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Citation:

Lofthouse, RM (2018) Long live metacognition, lessons learned from a life in the field. *CollectivED Working Papers*, 4. pp. 70-76.

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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 4**

**June 2018**

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## Editorial: Welcome to CollectivED Issue 4

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 fourth 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. 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 **Chris Moyse** writes about using 'live coaching' to support teachers. This model turns the norms of lesson observation followed by feedback on its head, Chris offers a rationale alongside very practical advice about how to do this well.

Our second paper is written by **Deborah Netolicky**, who draws on both her doctoral research and current practices as a teacher and leader. Deborah recognises that schools are talk-based organisations, and uses this to focus on coaching talk and coaching cultures.

The third paper is from the context of Higher Education and is written by **Kirstein Rummery**. Kirstein challenges the view that women in senior roles should be mentoring others coming through the academic ranks to fit into the current expectations of career success. She asks 'What if we focused instead on the structural issues that oppress women?'

Next **Karen Vincent**, from Canterbury Christ Church University, has contributed a research paper in which she shares the findings of an evaluation of changing ITE partnership roles and expectations. Members of the partnership have developed a self-evaluation framework and a new Mentor Development Programme which has had an impact on mentors' self-efficacy.

In our fifth paper **Carl Wilkinson** reviews the third edition of The National Association of School-Based Teacher trainers (NASBTT) Training and Assessment Toolkit for Initial Teacher Training (ITT). In doing so he reflects on some of the aspects and possible consequences of the high stakes system of teacher education.

Our sixth paper offers a new international perspective as **Trista Hollweck** writes about coaching, mentoring and teacher induction in Western Québec School Board, Canada. She draws on her roles as co-developer and consultant, and also her PhD research.

A number of papers already published by CollectivED illustrate the significance of trust in creating effective working relationships. In the next paper **Colin Lofthouse** focuses on trust as a component of school environments and leadership.

Next we have the first of two papers which reflect on the mentoring aspect of the pilot CTeach programme established by the Chartered College of Teaching. In our eighth paper **Stephen Campbell** reflects on the qualities and characteristics of his working relationship with his allocated CTeach mentor.

This theme follows into our next paper in which **Matt Shurlock, Rebecca Stacey and Patrick Ottley-O'Connor** each offer insights into their experiences in order to consider how the CTeach external mentoring compares and contrasts with internal school-based coaching.

The tenth paper is written by **Gary Handforth** whose paper provides considerable pause for thought. Through his work in a Multi-Academy Trust, he has started to consider how performance management procedures could be more collective and collaborative. He reflects on recent research questioning traditional performance management methods and offers alternative models which are now being trialled.

**Anne Knock**, combines two areas of interest and expertise: education and design. In the tenth paper she writes a thinkpiece about Generation Y teachers in Australia, whose ways of working bring them together more often than most teachers experience. She suggests that changing some of the norms of practice may sustain them in the profession.

Our twelfth paper is by **Rachel Lofthouse**, who has taken the publication of the EEF guidance on metacognition and self-regulated learning and focused on their advice for supporting teachers. She reflects on three key developmental opportunities (past and present) which allow teachers to engage productively and collectively to become more effective at teaching for metacognition.

This month **Steve Burton** reviews Gerry Czerniawski's book *Teacher Educators in the 21st Century*, describing it as a 'fascinating journey through the teacher education landscape'.

And we round off this issue with a Thinking Aloud CollectivEd interview with **John Campbell**, of Growth Coaching International, based in Australia. John reflects on some of his own key learning experiences in a long career, and on the influences on the way he thinks about and helps to shape powerful coaching practices.



## Leeds Beckett University

So, this is another bumper issue, combining papers focused on a variety of practices, but all with a common thread – the ways that we as educators work together and in doing so learn together and can evoke changes in the education system. We are proud to building a strong community through CollectivED and also to be drawing on the wisdom of different generations of educators.

### ***Professor Rachel Lofthouse***

[www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/riches/our-research/professional-practice-and-learning/collectived/@CollectivED1](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/riches/our-research/professional-practice-and-learning/collectived/@CollectivED1)

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### **To cite working papers from this issue please use the following format:**

Author surname, author initial (2018), Paper title, pages x-xx, *CollectivED* [3], Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University.

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## Live coaching and how it helps new teachers get into good habits quickly

### *A Practice Insight Working Paper by Chris Moyse*

During a lesson a teacher wouldn't look over a student's shoulder and think 'I can't wait to mark that later!' They would provide actionable feedback there and then in order to help that student improve. So why not provide this 'live feedback' to teachers too when you are supporting them in their classroom?

Several years ago I undertook a lesson observation of a science teacher who was doing her school placement at my school as part of her PGCE. Generally, the lesson was fine although she hadn't left an adequate amount of time for the students to fully write up their experiment. Part of the reason for this was that the opening activity was overly long and this had a knock on effect for the rest of the lesson. Later that day I met this PGCE student and provided her, in my role as her professional tutor, with some feedback. We discussed the timings of the lesson and she identified, with the help of the timeline I provided her, that she had left an inadequate amount of time to complete the experiment write up. Further examination of the timings and some feedback from me helped us to conclude

that the opening activity had gone on too long. Her reaction to this was very thought provoking. She said to me 'Why didn't you tell me to speed up during the start of the lesson?' Good point! I did think at the time that the opening activity was going on too long and time might be tight at the end. I even recorded this fact on my note pad. However, I didn't share this feedback there and then; choosing only to record it and mention it at the later feedback meeting.

Had I provided this feedback 'live' would the lesson have been more effective and successful?

Had I done this student teacher a disservice by not pointing this out to her during the lesson?

So why wait? Why not provide feedback in the moment when it is really needed so that the teaching can be improved straight away?

What begins as a well-intentioned respect for the teacher's ownership of their own classroom possibly ends by not prioritising the students' learning.

If we are serious about developing teachers as quickly as possible so that they can have maximum impact on the student's learning, we must try to improve teaching as it happens.

John Hattie in his research tell us that feedback to students is particularly effective when provided immediately, during task acquisition, rather than deferred. So why not with teachers too. 'Live coaching' is where an experienced mentor or coach, skilled in providing immediate live feedback, works alongside a less experienced teacher while they are delivering a lesson. The coach provides the teacher with live feedback about their teaching so that the feedback is immediate and acted upon rather than being given after the lesson when it is essentially too late.

The method of 'live feedback' or 'live coaching' seems relatively rare in many schools. There seems to be an unwritten rule that once the lesson is underway the observer remains silent and unobtrusive; possibly sitting at the back, talking to the students and certainly not to the teacher. That is, you find out later how you did. I am, however, constantly striving to improve the way I support future or new teachers in order to help them establish a fast and effective start to their careers. Over several years now I have been

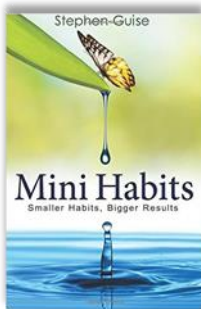
developing 'live' and 'hands on' feedback/coaching so that the teaching can be improved or enhanced 'in the moment'. As a result I have come to the conclusion that the more frequently I can coach my teachers, and the closer I can do this to the classroom, the better they become as they develop good habits that contribute to establishing a strong default position.

In undertaking 'live coaching' I have made some mistakes and learnt some very quick lessons. I have also, however, developed effective strategies to enhance this method of teacher development. It is very important to follow some rules and protocols to undertake this effectively otherwise you run the risk of unduly stressing the teacher, undermining their authority or reducing their sense leadership in their own classroom.

1. The more frequently you visit the teacher's classroom the more the teacher (and students) will be comfortable with you being in the room. This helps establishing trust and ensures also that you get to see typicality. Why give feedback on anything else other than 'typical'?



2. Use any previous observations, reflections and discussions to ascertain the next required focus for improvement. This is the focus for any observation. Keep it relatively small to retain focus and increase the chances of being successful. The clearer the goal and focus is the more likely improvement is going to happen. Deliberately work on addressing small changes at a time as this is both more achievable and sustainable for a busy teacher. Stephen Guise in his book



'Mini Habits' talks about the need to get started and build momentum. A mini habit is a very small positive behaviour that you make

yourself to do every day; a mini habit's 'too small to fail' nature makes it achievable, deceptively powerful, and a superior habit-building strategy. The secret is to engineer situations where the success rate is relatively high in order to build consistent and effective habits. Build one habit at a time.

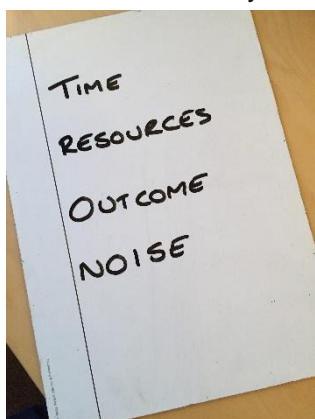
3. Design lessons where there is plenty of opportunity for this focus to be used frequently. The focus becomes the purpose of the lesson. The more frequently and successfully a skill is practised the more likely it is to

become automatic. For example, if you are working on transitions, design a lesson with several built in so that practice time is maximised and opportunities for feedback and subsequent improvement increased.

4. Discuss the role of 'live coaching' before the lesson so everyone is clear about the expectations.
5. In the classroom sit or stand close to the teacher so communication is easier and the students also get used to seeing you too. Be aware that another adult in the room may change the dynamic so a balance between being unobtrusive yet near the teacher is the aim.
6. Do not attempt to teach something new to the teacher during the lesson or point out things that cannot be changed, such as material on a PowerPoint slide or the objective that is being shared. This will possibly throw them, creating distraction, uncertainty and stress. The focus is pre-agreed before the lesson – stick to it. Instead, reward, remind and reinforce.
7. Reward: What your teachers do right is just as important in practice time as what they do wrong. If you see

evidence of something going well, especially a strategy you had discussed together previously that they have been subsequently practising, praise them. This will boost their confidence. Remember they will probably be nervous with you in the room. A quiet word, a thumbs up, a smile or even a word to the class about how you have noticed the class working well in a particular way will be affirming, reassuring and confidence boosting. Praise helps establish the right way encouraging them to do it again, the right way.

8. Remind: Before they are about to undertake the agreed focus (e.g. Transition, explanation, modelling, class discussion and so on) remind them about the pre agreed elements of that focus. Possibly even jot these



down on a mini whiteboard as a reminder and place them near the teacher. It may be prudent to have done this before the lesson so there are no surprises.

9. Reinforce: Give the teacher some feedback and points to reinforce the

strategy after it was done. This will prepare them for the next time they use that strategy in that lesson. Try to shorten the feedback loop and achieve correction and development as quickly as possible. Always correct privately obviously. Remember that you are not trying to rewire a skill just make small, simple changes.

10. Providing small bite-sized bits of feedback makes it more likely to be acted upon right away. If they are unlikely to be able to act upon the feedback immediately and possibly not get it right 'in the moment' make a note and leave it to discuss in more detail in your follow up session. So limit yourself to the focus and limit the volume of feedback you give too. Clarity and brevity are key here.

11. Pick the right moment. Don't interrupt their teaching; pick a moment when the students are working such as during independent or group practice time or talk partner time. This way the students are not distracted by your interactions and the teacher is more able to focus on what you are saying. Say what you need to say before they have to do something (remind) or just after (reward or reinforce). What you

say to the teacher must help student learning and make the lesson go more smoothly.

12. Be as brief and concise as possible as not to interrupt the flow or the thought



processes of the teacher. Remember that they will probably be

scanning their class as you talk to them. Allow and expect them to be doing this.



13. It may be possible to communicate with the teacher non-verbally. A hand gesture to encourage them to do something or a sign to remind. An athletics coach I had many years ago used to write brief reminders of things I had to remember on pieces of card that were left by the runway - a visual prompt to help me keep focused and remind me about what we had been trying to do in training. One or two words on a mini whiteboard (Scan,

check, 3-2-1, stand still, talk partners) as a visual prompt can work well.

I sometimes use an app on my iPad called 'Make it Big' to do this.

