

Evidence informed mentoring

Developing quality in mentoring as a
driver for professional learning and school
improvement

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This session

- Our own starting points
- Core purposes and characteristics of effective mentoring relationships
- Understanding the research evidence re effectiveness
- Some intriguing questions
- Skills for mentors and coaches- a video case study
- The skills of teachers in making good use of them!
- What this means for school improvement
- A metaphor



Evidence about effective CPDL/ mentoring

- A systematic review of all reviews of evidence about (CPDL) Developing Great Teaching (Cordingley et al, 2015 TDT) <http://bit.ly/23WTvw2>
- Shows that benefits for pupils, as well as teachers from CPDL/mentoring are linked with
 - Organising a carefully **aligned** combination of activities supporting professional learning organised around **aspirations for pupils;**
 - **Sustained (over at least two terms)** programme
 - Through a **rhythm** of iterative, structured, evidence-rich activities; and



Effective mentoring involves:

- Identifying, recognising and building on colleagues' starting points
- Exploring / reviewing/ challenging existing beliefs and practices *supportively* via:
 - *Iterative* cycles of trying new approaches: and
 - Collaborative *reviewing pupils' responses* to changes being made to refine practices
- Opportunities
 - for *structured peer support* – shared risk taking in trying out new approaches
 - to develop a *shared sense of purpose*; and



Effective mentoring involves:

- Understanding *why* things do and don't work as well as what's involved from e.g.
 - Multiple cases, interrogating colleagues' own evidence against wider evidence and contextualising for different pupils, subjects etc
- Working with specialists who provide expert support to secure depth via:
 - **challenging orthodoxies**
 - ***illustrating ever greater depth*** e.g. via *practices* from other settings
 - ***evaluating and designing* development activities with sensitivity!**



AFL for teachers

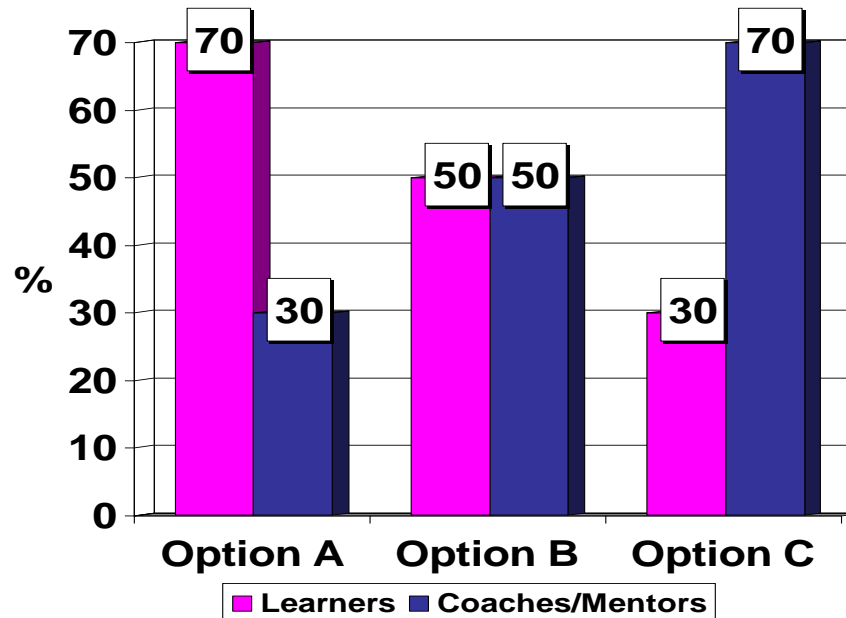
- Formative assessment is key
- Effective CPDL and mentoring means:
 - Asking to see evidence about how pupils are responding to new approaches to refine your support for teachers
 - Asking teachers to design AFL tools for different subject contexts and sub-groups of pupils to explore their understanding/ ability to apply ideas
 - So that AFL for mentoring is
 - an input - a form of instruction and a learning process;
 - an output; and
 - an evaluation tool for exploring outcomes
- Well designed mentoring is a highly effective way of organising and aligning all this



Intriguing questions

- Does a mentor need to know about:
 - the content of the professional learning?
 - the coaching process?
 - Or both?

Who gets most out of coaching and mentoring?



