

Supporting Teachers and Apprentice Coaches: a mentoring approach

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The Plan

- Mentoring –what it is and isn't
- Value of mentoring and expectations
- Effective mentoring
- Starting a mentoring relationship
- The mentoring programme
- Concluding a mentoring relationship

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Your interests

- ☐ Please identify any specific aspects that you'd like to address in this session

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Discussion

- ☐ In pairs/3s
- Discuss what you currently know and understand about mentoring
- Describe any mentoring experiences you have had – good and bad

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Let's all think...

- ☐ For your specific role:
 - What do you want this mentoring experience to be like for **you** – bullet points or short phrases please?
 - What problems/challenges do you think you might face with teachers/apprentice coaches?

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Mentoring

- ❖ Many different definitions of, and approaches to mentoring/coaching - may be confusing
- ❖ No single generally accepted definition, approach or 'gold standard' programme
- ❖ Difficult to pin down - try to see this as a strength rather than a weakness.

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Mentoring

- ❖ Generally, simply involves a one-to-one relationship supporting the development of another
- ❖ Effective mentors will act as 'shortcuts', accelerating the learning and development of coaches
- ❖ Important that mentoring is seen as a learning strategy, rather than just the outdated notion of mentors simply handing down professional know-how

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Mentoring

- A co-learning strategy where both mentor and coach should develop through the relationship
- Common components and processes (*caring, guiding, buying into the process, open mind, challenging*) but each relationship will be unique – even when the same mentor is working with more than one coach

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All together now...

- What do you think mentors will actually do apart from:
 - arranging/agreeing the mentoring programme and individual meetings
 - keeping a record of discussions, actions and agreements

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Discussion

- In groups of 3 or 4
- Identify what you consider to be the key aspects of developing an effective relationship with your coaches/teachers and the skills you will need
- Prioritise – list no more than four skills

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Core Mentoring Skills

- Building relationships – making, maintaining and developing
- Questioning
- Listening actively
- Providing feedback
- Observation and analysis
- Goal setting – focusing in action/development planning

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Building a relationship

- Being open-minded and non-judgemental – leave any personal views behind
- Understanding your philosophy and role in the relationship – you are not 'the fixer'
- Understanding the coach's/teacher's perspective and needs

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Discussion

- ❑ In small groups:
 - Set out what you think the key characteristics are of an early mentoring relationship
 - What would happen
 - What might it feel like for you as the mentor?

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Early Stage

- A 'sounding out' stage, with each assessing the other
- Coach may have expectations that are not 'in tune' with your approach

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Early stage

- ❑ An unbalanced relationship:
 - Initial stages: relationship likely to be unbalanced – you may have knowledge, skills and experience that the coach does not
 - Make your role as **facilitator** very clear in the initial stage, and encourage coaches to **take responsibility for their own learning**

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Developing the relationship

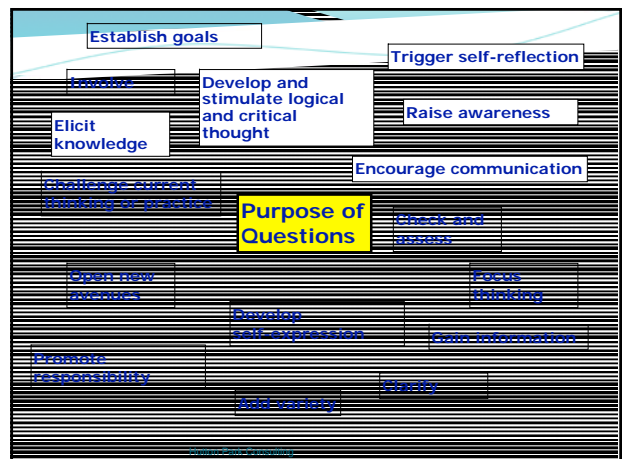
- ❑ Relationship may progress into a **two-way process** of personal development
- ❑ Coach develops self-reflection process and becomes better at learning from experience
- ❑ Role changes to assisting, rather than directing, the learning process

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Discussion

- ❑ In pairs, talk through the following scenarios, in general terms and identify some specific questions you might ask
 - **Mentor 1** - you are meeting for the first time and need to sound each other out and clarify expectations
 - **Mentor 2** - you are developing your relationship and wish to encourage the coach to take more responsibility for their learning

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Posing Questions

- Demonstrate positive body language/paralanguage
- Use silence; resist the temptation to rephrase or amplify original question too soon. Allow people time to respond
- Know why you are asking the question
- Respond to answers with warmth, enthusiasm and as constructively as possible
- Plan and prepare clear, concise questions
- Choose the right focus, pitch and level
- Ask one at a time
- Sequence questions in a logical order
- Use follow-on questions where appropriate
- Be aware of paralanguage
- Avoid random and arbitrary questions
- Actively listen

Questioning

- Develop your ability to ask effective questions at points of greatest value to you as a manager/coach
- Need to know why questions can be so powerful, when to ask questions and how to ask questions.....also when NOT to ask questions

Active Listening

- Closely linked to your questioning skills
- The 'right' question to ask next comes from listening to the coach's response to the previous question
- Involves listening carefully, objectively and paraphrasing, clarifying and summarising, where appropriate

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Active Listening

- LISTEN is an anagram of SILENT
- Do not become distracted (inner and outer)
- Do not make assumptions or judgements
- Be interested in the person
- Do not be selective – listen to every word
- Do not switch off
- Listen for main points/evidence
- Do not interrupt, add, elaborate or finish a sentence
- Concentrate on them, not you
- Develop note taking skills
- Have enough time
- Do not confuse what is being said with your own agenda
- Observe their paralanguage and body language

Difficult feedback

- Invite self-feedback and state the facts if required – if this is not forthcoming, then...
- Invite feedback on the effects of the behaviour – if they can't see it for themselves then...
- Ask what the person might try to do differently - if nothing, give advice
- Focus on the behaviour, not the person

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Process

Difficult feedback

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- Invite feedback on the effects of the behaviour – *if they can't see it for themselves then...*
- Ask what the person might try to do differently - *if nothing, give advice*
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GROW – a structure

- Goals – what do we need to achieve within this session and overall?
- Reality – could be a basic SWOT analysis or just analysis of current situation – strengths and weaknesses
- Options – what could be done to improve?
- Way forward – action plan of what to be developed and how to improve

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Summary

- If you are relatively new to mentoring, mistakes might be made
- Aim to **learn from mistakes** and use learning to inform subsequent practice
- Mentoring is a **practical** activity, but to get the most from this initiative, please make and take the time to **reflect** on it

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Finally

- Coaching and mentoring are not just about developing and applying your knowledge and skills
- Building effective and harmonious relationships relies on some key personal attributes/qualities of you as an individual

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And, really finally...

- ☐ Thanks for your contribution – I couldn't have done it without you!

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