You may also use other physical non-verbal cues. For example, exaggerating your own stance and posture will remind your teacher to stand still and face the class.

14. Model for the teacher, if appropriate. Sometimes words may not be enough and in order to fully understand the teacher may need to have the strategy modelled to them. Agree this beforehand so not to challenge their leadership and authority in their classroom. This can work really well with novice teachers who may not have a sufficiently developed mental model of excellence.

Practice doesn't make perfect. It makes permanent. Therefore, try to ensure that your teachers practise correctly otherwise poor habits will become quickly engrained and these are really hard to break. Frequent live feedback will help enormously here as it has the power to influence the lesson and therefore the learning in the moment, build great habits and also save time on lengthy feedback conversation too which is a real bonus.

# Fostering semantic space in schools for professional collaboration and growth

## *A Research Working Paper by Deborah M. Netolicky*

### **Schools are talk-based organisations**

Harvard academics and developmental psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2001) say that our places of work are places in which certain forms of speech are promoted or encouraged, and places where other ways of talking are discouraged or made impossible. Working in six schools across my almost-twenty year teaching career thus far has shown me in practice that schools, like other organisations, are places in which certain kinds of talk are promoted, while others are limited or suppressed.

Étienne Wenger (1998), in his seminal work on *communities of practice* (upon which *professional learning communities* and other collaborative education structures are based) notes that policies and procedures are important, but that practice is what produces results. We need alignment between organisational design and the work and talk that occurs on a daily basis. Do our policies and procedures live and breathe in our organisations, or do they pay mere lip

service to what we would hope for the professional learning culture our schools? Schools and education systems need to use terms like 'coaching', 'mentoring', and 'PLC' with a common understanding and an ability to enact that understanding in practice.

### **Coaching shifts organisational talk**

One thing that has influenced my own professional talk is coaching. Since 2012 I have been deeply immersed in coaching in schools; that is, coaching for the professional growth of teachers and school leaders. I led the design, piloting and implementation of a coaching model for teachers at my school, and continue to develop processes and practices to support professional learning and conversation, of which coaching is a part. I am trained in cognitive coaching, and am now also training in GROWTH coaching. The context of my PhD was the school-based coaching intervention at my school. Through my research (Netolicky, 2016), I found that:

- being part of a school-based cognitive coaching model is an identity-shaping experience, which can have positive, unexpected, non-linear impacts on and beyond individuals; and
- the combination of being a coach and coachee can facilitate empowerment, professional growth, and changes in practice.

Last year, while on a coaching in education research panel at the Australian National Coaching Conference in Melbourne with Professor Rachel Lofthouse, Professor Christian van Niewerburgh, and Alex Guedes, I made a point around shared terminology within a community. We were at a conference about coaching, for coaches. As I navigated the conference I noticed that even the informal corridor conversations had a coaching approach and used coaching language. Many of the conference attendees clearly had what Christian van Niewerburgh (2014) calls a 'coaching way of being'; a conversation with them *is* a coaching conversation. Coaches actively and intensely listen, paraphrase, pause, and ask thoughtful questions designed more for the benefit of the talker than the listener. These aren't conversations where the other person is waiting for their turn to say their piece or

pushing a personal agenda; they are ones in which the listener serves the talker via thoughtful and deliberate ways of talking and ways of being in conversation.

### **Collective semantic space**

At the above-mentioned conference, Rachel Lofthouse talked about Kemmis and Heikkinen's (2012) notion of *semantic space* as a frame for thinking about organisational talk. Semantics is about linguistic meaning; the logic of language. In organisations a semantic space is about 'how we talk around here', the meanings of words, the way communication happens. Lofthouse and Hall (2014) define semantic space as one of professional dialogue, constituting tone, choice of words, routines of dialogue, and balance of participation in conversation.

Semantic space interacts with organisational structures, physical spaces, and relationships. In my work I notice that classrooms and offices influence the talk that goes on within them. Do staff sit and breathe a sigh of relief when they enter a manager's office, or perch stiffly at attention? In classrooms, do students act with familiarity and autonomy, or anxiety and disaffection? Our relationships and spaces influence the talk and the work that go on in our schools.

Semantic space is collective. Costa and Garmston (2015) draw on the concept of *holonomy* to articulate the simultaneous individual-ness and collective-ness of members of an organisation. Each of us is at once an autonomous individual and a networked member of the group.

### **The talk is the work**

The words we use, the way we talk, and the way we interpret language are vital to our work, especially in education. In her conference keynote last year Rachel Lofthouse said, “Don’t talk less and work more. The talk is the work.” The way we talk can influence the way we think and the way we behave. In any organisation it is important to work on ‘how we talk around here’ as well as why we talk, when we talk, what we talk about, and how we *want* to talk.

My school has been deliberate about the role of coaching in our professional culture, grounded in a focus on growth and a belief in the capacity of everyone in our community to grow and improve. It is

part of our default position in terms of staff development: trusting the capacities of our staff and supporting them to reflect and improve. However, coaching is not our only tool for developing professional culture. For instance, we also use data, collaboration, mentoring, self-reflection, goal setting, professional learning groups, negotiated professional pathways, and differentiated leadership opportunities.

Leaders at my school have been consistently trained in coaching in various ways since 2005, and developing a coaching culture has been a focus on which the school has invested time and resources. This has meant that the language of coaching infiltrates the organisation in subtle ways. Our semantic space is not as stark or obvious as the coaching approach to conversations at last year’s Australian National Coaching Conference, but coaching does influence the way staff talk with one another, as well as how they talk with students and parents. Talk is not inconsequential in schools. It is the foundation for collective culture and individual growth.

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## Mentoring as a feminist academic

### *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Kirstein Rummery*

One of the very first things I did as a professor was to start mentoring early career academics. I was lucky enough to work with some brilliant mentors as I was developing my own career, and I felt duty bound to pass on the support and wisdom I knew had made my work possible. I knew from experience that the 'inside knowledge' that you gain from being mentored is priceless, as was the support from people who had been there, done that, and survived.

It was particularly important for me because I was a first-generation university graduate, and I grew up abroad. I never learned the middle-class unspoken code of getting ahead. I hadn't been to the right schools, I didn't know the right people, I had no role models from whom to learn. I was just bright, feisty, good at research, and lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time when funded postgraduate opportunities came up. It was also important to me as a feminist academic: as soon as I recognised and understood some of the structural issues that oppressed women in my chosen field of work, I felt an ethical and political obligation not just to try and overcome

them myself, but to help my fellow women overcome them as well.

I got pushed into serving on promotions committees, initially as a representative of the non-professoriat, then later as that rare thing, a female professor who understood how things worked across different disciplines. I got to know the written and unwritten rules of things like the Research Excellence Framework, what an 'international' reputation really meant, what 'counted' and what didn't. I learned how to spot successful people and emulate them, how to network, the importance of inside knowledge, and how to represent your discipline and your institution outside your work. I learned about enemies: how you could make them without meaning to, and how powerful they could be.

And the most important thing I learned, the hard way, was how to return to work and get your career back on track after being away on maternity or sick leave.

Mary Ann Mason (Mason et al, 2013) and other scholars have documented the penalty that academic women pay for

having a family, as against the positive boost having a family has on men's career trajectories.

It isn't just the time away from work: on return, women are often doing the double shift of the burden of arranging and doing the childcare; out of touch with current research in their field; having given up PhD students and research grants; having their ideas, work and students poached by childfree colleagues; finding international conferences and networking incompatible with the needs of a young family; taking on more pastoral and emotional labour in the workplace whilst their male colleagues are building up their research and absenting themselves from frontline teaching; finding the expectation of working 24/7 just to keep up any kind of competitive ability impossible.

So I took it upon myself to mentor early career academics, particularly mothers, on how to rebuild their careers without losing their sanity. How to build effective, supportive teams. How to focus on their writing and grant applications when they were being distracted. How to avoid the 'mummy track' and pull in all the social capital they could to be able to do the work that 'counted'. How, in other words, to 'lean in' (Sandberg, 2013) to the world of academia, put their emotions and their

bodies to one side and fit in to academic norms.

And whilst I still maintain there is an important role for academic mentoring as a tool for supporting women, I have come to realise how insidious mentoring and the reliance on mentoring has come to be.

Programmes like the Leadership Foundation's Aurora leadership training rely on senior women providing their labour for free to mentor the next generation of promising academic women, and teaching them how to develop their own leadership skills within the academy. In other words, women must learn to adapt to academia, and help each other do so, not the other way around.

What would it look like if we stopped making women adjust to the patriarchal world of academia? What if we focused instead on the structural issues that oppress women? On the overreliance and overvaluing of competitively funded research? On the treatment of academics as income generators instead of scholars? On the undervaluing of teaching and pastoral care? On the overvaluing of male markers of esteem such as membership of elite male-dominated clubs? What if we rewarded 'difficult' feminists who challenged sexist teaching and

scholarship? Or people who acted with an ethic of care in the workplace, devoting their time to research and teaching in a co-operative way and focusing on the wellbeing of others rather than their personal empire building?

What would the academy look like then?

I suspect we wouldn't need to mentor women, because the oppressive structures that meant they needed the mentoring in the first place wouldn't be there.

And I suspect we would have a better, kinder, more effective academy for it.

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# Researching the Impact of Changes to Mentoring Approaches within a Large Initial Teacher Education Partnership

*A Research Working Paper by Karen Vincent*

## **ABSTRACT**

Ensuring high quality mentoring for student teachers who are in the initial phases of their teaching career is vital and it is important that school-based mentors are well supported (Smith, 2017). The role that Universities play, as both quality assurance and as support for partnership schools (who are increasingly responsible for the training of new teachers), has increased in complexity in recent years. This working paper offers an insight into a changed approach that one large initial teacher education partnership in the South East of England has taken in supporting the development of mentoring. It shares the findings of an evaluation designed to research how this changed approach has been experienced by mentors within the partnership and shows that whilst there is still more work to do, this approach has been overwhelmingly positive.

## **Background**

Significant investment in a different model of partnership (initiated by a review of working practices in 2014) had realigned the roles of the mentor (school-based) and link tutor (university-based visiting tutor) when working with student teachers on our initial teacher education programmes. Instead of link tutors' prime focus being on supporting student teachers (and mentors) during placements, they were now to be

seen as pivotal in facilitating mentor development within the schools in which they were assigned. They were to support the development of mentoring through coaching approaches, within our partnership schools across both primary and secondary phases of education.

In order to support this changed model of practice, a partnership evaluation framework was designed to support our ongoing self-evaluation. The framework had been created with our partnership schools and was intended to enable a joint construction of meaning about provision and facilitate a discussion regarding available opportunities for further development. The belief is that raising the status of mentoring will benefit all partners involved in partnership working. The framework covers four themes: induction, professional development, mentoring/coaching and working in partnership and contains sets of statements for school mentors and university link tutors to consider together, wherever they both are in their professional development and to use

these in setting targets for continued development.

Alongside the framework, a Mentor Development Programme was also conceived, written and taught within our partnership areas. This programme is underpinned by the National Standards (DfE, 2016) and was designed to supplement the framework and support the continued development of provision within the partnership. Where areas for development are identified, the Mentor Development Programme can help to support continued development. The programme is research informed and designed to support the identification of mentors' personal attributes and further their mentoring skills as well as offer collaborative networking opportunities.

### **Forming the research team**

There was a need to evaluate this substantial 'investment' and the evaluation project sought to understand what impact the Mentor Development Programme and individual development was having on the quality of mentoring. The project lead was assigned in July 2016 and the team formed through an invitation to all teacher education colleagues within the faculty. Initially six members of the team met to plan the project. They were all teacher educators within the faculty but were not

all experienced in doing research. The team continues to grow both in number of members and in expertise, through support from colleagues in the faculty. These include the Head of School who has acted as sponsor to the project and other research based colleagues who had more experience in doing research and could offer valuable suggestions at pivotal moments.

### **Methodology**

The project adopted a mixed methods approach and data was drawn from multiple sources. In line with University policy and best practice, we conducted our evaluation with clear adherence to ethical practice and principles.

