Learning partners in educative mentoring: principles and practice

Dr Caroline Daly
New year, new mentoring relationships...

- Where are you from and what’s your current role in school?
- What concerns you about your mentoring role?
- What you are looking forward to?
- What would you change this year in your mentoring relationship(s)?
Mentoring in a dual role

Assessing

- Programme tasks
- Standards
- Accountability
- Student & pupil outcomes

Developing

- Enquiring
- Taking risks
- Thinking critically
- Learning over time

Learning conversations
Which image strikes you as most representing the mentoring relationship with a student teacher?
Some reflection…

• Compare with someone else - ?
• What pictures do you think student teachers would choose to represent how they see the mentoring relationship?
Research into mentor-mentee relationships

NEW TEACHERS

Hobson and McIntyre (2013)

- ‘Teacher fabrication as an impediment to teacher learning and development’
- Follows the BaT study 2009 – ‘Becoming a Teacher’
- Proposes intrinsic challenge in the dual role of mentor = fabrication

MENTORS

Langdon (2014)

- Mentor/mentee learning conversations
- New Zealand – trainee teachers & NQTs
- Mentor research – did not really know the kinds of dialogue they practised
- Identified types of dialogue/ examined conversations
- Mentor development
Maintaining the illusion

No one wants to expose their weakness ... I can openly admit when I started at this school that I wouldn't go to anyone.

strategic silence

You never want to mention any potential failings that you might have to your mentor or your line manager ... I have got the acting down to a fine art.

strategic avoidance

FABRICATION
Educative mentoring …

…is based on a vision of teachers as learners and the classroom as a site of enquiry (Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005)…
…It is based on collaborative principles that involve building knowledge together about teaching and learning (Daly and Milton, 2017)
…facilitating the development of alternative beliefs and viewpoints (Flores and Day, 2006) –
PREPARE TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE
...and collecting and assessing high-quality evidence that is professionally relevant to the [beginning] teacher (Yusko and Feiman-Nemser, 2008).
• Classrooms as sites of enquiry

• Alternative viewpoints & critical thinking

• Classroom enquiry, reading, reflection

• Co-planning, team-teaching, post-lesson dialogue

Teachers as learners

Collaboration

Developing beliefs

High quality evidence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educative</th>
<th>Restrictive</th>
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<tr>
<td>• ‘a role, a relationship and a process’</td>
<td>• Learning from ‘experts’</td>
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<td>• Enquiry into pupil learning as basis for</td>
<td>• Passing on school routines and norms</td>
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<td>practice development</td>
<td>• ‘how things are done around here’</td>
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<td>• Mentor learning as well as student/NQT</td>
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<td>learning</td>
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Policy environment

- Concerned with identifying ‘what works’
- Concerned with finding solutions to problems
- Concerned with replicability and reliability across contexts
- High emphasis on data demonstrating compliance
- Conceptualises knowledge as stable and transferable
- Seeks certainty

Educative mentoring

- Concerned with the teacher as a social, principled, practitioner
- Concerned with problematising practices
- Concerned with classrooms as complex social spaces
- High emphasis on rich data as evidence of teacher learning
- Conceptualises knowledge as constantly reconstructed
- Embraces uncertainty as core to thoughtful teaching
This means

- ‘A new mentoring stance’ (Langdon and Ward, 2015)
- The quality of dialogue is crucial
- ‘alternative practices’ are explored
- Planning and reviewing teaching are core
- Enquiry is embedded – ‘let’s find out…’
- Builds capacity for school improvement
Addressing Teacher Workload in Initial Teacher Education (DfE November 2018)

- ‘Addressing workload and changing the culture of burdensome practice through ITE content’
How have you reviewed your provision to develop trainees to focus on planning a sequence of lessons rather than writing individual lesson plans? (p.4)

- Reduce the expectation on trainees to develop individual lesson plans and concentrate on teaching.
- Transfer the focus to evaluating, using and adapting existing resources, schemes of work and textbooks.
- Introduce a phased approach to move from planning lessons to planning schemes of work as students gain experience.
- Develop more ‘light touch planning’ over sequences of lessons
Re-imagining lesson planning dialogue…

• What can we do to stop so many pupils in this class ‘falling off a cliff’ when we’re teaching fractions, once we move from teacher-led input to pupil practice?

• How could we work with pupil voice to help design our new topic next term?

• Could the ‘curiosity corner’ be better used to support learning in science this term?

• Think of a question worth asking with a student teacher as a basis for co-planning…
Re-imagining mentoring relationships...

- What steps could be taken to discuss educative mentoring in your school?
- What concerns you about your mentoring role?
- What are you looking forward to?
- What would you change this year in your mentoring relationship(s)?


