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# CollectivED

**Working papers from CollectivED;  
The Hub for Mentoring and  
Coaching**

**A Research and Practice Centre at  
Carnegie School of Education**

**Issue 3  
April 2018**

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## Editorial: Welcome to CollectivED Issue 3

CollectivEd: The Hub for Mentoring and Coaching is a Research and Practice Centre based in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University. As we develop our networks, practice and research we aim to continue to support professionals and researchers in a shared endeavour of enabling professional practice and learning which has integrity and the potential to be transformative. We are interested in all voices, we will learn from many experiences and will engage with and undertake research. We will not paint rosy pictures where a light needs to be shone on problems in education settings and the lives of those within them, but we will try to understand tensions and offer insights into resolving some of them.

Welcome to our third issue of CollectivEd Working Papers. Once again it has been an absolute pleasure to collate these papers. They represent the lived experiences of researchers and practitioners working to support the professional learning and practice development of teachers and other education staff at all stages of their career. Please do read them and use them to provoke your own reflections and action. This issue has a significant number of international working papers. Information about the contributors is provided at the end of this issue, along with an invitation to contribute.

In our first research working paper is by **Brett Kriedemann and Cameron Paterson** who work at Shore School which overlooks the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Rachel Lofthouse was lucky enough to meet them there in 2017 and their paper provides insights into how their school has developed both coaching practices and fostered a coaching culture.

Our second paper is written by **Rachel Lofthouse**, founder of CollectivED, who shares a case study of inter-professional coaching between Speech and Language Therapists Jo Flanagan and Bibiana Wigley and primary and EYS teachers. This case study illustrates a model which, though developed to illustrate collaborative action research, might also be representative of learning partnerships such as coaching.

The third paper is from the Netherlands and is written by **Quinta Kools** of the Fontys Institute where 250 teacher educators work with 4100 secondary and vocational education student teachers. She illustrates the potential of self-study, focusing on aspects of role modelling and coaching and mentoring in the development of teacher educators.

Next **Brian Marsh**, from Brighton University, has contributed a research paper in which he describes the impact of video mediated teacher peer coaching, demonstrating how coaching allowed teachers' tacit knowledge was articulated and made explicit.

Coaching has a significant role to play in leadership development and in our fifth paper **Dwight Weir** reflects on his experiences as a coachee on the Future Leaders programme, and the lessons that have stayed with him in a new educational leadership culture in Qatar.

CollectivED is all about development through dialogue and our sixth working paper takes that form. It's a conversation between **Richard Holme and Bob Burstow** who reflect on the changes to teacher education in the UK over several decades; quite an achievement in a short piece!

Our international theme continues with a research working paper from **Perunka Sirpa and Erkkilä Raija**, teacher educators from Oulu University of Applied Sciences in Finland. Their research focus is their own experiences of team teaching, and focuses on processes of collaborative learning, co-creating information, and collaborative evaluation.

**Shaun Robison** writes our eight working paper reflecting on developments in teacher education and what it means to be teacher educator in the United Arab Emirates, where he works. It is based on his nearly complete PhD being undertaken at Newcastle University.

The ninth paper is written by **Richard Pountney** of Sheffield Hallam University and **Alison Grasmeder** from neighbouring Sheffield University, and is an evaluation of Sheffield Hallam's online mentoring course.

In a new initiative from CollectivED **Rachel Linfield**, of The Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University writes a book review of **George Gilchrist's** new book 'Practitioner Enquiry: Professional Development with Impact for Teachers, Schools and Systems'.

And we round off this issue with a Thinking Aloud CollectivEd interview with **David Leat**, of Newcastle University's Research Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT). Here he reflects on his career as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher and the significance of opening up classrooms to more diverse curricular and pedagogic approaches.

So, this is another bumper issue, digging into practices that make a difference, providing evidence from case studies and empirical research of the lives of teachers and how to support their professional growth. We are proud to building an international community through CollectivED and also to be drawing on the wisdom of different generations of educators. We hope they are read with interest and reflected on critically to move your thinking on, and perhaps to develop new practices. We also hope they signify the need for ongoing research and more nuanced policy-making in a national educational setting which still has much to learn.

### **Professor Rachel Lofthouse**

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## **Coaching: An Emerging School Culture**

### ***A Practice Insight Working Paper*** ***by Brett Kriedemann and Cameron Paterson***

Shore School is an independent boy's school in North Sydney with 1800 students. Established in 1889, it advocates a "dynamic tradition". A Mentoring Programme for new staff has been in action in various guises for more than two decades, and building on the success of this Mentoring Programme, a Coaching Programme for other interested teaching staff was established in 2009 and has developed to become the largest avenue for professional development within the school.

The Mentoring Programme for new staff has gone through various iterations over the past two decades, evolving into a team of five Mentors, who are responsible for up to three new teachers (Mentees) to the school through a structured programme of lesson observations, student surveys, and reflective conversations. The Mentors are experienced teachers and they receive a stipend, but no period allowance. The positions are highly sought, with up to 20 applicants for the most recently available position. The Mentoring Programme targets the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which is a national statement of teacher quality, and

articulates what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. All teachers who are new to the school complete the programme, regardless of experience. The Mentoring Programme is highly regarded by the staff, with many teachers identifying the six-month experience as the best professional development they have undertaken.

The success of the Mentoring Programme is largely due to what Cameron (2013) describes as "descriptive communication". Whereas evaluative language is emotionally charged and punitive, "descriptive communication allows a person to be congruent and authentic, as well as helpful." Feedback offered by the mentors is aimed at reinforcing the observable strengths of the mentees, validating the skills for which they were hired and respectfully offering the mentee the opportunity to enter into two-way conversation with his/her mentor. Douglas Reeves (2009) highlights that the biggest influence on teacher professional practice is advice offered by one colleague to another and this was a key driver for the Mentoring Programme. It was specifically designed to help to decrease new teacher

isolation, share successful teaching practices, increase staff morale, open the door to experimentation, and increase collective efficacy.

Given the success and popularity of the Mentoring Programme, ago we decided to build on this success by developing a Coaching Programme for any other interested staff. The aim of the Coaching Programme is to develop job-embedded models of professional learning by providing support for teachers to reflect, discuss, and explore teaching. We have since the beginning of our programme advocated that coaching individualises and personalises staff learning. As Needham (2014) claims, “Coaching puts teachers’ needs at the heart of professional learning by individualising their learning and by positioning teachers as professionals” Needham also observes that coaching can be “a vehicle for bringing an intentional, growth oriented approach to conversations about teaching practice.

The Coaching Programme at Shore has, in its short existence, taken on different forms, guided largely by the needs of the coachees, and the practicalities of time management. Early on we made extensive use of Jim Knight’s Instructional Coaching work. While staff found the use of video effective, time constraints made it difficult

to entice staff to enrol in the programme. Even so, there was a deep desire among staff for a Coaching Programme that would allow them to actively pursue the annual personal professional goals that they set in consultation with their Heads of Department. Given this need, the GROWTH model, as advocated by Growth Coaching International (GCI), presented itself as the natural segue from Instructional Coaching, and also allowed staff to more closely align their annual personal professional goals with the Australian Professional Standards.

Clutterback and Spence (2016) referencing Downey (2011) and Whitmore (1996) describe the focus on goal orientated coaching that is central to the GROWTH coaching model, as coach and coachee work together to:

1. identify what the coachee wants (GOAL clarification and a consideration of the coachee’s current REALITY);
2. make plans about how they will get there (Consider the OPTIONS available to the coachee and identify what he/she WILL do);
3. identify steps needed in striving towards the goal (Identify possible TACTICS for success);
4. maintain motivation and momentum (Encourage HABITS the coachee could adopt for sustaining success).

Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh (2017) highlight how coaching “is designed to support people to use their skills and experiences to make an impact within their contexts”. Further, underpinned by self-determination theory, that “all human beings possess positive tendencies towards growth and development.” John Whitmore similarly argues that coaching is about creating the conditions for learning and growing, seeing people in terms of their future potential, and about building the coachee’s self-belief (Whitmore, 2009, pp. 5-19). Simply stated, the Coaching Programme exists to facilitate continued professional learning and to build capacity within the coachees involved.

We have learned (the hard way) the importance of providing appropriate training and time for coaching to succeed, and we have learned that coaching is more about relationships than knowledge. Knight (2007) describes the attributes of good coaches as “skilled communicators or relationship builders, with a repertoire of communication skills that enable them to empathise, listen and build trusting relationships.” To this end, we have been mindful to appoint coaches from among the teaching staff. Our coaches engage with their coachees as peers, always acknowledging the coachee to be the subject specialist, with the coach available

to support and encourage desired professional development.

We now have five coaches and about half our teaching staff are involved in the Coaching programme, about 60 staff in total. Staff all volunteer into the programme as it is a choice within a broad suite of professional learning options, including: Critical Friends’ Groups, action research, or online courses. Every member of the teaching staff enrolls in one of these choices annually and the range of options changes year to year, depending on staff interest and the school aims for that year.

The Coaches are all teachers and they receive a stipend and a period allowance. Each Coach is accredited with GCI. We currently have two Teacher Coaches, one Technology Coach, a Leadership Coach, and an Inclusion Coach. We are finding that providing staff with a range of coaching options fosters interest and we have noted an uptake in the willingness of staff to enrol, as they perceive coaching to target their immediate needs.

Typically, each Coaching Cycle follows a similar process:

1. Pre-Coaching - Goal Setting with Head of Department: Each member of staff meets with his/her Head of Department in Term

- IV to set two professional goals for the following year.
2. Meeting the Coach - Goal Setting: The Coach and Coachee meet in Term I and review the goals set with the Head of Department. These are sometimes adapted or changed. Alternatively, new, additional goals may be agreed upon and set using the GROWTH model. All goals are matched against Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
  3. Reflection and Planning: The Coach and the Coachee meet again at the end of the agreed upon timeframe to review the progress made. Coachees are expected to bring evidence of such progress for consideration and discussion – this may lead to an extension of the goal.
  4. Setting a new goal: If the goal was achieved, the Coach and Coachee set a new goal; this may be drawn from student work, pedagogical concerns or a puzzle of practice.
  5. Reflection: staff are asked to write a written reflection at the end of steps 3 and 4.

More recently there has been another organic movement within the Coaching Programme at Shore, in that coaching conversations with staff have moved beyond the boundaries of goal setting. This trend is particularly noted in those coaching relationships that have extended

beyond a single year, where the coach and coachee have developed a strong working relationship underpinned by trust. Also, the recent foray into Leadership Coaching has also necessitated a shift from goal-orientated conversations to a focus on problem solving. To better facilitate these coaching conversations, some of the GCI accredited coaches at Shore have completed the 'Solutions Focus Master Class' based on Dr Mark McKergow's work.

Traditionally, problem focused approaches is often seek to analyse the cause of failure or deficit and set things right. Solutions Focus is not problem-focused; rather, a solutions focused approach harnesses the resources of the coachee to work collaboratively with them with a focus on the future where the problem is solved and solutions are already in place. In striving for this ideal the coach seeks to direct the coachee to consider times when the problem does not happen, or is less acute, and seeks to amplify what works in those moments. Simply stated, "Solutions Focus is about finding what works and stopping doing what doesn't work." (Jackson & McKergow, 2007: p. 209).

The clear, structured nature of coaching conversations and the actioning that follows has generated interest among the Heads of Department, some of whom

have completed the GCI coaching accreditation. Also, we recognise that opportunities exist to extend coaching conversations to the students we teach, and that this potentially will benefit the pastoral care programme.

We have learned a great deal about implementing and developing Mentoring and Coaching programmes over the course of the last decade. Key lessons

have included the importance of building trust and relationships, being present and listening actively, appointing the right people to these positions, and providing staff with the opportunity to opt in or volunteer. We continue to believe that a well-implemented coaching culture can make a real difference to teacher growth and development and, ultimately, to student learning and well-being.