Considering how Kemmis' et al's (2014) architecture of practice might be used as a way of making sense of our data through the interpretation of 'doings, sayings and relatings' was a really helpful way to conceptualise the project. Kemmis et al (2014) conceptualise mentoring as a specific kind of social practice in terms of a theory of practice architectures. i.e. specific cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements found or brought into a site that enable and constrain a practice: arrangements that make the practice possible. '*Understood as a social practice,*



*mentoring is a specific kind of cooperative human activity in which characteristic actions and activities (doings) are comprehensible in terms of relevant ideas in characteristic discourses (sayings), and in which the people and objects involved are distributed in characteristic relationships (relatings)' (Kemmis et al, 2014).*

The team aimed to understand: The different things people in the partnership were saying about mentoring (sayings), the different things people in the partnership were doing when mentoring (doings) and the different ways people were relating to each other in the partnership when mentoring (relatings). Adopting this theoretical framework gave us a solid basis from which to gather our data.

### **Establishing a responsive and adaptive approach to the gathering of data using mixed methods.**

A responsive and adaptive approach was required given that the majority of the team were novice researchers. Mixed methods were used in order to capture perspectives on mentoring that could be used to evaluate impact. These included documentary and data analysis, mentor interviews and elicitation exercises, field notes and discussion responses and

notes. The evaluation had many strands, aiming to capture multiple perspectives. Findings were thematically analysed (Strauss and Corbin, 2009) and emerging themes were used as a basis for further analysis in relation to mentors' doings, sayings and relatings (Kemmis et al, 2014).

Gaining access to mentors' perspectives required the research team to go out into the field as this was not information gathered routinely. They did this through individual mentor conversations (including a sorting activity where mentors were asked to decide which statements were most and least important to them) and through structured group discussions at area meetings. Other sources of data were obtained through activities that were naturally occurring within the university and partnership. Nine mentors in total consented to being part of the individual research conversations. They understood that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time. The mentors were recruited through pre-existing relationships with university tutors, some offered to be part of the research through attendance at the Mentor Development Programme and some were specifically requested to be part of the research. We aimed to represent the many different 'types' of mentors that work in partnership with us

and obtained a wealth of data to draw from when undertaking the thematic analysis.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **What are people in the partnership saying about mentoring?**

Mentors see an important part of their role as inducting new professionals through collaborative self-development. Skills mentioned within this include; building independence and resilience as well as encouraging pro-activeness and initiative. Coaching approaches are seen to be an important way of achieving this. A sense of purpose appears to be important to mentors for example, one mentor stated that a determination in supporting others to succeed is important, as is knowing when to take a step back. Factors that support this development are: the relationship with the link tutor, mentor development opportunities and the partnership evaluation framework. It is noted that these have been key improvements in more recent years and that reliability, consistency and reassurance for mentors is of vital importance if they are to be as effective as possible.

Personal support appears to be important to mentors: both the collaboration and teamwork that schools undertake together

in order to support student teachers as well as the support from link tutors for their role. Mentors draw on the support of their colleagues and rely on the strength of their professional relationships to ensure that the students' experience as positive a school experience as possible.

Mentors are also very conscious of their responsibility as gatekeepers to the profession. They work hard to ensure that student teachers meet the standards required of teachers (DfE, 2013). They recognise this as a challenging and demanding aspect of the work, particularly when they are acting as a lead mentor in the school. They also recognise that there is a requirement to act if the standards are not upheld. Being a mentor and guide does not appear to be without its tensions.

#### **What are the different things that people in the partnership are doing to support the development of mentoring?**

Our research found out that the Mentor Development Programme is considered to be professional and well-organised with good resources and networking opportunities. Mentors have valued the inclusion of research-based models in gaining new insights into their mentoring and learning from this. The partnership area meetings are seen to be useful for

getting new information and learning from one another and the Partnership Evaluation Framework is seen as valuable in supporting and enhancing mentors' professional learning. Some mentors commented that the moderation of this within school can sometimes pose a challenge, particularly when there are different types of student/mentor pairs within the school.

Mentors are also feeling a greater responsibility for the assessment of student teachers which appears to be impacting on their workload. Moderation of student achievement, within and across schools can be a challenge, particularly when attendance at area meetings is not possible. Contact with the link tutor therefore appears to be particularly valued by mentors in terms of validating and moderating judgements.

### **How are people relating to each other?**

The Mentor Development Programme has had an impact on mentors' self-efficacy. It has raised the status of the mentoring role and had an impact on mentors' confidence. Area meetings are not seen to have such a developmental focus but are a valuable source of support and guidance for mentors.

The greater responsibility felt by mentors to have difficult conversations when

required and to undertake more lesson observations has meant that the link tutors' role as professional developer is crucial in ensuring quality, however there remain pockets of confusion about how this role in supporting students should operate.

### **Conclusions and issues for consideration**

Kemmis et al (2014) state that mentors need to consider the types of dispositions that their mentoring might foster in developing their mentees. If the partnership is to have consistency, considering the relationship between link tutors and mentors in the development of particular dispositions becomes important.

The findings show that mentors in this partnership have developed a variety of different 'types' of dispositions towards their mentoring practice. Kemmis et al (2014) categorise these in the following ways:

- **Supervision:** mentors adopting the disposition of a supervisor and perhaps an agent of the state, and mentees therefore likely to develop a disposition of compliance to state authority
- **Support:** mentors developing a disposition to be a helpful professional colleague and guide, and mentees developing a disposition towards continuing professional development

- **Collaborative self-development:** mentor-mentees developing dispositions towards engagement in professional communities committed to individual and collective self-development

Based on the evidence examined, the majority of mentors conceptualise their role as that of a helpful professional colleague and guide; *as support*. To a lesser extent, the role was seen as either that of supervision or as collaborative self-development. This finding is raising some interesting discussions amongst partnership colleagues.

Whilst the Mentor Development Programme and the promotion of individual development opportunities for mentors has had substantial impact on the professional development of mentors within the partnership to date, we are not complacent. We are also considering how we might maximise our partnership schools' ability to forward plan for their own development and how link tutors might be further supported in nurturing mentors' dispositions towards engagement within professional communities.

As coaching approaches across all phases appear to be valued, we also need to consider how the partnership continues

to emphasise coaching approaches during link tutor and mentor development opportunities and consider how we might begin to address some of the tensions arising from the contradiction between mentoring and coaching approaches.

The Partnership Evaluation Framework is having an effect on how mentors and link tutors approach their work however, moderation within and across schools and phases appears to be a continued challenge given the nature of our large partnership. We are considering how moderation of the evaluation framework might be further embedded through the use of data management systems that can enhance cross phase working.

Undertaking this evaluation has had many benefits for the whole partnership. It has created a solid body of evidence about a changed way of working from which to move forwards in an evidence-based way. However, as a by-product, it has also enabled a group of teacher educators to develop their experience and expertise in doing research. This is often a challenging and demanding aspect of their role. The next phase of the project will focus on understanding the experiences of link tutors and we look forward to reporting this at a later stage.

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## Reflecting on the Third Edition of the Training and Assessment NASBTT 2018 Toolkit

### *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Carl Wilkinson*

#### Introduction

The National Association of School-Based Teacher trainers (NASBTT) have launched their third edition of the Training and Assessment Toolkit for Initial Teacher Training (ITT). NASBTT is the association that represents School Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) ITT provision, whereas the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) represents, largely, university and college provision. The two associations are separate, but work closely and have similar goals; they market themselves as the voice of teacher training. The following section draws upon direct pertinent information from the Training and Assessment Toolkit Workshop handout from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

#### The Third Edition of the Training and Assessment Toolkit (TAT)

The TAT is a mechanism for assessing initial teacher trainees against the Teachers' Standards while on placement in a school. The toolkit has the following aims;

- To secure accuracy and consistency in assessing and tracking the quality of a trainee's teaching over time *through* (this author's italics) their impact on pupil learning and progress
- Provide the basis for a shared understanding and common language for all members of an ITT partnership

The key considerations developed in this third edition of the TAT are;

- How well trainees teach should be assessed by the impact their teaching has on all pupil's progress and learning over time: this should be the driver for all partnership processes
- The focus on progress "over time" for trainees and pupils increases the significance of ensuring well-timed review points

The TAT is evidence based on holistic professional judgements and as the Teachers' Standards are interrelated, a shortfall in trainee skills against any one standard is likely to impact on the progress pupils make. This means that the weekly meetings held between the trainee and their school-based mentor should be evaluative, focus on the impact of teaching on the pupil progress, which



will generate pupil-focused targets. The pupil data used as evidence to judge a trainee's progress is termed an evidence bundle, its purpose is to identify;

- The impact on pupil progress to determine the strength of their teaching
- How it can inform accurate learner-focused target setting.

The effective use of a trainee's evidence bundle can;

- Ensure that trainee assessment is informed by the full range of evidence **beyond** (the document's bold) observation
- Judge by the impact on pupil progress
- Avoids reliance on a numerical system
- Reduces collection of evidence not directly related to pupil progress.

This leads to the following format;



The TAT anchors quality of trainee with pupil progress;

- The impact on pupil's progress is dependent upon the skills and knowledge trainees demonstrate as they teach

- A lack of skill results in limited pupil progress
- Trainee targets are pupil focused
- A trainees strength will be evaluated on the amount of pupil progress

A typical evidence bundle could consist of the following;

- Pupil data
- Annotated samples of pupils' work, including homework
- Self and peer assessments undertaken by pupils
- Trainee examples of marking
- Examples of planning, observations and lesson evaluations focusing on pupil progress
- Exams and tests
- Samples of pupils' progress
- Start and end points of pupil progress

### Reflection/Discussion

There is no doubt that in a performative educational system that teaching and learning within the educational setting are directly linked, the only point open for discussion is what that learning should consist of, is it knowledge of the curriculum, work related skills/life related skills, health and wellbeing awareness, morals, religious dogma/diversity, citizenship, metacognition or indeed merely to generate a love of learning, the list is endless! The TAT is very much

curriculum based and focuses solely on an initial teacher trainee's ability to impact positively on pupil progress within the National Curriculum and beyond. 'The key factor in judging the quality of teaching over time is the impact teaching has on the quality of learning' (OFSTED 2018a Paragraph 128). The Preamble to the Teachers' Standards state that 'teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct' (DFE no date). Indeed Teachers' Standard 2 'Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils' stipulates the importance of working towards maximum pupil achievement'.

However, it should not be forgotten that the Teachers' Standards are intended for teachers' capability, as well as trainee teachers to be judged on their capacity to learn how to teach. Notwithstanding the realisation, that ITT is not the end of a trainee teachers learning, as the Newly Qualified Teaching (NQT) three school terms completes their induction into the teaching profession, along with their entitlement for further continuous professional development, as well as a reduced timetable, in recognition that they have not fully formed. Surely a discussion point with regards to coupling teacher trainees' individual and overall Teachers'

Standards grade solely on their impact on pupil progress is very much determined by circumstance and chance and does not opportune the trainees who find themselves placed in more challenging circumstances, which condones an unfair playing field. Furthermore, if we were to couple judgement of experienced teachers' practice with the Teachers' Standards solely based on pupil progress would this mean that a large percentage of the teaching workforce were not fit to practice? For example, considering the most recent OFSTED reports for Secondary schools consisting of 3,135 schools in England, 21% are considered inadequate or in need of improvement and Secondary schools inspected between September 2016 and 2017, 900 in total, 38% were awarded grades 3 or 4. Another example posed could be the Government's gold standard of English and Mathematics grade 4 or above at GCSE, approximately 30% of 16 years olds failed to reach this standard (GOV.UK 2018).

Combining these two factors, OFSTED rating and GCSE performance in English and Mathematics, does this imply that 30% of the teaching workforce is not having the desired impact on pupil progress and so therefore is not fit to teach? It is interesting to note that even

OFSTED recognise the unfair playing field;

*'A common factor in the schools that do not improve to good or outstanding is that they have a higher proportion of deprived pupils. Fifty-five per cent of the schools that currently require improvement have high proportions of pupils from deprived areas' (OFSTED 2018)*

It probably would not take too long to find that pupils emanating from these deprived backgrounds also form the bulk of 16 year olds who do not achieve the Government's gold standard in English and Mathematics.