The research based framework for mentoring and coaching

- CUREE created a National Framework for the English (more recently) Welsh government to clarify the research evidence <https://bit.ly/2tHNJWs> and support the new Professional Learning Framework
- It comprises 4xA4 –
 - A set of ten shared principles,
 - A map of the who, where, why, when
 - A summary of core skills
 - A map of overlaps between mentoring, specialist coaching and co-coaching



Principles -3 examples

Principles of mentoring and coaching

The Welsh Government recognises that the ways mentoring and coaching are used depend on the context. There is no intention to impose a uniform model. These ten principles, based on evidence from research and consultation, are recommended to inform coaching programmes in schools and to help increase the impact of continuing professional development on student learning.

Effective mentoring and coaching involves:

a learning conversation structured professional dialogue, rooted in evidence from the professional learner's practice, which articulates existing beliefs and practices to enable reflection on them;

a thoughtful relationship developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep professional learning;

a learning agreement establishing confidence about the boundaries of the relationship by agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability;



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk



3 more examples related to building whole school capacity

Growing self direction - An evolving process in which the learner takes increasing control over their professional learning skills as knowledge and self awareness increase

Setting challenging and personal goals - Identifying goals rooted in aspirations for pupils that build on what they know and can do already whilst attending to school and individual priorities

Understanding why different approaches work - Developing understanding of the rationale for new approaches so practice and theory can be developed side by side

Which of these principles is most important for strengthening mentoring for your focus mentee and school improvement ?



Core skills for mentors and coaches

Mentors	Specialist Coaches	Co-Coaches
Skills for mentoring and coaching – mentors and coaches learn to:		
1. relate sensitively to learners and work through agreed processes to build trust	1. relate sensitively to learners and work through agreed processes to build trust and confidence	1. relate sensitively to learners and work through agreed processes to build trust and confidence
2. model expertise in practice or through	2. model expertise in practice or through	

Headline skills

Relate sensitively to learners	Build learners' control over their learning
Model expertise (or seek it)	Use open questions
Relate guidance to evidence	Listen actively and with self awareness
Broker a range of support	Relate guidance to assessment frameworks
Observe, analyse and reflect on practice	Provide information and feedback



Mentors

Specialist Coaches

Co-Coaches

Effective mentoring and coaching – mentors and coaches learn to:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. relate sensitively to learners and work through <p>9. listen actively and with self awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using affirming body language to signal attention• replaying what's been said using the same words to reinforce, value and reframe thinking <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. build a learner's control over their professional learning8. use open questions to raise awareness, explore beliefs, raise awareness, develop practice consequences and explore and commit to change9. listen actively and with self awareness:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using affirming body language to signal attention• replaying what's been said using the same words to reinforce, value and reframe thinking10. relate practice to assessment, accreditation frameworks and evidence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. relate sensitively to learners and work through and confidence through <p>9. listen actively and with self awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using affirming body language to signal attention• replaying what's been said using the same words to reinforce and value thinking <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. facilitate growing independence in professional learning from the outset8. use open questions to raise awareness, explore beliefs, raise awareness, develop practice consequences and explore and commit to change9. listen actively and with self awareness:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using affirming body language to signal attention• replaying what's been said using the same words to reinforce and value thinking10. establish buffer zones between coaching and other formal relationships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. relate sensitively to learners and work through agreed processes to build trust and confidence2. draw on specialist resources to inform learning3. draw on evidence from research and practice to shape development4. understand the goals of the co-coach5. observe, analyse and reflect upon each other's practice, make this explicit and interpret it collaboratively6. provide information that enables learning from mistakes and successes7. learn reciprocally with commitment and integrity8. use open questions to raise awareness, reveal beliefs and enable professional learners to reflect upon them9. listen actively:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using attentive body language to signal attention <p>9. listen actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodating and valuing silence• concentrating on what's actually being said• using attentive body language to signal attention• replaying narrative using professional learner's own words to check meaning and/or value their thinking
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Questioning framework

