

Collected blog thoughts on being and having a mentor

This is a series of blog posts that have been written over the past few years, often as a result of a period of working with trainees and their mentors. Hopefully, as a collection, it forms a useful document for anyone setting out as a mentor, or perhaps a reflective jog for any experienced colleagues.

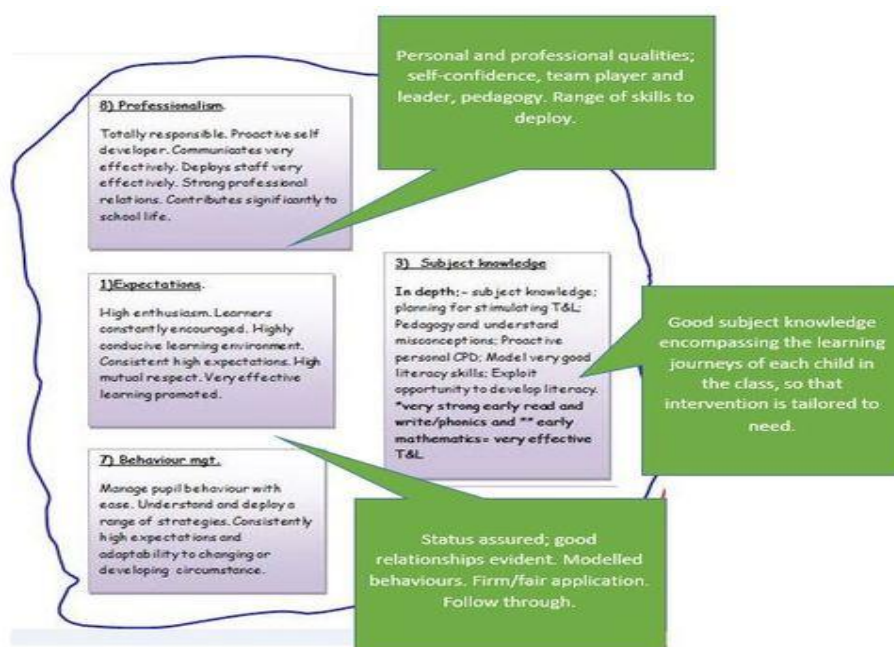
The importance of being a mentor.

I am in the middle of a month of School Direct activity, with significant events marking the end of the training year, leading to the award of QTS and post grad qualifications. It is a delight to work with groups of energetic, enthusiastic young teachers, looking forward to their new life as a teacher. Then I read tweets and see colleagues writing about leaving. There have to be ways to ensure that this initial enthusiasm and energy remain in the system.

One significant element of the route to becoming the best possible teacher is high quality dialogue with colleague professionals; sharing practice, unpicking successful and less than successful lessons. In recent years, the appointment of a professional mentor has been a part of ITE training routes and into the NQT year. This person acts as internal quality assurance as well as professional coach, guide, model and counsellor. They signpost the trainee to appropriate expertise, to reading material and to resources that will enhance their developing practice.

The role of the mentor has benefits to the trainee, but also to the mentor themselves, as they have to distil a great deal of information so that it can be enacted with ease during the ITE experience or within the NQT year.

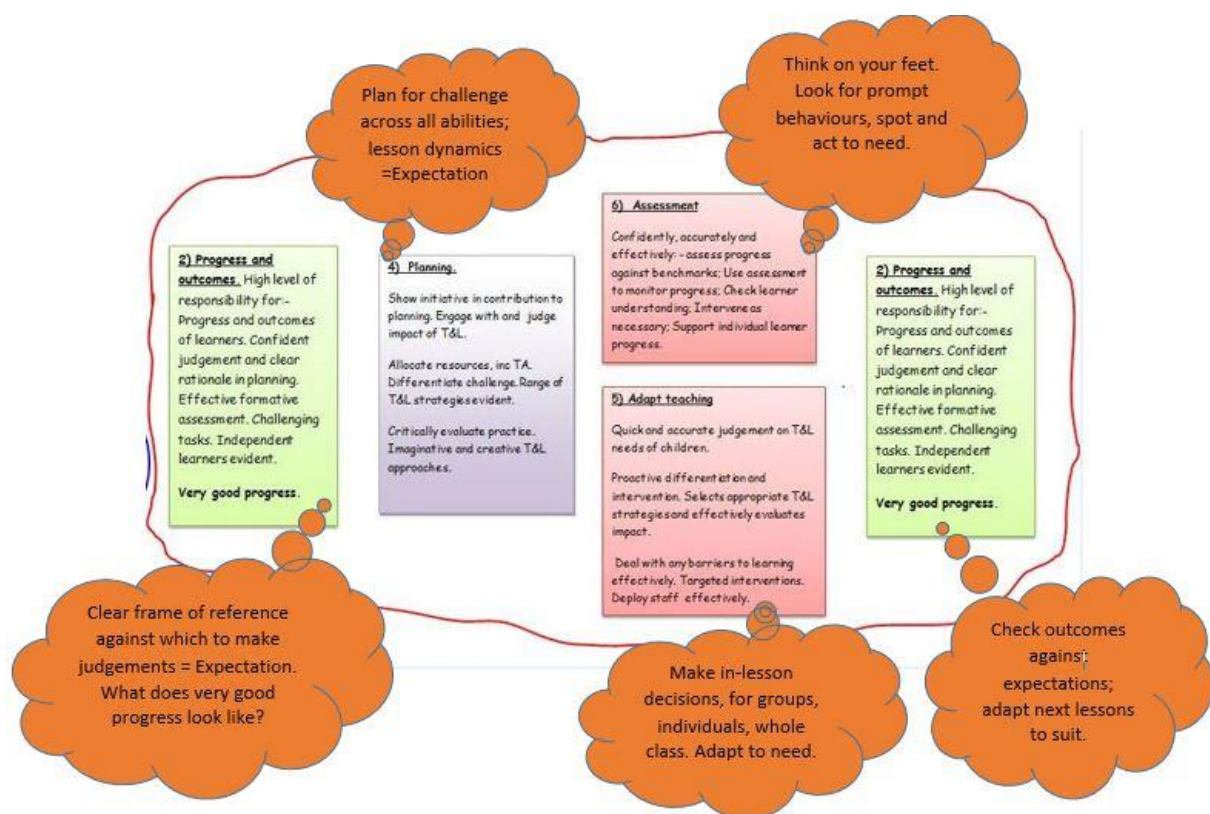
Trainee's generic knowledge of areas such as behaviour management, planning details for learning, SEND and assessment, have to be transformed in practice to the needs of the receiving school, where each can be subtly or, more often today, distinctly different. The focus on evidencing the Teaching Standards is also important, so brings these to the fore in the mentor thinking too. These can be separated into the personal and the practical, as per the following diagrams.



Once a trainee is in a school setting, the in-school support is key to their success or not and this, context-driven difference, can be significant, leading to variation in outcomes that can make a difference to the employment prospects of the trainee.

Many ITE trainees go into school practice with assignments to be completed, in addition to the teaching roles. Overview planning can be a key element of success, ensuring a balance of demand.

Getting to know the children well is a key element of success, with Teaching Standard 2 (Progress and Outcomes) impacting on planning (TS4), assessment within and after the lesson (TS 6) and adaptations within and between lessons (TS5), as well as qualitative judgements about outcomes, all leading to knowing the children better.



I always recommend that the whole practice is mapped out, with any projects or assignments booked into diaries, with appropriate time given for discussion and research, so that the trainee is able to give full concentration to the teaching role when timetabled.

As well as the whole plan, I also recommend full awareness of whole weeks or fortnights of medium term planning, to get a feeling for challenge, expectation and outcomes over a period of teaching, so that evaluations can be part of a dynamic, not just of single lessons.

While some will cope with minimal support, others will need greater guidance. With good guidance and support, trainees begin to develop self-confidence and take greater responsibility for their own development. So the mentor role is very subtle, with empathy

and awareness of another's needs a key element.

I'd propose that within the first three years of teaching, every teacher should undergo some training as a professional mentor, enabling a period of self-reflection, so that they were able to undertake the role with trainees, but also with internal colleagues within promoted roles.

This training could be at individual or school level, with many ITE institutions offering at least a basic introduction to the role. Some offer routes that include Master's level opportunities. This CPD opportunity could be checked during an Ofsted visit, together with a check on the school role in teacher education.

With more schools being brought into the School Direct route, in addition to ITE support, it strikes me as self-evident that mentoring in schools needs to be a significant focus. To do so also adds value to professional development, as lesson observations are a key element of development. This can evolve into coached lesson study with mentor and trainee observing another colleague, further enhancing the professional dialogue.

If all teachers became mentors over time, the system as a whole would benefit, from collective reflective practice. It should not be a matter of luck whether or not a trainee or newly qualified teacher has a good mentor.

And, of course, every newly promoted person should be offered a professional mentor, not just a line manager, to ensure that they very quickly are enabled to settle into the role. Line management can then be effective, based on high quality induction.

Professional talkers?

Life is a strange thing. We each pass through it in our own way even if we are ostensibly engaging in the same activity. We'll see, hear or sense things slightly differently, because, whether some like it or not, our lives to that shared point will have been, to a large extent, unique, an interplay between our underlying, embedded capacities and the quality of the experiences which we enjoy. In seeking to make sense of our experiences, we put the new in relation to the old, make comparisons and, through any period of reflection, refine what we previously knew to create a new baseline of understanding.

That the experience, and therefore our understanding, contains flaws, has occasionally to be the case, especially where the experience is a third-party interpretation of something that has happened outside the immediate experience of the sharer. In other words, virtually every area of education, where a teacher largely imparts "knowledge" that they have gained and internalised from another "teacher/source" at some point in their lives. That they alter this to cater for the nuances of the situation in which they find themselves is inevitable; knowledge sharing can be resource dependent, to enable a variety of supportive models to be created.

I am acutely aware that I am the holder of “my understandings”. I’m not going to call this knowledge, because I am also aware that furthering my experiences is likely to result in alteration.

That this is a perpetual state for children working their way through school needs to be considered.

This requires order and organisation from the school, as the enabling body, ensuring that the resource base available to teachers is as good as it can be, in terms of available relevant developmental literature (how many teachers read the teacher guide to schemes?) and also the physical resources that enable visual interpretation through manipulation.

Order and organisation of resources has to be then [underpinned through thorough, detailed planning](#), across year groups and within each class, with subtle adaptations between classes to account for the variability that inevitably exists within any mixed population.

As a head, I allowed teacher autonomy for these decisions, for which they had to have a clear rationale, on the basis that if these things are in place, then teachers can be held accountable for the outcomes of each child in their class.

Teaching teachers, as an initial activity or as continuing development, inevitably means that another adult, deemed to have some expertise is invited to share their expertise to the benefit of a wider group. Whether this is a seminar or an international education conference, the speaker has been selected as worthy of an audience.

What they share will be new to some, possibly old-hat to others, but, as long as there is also quality time for discussion, those with additional expertise can add further value to the understandings by broadening the evidence base, or questioning some of the premises of the presentation.

Apart from two extended periods of post-grad study, for diplomas that extended my professional knowledge, most CPD was short term, weekend at most, on specific subject areas, or even specifics within subjects. These sessions were led by experienced teacher colleagues, local authority or university specialists or national speakers.

They shared the distillation of their current thinking.

It was either reassuring or challenging; either way it was shared within the wider staff group on return and had a wider impact. I learned, as many others had learned before me and many will continue to do, by listening to others and making up my own mind, in relation to circumstance.

People helping each other to improve is, to me, the hallmark of a collegiate group of

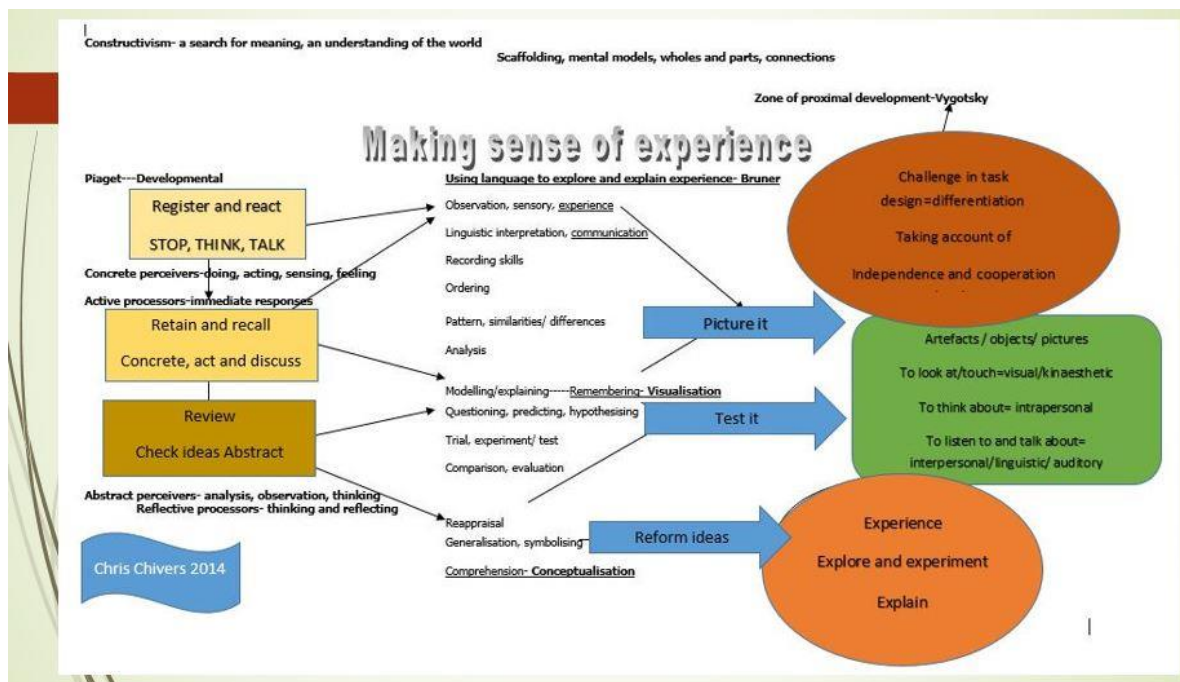
colleagues, prepared to spend time together to benefit each other. Those with experience have something to share with developing teacher minds, but this has to be done with care, to ensure that they think for themselves, not just become a clone. Cloning and copying rarely works, as there is a significant need to be able to think on your feet and make instant, reflective decisions.

So, if I was looking to make an improvement in education, I'd be seeking a profession-wide dialogue, with experienced support; let's call them mentors.

- If mentoring occurs across a school, there is **common assent to decisions** regarding achievement and progress expectations.
- If mentoring occurs across schools, an **area wide understanding** occurs.
- If outcomes of National testing were seen as an aspect of moderation, the **outcomes could provide exemplar material** to support internal mentoring needs.
- If **mentoring became a common tool** across all schools, supported by external expertise as necessary, there could be an **improvement in (detailed) teacher judgement** and a reduced need for formal testing, so we could **save money on SATs testing**.
- If in-house teachers became trained mentors, for internal and external use, the use of such people **would provide opportunities for mass localised CPD** and lead to higher expectations, based on a common understanding.
- If **lesson observations** became a mentoring exercise, based on the common agenda of the teaching standards, then feedback would be developmental. Nobody is perfect all the time.
- If **Ofsted and other assessment/inspection visits** were mentoring visits, to validate the judgements of the internal moderation team, we could establish expectations common to every school in the country.
- If **Ofsted inspectors and HMI mentored each other**, the judgements across every establishment would be more consistent.
- If **Ofsted and HMI regularly produced reflective (research) pamphlets** about their distilled experiences, across all subjects, the system could benefit from such collated reflection. (Anyone remember the "raspberry ripple" series?)
- Perhaps we could have a new series of conferences; Mentored...

If judgements across every classroom in every school in the country were improved, as a national educational establishment we would make progress. It is a case of giving teachers

space to think and something of worth to think about.



Mentoring can be excellent CPD

In the next couple of weeks, I will be working with PGCE, third year undergraduates and School Direct trainees as they start a new practice, in some case their final practice before qualification. One of the elements in their potential for success is the school context into which they are placed, with a significant factor being the quality of mentoring that they receive from in-school staff.

It has to be hoped that the teacher whose class is being used for the practice is happy that they will be having a student. I have met mentors who have complained at the outset that the student was a last-minute change to plans. It is equally important that the trainee is introduced to the class in positive terms, so that their status is not undermined from the beginning.

For preference, the mentor will have received some training beforehand, so that they are prepared as fully as possible to understand the pattern of the school experience, the necessary paperwork, the need for the student to complete task for the university during the practice, the teaching demands that it is reasonable to make at different stages.

The school experience has to start with a modest apprenticeship, usually during a short familiarisation period (1 week) approach as the trainee familiarises themselves with the school layout, the policies and practices, timings and the individuals who make up the class, including any TAs who make up the team. They need to be introduced to key staff, subject

leaders, SENCo, caretakers. They need time to gather their thoughts about the intended plans and their part in this. To create an overview diary, for the whole practice, that details the growing demand, while still keeping track of extraneous demands, is a good means of keeping everyone on track.

The overriding need is for the student to have the time and space to develop as a rounded teacher, able to show that they can evidence their progress against the eight teacher standards. The personal side of this is likely to be evident early (8,1,7 and 4).

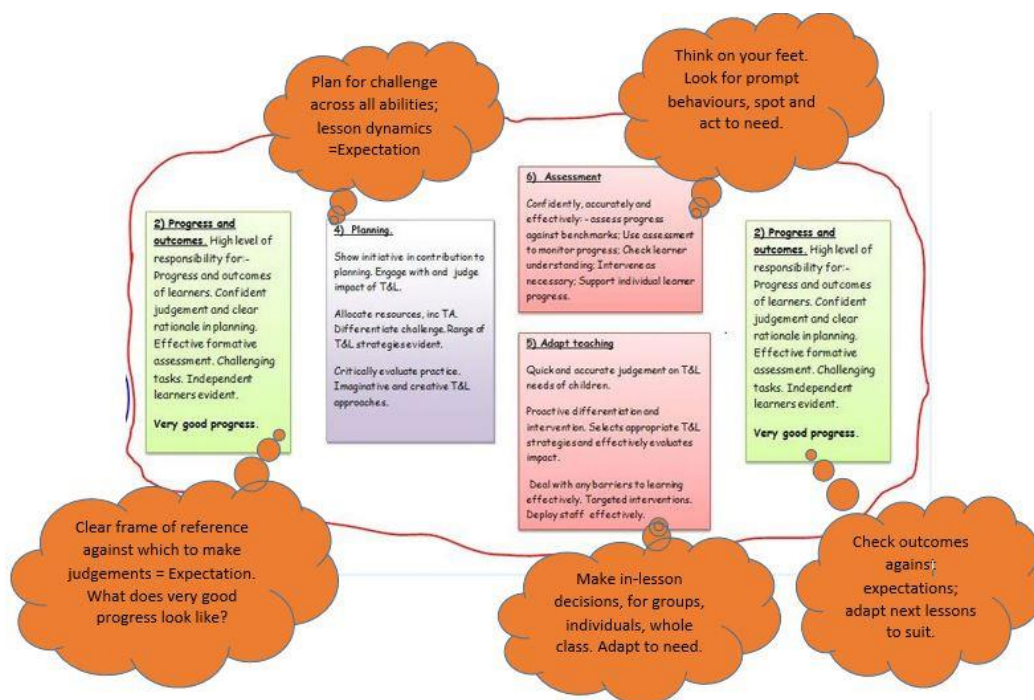
8) They will show professionalism in all aspects of their approach, to relationships and to their focus on the tasks in hand. They will be self-developers, not completely reliant on others in order to function.

1) They will have some idea about the character of a well-run class, have appropriately high outline expectations about children as learners, which will be “coloured in” during the school experience.

7) They will understand the importance of good behaviour, understand the school system and work effectively within that; in doing so, showing that they can operate independently.

4) They are ordered and organised in all things, but especially in their planning and record keeping.

The remaining standards rely on their understanding of the needs of the class in front of them, especially with regard to their learning outcomes to date and the expectations of their progress over the time of the practice. This can be summarised as knowing the children well, planning for challenge and progress, running an effective lesson, engaging with ongoing learning and then reviewing outcomes to support decision making. [\(24652\)](#)



Some mentors find it hard to relinquish their grip on the class, but, unless they do so, the state of deference might put the student at risk of failure, as always working within another's thinking can create tensions which move from professional to personal.

It is important that the mentor forms a strong coaching relationship with the trainee, that recognises that (s)he has strengths developed over a number of years and that there will still be some developmental needs, not least knowledge of the children. They need to be sensitive to their context; each school and each class can be subtly different, often as a result of that teacher. They need to recognise that the student may turn out to be a stronger teacher than they are and acknowledge significant success without rancour. A jealous teacher can damage a potentially excellent colleague.

Sensitive professional support and challenge is the hallmark of high quality mentoring. The trainee will not necessarily be expecting everything to be high quality from the beginning, so they need regular feedback that supports their development, but which doesn't rely on just hints and tips. There has to be a clear rationale behind all support. The mentor does need to know the Teaching Standards, so that they can work within these parameters, as a whole.

Observations, both informal and formal, are points where the mentor has to seek to suppress personal bias and seek to see the lesson for what it is. It is possible later, during the debrief, to clarify, through questions, the trainee intentions, outcomes and their evaluation of progress made in the lesson. Alternative strategies can be offered, for consideration. As a Link Tutor, I would advise a mentor to offer in-lesson prompts as development, if it is obvious that a tweak is needed, where not to do so will jeopardise a positive outcome. In-ear coaching might be available in some situations.

Discussions should always be of a professional nature, as the mentor is the professional model that the trainee will work to in that setting. Encouraging the student to self-evaluate is key to them becoming fully self-reliant. They need clarity if they are to come up with their own solutions when operating independently. A developing relationship will alter the mentor-trainee relationship over the time of the practice.

Joining in with in-school training, staff discussions, meeting with in-school experts all contribute to the trainee understanding of the breadth of demand on a soon to be teacher. They need to recognise that it is a team game with colleagues relying on each other to do what is expected of them. At the same time, they may need advice on how to maintain a balance, avoiding burning the candle at both ends.

Where problems occur.

Planning. There is a need for the trainee to have an overview of the learning that will take place over the time of the practice. The medium-term plan enables single lessons to be seen in context. It is possible, early in the experience, to structure a week so that the trainee is a part of the whole, rather than just being involved in a planning single lessons.

- Work together on the week's plan, eg for English, but could be any subject.
- Teacher leads lesson 1, student observes and participates with a group, discussion after.
- Student prepares lesson 2, teacher informally observes, participates with a group, then feeds back to student in an exchange of views.
- Student prepares lesson 3, as in 2.
- Teacher leads lesson 4, as in 1.
- Student leads lesson 5, as in 2 but this time observed formally.
- Both teacher and student review the week, including book scrutiny to ascertain progress and to make plans for the forthcoming week. Student keeps evidence of outcomes and progress discussion for portfolio.

Teaching Standards 6&5 are often the least well documented standards, even half way into the practice, as students often believe that assessment is something that is done in discrete weeks, rather than lesson by lesson and within lessons. This needs to be addressed early, with trainees reflecting on the points in a lesson where they went "off plan" in response to evident needs. They need to get good at doing this, as it is in-lesson support, coaching and feedback to learners that makes a difference.

Where a school takes a student but they are seen as just one teacher's student, this can become self-limiting. The trainee should be enabled to make use of the full range of expertise available within the school.

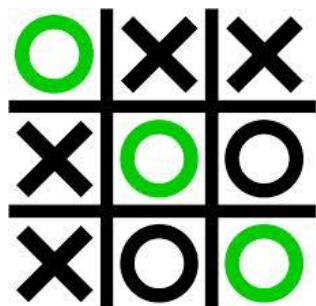
Trainees need to learn how to talk with parents, so taking opportunities to sit in on teacher-parent discussions is important.

Mentors need to loosen their grip as the practice progresses, so that the student can be seen to operate independently. In a few weeks, they may well become a colleague in the school. It is not uncommon for a student on experience to be employed by the school.

Mentors and their schools are helping to train the teachers of the future. Their role is an essential one, as the system needs a supply of high quality trainees developing into high quality teachers.

Some universities offer mentoring modules that offer certification, including up to Master's level.

Mentoring as shared enterprise and expertise.



It's as "easy" as **TIC, TAC, TOE**; team inside the community, team around the community and team of experts. It's also a useful mantra for [graduated SEN practice](#).

If you are old enough to remember the days before Local Management of Schools, LMS, you will probably recall the limited funds available for schools to buy "essentials", such as all the consumables. If you were lucky, the authority, in the form of an adviser, might look kindly upon a project and offer a small pump-priming fund, usually supplemented by the PTA fund raising.

These were the days of twilight training sessions, often a series of five or six, at the local teacher's centre, led by local teachers whose expertise was identified as worth sharing. If you were lucky, you got to do a "Gurney Dixon"; a weekend at the County residential centre. It was not as swish as it might sound. On a few occasions, I had to share my room with the caretaker's stores, but it was taken as the norm; it was cheap training. The sessions cost the school nothing, but did demand a significant commitment to personal development. However, it did ensure that expertise was shared as widely as possible through the authority.

In-house expertise was equally generously shared, so that the "specialist" would be happy to spend time sharing ideas to help less experienced colleagues. I can remember leaving with ideas that I then went back to my classroom and played, or sat in the library and went through the available books. It was a time of self-help and self-reliance; make do and mend was the mantra. Pencil pots and other stationery containers, made from well-washed tins, covered in wallpaper, or if you were lucky, in sticky back plastic. Paper holders were adapted and covered soap powder boxes. Show boxes of the right size housed the cassette tapes.

LMS enabled internal decision making on school priorities, enabling often significant spending on quality equipment and staffing, especially if the school enjoyed a rising roll. "What would you like?" could replace "What do we need?"
Belt-tightening has been on school agendas for a while and may yet have time before the most difficult decisions have to be taken. Staff reduction decisions are always the most difficult for any school.

CPD could become a casualty, unless there are some changes in approach. To send a member of staff off site, to a central site for a conference could cost several hundred pounds, with supply cover, travel, the cost of the conference and perhaps food. It doesn't take long for even a generous budget to be spent.

It has often been stated that there is as much discrepancy in practice within a school as there is between schools. What would be the case if every teacher in the community was as good as the best and how could that be achieved?

What do you do, though, to address the constant feeling of busyness?

TIC; Team inside the community. Are you a talking establishment? It's well worth while looking at the mechanisms within the school that enable an appropriate level of discussion and information sharing that starts with induction practices and then continues. Has the school audited the skills of each member of staff to see where well-needed expertise lies? How are staff meetings and closure days used to support the dissemination of expertise? Is coaching time made available? Is expertise made available in written form? Is there a staff bookshelf, and is it actually used?

Short term additional "staffing" can become a reality within partnership arrangements with ITE providers, especially if final practice trainees are hosted. After a settling period, and a judgement of secure practice, the mentor can plan some time out of the classroom. Releasing staff in-house is a great deal less costly than sending them on a course.

TAC; team around the community. Do you talk outside you school; at all levels? It is really important for a school to recognise the limits of the internal expertise, and, when shared, this will become a reality. It is also essential not to feel alone in the enterprise of developing the school. Schools will develop to the level of the best, but, if the best is not as good as the best elsewhere, how can that expertise be accessed?

If the school works within a cluster, or a local academy group or federation, the expertise in one establishment could be deployed or purchased into a receiving school, to mutual benefit. This could be in the form of twilight sessions, as per the earlier model, or it could be purchased release to model and discuss aspects of practice. This is good CPD for the person delivering also, as they move into a training role.

In attending a number of Saturday conferences, Pedagogoo, TLT16 and #LearningFirst (Bath) it has struck me that teachers want to get better at their job. This might prove an appropriate model for some. The #teacher5aday group has organised, and is organising another weekend CPD "retreat".

There are many models that can begin to address development based on local expertise.

TOE; team of experts. How do you decide when you need a little extra? In some

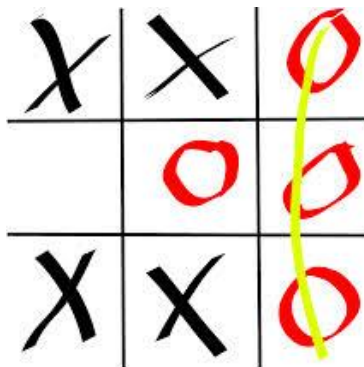
geographic areas, the availability of expertise may soon appear to be evaporated. At this point, or to make a significant impact on an aspect of school development, it may be opportune to buy in someone with acknowledged wider expertise. This could be from a local university, a local inspector, or one of the growing army of consultants. It is a case of “pay your money and take your chance”. The brief needs to be clear and concise and the expert has to have the skills to deliver. There won’t be many readers who have not sat through a training session that has not quite hit the mark.

Local clusters of schools, banding together, can create significantly greater budget for a one-off event, which may be much more cost effective.

When it comes down to it, though, there is a significant simplicity. CPD is communicating the knowledge from someone with acknowledged expertise to others with a need to develop. Making some quality time to talk is therefore paramount. This can start from sitting in a classroom with a cup of tea after school going through an idea with colleagues. It does need goodwill and teacher involvement and ownership of their own need to identify and incorporate their training needs.

Learning to teach is a life-long need. There is always a need to accommodate to change, from a move to another year group, another school, or another curricular adjustment.

Teachers need to remain learners. Learning should be a shared enterprise, or it could become three strikes and you’re out, of date...



Dialogue as CPD



Thoughts on mentoring as organisations; stop talking at, start talking with...

What if every teacher could learn from, and be as good as, the best in the school, with an extension into the local area or wider organisation (LA or MAT)? Teachers are full of great ideas. Shared, they take on another life, can be adapted and developed, then returned with interest.

One of my roles with a local Teaching Schools Alliance is working closely with mentors, including five formal sessions of training during the school year, supplemented, as needed, with personal support. In many ways this works extremely well.

The mentor is, in most cases, the class teacher, so the feedback loop is very tailored within each lesson, not reliant on a timed “drop in” for an observation. The role, in interpretation, can occasionally become a little formulaic, with judgements being more judgemental than developmental. In a training year, the latter has to be paramount. Judgements about capability have to be kept in mind, but, trainees are not the finished article, by any stretch of the imagination. Everyone has to start somewhere...

In reflecting on the first year of my own career, I am wondering if elements could be useful for institutional reflection.

In 1974, I left training college, armed with my “permit to teach”, having passed the three-year course of training. This let me start teaching in what was then called your probationary year. In the August of 1974, I received a letter from the Department of Education and Science welcoming me and informing me that qualified teacher status was contingent on my passing the probationary year.

That first year, I spent a term in a boy’s Secondary Modern school, mainly teaching science

successfully, but with additional teaching responsibilities for the ROSLA children, the Raising of the School Leavers Age group that had to be in school for an extra year, but who were not taking any exams at the end of the year. There was no curriculum and no support from the head of science who had no ROSLA groups, so it was very much trial and error with very challenging classes. The deputy heads were rarely seen, a couple of times to check on the quality of my teaching, with an “ok” at the end, but they were no use in curriculum support. It was colleagues in the science department with whom the probationers spoke in the tech rooms who offered some help and guidance. The hours were long and stressful, which, combined with little support became destructive. Plus ça change...

In January 1975, I moved to a local Primary school. In those days, there was no-one designated as a mentor, taking a supposedly key role in guiding and monitoring your development. You were a team member and were expected to be a team player, working and talking together, sharing the available resources and ideas. Everyone had something to offer and, as a result, the rest of the year went relatively smoothly. The principle was that sharing what you knew helped everyone. It was simply a sharing culture.

It is very hard to think that that class of children are in their mid-50s. I’ve met a few who stayed locally and they have done well in life, so I can’t have caused any permanent damage!