An interesting dichotomy was included at the Workshop in that a session on trainee workload was included as a separate seminar. The Teacher Workload, Survey 2016, Research report (DfE 2016), recognises the serious nature of teacher workload in schools and could be the most significant factor in teacher resilience and retention within schools. The survey reports that on average Secondary school teachers working week is 54 hours and 17 hours on the weekend, 8 of which is taken by marking pupils' work. 42% of Primary school teachers responding said that they spent too much time assessing pupils, in contrast to 34% of managers saying that

they did. 75% of a Primary and 66% of Secondary teachers administrative time is spent recording, inputting, monitoring and analysing data in relation to pupil performance. 93% of teachers reported that workload was a very serious/fairly serious problem. The question then arises that if the government recognises workload as an issue and that the performance monitoring of pupil progress is a major force in driving workload, then why would ITT deliberately couple impact on pupil progress to the capacity to learn to teach? The Government survey indicates the effects of school performance on teacher workload; could there be a direct correlation between workload stresses of teachers in underperforming schools? If so, does that indicate the nurture of the TAT emanating from NASBTT who represent SCITT providers, which are schools that have proven OFSTED capacity and proven school performance? Does this explain the selective nature of ITT provision; see LBU comparative data on ITT Secondary disabled and ethnic recruitment. Further research is required on this subject as the initiation of the TAT is not based on any published or peer reviewed evidence and consideration of trainees workload and health needs to be considered.

### ***The case for or against coupling ITT to pupil progress***

As previously mentioned, the TAT documentation produced for the launch of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition does not reference peer reviewed research, or indeed any research in support of coupling ITT to pupil progress, other than anecdotal evidence from players involved in the development of the toolkit. Therefore, the vulnerable workplace learning practice for trainee teachers that Lofthouse and Thomas (2014) refer to now becomes even more pronounced. The culture of 'high-stakes testing' (Ball 2003) is positioned on trainee teachers through their school based mentor's anxiety.

Wilson's 'cultural-historical activity theory' (2014) recognises that mentors perceive trainees through the lens of the school, so a school where performance plays a key part will automatically focus teaching and learning on achievement and assessment. This 'formalisation of work processes' (Imants et al. 2010 and 2013) stultifies the trainees learning, as pupil assessment and achievement are now the focus. Because both mentor and trainee have the same goal, i.e. pupil progress towards achievement, trainee risk taking is stemmed and the trainee directly follows host teacher's directions. Any deviation from teacher led direction; if it fails to

result in pupil progress will be deemed as fail, Hobson and Malderez (2013) termed this 'judgementoring'. This is why Lofthouse and Thomas set out to prove that mentoring trainee teachers is more complex than mere judgement and followed the socio-cultural practice of Kemmis et al. (2012), termed the theory of practice architecture.

### **Conclusion**

Schools are not factories, teachers are not production managers, school policies/procedures are not standing operating procedures for production lines and pupils are not widgets that can be quality controlled or assessed, unless of course the pupils can be selected for their ability to perform to expectations like manufactured products can. Selection of children, through the back door, creates an unfair playing field in the league table of school performance and now, it seems, an unfair playing field for trainee teachers, because just as teachers working in more challenging circumstances are demoralised by poor OFSTED outcomes, triggered by underperformance or inability to reach threshold targets, trainee teachers, who find themselves, through no fault of their own, will also find it difficult to show performance in comparison to trainees working in high performance schools. The NASBTT represents SCITT

ITT providers, whose members naturally are working in high performance schools. The TAT claims that it does not rely on a numerical judgement, but pupil performance is just that. A remark made by a speaker at the launch of the third edition stated that trainees often claim that due to the amount of stress and anxiety abundant in their high performance training school; they make a decision that that is not the type of school they would like for a career in teaching. If we are to revitalise

teaching as a desirable profession, engaging trainee teachers in such high stakes rolls of the dice is not going to bring about success for recruitment or retention. There needs to be more research in this field, both qualitative and quantitative in order to analyse the impact that coupling teacher training solely to pupil performance is having.

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# A pracademic's exploration of mentoring, coaching and induction in the Western Québec School Board

## *A Research Working Paper by Trista Hollweck*

Induction, mentoring, and coaching have been gaining traction across Canadian school districts as powerful approaches to support teacher professional learning, especially for early career teachers. As highlighted in Learning Forward's recent publication on *the state of educators' professional learning in Canada* (Campbell et al, 2017), induction and mentoring for new teachers are an important form of "practical and relevant professional learning with positive reciprocal benefits for mentors and mentees, including practical, professional, and emotional support" (p.70). The potential positive impact of induction, mentoring, and coaching has been well documented in the international research literature (Campbell & van Nieuwerburgh, 2018; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Knight, 2007; Moir & Bloom, 2003; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012) as well as in the pages of previous CollectivEd issues. In many ways, it feels as if Canada is a little late in joining the conversation. Certainly, mentoring and induction programs for early career teachers have long been in place informally in many Canadian districts; however, because education is a

provincial/territorial responsibility, significant variations exist between jurisdictions when it comes to programs and policies (Kutsyuruba et al, 2017). The aim of this paper is to share the experience of one English school board in Western Québec engaged in systemic induction, mentoring, and coaching. With few opportunities to exchange key learning and best practices on a national let alone an international level, I hope to contribute to the CollectivEd discussion by sharing my district's lived experience and highlighting some of the tensions surfacing from my doctoral research.

### **The Canadian Context**

As noted above, provisions to support new and beginning teachers look very different across Canada; they can be formal or informal and can include mentoring support, induction support or a combination of both. Evidence from a recent multi-year pan-Canadian research project (Kutsyuruba et al, 2016; Kutsyuruba et al, 2017) showed that the composition of programs vary even within each provision type and are generally

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found at four different levels: 1) provincially mandated/ministry level support; 2) provincial teacher association/federation/union level support; 3) hybrid programs (e.g. universities and teacher associations working collaboratively); and, 4) decentralized programming (school district level support). The Western Québec School Board (WQSB)'s Teacher Induction Program (TIP) falls under this fourth category and not only looks very different to programs in other provinces/ territories, but also differs from the approaches used in school districts across Québec. The diversity of provisions was particularly evident at the 2016 Teacher Induction and Mentoring Forum. A first of its kind, the Forum was hosted by Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and provided an engaging and meaningful space for Canadian professionals and academics deeply engaged in the work of supporting early career teachers to come together to share their best thinking and successful practice. Seventy representatives from eight provinces attended the Forum and many contributed chapters to Benjamin

Kutsyuruba and Keith Walker's (2017) edited volume "The Bliss and Blisters of Early Career Teaching: A Pan-Canadian Perspective." As a participant and presenter, I found it particularly interesting that in both the Forum and the resulting edited volume the term 'coaching' is rarely referenced in relation to early career teacher support in Canada, except as an approach to be used within a mentoring framework. Of note, coaching is also only referred to as *peer coaching* around the observation of teaching in *the state of educators' professional learning in Canada* (Campbell et al, 2017). In the Western Québec School Board (WQSB), however, both mentoring and coaching are viewed as distinct yet interconnected components critical for an effective teacher induction program. The following visual is used across the district to help clarify how the two terms are understood (for more information, see my short SSHRC storytelling [video](#)). Unpacking the terminology for the district context has been an important part of the WQSB's TIP journey.



## TEACHER INDUCTION

**MENTORING** and **COACHING**  
are anchored in a collaborative and reflective relationship.

Both are focused on personal and professional growth based on trust, empathic listening, safety, mutual respect, curiosity and confidentiality.



Trista Hollweck, 2017

Figure 1: Defining mentoring and coaching within teacher induction (Hollweck, 2017)

### Positionality

Before I outline the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in more detail, it is important to situate myself in this story. I have been a WQSB co-developer and consultant for the TIP since 2009, until I embarked on my PhD journey. Naturally, my doctoral research project is a qualitative case study examining induction, coaching and mentoring in the WQSB. As someone who straddles the world of academia as a scholar and the

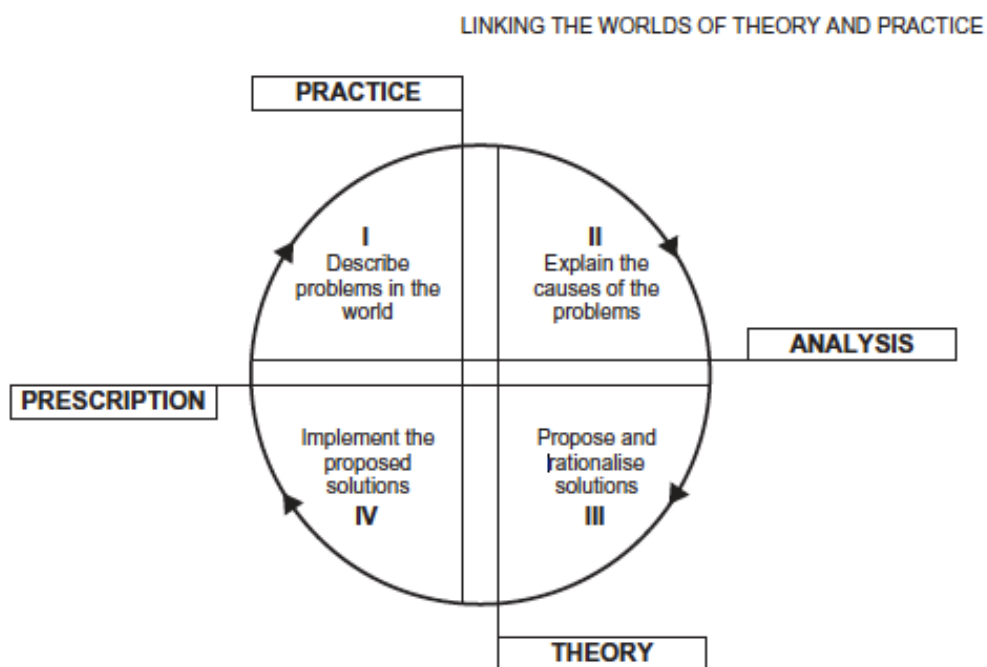
pragmatic world of practice as a district consultant, I consider myself a 'dual citizen' (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), both an outsider *and* an insider in terms of positionality- the notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world (Warf, 2010). Seeing these positions along a continuum rather than as dichotomous, I agree with Dwyer & Buckle (2009) that in qualitative research "the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic,



honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience" (p.59). Thanks to the CollectivED community (@debsnet & @stringer\_andrea, specifically) I also consider myself a 'pracademic,' which has helped me better understand my research process and methodological choices. As defined by Walker (2010), pracademics

are "boundary spanners who live in the **thinking** world of observing, reflection, questioning, criticism and seeking clarity while also living in the **action** world of pragmatic practice, doing, experiencing, and coping" (p.2). I have found Susaskind's (2013) "the circle of Engagement' model useful (see Figure 2) to help me link the worlds of academia and practice and am developing this idea further in my dissertation.

### The Circle of Engagement



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Figure 2: Susaskind (2013)'s Circle of Engagement

Like many educators, I am curious about what underpins my professional practice and my research questions emerge directly from problems of practice. I am motivated by examining theoretical frameworks that will help me better understand problematic situations and to propose solutions that I can then implement in my work context and reflect upon. Essentially, I want my research project to be useful and to make a difference in the lives of students and educators I learn with and support.

### **WQSB's Teacher Induction Program**

Since 2009, the Western Québec School Board has been engaged in the design and implementation of a mandatory Teacher Induction Program (TIP) for all teachers new to the district, regardless of teaching experience. Induction in this context is conceived as a 'helping mechanism' (Weva, 1999, p.194), and has three clear aims to: 1) retain effective teachers new to the district; 2) provide leadership and professional growth opportunities for veteran staff; and 3) improve teaching and learning across the district. With no clear provincial directions to guide its design, the TIP was developed at a grassroots level by a volunteer committee of teachers, administrators and district personnel. In my dissertation I have conceptualized TIP as a patchwork

quilt. Whereas the TIP's quilt back is framed by the district's context and provincial guidelines, its quilt top stitches together the numerous influences, initiatives, commitments, district partners and key stakeholders that form the many fabric blocks. Each year, the TIP pattern evolves and changes in response to key stakeholder feedback (in particular, administrators, participants, and the local union) and the current quilt design looks very different from the 2009 version.

### **The local Context**

With no 'one-size fits all' model to teacher professional learning, teacher induction, mentoring, coaching and evaluation must be understood and interpreted within the cultural, social, educational, philosophical and political conditions in which they occur (Fransson, 2010; Wang et al., 2008). The WQSB is a small English School Board and is a member of Québec's English School Network, which has a much smaller student population (around 11%) than its French-language counterpart (ABEE, 2009). Although the WQSB is small in numbers (25 schools, 7200 students, 520 teachers, 30 administrators), it has the largest geographic catchment in Québec, roughly the size of Ireland. The WQSB is comprised of both urban and rural schools and has a unique composition of student

population in terms of language and culture, especially in its northern schools. The distance between the schools and the school board is significant (up to a seven-hour drive) which makes professional development and inter-school collaborative work challenging. Historically, the district has struggled to attract, hire and retain teachers, especially French teachers and teachers willing to work in its rural and northern schools. Although the WQSB draws many Ontario trained teachers, its lower pay-scale, distinct curriculum documents and unique political and cultural context are significant factors influencing teacher retention.

In order to support its *Teaching Fellows* (all teachers new to the district regardless of experience) as well as to help retain *highly effective* teachers in all of its schools, the WQSB developed a comprehensive and high-stakes (job vs. no job) two-year induction program. There are three key pillars in the TIP: Professional Learning (PL), a Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship (MCF), and Teacher Evaluation. Under the PL pillar, the district offers up to 6 days of optional district-led professional development sessions each induction year. In the MCF, every Teaching Fellow is paired in their first year with an administrator-selected non-evaluative Mentor-Coach to

collaborate, practice and reflect on new learning in their own environment as a fellowship (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Mentor-Coaches are ideally a veteran 'master' teacher from the same school, same grade and same subject area. However, with a fifth of the WQSB's teachers currently in the TIP, distance Mentor-Coaches are often engaged and teaching expertise varies. Each Fellowship is provided with two 'Fellowship Days' that can be used at their discretion, often to observe teachers in different classes and/or schools. Finally, the most controversial pillar of the TIP remains its high-stakes evaluation component. In order to gain a position on the district's 'priority of employment' list which leads to a tenured position, a Teaching Fellow must successfully complete two yearly summative evaluations. These evaluations are based on the Ministry of Québec's (MEQ, 2001) *12 Professional Competencies for Teachers*. Each year, the administrator makes a final professional judgement each year based on data from at least two formal classroom observations, as well as, the Teaching Fellow's *Reflective Record*. One aspect that remains hotly debated in the district is the TIP team members' participation in one of these formal observations in the second year. The *Reflective Record* (previously called a

Professional Growth Portfolio) includes termly goal-setting, evidence of professional growth and documented reflection. In their first year, the Teaching Fellow works collaboratively with their Mentor-Coach and administrator to develop a meaningful Reflective Record.

### Tensions

With more than half of its teachers having participated in the TIP since 2009, it is clear that the program plays a significant role in the district. Generally, feedback remains quite positive around the TIP, especially regarding the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship pillar. However, as my doctoral research shows, there are many issues that are still being grappled with at the district level. Three of these tensions will be discussed below.

#### 1. *Program requirements and terminology*

Although the WQSB has made an effort to streamline the TIP requirements, confusion still exists around evaluation expectations for Teaching Fellows, especially around the Reflective Record. In spite of the significant changes to the program over the years, a perception remains in the district that a Teaching Fellow's final summative evaluation is based on a 20-minute formal observation conducted by the TIP team and a

'showcase' portfolio. Always intended to reflect on-going, meaningful and messy professional growth, the Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) was never able to shake its negative reputation as a "make-work project" or another "hoop to jump through". Whether the re-branded 2018 Reflective Record is able to fare any better still has to be determined.

Another tension in the district is around the institutionalization of terminology. Specifically, many WQSB educators still refer to the TIP as the 'New Teacher Program'. The removal of the word 'new' was deliberately made to respect the variety of experience each Teaching Fellow brings to the district and to emphasize the reciprocal learning that can happen within the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowship. District leaders felt that regardless of years teaching, all teachers new to the district could benefit from working with a colleague to focus on their professional practice and hoped the experience would help develop a coaching culture beyond induction years. As such, participation in the TIP was made mandatory for all Teaching Fellows, with the focus primarily on coaching for more experienced teachers. As my research shows, tensions have surfaced in the district around this managerial approach to professional development and the

influence of “contrived congeniality” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Finally, another significant challenge in the district has been unpacking the terminology and clarifying that a Mentor-Coach toggles between both mentoring and coaching depending on the relationship, context, and fellowship needs. Some findings from my research show that it usually takes around three years for Mentor-Coaches to be comfortable in this fluid role, that some Mentor-Coaches prefer to only work in one approach (i.e. they prefer to be a coach rather than a mentor) and ultimately, most are comfortable with mentoring, but need more training to move into the coach role.

### *2. Mentor-Coach selection and training*

Administrators play a large role in any systemic change initiative (Fullan, 2012), especially teacher induction. In the WQSB, administrator buy-in around the TIP was initially challenging (Kharyati, 2017). As such, the WQSB deliberately chose to include the administrator in the TIP process by having them responsible for selecting Mentor-Coaches and making the Mentoring and Coaching Fellowships. Over the years, although support has notably increased, my research shows discrepancies still exist around the level of administrator involvement in the induction process, especially when it comes to

regular meetings focused on the Reflective Record, and providing timely formative feedback on classroom practice. Tensions also remain around Mentor-Coach selection, specifically who is selected (and who isn't), the motivations behind some selections (such as using the process to push forward certain initiatives), and the overall effectiveness of certain Mentor-Coaches.

### *3. The role of evaluation in teacher induction*

As mentioned above, the role of evaluation in the TIP remains contentious. From a system-level perspective, providing a clear standard of what ‘high quality teaching’ looks like in the WQSB has been important for building a common understanding across the district. In fact, administrators report feeling very supported by the TIP process, which has helped them with the evaluation process and making personnel decisions. However, these locally developed standards indubitably also influence and frame the mentoring and coaching process since the ultimate goal of most Teaching Fellows is to gain tenure in the district. As such, my research shows questions have been raised around the role of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2003; Day & Gu, 2010; Lofthouse, 2016), whether there is a space for educator difference and/or

challenge in the WQSB, and how (if any) Mentor-Coaches contribute to the development of a 'cookie cutter approach' to teacher development in the district.

Like any systemic change initiative, the TIP has many tensions that still need to be addressed at the district level. My positionality and identity as a pracademic has been useful for the research process and as a means to implement and reflect on 'proposed solutions' (Susskind, 2013).

By sharing our district's lived experience around mentoring, coaching, and induction, I hope to bring a Canadian perspective to the CollectivED conversation. I expect our prizes and imperfections will be transferable to other contexts and I look forward to the ongoing discussion of our CollectivED community as we 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."

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## Searching for Trust

### *A Thinkpiece working paper by Colin Lofthouse*

I remember once, as a secondary school pupil in a general studies lesson, we did one of those trust exercises. You know the type of thing.

You are told to fold your arms in front of you, close your eyes and rock back on your heels over the point of balance into the waiting arms (you hope) of the randomly selected classmate who you happened to be stood next to.

'It's an exercise in TRUST' the teacher said.

I couldn't do it. I tried. Time and time again I set off backwards into the waiting arms of Anthony (not his real name), but each time at the critical point my foot shot out behind me and I pivoted round to see Anthony's jeering face.

Why couldn't I do it?

All around me classmates were dropping to the floor like tombstones to be caught by their partners, 1970's haircuts brushing the floor.

'What's the matter Lofthouse? Don't trust Anthony to catch you?' asked the teacher.

You're dead right I didn't! Anthony was a large lad, perfectly capable of catching me, but during our short relationship he

hadn't provided me with much proof that he was in fact, worthy of trust. I was a door prefect, tasked with policing entry to the school during breaks and lunchtimes. Shortly after taking up my exalted position, Anthony had informed me of his attitude to my position of power over him, by nutting me square in the nose.

Now, I was supposed to implicitly trust him to prevent further bodily harm? It wasn't going to happen.

At the start of each new school year I find the issue of trust playing on my mind. I really like the start of Autumn term, it always feels so full of promise with new pupils and staff, things feel poised and in balance – we've laid our plans, know where we are headed and we're off.

It helps that I work with a fantastic group of people. Professional through and through, we have worked hard to create a school that 'feels right' and we are happy here.

It's infectious, when you walk through the door you can sense it. There is laughter!

There is trust.



Trust isn't easy to build, it takes time. People are naturally cautious and need proof of reliability, integrity and competence. Positive relationships need fostering through praise and reward.

In our school we are working hard to change the way we teach by looking at our own practice with a critical eye. What is working? What is not? Can we change the way we do things?

Change requires energy – lots of it. It's scary to change embedded practice, it requires a highly positive climate in which to experiment without the fear of judgement. Confidence to fail is needed to try new things out and be open about explaining what went wrong, so we can learn and move on. Trust is a fundamental starting point for this kind of transformational activity.

Which makes it all the more strange and baffling that with the stated aim of improving our education system to be amongst the best in the world (no small aim) our political leaders of education and policy makers seem to be trying their best to engender a complete lack of trust in the people they are asking to transform it.

Proscriptive new curricula and accountability systems, ranking and league tables, stringent new examination systems, the erosion of teachers' professional judgement, fines for schools whose pupils fail to make the grade.

Google any of the last 8 years of Education/schools Ministers and pick out the language that appears in the headlines. Failing, coasting, not good enough, crackdown. Hardly the language of trust.

I came across the research work of Megan Tschannen-Moran the other day. She is an American academic whose research into trust in educational leadership and change processes is really inspiring. The publication I came across was from a summary of the Ontario Education Leadership Conference in 2013 at which she was a speaker – *Healthy Relationships: The Foundation of a Positive School Climate* – the link is at the end of this paper.

From her years of in-depth research, she concludes that educational leaders can accomplish very little in the absence of trust. That trust brings people out of their natural, self-protective mode into an energised, collaborative and accepting

environment where change can occur rapidly.

She talks of the fundamental principles of trust being one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open.

**Benevolence:** confidence that well-being is protected

**Reliability:** the extent to which you can count on another

**Competency:** the extent to which the trusted party has knowledge and skill

**Honesty:** the integrity and authenticity of the trusted party

**Openness:** the extent to which there is no withholding of information from others

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<https://thelearningexchange.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Healthy-Relationships-The-Foundation-of-a-Positive-School-Climate.pdf>

This paper was first published as a blogpost for Schools North East

<https://schoolsnortheastblog.wordpress.com/2015/09/24/searching-for-trust/#more-224>

It's difficult not to feel vulnerable as a school leader at the moment but how many of us are willingly so? Or are confident in the character of those at the top? In my school we are ready, willing and able to catch each other and I hold that dear. It is a precious thing, because at the moment I feel, like many other Head Teachers I suspect...that Anthony's got my back.

Finally, the thing that struck me most about the article was the foreword, which implored leaders in education to put Tschannen-Moran's findings into practice – Who wrote it? George Zegarac the Ontario Deputy Minister of Education.

## Being mentored through CTeach

*A practice insight working paper by Stephen Campbell,  
with thanks to Claire Price*

Chartered Teacher Status, the flagship component of the youthful Chartered College of Teaching, seeks to develop the teaching practice of those involved, and to assess the quality of participants. In a sense, this is a slightly idiosyncratic process: to be awarded the status implies a certain threshold of quality has been passed, which itself requires reflection to reach; however, the status also judges the quality and impact of this reflection process too. Therefore, the need to reflect, fully, and widely, is perhaps the core component of CTeach: the regularity of the reflective journals that we are encouraged to write, as participants, and the significance attached to our interactions with our mentors certainly bears this out.

Reflection is difficult: as a teacher, I find myself considering the quality of reflection in my pupils, and often find it lacking. Reflection is not something that comes naturally and, if I am being honest, the need to reflect was perhaps the most daunting aspect of the CTeach programme, when I first decided to apply. There is a clear directive from the

Chartered College that CTeach should be awarded independent of school input, thus I had visions of wondering around the desert of reflection alone, seeing mirages of improvement where no real development existed. How fortunate, then, to be paired up with a coach, a sage, to guide me through this journey.

I don't think that I have ever really been coached before, certainly not formally, and certainly not in my professional capacity as a teacher. When I first met my coach, Claire Price, I was astonished and impressed in equal measure at the things that she has achieved and her standing within the teaching profession; I was equally impressed with how relaxed and humble she was, and how she immediately made me feel at ease. As our relationship has developed, have been certain things that have struck me, even so early in the process, that I think it is important to share.

### **Kindness**

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, my coach is kind and has been kind to me. I have a tendency to be negative, and to see errors, mistakes and negatives: I think

that the only way that I can see past these is to feel relaxed. However, I don't think it is possible to relax in someone's company by being told to relax: feeling relaxed comes as a consequence of being treated as kindness. All of our conversations are bookended with this atmosphere, and I hadn't appreciated the importance of this until being involved with CTeach.

### **Knowledge**

Another area that has impressed me regarding my relationship with Claire is her vast, impressive knowledge. This actually covers various different areas: her knowledge of me has been built up quickly and genuinely. For example, Claire knows about my children, and the impact that they have on the amount of time I can give to certain things; Claire has very quickly understood my tendency to worry, or find problems; Claire also knows my strengths, and talks about them with real examples that make me feel positive and supported. Further to this, Claire's knowledge of teaching practice is outstanding: she has seen ever so much, and shares this knowledge with care and support; it never feels overwhelming, but measured and deliberate.

### **Humility**

Perhaps one aspect of the CTeach pilot that is unique in the world of coaching is

that Claire, and the other coaches, don't really know much more about the course itself than we, the participants, do.

However, the way that Claire has dealt with this, by being clear and open, but by keeping things focused on me and my progress, has actually turned this lack of clarity into a strength. We don't worry about the specifics of the requirements, and of those things we don't know: we focus on me, my practice, and how I can improve.

CTeach has been, thus far, a challenging, thought-provoking and, at times, destabilising process. To have had a coach who has so quickly understood me, as a person and a teacher, has made a huge difference to my development, and, as a consequence, my ability to reflect.

An added dimension, interestingly, is that the Chartered College currently plans to use teachers who have recently been awarded CTeach status as the coaches of future cohorts. Thus, my coach is not only teaching me how to improve and develop, but also how to coach in the future. As has been well-documented, when teaching something, it is essential to have a clear model of what excellent looks like; I really feel that, in Claire's case, I have been shown this, and hope that I can coach future participants with as much kindness, knowledge and humility as her.

## Comparing the mentor - mentee dynamic of the Chartered College pilot programme with in-school coaching

*A Practice Insight Working Paper by Matt Shurlock, Rebecca Stacey and Patrick Ottley-O'Connor*

### **Matt, The Mentee**

The Chartered College of Teaching is half way through the delivery of its pilot Chartered Teacher programme (CTeach). The completion of the programme is designed to '*recognise the knowledge, skills and behaviours of excellent teachers, highlighting the importance of their expertise in supporting the learning of children and young people*'<sup>1</sup>

There are a wide variety of tasks and assessments required to complete the programme. To aid participants in their journey through CTeach, the Chartered College have prescribed each participant with a mentor. In this article, I will reflect on the dynamic of the mentoring relationship as a part of CTeach and compare this to the in-house coaching that is taking place with a colleague within my school. I will question the impact these two relationships are having on my

professional development and professional well-being.

Firstly, let's take a closer look at the mentor element of the CTeach pilot programme. The CTeach pilot handbook states that the purpose of providing candidates with a mentor is to support participants to:

- Evaluate the impact of your practice on outcomes
- Develop an effective professional development plan, including identifying professional development opportunities
- Develop your teaching practice
- Write a research question and literature review
- Implement a research-based improvement project
- Evaluate the impact of the project
- Complete assessments successfully.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://chartered.college/chartered-teacher>

<sup>2</sup> <https://chartered.college/chartered-teacher/professional-principles>

Through face-face meetings, phone and other methods of communication, mentors also support participants in developing against the 12 professional principles of the course<sup>3</sup>.

At the launch event in January, I met with my mentor - a Headteacher of a primary school, who has similar interests in the primary curriculum. This close match has allowed a positive professional relationship to develop rapidly. Since the initial meeting, we have met again at the CTeach assessment event and been in phone and email contact. With the variety of modern communication methods available, it has been possible to stay in contact despite both being busy with the day-day of school life.

Mostly, we talk about the CTeach assignments, particularly the Professional Development Plan. But we also take the time to discuss the opportunities and challenges of life in school. The relationship benefits from our shared views on areas of teaching and curriculum development. It also benefits from my mentor being external - far removed from the context of the school but in a similar setting, therefore able to have insight. This allows for open and honest dialogue,

uninhibited by the dynamics of the internal mechanisms of my school.

So, has the purpose, set out by the Chartered College, been met? I certainly feel well supported. I have been able to explain my ideas and clarify areas for development. My mentor has been able to provide an outsider's perspective and therefore is able to suggest ideas and approaches I did not see. The significant amount of work needed to complete the CTeach tasks has felt manageable thanks to being able to check in with my mentor as I progress through the programme.

It has been difficult to identify just one specific impact that the mentor relationship has had on my professional development. Instead, it has been part of a range of improvements I have implemented from the whole CTeach programme. My practice is more rooted in current research, I am reading more widely and engaging in critical conversations pertinent to high quality teaching and learning.

During my NQT year, I learnt about collaborative professional development through mentoring from my NQT mentor. I then went on to use what I had learnt to mentor trainee and NQT colleagues. Now,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://chartered.college/chartered-teacher/chartered-teacher-mentoring>

by working with my CTeach mentor, I am continuing to learn more about this dynamic. I hope to be able to use my experience as a mentee to provide sound mentor support in the future.

In summary, the CTeach mentor relationship has been quickly established, assisted my professional development within the CTeach programme, and provided an external sounding board and source of sound advice. It also has the potential to further develop as the remainder of the pilot continues.

In addition to the CTeach mentoring, ESSA Primary, the school where I work, puts significant emphasis on developing coaching and mentoring between staff. During the Spring Term I undertook a fortnightly meet up with the Executive Principal. The aims were to develop my ability to lead change across the school and manage my workload. In our sessions we discussed the dynamics of relationships across school, time management and action planning.

The impact of the in-school coaching on my professional development is significant. It has allowed me to organise my thoughts on how I want to develop Maths across the school, articulate my vision and receive specific and relevant feedback to make improvements.

The impact on my wellbeing has also been significant. I am working more efficiently and actively seeking to redress my work-life balance. My school coach is an evangelical advocate for teacher wellbeing and consistently promotes it. Having a senior member of the organisation actively encourage staff to manage their work life balance, and leading by example, makes it more believable and therefore achievable.

So, how does the in-school coaching compare with the CTeach mentoring?

CTeach Mentor	School Coach
Support for CTeach programme	Support for Leadership Position
External to school - therefore impartial perspective and alternate view.	Internal to school - therefore aware of idiosyncrasies and dynamics of school.
In person (termly) & phone/email	In person (fortnightly)
Key areas of support: Professional development through engaging with research.	Key areas of support: Professional development through leading change across the school.  Managing well-being.

Both are different processes, in different settings, with different intended outcomes. However, they similarly share a willingness to work with and support the development of their mentee. In both cases I feel supported and able to have honest and productive conversations. They are concerned with improving my professional development and balancing this with a realistic and balanced workload.

Through this process of reflection on CTeach mentoring and in-school coaching, I was not expecting to discover massive differences between two very similar relationships. Instead I wanted to drill down to what the purpose of each was, ask if it was being effective and appreciate the support I have been fortunate to have. Both have been

successful in moving my professional knowledge and skills forward. I feel that the impact that these relationships have had on my development have been greater than the sum of their parts. By carrying out both in tandem means their benefits combine to add different qualities to my professional development.

### **Rebecca, The CTeach Mentor**

The Chartered College have hit on a great way to support their chartered trainees, who have a wide range of experiences and are spread across the country. As a mentor who lives in a somewhat isolated part of the country the use of tech means that we can support our mentees via a channel that best suits them.



Quick conversations via apps, or phone calls and the occasional meet up works for those of us who are already very busy but want to make time. The manner in which the Chartered College have structured the course also works well - mentoring needs clear expectations and the framework for what the applicants are doing means we know what we need to cover in the time we have. I appreciate this may not work for everyone - but it certainly allows for more professional connections to be made.

### **Patrick, The School Coach**

The current forensic focus on targets and performance tables can create a workload nightmare of toxic accountability within schools. Coaching can be the perfect antidote to this toxicity and can truly liberate teachers to see their own issues, own their own priorities, create their own solutions and empower them to act to improve.

Effective coaches can inspire and motivate teachers and leaders alike, while laying the foundation for creating a sustainable source for the next generation of school leaders.

Coaching in schools is not about fixing the teachers in your team, it is about their growth and development. Coaching should be blame free. Accepting responsibility for your actions, or the actions of your team makes you trustworthy and builds integrity. If the performance of our teachers and/or team members slips or bad decisions are made, we need to understand that their failure is our failure.

A coach should help coachees to remove barriers and ensures that there is clear alignment between actions, outcomes and accountability. Without this alignment, coachees can stray from the path of goal achievement or not even start the journey because of seemingly insurmountable barriers. Agree expectations and revisit goals regularly to ensure continuity and alignment of efforts toward the vision.

A critical success factor in being a good coach is being a good listener, so practice active listening.

To listen well, you must first ask the right questions. Remember that the goal of your questioning is to create a dialogue that will help the coachee see, own, solve and act upon their issues. You are guiding the conversation not controlling it. Ask questions and ensure what is said is not only heard but understood.

While being the problem-solver might be effective and efficient in achieving results quickly, in the long run, it creates a weaker team through learned helplessness. Remember that every problem is a learning opportunity. Don't bypass the learning experience in a rush to reach a solution.

Allow the coachee to create their own solution. Provide support and insight but the solution must be owned by the coachee. This will result in the greatest buy-in for an idea and sustainability of impact.

## Re-imagining performance management

### *A Practice Insight Working Paper by Gary Handforth*

**‘Performance Management’** - *a process by which managers and employees work together to plan, monitor and review an employee's work objectives and overall contribution to the organization.*

**‘Appraisal’** – *the act of estimating or judging the nature or value of something or someone.*

**‘Collaboration’** – *‘the act of working with someone to produce something’*

#### **Introduction**

I've always been interested in understanding what the word ‘collaboration’, in a specific sense, actually means and what can be better understood about any practical application of collaborative group learning practices and team development in all of the schools I have ever worked in. Whether this is through our (Bright Futures Educational Trust) current whole Trust peer review model ‘Educational Review’, our Primary classroom ‘Reflective Inquiry’ approach for developing reflective practitioners, or our work on building a research community through ‘Practitioner Inquiry’. All of these approaches have a strong focus on

collaboration, team development and an emphasis on utilising and developing coaching principles from facilitators to develop individual and collective reflexivity.

Following a recent experience whilst establishing the annual cycle of performance management with individual middle leaders in a primary school, I decided to take a closer look at how we currently view and manage this system in our schools, asking: Could there a better way for developing and applying a more collaborative process and group learning opportunity with performance management? This question led me to consider how a more collective approach could be adopted which could better promote self and group reflection by taking a wider view of reality. That through prompting individual actions that work in a relational sense to the work and actions of others, ultimately creating a more practical and realistic approach that better reflects reality and where we are all held accountable to each other.

## Leeds Beckett University

Working with ImpactEd and Leeds Beckett University, and supporting the wider ambitions to develop rigorous inquiry across our schools, this particular year-long study aims to explore how a more collective and collaborative approach to performance management and personal and professional development may be influenced by team working. The study aims to weave group coaching into the staff appraisal process, using collaborative methods to encourage joint practice opportunities. Over the course of this year, Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET) is partnering with ImpactEd and Leeds Beckett to trial and evaluate a collaborative coaching method with Primary Learning Assistants, Key workers and Lunchtime Organisers (lunchtime support) across 3 schools. During this period, myself and a number of trained coaches/middle and senior leaders will facilitate small group staff sessions, using individual and paired activities for participants to reflect on their work and to analyse the impact of their own and others skills and knowledge.

Individuals share their professional aims and objectives and, as a group, and if appropriate, agree on a common objective for pupils, which is supported by their unique individual professional development objectives. These objectives

are then openly discussed and developed throughout the year through collaborative approaches and everyday working practices. This will differ according to particular roles and responsibilities e.g. for the lunchtime organisers, a more common pupil focused objective for all pupils may be more suitable, whereas for the Primary Learning Assistants and Mentors these may be focused at the individual child or small group level and be different in each key phase e.g. Early Years, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2. In all situations, and through developing enabling conditions to encourage the development of group dynamics, the practitioner is also asked to reflect on their own professional and personal objectives in relation to the shared objective, unique to the individual but then openly shared with others.

The ambition is to reimagine traditional top-down accountability by instead using collaborative coaching methods to develop a more mutual and horizontal (or flat) accountability approach with a small team of people who are accountable to and for each other. The intention is for this to build both individual and staff (collective) agency and a strong sense of community through working towards common and aired goals, alongside the development of both personal and professional goals that will impact positively on self and pupil

outcomes. In the long term, to develop a culture of shared professional learning.

ImpactEd and BFET are working in partnership to develop the rationale for action, an outcomes framework, data collection and analysis and reporting methods. A Carnegie researcher (Leeds University) will add significant domain knowledge and expertise to this process.

### **What is performance management?**

Performance management is usually determined by the following principles:

- Establish objectives at the beginning.
- Hold people to account by setting clear targets, goals and outcomes.
- Build in the necessary development of skills and knowledge to undertake the work.

Ultimately, this is to improve performance, and, in the case of schools, to improve the quality of provision which will impact positively on pupil outcomes. The measure of the impact (normally pupil grades) is often the main metric to which people are judged (at the end of the year) in terms of their overall effectiveness.

A typical Review meeting follows a basic structure:

- Goal setting
- Identifying specific tasks
- An agreement on methods of evaluation
- The nature of feedback and when to expect it (e.g. normally once or twice in the annual cycle e.g. mid-cycle review meeting, end of cycle meeting)
- Rating methods used for the end of cycle evaluation (e.g. met/not met/partially met)

Based on the recent experience of individual meetings with middle leaders, I decided to explore these traditional approaches and to consider how new collaborative methods of bringing individuals together to establish common goals, to reflect and then openly share individual personal and professional needs might be a smarter way of working together and one that could have greater benefits for themselves, the organisation and ultimately for the students whom they are working with.

### **Encouraging divergent thinking**

Reality is diverse and our systems need to acknowledge this and to encourage more divergent thinking. After a series of nine, one-hour individual appraisal meetings with 'middle leaders' in a large primary school, I asked myself 'why am I holding

individual one-to-one meetings with people who have similar shared responsibilities and are working on many overlapping projects or ideas?' All are focused on common goals which are directly related to the school's development strategy and on pupil targets and many have similarities around professional development where each person could actively support the other. After 2 or 3 of these meetings, it became increasingly obvious that too many opportunities were being missed for each person to work together towards overall goals and to provide the support for each other's professional development, and that this shouldn't be left solely to chance. That we should be working with, alongside and in the natural nature of the diversity of the school systems and provide the space and time to reflect on how this continually develops and grows.

The work of the middle leaders had many cross-over elements: e.g. Pupil objectives for an attendance lead had a direct relationship with those of the behaviour lead and a creative arts lead. Their work also related to the leader on parental partnerships and so on. Regarding one without the other is a rather myopic, or mono-disciplinary view of education and does not necessarily reflect the reality of the complex school system and how we

(and things) work. That this view could be limiting the possibility of seeing how things work relationally and in a more multi or trans-disciplinary manner. At best, I was acting as a signpost for each of the middle leaders, signalling them to come together to discuss their work. At worst, as a blocker engaged in a model that prevents and frustrates the natural flow of information and knowledge already 'out there' in the school system. I would also be repeating this process during the mid-year review meetings. Like a hub attaching and binding the spokes of a wheel I felt that I needed to somehow remove the control of the hub from this process, relocate myself as a group facilitator and bring the middle leaders together as a group that would form a more dynamic, responsive and fluid system that more accurately reflects the diverse reality of a school, not as an overly rigid structure that attempts to place a sense of control through a series of pre-planned events that attempts to accurately predict all of the outcomes from the outset.

In a recent research paper from the CIPD; 'Could do Better: assessing what works in performance management' (Dec 2017), there lies a strong criticism of the more traditional performance reviews which is made on several grounds. They are seen to be:

- overly time-consuming
- energy-sapping
- disappointing and ultimately demotivating
- divisive and not conducive to co-operation and effective team-working;

and, most damningly:

- not effective drivers of performance.

Rob Lebow and Randy Spitzer (1991)

support this view:

*‘too often, appraisal destroys human spirit and, in the span of a 30-minute meeting, can transform a vibrant, highly committed employee into a demoralized, indifferent wildflower who reads the want ads on the weekend....’*

They go on to say....

*‘They don’t work because most performance management appraisal systems are a form of judgement and control’*

Furthermore, in a recent article in Harvard Business Review (2017), Cappelli and Tavis (2016) argue that current changes to performance management are a result of changing strategic priorities. Specifically, in advanced economies, there is now less need for individual accountability and more of a need for group development; for

greater agility and shorter-term targets; and for *teamwork rather than individual performance*. Suggesting that, what was appropriate several decades ago is an outdated method for achieving strategic goals and may no longer be the most appropriate method.

*‘Companies of all sizes are shifting away from annual appraisals to more regular ‘check-ins’ and frequent real-time feedback and the redesign of performance management is now a high priority for 79% of executives according to Deloitte’*

I wonder if we work under a myth of control? That it is only through tightly managed systems and predetermined imposed structures and plans that we will be able to navigate the system better and accurately predict outcomes? It may well be true that such systems do have their time and place and that this may well depend on the nature and context of a system, but not always. Over the past 15 years and in many leadership positions, as an Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head teacher, and currently as Executive Headteacher and Director of Education in a Multi Academy Trust, I have conducted countless appraisal meetings and never or rarely have they tightly followed the initial path and plans neatly established from the outset.

What I have learned over this time is that the shortest point between A and B is not a straight line. The line evolves as we move through the process and it is only through regular 'check-ins' and feedback that we will be able to make sense of what we are doing and adjust the route along the way. What Argyris (2010) describes as 'double-loop' learning which provides a focus on the reasons for behaviours and visible emergent results, and not to simply act on the more mechanistic processes that may fail to address the underlying internal and external factors impacting on these visible outcomes as we move and progress. This asks us to find meaning together, in a group, and to suspend our individual assumptions (which may be limiting ones) and embedded and entrenched biases but to pause and consider the perspective of others before we rush to action.

So why are we still using a system that still places most of its emphasis on a one-to-one meeting, a one-to-one mid-point review and a one-to-one end of year review to assess or appraise performance over the course of an annual cycle? Surely, as we learn more about the complexity of modern workplaces, the increasing speed of information and changes to the educational system that are unprecedented e.g. mass

migration/movement of people, we would be better suited to become more adaptive and responsive and to look again at how we try to manage the workplace and manage people and performance.

'Managing' systems pre-supposes that we can somehow determine the path and predict the end points of something that is continually shifting, evolving, fluid, dynamic and changing. As Cappelli and Tavis argue, we live and work in different times and the management methods we once used are now outdated.

School systems are socially complex and not easily suited to be shepherded or annexed from the outset. These systems have a large degree of turbulence brought together through complex interconnections that emerge through a process of engagement, they don't always follow artificial boundaries. Consider the open water sea swimmer (water and waves provide a type of reality for the school's ever-changing environment). Each wave generates a new challenge and, no matter what we thought when looking out from the shore and how we read the waves before we set out, it is only through subjective experience that the body 'learns' to swim the next wave, adjusting along the way. We may have some basic 'facts' from which we work e.g. the rip tide, the swell, the weather conditions but this



isn't nearly enough. Sure, we need some facts from which to operate but surely we need to emulate this more chaotic type of system with something that provides regular feedback opportunities throughout the year, and not constrained to a mid-cycle meeting (how are we getting on after 20 waves?) or an end of year review (too late – already drowned). One which can make sense of the different experiences we encounter along the way, embedding high quality reflection, dialogue and feedback, together, with others and embedded as part of the process.

In the example, the swimmer has a type of 'know how' knowledge and, through active participation, develops their new knowledge as an emergent property dependent on the ever-changing conditions of the water (the 'real' school environment) - knowledge forming through the interpretation of each individual encounter. Along with their 'know that' knowledge – they 'know that' the weather is poor, that the rip tide is moving at 8ft per second, and the swell is generating large waves – it is through bringing both forms of knowledge together that is much more effective and, in the case of the sea swimmer, life-saving! Through bringing both knowledge and skills together, and particularly in collaboration with others, which brings in a much wider view of

experiences and different and diverse perspectives, then we would have a much fitter system that better reflects the reality of the diversity of school life. Diverse systems call for divergent thinking.

We can't always accurately predict school systems by an initial analysis of specific individual roles and then ascribing a set of pre-established actions to rigorously follow. No doubt, this is useful in the sense of 'Know That'. But we also need to cultivate regular meetings where we 'listen in' to emerging real-life examples and lived experiences from those 'in the sea'. Responding to our 'Know How' through sharing knowledge about what appears to be working and what doesn't and able to make real-time adjustments that better serve the needs of pupils in a timely manner.

### **Can we change the system? 'What if?'**

What if we not only had more opportunities to 'check-in' but that we also brought teams or groups of people together as active participants?

What if, instead of one-to-one individual meetings with, in the case of this study, Learning Assistants, Mentors and Lunchtime Organisers that we brought

them together to explore collective and individual goals from the beginning?

What if we planned for regular feed-back meetings (check-ins) that would enable everybody to be able to pay attention to what emerges (for and from each other) as we move through the different waves of experiences?

What if the role of the 'appraiser' changed to one of the 'group supervisor/group coach/group facilitator' whose central role would be to create the necessary conditions for this type of reflection, dialogue and decision-making to take place within a group of people?

What if their role (and ultimately, their responsibility) would be to ensure that the process is robust, that both pupil, personal and professional targets/objectives were challenging and that the conditions of engagement provided high levels of support not just from themselves but from the others in the group?

These systems and conditions for professional learning would not only help develop deep and meaningful professional relationships across the school but could ultimately better serve the overall aims: to

improve individual (professional) performance that will impact positively on pupils as well as on the overall goals of the organisation.

What if we stopped trying to 'manage' a system but instead provided the opportunity for the system to manage itself, and in doing so, better reflect reality, becoming more adaptive, flexible and self-renewing.

At a time when we are:

- Dedicated to reducing Teacher workload
- Focusing on mental health and well-being
- Having high regard for work-life balance
- Maximising the benefit of support staff
- Trying to better understand collaboration and collaborative working processes
- Developing stronger accountability structures

Wouldn't working together in collaborative groups or teams be a better, more effective, coherent and efficient system?