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# Supporting children's speech and language development through inter-professional coaching; a case study of collaboration

## *A Research Working Paper by Rachel Lofthouse*

This paper draws on my work with Jo Flanagan and Bibiana Wigley. They are speech and language therapists working in primary and nursery schools in Derby, with whom I have worked over a number of years to develop a video-based coaching approach to support teachers in creating more communication-rich pedagogies. It is a case study which will illustrate the themes of inter-professional learning in complex landscapes of educational practice. This case study featured in a keynote that I gave at the 2017 IPDA conference which was themed 'The Complexity of Professional and Inter-Professional Learning'.

### ***Addressing children's speech, language and communication needs in school***

So, let's recognise the challenge that this inter-professional coaching is aiming to address. The universal service that almost all children experience is school; starting with early years' education. There, they and their families start to rely heavily

on teachers and teaching assistants to support their development and learning. The National Curriculum assumes children start school with necessary speech, language and communication skills, ready to learn and to develop quickly using reading and writing as the vehicle for demonstrating measurable competence.

However, Law et al (2017) provide evidence that 5–8% of all children in England and Wales are likely to have language difficulties; and there is a strong social gradient, with children from socially disadvantaged families being more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with a language problem. Disparities in child language capabilities are recognisable in the second year of life and clearly have an impact by the time children enter school, where their language skills play a key role in their progress, attainment and socialisation and consequently their life chances. Language skills are widely accepted as the foundation skills for learning and it is recognised that most

children with SLCN have some difficulty learning to read and write.

This raises the problem of appropriate provision. Ainscow et al (2012), for example, found in a Manchester-based study, that teachers were missing around half of children's SLCN. To compound this problem, Gascoigne and Gross (2017) reported that teachers who worked in areas of high disadvantage were often 'norm-shifting', meaning that they considered children who were at age related expectations to be above average. These dimensions create genuine challenges as SEND reforms call for schools to develop a robust offer to children at universal, targeted and specialist levels. Most teachers would need considerable training to identify speech, language and communication needs accurately and early on in a child's educational life, but this training is rarely offered to them. Most children only meet a speech and language therapist if their needs are acute, or if their concerned parents are able to persuade the gatekeepers to provide the access. If a child does have access to speech and language therapy, a secondary problem emerges. The child is now between two professional domains. Speech and language therapists and teachers address children's speech, language and

communication needs in different ways and each profession has its own cultures, learning experiences and methods for evaluating and researching new ways of working.

Most recently the 'Bercow; Ten Years On' report published by ICAN (2018) reminds us that

*The most fundamental life skill for children is the ability to communicate. It directly impacts on their ability to learn, to develop friendships and on their life chances. As a nation, we have yet to grasp the significance of this and as a result, hundreds of thousands of children and their families are suffering needlessly. (p.4)*

This short description just scratches the surface of the complexity of the professional landscapes that teachers work in; looking at just one feature of child development, the potential of related special needs or delay and the challenge of the current curriculum and assessment regimes. But even though it is just one part of the jigsaw we have to start somewhere to change outcomes for children and young people, especially those who are most vulnerable. As Speech and Language Therapists Jo Flanagan and Bib Wigley did just that. They started with what they knew and could change.

### ***A working partnership focused on inter-professional coaching***

I have been working with Jo and Bib, firstly as a critical friend and consultant to help them develop the coaching dimensions of their new business as Clarity (independent speech and language therapists), and as our working relationship evolved through what we recognised to be collaborative action research. The research was undertaken across both primary and early years' settings in Derby where high concentrations of children with speech, language and communication needs attend schools in socially deprived wards, and many of these schools also serve populations of children whose first language is not English.

We used a Theory of Change Methodology as an evaluative tool, basing our work on the approaches developed with my former colleagues, Karen Laing and Liz Todd at Newcastle University, Research Centre for Learning and Teaching. Our working hypothesis was that specialist training and coaching could mobilise the knowledge and skill sets of both the teachers and speech and language therapists to better enable the teachers to critically reflect on their practice (Laing and Todd, 2015).

This was a three step process. Jo and Bib first audited the school environment and sampled some lessons. They then led short group training sessions for teachers and teaching assistants in the settings. The training covered theoretical models from education and speech and language therapy research; including ages and stages of speech and language development appropriate to the age range of children that the teachers worked with. Practical speech, language and communication based classroom approaches were highlighted and the teachers were also introduced to basic coaching theory.

This then led on to the specialist coaching stage. Jo and Bib took short video clips of dialogue-based teaching in the teachers' own classrooms. As soon after the lesson as possible the teacher watched the clip, followed by the speech and language therapists. Each made notes, for example reflecting on their perceptions of the child or children's age and stage of development, the pre-planned language learning opportunities created and the oracy and language learning interactions deployed to support the children's vocabulary development. In addition, aspects such as children's turn taking and social communication skills, attention and listening skills, understanding of language,

use of grammar and sentence structure and narrative skills were noted. Interesting extracts from the video were chosen both by the teacher and by Jo and Bib, and these were then used to then frame the coaching conversation. In total, each teacher (and some teaching assistants) engaged in a series of three video-based coaching sessions with a speech and language therapist, creating cycles of critical thinking and reflection on live practice, enacted in a non-judgemental creative learning space.

### ***Theorising the process of change***

In working in partnership with teachers in this way Jo and Bib confirmed their basic premise; that the teachers' knowledge for effective pedagogies might be enhanced by drawing on the specific expertise that they held because of their own professional expertise as speech and language therapists. They found the training and coaching to be a means to support teachers' professional learning which was suited to the complex and particular contexts in which they worked.

Through our action research and using the Theory of Change approach we were able

to demonstrate that this form of coaching can bring speech and language therapy research and expertise into the practice domain of teachers. This was a dynamic, reciprocal and co-constructive relationship through which both parties, from the two professions, extended their knowledge base and developed a more nuanced understanding of relevant evidence for, and in, practice.

One of the research outputs derived from this study was a new model of collaborative action research (fig. 1), which drew on the reality that this work was only ever part of our working lives. The model was developed through reflection on the collaboration between myself as a teacher educator and researcher, and Jo and Bib as the speech and language therapists. However, the same model has resonance for the processes of inter-professional learning as illustrated by this case study. This model offers a way of conceptualising inter-professional learning through time, and of recognising the importance of the partners' zones of proximal, contributory and collaborative activities in sustaining change and knowledge-creation (Lofthouse et al., 2016).

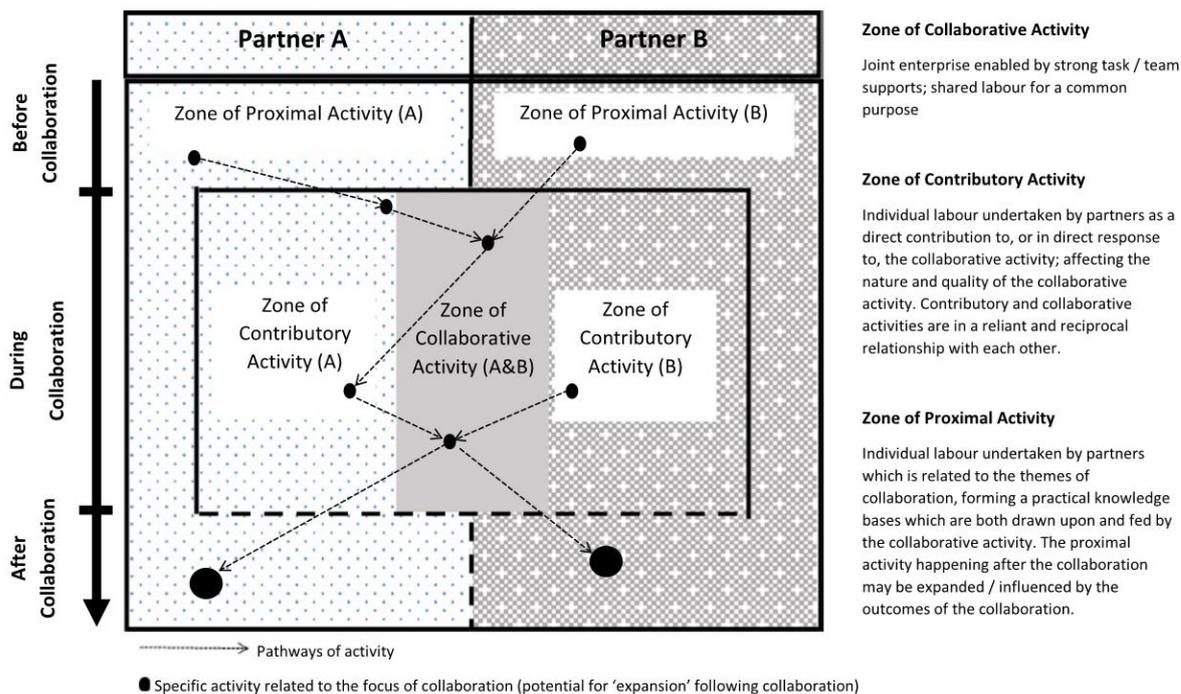


Fig 1. Activity zone model of collaborative action research

The model can thus be used to consider the ways the partners working to develop new practices might undertake a form of collaborative enquiry, which might take the form of coaching conversations about practice.

The model indicates two partners (who might be individuals or groups of people sharing common roles). In this case let's take Partner A to be the teacher, working in their primary or early years setting. Partner B is thus the speech and language therapist. The teacher has a huge and multi-faceted role and has to pay due regard to the norms and routines of the setting, the needs of all the children, the

expectations for their learning in relation to the curriculum, and the felt responsibility for their progress and attainment. The teacher also mediates the relationship between the family and the school, and is expected to recognise which children may benefit from targeted pedagogic or clinical therapeutic interventions. They do all this for each child while only knowing that child as one of probably thirty children they have responsibility for.

The speech and language therapist may provide one of those interventions, if a teacher has identified a need, and if provision can be funded. They usually arrive at the school just before their scheduled session with a designated child,

which is perhaps one of up to ten similar sessions that day. The speech and language therapists rarely has opportunities to talk to the teachers, has time to pass on only scant records, but will return for more sessions with that child. Following each session, the child returns to the classroom, absorbed once more into the melee of learning, and the teacher hopes that the speech and language intervention will start to rub off on the child's capacity to access the curriculum and make progress.

In quite simple terms we have a problem. We cannot expect the speech and language therapists to use their half hour session to re-introduce a week's learning to the child in a way that overcomes the impact of their speech, language and communication needs on their progress. Neither can we simply transfuse the expert knowledge that the speech and language therapist has of that child into the working knowledge of the teacher – it does not happen by osmosis.

So, what if we change the ways that partner A (the teacher) and partner B (the speech and language therapist) interact? What is acknowledged is that in their normal, but separate, working lives the speech and language therapist and the

teachers are undertaking individual activities, both with the aims of improving the child's learning experiences and outcomes. Instead of seeing these as separate activities, what if we see these as proximal activities? In other words, these are nearby activities which can form two essential practical knowledge bases. We then need to find a way to bring these proximal activities into the same space and time. We need to create a collaborative activity. In our case study it is the video-based coaching which occurs in the zone of collaborative activity. Here, over time, the participants experienced strong task and team support, through their shared focus and labour around their joint enterprise of developing more communication rich pedagogies to better suit the needs of all children. So far, so good. But it is possible to recognise a third zone, that of contributory activity. This is the individual labour undertaken by each partner as a contribution to, or as a direct response to the collaborative activity of coaching. This contributory activity might include the teacher requesting to attend a training course now that she is more aware of an area of practice that she wishes to develop. Perhaps the contributory activity occurs when the group of teachers being coached in a setting designate specific planning time to consider how to adjust a scheme of work based on their growing confidence in

supporting speech, language and communication development. Maybe, a coached teacher reads a news article about the effect of social disadvantage on school attainment with a more informed understanding.

But it is not just the teachers who undertake activities that might be considered contributory activity. Perhaps the speech and language therapist now accesses policy guidance on curriculum and assessment because the coaching conversation with the teacher gave them insights they had not previously had, and that they feel they need to make more sense of. Perhaps during a meeting with a parent the speech and language therapist feels better able to understand the significance and possible causes of the parent's concerns about their child's school anxieties.

