

New Deal for
the Education
Workforce



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Coaching and mentoring

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Leading, learning, inspiring

Audience

Educational practitioners working with learners from ages 3 to 19, including teachers, support staff, leaders and further education lecturers.

Overview

This booklet defines and outlines the key features of coaching and mentoring. It explores a variety of different approaches to coaching and mentoring and describes how they can improve learner outcomes and contribute to whole-school improvement. It also provides examples and case studies of the practical implementation of effective coaching and mentoring in an education setting and supports practitioners to assess their own abilities in and identify the next steps in developing their coaching and mentoring skills.

Action required

None – for information only.

Further information

Enquires about this document should be directed to:

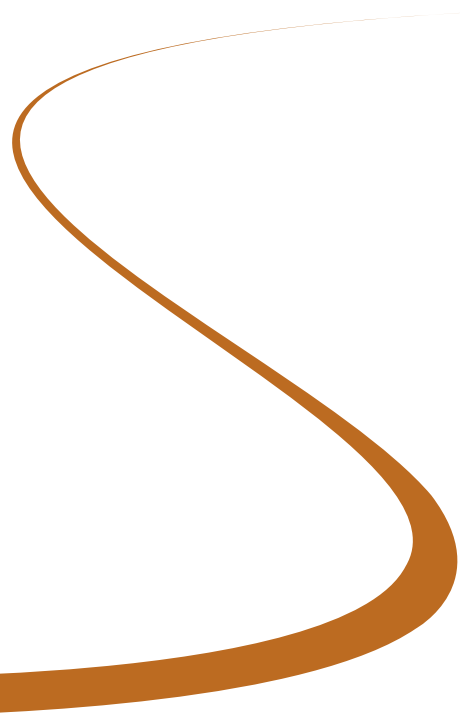
Teaching and Learning Improvement Branch
Practitioner Standards and Professional Development Division
Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Learning Wales website at learning.wales.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

This booklet forms part of a set of resources to support the Welsh Government's 'New Deal' for the education workforce, and its professional learning model (PLM) for educational practitioners in Wales. This key initiative emphasises the need for practitioners to learn and develop throughout their careers so that they can do the very best for their learners. It is linked to other education improvement developments including *Qualified for life* and school development plans. You can find out more about these developments in the reference list in Section 7 (page 23).

This resource focuses on coaching and mentoring, two important aspects of working collaboratively, and a key component of the PLM, as indicated in Figure 1. It will provide you with information about coaching and mentoring from a variety of sources, along with practical advice and guidance on what you can do to get the best out of coaching and mentoring relationships.

Figure 1: Diagram summarising the key components of the PLM



All the studies, reports, and other evidence mentioned in this booklet are listed in Section 7 (page 23) so that you can read more about them if you wish. You can also explore PLM topics further within the module on professional learning on the Learning Wales website.

2. Introducing coaching and mentoring

What do we mean by these two terms? We will look into each of them in more detail in further sections, but Figure 2 provides simple working definitions that should help to differentiate between these two important professional relationships.

Figure 2: Working definitions of coaching and mentoring

Term	Working definition	Who provides?	Who receives?
Coaching	Provision of guidance on specific skills and competencies.	Coach	Coachee
Mentoring	Provision of advice and guidance on a range of professional issues.	Mentor	Mentee

Why do you need to know about coaching and mentoring? A study for the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) indicated that both of these professional relationships led to benefits for all those involved, and also for their organisations. Figure 3 lists some of the key benefits noted for those receiving coaching and mentoring.

Figure 3: Benefits for mentees and coachees (from Lord et al. 2008)

Improved knowledge and skills

Better problem-solving skills

Increased reflectivity and clarity of thinking

Improved psychological well-being and confidence

Communication and relationships

Self-management and self-learning

The study also found very similar benefits for coaches and mentors, and additionally found that their engagement with these processes enhanced their career development.

But it's also worth noting that though coaching and mentoring can convey many benefits, these activities may also bring challenges. The study by Lord et al. (2008) identified several of these, including:

- time and workload pressures
- the requirements of the mentor/coach role
- understanding and expectations
- gaining the commitment of the workforce.

These have to be taken into consideration when planning programmes of professional development.

Point for reflection

What benefits might coaching and/or mentoring bring for you?

Within this booklet we will look in particular at useful examples of coaching and mentoring, and focus on points that help promote effective practice. In Section 3 (page 5), we will consider coaching in more detail, and in Section 4 (page 14) we will turn our attention to mentoring. In both sections, we will reflect on issues associated with being coached or mentored, and also on ways of becoming an effective coach or mentor. In Section 5 (page 19) you will consider ways in which you can become more involved in these key professional relationships to help you to make progress in your professional learning.

3. What is effective coaching and how can it support practitioners?

There are several possible definitions of 'coaching', but we shall use the definition provided in the Welsh Government's Framework for Mentoring and Coaching based on the CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education) model. This describes coaching as 'a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice'.

Hence, we can think of coaching as a professional relationship between two individuals: the 'coach', who has experience and expertise in particular skills or competencies, and the 'coachee', who needs to acquire particular skills or competencies. Coaching is a familiar term in sport, where sports coaches help athletes and team members to enhance and develop specific sporting skills such as running faster, jumping higher, etc. In education, we might focus on examples such as behaviour management or assessment for learning.

There are several variations on the above 'one-to-one' model as indicated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Some terms relating to coaching

Specialist coaching	Coach is an expert or specialist.
Co-coaching	i.e. 'Collaborative coaching': coaching is shared between two or more professional learners.
Shadow coaching	Coach shadows the 'coachee' to observe normal practice prior to making changes.
Coaching 'triad' or 'triplet'	An example of co-coaching involving three practitioners.

Point for reflection

Do you feel that you might need coaching on a specific aspect of your practice?

The last item in Figure 4, the coaching 'triad' or 'triplet', may be unfamiliar to you. This generally involves a form of three-way grouping: for example, a report by Jo Linden (2011) commissioned by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services in England (now renamed the National College for Teaching and Leadership) describes coaching relationships involving a grouping of three primary schools, and also groupings of three individuals at different levels in the senior leadership team. Coaching triplets are also in evidence in the following case study. Read the case study, and reflect on the points listed at the end.

Case study 1

One example of a school in Wales where coaching has been used successfully is Herbert Thompson Primary School in Cardiff. This case study is based on an Estyn best practice example (see Estyn website at www.estyn.gov.uk).

At Herbert Thompson Primary School staff skills are a priority, and are discussed during every senior leadership meeting. The school ensures that all teachers are provided with appropriate training and opportunities, including opportunities to share their skills with others within the school and beyond. 'Coaching triplets' is one co-coaching strategy employed, and this involves all teachers work in triplets in order to coach each other in ways to improve learning and teaching. Staff work together, observing each other teach and then having discussions in order to find ways to improve. During discussions, teachers adopt roles including Coach,

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Coachee and Observer. The Coach's role is to use skilful questions to encourage the Coachee to reflect on their teaching and consider what the issue is in reality to find a way forward. The Observer focuses on the Coach in order to feedback on the Coach's skills, for example in terms of the questions they ask and their body language. This has led to improvements in learning and teaching and also builds capacity by developing leadership skills. This strategy is

now well-established in the school, and is helping to build and improve teaching and leadership skills. The school is additionally involved in coaching in other ways including the Sustaining Excellence Programme, the Outstanding Teacher Programme, and the 'Power of Coaching'.

- Have you encountered a 'coaching triplet' as a development activity? If you had to arrange such a triplet, which of your colleagues would you invite to join you, and why? How could you extend and/or adapt this approach so that you could develop your skills further?
- What would individuals need to do to get the best out of the 'coaching triplet' approach?
- How can school leaders contribute to the success of a strategy of this sort?

Your thoughts on the second of the above points should help you think about how you would approach being coached, and what you would need to do to get the best possible outcomes from a coaching relationship. The Welsh Government's Framework for Mentoring and Coaching based on the CUREE model gives more guidance on this (see reference list at the end of this booklet), and Figure 5 summarises some of the key points.

How can you best reflect on your own practice? You may use a diary or log book for reflection, and you can also consider indices such as attendance, responsiveness in class, achievement in tests and formal examinations. Having your lessons observed, either by a line manager or a peer, can provide valuable information upon which to

Figure 5: Activities for coachees to undertake in a coaching session (adapted by Dr Christine Davies, WIWBL, UWTSD)



reflect, and video provides a tool that extends this. You can find out much more about effective reflection from other PLM resources including a booklet on reflective practice, and a module on professional learning available on the Learning Wales website. Additionally, the CfBT Education Trust has produced detailed practical guidance about the best ways of using video, and other interactions, within coaching relationships, and you can find out more from their publication *Coaching for teaching and learning: a practical guide for schools* (2010).

The CfBT Education Trust also commissioned research into ways in which coaching was used to support teaching, and the resulting report (2010) summarised findings from 13 schools in England. The report indicated that most coaching sessions for educational practitioners revolved around the observation of coachees' lessons. In the majority of cases, the sessions mainly comprised pre- and post-lesson conversations, sometimes supplemented by studying videos of lessons. The research carried out included an analysis of coaching conversations and the types of interaction observed within them. Figures 6 and 7 show these on the horizontal axes of the bar charts shown, and they include:

- 'summary': provide a summary of information imparted, what has been learnt, etc.
- 'acceptance': coachee indicates that they accept the feedback about them
- 'challenge': coach and/or coachee introduce and/or respond to some form of challenge
- 'continuity': there are clear links between different parts or activities within the coaching conversation
- 'dissonance': there are signs of disagreement or discontent within the coaching conversation.

The following case study provides information about a small part of the findings from this study: two coaching episodes with two different coaches and very different interventions. The case study should prompt you to think further about what you need to do to get the most out of a coaching session.

Case study 2

The two bar charts in Figures 6 and 7 below show the number and type of different interactions observed from both coach and coachee in two different coaching episodes with coaches 'Angela' and 'Miriam' (both pseudonyms). Examine the charts, and respond to the questions posed beneath them.

Figure 6: The type and number of interventions observed with coach 'Angela' (reproduced with permission of CfBT)

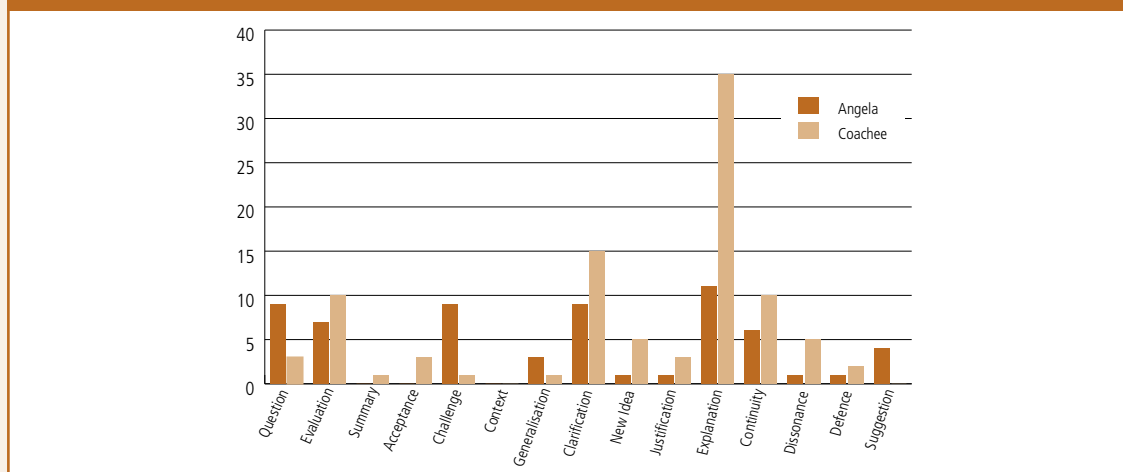
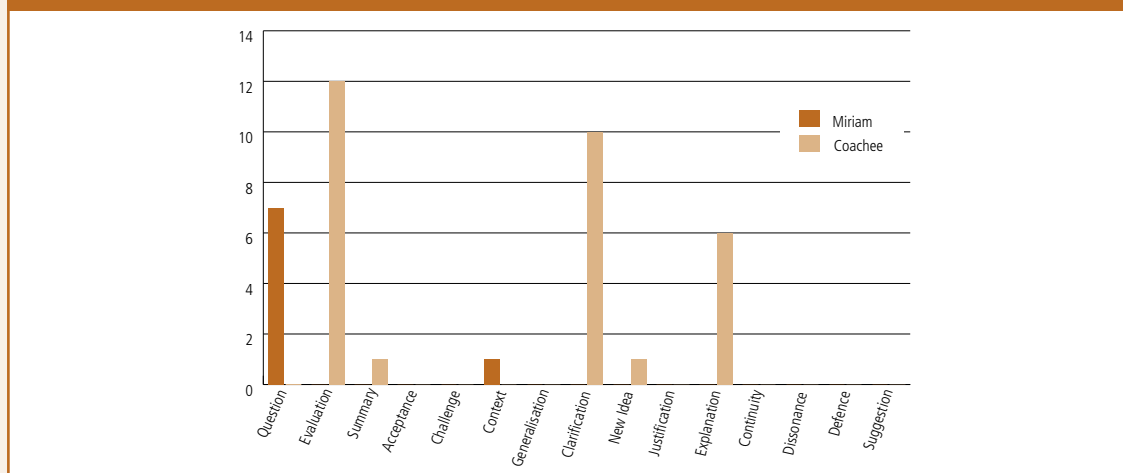


Figure 7: The type and number of interventions observed with coach 'Miriam' (reproduced with permission of CfBT)



- How would you describe the coaching strategies of Angela and Miriam? What might be the pros and cons of these very different approaches?
- If you were given a choice of coaches, which of these two would you choose, and why?
- To what extent does a coachee need to be pro-active in a coaching relationship? Bearing in mind the interventions indicated in the above bar charts, in what ways could you be pro-active if you were being coached?

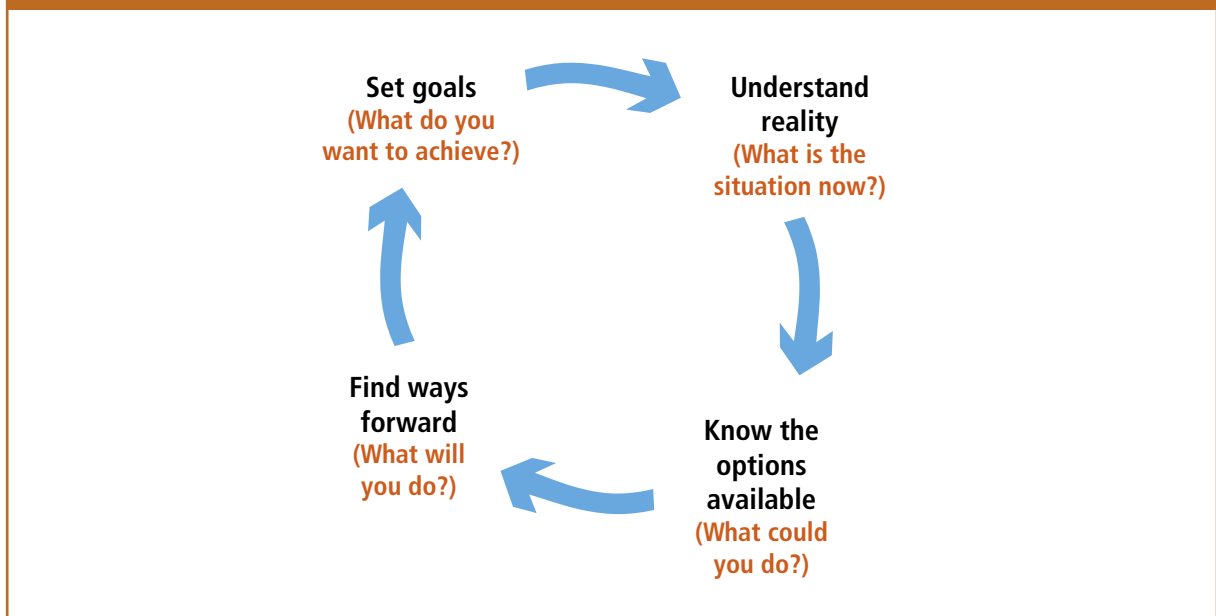
As well as indicating some useful interactions for coachees, Case study 2 also provides ideas for coaches to take on board. Becoming a coach is an important milestone on a professional learning journey, and a key step for practitioners heading for leadership. The role of coach in an educational institution carries a great deal of responsibility, as the guidance a coach provides will not only influence the practice of teachers, but also the learning experience of their classes. Hence, coaches should strive to plan coaching sessions thoroughly using the best tools at their disposal.

Point for reflection

Can you picture how you would act when being coached?
What are you doing?

One model that may be helpful in planning a coaching session is 'GROW', and this is outlined in an educational context on the 'Good practice for leaders' website (see Section 7 on page 23 for link). The 'GROW' model can support coaches in diagnosing the 'skill and will' of a coachee, and can help to frame coaching conversations so that those being coached can more easily set themselves 'Goals' within the context of their current situation ('Reality') and the 'Options' available to them, and encourage them to find 'Ways forward' (hence 'GROW'!).

Figure 8: Adaptation of the 'GROW' model
(adapted by Dr Christine Davies, WIWBL, UWTSD)



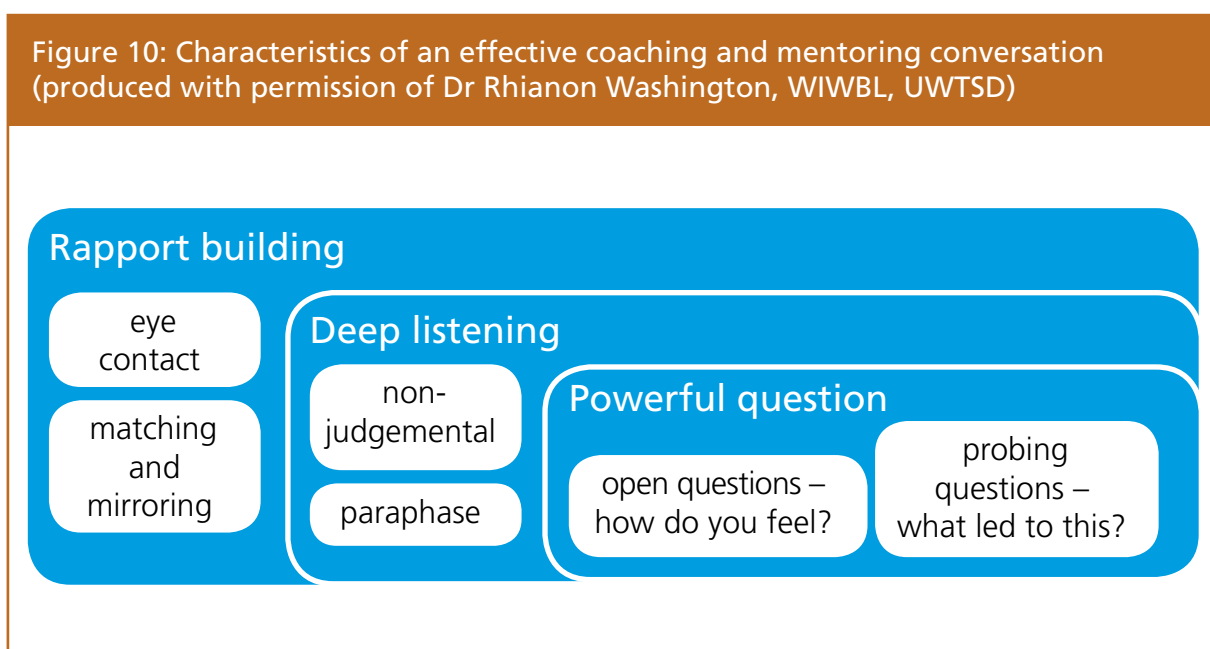
The CUREE model of coaching and mentoring goes into further detail about the characteristics of a good coach, and some of the points referred to in that model are listed in the following figure.

Figure 9: What do coaches need to do to be effective?

1. Relate sensitively to coachees.
2. Model expertise.
3. Facilitate access to research data and other evidence.
4. Tailor activities in partnership.
5. Observe, analyse, and reflect on a coachee's practice.
6. Facilitate growing independence.
7. Listen actively.
8. Use open questions.
9. Provide feedback.

The last two points in this list (which is by no means exhaustive) echo the best practice in 'assessment for learning' that we aim to use with learners in our classes, as advocated by key educationalists such as Black and Wiliam (2001). This reminds us that coaching is a learning relationship: it will not be worthwhile unless the practitioner being coached is able to learn, develop, and improve his or her teaching skills. The second point in Figure 9 further reminds coaches that they must themselves demonstrate and model best practice. To this end, it may also be worth including an analysis of a coach's lesson or videoed lesson as part of a coaching conversation.

It's also important that coaches ask the right questions, listen carefully, and ensure that a rapport builds between coach and coachee which will build trust and sustain further coaching activity. This is summarised in the following figure.



This figure makes reference to points such as maintaining appropriate eye contact, and the need for coaches to match and reflect the needs of the coachee, who, in turn, must aim to match and mirror what they have learned in coaching sessions within their own practice.

Coaches and coachees also need to think ahead with respect to the practicalities of coaching episodes, including where and when you will meet (and make sure that there is adequate provision for the time required). There are also issues such as confidentiality to bear in mind, and very importantly, setting expectations. Figure 11 summarises these points.



Point for reflection

Do you have particular skills or competencies that you could impart to others as a coach?

Case study 3 examines an important recent example of best practice in coaching in schools in Wales, and a programme that should have a positive impact on all school-age learners in Wales whatever their socio-economic background or learning needs.

Case study 3

Achievement for All Cymru is a whole-school improvement framework that raises the aspirations, access and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, including those eligible for free school meals (FSM), those with additional learning needs (ALN) and looked after children (LAC). It helps schools to:

- provide evidence of effective use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant
- prepare for Estyn inspections
- bring together national, local and school-based interventions and initiatives under one, single, effective framework.

Since January 2014, the programme has been successfully piloted with the Central South Consortium in 14 pathfinder schools in the region, supported by the Welsh Government, the Wales Centre for Equity in Education at the University of Wales Trinity St David, regional consortia and Welsh schools. Data from pathfinder schools indicates significant progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of learners on the programme is indicative of one national curriculum level of progress per year (better progress than in schools in England). The Achievement for All programme runs over two years and is delivered in partnership by a school's nominated 'champion' and an 'achievement coach' who leads coaching sessions for all staff in four key elements of school improvement.

- Leadership – with a strong focus on school-led improvement to transform outcomes for vulnerable learners.
- Learning and teaching – including assessment and data tracking, planning and delivery.
- Parental engagement – structured conversations with parents/carers focusing on educational outcomes.
- Wider outcomes and opportunities – improving behaviour, attendance and participation in school life.

One of the 14 schools supported by this programme is Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School, Barry. Mary Davis, Deputy Head at Bryn Hafren, described the role of achievement coach at the school as 'supportive and positive, always showing the good side – this is very important in maintaining motivation'.



A page from the Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School website

This example has turned our focus from practitioners towards learners. There have also been some good examples of coaching interventions for learners in Wales. An example is the 'learning coaches' programme that has helped to develop the interests, achievements, and study skills of young people in the 14 to 19-year-old sector in Wales. You can find out more about the programme by following the link provided in Section 7 (page 23).

Point for reflection

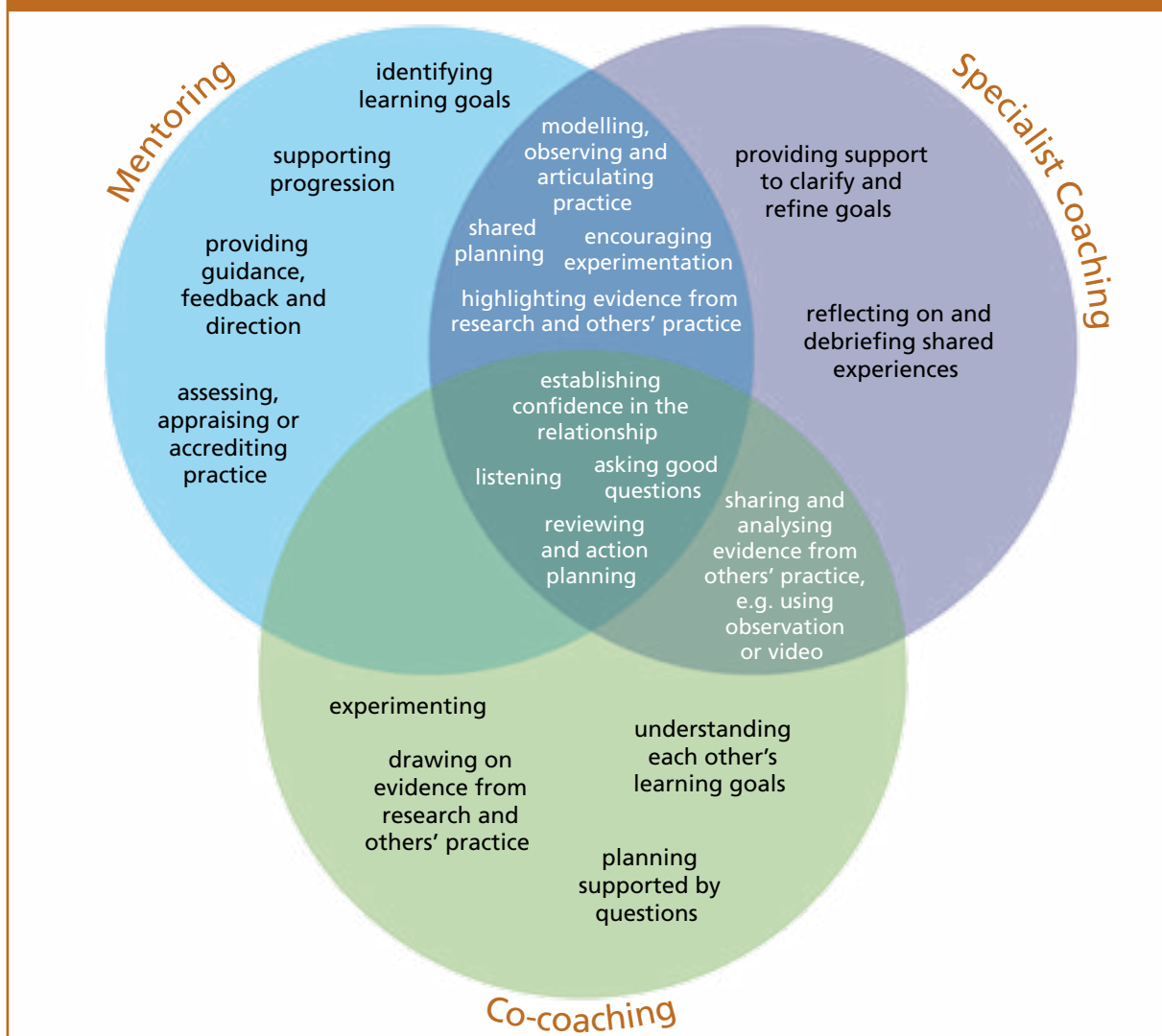
Can you think of good examples of coaching involving your learners?

4. What is effective mentoring and what difference does it make to schools and colleges?

The NFER discusses mentoring as ‘being concerned with “growing an individual”, both professionally and personally’. This is a wider relationship than that of coaching, and addresses issues beyond the acquisition of specific skills or competencies. It relates to more general professional support by an experienced mentor as a practitioner, the mentee, makes progress through their career.

Clearly, there is great deal of overlap between mentoring and coaching, and indeed, between mentoring and particular forms of coaching including specialist coaching and co-coaching (collaborative coaching between peers). Figure 12, from the Welsh Government’s Framework for Mentoring and Coaching based on the CUREE model, depicts the regions of overlap very clearly.

Figure 12: Diagram depicting similarities and differences between mentoring, specialist coaching, and co-coaching



There are areas with less overlap, however, for example mentoring to support career progression, and also as an important component in induction. The CUREE framework also makes reference to 'Mentoring for challenge' to enable professional learners to address issues that may be inhibiting their progress.

Mentoring is often an important part of professional learning schemes in countries considered to have highly successful education systems (e.g. based on results of PISA tests, i.e. Programme for International Student Assessment). One of these is Singapore, and this is the focus of the following case study.

Case study 4

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore puts significant emphasis on 'growing' its teachers, as indicated in a press release in September 2014. As part of this process, they make good use of mentoring both for newly qualified teachers ('Beginning teachers'), and those making progress towards leadership. The MOE have resolved to strengthen the quality of developing a course for all mentors to strengthen their mentoring skills.
- Strengthening practitioner support for schools so that mentors have the space and time to coach their younger colleagues.

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Whatever stage you are at in your professional learning journey, you will find that mentoring will be beneficial for you whether you are on the receiving end, or at the 'dispensing' end of the relationship, and it is likely that many practitioners fall into both categories at different points in their careers.

Just as with coaching, for a mentee to get the best out of a mentoring relationship, they need to show some key characteristics, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Activities that mentees should undertake in a mentoring session (adapted by Dr Christine Davies, WIWBL, UWTSD)



Point for reflection

What do you need to do to get the best out of mentoring? What does your organisation need to do?

Once again, we see a lot of overlap between this figure and its counterpart for coaching (Figure 5). What is different about this diagram? It is much wider in its scope: if you are being mentored you will not just wish to discuss one particular technique or strategy, you are hoping to learn about the whole of the practitioner experience. So, for example, when 'observing practice' within the context of mentoring you might aim to find out about many aspects of best classroom practice, not just specific areas such as 'starters and plenaries' or summative assessment.

Case study 5 makes reference to the Outstanding Teacher Programme in Wales, a programme that made significant use of coaching, but also employed mentoring in some instances. The case study focuses on ways in which mentoring was used, and finds evidence of practice which clearly benefitted both mentees and mentor. It's also an example of school-to-school support, and hence a small-scale example of a professional learning community (PLC). Read the case study and reflect on the points listed at the end.

Case study 5

Mark Davies is currently Acting Headteacher Ysgol Maes y Mynydd in Rhosllanerchrugog, but has also had a specific role in supporting literacy, and during 2012–13 he was also a mentor for literacy at Hafod y Wern Community Primary School in Wrexham as part of the Outstanding Teacher Programme in Wales. In a best practice case study available from the Welsh Government on the 'Professional learning' area of the Learning Wales website, Mark outlines how this inter-school mentoring operated. He explains how important it was to plan mentoring with the head and staff team at Hafod y Wern, and also how vital it was to win the trust of his mentees at the school. He also mentions that he learned a lot from his mentees with respect to the development of his own mentoring skills, and also picked up new skills from them, e.g. in the area of IT.

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- Why was it important for Mark, the mentor in this example, to liaise very carefully with staff at the 'mentee school'?
- How does this example illustrate ways in which mentoring can benefit both mentee and mentor?

The example in Case study 5 shows some features of a good mentor. The Welsh Government's Framework for Mentoring and Coaching based on the CUREE model gives further advice about how best to undertake mentoring, and Figure 14 which has many similarities to Figure 4 relating to coaching, summarises some key points.

Figure 14: What do mentors need to do to be effective?

1. Relate sensitively to mentees.
2. Model expertise.
3. Relate guidance to research data and other evidence.
4. Broker a range of support.
5. Observe, analyse, and reflect on practice which can benefit >1 mentee.
6. Build a mentee's control, and direct them towards further development and accreditation.
7. Listen actively.
8. Use open questions.
9. Provide feedback.

Once again, we see that the focus here is not specific techniques or even specific mentees: a good mentor will have picked up a range of skills and information which could enrich and improve the practice of a range of potential mentees. However, as in the situation of coaching, it is important that mentors are sensitive to the specific needs of particular mentees, and ensure that during mentoring conversations they ask appropriate questions. This takes us back to the characteristics of an effective coaching and mentoring conversation depicted in Figure 10.

Similarly, it's also important to bear in mind the practicalities of when, where, and how frequently to meet, as indicated in Figure 11. All these points are part of good leadership and management, and relate to 'Developing and working with others', an important section of the Leadership Standards (see Section 7, page 23), and hence a step towards the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). If you are involved in educational leadership, you will find the individual leadership review (ILR) tool will help you reflect on the appropriate standards, and on your practice with respect to the role of coaching and mentoring in your organisation.

Case study 6

The OECD publication *Improving Schools in Wales* (2014) highlights high-performing educational systems in other parts of the world including Ontario, Canada. Here, school leaders are not only the providers but also the recipients of high-quality professional development, and this continues throughout their leadership. In order to get and keep a principal position, individuals undertake a two-part principal certification programme that involves academic coursework and coaching and mentoring of a practice-based leadership project. Once in post, mentoring is made available to principals during the first two years of practice.

Point for reflection

Do you have the skills and experience to be a mentor? Could you take your mentoring skills beyond your own organisation?

We shouldn't forget that mentoring has an important role to play for our learners also, and a brief example of this is provided in the following case study.

Case study 7

Coleg Sir Gâr is a further education (FE) provider, and part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) group. As indicated in an Estyn case study (2014), Coleg Sir Gâr has formed many partnerships with schools, businesses, local government, and many other organisations that have a role to play in providing educational opportunities. One recent example is a link with the BBC, and personnel from the BBC mentored groups of learners in aspects of film-making as part of their Film Studies programme.

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Point for reflection

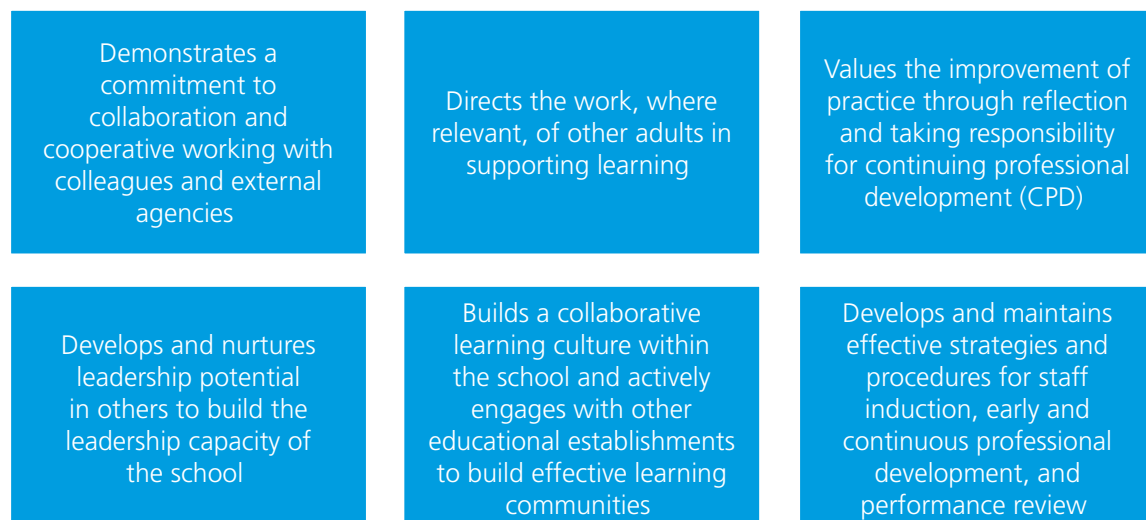
Can you think of good examples of mentoring involving your learners?

5. How can I get involved in coaching and mentoring?

You may already be involved in a coaching or mentoring programme, or may have been in the past. Alternatively, the concepts of coaching and mentoring may be new to you. Whatever your role or past experience, you should find that you can participate in, and benefit from, some form of coaching or mentoring. Hopefully, having read the previous sections, you have already reflected on what these collaborative interactions might mean for you, but the activities within this section will help to focus your thoughts and identify your priorities.

First of all, look at Figure 15 which contains some of the revised professional standards for education practitioners in Wales (2011). The standards selected are associated with collaborative activity that could include coaching or mentoring, and they cover many types and levels of practitioner including higher level teaching assistants, practising teachers, and leaders. Use Figure 15 to identify which of these standards you have already addressed or are addressing, and those that you are yet to address. Note down those that you need to act on in the short- or longer term.

Figure 15: Selected professional standards relating to coaching and mentoring



Point for reflection

How do the professional standards shown in Figure 15 relate to your current practice?

Now we'll focus more specifically on coaching and mentoring, and think about what these activities mean for you now, or might mean in the future. You have some questions to answer in Figure 16: examine each one, indicate with a tick or cross whether you need to undertake the activity listed, and then indicate the rank order of priority. In the far-right column, you may wish to add notes (e.g. about any specific guidance you might need).

Figure 16: Prioritising coaching and/or mentoring activities

Activity	Required?	Priority level	Notes
Receiving detailed guidance on a particular aspect of practice (i.e. coaching).			
Receiving detailed guidance on a particular aspect of practice from peers (i.e. co-coaching).			
Providing detailed guidance on a particular aspect of practice (i.e. becoming a coach).			
Receiving general guidance about practice and professional development (mentoring).			
Providing general guidance about practice and professional development (i.e. becoming a mentor).			
Finding out more about coaching and/or mentoring within the organisation.			
Initiating coaching and/or mentoring within the organisation.			
Evaluating coaching and/or mentoring within the organisation.			

Now use the priorities you have listed in the table on the previous page to produce a set of targets for yourself. Ensure that you note:

- what exactly you are aiming to achieve
- what actions you need to take to achieve your aims.

How will you implement the actions you need to carry out? If your organisation already has well-established systems of coaching and mentoring, it should be fairly clear who you need to approach if you need to perfect certain skills or receive more general guidance. In such organisations you should also be well acquainted with the processes involved if you wish to become a coach or mentor, or receive further training to help you do so.

However, not all organisations have such well-established systems, so you may need to take the lead in the implementation of the required actions. What should you do in this instance? Here are some possibilities to consider.

- Approach your line manager with a specific request.
- Discuss with peers whether they have similar needs, or useful ideas.
- Approach a member of the senior management team (SMT), perhaps using this booklet as a starting point for a conversation about professional learning.
- Find out about coaching and mentoring activities that may take place in nearby schools, and consider whether links might be made between schools.
- Find out what support is available from your regional consortium.
- Find out what further on coaching and mentoring support may be available from PLCs and online networks.

For the some items on the list, and particularly those relating to other schools and regional consortia, you will need to have the support of your line manager and SMT before taking steps.

You should also bear in mind that more guidance and resources on coaching and mentoring are available on the Learning Wales website, including a module on professional learning that covers many other aspects of collaborative working.

6. Summary and key points

- Coaching and mentoring are two important aspects of working collaboratively, and key components of the PLM.
- Coaching involves the provision of guidance on specific skills and competencies.
- Mentoring involves more general support on many aspects of professional development.
- Coaching and mentoring confers many benefits both to 'providers' and 'receivers' of these activities. Benefits include improved knowledge and skills, greater reflexivity, improved capacity to solve problems, and improved psychological well-being.
- All educational practitioners in Wales can use coaching and/or mentoring in some way to support their practice, and improve learner outcomes.

7. Where can I find out more?

The following links and publications will provide much more information about the topics discussed in this booklet, and you will also find further details on the Learning Wales website.

References

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