In addition to staff collaboration, there was a local teachers’ centre, with a dedicated lead, who would organise courses run by local teachers with acknowledged expertise that they were willing to share. These courses, all twilight, ran for between three and six weeks, so genuine background reflections into processes behind subjects and an opportunity to try out ideas supported deeper insights into what children could produce, especially if there were opportunities to share outcomes from the week. Some of this happened at our regular TGIF meetings, informal probationer chats over a bottle of beer at the teachers’ centre. It was a good way to unload and start the weekend and some of that group are still friends, some 43 years later.

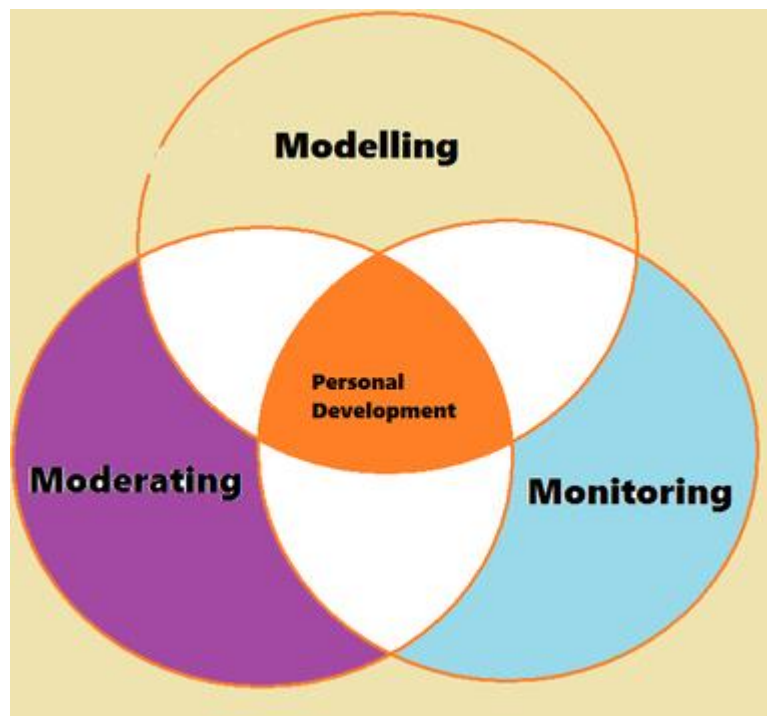
The driver to all this was ourselves, as self-developers. It was not required by external demand; certainly not the school head or deputy, simply a response to personal awareness of need to fill in inevitable gaps from initial training. I didn’t have a mentor, just colleagues who shared.

Today’s trainees and NQTs have a dedicated mentor. This is seen as a significant role and has been flagged up as a need within the most recent [Government consultation on QTS](#). Colleagues who currently take on mentor roles are usually senior members of staff, often SLT, with a range of competing responsibilities, some of which will inevitably interfere with planned time for discussion, observation and the myriad other requirements of supporting a trainee. Universities and TSAs pay receiving schools from the received fees to host trainees, so there is a pot of money available to facilitate meetings etc.

Trainees are also expected to show that they are self-developers (teacher standard 8), taking a full part in school life, working within school expectations (TS1) and behaviour systems (TS7) contributing, as possible, to year or subject planning (TS4), supporting wider school life, becoming colleagues, rather than just a trainee.

Mentoring is a multi-faceted role; I blogged this as

<https://chrischiversthinks.weebly.com/blog-thinking-aloud/mentoring-modelling-moderating-and-monitoring>



In many ways, modelling, monitoring and moderating can be done by a range of colleagues, according to their personal specialisms, with the accredited mentor providing a conduit to signpost the best advice. In this way, the whole organisation becomes the mentor “knowledge base”, from which to select the best provider.

Where schools regularly take trainees, it is a very good idea for the whole staff to receive briefings from the providers of their student teachers, so that they can work in concert to provide the best training base; each knowing that they have something to offer. This year’s NQT was last year’s trainee, so they can empathise with the workload; others can give of their specialist help. Every school has to reflect on the needs of “newbies”, both NQTs and those new to roles.

There appears to be a relatively young workforce currently in teaching. CPD for all is important, but is also an expensive element, with supply for release and course costs. How about a bit of self-help first? All of the following were, at some stage, a part of my career experience, especially within my headship.

- What about seeing internal sharing as first stage CPD, with colleagues sharing their practice, process as well as outcomes, to provide progressive descriptions that might begin to underpin descriptions of learner progress?
- What about staff meetings occasionally being simply sharing what's happening in classrooms, through alternating the venue to visit each other's rooms?
- If colleagues are sharing, they will have organised and clarified their thinking, in order to present. In doing so, they may well have revisited sources to be able to quote accurately. This research may well have resulted in questions that might stimulate discussions that, in themselves, increase the general understanding.
- How about occasional papers, think pieces, to stimulate thinking and further consideration ahead of staff meetings; moving discussion from reactive to developmental?
- Mentoring skills are the first steps in middle management; being able to harness the capacity across the organisation to best purpose.
- Specialists, especially in foundation subjects, can share the underlying developments in subjects, with essential "staging points" against which to make judgements. Collecting and collating outcomes across a school can provide essential reference points for others; the art of celebrating what's possible. This can become aspirational, but also guide the non-specialist to ask appropriate questions.
- Engaging in discussion about outcomes and processes, with interpretation into descriptions of progress, are essential to every classroom decision, from overviews and broad decisions to refined interactions.
- How about a book club, which could be expensive if supplying a copy to everyone, or a led book session, with one colleague each month sharing an education book that they have read? This could also develop with a fiction title or an author being shared. This latter idea could become a staffroom display, with colleague reviews encouraging others to have a read, and share with classes.

All the above can be classified as part of the general collegiate discussion. I would hazard that it is rarely considered as any form of CPD, which has become synonymous with "going on a course". These events, often costly, may have limited impact if they remain the property of the attendee. "Cascading" is often a hit or miss affair, unless it is timetabled into other meeting times. Reporting back, with a summary appropriate to the school needs would seem to be a minimum requirement after a day out of school that's cost perhaps £500 in total.

The essence of all education is communication. Collegiate, talking schools share good practice and ideas, to the advantage of the whole. Talk is relatively cheap CPD, unless you count the cost of a cuppa and a good biscuit or two.

Keep talking...



Chris Chivers @ChrisChivers2

Leaders; remember that you work through the efforts of the team.

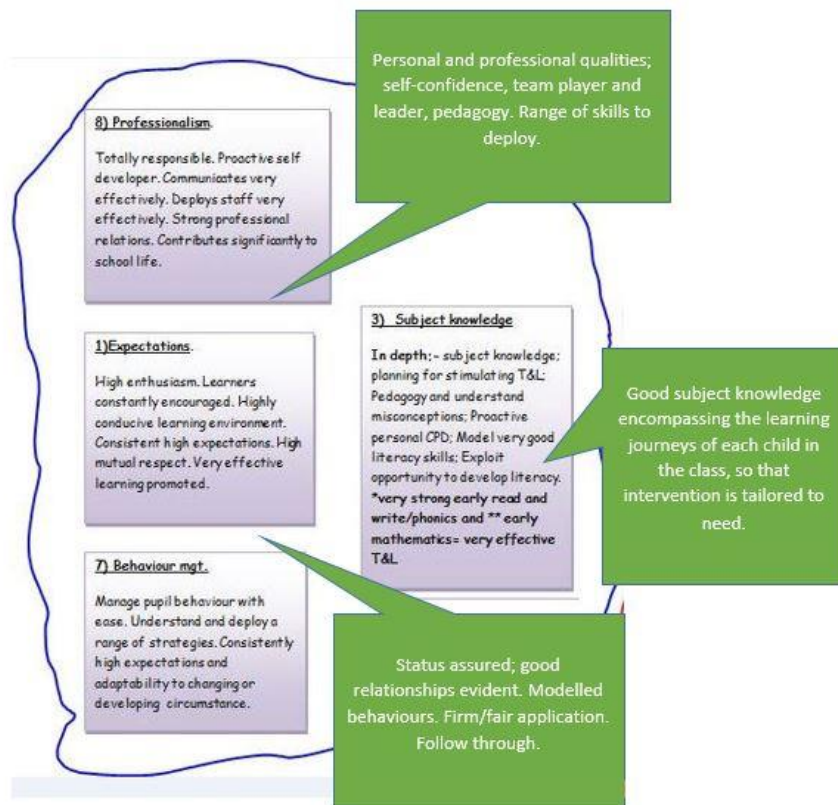
Team well-being is essential to success.

On mentoring schools

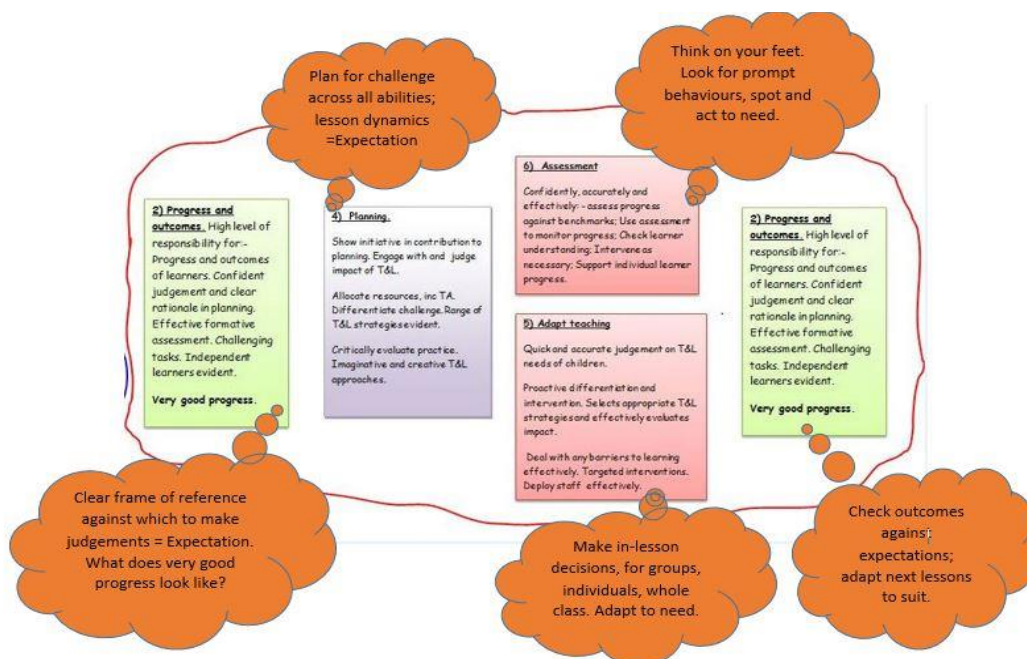
Looking out for the “newbies”.

As the term and the school year comes towards a close, staff have largely moved and been replaced, often with a newly qualified teacher, a newbie, fresh from their training. I’ve recently finished my final visits to School Direct trainees as a Link Tutor for one group and Quality Assurance for another. It is always a good thing to spend some time after an experience, to evaluate the process and the details that contribute to the whole, so that necessary tweaks can be made to improve the system for the future.

It was a feature of all the trainees, across both groups, that their standard of professionalism was extremely high. This I have explored in an earlier blog post, identifying Teacher Standards 8,7,1,3 as common features of early success; they have a professional demeanour, recognised by colleagues and children, enabling them to get across their ideas.



The more practical standards are the ones with which they grapple, as they embed significant variables that, at this moment in time, are still subject to much discussion in schools. These are 2,4, 6&5, all about the children; development, progress and outcomes, planning specific challenge with expectations, interacting (assessment) and adjusting this to evident need, to get to know the children better. In other words, the trainees don't quite know what they are looking for.



In my quality assurance report to one of the Teaching Schools' Alliances, I focused on the role of the mentor as a key element in addressing the issues that will be a part of the whole training year, especially where there is a need to undertake a short practice in an alternative Key Stage. I offer these thoughts here, before extending them a little.

An [earlier blog on mentoring](#) looked at it as a form of CPD.

The quality of mentoring can be a significant variable, both in terms of the personality and the teaching quality of the individual mentors, but also in the receiving school, as a whole, in their preparedness to support a developing teacher.

In the early stages, where quality induction is required, there is a need to explore the totality of education and to make sense of the whole, as it is evidenced in their host school; eg ethos, safeguarding, behaviour management, expectations, resource base, planning approaches, among many others. This wealth of information can be overwhelming, if not carefully managed, and should not rely on the trainee just to find out for themselves. Introductions to key personnel need to be made, with Maths and English managers and the SENCo, to familiarise the trainee with current issues.

The mentor (or a nominated colleague) may also have to act as the “tutor in residence”, able to support the academic aspects of the course; at least to be party to reflective discussions about the writing tasks.

The above does require a mentor programme to run alongside the trainee programme. If, as suggested, trainees were given time to discuss “papers” during their training days, these could then inform discussions with mentors, to gain a school perspective on the topic.

In discussion, it is clear that many mentors do not generally attend formal gatherings, in doing so, limiting the opportunity to develop a network. This is not a dissimilar picture in university mentor meetings. Some thought needs to be given to incentives to encourage attendance, or at least to discourage non-attendance.

Regular meetings with mentors, on a personal level, “mentoring the mentors”, would also support the STSA profile. Where University Link Tutors visit more regularly, it can seem that some schools are able to misinterpret the roles of different visiting representatives.

To summarise. Mentors need to be fully appraised of the training programme, the demands on themselves and the trainees from the Alliance and the University and be able to provide support that ensures a smooth training opportunity.

After a committee discussion yesterday, I took the thoughts one step further, by reflecting on the role of the receiving school, developing the whole school into a global mentoring system, rather than just relying on one colleague, although, for weekly discussions, this would still be the case.

This, to me, sits within a “Teaching School” Alliance; a collection of teaching schools, rather than a central Teaching School with satellite schools agreeing to take trainees. In this way, everyone becomes a mentor, additional CPD becomes an opportunity to reflect on practice and the central Teaching School could invite broader discussion within the group to explore the sharing of very successful practice.

We need high quality teachers, well supported at vulnerable times of their teaching careers.

The NQTs arriving in schools in September will not be the “finished article”. The newbies, transferring in from other schools may also be vulnerable. They will need support to settle, to organise and orientate themselves, to pick up the wide range of school systems in order to become effective colleagues. They need to get to know the children and the expectations that the school has of their progress during the year. They need to know the quality standards. These need to be effectively shared during induction, but also as a continuous activity. Induction could last the year, with regular meetings to support, enable downloading of problems, seeking solutions.

This is a school level need. Often, if a teacher is failing, it is the lack of colleague intervention that makes this harder to resolve. Teaching can be a solitary activity, but it is a team game. Everyone should be looking out for the newbies.

Let's make all schools Teaching Schools, committed to teacher development at all stages of their careers.

Developing mentors as in-house tutors

The past few years have seen a gradual increase in my work with mentors, through a variety of routes. There are common themes and some contextual nuances, but, at the centre is the significant importance of the mentor, whether for a trainee in initial teacher education, an NQT, RQT or perhaps coaching someone through a short term need.

This area of interest, therefore, was one that I was happy to share during Pedagoo Hampshire 2017, albeit as a stand-in speaker as a favour to Martyn Reah.

While there are some simple and straightforward expectations, the need to develop the professional thinking skills, as well as subject pedagogy, requires skills from the teacher that can [eventually lead to significant self-development](#).

Getting organised; staying prepared

Mentoring, modelling
and moderating, ITE
and NQTs



One year ago, September 2016, the government published a new document, in which it set out standards for mentors for Initial Teacher Training. many of these I would describe as "grandma sucking eggs", but, as experience has taught me, working with teachers, they come in all shapes sizes and experiences, from those who have actively volunteered for the role, purposefully to enhance their careers, to some who have suddenly found themselves as a mentor at the last minute.

To some extent, the standards are self-explanatory, so I have copied a version that we use at Winchester University, to set the scene for expectations. The quality of the professional relationship is key to a successful period in any class. How well the mentor can unpick aspects of practice, in order to share both the overview and the detail, without overloading the trainee, is an important element.

It is also worth mentioning that schools which choose to take on trainees of any description become [de facto teaching schools](#), with every member of staff potentially being asked for help or advice at some stage. Therefore, the best prepared schools are those where everyone knows that a trainee is starting, and expectations of each staff member, as well as an understanding of the phases of development.

The responsibilities for the trainee can be shared, with classroom mentors being supported by colleagues who may have recent study skills that might be useful to the trainee as they prepare written submissions for their PGCE or QTS status. Equally, using the available collective expertise can be useful in general discussion. Perhaps a colleague has completed a diploma, masters or some other qualification and can help with academic phrasing or referencing, perhaps offering to read the piece ahead of submission.

National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors**Standard 1 - Personal qualities**

Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and understand how to support a trainee through initial teacher training

The mentor should:

- Be approachable, make time for the trainee, and prioritise meetings and discussions with them;
- use a range of effective interpersonal skills to respond to the needs of the trainee;
- offer support with integrity, honesty and respect;
- use appropriate challenge to encourage the trainee to reflect on their practice; and
- support the improvement of a trainee's teaching by modelling exemplary practice in planning, teaching and assessment.

Standard 2 – Teaching

Support trainees to develop their teaching practice in order to set high expectations of all pupils and to meet their needs

The mentor should:

- support the trainee in forming good relationships with pupils, and in developing effective behaviour and classroom management strategies;
- support the trainee in developing effective approaches to planning, teaching and assessment;
- support the trainee with marking and assessment of pupil work through moderation or double marking;
- give constructive, clear and timely feedback on lesson observations;
- broker opportunities to observe best practice;
- support the trainee in accessing expert subject and pedagogical knowledge;
- resolve in-school issues on the trainee's behalf where they lack the confidence or experience to do so themselves;
- enable and encourage the trainee to evaluate and improve their teaching; and
- enable the trainee to access, utilise and interpret robust educational research to inform their teaching.

Standard 3 – Professionalism

Set high expectations and induct the trainee to understand their role and responsibilities as a teacher

The mentor should:

- encourage the trainee to participate in the life of the school and understand its role within the wider community;
- support the trainee in developing the highest standards of professional and personal conduct;
- support the trainee in promoting equality and diversity;
- ensure the trainee understands and complies with relevant legislation, including that related to the safeguarding of children; and
- support the trainee to develop skills to manage time effectively.

Standard 4 – Self-development and working in partnership

Continue to develop their own professional knowledge, skills and understanding and invest time in developing a good working relationship within relevant ITT partnerships.

The mentor should:

- ensure consistency by working with other mentors and partners to moderate judgements; and
- continue to develop their own mentoring practice and subject and pedagogical expertise by accessing appropriate professional development and engaging with robust research.

National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors

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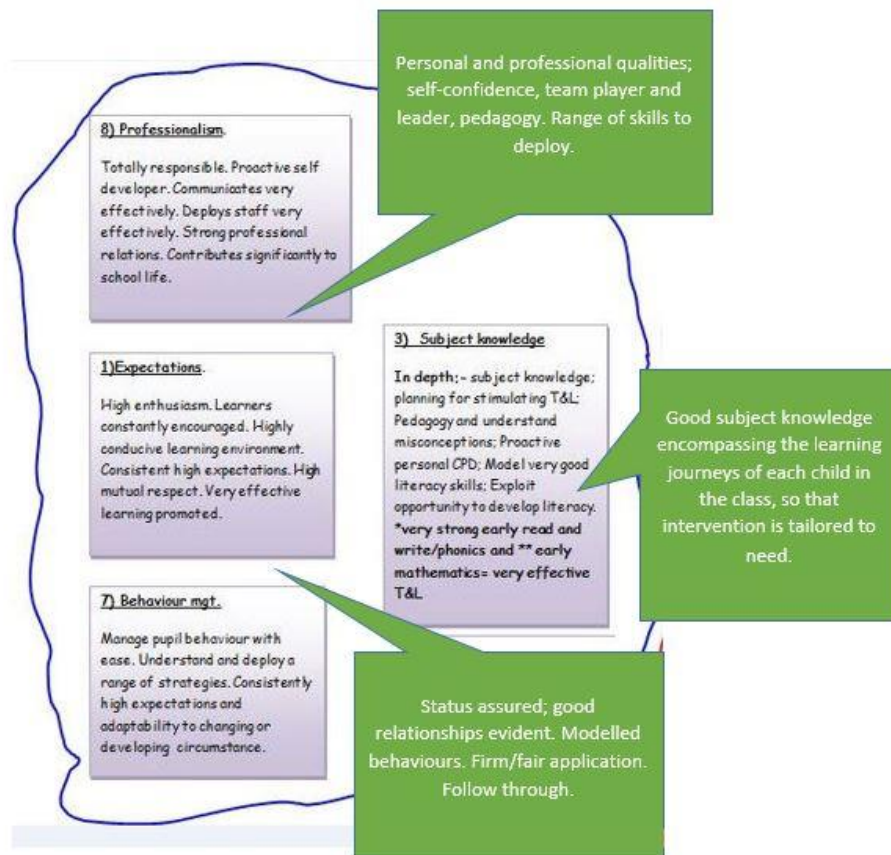
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There are two distinct areas where there are likely to be different needs for support. The first is in the personal capacity of the trainee. The four standards, 8, 3, 7 and 1 are likely to be the essence of the starter; professionalism, subject knowledge, behaviour expectations and general expectations of how the classroom should be running.

Professional relationships, between the mentor and the trainee, trainee and teaching assistants, wider staff involvement, parents and children, will become self-evident, from the very outgoing to the excessively shy; I've met both extremes and every shade in between. The green boxes in the diagram below seek to summarise what might be seen in a

potentially successful trainee. While they are self-explanatory, any suggestion of concern, in any of these areas, is likely to raise questions in a mentor's mind. These questions might, in themselves, become limiting factors. In this regard, the mentor has to unpick their own personal biases, in order to interact professionally. However, concerns are concerns and may eventually have to be addressed. We are talking basic teacher capabilities.

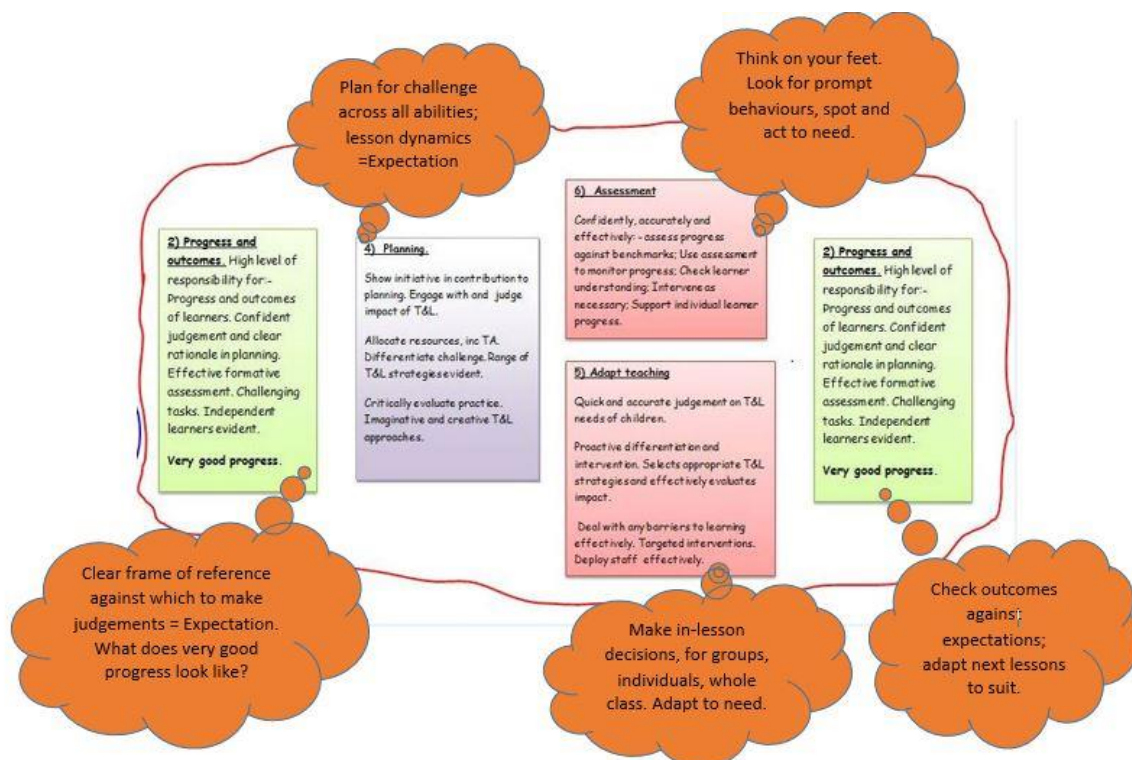


The second layer of teacher standards are likely to be more challenging, in that these are the practical aspects of teaching and learning; standards 2, 4, 6&5, leading back to 2. Progress and outcomes, leading to detail in planning of teaching and learning expectations, with in-lesson and post-lesson judgements (assessments) and adaptations to initial planning, leading to good outcomes that demonstrate progress across a period of time, eg week, fortnight, month.

This is a significantly important area. A trainee will have had very little experience longitudinally. They may have had anything from a few weeks' experience to HLTA over time, but they may still need to get to grips with what "good outcomes" look like and the right decisions to make in order to promote further progress. Even an experienced teacher changing year groups or changing school settings may find this challenging. Moderation activity, aka talking about what the children are doing, between the trainee and the teacher is essential, to enable the mentor to guide decision making and develop baseline expectations. Visiting the year above and the year below is also a useful guide, to see where children have come from and what they are expected to be able to do the following year.

The baselines will, in effect, guide in-lesson decisions. A clear idea of the journey of the lesson and the outcome expectations enable appropriate decisions to be made, including the use of sharing time, working alongside an individual or group to support their working approach.

reflection within and outside the lesson guides decisions about subsequent learning.



Planning for development over time is essential to avoid elements being missed. Trainees, on whatever route, have a mountain of paperwork to keep, to be able to show their development against the teacher standards. This can be aided by forward thinking and ensuring that structural elements of the programme are embedded in the timetable, so that they can be achieved, hopefully in timely fashion. In many ways the elements are articulated in the two slides.

Week	Activity	Possible Evidence
1	<p>Orientate yourself. Walk the school. Find the resources and essential policies. Meet the "people resources", to whom reference can be made.</p> <p>Get to know the class. Work with groups, as a participant observer, and as a lead, getting to know the evident individual needs.</p> <p>Read and understand the half term plan, the weekly planning format and join the planning meeting(s)</p>	<p>Notes on policies Who's who of school? Specific and new resources</p> <p>Tracking documents Available plans Individual child notes</p>
2 development weeks	Working from the weekly plan, develop a teaching plan, based around your strengths. See an example below, as a guide.	<p>Your professionalism should be noted (TS8)</p> <p>You should be able to evidence standards 2, 3, 4, 6&5 from your practice, captured within your weekly reviews.</p>
3	ditto	Class control should be developing, showing TS 7 and high expectations TS1
4 Consolidation and enhancement	<p>Taking a significant part, or leading 3 out of 5 English and Maths lessons. Adding topic areas, <u>Geog, Hist, Science, Art.</u></p> <p>Understanding Music, PE and MFL</p>	Your annotated exemplars, discussed with your <u>classteacher</u> should begin to evidence deeper understanding of progress and outcomes
5	ditto	Repeat all the above
6	ditto	ditto
7		ditto

Using this proforma as a checklist might ensure that each partner knows exactly what should be done each week, so nothing is left to chance and gets missed, leading to a backlog of activity later in the experience. Variation due to the vagaries of school life should be expected and addressed within a revised timetable.

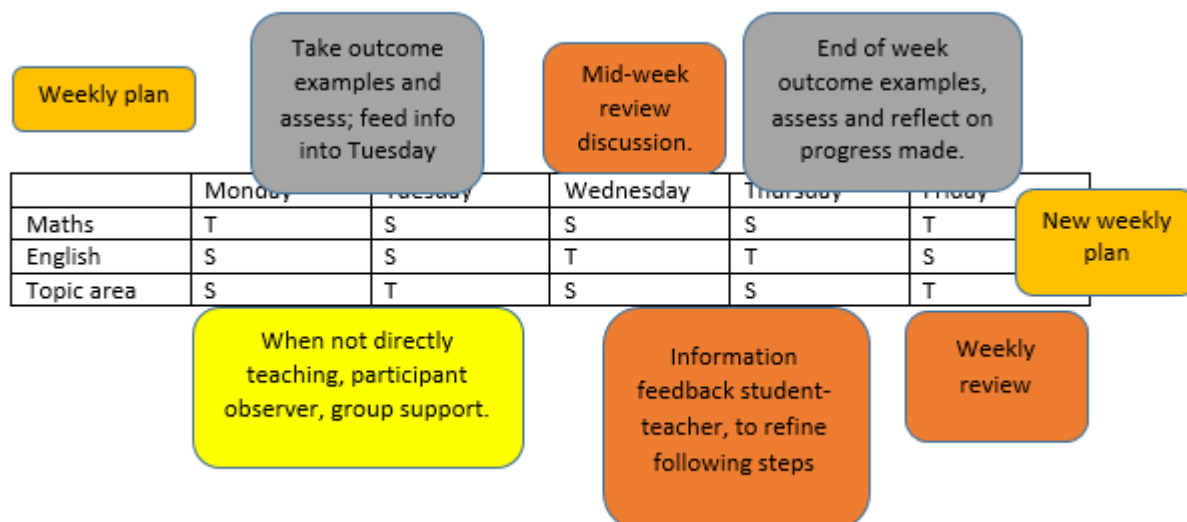
Planning each week; generic guidance. Will vary from week to week, but needs to be actively kept under consideration. There are no real short cuts to thinking as a teacher.

Trainee	Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare your weekly timetable and teaching plans for discussion with your mentor. • Timetable should include observation time of other teachers and year groups. • Plan and teach agreed lessons, using an agreed planning format. One lesson will be observed by the mentor. • If not leading a lesson, support individual and group working. • Teaching (contact) load 50-70% across the course of the term. • Evaluate your lessons, outcomes for the children and you. • Mark any work you have set. • Collect and annotate learning outcomes in <u>Maths</u> and English for your case study children. • Prepare your weekly review for discussion with your mentor. • Forward a copy of the weekly review to the SCITT office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate trainee involvement with aspects of school life (extra-curricular activities, parents' meetings, working with other Teachers). • Ensure trainee meets other professionals e.g. support staff, nursery nurses, <u>SENCo</u>, to develop awareness of teams involved in schools and settings • Negotiate with other staff to ensure trainee observes the teaching of a range of subjects and different age groups • Observe and give developmental feedback to trainee. Follow up each week on target areas. • Meet with SCITT staff as needed; attend mentor training sessions. • Meet trainee on a weekly basis to discuss progress. • Ask trainee to feed-back on what they have used non-teaching time for professional development. • Contact SCITT Office in case of any query or problem regarding the school experience • Talk to trainee about reflective writings.

Trainees have to understand issues of learning over time. Working closely with medium term plans, over one or two weeks, it is possible to timetable periods where the trainee leads, is an observer or participant observer working with a group, feeding lesson outcome reflections to the teacher if passing on the next lesson or receiving such detail when taking over. This professional dialogue acts as prompts to dynamic thinking. Selecting work to annotate and investigate through the week allows more detailed discussion at the end of each week in preparation for the following week.

Within lessons, it is fine if a mentor feels the need to act as a "parrot on the shoulder"; having a quiet word in the trainee's ear to prompt timely action. If the school has a system of microphone and earpiece, this could be an alternative means.

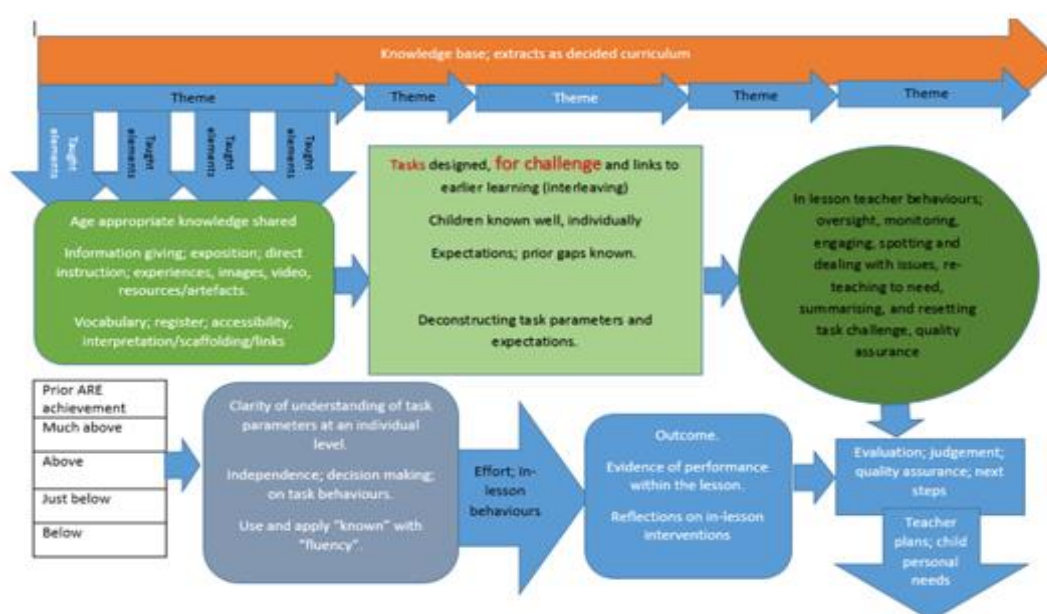
Videoring the lesson can provide the basis for post-lesson analysis and discussion between mentor and trainee.



The "busyness" of a classroom, especially with younger children can sometimes prove daunting to early career trainees. The mentor has the role of unpicking what is going on within the complexity, so that the trainee can start to focus on specific areas, based on their mentor model and also from feedback on their own practice.

Something as seemingly simple as in-lesson transitions can be the point where a trainee finds limitations in their practice.

The difficulty for an inexperienced trainee is that a good teacher can make teaching look easy. They may need guided observations to be able to tease out the key themes, then begin to delve into the nuances. A mentor "talking their thinking", making their actions overt, might seem an odd thing to propose, but it can be sufficient to guide the trainee within the dynamics of the classroom.

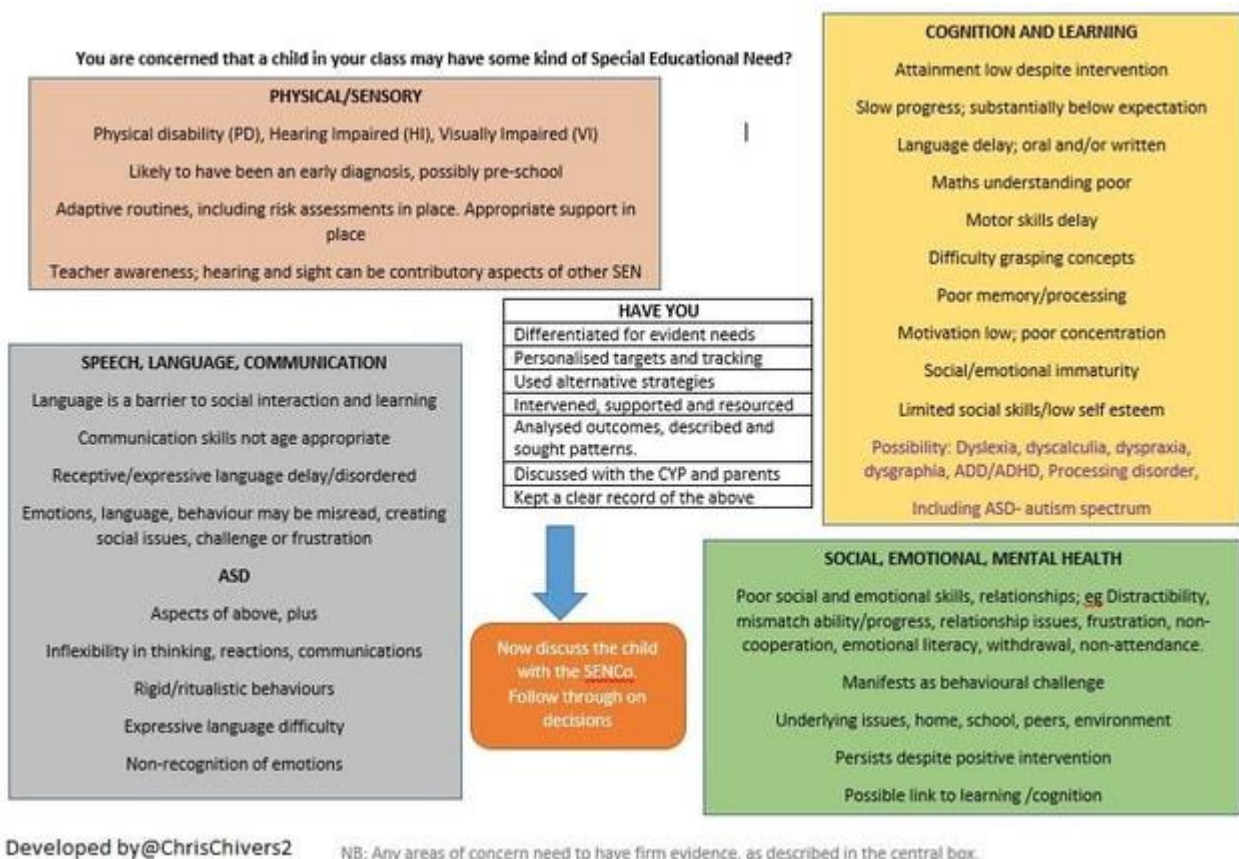


Knowing the children well is a key aspect of success. I would advise mentors to regularly ask their trainee to identify a couple of children and to give a short verbal summary of what they know, as if they were talking to a parent or perhaps writing a short report with a parent in mind.

Getting to know the children in your class better; think of the cycle, not just the components.

Teaching standards	Title	Descriptor
2	Progress and Outcomes	Knowledge of child development. Knowledge of specific classes. Knowledge of specific individuals. Starting points. Baselines. Assessments. Prior attainment. Targets? Records Transition? Transfer of expectations/ work levels?
4	Planning.	Long, medium, short term. Overviews, leading to day to day plans. Short term- challenge and expectation. Challenge =Growth Mindset= differentiation. Target setting, global, group, individual=expectations.
6	Assessment	Summative assessments= baselines, plus guide to expectation within challenges. Every lesson. In lesson thinking; meeting, exceeding, or not reaching expectation?
5	Adaptation	In lesson intervention to evidence; class, group, individual. Dylan William; Responsive teaching.
	Progress and Outcomes	Review, in lesson, <u>AfL</u> , evaluations. Marking, feedback. Tracking. Baseline expectations= better than before. Class, department, school exemplars. Excellence walls?

Knowing the individual needs of some children will be significant. Any child on the special needs register should be highlighted to the trainee, but they should also have the skill to spot developing needs in children who may not yet have been recognised as having a need. They need a framework, based on the 2014 SEN changes and I would offer the diagram below as a useful aide memoire, to be able to guide their thinking and provide the framework for a professional discussion with their mentor and the SENCo.



Reflection should become part and parcel of everything a trainee does, within the classroom and outside. Everything may be new, subject to internal chaos, needing sorting into internal "folders", to be used as appropriate when there is a need.

Reflection, supported by opportunities to discuss their thinking, will ensure that the trainee, over time, becomes a thinking professional colleague. Some have one year to achieve this. It is incumbent on the school, through the mentoring and colleague support, to ensure that they are led along this path. It should not be left to chance.

At the end of the day, schools and mentors are creating the next generation of teachers, perhaps for themselves, but certainly on behalf of the education system. It is a responsibility, but it is also a privilege to see any trainee develop into an independent colleague.

For this reason, I'd like to see some kind of accreditation available to mentors, to be able to transition to becoming in-house tutors, on a par with university colleagues, responsible for in-practice pedagogy.

Evaluate and discuss; questions to consider, after a lesson, and in your weekly review.

This should be considered for both the pupil's learning and your professional and pedagogy progress.

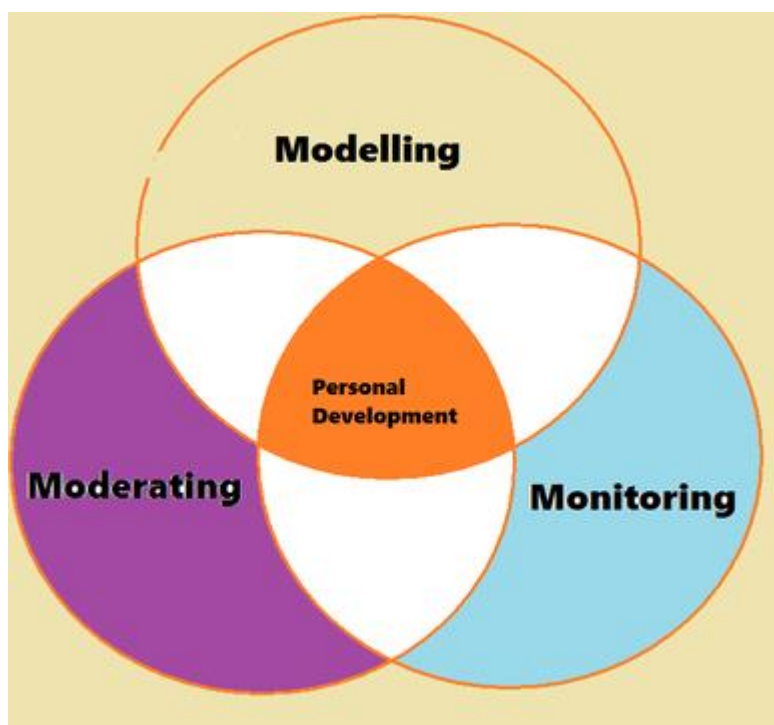
Annotate your lesson plan, especially noting points where in-lesson decisions/changes to intention occurred.

Link the evaluation of a lesson to the lesson plan, but avoid rewriting the plan.

The review should be analytical.

- What went well? How do I know it went well?
- What did I do to enable this learning to happen?
- What was less successful?
- What **evidence** am I using to support my evaluation?
- What am I going to do next?
- What have I learned about myself, this lesson?

Mentoring; modelling, monitoring and moderating.



In looking at teacher development, the elements of the title would seem to be significant. They are, to some extent exemplified in the national standards for in-school mentors that were published in the autumn of 2016. These can read as “grandma sucks eggs”, but cover personal qualities, teaching model, professional exemplar and to show that they are self-developing in their role. They sometimes need to be guide, counsellor, advocate, overseer

and judge, sometimes all rolled into one.

While a few individuals have sufficient confidence and self-assurance, the majority of teachers in my experience have valued opportunities to work alongside others whose expertise they value, either in formal sessions sharing understandings or informally, through classroom visits for observation or time to chat.

ITE trainees should have, or create, dedicated time to visit other classes, as well as to watch their mentors, to gain an idea of the approaches being modelled within their practice school.

Whether formal or informal, the sharing of, or modelling of expertise is a form of mentoring.

If the “expert” visits the class of the “mentee”, they can monitor or audit the classroom provision and offer coaching advice about improvements. So mentoring, moderation and monitoring are three points on a circle, or the intersection on a Venn diagram, with the centre being the point of personal improvement, where all three come together.

The model of mentor sharing is worth exploring. It takes time to develop descriptors of working practices in such a way as to impact on the practice of another. The receiver has to develop a mental model of the classroom situation being described, including the classroom layout, the storage, availability and accessibility of relevant resources and the challenge tasks that were shared.

This would be in addition to the detail of how essential information was shared, through direct instruction, dialogue, dvd, imagery or artefacts to explore or text material to read, ahead of interactive approaches.

The mentor, in visiting the mentee for an observation may well focus on these initial aspects, as they are the structural elements of the lesson, in the hands of the teacher through their planning. If elements of the structure needed to be tweaked for other lessons, this advice is relatively easily given.

Timely intervention support by a mentor can prompt mentees to take action at an appropriate time. The reason for this and exploration of the consequences of taking the action can be explored, as well as the opposite scenario. I don’t mean the mentor calling out to the mentee to do something, as this is undermining, but rather a quiet word in the ear, so that the mentee can retain status.

The mentor is likely to be able to “tick off” the professional standards as the lesson progresses, based on the teacher status and relationships with the class and any additional adults, covering standards 8, 7 and 1. The order and organisation of the planning is embedded in standard 4, while the mentee subject knowledge (3) is likely to be evident in the introductory elements, where they share essential information to children in a form that

is appropriate, and pitched to the age and needs of the group.

The lesson pitch, including the quality of task challenges evidences standard 2.

While the lesson progresses, the mentee will be listening to interactions, questioning, scaffolding, modelling to explore the detail of supportive feedback or adaptations to the original tasking to take account of the emerging evidence of misconception or lack of understanding. This could be at an individual, group or class level, with lesson interruptions to highlight or share developing concerns within the learning. It is often the close details of the lesson that determines the quality of the outcome from the learners.

Understanding what “good” looks like as an outcome, is an essential tool to support teacher judgement. In the early stages of a career, this might be a little less secure, but, through exposure to a wide range of outcomes, this develops greater security, especially if supported by moderation activities with another acting as mentor.

Monitoring exists on a number of levels. The interaction with the mentee’s lesson allow for both developmental and judgemental commentary. Working with ITE trainees, while for the majority of their school experiences these will be developmental, en route, for individuals, evidence has to be faced of significant deficits in their practice or their professional approach. On such occasions the trainee may well require a career discussion to decide their future routes. ITE providers have a responsibility to the profession as a whole, to quality assure all trainees. There will be a range of competences within any cohort, but there has to be a basic level of competence to be determined as employable.

Competence can become an issue for serving teachers, although this is rare. Processes are clearly articulated in personnel documentation and it is incumbent on the school to quality assure the process leading to (hopefully) addressing and remediating the identified issues. A note of concern on an ITE route serves as a beginning point for developmental dialogue. Mentoring, moderation and monitoring are the three parts of supported personal development. They are, for the most-part a shared experience, done with and through, rather than to. If handled with care, the mentee benefits. If it is too onerous a process, or perceived as top-down judgement, it may not support general improvement, only focus in a small target area.

Like many things in life, mentoring is often a judgement call. This has to be acknowledged as occasionally flawed; it is a human system. For that reason, ITE providers have quality assurance mechanisms, through visiting Link Tutors or specific tutors responsible for Quality Assurance and for mentor development. I am lucky enough to be undertaking all three roles for different providers, so can see the picture from a variety of roles.

Like any learning situation, it is a case of identify, address, check. If done in a professional manner, everyone benefits, including the mentor, whose person-management skills are enhanced through undertaking the role. They also reflect very deeply on their own practice

through watching others. The whole system benefits.

Developing another develops yourself. Everyone should have and become a mentor to another. Giving quality feedback and advice is a powerful development tool, for both giver and receiver.

Mentoring and apprentice teachers



“Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.”
– E.M. Forster

Schools Week, on 27th January 2016, [ran a story by Freddie Whittaker](#), about Government plans outlined by Jonathan Slater, the DfE Permanent Secretary, to introduce a post graduate scheme, to be called an apprenticeship route into teaching. This is being designed to run in line with the apprenticeship levy, soon to be introduced into schools, top-slicing funds to then be claimed back if apprentice teachers are developed. There is some discussion whether this will replace the current School Direct route.

Post-grad routes into teaching cost money, whether PGCE or School Direct, with the latter occasionally offering a few candidates a salaried route. The majority pay the £9k university fee and fund their living. It will be interesting to discover whether the apprenticeship is a salaried route and whether university fees are paid by the school, the Government or the trainee.

Trainees currently have to pass an English and Maths test before starting training, are required to have at least ten days in-school experience before their compulsory interview.

Current routes provide periods of training, interspersed with in-school experience, with clear guidance on what should be experienced within these periods. The training has to be at graduate level, whether in a university setting or a school-based approach. Trainees, on both routes, have assignments set by universities which are marked by university staff.

Both routes have systems of Quality Control, with external staff monitoring the quality of experience being offered. This is in addition to in-school quality controls, where trainees are supported by mentors and senior school staff.

There is a current need for teachers undertaking training for teaching, that experience must be had across two key stages. This can mean, in Primary, key stage one and two separate experiences, in two different settings. One is the substantial setting, the other is a minimum of six weeks experience.

But, there is always going to be variability in a human system.

- Selection of trainees, will depend on the quality of the people available.
- Will potential new trainees be subject to interview and have to pass the skills tests, as now?
- The training sessions will vary with the person leading the session.
- Mentoring can vary widely, from limited to extensive. Mentors can vary from untrained to Masters level training.
- Schools as a whole range in preparation. By taking a trainee, they become a de facto training school, with every member of staff taking a training role in developing the trainee.
- The variability of school settings can be the cause of concern with the second, shorter experience, where the trainee has to demonstrate quality skills rapidly.

This then raises questions.

- Who will select the potential apprentices as trainees?
- If individual schools, how will quality selection be assured?
- Will they be subject to interviews and the skills tests as now?
- Who will provide the training sessions, at the appropriate level?
- Is the school prepared as a whole staff to undertake training of an apprentice?
- Will there be a nominated senior training member of staff, with status and time to oversee and coordinate the process, including regular developmental and quality control observations?
- Who will sign off on achievement?
- Will there then be the NQT year as now?

If an apprenticeship route into teaching is to be successful, therefore, it will need several new layers of bureaucracy, in the same way as should exist for all other routes into teaching. This would need to be at national and regional level, linked to the available universities. There would need to be a coordinated training army of teacher mentors, for subject specific and pedagogic training, together with secretarial backup to ensure that training spaces were available to need. There would need to be management training, as quality control and to have specific staff designated as coordinators. Mentors would have to have time off-timetable, to be able to undertake training and also to create quality development time to work with the trainees.

If future teachers are to be trained in-school, starting as apprentices, then the current situation of every school creating their own systems across all aspects of pedagogy would also need to be questioned. At a recent meeting with SD mentors, I asked each to describe their current approach to assessment. Within nine mentors there were seven systems, including four variations on the local County scheme. This, in itself, causes trainees difficulty in their second experience, as they have to get to grips with significant system change, as well as new children and current expectations of them. They are far less nuanced in their decisions on the second experience.

Mind you, the same could be said of many teachers changing schools in the current climate. It's not surprising that there is so much talk of burn-out and workload issues. Ever changing systems add to the day job considerably.

As I wrote in an earlier blog, [everyone has to start somewhere](#). It's a truism, but, if a new generation is to take on the mantle of becoming teachers, the systems that lead to them doing so have to be clear and understandable, on order for them to be enacted successfully. It cannot be left to chance. There is too much at stake; someone's livelihood and children's life experiences.

The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.

Steven Spielberg

A parrot on the shoulder



The past couple of weeks have seen me working with ITE trainees and Teaching Assistants (TAs). There are interesting parallels with both groups.

One is starting a process that will lead to QTS, under mentor/classteacher supervision, the

other is working in a classroom under teacher direction.

One begins to assume responsibility for the whole class, including planning for learning, after a period of induction and preliminary training, the other may have autonomy while working with a group, to address issues arising for learners.

A designated HLTA may assume some time-limited classroom responsibility, if directed by the head.

Both are acting, to some degree, as a teacher, with the classteacher/head taking overall responsibility. It has long been a head's responsibility to decide who is a right and proper person to be in front of a class.

There is inevitably a responsibility upon the classteacher to quality assure the actions of either the trainee or the TA. In-lesson interaction is a vital ingredient.

In the case of the trainee teacher, I have advised mentors, who, by and large are the classteachers, to become what I have termed "the parrot on the shoulder" approach. This involves making timely decisions that result in a quiet word in the trainee's ear to take some specific action. In other words, providing appropriate prompts that ensure the growing awareness of the trainee to the complexities of the classroom environment. I remember a conversation with Graham Newell, of Iris Connect, discussing the use of technology. I had envisaged the possibility of the trainee with an earpiece and the mentor with a microphone, really guiding with in-ear advice. A simple word in the ear may be all that is needed!

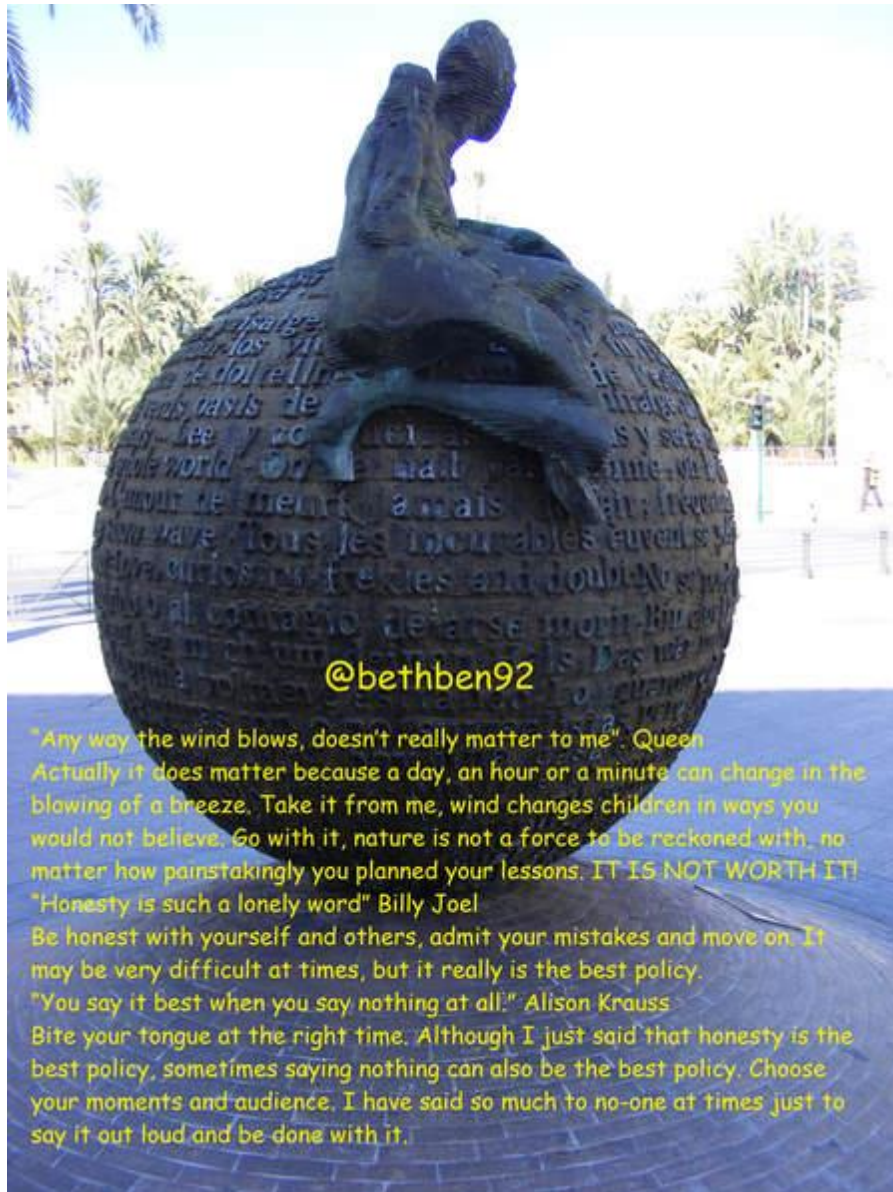
In the case of TAs, even if they are given responsibility for a group or an individual, these groupings should always operate under the teacher's guidance. Classroom observations often show that when on task, teachers may rarely interact with the TA group or the TA during the lesson. If this becomes a norm, it can mean that the teacher has less and less contact with specific groups. Oversight and interaction are key, if children are to make the progress desired. Some kind of feedback loop should be integrated into the relationships.

The mentor role is an interesting one, in guiding and training both the ITE trainee and a TA. A second piece of advice that I gave the mentors was the "talk your thinking", making actions clear, to both the children and the adults, making links overt, to avoid ambiguity. This does require the mentor/classteacher to have a very clear rationale for what they are doing, in order to explain this through the lesson.

The whole could of course be simplified to valuing adult interaction and professional talk within every lesson. By incorporating a trainee or a TA into a classroom, the team ethic needs to be secure, the team leadership and guidance falls to the senior professional, the class teacher, whose role is organiser, guide, mentor and quality assurance. Therefore every teacher is now becoming a manager in some form, responsible for the actions of others.

Having a TA or a trainee does not ensure an easy load, but a well-rehearsed team can work

The key is quality talk...



Thinking a little more about teacher thinking.

to know is key. Where any teacher reaches a point where it is their own knowledge that is a barrier to children's progress, this must be addressed urgently. In the first years, this is likely to be a constant need, especially if there is a change of year-group, or perhaps school, where the new context has different schemes. This puts inevitable pressures on new teachers, so high quality mentoring and in-school documentation should be available for everyone.

Teachers get to know their children, to varying degrees, depending on their contact through the week, but they are trained to understand learner development through the age range. Primary teachers spend 25 hours a week with their classes; a secondary teacher may see each class for two hours a week. The difference in interaction time embeds different levels of nuance of knowledge of the children. Both phases of teacher should be aware of the whole achievement range of their age range. One tweet today, reporting on Singapore education called this "horizon thinking" ... what came before and what comes afterwards...

They ensure that behaviour ensures learning can take place. Working within agreed and clearly articulated school approaches, maintenance of behaviours that allow learning is fundamental.

They will have ordered the agreed curriculum into discrete themes, topics or programmes of study. Order and organisation are essential to progression in learning. Some topic areas "feed forward" into successive topics. Therefore, what is now often being called "interleaving" can be planned, although often it is recall through circumstance and a spiral curriculum.

They order and organise the coherence of their plans over a known timescale, ensure that classroom and the resources for learning support the learning proposed. The use of space and resources are in teacher control. How furniture is arranged to suit teaching, and resources are available for easy access and return, embeds an element of control, reducing some potential causes of behaviour issues.

Their plans seek to match the needs of the subject with the needs of the children, providing appropriate challenge to all abilities. This is the first stage of "differentiation", which used to be termed "match and challenge", with challenge being the most significant aspect. What are children being challenged to think about, talk about and attempt to do?

They plan learning over a timescale to ensure a dynamic is established which fully engages learners, in and out of school, and assures the imparting of a body of knowledge derive from the wealth of local and wider information and experiences. Spiral curricula, interleaving, home tasks, "flipped learning", working memory, long term memory, practice, rehearsal all have a part to play over time.

An example...

ANNUAL PLAN FOR YEAR GROUP				Year 4		TEACHER					
TIME SCALE WEEKS	TOPIC TITLE	LEAD SUBJECT: H,G,Sc,BT	MATHS - practical opportunities	ENGLISH	IT **	DT (support- RC)	ART	RE	MUSIC (RW)	PE HCC (Indoor) (PG)	SCHEME Games/ Swimming
2.5 4/9-19/9	Story Maps	English/Art	Place value Money/+ -	Story planning Chronology & setting/poetry	Keyboard skills Save/print	Poetry scrolls	Story maps - penell	Trees		Balance	Football
5 22/9-24/10	Insulators/ Conductivity. Forces/Elect.	Science	Measures Shape & space X +	Recount/letter Narrative order Character dev.	Word Art Power point Roamer	Design and make 'catapult'	Pen & wash Pastels	Trees		Balance	Football
1 3/11-7/11	Habitats: Autumn/ Winter	Science	money Data	*Alphabetically ordered/information text	Clip art Dig.cam scanner	3D shadow box	*Close observational drawing Colour mixing/ shading	Angels		Dance	Hockey
4 10/11-5/12	Space/ Light/ Sound	Science	Fractions/dec + - Time	Book reviews Onomatopoeic poetry, instructions	Power point			Angels		Dance	Hockey
2 8/12-19/12	Angels at Christmas	RE		Reports/ articles	Word art			Angels		Dance	Hockey

They create tasks appropriate to the challenge, with an understanding of the subsequent developmental stages of the learning, so that by engaging with the learners while on task, they can guide and support their developing understanding. Task challenge can embed independence of thought, planning and action, grit and resilience through reflection/evaluation, revision as a group(team) or individually. An engaged teacher spots needs, coaching and teaching to need. Compare with a PE lesson elements; apply in other subjects.

They ensure that any input gets across the essential information on which the lesson is to be founded, through a variety of means, which are enhanced by the availability of in-class ICT facilities. Exposition has always been a significant part of all teaching. The teacher at the front, speaking clearly and articulately, directly, explicitly, using a variety of imagery to support, video, modelling with concrete resources or through diagrams, engaging with evident audience need in timely manner. That technologies are available, e.g. visualisers, to make this exposition and modelling even more overt, should mean knowledge sharing of a higher quality.

Teachers are reflective storytellers, have a broad subject vocabulary that enables subtle retelling with appropriate links made at different levels of need, with a high degree of audience awareness.

They interact with outcomes, orally in class and in writing after the lesson, while marking books. They are constantly making judgements or assessments, on an individual, group or class level. Within lessons, teachers are audience aware, looking for signs that imply lack of understanding. They ask questions, closed to elicit discrete knowledge, but also open ended to allow broader thinking, explanation or articulation of thoughts.

They use the outcomes as new reference points against which to plan the next steps. Outcomes offer another layer of reflection on assimilation of learning, with two layers of response, teacher, what needs to be further addressed, child, what do I need to do to improve? The one potentially impacts on the next lesson, the other might simply be feed forward notes for consideration in subsequent work. Teachers talk now of whole class feedback. If a teacher notices, because of a lesson, that a large proportion of the class don't "get it", the next step has to be a revision to secure that learning. 'Twas ever thus. Equally,

by identifying a group with need, to offer challenge to the secure group, enabling detailed remodelling to another, bringing them up to speed, would appear sensible.

Teachers add broader value to schools in many, many ways. Working in teams, subject, year group, whole school, thinking, working and occasionally playing together, the team ethic has an impact on daily school life through personal interactions, setting a positive tone among the adults. Some offer specialist clubs or other interests, including subject expertise to the benefit of the whole.

They undertake personal CPD that enhances their practice. Starting as high-quality thinkers, most teachers are life-long learners, so engage with each other to share expertise, formally or more often, informally. Many attend local events, through subject groups and cluster initiatives, perhaps travelling to specialist conferences, in school time, or, as is currently the case, to a plethora of volunteer organised conferences, Teachmeets, TLT, Pedagoo, ResearchEd, Northern (southern) Rocks, Primary Rocks, Reading/Writing Rocks... Equally, a number also interact via social media, such as Twitter, which then acts as a conduit into conferences.

Teaching requires a collegiate approach to thinking and self-development. One starts as a novice and assimilates information from many sources, creating a sense of self that contributes to professional confidence. Expertise develops over time, but, as in all learning, there is always a little more that can be found.

Mentoring and Coaching

The words coaching and mentoring seem to be regularly passing through my experience at the moment, partly as I am responsible for training mentors within a Teaching School Alliance and in my role as a university link tutor, but they also passed through a presentation by a colleague at Winchester University.

The role of a coach or mentor is focused on the person whom they are seeking to develop. The University example drew from sporting situations, where the guiding person is regularly seen as a coach.

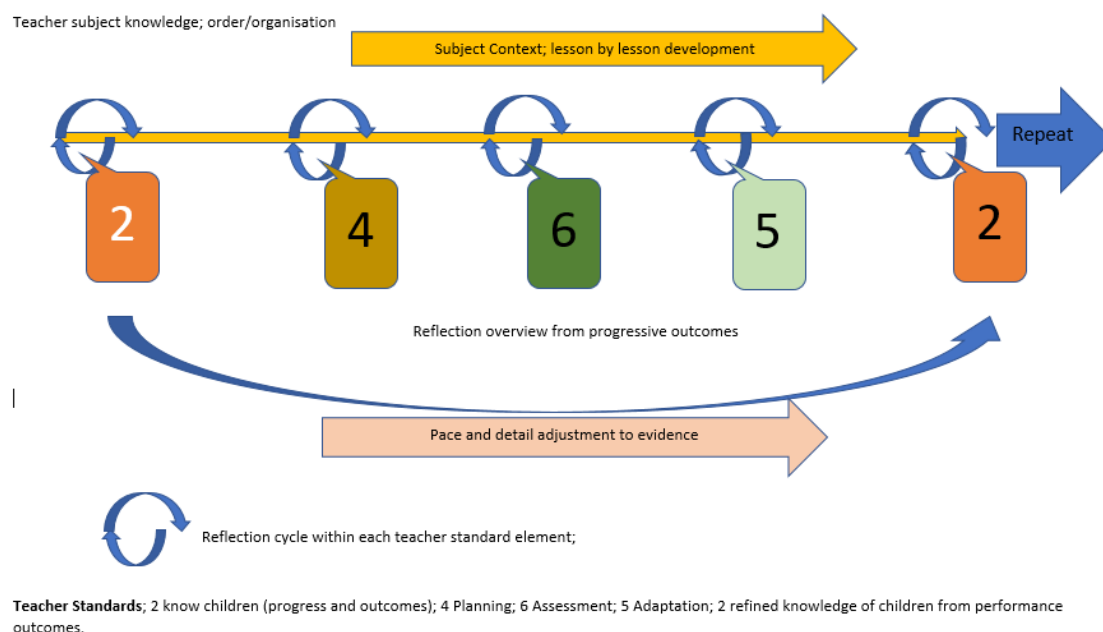
Wondering what the difference is between a coach and a mentor, I came to the following conclusion; a coach is someone who supports development of discrete skills through exploration and improvement advice in each area, whereas a mentor, to me, signifies someone capable of nurturing a whole talent, always focused on the bigger goals, helping the trainee to maintain their own focus on agreed targets.

Being a coach and mentor is not unusual. Teacher mentors are, at one and the same time, coach and mentor, keeping the bigger picture in sight while exploring the details along the thinking journey. It is a positive, developmental eye kept on the process of becoming a

teacher, as well as the outcomes.

Below is a diagram exploring the thinking process within teaching; based on the analyse, plan, do, review, record idea that I have explored in other posts. These statements link with the Teacher Standards as they currently exist; 2 Progress and outcomes (know your children), 4 Planning (order and organisation for lessons), 6 Assessment (thinking in and between lessons), 5 Adaptation (spotting needs and doing something about them). A return to 2 will be based on a more detailed understanding of the children, allowing subsequent information sharing and challenges to be more refined to needs and achievements.

The mentor role is to unpick the detail of each element within the whole, engaging in a reflective dialogue with the trainee, so that it can be put back together within the agreed lesson structure. I was introduced to the “whole-part-whole” approach by a PE inspector early in my career. While it can be overt in a PE lesson, it can also apply in any other learning situation.



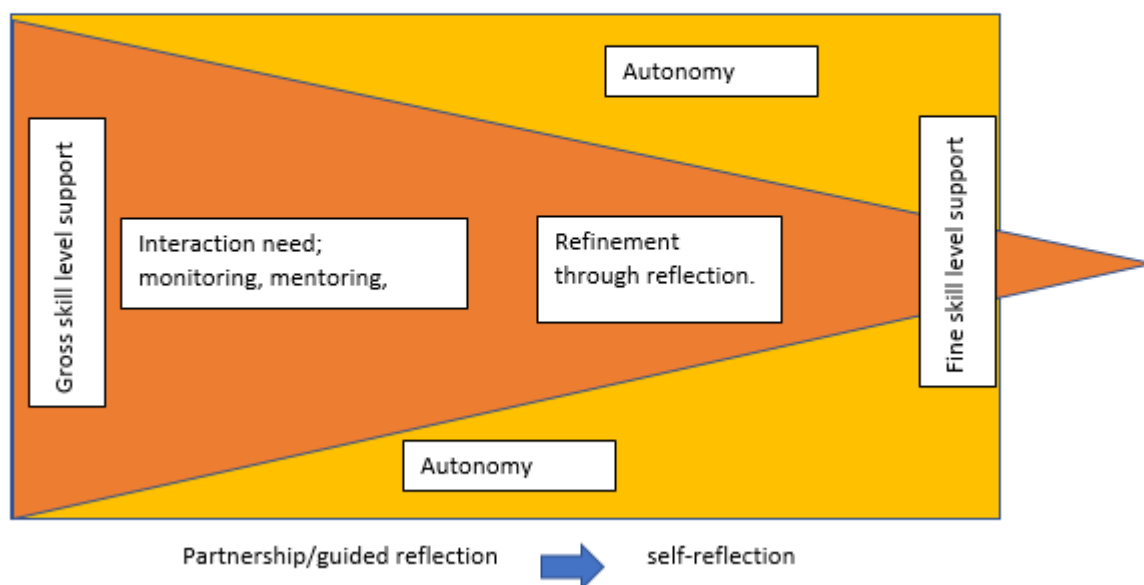
As a mentor, judging when to allow the trainee to operate “independently” is likely to be a key decision, based on many factors, but, more likely, an understanding derived from the dialogue that the trainee is confident and sufficiently organised to “have a go”. There may well be a need for the mentor to step in, quietly and unobtrusively, to prompt the trainee to take timely action. In many ways, this is more profitable than a reported conversation after the event. As mentor confidence in the trainee grows, greater autonomy is granted. There are similarities, in my mind, with parenting, allowing a child to make independent trips into town alone. As confidence in abilities grow, a more relaxed approach develops.

The mentor is then needed as a sounding board for discussion of the process and the

outcomes, with the trainee, as much as the mentor, identifying the areas where further reflection is needed.

Mentoring qualities; humane, accessible, watcher, listener, questioner, communicator, guide, coach, teacher.

Mentee qualities; listener, continually reflective, communicator, learner, engaged, assimilate, enact, refine.]



But, and it's a big but, the difficulties arise within the complexities that exist in several areas.

Consider again; 2 Progress and outcomes (know your children), 4 Planning (order and organisation for lessons), 6 Assessment (thinking in and between lessons), 5 Adaptation (spotting needs and doing something about them).

The first (2) encompasses the whole of child development for the age groups being taught, across a wide range of subject areas within the Primary Curriculum.

Subject knowledge, standard 3, as a teacher must include the pedagogy of how to teach the subject, across the age range, understanding the steps that children have to take to acquire proficiency, selecting of appropriate vocabulary to aid the narrative of the lesson and also having a good understanding of the available resources that are available in and outside the school.

Standard 4, planning, needs to consider planning over different timescales, long, medium and short term, to ensure coverage, use and application of the known in challenges. Planning structures can be a variable between schools, and imposed structures can become limiting factors for individuals. Plans should support the order and organisation of learning.

Standards 6 and 5 may well have to be the subject of much coaching, as they constitute the thinking teacher skills, inside and between lessons; reacting to evident needs and doing

something about them, to affect the learning dynamics for individuals, groups or the whole class. Checkpoints and interventions (please don't call them plenaries) to need are positive. Just stopping the class to show that you can is a waste of time.

And then we're back to 2, a reflection on the lessons from the lesson, that will guide decisions for the next lesson, where adaptation may be required. It's [the get it, got it, good approach to assessment](#); get it, move on; not got it, review next lesson before moving on.

Personal reflection in action	Holistic overview- Partner dialogue						
		2 Analyse	4 Plan	6 Do (Aft)	5 Review	2 Record	REPEAT
	Analyse	Prior info ref children Talk, mentor, SENCo , Tracking	Long term Medium term Short term				Refined understanding of personal needs.
	Plan		Lesson plans				Refined challenge
	Do			Input Interactions Challenges Activity support	Interventions in-lesson. +/- challenge		Refined interactions.
	Review				Reflect and act Dialogue Guidance Support Moderate/QA		Refined interventions.
	Record					Evaluation notes. Evidence statements	Tracking
	Mentoring	Prelim dialogue Insights, detail, sharing	Explore planning over different timescales; dynamics, rationale	Observer or participant observer; Watch, listen, intervene, prompt, reflect back , Moderate	Observer or participant observer; Watch, listen, intervene, prompt, reflect back	Dialogue; positive notes and areas for reflection	
	Quality Assurance	Monitor QA 8,7, 1 Professionalism Policies Order/organisation of thinking confidence	Monitor QA 3,4, 1 Subject knowledge, Order/organisation Narrative	QA 6 In-lesson and between lesson evidence of consideration of class needs	Moderate QA 5 Moderation; quality of outcomes. Work scrutiny; dialogue.	QA 2 Where next with the class/ specific group/ individuals?	Trainee progress against professional standards.

The essence of all good coaching and mentoring is communication, mutual understanding of the job in hand and how it will be tackled. Dialogue is, by far, the strongest approach, with the trainee and the mentor working out together the needs of the trainee and the best training path over the agreed timescale.

The plan is for the trainee to enact and the mentor to oversee and provide a developmental commentary, together with personalised areas for further development, which, in the case of teaching, can be areas to reflect on, to read about or signposting to discuss with a knowledgeable colleague.

The mentor role will always be to make the trainee as good as they can be. Limitations can be very personal, in understanding the complexities within each of the simple statements, such as planning and subject knowledge. It's sometimes like having all the jigsaw pieces but not a clear picture of how they fit together. That's a significant part of mentoring; holding onto the bigger picture. They are, after all, good at their craft.

[Shared experience is excellent CPD.](#)

Teaching requires life-long learners.

Everyone starts somewhere.

Reflections for trainee and about to be qualified teachers.

It's that time of year again, when the merry-go-round of teacher appointments reaches its zenith, joined by the multitude of newly qualified finalists and post graduates. This last week, I signed off on my finalists from their school experience where they all proved that they had what it takes and that they have much promise.

Like all learners, at whatever stage, you are where you are, because of the experiences you've had to date. Continue to be a learner; that way you'll develop and hone skills through your actions and by sharing the journey with and through others.

As a Link Tutor with one of my local universities, I am looking forward in the next few weeks to working with the Post Grad students who will be making their way into local schools to gain more insights into the craft of teaching and to hone their skills a little further. Undergrads will also go out into schools over the next few months.

In September 2014, I was involved in the introductory week for the Solent Teaching Schools Alliance, School Direct route students (Primary). As only one of these participants was in a paid route school, all the others were essentially PGCE students, each of whom has paid £9000 for the privilege of being trained to be a teacher. To save money, some had moved back to the family home, or were relying on partners for financial support. Some were adding to loans. Becoming a teacher today costs a substantial amount and is not for the faint hearted.

I had a short experience of Teach First during a visit in the summer of 2014 to a London Academy, meeting some Teach Firsters in class and, during the second day, seeing the school "invaded" by an induction group.

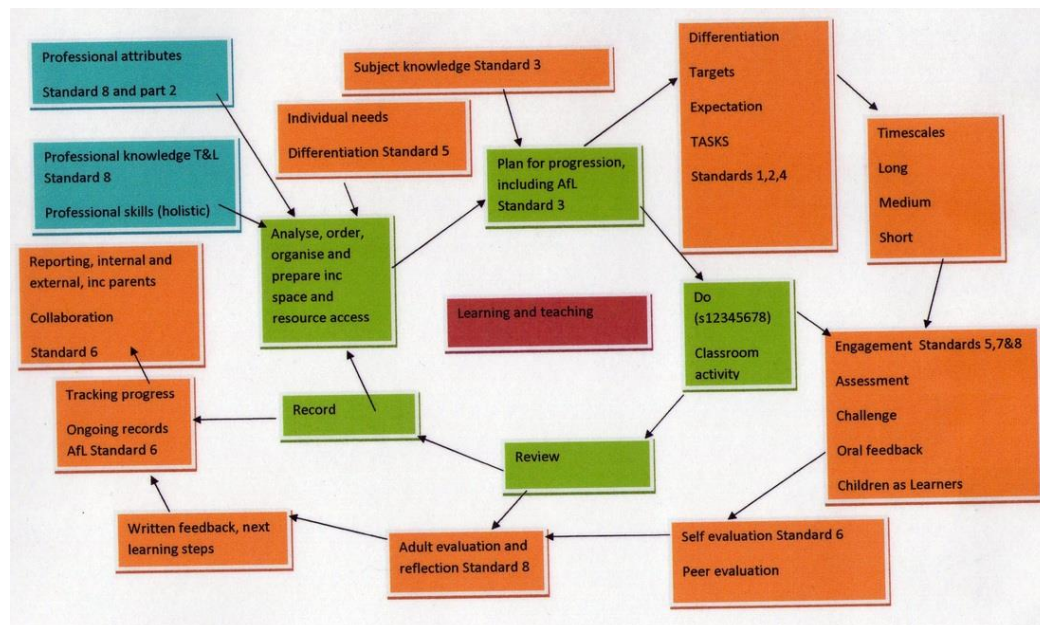
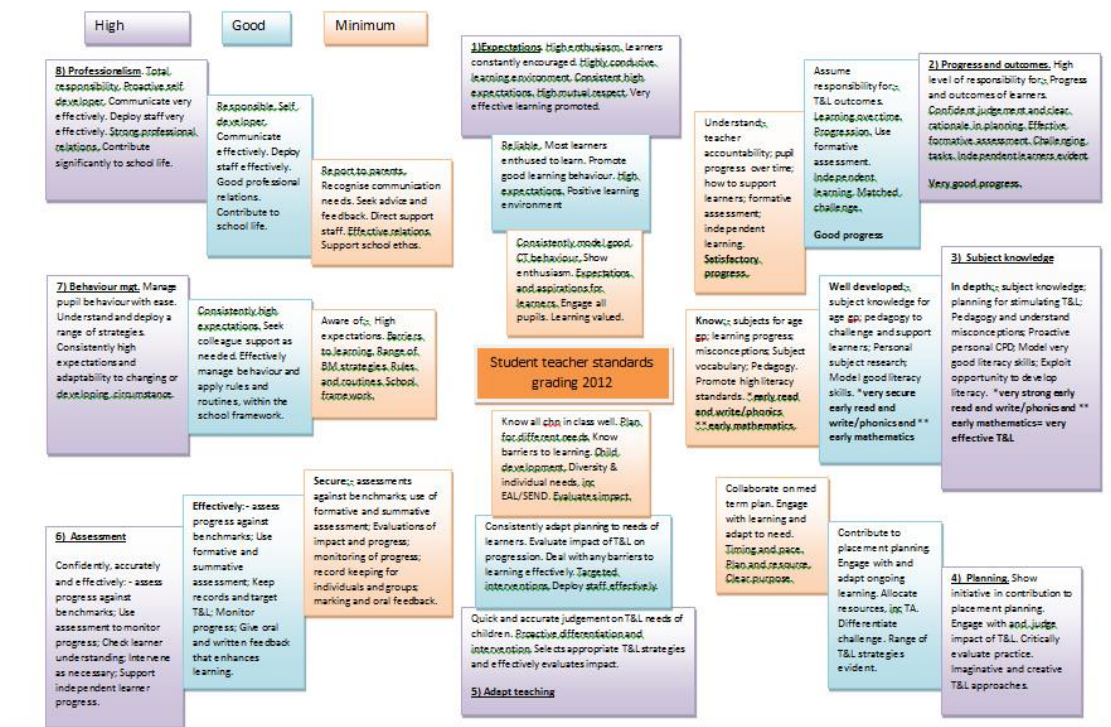
All routes lead to the same end; they become a teacher. On the completion of their chosen course of study, they become qualified to teach. If they are lucky, they then run the gauntlet of application and interview and end up in a school which sees them as NEWLY qualified, not FULLY qualified, so that they receive additional training, coaching and mentoring opportunities, so that they can operate effectively.

The vast majority of these aspirant teachers have had (some) experience of school prior to their training. The School Direct group had all been teaching assistants for most of the previous year, some much longer, so they had insights into what schools are about. They now have to make a shift in their thinking to become the classroom leader, but they are all capable of doing that.

Both the Winchester Uni and the School Direct group will have a similar message, based on

the Teaching Standards and discovering that the essence of teaching is a sequence of decisions, based on a simple premise- that you know your learners well.

Two diagrams sum this up and provide the basis for reflection and discussion.



Advice and questions for a newbie.

What does it mean to be professional as a teacher? Develop a teacher persona; look, sound and act like a teacher at all times in the professional setting and remember the teaching standards part 2 can apply outside school.

Safeguard yourself. Find out immediately what the school procedures are for safeguarding and who the key personnel are. That way you'll be in a position to respond appropriately should a situation arise. You and the child can then be safe.

Behaviour management. Again read the school policies and develop schemes that operate within that. Consistency is the key in behaviour. You need to be able to respond to challenging behaviours.

Analyse: Start points- know the learners well, from prior records, from talking with previous teachers, from the earliest activities. Know what is expected from the curriculum during the year.

Plan effectively over different timescales; long allows you to breathe easy knowing that everything is covered, medium sets the road map and the detail over a few weeks, while short term is likely to be your lesson aides memoire, things not to be forgotten. This is your basic statement of "expectation".

Effect- Do; Make sure the resources are appropriate, available, easily accessible and returnable, that the technology works and you know how it works. Know your story really well, have the ideas and vocabulary to engage with your "audience" and, like a stand-up or improvisational actor, think on your feet, spot needs and adjust to the information coming from the audience.

Review; Always reflect after the event; what went to plan, what needed adjusting and why. This will help with subsequent planning. Mark effectively and reflect on the outcomes. Can you move on, need to go back over some bits for all or some of the class?

Record; Write notes, adjust/annotate plans, jot down things you spotted about the learners.

Teaching is a team game and your more experienced colleagues all started like you. Ask for support, help, advice or just to chew the fat with more experienced teachers. You are one of them, even if you are at a different stage. They can share their insights and experiences. Reflect on them.

Expectations will rear their heads. What are they? We all have high expectations, as far as the Teaching Standards are concerned, yet they can be somewhat nebulous as a concept. Expectations of behaviour for learning, for social interactions are likely to be central to thinking, but what about learning outcomes as expectations? **Every teacher is judged on their learning outcomes, so shouldn't this be a central plank of the high expectations?** Outcomes will vary across a school, from year-group to year-group. It is essential to have a clear series of anticipated outcomes to be able to judge whether the outcome is good enough, good, or high. Moderating and discussing outcomes will be a time-consuming, but developmental activity.

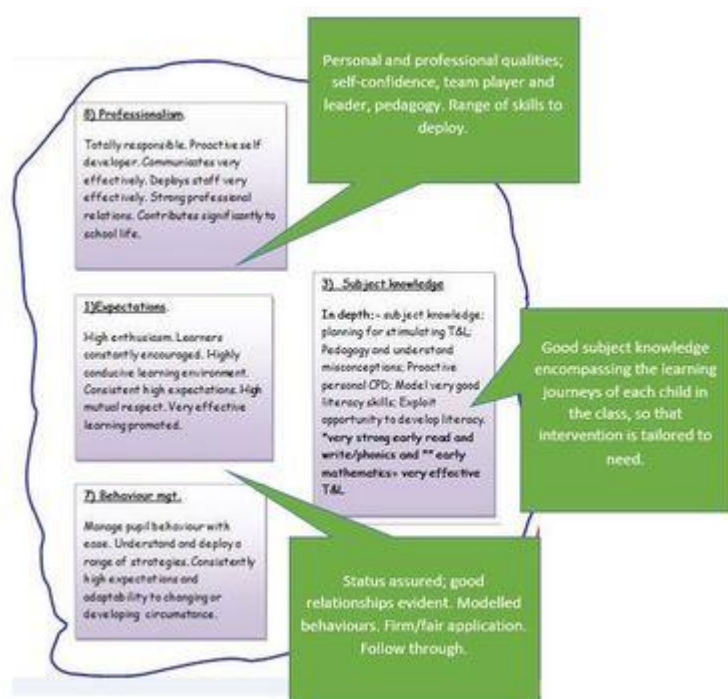
And always remember; no-one has yet absolutely cracked the secret of the perfect lesson, or you'd have been trained to that formula. Every classroom, every school, every set of learners is subtly different.

In that way, you are forever an explorer and learner yourself.

Promoting progress through reflective journeys

I was thinking about mentors supporting trainees recently and came up with a couple of diagrams which I thought helped with [that blog](#).

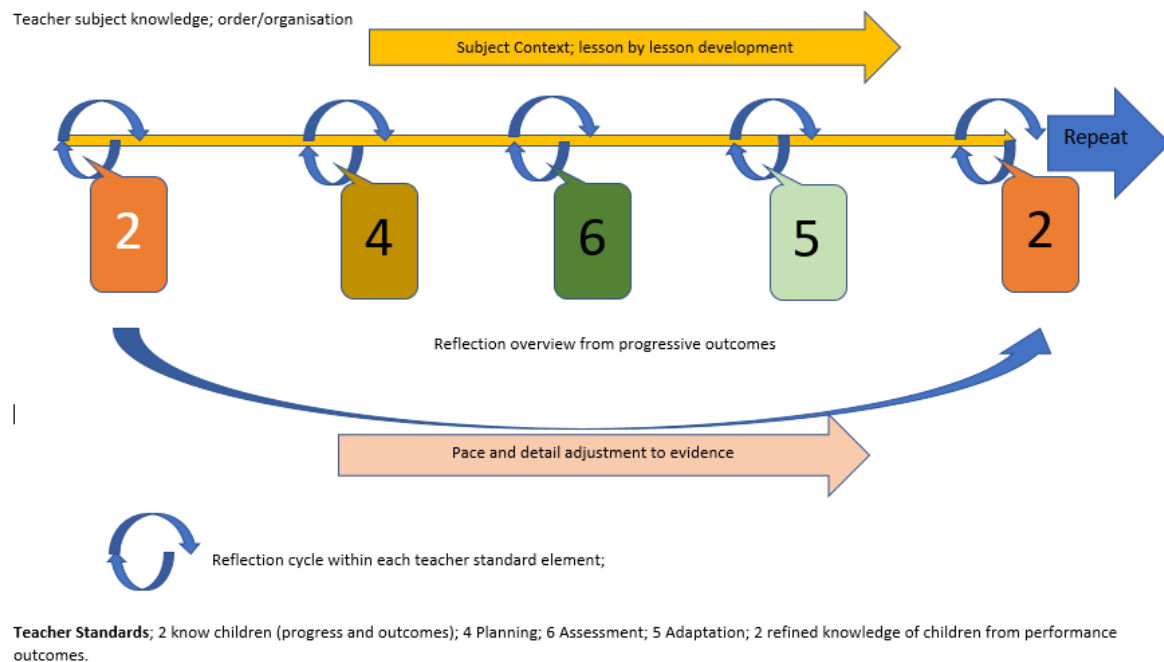
However, on reflection, I started to think more broadly about personal reflective journeys and how this impacts on teaching practices. I'm going to assume, from the outset, that anyone destined to be a successful teacher has a number of specific qualities, as described by the Teacher Standards, shown in this diagram; an organised, responsible person, who understands how to organise and run a good classroom for learning.



It is then a truism that every class being taught will be different, whether a teacher is new or experienced, the difference being that experience of a particular year group sensitises the teacher to possible expected outcomes, which, in practice are refined with subsequent experiences. Changing class, or school during, or at the year end, puts knowledge of a specific group of children into a new phase; a period of extended reflection.

Why did I link reflection with assessment? For a very simple reason that that's exactly what any teacher is doing; thinking about what they know about a class of children and deciding on the best means to promote learning progress across all of them.

The “thinking standards” I’d see as [24652](#). The whole being a linked series of consequential decisions, premised on one particular; How well do you know the children in the class?



If you look at the diagram above, it appears linear, but that might help to describe time, which is never circular. Every teacher starts a year with information, data, from a previous year. This may be simply numbers, or ARE (age-related expectation) statements. If they are lucky, this will be supplemented with additional information that builds a much broader picture of each child and their continuing needs.

The header in the diagram looks at the developing curriculum. In a [blog on planning](#), I advocate the creation of an annual plan to look longer term, to ensure appropriate coverage, as well as consideration of the interlinked potential across the curriculum. As this was done as part of a closure in the July before the new year, one layer of planning was clear from the outset. As it started with a two-week, teacher-devised topic, as a “settler”, teachers could focus in that timeframe on getting to know the children better; putting flesh on the generalities of data.

ANNUAL PLAN FOR YEAR GROUP				Year 4		TEACHER						
TIME SCALE WEEKS	TOPIC TITLE	LEAD SUBJECT: H,C,S,E,DT	MATHS - practical opportunities	ENGLISH	IT **	DT (support-RC)	ART	RE	MUSIC (RW)	PE HCC (Indoor) (PG)	SCHEME Games/ Swimming	
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1 3/11-7/11	Habitats: Autumn/ Winter	Science	money ↓ Data	* Alphabetically ordered/information text	Clip art Dig.cam scanner	3D shadow box	* Close observational drawing					
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2 8/12-19/12	Angels at Christmas	RE	↓ Reports/ articles	↓ Word art								
6 5/1-13/2	Roman Britain	History	Place value, + - money/measures Shape & space	Historical stories - playscripts/debate Viewpoint/poetry	CD	Food tech. Marble maze	3D paper sculptures-helmets			Gym- height/ changes	Basket ball	
1 23/2-27/2	Habitats: Spring	Science	Number: properties & reasoning	* Alphabetically ordered/information text	Dig.cam. - import		* Close observational drawing	CHRIST'S TEACHINGS Paschal candle		Dance changes	Athletics	
4 1/3-26/3	Materials: Changes/ Classifying.	Science	X +, money Checking results Handling data	Instructions Report - Non chronological ↓	Dig.cam recording graphs	Textiles- Design & make	Textures/ Rubbings/ Tone/line					
1 29/3-2/4	Easter	RE	Fractions and decimals	Poetry ↓		Food tech. collage						
3 19/4-7/5	Plant growth/ Human skeleton	Science	Data (topic) Place value + - Money	Information/ explanation text - Posters	Textease/ graphics	Food tech- Healthy eating	Watercolour Tone/line Clay figures	COMMUNITY & BELONGING Prayer		Gym- stretching building	Swimming	
1 10/5-14/5	Habitats: Summer	Science	Measures Handling data	* Alphabetically ordered/information	graphs		* Close ob. drawing					
4 (over 1/2 term) 17/5-18/6	Rivers	Geography	Shape & space Number/x + Money Fractions/dec	Persuasive writing. Posters/factfile Explanation Story dilemmas	Map skills Power point ↓	Design & make - simple chassis/axle	Colour mixing					
4.5 21/6-22/7	Havant to India	Geography	+ - time ↓	Story/Poetry : different cultures Leaflets	Textease: graphics ↓	Food tech.	Printing			Dance: Rivers		
Working range of group - NC Levels- as at 1 st September. 1-4				** internet/whiteboard/word processing/laptop use- on-going								

Shorter-term planning, based more on the known needs of the children could, over time be more nuanced and focused on specific needs. Within the earlier blog on mentoring, I looked at the potential for a reflective partnership, with the mentor coaching and guiding the trainee along a thought process, which passes from the original plan into classroom action, where in-lesson thinking is seen.

Described as Teacher Standards 6 and 5, these are assessment and adaptation. I've always seen these as the thinking standards, in that they represent, to me, those points in a lesson where the original plan meets the reality of learner needs, causing the teacher to wonder, to themselves or aloud, what is causing an apparent issue for one or more learners. These are the "decision-making" points; intervene and address, leave and watch, do nothing, any of which could be a right or wrong decision. This is often only clear at the point of intervention. To me, this starts to meet with Dylan Wiliam's description of the "reflective-reactive" teacher.

The reflective outcomes from any lesson can be simply summarised; did they "get it"? If the answer is yes, then there's a point to move on; no, move back one place; some, how to address the evident need and at the same time cater for those who are secure. I would say that these decisions have always been the case, throughout my career, and probably always will be.

Some commentators see inherent bias in teacher actions. While we have a system that puts

one adult in charge of the learning journeys of a cohort of children, we probably must accept that decisions are seen through their eyes, with or without their bias. Having been a classroom teacher before the National Curriculum in 1987, the language of progression, through the level descriptors did offer clearer criteria against which to make judgements.

Some also wish to promote testing as the only real route to assessment. Tests, to me, have always been just another point of information, to be used to inform decisions. If information that informs teacher decisions and subsequent interactions with learners is not forthcoming from a test, then I'd always question its utility. Summative points are only classroom MOTs; only really good on the day.

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	Record				Evaluation notes. Evidence statements	Tracking
Mentoring	Prelim dialogue Insights, detail, sharing	Explore planning over different timescales; dynamics, rationale	Observer or participant observer; Watch, listen, intervene, prompt, reflect back. Moderate	Observer or participant observer; Watch, listen, intervene, prompt, reflect back	Dialogue; positive notes and areas for reflection	
Quality Assurance	Monitor QA 8,7, 1 Professionalism Policies Order/organisation of thinking confidence	Monitor QA 3,4, 1 Subject knowledge Order/organisation Narrative	QA 6 In-lesson and between lesson evidence of consideration of class needs	Moderate QA 5 Moderation; quality of outcomes. Work scrutiny; dialogue.	QA 2 Where next with the class/ specific groups/ individuals?	Trainee progress against professional standards.

The reflective cycle is one of constant refinement, supporting the teacher rationale for decisions, in terms of task challenges and subsequent interactions. Every interaction is a chance to question, to respond, to model, reflect with the learner, alter course. The diagram above looks at trainee need. We cannot assume that every trainee is always thinking at this level, they need to be challenged to do so. For a significant period, they are making sense of the structural elements, before getting to those parts that really matter; the children.

Progress can be a difficult word to describe, but, if process and outcomes combine, with a sense of achieved criteria within a particular task, at least the learning journey of the children can be described, with an overview over time supporting that analysis.

Unpicking Standard 2 of the Teacher Standards with a trainee.

A feature of recent visits to ITE trainees has been the difficulty in evidencing **Teacher Standard 2, Progress and Outcomes**, yet it is the most significant of the standards, as teachers are always judged on their outcomes.

Many ITE routes require trainees to keep portfolios of children's learning, and in fulfilling these requirements, often end up with a disparate collection of work, which has little meaning and limited impact on their understanding. It can have the appearance of busyness, but becomes a futile exercise in file-filling.

Annotating work collected with notes that describe the context of the learning, such as time taken, support and guidance given, as well as a qualitative assessment, helps with later reviews.

Formative thinking can be captured in annotated lesson plans, indicating where in-lesson decisions were required, to address evident needs and issues carried forward into the next lesson. This would highlight both the in-lesson thinking, and reflections after the event.

As a training exercise, the trainee and mentor should meet to discuss pieces of work from a focus child, recording their discussion outcomes as the basis for a future, short summative oral "report" from the trainee on the pupil. If this become a regular feature of the weekly review, it would inform both formative and summative assessment, supporting standards 6 and 5 as well, both of which can be more difficult to evidence as they are the "thinking" standards.

A trainee, especially on a Primary route, when asked at any point, to talk about a child, should be able to come up with a short summary. In the early days, it will necessarily be a little generic, based on early exposure, but, over time, becomes much more nuanced, enabling more refinement of the teacher-child interactions.

A simple summarising question, to stimulate discussion, might be; what impact have you had with (child)?