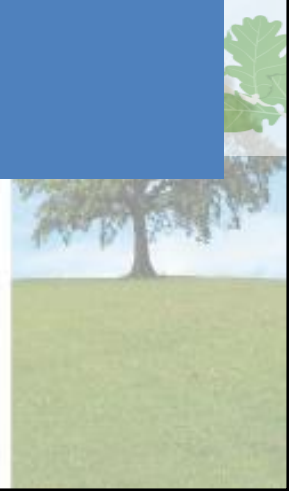
Learning to listen actively

Example questions

1. Identifying and refining a focus for learning	2. Exploring why things work the way they do
a) Can you tell me something about the situation you want to talk about? b) What's going well? What do you enjoy? c) Where is it that you get surprises or feel you struggle? d) What do you want to change? e) That sounds like a lot of things I would like to see you work on. What thread do you want to focus on? f) When does this thread come up?	a) Can you describe what you do now? How do your students respond? b) Can you think of two different students or groups who respond differently to a strategy - what are the key differences? c) Why do you think things work out the way they do? d) What keeps things the way they are?
3.	
a) How do you... b) What would... c) How would... d) What's the... e) What are... f) When does...	
An important part of the process is to identify and refine priorities. The following questions are designed to help you do this.	
5.	
a) Shall we... b) I think so... c) These are... d) What do you...	

Stages:

- Identifying and refining a focus for learning
- Exploring why things do and don't work the way they do
- Exploring alternative possibilities
- Planning next steps
- Building appropriate pace



Questioning framework

Learning to listen actively

1. Identifying and refining a focus for learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Can you tell me something about the situation you want to talk about? b) What's going well? What do you enjoy? c) Where is it that you get surprises or feel you struggle? d) What do you want to change? e) That sounds like a lot of things bound up together can you unravel one of the threads?
3. Exploring alternative possibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How do you want things to be in 3 months/6 months time? b) What would it look like if everything were going just right? c) How would you like things to be in an ideal world? d) What's the best possible outcome? e) What are some of the possibilities? f) When does it work best?

An important part of an effective learning conversation is to build appropriate priorities. The fifth set of questions below will help mentors and coaches

5. Building appropriate pace into your conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shall we move on because this seems like a good place to look at... b) I think so far we have looked at ... x, y, z but we haven't yet had chance to look at ... now? c) These are all interesting strands of thinking – shall we make a note of them and come back to the others? d) What do you think the trickiest issues are – should we focus on those?

1. Identifying and refining a focus for learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Can you tell me something about the situation you want to talk about? b) What's going well? What do you enjoy? c) Where is it that you get surprises or feel you struggle? d) What do you want to change? e) That sounds like a lot of things bound up together can you unravel one of the threads?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What concrete things are you aiming for? b) What practical steps do you need to take to get there? c) What's your first step and deadline? d) What support do you want to secure for yourself? e) What are you going to do next?

3. Exploring alternative possibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How do you want things to be in 3 months/6 months time? b) What would it look like if everything were going just right? c) How would you like things to be in an ideal world? d) What's the best possible outcome? e) What are some of the possibilities? f) When does it work best?

- How might a questioning framework like this have helped Ellen?

Mentoring skills extended

- It wasn't just Ellen who was stuck
- What did or didn't Max do to make the first session an effective mentoring conversation?
- Let's look at the [skills](#) for professional learners in the framework to prompt ideas



Professional learning skills for mentees

Mentors	Specialist Coaches	Co-Coaches
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Professional learners develop their ability to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek out specialist expertise and respond proactively to it to acquire and adapt new knowledge • discuss practice and core concepts professionally dialogue asking and answering probing questions • understand their own learning needs and goals and develop strategies that respond to these through dialogue with their peer coach • observe, analyse and reflect upon their own and the coach's practice and make this explicit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek out specialist expertise and respond proactively to it to acquire and adapt new knowledge • discuss practice and core concepts professionally dialogue asking and answering probing questions • understand their own learning needs and goals and develop strategies that respond to these through dialogue with their peer coach • observe, analyse and reflect upon their own and the coach's practice and make this explicit.
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Proactive professional learning behaviours

Effective professional learners develop their ability to

- **E.G. Understand their own learning needs/ goals**
- Build awareness of their internalised knowledge
- Use their coach/ mentor to indentify what they don't know they don't know
- Ask an appropriate mix of open and closed questions
- Identify opportunities they would value

respond proactively to modelled expertise to acquire and adapt new knowledge:

- **be curious about expertise**
- **experiment with modelled behaviours** in your context
- **compare your own and modelled expertise**

discuss practice and core concepts professionally with your coach:

- **make previous practice explicit** and reflect on it
- **be alert to the helpful intentions** behind even poorly framed questions and suggestions
- **give yourself time to develop responses** to searching questions or challenging suggestions
- **reveal and explore your anxieties** to enrich reflection
- take care to **celebrate successes**

understand your own learning needs and goals:

- **build awareness of your internalised knowledge**, skills and beliefs
- use your coach to **identify what you don't know you don't know**
- **ask an appropriate mix of open questions** (to uncover new thinking) and closed questions (to target support)
- **identify the opportunities you would value**
- **identify appropriate goals** and steps for reaching them, with support

observe, analyse and reflect upon your own and your coach's practice and make this explicit:

- **observe practice** either directly or via recordings
- **identify specific learning goals** for observing others
- **secure evidence of and feedback** on your practice and your students' learning
- **reflect on and analyse available evidence** with support through questioning

think about and act honestly on your developing skills and understanding:

- **broaden your self-awareness** by questioning your beliefs and assumptions with your coach
- **make use of praise and criticism** – don't let your feelings get in the way
- **agree a formative review** process to refine goals

Implications

- What might mentors who have had chance to observe developing professional learning skills amongst mentees be able to contribute to wider CPD and school improvement in terms of building professional learning capacity?
- What might else might they learn?
- How might they use it to fuel school improvment?



Examples from our Gaining and Sustaining Momentum research

- Windows into the latest research – for reviewing the school's model of teaching and learning
- Deeper questioning skills to feed into coaching and CPD sessions
- Ideas about personalising professional learning and ways of creating a manageable rhythm wrapped around the day job
- Raised expectations - confidence re how quickly it is possible for colleagues to move forwards

http://www.curee.co.uk/files/shared/GSM_report_public_version.pdf



Effective mentoring and coaching tools and resources

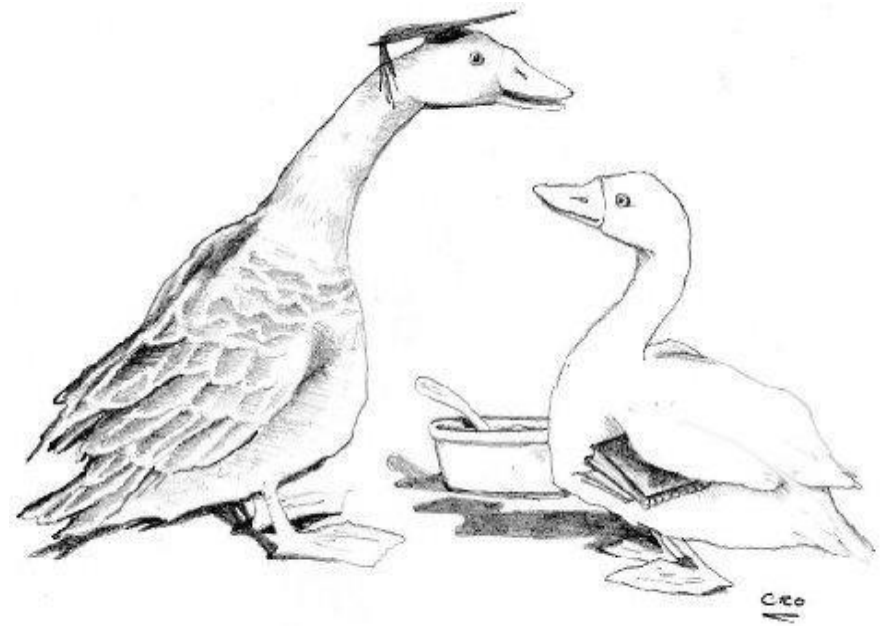


<http://www.curee.co.uk/mentoring-and-coaching/effective-mentoring-and-coaching-suite/samples>



Sauce for the Goose

- There's a risk that we are / have been focusing too much on the teaching of teachers
- We need to think just as hard, perhaps even harder, about their professional learning
- as a gateway for positioning professional mentoring and coaching as a driver of evidence informed school, teacher and pupil success



"I'll have what he's having!"



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