

Core concepts

Mentoring is a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions.

Mentoring for Induction is used to support professional learners on joining a new school. For Newly Qualified Teachers this will also include induction into the profession as a whole.

Mentoring for Progression is used to support professional learners to respond to the demands of the new role, to understand the responsibilities it brings and the values it implies.

Mentoring for Challenge is used to enable professional learners to address significant issues that may inhibit progress.

Mentors are experienced colleagues with knowledge of the requirements of the role. They broker access to a range of increasingly self-directed learning opportunities to support the development of the whole person. Mentors are selected on the basis of appropriate knowledge of the needs and working context of the professional learner.

A professional learner is someone tackling a new or particularly challenging stage in her/his professional development who seeks out or is directed towards mentoring.

Mentoring involves activities which promote and enhance effective transitions between professional roles, including:

1. identifying learning goals and supporting progression
2. developing increasing learners' control over their learning
3. active listening
4. modelling, observing, articulating and discussing practice to raise awareness
5. shared learning experiences e.g. via observation or video
6. providing guidance, feedback and, when necessary, direction
7. review and action planning
8. assessing, appraising and accrediting practice
9. brokering a range of support

Mentoring usually takes place in the professional learner's school, in the work place and in quiet spaces that allow confidential reflection. For teachers, especially trainee teachers, it also takes place in other people's classrooms to enable observation for learning.

Mentoring is useful to a practitioner, at the beginning of her/his career, at times of significant career change or in response to specific, significant challenges.

Specialist Coaching is a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice.

Specialist coaching is used by schools and teachers to:

- review and refine established practice
- develop and extend teaching and learning repertoire
- introduce and experiment with alternative teaching and learning strategies
- support the development, across a department or a school, of a culture of openness e.g. mutual support for and critique of professional practice.

Specialist coaches are fellow professionals with knowledge and expertise relevant to the goals of the professional learner. They enable professional learners to take control of their own learning through non-judgemental questioning and support. The coach might be from the same institution or from elsewhere (e.g. a university). Coaches are usually chosen by professional learners themselves.

A professional learner is someone tackling a specific teaching and learning or leadership challenge who seeks out or is offered coaching.

Specialist coaching involves activities which promote and enhance the development of a specific aspect of teaching and learning or leadership practice, including:

1. support to clarify learning goals
2. reinforcing learners' control over their learning
3. active listening
4. modelling, observing, articulating and discussing practice to raise awareness
5. shared learning experiences e.g. via observation or video
6. shared planning of learning and teaching or leadership, supported by questioning
7. supported review and action planning
8. reflection on and debriefing of shared experiences

Specialist coaching usually takes place in the professional learner's own work place - and in quiet spaces that allow confidential reflection - in order to facilitate observation of and reflection about her/his own practice and experiments with new approaches.

Specialist coaching is useful to a practitioner, at any stage in her/his career, in developing a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of existing and new approaches.

Collaborative (Co-) Coaching is a structured, sustained process between two or more professional learners to enable them to embed new knowledge and skills from specialist sources in day-to-day practice.

Co-coaching is used by schools and teachers to support and sustain voluntary, structured partnerships in which each participant relates specialist inputs to day-to-day practice.

It supports the development, across a department or a school, of a culture of openness e.g. mutual support for and critique of professional practice. It also provides a good preparation for more specialist coaching skills and roles.

Co-coaches are professional learners committed to reciprocal learning and to providing non-judgemental support to each other based on evidence from their own practice. Co-coaches seek out specialist input to inform their coaching. This may be provided by a third party e.g. via a course, consultant, demonstration session or text based resources.

Co-coaches each take the role of coach and professional learner, usually alternately. Co-coaching partners are mostly self selecting.

Co-coaching involves activities which promote and enhance reflective practice including:

1. developing mutual understanding of specific goals
2. sustaining learners' control over their learning
3. active listening
4. observing, articulating and discussing practice to raise awareness
5. shared learning experiences e.g. via observation or video
6. shared planning of learning and teaching or leadership, supported by reciprocal questioning
7. reciprocal action planning
8. shared analysis of learning experiences, evidence, research or alternative examples of practice

Co-coaching takes place in the professional learners' work place and in quiet spaces that allow confidential reflection. This will usually involve co-coaches observing each other's work and reflecting upon their own and their co-coach's activities.

Co-coaching is useful to a practitioner, at any stage in her/his career, following specialist inputs and whenever professional learners are seeking to review and enhance practice.

WHY?

WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHEN?