

TARGET SETTING MENTORING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In previous articles (Hamblin and Beckey, 2021; Beckey and Hamblin, 2022) we have looked at a school-based feedforward cycle that can be utilised to guide and collate all feedback against weekly targets, along with the REVIEW process (Lawrence and Mellor, 2011) that can be applied to shape the weekly mentor meeting.¹ It is anticipated that by sharing these frameworks student teachers and mentors know their roles in these processes and the student teacher is empowered to be a more critically reflective practitioner.

Identifying and setting targets throughout teacher education is a fundamental task for mentors and could be argued to be the most important duty they are charged with. Targets emanate from lesson planning, weekly review meetings, subject knowledge audits, placement reports and early career teacher (ECT)/ induction year profiles (Department for Education (2019b)). The context may vary but they are a mechanism to enhance the prospect of the student teacher improving. It is curious that this skill is omitted explicitly from the national standards for school-based initial teacher training mentors (Teaching Schools Council, 2016). Without clearly framed targets that the student teacher understands, plus achievable actions to accomplish them, growth and development will always be limited. Targets need to be reflected upon and supportively monitored weekly to enable a continuous flow of progression (see the feedforward cycle in Hamblin and Beckey, 2021). In this article we intend to take you through the steps that will help you to set targets smartly.

Setting targets is an integral part of professional development, where using the SMART acronym (Doran, Miller and Cunningham, 1981) can be helpful (see Table 1). Firstly, targets need to be framed and, in teacher education, the Department for Education (2019a) Core Content Framework (CCF) and the Department for Education (2011)

Teachers' Standards will be used to accomplish this, with the CCF 'learn how to...' statements (Department for Education, 2019a) most likely to be referenced and helpful. Well written targets focus on the outcome: what will be the impact on the pupils, the student teacher, or both? What will it look like once the target has been realised? Associated actions need to accompany each target, so expectations are shared and the novice teacher has clarity how they are to move towards or achieve them. This provides an opportunity for discussion to decide upon the resources and support necessary to reach the target, for example: the student teacher may need guidance on what to focus on in observing lessons; support to broker opportunities to observe great practice; or direction on what resources to read, watch or listen. Targets need to be recorded and shared with all in the physical education department who support the student teacher, for example, getting the student teacher to send an email with targets at the start of the week and to place them at the top of their lesson plans is an effective way to achieve this. The targets will need to be monitored and reviewed, identifying progress against each target, evidenced by the student teacher. Agreement can then be reached as to whether the target has been met or needs to be carried forward. If this is the case, the accompanying actions will need to be reconsidered and revised to enable the target to be fully met. It must be emphasised that not all targets will be met in one week as the novice teacher requires practice to understand, refine and competently show they have been grasped.

This use of SMART (Doran, Miller and Cunningham, 1981) target setting is best exemplified by the following illustration. Over a week a student teacher is unlikely to be able to focus on more than three targets. One of the initial weekly targets stated, 'To improve formative assessment.' Assessment is one of the five core areas of the CCF (Department for Education, 2019a). Making accurate and productive use of assessment is consistently puzzling for a novice student teacher. To enable them to



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¹ An example of using the REVIEW process can be seen at: https://youtu.be/mb_N-A1kerU

Table 1: SMART targets.

Specific	<i>What do you want to achieve?</i> Targets should explain the expected behaviour, achievement or outcome in precise terms, so that an objective judgement can be made as to whether they have been met. They need to be expressed so student teachers can show evidence of progress towards meeting them.
Measurable	<i>How will you track progress and measure the outcome of your target?</i> Measurable outcomes allow the student teacher to state to what degree the target has been achieved or accomplished and to know whether they have successfully achieved it.
Achievable	<i>Are targets realistic and attainable?</i> Targets should be challenging and stretch the student teacher to make changes in behaviour or application of knowledge and/or effort. Consider the time, resources and support that will be required to achieve the target – are they all controllable by the student teacher? It is crucial that there is agreement between the mentor and student teacher, as the mentor may not appreciate other current demands on the student teacher's time, e.g. university tasks.
Relevant	<i>Is your target stretching you, but realistic and relevant to you and your context?</i> The target should be appropriate for the level of experience the student teacher currently possesses. Additionally, it should be prioritised to address the most critical aspects of teaching that will have the greatest impact on the student teachers' practice.
Time-bound	<i>What is the deadline for achieving the target?</i> Targets need to be tangible and trackable, ensuring effort is focused on meeting them. Sufficient time needs to be set aside to achieve targets and it must be understood that some targets will take the student teacher several weeks to attain. It is perfectly acceptable to roll over targets, monitoring and updating them as progress is made.

make progress in this core area it needs to be broken into manageable steps. Referring to the related CCF aspects (Department for Education, 2019a) assists clarification. Targets should not purely quote the CCF (Department for Education, 2019a) but draw upon it to frame the target.

*“Learn how to...
Avoid common assessment pitfalls, by: Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues how to plan formative assessment tasks linked to lesson objectives and think ahead about what would indicate understanding (e.g. by using hinge questions to pinpoint knowledge gaps).”*
(Department for Education, 2019a, p.23).

The initial target is too vague and needs to be more specific. It would be better if written as: ‘To ensure lesson plans have formative assessment tasks planned.’ This is now SMART (Doran, Miller and Cunningham, 1981). The outcome is specific and can be tracked by looking at the student teacher's lesson plans in a week's time. The target is relevant to the student teacher in that it will help them to assess their learning objectives and is framed by the CCF (Department for Education, 2019a, p.23). Lastly it is realistic to achieve the target by addressing it within lesson planning for the coming week. Many targets are ticked off too quickly without the student teacher feeling confident they have secured them. Table 2 shows how the target may be used over three weeks.



Table 2: Example of a weekly target being rolled over for three weeks.

Week	Target	CCF core area	Actions	Progress review
1	To ensure lesson plans have formative assessment tasks planned	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify efficient ways in your lesson plan to formatively assess pupil progress, e.g., targeted questioning, the use of mini-white boards, integration of Plickers, small group discussions Write potential questions in your lesson plan for each plenary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of prepared questions from your lesson plan was clear in each mini plenary Much better at enforcing hands-down and targeting questions at specific pupils Struggle to remember questions from lesson plans Focused on questioning rather than other strategies that may make transitions sluggish
2	To ensure lesson plans have formative assessment tasks planned	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise open questions and try to build a thread from one question to the next Write adapted questions in lesson plans using Bloom's taxonomy Write questions on a post-it note and pop it in your pocket to use in lessons/colour code to Bloom's taxonomy Aim to use mini-white boards in one lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much better open questioning utilised – good use of colour coded post-it notes You threaded questions from one pupil to the next well Adapted questions clearly in your lesson plan but you need to get to know pupils in greater depth to be able to judge appropriateness of challenge Good use of mini-white boards in opening and closing plenaries with Y7 class Try to use other strategies too
3	To ensure lesson plans have formative assessment tasks planned	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a resource of question starters you can attach to your ID card using Bloom's taxonomy Use a group coded class list to help you to target questions appropriately Using the word 'might' may help you formulate better questions on the spot Use other strategies to formatively assess. See shared department folder for 101 ideas – pick 3 to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent variety of questions used – resource produced is helpful Better targeting of pupils with questions – use of group coded class list beneficial On the spot 'might' questions were effective in challenging pupils to improve Consolidating your use of mini-white boards Efficient use of traffic lights with Y8 – make sure you plan enough time to challenge their positions Awesome use of magnetic Plickers with Y9 to assess progress – please share with the department at the next meeting

The above illustration shows how SMART (Doran, Miller and Cunningham, 1981) target setting, accompanied by relevant actions, can help student teachers make incremental steps to feeling competent in one area of the CCF (Department for Education, 2019a). Whilst the target remained the same over three weeks, the accompanying actions were adjusted to keep it challenging and relevant for the student teacher. By keeping this target consistent, the student teacher can demonstrate they have securely been able 'To ensure lesson plans have formative assessment tasks planned.' Ultimately it is the job of a mentor to gradually remove the supportive stabilisers, enabling the

student teacher to act, think and reflect upon their practice. The setting and monitoring of SMART (Doran, Miller and Cunningham, 1981) targets, complementing them with appropriate actions, can enable this to be achieved. ■

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