These contributory and collaborative activities are thus in a reliant and reciprocal relationship with each other, and indeed form a permeable working boundary with the proximal activities. They also develop through time, with an inevitable before, during and after phase. Financial and time constraints mean that the capacity for ongoing collaborative activity (like coaching) is likely to be

limited, but if the collaboration has created a genuine opportunity for new professional learning to impact on practice, future practices are different to those which came before.

### ***Coaching as transformative activity***

Here, I want to propose that it is possible for inter-professional learning to be transformative. Kennedy (2014) described coaching CPD models as 'malleable' rather than 'transformative'. However, our collaborative action research and analysis of the impacts of the coaching suggests that this model of inter-professional coaching has transformative qualities. This potential is realised if the coaching is co-constructive and collaborative level (Lofthouse et al. 2010). As such it can act to alter the conditions for teachers' learning, helping practitioners to position themselves in a culture of democratic professionalism rather than what Sachs (2001) refers to as managerial professionalism, and thus help to promote the teachers as agents of change.

This transformational potential is well illustrated in the following quote from a headteacher in a nursery setting in which Jo and Bib worked:

*"There is a definite shift from individual specialist coaching to a staff coaching*

*culture. The setting is open plan and I now notice teacher and teaching assistants commenting to each other while they are working with the children, referring to commonly understood concepts which support speech, language and communication. Because staff are more informed their conversations with parents about this are also more meaningful.”*

In addition to the impact on professional learning, practices and conditions already described, there was also evidence of impact of the more communication-rich pedagogies on teaching and on the children’s outcomes. While it is not possible to demonstrate a direct, singular causal relationship between the inter-professional coaching practices and pupils’ attainment data because the coaching cannot be isolated from other changes with the settings, one teacher described the initiative as part of ‘the big push’ through which they were focusing on children’s speaking, guided reading, role-play and asking good questions in a more focused fashion.

These primary and nursery settings in disadvantaged and multi-lingual communities are typical of the complex ‘black box’ environments for which traditional education evaluations are

poorly suited. This is why the Theory of Change interview methodology was used to try to establish the multiple mechanisms at work. One teaching assistant indicated this in her interview as follows:

*“The discussion with the speech and language therapist about my video clips was very reassuring. They found things I do well which I see as natural. They asked me questions about my practice, they focused my attention on things I had noticed and gave me advice. This worked because the video coaching came at the end of the audit and training, so I got to know them and felt comfortable with them. I trusted them and accepted their feedback. I felt more confident and reflective.”*

Each head teacher and coaching participant interviewed was able to highlight noticeable changes in both pedagogy and in children’s outcomes. In the nursery, a teacher was conscious that she was making more rapid and reliable assessments of children’s language skills and that this led to more productive conversations between herself and colleagues about how to meet their initial learning and support needs. In the primary school, the children in Year Three, whose teachers had been coached, were commended by visitors to an assembly for their ability and willingness to articulate

good questions in standard English (outstripping Year Four in this respect). In the same school, another teacher reflected that:

*“My children are now choosing to share ideas, they have more confidence and can articulate their ideas better, modelling good language to each other. They are also developing better social skills, because they can now explain themselves and experience less conflict with each other and with staff.”*

Perhaps the most passionate advocate of the impacts of the work was the long-established nursery head teacher who was working in her final year prior to retirement. She had indicated in the initial Theory of Change interview that she was hoping that all her children (most of whom were learning English as an additional language) would demonstrate two points of progression in speaking and listening in the year, which had not been achieved before in the setting. During the return interviews she stated that every child (including those with special Educational

needs) had achieved this, and that beyond this the attainment data in every area of the curriculum were ‘amazing’. This progress was highlighted in an Ofsted inspection that year, which upgraded the nursery school from Good to Outstanding, with grade 1 for all areas (including pupil achievement and quality of teaching), and which stated that:

*“Staff are reflective and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn; through their involvement with a project they are developing further their understanding of language development and how their practice effects on this skill. This has led to even more detailed and accurate assessments of this area of the children’s development.”*

So, what can we learn? Well, it seems to us that video-based coaching is one of the inter-professional working approaches which allows what Forbes et al. (2018) advocate as ‘co-practice’ which allows the professionals from each field to place the child at the centre of activity through which professionals invest their time and expertise.

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### Additional information on this case study can be found online at

Jo and Bib are directors of Clarity Tec <http://www.claritytec.co.uk/>. In this BERA blog they write about their work <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/the-potential-of-inter-professional-learning-in-supporting-children-with-speech-language-and-communication-needs>

Here we share more details of the video-based coaching approach  
<https://attunedinteractions.wordpress.com/?s=flanagan>

More info on coaching approaches, including this one can be found here  
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/cflat/files/teacher-coaching.pdf>

If you are a member of the Chartered College of Teaching you can access our Impact Journal article here <https://impact.chartered.college/article/lofthouses-specialist-coaching-teachers-speech-language-science/> or hunt out the free copy of the journal that was sent to every school in UK.



## Self-study as a tool for professional development of teacher educators

### *A Practice Insight Working Paper by Quinta Kools*

Teacher educators fulfil different roles in their profession: according to an extensive review study of the literature on the professional roles of educators, Lunenberg, Dengerink, and Korthagen (2014) mention six roles. These are: Teacher of teachers, Researchers, Mentors / coaches, Gatekeepers to the teaching profession, Brokers / facilitators of community of learners and Curriculum developers. The first role, teacher of teachers, is an important role that distinguishes teacher educators from teachers. In their teaching student teachers, teacher educators act as a role model, their own teaching behaviour is an example for the student teacher. In other words: not what they teach, but HOW they teach is important. This whole idea of being a role model and being aware of one's responsibility as a teacher educator was the starting point for a trajectory in our institute for teacher education.

Our institute is situated in the south-west of the Netherlands and we educate over 4000 students to become a teacher in both bachelor and master-programmes. We educate teachers for secondary and

vocational education, in languages (French, English, Dutch, Spanish, German), social sciences (history, geography, social studies, economics) and beta sciences (mathematics, science, physics, biology, health education). At our institute about 250 teacher educators are employed.

In order to encourage the professional awareness of my colleagues of their role as a teacher of teachers, I organised a trajectory to do so. For the design of this trajectory, I was inspired by articles about learning about inquiry through self-study (Lunenberg, Zwart & Korthagen, 2010; Lunenberg & Samaras, 2011). Self-study seems to serve as a powerful tool in professional development. The challenge of the trajectory was to make it work in the hectic every-day life of teacher educators. Therefore, I decided to set some ground rules.

#### **Ground rules of our self-study group**

First, to fit self-study into the work tasks of my colleagues, the topic should contribute to their daily practice. This led to the

decision to focus on the task of every teacher educator to be a role model and a 'teacher of teachers' or the role of 'mentor/coach' (Lunenberg, Korthagen & Dengerink, 2014). This meant that the focus had to be on one's own work/tasks as a teacher educator. For example, it could be about 'how am I modelling when I am teaching' or 'how do I encourage student teachers to reflect on their teaching'.

Second, in order to encourage my colleagues to perform a self-study, it is important to keep the study small with regard to data-gathering. This meant that data-gathering could be done in a short amount of time. For example: "for a small-scale study about my mentoring skills, I will videotape and analyse two mentor conversations with student teachers".

Third, I am convinced that research activities improve by giving feedback to and receiving feedback from others. Therefore, I wanted to encourage peer-feedback and peer-conversations within the group of participating teacher educators. To organise the process of giving feedback, I used protocols (<http://linpilcare.eu/index.php/intellectual-outputs/tools/complete-toolkit>). These protocols help to structure the feedback

process and ensure that all participants have an active role. And because they all study some aspect of the same topic (ground rule 1), this also helps to get to a deeper layer of feedback.

Fourth, because teacher educators already have a busy job, the number of meetings should be limited and each meeting should contribute to the process of inquiry.

Fifth, sharing the outcomes of both the process and the findings are important. Therefore, a presentation to colleagues would be part of the trajectory, as well as a written report on the self-study. This report should have a maximum length of 4 A4 pages (a longer report will not be read by colleagues...).

### **Design of the trajectory**

Following these steps, I designed the trajectory for the self-study group. I organised six meetings of three hours, situated in a time period of five months (end of September - end of March).

- 1) Kick-off meeting: introduction to the concept of self-study and to the topic 'teacher of teachers'.
- 2) Making an outline for ones' own self study

- 3) Feedback on plans, start of the inquiry and data gathering
- 4) Feedback on data gathering and data analysis
- 5) Trouble shooting, evaluation of own yields
- 6) Presentation to colleagues and deliverance of small report.

### Starting the group

I composed an email to invite colleagues to participate in this group. In order to persuade them to participate, I used the word 'professional development trajectory'. I also mentioned that this trajectory would consist of five meetings with an additional workload of about 30 hours in between meetings. I deliberately did not mention the word 'research', because that would set them off on the wrong track; most of my colleagues think research is something that is time consuming, difficult and not beneficial for

them. The word 'trajectory' on the other hand implies that there is some effort required, but within reach of the participants.

In 2016, eight people signed up (all female teacher educators). For these eight participants, the trajectory obviously was a success, because six of them have continued this trajectory with a new question. The other two had to stop; one is on a sabbatical leave and the other one could not find time anymore.

### Subjects that were studied

I will give some examples of the topics that are studied by the participating teacher educators. I do this through unfolding small 'portraits' of the participants about their professional journey (see Loughran, 2014).

#### Portrait 1: Jacob

Jacob is a teacher educator who is involved in coaching and guiding student teachers in their practical work experience (internship). He visits student teachers at the school where they are teaching and has conversations with them about their concerns and their teaching.

In these conversations, Jacob wants to encourage the student teacher to reach a deep level of reflection. According to the theory of Korthagen (2002), reflection is an important issue for the professional development of student teachers.

Reflecting on his own work, Jacob wants to know more about the way he is performing in these conversations. Does he ask the right questions, is he challenging the student to reflect?

So Jacob's research question is: '*what kind of questions do I ask when I have a conversation with a student?*'

The theoretical framework behind his self-study is derived from Korthagen (2002). Based on Korthagen, Jacob defines a range of questions on different levels, each level probing deeper into a reflection modus (the 'onion'-model).

Jacob decides to video record three of his conversations with student teachers. He analyses the video recordings thoroughly with regard to his own phrasing of questions. He carefully writes down the exact wording of his questions and compares these transcripts with the onion-model. The analysis reveals that in all three conversations, all levels are present. Another finding was that, although Jacob had expected beforehand to pose more questions on the deepest level, this was not the case.

Summarizing his findings, Jacob concludes that his self-study helped him to become more conscious of his questioning in conversations with students. He has also seen that he is capable of addressing all levels in a conversation. For the near future, he intends to stay conscious of his way of questioning. He also intends to start a new self-study trajectory, in which he wants to focus on the impact of the conversations on the students.

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### Portrait 2: Evelyn

Evelyn is a teacher educator who is working in the language department. She is supervising student teachers' practitioner research. Throughout the years, she has noticed that student teachers find it very difficult to write a research report. It takes Evelyn a lot of effort to help student teachers in this process and she wonders what she can do to make her efforts more worthwhile.

Then Evelyn attended a mini-conference where a keynote was delivered on 'giving feedback'. Immediately, her attention was drawn to this topic. She then starts to read Hattie and Timperley's work on feedback and realises that there are several types of feedback: feedback, feed-up and feed forward, and that all these types can either be directed towards the task, the process, the self-regulation or the person.

After having read this, Evelyn is curious about her own feedback-routines. Her self-study is directed towards the question: what kind of written feedback do I give to my students?

For her self-study she takes a closer look at her written feedback on the reports of 7 students she has supervised last year. First, she develops a framework in which the different types of feedback are distinguished. This already helps her in understanding the differences between the various types. Then, for each report of the 7 students, she is scoring the feedback she has given and matches this to one of the categories.

The process of scoring reveals that she has often been giving feedback on the task. She did give some sort of feed-up and feed-forward, but both these categories are less often present. Her analysis helps her to evaluate her role as supervisor. With some adjustments in the type of feedback, she might help students better. She now realises that also in conversations with students about their work, the feedback could be more directed towards the process.

Evelyn talks about her findings with her colleagues and discovers that they also struggle with their supervision tasks. This leads Evelyn to present her findings and her framework and this is the start of a professional conversation in the team about this topic.

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Hattie & Timperley (2007) The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, March 2007, Vol. 77, No. 1, pp. 81–112

These two portraits are examples of topics derived from the teacher educators' practice, that are worthwhile studying, because the teacher educator at stake wants to improve his or her practice. When I am supervising teacher educators in their self-study process, I always stress the fact that their subject must be related to their practice, so that the outcomes are beneficial for that practice. I also give a lot of examples of topics that other teacher educators have studied. Sometimes participants are hesitant to pick a subject that another person already studied. Then I encourage them by saying: 'is this is a

topic that is bothering you, why don't you feel inspired by this other person? Your self-study is about improving YOUR practice, not about finding a unique topic of about winning the Nobel-prize. Just build on to this other persons' ideas and apply them for your benefit. It all adds to building your personal knowledge base as a teacher educator'. Moreover, together we build on the public knowledge base of teacher educators.

## **Impressions after the trajectory on professional growth**

From the evaluation in the fifth meeting, we learnt that the participants saw two strands of professional growth. The first strand is development in their role as teacher educator, daring to take the step to dive into studying their own practice. The second strand is learning about inquiry.

Quotes of participants:

- 'I see myself as an inquiring teacher educator'
- 'talking with group members about my inquiry contributed to my development'
- 'this inquiry enhanced results for students and myself'.

Parts of this paper have been published as a blog on the website of the InfoTed project <http://info-ted.eu/blog/>

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# Teachers supporting teachers in professional learning and the development of classroom practice: The use of video mediated peer coaching

*A Research Working Paper by Brian Marsh*

## Abstract

The use of video to support teacher professional development is widespread in schools. This article considers the impact of using video as a tool to support an extended period of peer coaching support. A video mediated series of reflective coaching cycles was undertaken by 12 pairs of teachers drawn from primary, secondary and further education (FE) contexts. The findings, common to all phases, were that effective professional learning conversations occurred which supported reflection and enhanced practice. The greater the number of sessions the more effective the reflection appears to be. Moreover tacit knowledge was articulated and made explicit. There were benefits for both teachers and their coaches.

## Introduction

In a recent edition of CollectivED working papers, both Lewis (2018) and Kosiorek (2018) write about the benefits of video mediated coaching in supporting reflection

and developing practice. This article contributes further insights into this process by investigating:

1. *the impact of video-mediated coaching over an extended period of time*
2. *the similarities and differences of doing this in different phases of the English education system*

Lewis (2018, p. 5) rightly identifies the limitations of various models of reflective practice which rely on subjective self-reflection not least of which is knowing “if we are reflecting on the right things to transform our teaching and pupil learning”. The argument, therefore, for coaching is very persuasive. However, this is also not without difficulties. There are issues, for example around noticing and language – are these shared and understood between the teacher and coach?

## Video and Lesson Observation

Lesson observation is a contested issue due to its relationship to performativity. However, O’Leary (2017) argues that lesson observation can and should be

used for enhancing teacher learning and developing practice. It is useful in helping to conceptualise what comprises effective teaching and learning. Thus, he argues, good classroom observation can lie at the heart of both understanding professional practice and improving its quality but it ought to be formative in nature and supportive rather than judgemental.

Nevertheless even with formative and non-judgemental observation there are issues to be overcome. These include the subjectivity of observation as events are filtered through the interpretive lens of the observer. Also it cannot be assumed that there is a shared understanding among observers and observees as to the meaning and interpretation of complex classroom events.

A number of benefits of using video for lesson observation are identified by Marsh and Mitchell (2014). These include the ability to capture complex activities and so get to rich descriptions of classroom activities that are hard / impossible to describe. Additionally, capturing lesson activity on video helps overcome the ambiguity of written descriptions.

One important feature afforded by using video for observation is the development of professional vision and noticing – essential for supportive observation.

Building on the work of Miriam Sherin's video clubs for maths teachers Seidel, Sturmer, Blomberg, Kobarg, and Schwindt (2011) discuss noticing and knowledge based reasoning. They argue that teachers selectively consider and interpret complex classroom events, that the teachers draw on their professional knowledge to identify significant components of teaching and learning so:

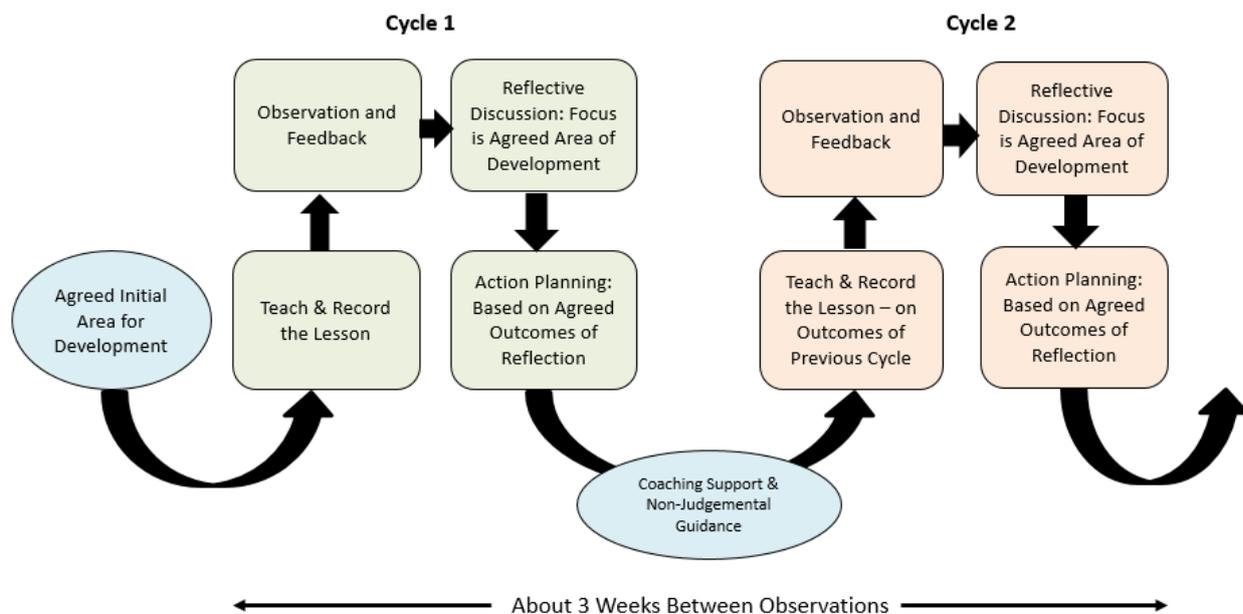
1. *through noticing there is the identification of what is relevant from many things that occur simultaneously in a classroom.*
2. *noticing can then lead to reasoning (based upon professional knowledge) thus observed classroom activities are located in a theoretical framework. There is a change from simply noticing pupils' ideas and actions to an analysis of pupil thinking and a change from describing the teaching strategies used to understanding why they were used and the potential impact on pupil learning.*

### Methodology

The coaching process used in the schools and college is outlined in figure 1. A series of up to 5 or 6 lessons were video recorded over something like 2 terms (about 6 months). One teacher had their lessons recorded. The coach was invited to be present to undertake a lesson

observation in the traditional way (40 / 48 lessons recorded had the coach in the lesson). Some schools had systems where the coach could observe remotely and synchronously in another room – that option was never used. 8 lessons were observed by the coach asynchronously.

Following the lesson observation both teacher and coach then observe the video and individually identify critical points for discussion - the coach already having a feel for what is important having already observed the lesson live; there would a professional learning conversation; development targets were agreed and practiced and then the cycle continued.



*Looking for 5-6 cycles over about 6 months (approx. 2 terms)*

Figure 1: Reflective Coaching Cycles

## Methods and Data

12 coaching pairs from across primary, secondary and post-compulsory phases were involved in this project. The breakdown of pairs is shown in table 1:

Phase	Number of Coaching Pairs
FE	5 coaching pairs – all from same College
Secondary	4 coaching pairs – 2 schools : 2 pairs in each school
Primary	3 coaching pairs – 3 schools : 1 pair in each school

**Table1: Location of coaching pairs**

For each pair there were separate semi structured interviews for both the coach and the teacher. Pre-project interviews occurred just before project started and focussed on prior experience and expectations. Post-project interviews considered the processes involved and a self-assessment of professional learning.

The reflective discussion between the teacher and coach following each

observation was audio recorded, transcribed and coded (between 2 and 6 per pair).

An unintended finding occurred when 2 secondary teachers additionally undertook self-recording without involving a coach. This offers a glimpse into the benefits of having a coach compared to not having one. These are included in figure 2 but with the recognition that this requires further investigation.

The project was subject to the BERA guidelines (BERA, 2011) where for example participation was voluntary, ownership of the recordings belongs solely to the teacher being observed and there was no link to performance management and appraisal.

## Findings and Discussion

The data indicates that the greatest professional learning gain for all teachers occurs when there has been sustained coaching over time. Moreover this is enhanced when the coach is in the lesson as well as commenting on the recordings. This is represented in figure 2.

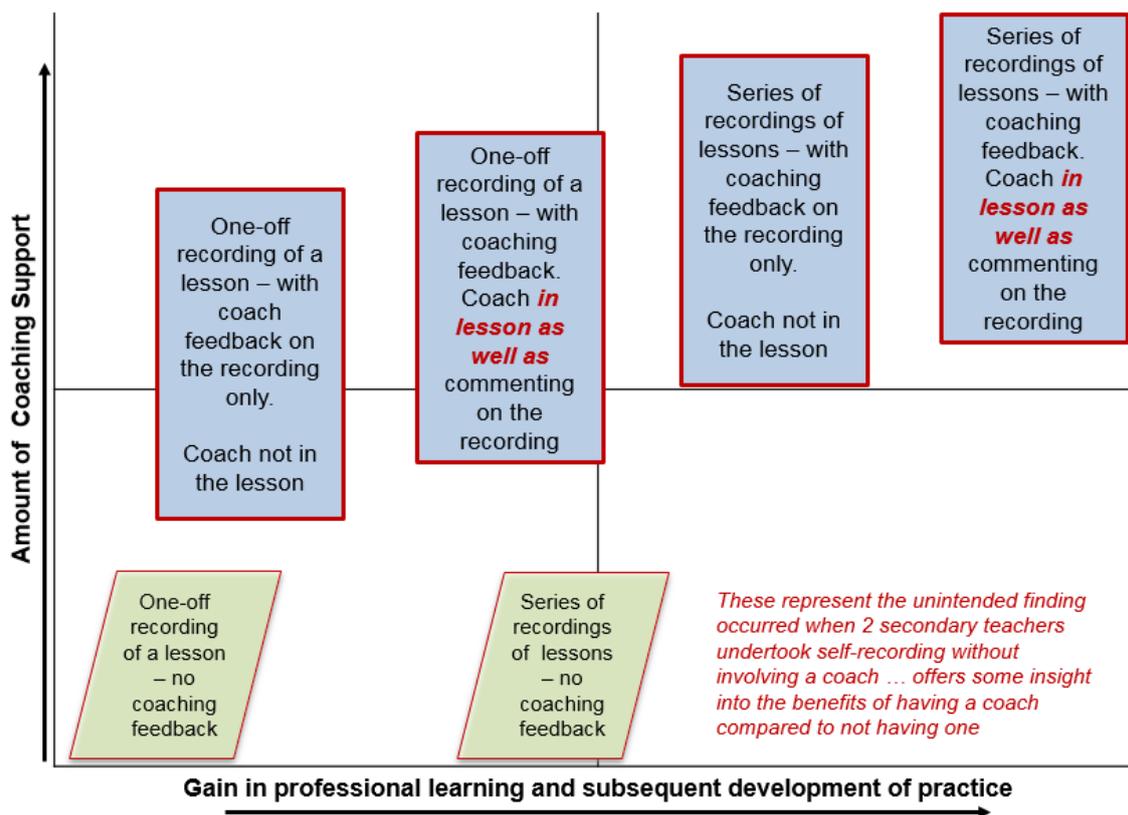


Figure 2: Impact of video mediated peer coaching

The data from the interviews, but particularly the audio recordings of the reflective learning conversations, indicate that observing recordings of a lesson with the support of a coach enhances awareness of classroom interactions. Video supports a recognition (noticing) of substantive classroom moments which leads to an identification and understanding of the appropriateness of the decisions made in the classroom thus leading to a more effective interpretation of events. Observing recordings of your own lesson with the support of a coach

enhances reflection and analysis and in doing so practice is changed.

Professional vision is a process that occurs while observing lessons that draws on teachers' theoretical knowledge to interpret and understand classroom situations (Sherin & Van Es, 2009).

The mediation of a coach supports for this process as theoretical ideas are contextualised. In this peer-based reflection there is a common framework for discussion. As one teacher said, "You look at a classroom together. You discuss what has been taught and what has been

*seen together. Your partner asks questions you hadn't even thought of."*

What appears to be occurring is that the conditions for effective professional conversations are created (Timperley, 2015). This is communal constructivism whereby teacher and coach collectively discuss, analyse and deconstruct observed practice

So what is happening? It appears from the data that peer-based observation appears to scaffold the reflective process.

Observing the same segments of recorded practice affords a common framework for discussion that doesn't occur in 'traditional' observations. There is evidence of metacognitive reflection; the unpicking of the decision making processes in both the planning and enactment of the lesson and this facilitates changes / refinements to classroom practice. However the effectiveness of the scaffolding and metacognitive reflection appears to be enhanced over time thus multiple observations rather than one-off occasions is important.

The post-project interviews with the coach included discussion on in-class observation simultaneously occurring with the recording (83% of observations were undertaken this way). The coaches identified a number of advantages of doing it this way. These included having more

reflective depth to the feedback discussion. The coaches commented that they could draw on aspects of the lesson not captured on video since the coach gets a "sense of smell" of the lesson. It overcame limited perspective of the camera especially if only a single camera is used.

The coaches also reported that undertaking this role was an enriching experience. Although it is a second-hand experience, they reported feeling an integral part of the process. They were able to reflect and make multiple connections with their own practice – a process described elsewhere as resonance.

### **Conclusion**

There were findings that were common to all 3 phases. Peer supported critical mediated viewing allowed for a meaningful understanding of what is viewed and this was often deconstructed in such a way that tacit knowledge was articulated and made explicit. Tacit knowledge was being constructed and deconstructed initially by the coaches but overtime by both coach and teacher, i.e. mediation occurs.

The video helps maintain focus on the details and ensures reality is discussed rather than partial recollections (Lofthouse

& Birmingham, 2010). Increasingly as the sessions progressed there was an increasing commonality of pedagogical language. This appears to be a powerful learning tool which promotes deeper reflection which in turn leads to constructive changes in practice.

This process also facilitated collaborative learning, in other words both teachers and coaches become learners. Collegiality is important as both teachers and coaches gain by having common experience.

Consequently classroom practice was changed and improved

The data only indicated one difference between the phases and that was a feature of the secondary pairings. They were drawn from within subject teams (Geography & History). Their learning conversations also included discussion about subject knowledge (not identified in the primary or FE pairings). What was identified were conversations around pedagogical content knowledge. This needs further exploration.

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# **A journey with the experienced other - the skills and attitude needed by the coachee on the *coaching journey*.**

## ***A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Dwight Weir***

Succession planning and the realisation that a number of Headteachers in the UK would reach retirement within a few years influenced the development of the country's flagship Headteacher training programme - Future Leaders. Coupled with the need to prepare senior leaders to take on headship roles within three years of the training is the vision to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and privileged students in schools across the UK. After a few hours of interviews, role plays and in-tray tasks I was selected for this intensive training programme. I saw this as an opportunity to accelerate to my dream of becoming a Headteacher as I wanted to walk in the footsteps of teachers who worked tirelessly to give me the opportunity to get an education, as I too was schooled in a deprived area – one of those children who was disadvantaged.

Leadership development training encourages the use of hands on practical training (Woyach and Cox 1997), is more effective if it's context specific (Creasy and Cotton 2004; Barnett 2001 and Kouzes and Posner's 1995) and promotes the use of a mentor or coach (Paterson and West-Burnham 2005) and is personalised (Owen 2007 and Patterson and West-Burnham 2005). Coaching played a significant role in this leadership development journey which proved very effective.

As participants, we were placed in groups according to where we geographically lived or worked. We participated in a catalogue of leadership development tasks which involved role playing, presentations, discussions and simulation activities in which we had to develop our own virtual school in roles as senior leaders in particular Headteachers. Undoubtedly this has been the most effective CPD I have ever had for a number of reasons but more so due to the coaching relationships within my coaching group and the one to one coaching experience I had with an experienced retired Headteacher – the experienced other, as coaches are not endemic to educational settings, but are experienced in their context of work.

Even though I have studied and written about leadership and leadership development on a number of occasions I haven't always had the time to exclusively link theory to practise. Being part of a coaching group propelled me further towards developing my own leadership and I dare say my coaching group as well. Coaching relationships can be likened to a journey to self-discovery and self-realisation.

Coaching was a new concept for me and some others in the group, moreover group coaching. The experience gained as part of the group coaching enabled us to collaborate

professionally at a non-superficial level due to the conventions of group coaching which became apparent throughout the coaching experience. Learnings from the group coaching appears to be performance focus (McGurk 2012) as there was a focus on development orientation, effective feedback, performance orientation and planning/goal setting. From this experience it was evident that the growth expected in group coaching is collective as the outcome will be achieved as a result of the collective sum. Whilst participating in group coaching a number of variables became evident during the process;

**Collective Growth** – the collective process we used as a coaching group to develop our virtual school was dependent on a combined effort. This might not be the same for all coaching groups but can be expected when group coaching participants are working towards an agreed outcome, knowing that the progress of the group is dependent on the progress of all.

**Cooperative Reflection** – as we developed our virtual school we regularly reflected on our progress and the impact we were having as a team. We always evaluated our efforts with the intention to improve. This was reflection with a purpose.

**Collective Honesty and Openness** – we benefited from this process as we knew that collectively only honesty and openness truly informed each of us on our individual and collective process. The idea that feedback is a gift kept us open to feedback knowing that gifts can be returned or embraced. The relationships that we developed meant that as

we fed-back to each other we respected the feedback given, knowing it was honest.

In addition to group coaching we also had one to one coaching sessions as part of the training. This approach was more intense as the focus was more on the individual and our areas for development. The one to one coaching was most effective as mature coaching (McGurk 2012) could be considered was in action. This level of coaching involved powerful questioning, using ideas, shared decision- making and encouraging problem-solving.

The learnings from this journey has allowed me to craft certain skills and attitudes. Not much has been said about the behaviour of the coachee, my experience working with a coach has altered my behaviour and I developed new skills and attitudes which I present as the skills needed by coachees.

**You answer your own questions** - In answering your own questions, you are often engaged in a radical thinking process, examining your challenge and context and then find the best way through the challenge. The thinking environment is a philosophy of communication developed by Kline (2009), which enables people to think for themselves and think better together. It is a simple, rigorous and radical set of processes. Coaches don't answer your questions but provide you with the means to think through and find answers yourself.

**You take more risks** – It's through risk taking that you know if your ideas will work. On the

journey to leadership success – radical decisions are made. You make these decisions as you know you'll be able to reflect and discuss your thought process with the experienced other - the coach.

***You become more reflective*** – a great amount of the discussions with the coach is reflective. Researchers such as Muir and Beswick (2007) suggest that there are different levels of reflection that can take place, which move from descriptive to critical forms. It is the critical reflections that help us transform our practices.

***You must embrace quiet moments*** – embrace quiet moments as you think through your own hurdles. In mentoring the quiet moments are filled with answers. Within the coaching relationship you don't need answers you need a sounding board - the experienced other - the coach to discuss your ideas. Here you find out for yourself.

***You become open to criticism*** – Coaches are frank and open. In coaching relationships you are told the brutal truth about your observed movements, dialogues, expressions and attitude. Feedback is a gift. You can return the gift. But on these occasions, you keep the gift, as in true coaching relationships trust is the base from which change is realised.

A lot can be gained throughout coaching journeys and relationships. What became more and more apparent was that coaches don't give answers but feed with questions which enable meaningful thought and self-discovered answers to challenges. This is a

skill only the experienced other could exhibit flawlessly and empower the coachee to unravel options and find answers. I describe this process as a journey as this relationship develops gradually after establishing trust and an openness to feedback from your coach. I was able to achieve my first headship post in line with the objectives of the Future Leaders programme. It is appropriate to say that this success would not have been possible without the experienced other – the coach.

Coaching relationships should be for a proposed period of time. It should be anticipated that the experienced other will equip coachees with the skills to enable their success then release them to grow. I migrated to the Middle East, consequently my coaching relationship discontinued before the agreed end. This forced greater dependence on the skills I already developed in readiness for whatever the new experience aboard would bring. Coaching doesn't necessarily prepare you for relocation, it prepares you to deal with challenges you will face in your career. Consequently, coaching prepares one for more than a specific context, it allows for by-products of skills to be developed and used. It became evident that two by-products of reflection are empathy and respect. Through meaningful reflection you spend quality time thinking through decisions you've made and will make and as a result you are given the opportunity to understand yourself and others you lead – understanding the stakeholders in education is vital as understanding influences decision making.

The culture in the Middle East is heavily influenced by religion. Gender separation also plays a huge part in society. In addition to this, I lead a team of predominantly British professionals who deliver the British curriculum to a multicultural group of pupils. It

is complex – therefore meaningful reflection and its by-products; empathy and respect continue to be foremost in my leadership to deliver a truly British educational experience in an Arabic context to individuals from a multiplicity of countries.

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# The Changing Landscape of Teacher Development in the UK

## *A Dialogue Thinkpiece between Richard Holme and Bob Burstow*

### Background

Bob Burstow (BB) qualified as a teacher in the 1970s and has been heavily involved in teacher development and research ever since; he recently published *Effective*

*Teacher Development*

(<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/effective-teacher-development-9781474231855/>).

Richard Holme (RH) trained to teach in the 2000s and now works as a lecturer in education with a research interest in teacher-initiated professional development. In this discussion, designed to act as a think-piece, RH questions BB on the ways in which teacher PD has developed and where it may go next.

### Interview

RH: Your latest book *Effective Teacher Development* proposes that PD can be viewed along a continua, ranging from 'craft' to 'professional'. Your own initial teacher qualification was very much at the 'professional' end of this scale, whereas in contrast I trained via the Graduate Training Programme (GTP) which was very much 'craft' focussed. Given these quite different approaches to teacher

learning do you see teaching as a vocation or a profession, and does this impact on how teachers are trained or mentored?

BB: I use the image of continua deliberately to put over the idea that the type of initial training is not a binary choice – and the same, I think, is true of the profession/vocation discussion. It may be considered to be both and there is then the possibility of a very wide variation of blends or mixes. Additionally, 'profession' itself is a word that entertains many definitions. As to your last phrase, the impact surely is going to depend on the beliefs and aims of those designing and carrying out each initial training programme. The risk then (if we can call it a risk) is that a teacher trained initially through a school-focussed approach who only receives mentoring in the same approach may never have a chance to experience the opportunities offered along the other route – and the opposite is also the case. It raises the question as to whether this 'risk' of becoming skewed is greater now, with the increase of large

MATs with highly specific approaches to training, both initial and continuing, as opposed to the slightly looser college/LEA/professional association structure in which I developed.

RH: So I wonder if this variety and breadth of experience may be partly due to the range of routes into teaching in England. And interestingly, Scotland now seems to be moving in the same direction. Do you think this will impact on how these teachers are supported (such as through mentoring and coaching) and respond to development opportunities in future?

BB: The temptation is to view this return to practice-focussed initial training as a return to the previous centuries, where people 'grew into' teaching, but that is too simplistic. Once again, from my point of view, achieving a balance between the two extremes is the desirable outcome. Where this is not achieved during the initial phase, then it might well be addressed, at each individual teacher's level, during the ongoing professional learning opportunities. Which I spend quite a lot of the book discussing. The object is to avoid the two traps of 'over-parochialism' for the extreme practice-focus trainee and 'over-distancing' for the

overly theoretical approach. Responsibility for this cannot just be for each individual teacher. The SLT in every school must carry a part of that load. It is surely, ideally, down to them to nurture their staff – and that ought to mean achieving a balance between furthering the individual career and improving their school. Neither of these, I suggest, will be done by a denial of professional learning – or by adopting a very arrow definition of professional learning (limiting it for example to addressing specific, local, short-term needs).

RH: Collaboration and co-operation must be important then. I would also agree a narrow view of what is, or isn't professional learning, can be limiting. We also seem to have witnessed, over the last decade, a shift toward teachers 'owning' their own PD; whether this is through development of Professional Learning Networks (PLNs), social media - especially Twitter, or EdCamps in the US and TeachMeets, which originated in Scotland. How do you think this might impact on teacher learning and development over the next 20 years?

BB: ...and of course this is also the turning of yet another cycle. I was a young

science teacher during the 1970s and remember with great fondness the choices on offer: School Council, Nuffield – and even the chance (which I took) to become the examiner of your own designed 16+ examinations (the Mode 3 CSE). So, we had ownership of our own professional development, curriculum design and exam design (setting, marking and moderation). This certainly affected my future thinking, and attitude to the increasing centralisation of these aspects of my professional life. I welcome these recent developments and am full of admiration for the enormous energy and curiosity shown by the current generation of young teachers. I hope it does have an impact. It gives me great hope for the healthy future of the profession.

RH: I'm pleased to hear teachers haven't changed too much then, and reinvention does seem a common theme in education! I suppose this is where historical contextual knowledge is so valuable. Given your experiences over the last 40 years, do you have a particular wish for the future of teacher education and professional development?

BB: I think I've covered this in almost every response so far! I wish for a re-recognition of the existing skills, intelligence and professionalism of the teaching population. They should be treated as competent adults, who have the ability and desire to make sensible choices in their own developmental pathways. They will still need to have options from which to choose. They will still need to have mentor/coach/facilitators but ones with whom they can have truly professional conversations, so as to focus on achieving yet another balance – between their own personal development, the continued improvement of their current school and that of the whole national education system.

RH: And trust seems to be a crucial factor, facilitated by dialogue, which will ultimately support teachers in developing greater professional agency. Well, thank you for taking the time to answer these questions; this has certainly been a valuable professional conversation for me, and hopefully others too.

## Team teaching strengthens professional growth

*A research working paper by Perunka Sirpa and Erkkilä Raija*

### Abstract

Team teaching is a pedagogical model, that promotes the teachers' professional growth. Team teaching supports collaborative learning, co-creating information, and collaborative evaluation. This article will present the key factors of team teaching. The viewpoint presented in the article is based on self-study approach, in which research is conducted by studying one's own practices. The writers of this article have conducted team teaching at Oulu University of Applied Sciences, School of Professional Teacher Education in Finland, for several years, and they have written down their experiences on a collaborative writing platform. Several benefits of team teaching arose from the writings, and as a whole, team teaching was a rewarding experience to the authors. Four key factors of team teaching emerged: active participation, shared expertise, openness, and self-knowledge, and self-regulatory skills. At its best, team teaching fortifies one's personal teacher identity and advances professional growth throughout a teacher's whole career.

Keywords: Team teaching, collaborative teaching, collaborative learning, self-study, professional growth

### Characteristics of Team Teaching

We will first focus on the conceptualization of team teaching. Different definitions of team teaching share the perception that teachers or lecturers work together, planning and executing a certain, pedagogical module. Nevin et al. (2009), who have analysed studies about team teaching, state that team teaching has been perceived in many ways. Because of that, teachers' team teaching varies in practice, and that transpires as different kinds of responsibilities and how the tasks are distributed between the teachers.

In team teaching, for example, special experts can be utilised, and expert-novice model can be employed; the expert takes a greater responsibility of the teaching and the novice teacher implements a certain portion of the teaching. In team teaching, the scarce resources can also be distributed in a different manner — teachers can either divide or separate groups based on which furthers the

learning situation in progress the most. It seems that the variety of methods and policies have resulted in different, adjacent concepts. The concept of team teaching is also used in parallel with co-teaching, collaborative teaching, parallel teaching, and coaching.

Baeten and Simons (2014) have classified five different types of team teaching, of which, in their opinion, only one fits into the characteristics of team teaching. That type is called teaming model by Baeten and Simons. In that type, the team teachers share an equal amount of responsibility, from planning to the evaluation, and in the teaching situations reciprocal interaction and dialogue are common traits.

We think that team teaching is a suitable model in the framework of collaborative learning. Team teaching executes the current socio-constructivist learning theory, which is based on the idea of communal creating and sharing of knowledge. In practice, for example, a teaching situation, all participants bring their own knowledge to collaborative reflection. Everyone has a chance to reflect their own and others' experiences, and analyse even hidden perceptions. Collaborative reflection enables the

participants to learn from others and on-going professional growth.

### **The present study**

Our study of team teaching began in 2015, and it was designed and carried out in Finland, in the School of Professional Teacher Education, a unit of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences. This unit offers the teacher's pedagogical studies of 60 ECTS.

The starting point for the study was our desire to understand our own practices as team teachers. In Oulu School of Professional Teacher Education, team teaching has been the current work method for educators already for several years. In our own practice, team teaching refers to the collaboration of two or more teachers, who think that dialogical and simultaneous collaborative teaching, shared planning, and shared responsibility of the learning process and student is essential. Shared responsibility and dialogue extend to collaborate reflection and evaluation afterwards, and the planning of the next learning cycle.

### **Methodology and analysis of data**

We decided to scrutinise team teaching through our own experiences, because

team teaching has become a part of mundane life through action. We started the evaluation of our team teaching by free-form writing. We wrote our thoughts on a shared writing platform (Google Docs) that enabled us to read the other's ideas and comment them directly. Our aim was to bring forward our ideas, thoughts, activities, problems, etc. The platform was open for approximately two months and it was a time to stop and look deeply our process. Doing this kind of reflective writing is familiar to us. According to Zeichner (1999) as teachers critically reflect on their practice, they strive to make sense of their teaching and participate consciously and creatively in their growth and development.

Accurately expressed the research data is composed of our common diary and the comments that we made to it. The data can be described to be very personal and authentic. It was after analysing the data when we came across with the self-study –theory. Self-study method can be defined simply as a working together with others to achieve a particular goal, and it is said to be multiple and multifaceted (Samaras & Freese, 2006).

Self-study scholars come from various theoretical orientations and conceptually

frame their studies accordingly. Also, self-study scholars conduct their research with multiple and diverse qualitative methods (LaBoskey, 2004). Several researches (e.g Han et al., 2017; Kelchtermans & Hamilton 2004) point out that self-study approach is suitable for educators, who want to study their own work and to increase the quality and depth of understanding one's own practice. Thus, the self-study method has been discovered to be an essential tool for professional growth and improvement. Samaras and Freese (2006) point out that self-study research requires openness and vulnerability, since the focus is on the self, and it is designed to lead to the reframing and re-conceptualisation of the role of the teacher.

Though self-study may be individualistic and situation-based at first, the studies reach a collective, communal level, where the teacher-researchers reflect their experiences through research literature. Self-study is not done in isolation, but it rather requires collaboration for building new understandings through dialogue and validation of findings. Research uses dialogue as a coming-to-know process, which requires a strong relationship among researchers, data, and ideas. (Pinnegar & Hamilton 2009.)

Self-study proved to be the kind of methodological frame that suited our study. Our performances as team teachers required ongoing, open discussion, and our data based on our genuine will to write down our experiences. With the help of our journal, we were able to discern our own thoughts and actions as team teachers. Self-study data is often personal, qualitative and versatile, and the aim is to scrutinise and support one's professional growth.

For the data analyses, we first explored the data by reading it thorough many times. After reading the material carefully, we investigated and discussed together the emerging themes. Final themes were extracted from the data.

Data analysis resulted four central themes of team teaching, which we named as: active participation, shared expertise, openness, and self-knowledge and self-regulatory skills.

After discovering the themes, we named them as key factors of team teaching. Then we investigated the relationships between the key factors further by going back to data, and at the same time, discussing our findings and experiences. We discovered that the relationships

between the key factors are essential in the process, and the relationships enable successful teal teaching.

### **Results; Key factors for team teaching**

The main results of our study are presented in Figure 1. We will explain the key factors, and relationships between them, since they compose our main results.

Key factors for team teaching are active participation, shared expertise, openness, and, self-knowledge and self-regulatory skills.

Active participation and shared expertise together mean that both team teachers are really involved in whole process, from co-planning the curriculum to execution and evaluation. In successful team teaching, active participation and shared expertise enable reciprocal equality throughout the learning process.

Shared expertise means that participants are ready to share their own expertise and knowledge, and to gain new perspectives from the other participants. Openness means that participants understand that there are different ways of doing things. Together these key factors create an atmosphere that facilitates fruitful,

# Key factors for team teaching

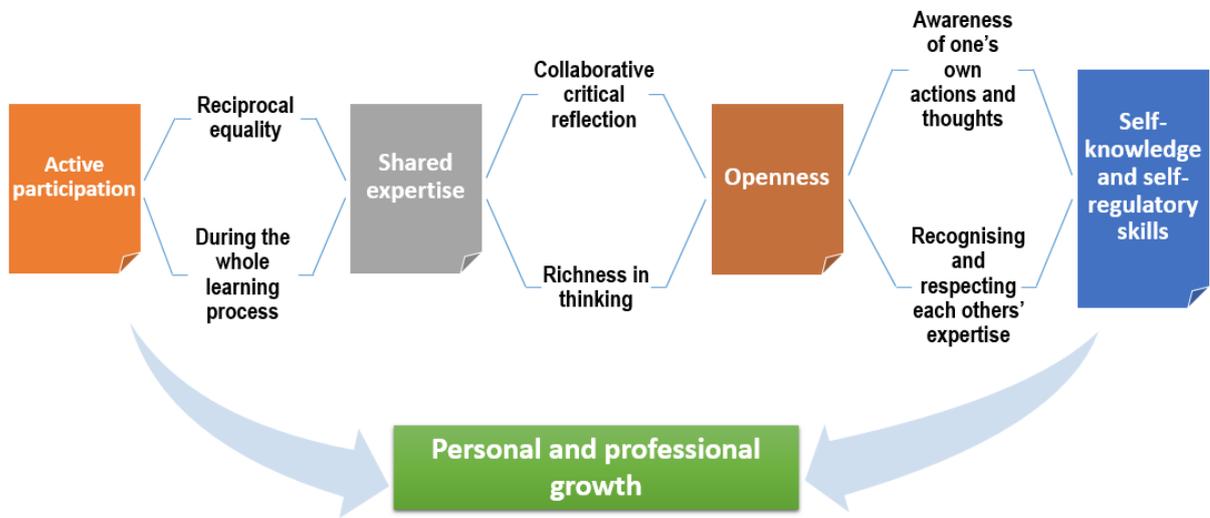


Figure 1. Key factors for team teaching.

collaborative critical reflection, and richness in thinking.

Self-knowledge and self-regulation skills means that one knows one's own ways of thinking and acting, and how to regulate them. Openness combined with self-knowledge and self-regulatory skills means that the educators are aware of their own actions and are able to evaluate their own goals and procedures in relation to the ongoing activity.

Dialogical collaboration requires good self-knowledge and self-regulatory skills. At its best, these factors strengthen one's

personal identity as an educator, and advance professional growth throughout one's career.

## Discussion

We started to study our own experiences in team teaching by researching and reflecting our own pedagogical thinking and work procedures. Our research produced four key factors and three elements that are connected to each other (see figure 1). Together these produce same kind of rewarding experiences for teachers as for example Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury (2015) and Garran et al. (2015) note. They state that team teaching encourages creativity, deepens collegial

relationships, and helps to build community through the sharing of insights, materials, the points of view, and techniques. Through regular co-planning meetings, teachers engaged in learning and developed important knowledge for teaching.

According to our study successful team teaching creates experiences of active participation for everyone who has been involved in team teaching and team teaching also supports teachers' professional and personal growth. According to Garran et al., (2015) the more professors team teach together, the better they are at communicating, understanding, negotiating, and accepting one another's styles. Trust, which is also one key component in team teaching, develops over time and is based on partners' willingness and ability to be open and authentic with one another. Team

teaching brings out a teacher's tacit and practical knowledge. (see Baeten & Simons 2014.)

What is our current perception of team teaching? In our opinion, team teaching can be implemented in many ways, and the practice will unveil the best method for a teacher. Team teaching, as we have presented in this article, can be challenging for many different reasons. Through our own, positive experiences, and based on studies, it is easy to state that team teaching will proliferate. Team teaching rewards in multiple ways. We also agree that it has had significance in our professional growth. Openness and shared expertise with confidential atmosphere are essential features to produce dialogical relationship among teachers. In that way, it has had significance in our professional growth.

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## What should a teacher-educator framework look like in the United Arab Emirates?

### *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Shaun Robison*

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is geographically located in the Arabian Gulf next to the State of Qatar and opposite the Republic of Iran. It is still a relatively young country (Dickison, 2012). Nearly 90% of the UAE's population is made up of foreign workers. Islam is the national religion and the country is separated into seven distinct emirates. Each emirate has its own government that reports to the federal government. In the time that I have worked in the UAE, I have worked in public and private sector in Abu Dhabi, which is the nation's capital; Al Ain, which is the fourth largest city and has the nation's highest population of locals; Dubai, which is seen as the country business capital and most 'westernized' city; Sharjah which is the nation's home of Islam, and Ras Al Khaimah, which is a northern emirate close to Iran. Each emirate is distinctive from the rest, and has its own education policies and regulatory framework. I have worked as a teacher-educator in all of them and grappled with the cultural, social, and economical challenges that each one faces.

In this environment, changes to regulations happen very quickly, and the implications of this can be seen within schools. Taylor (2014) argued that the complexity of being a teacher-educator is challenging, as the demands of the role *"cannot be pinned down with certainty"* (Taylor, 2014:102). Managing un-certainty is a disposition that I have attempted to learn in my time here. Not only do we need to equip teachers to operate within the environment but we also have to equip ourselves.

My role has been shaped by the contexts I have worked in, working alongside teachers whose learning has been shaped by the wider context, and their smaller, micro-contexts. This suggests that the role of teacher-educators is complex, and the skill set required to define my role is multi-layered.

International, private schools vary in their curriculum, price point, management, student body and teaching staff. As the United Arab Emirates attempts to move

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away from oil dependency, education has been central to the UAE's reform in an attempt to diversify its economy. In Dubai, there are 189 private schools offering a mix of 19 different curricula including Indian, UK, US, Canadian, International Baccalaureate, Pakistani, Japanese, German, French, Filipino and others.

There is a uniformed inspection system that sits above these schools, and school inspections happen on a yearly basis with student attainment and progress prioritised above other indicators. School inspection judgements are also linked to the education cost index (ECI) and the school inspection rating determines how much a school can increase its fees. It has been argued that the journey that the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (Education Regulator of Dubai) is taking, to regulate a completely market-led system is significant *"because it is demonstrating how innovative governance designs can help a public institution steer an expanding private education sector towards quality improvements"* (The World Bank, 2016).

In survey I conducted in 2016 with 600 teachers across the UAE, 49% were working on 2-year contracts; 7% were on 3-year contracts and 29% were on 1-year contracts. The rest were not working on any kind of contract. Worryingly, 73% of

teachers said that they would consider leaving their current role to another country, if a better one came up and 43% were actively seeking another job.

Managing uncertainty is a critical part of professional learning for teachers within this environment.

How does a teacher-educator navigate the social and cultural challenges *and* engage a teaching workforce that is increasingly mobile? The solution, much like the role, is complex. There is certainly a gap in the knowledge of this field within the United Arab Emirates. Timperley (2008) states that teacher professional learning is shaped by the context of which the teachers operates within, and *"is strongly influenced by the wider school culture and the community and society in which the school is situated"* (Timperley, 2008:6). I would also argue that international school literature is perhaps not defined enough for teacher-educators within the UAE to use as a reference point.

### **So what should a teacher-educator framework look like in the United Arab Emirates?**

My post-graduate research is nearly complete and it attempts to address this very question. The initial findings suggest

that awareness of self and others *within* context, and managing uncertainty are critical factors at the core of this framework.

The recent announcement that every teacher must apply for a 'teacher license' and complete a certain number of pre-designed courses has shifted the professional learning landscape overnight. Teachers *now* need to navigate an additional regulation to justify their

positions despite the fact that school principals have already appointed them, whilst deciding what their immediate and medium term future might look like in the country. Teacher-educators need to immerse themselves in this myriad of challenges in order to maintain some layer of certainty within the sector, whilst creating professional knowledge that will enable others to do so as well.

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# Building bridges: enhancing mentoring skills, knowledge and practice through an online course

*A Practice Insight Working Paper by Richard Pountney and Alison Grasmeder*

## Abstract

This paper outlines the rationale for an open online course for teachers, *Enhance your Mentoring Skills*, aimed at addressing the UK National Mentor Standards (2016), and describes how this was put into practice. The professional needs of school-based mentors and how these were met in the design for learning are examined alongside a consideration of the efficacy of the curriculum and associated pedagogy of the course. Drawing on the evaluations of 73 teachers who have completed the course in 2017 and their contributions to individual and communal learning activities the paper develops an impression of mentoring practice that represents mentors' *theories-in-use*. Teachers' accounts of the value of the course suggest considerable effect on their levels of confidence and some evidence of impact on their mentoring practice. However, findings also indicate that participants' understandings of their mentoring role lacks a clearly defined model for mentoring relationships and that mentors welcome greater opportunity to

reflect on their practice and to share this with others discursively. The paper discusses the extent to which the course offers a bridge between mentors' wishes and intentions and how they are realised in practice. Recommendations for future iterations of the course are made, with proposals to develop this case study further, as an instrumental form of theory building (Stake, 1995), in order to better understand how mentors understand and develop their practice.

## Introduction and context

The National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (DfE, [2016](#)) were developed in response to the Carter Review ([2015](#)) with the aim of facilitating greater coherence and consistency in the practice of school-based mentors in order to support the training and development of trainee teachers. The standards were seen as a key catalyst for raising the profile of mentoring within educational settings to ensure that support is offered to those embarking on their teaching

careers, as well as those within the early years of their professional development. While the typical format of professional development for mentors is face-to-face meetings the development of web-based technology has seen a greater range of opportunities for mentors. The *Enhance your Mentoring Skills* open online course is one model for this.

### **Problematising the professional development of school-based mentors**

The literature recognises the important transitional phase of beginning to teach as a complex stage of teacher learning (Avalos, 2011). The emphasis on mentoring as an important factor in teachers' professional development (Hobson et al., 2009) is underlined by what mentors bring to the induction process, and also how they contribute to the identity formation of beginning teachers (Devos, 2010). Threaded through the experience that teachers derive from their practice is the knowledge of what professionalism explicitly 'looks like'; an understanding of how to apply professional values, attitudes and behaviours appropriately; a skill set that enables them to fulfil their roles; and finally attributes that are agreed upon as underpinning all professions. This is a development model of mentoring (Furlong and Maynard, 1995).

In the autumn of 2016 the Sheffield Institute of Education (SIOE) reviewed the mentor training provided across all four phases of teacher education and found the focus of activity to be primarily on the mechanics and documentation of mentoring trainee and newly qualified teachers. Typically, mentor training takes the form of half-day meetings, focusing on quality assurance and operational and procedural processes and know-how. A focus group of 50 senior mentor coordinators in November 2016 expressed the need for '*materials that de-mystify the standards so that they don't become overwhelming*' and help for mentees to match practice to standards, suggesting that mentees look for both a supportive mentoring relationship and practical advice for teaching practice (Hobson, 2016).

Following this review the SIOE agreed to support mentors' professional learning through the development of a free open education resource for mentors (<https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/mentorshooc> see Figure 1). This, is in concert with the aims of the Mentor Standards (DfE, 2016) to contribute to the building of a culture of coaching and mentoring in schools, in which 'the standards have a resonance beyond the training period and into teachers' early professional development,

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where high-quality mentoring and coaching are just as valuable' (DfE, 2016, p. 3).

The course objectives (see Table 2 below) included developing familiarity with and understanding of the mentor standards and the associated competences; and the critical reflection on mentors' own

mentoring practice. To date 730 teachers have registered for the course. Prior mentoring experience ranged from none to greatly experienced senior mentors with responsibility for overseeing and moderating the work of other mentors. Significantly 41% of those registering on the course had had no previous mentor training.

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Figure 1: Web banner for online course blog

### A design for professional learning

The curriculum of the course was mapped to the standards and involves the completion of 5 workbooks, estimated to take 25 hours to complete in total. These are shown in Table 1 along with the relevant standard and indicative activities. Delivered online via an online e-portfolio tool, *Pebbledpad*, each workbook comprises: a video introduction and outline of the workbook topic; a reader on the workbook topic; a set of case studies related to the topic; a set of individual, and

some communal, online activities (e-tivities) to be completed by the participant (including reflections and discussion of the case studies and the reader in relation to the participant's own mentoring practice); and a self-evaluation against the standard covered in the workbook. In addition, a one-hour, live webinar (recorded) was run each workbook by the workbook leader from the team, some of which had invited speakers. There was an option for participants to work towards *Open Badges* and a *Certificate of Completion*, as a

reward and recognition pathway, for those who successfully completed the workbooks.

Completing workbooks involves a combination of ‘closed’ individual activities (reflections and self-evaluations) that can only be seen by course tutors when the mentor chose to submit the workbook online; and ‘open’ communal activities shared in ‘open’ spaces online that everybody could see. For example, shared online activities (e-tiviites) for workbook 4 included an online forum discussion

around participants’ experience of giving difficult feedback; contributions to an ‘Answer Garden’ ([‘How do you know good teaching when you see it?’](#)); a Tweetchat around [‘What part can mentors play in developing teaching quality and effectiveness?’](#) prompted by a [blogpost](#) on the topic; and a Top Tips Padlet on [giving feedback on teaching observations](#).

Together these contributions are an indication of the participating mentors’ understanding of the mentoring process and collectively they provide rich accounts of how this is enacted in practice.

Workbook	Mentor Standard (overview)	Focus (indicative content)
1. Introduction and Induction.	Overview of course and materials.	<i>What are the advantages and drawbacks of being a mentor?</i>
2. Modelling & Developing Professional Relationships.	<b>Standard 1. Personal Qualities:</b> Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and empathising with the challenges a mentee faces.	<i>What strategies do you use to create a good working relationship with mentees?</i> Case Study 1: dealing with unprofessional mentee.
3. Developing Mentees’ Professionalism.	<b>Standard 3. Professionalism.</b> Induct the mentee into professional norms and values, helping them to understand the importance of the role and responsibilities of teachers in society.	<i>What do mentees find difficult about developing professional values, knowledge and skills?</i> Case Study 2: Mentors talking about supporting mentees to be professional.
4. Supporting & Guiding Mentees and Mentors.	<b>Standard 2. Teaching:</b> Support mentees to develop their teaching practice in order to set high expectations and to meet the needs of all learners.	<i>How can you use reflection on critical incidents to help the mentee progress?</i> Case Study 3: Giving feedback and discussing critical incidents
5. Mentees and Professional Development.	<b>Standard 4. Self-development and working in partnership.</b> Develop own professional knowledge, skills and understanding and invest time in developing a good working relationship within partnerships.	<i>Consider CPD that works for you and plan future CPD</i> Case Study 4: becoming a mentor and the stages to becoming a senior mentor.

Table 1: course structure of workbooks, mentor standards and exemplar focus

**Evaluation: making sense of what mentors say about mentoring**

The SHOOC created space to think in a metacognitive way, to challenge established ideas and assumptions about mentoring, and then to be able to use this learning to impact directly on subsequent mentoring practices, something highly

valued by participants: *‘the opportunity to reflect on what mentoring is, why we do it and how we do it, has been invaluable in boosting my confidence and in helping me move forward in my role’* (secondary mentor). The extent to which course objectives were met is shown in Table 2.

Course Objective	Degree to which met
Identify the mentor standards and understand their relevance and application to mentoring practice.	Confidence levels were improved in all standards, with clear indications to which standards need to further addressed. Many reported not knowing the standards and how the course helped.
Understand the set of knowledge and skills that constitute competence in mentoring and how these can be developed.	Improved confidence in all areas with the need to challenge mentees highlighted by mentors themselves. Clearer understanding of differences between coaching and mentoring are emergent.
Reflect critically on your own mentoring practice and understand how to identify gaps and weaknesses in your current practice and that of others and to use this knowledge to improve mentoring practice.	Strong insights evidenced into mentor’s current practice and plans developed to develop this further. Self-reflections were powerful means of identifying gaps and needs.
Participate effectively in professional communities of mentors in order to share individual professional practice and to draw from the practice of others.	Mentors reported the value of sharing practice in the forums and seeing others’ contributions to communal activities.

Table 2: How course objectives were met

Evaluations and comments from the 3 iterations of the SHOOC to date indicate what the participants think they need to develop their mentoring practice, summarised here:

- a space/opportunity to be able to reflect deeply
- a collaborative community where ideas can be shared and developed
- a structure for learning and access to expertise
- a variety of activities to engage with, including case studies which provide context
- differentiation to meet the needs of all participants including: flexibility about when to engage, freedom to choose what elements to engage with and limited deadlines



- links to Continuous Professional Development/appraisal targets within school
- a chance to be able to apply the tips from the course to current mentoring roles

Findings also indicate that participants' understandings of their mentoring role lacks a clearly defined model for mentoring relationships and that mentors welcome greater opportunity to reflect on their practice and to share this with others discursively.

### Discussion

The ability to network, to share, reflect upon and learn from other's experiences is key to any form of learning and is essential if this learning is to have impact on professional practice. The cumulative approach to learning through experience is linked to the notion of teacher growth that is constituted through the evolving practices of the teacher, which are iteratively refined through a process of 'enaction and reflection' (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002: p955). Enaction, in these terms, distinguishes a form of teacher activity that involves the putting into action of a new idea or a new belief or a newly encountered practice. The form of 'reflection in the SHOOC aspires to Dewey's ideal of "active, persistent and careful consideration" (Dewey, 1910/1991,

p. 6) but further exploration of how teachers modify and change their practice as a result of mentoring is needed.

Teachers are often influenced by established repertoires of practice that produce embedded and reinforced assumptions about what works in teaching and learning. Mentors, as experienced teachers, are subject to this influence and are at risk of reproducing the models that appear to work for them. The common-sense understanding of what works in practice, acting as mental maps or schemas that guide practice and its development, involves the idea of theories-in-use (Argyris and Schön, 1974) that teachers apply everyday in their practice. Teachers often espouse the principles of their practice without understanding or fully articulating or clarifying the concepts and constructs that underlie and underpin them. Further development of a framework for understanding and modelling how teachers develop their mentoring practice and how this affects that of mentees, is required.

The positive feedback on the value of the open online course has encouraged us to run it again and registration opens on 1st May 2018 (<https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/mentorshooc>).

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## Book Review of

**Gilchrist, G. (2018) *Practitioner Enquiry: Professional Development with Impact for Teachers, Schools and Systems* Abingdon: Routledge**

**By Rachel Linfield**

*Practitioner Enquiry: Professional Development with Impact for Teachers, Schools and Systems* is a concise, accessible book which explores thoroughly the concept, and the practical aspects, of 'practitioner enquiry' for both teachers and school leaders. It provides valuable insights, in a positive, 'user-friendly' way. Throughout the book there are inspirational phrases which encourage practitioners to give serious consideration to the benefits for starting practitioner enquiry.

The first chapter, entitled 'Why practitioner enquiry?', outlines the qualities which distinguish practitioner enquiry from other enquiry models such as 'action research', 'collaborative professional enquiry' and 'teacher learning communities'. Initially, the discussion seemed pedantic – all the iterations of enquiry have value, does the name really matter? But, by the end of the chapter, the reader is aware that in the same way one chooses a specific cooking method for food preparation, it is important when carrying out enquiry for professional development, to select a method that is appropriate and the purpose of which is understood fully by all involved.

Throughout the book there are useful points to consider, often based on the professional experience of the author (former headteacher, leader and researcher) which combine practical thought rooted in theory. At times the statements appear obvious yet, when re-read, they are key for implementing successful practitioner enquiry. For example, the author suggests that the role of school leaders/principals, when introducing practitioner enquiry, is 'to manage' in order to avoid teachers being 'overwhelmed'. This emphasis on 'managing' rather than 'leading' creates a pleasing feeling of support. When outlining practitioner enquiry as 'each individual enquiring into their own practice' the need for it to be 'situated within a collective and collaborative culture, focused on development and growth of all, and for all' is stressed. (p. 50) The importance, when carrying out practitioner enquiry, of starting 'from where you are' and for activity to be 'proportionate, manageable and reasonable' is highlighted. (p.62)

Case studies, taken from a range of contexts, provide helpful insights into the benefits that can come from practitioner enquiry. Chapter 7 outlines in detail the

author's experiences, over a four year period, for a whole-school approach to practitioner enquiry. The description illustrates the time and effort taken by both leaders and teachers; the impact on teachers and their pupils and, also, the value that came from working closely with Dr Gillian Robinson from Edinburgh University who provided key guidance and support. The university/school partnership was clearly beneficial. It was good to learn, within the case study, that the 'power of slowing down and giving enough time for deep, embedded change to occur' was valued (p. 91).

Chapter 8 gives four, succinct case studies of practitioner enquiry set within Scottish schools, three from primary school settings and one secondary. All the case studies reflect positive impact on professional development but, also, highlight potential challenges and frustrations that may be experienced within schools. The concern that practitioner enquiry may be more difficult within a larger secondary school setting is understood but, as suggested by the author, 'the scales are larger in secondary settings but the principles, and the gains, remain the same'. (p. 109) A further example of practitioner enquiry from a secondary school would have been welcome.

The concluding chapter provides further motivation for carrying out practitioner enquiry. It celebrates the impact on professional development and children's learning that can arise from practitioner enquiry. The inclusion of posters and data within the appendices are a useful illustration of the practitioner enquiries discussed in the case studies.

In summary, *Practitioner Enquiry: Professional Development with Impact for Teachers, Schools and Systems* is recommended for teachers, coaches and leaders who are willing to 'approach practitioner enquiry with an *open mind*, prepared to accept what it throws up, and equally prepared to make changes ... when required.' (p. 57) It is a book that benefits from being read 'cover to cover' and then being dipped into later for discussion and debate. Whilst features such as case studies beyond Scotland and, a list of acronyms might have been helpful, this might have detracted from the compact nature of the current book. Perhaps these omissions are simply a subtle reminder that practitioner enquiry is, in the words of the author, 'a journey with no end ...' (p. 43) and books on the topic could always include more information!

## CollectivEd Thinking Out Loud

### *An interview with David Leat*

In this series of thinkpieces CollectivED founder Rachel Lofthouse interviews other educators about their professional learning and educational values.

***Please tell us who you are and what your current role in education is.***

I am David Leat and I am Professor of Curriculum Innovation at Newcastle University. I have been a geography teacher, PGCE tutor and even worked for DfE on secondment, but now I am a co-director of the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT). I teach on a variety of modules, supervise doctoral students, work on research projects and strive to contribute to a collaborative research culture. My current research focuses on Project Based Learning and particularly the idea of *Community Curriculum Making*, in which schools develop curriculum projects with community partners, allowing students to 'Go Places, Meet People and Do and Make Things'. This is fantastic raw material for informing aspirations, developing complex and healthy identities, and developing human capability.

***Please reflect on an episode or period in your career during which your own learning helped you to develop educational practices which remain with you today. What was the context, how were you learning, and what was the impact?***

In my early days as a PGCE tutor I developed my interest in Thinking Skills. I saw many of my tutees struggling with teaching, as I sat somewhere in the room. They wanted to be inspiring and well liked – some succeeded and many struggled, but often they were working too hard to inform and entertain and they tended to focus on the more superficial aspects of subject content rather than patterns, principles or 'big concepts'. I was learning from being able to watch lessons. To cut a long story short this led me to develop a series of highly flexible 'teaching thinking' strategies which could be used across a wide range of content and age ranges. These strategies, such as Mysteries, Reading Photos, Living Graphs and Taboo encouraged talk, the use of existing knowledge, creative and critical thinking and opened up significant opportunity for metacognitive plenaries.

### ***Who has influenced your educational thinking, and in what ways has this allowed you to develop?***

It is a long list but at the top would be John Holt, the American author who wrote 'How Children Fail' and 'How Children Learn' in the 1960s. Those books got me hooked on education. The long list would include Philp Adey, Matthew Lipman, Basil Bernstein, Lev Vygotsky, Jo Boaler, Yryo Engestrom, Sanne Akkerman, Mark Priestley, Neil Mercer, Nel Noddings, Ron Berger, David Cohen & Jal Mehta, Hubert Hermans, Martha Nussbaum, Deanna Kuhn – what characterises this somewhat eclectic list is that they add new dimensions to my understanding of learning and how to bring about change. They become new voices in my mind that contribute to my inner dialogue that I hope continuously feeds my learning. Happily, those voices also contribute to external dialogue with colleagues, friends and adversaries.

### ***When someone you meet tells you they are thinking about becoming a teacher what advice do you give them?***

I would be very careful about giving any advice to possible recruits to the profession, but to teacher trainees I would say 'It does not have to be this way, and

when all else fails, you still have your voice to argue for the things you believe in, so use it'. Of course, for many who have been educated in an exam oriented system it is difficult to imagine an alternative. There are some people who I might warn off the profession, if I felt that they could not handle the relentless pressure of work in the evenings and weekends and exam oriented classroom performance.

### ***If you could change one thing which might enable more teachers to work and learn collaboratively in the future what would you do?***

Break the formula of one room, one teacher, 25-30 pupils. With appropriate road-testing, you can have: occasional lectures to most of whole year groups; various forms of flipped learning and self-study, collaborative Project-based Learning (PBL) on meaningful projects with light supervision, 1:1 to 1:4 mentoring with community or university student volunteers. This should allow and demand far greater teacher collaboration leading to a mixed economy of learning contexts and not the monolithic structure we currently have. The re-engineering of school spaces is a challenge but not impossible.

***If you could turn back the clock and bring back a past educational practice or policy what would it be and why?***

CSE Mode3, which gave teachers the opportunity to exercise their agency and creativity by designing the curriculum and assessment for the GCSE age range, including marking the assignments (moderated in consortia). This led to some very creative units of work, and with the advent of digital technology, we could get some very exciting curricula. I would also put in a word for taking pupils out of school more easily.

***What is the best advice or support you have been given in your career? Who offered it and why did it matter?***

'Don't put yourself down, know what you are good at' from Mick Parkinson captain of the football team I had just joined aged 15. Although this was well before my educational career, it REALLY stuck. I am not very good at quite a lot of things (DIY, anything electrical or mechanical, singing, learning languages) but I am good at some other things (growing vegetables, identifying birds from their calls, being a dad and grandad, running long distances and ... developing creative teaching approaches) and I think I have developed and enjoyed these talents – it is in essence the realisation of my human capability.

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