## How does this work?

### *Initial objective setting*

I worked with 2 separate groups:

#### *Lunchtime Organisers*

Working with the lunchtime organisers, I had to consider that some roles in schools are not always conducive to outcome goals for pupils that might be specifically about academic task performance, test results etc... but that a more appropriate consideration should be on behaviour and learning objectives/outcomes that sometimes cannot be easily measured. I also noted that the language we sometimes use for teachers and school leaders e.g. targets, success criteria, timescales, may not be appropriate or easily accessible in the sense of truly understanding what these mean and applied meaningfully. I felt that the process we should use needs to lean towards a learning orientation rather than a performance orientation for appraisal, and that the complexity of the work may well dictate this e.g. the complexity of lunchtimes. This particular view encouraged me to think differently and to help them to set a general objective, one that comes from an initial collective group dialogue and group decision-making process and was not too singularly specific but covers a general theme or aim which could still be measured, to some

extent, in terms of its general impact.

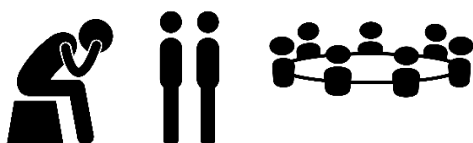
Although in most circumstances we follow the SMART objective setting process (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-related) and that these are suitably challenging, it is not necessarily always the case that this will be appropriate and that this approach could develop a rather reductive understanding of systems. Better, I think, and specifically for the complex work of the Lunchtime Organisers and lunchtimes, to have an overarching collective objective which everybody, in their own unique way, can work towards. The Lunchtime Organisers would still have a personal objective to which they are solely accountable but shared with others to develop mutual accountability – responsible to supporting and developing each other. This process is much better if all of these ideas came from the participants themselves as they will be more likely to invest their efforts if they thought of them themselves, a very human trait!

#### *Primary learning assistants and mentors (PLA/PLM)*

Working alongside middle leaders (who were to be the group coaches/facilitators throughout the year for the PLAs and PLOs) the initial meeting followed a similar pattern to that of the Lunchtime Organisers in that it consisted of

individuals 'telling their stories' about their work and a sharper focus on reflecting on their past and current work specific to their role and responsibility in the school (e.g. individual intervention programmes targeted at specific pupils or previous personal/professional development work, professional training and courses). The PLAs and PLMs share the successes and failures of these within paired and group settings. and because the quality of thinking depends on the quality of questions being asked, we train all of our group supervisors (in this case, the middle leaders) as coaches, not just through our Teaching School coaching programme but also through planned continual development in the form of supervisory sessions throughout the year. Because of this, it was possible to organise the session into smaller, phase teams from the outset.

### ***How this worked – the initial meeting***



For both groups, the initial meetings explored what we (as a collective) wanted to achieve and that a relationship was established between this and the school's development plans. For some, a powerful moment, as this was the first time they

had seen the plan in full detail. From this, we created a general objective with the Lunchtime Organisers but more specific and targeted objectives for the PLAs/Mentors. Through a planned process of individual reflection (I think), paired discussion (you think), opening up the possibility of 're-think', and whole group dialogue (we think), each person decided on how they would contribute to this.

This forms a collaborative team of individuals that will develop an approach to solving problems together. This method may not only help to develop the reflection skills of the individual, and avoid, to some extent, individual power dynamics taking over the group process, acting on what one person thinks from one person's perspective (everybody has a valid voice) but it could also bring about a greater sense of open and transparent (horizontal) accountability. In other words, everybody knows what everybody else is working on and that everybody is working towards a common and agreed objective that is closely linked to current school priorities.

This is a fully participative process and one which provides the opportunity for individuals to grasp their own reins of responsibility and allows them to put their

hearts into their work. As is the case of the open water swimmer, these meetings gave some clear parameters to start with (know that) but they also allow the system to develop, self-organising in a way that is natural to the people working within them and responding to their 'know how'.

This has a strong purpose from the outset, commits individual to personal actions and binds the group together to provide a pattern for their future behaviours.

*'If an organisation asserts more control, people tend to withdraw or become disengaged'*

and;

*'They just do what they're told'*

(Margaret Wheatley, Finding our way p.205)

The initial group meetings ensured that each participant first reflected on their place at work over the previous year(s) and that they were able to share this with others. From this, they then considered what their professional targets would be for the forthcoming year.

The structure of this meeting followed our trust-wide coaching model by asking:

- What is the current reality?
- What would the ideal scenario look like?
- What actions need to be taken?

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We also considered; what is the likely impact of our work? How would we know? This developed into a common objective for the lunchtime organisers;

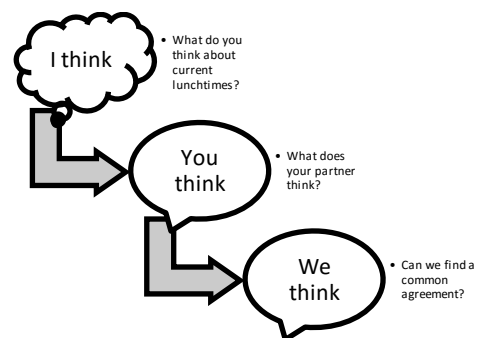
### ***What are 'we' going to be working on?***

This started with a 'I think – You think – We think' approach. Listening to ourselves and the views of all the people. This was a general objective for the Lunchtime Organisers but a more specific phase and role one for the PLAs and PLMs.

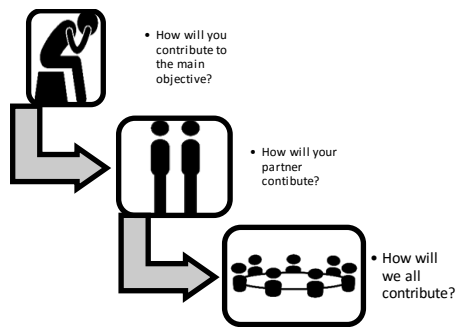
### ***What are you going to be working on?***

Drawing out the individual contribution towards the general objective.

### **Gaining perspectives of the current reality**



And from this, develop the ideal and the actions we will take:



### **Mid-Cycle Reviews: On-going/Check-in meetings**

For the middle leaders who are working with the PLAs and PLMs, we are embedding regular check-in meetings throughout the year and as part of their normal (phase) practice of team meetings. It is during these meetings where individuals will reflect on the progress of their work, to have their thinking explored and challenged as part of a group and their individual contributions. For this process, the middle leaders are also available for one-to-one discussions but the emphasis is on group work.

For the Lunchtime Organisers, and for more obvious practical reasons e.g. contractual availability, there is more of a focus on planned sessions where we can come together as a group to explore the collective objective and their individual contribution. These sessions will also provide training opportunities that have become more apparent as this system itself encourages better communication and openness.

As mentioned, there will be a supervisory session throughout the year between myself and the middle leaders who are responsible for the PLMs and PLAs. This is to explore how they are developing this process, what type of issues are emerging and how they can support each other.

### **End of year appraisal – no surprises**

Several organisations that are grouped as part of the shift away from annual appraisals, in fact, continue to have end-of-year assessments (Baer 2014, Cappelli and Tavis 2016). For example, Adobe's manager 'check-ins' may be regular and informal, but they are nonetheless 'tied to people having yearly expectations' (Baer 2014). However, a distinction is usually made in that these annual meetings are secondary to more regular meetings – they are a way of formalising the discussions that have already taken place during the year and potentially making the link with administrative decisions on pay, promotion and so on. There should be no surprises as the conversations are happening through the year anyway.

Our final review meetings would ask the individuals to present their work over the course of the year. The team coach encouraging questions from the group, where self-perception is held up and interrogated against peer perception as a more meaningful reflection on individual and group contributions.

## Leeds Beckett University

If necessary, any issues regarding competency would still be able to be picked up in one-to-one meetings throughout the year, concerns of underperformance made apparent throughout the process and not as a surprise at the end of the year when it is too late to adjust.

**Summary – ‘Walking the Talk’** or how this work is linked to our organisation's vision and core values

At Bright Futures Educational Trust, we hold our values of; Community, Integrity and Passion, and our vision: ‘the best for everyone, the best from everyone’ very close to our hearts and we constantly look for opportunities to make sure that these are in use and not just laminated signs put up on the corridors and classrooms in each of our schools. We actively explore opportunities to develop positive relationships and effective communication systems that will develop the very best from everybody in the organisation.

This approach develops and unlocks talents in all of our people: **‘the best from everyone’**

It also provides opportunities for people to work together on common goals: **‘the best for everyone’**

It follows that there could be a reduction in bureaucratic workload (by meeting everybody together and not as a long

series of one-to-one meetings). That we have more of a focus on intentionally developing meaningful relationships and learning communities (by design) where teaching and learning is seen as a team effort stimulated through enabling systems. Systems of professional learning where people come together to listen to each other, to identify and solve problems, to create new approaches and ideas, and to share in successes and failures. A more adaptive, rewarding and responsive system.

I see this as a radical shift in the way that people view their roles and responsibilities and not as a soft option that moves away from traditional vertically managed accountability. The open nature and transparency of the meetings may well create greater accountability as individual objectives and actions are exposed to a wider audience and thus creates greater mutual responsibility with the additional benefit of encouraging stronger support mechanisms across the school network to take root i.e. if I know what you are working on, this not only exposes your work but ensures that I’m in a better position to support you. If I know what you are working on, you are more accountable. This approach reflects the actual and real adverse nature of how systems are actually operating in a school setting – providing a better understanding

of the relational and systemic nature of things.

I believe that it is through individuals sharing their 'stories' that other people can help them to make sense of their experiences, explore new ideas, make better decisions and develop new professional habits, and from this, emerges stronger working relationships. I believe that it is within collaborative groups that the individual finds a place where their own internal reflections ('I think') is developed through the different interpretations and perspectives offered first with a partner ('You think') and then within the group ('We think'). Ultimately, both an individual and collective agency is cultivated and developed.

By using storytelling as a method of engaging individuals in a group process, we are able to make sense of our self and our past actions. They provide a way of understanding our experiences in order to strategise and plan. In other words, the regular meetings provide the space and time to explore the continuous chain of connected activities not, and seen more in the case of 1 or 2 meetings, as a discrete process that is occasionally revisited.

This approach does require deep levels of relational trust within the group which can be built up over time and must be expertly facilitated by an experienced group coach who must set the right conditions for

quality dialogue to be able to guide the group dialogic process as it emerges. Not an easy task!

### **A return to 'Collaboration'**

Traditional models of appraisal are often centred around individual agency and individual performance levels, yet they often (always?) rely on the collaboration of others from within the network. We do see this shift towards collective agency in many flourishing school environments where processes and structures encourage this to happen, but not, I would hazard a guess, in many. The traditional model just feels counter-productive and is working against a naturally organising system. As my early frustrations of one-to-one meetings illustrated, there is a clear need to look at the (social) power of collective agency and the impact this could have on performance and better achieving the goals of the organisation, the goals of the individual and on pupil outcomes (and not necessarily always on test scores and exam results).

A focus on collaborative learning provides a different approach to understanding knowledge sharing, knowledge generation and knowledge transmission as part of normal and everyday work practices. Re-imagining performance management as a process of collaborative learning supports



the engagement of individuals working in a social system through a form of embodied learning ('know how') which makes better use of knowledge and applies it to particular contexts.

It is through establishing collaborative environments that we may be able to better explore individual assumptions and biases and our take on reality. What 'I think' may not be what 'you think' and it is through collaborative environments that we are able to listen to and take on new perspectives and to better avoid possible recycling of redundant patterns of thought and behaviours from one realm to another,

or from one year to another. Perhaps, by establishing more collaborative environments, we can affect the way we share, generate and transmit knowledge and provide a strong platform from which to develop professional skills and tune into our personal ambitions. By doing so we need to focus more on the environment of how to establish group settings where dialogue is encouraged, where meaning is explored and interpreted and where collective and individual actions are developed. Not only a more effective and efficient system but also a better place to work.

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## Teaching-teams not Teaching-solo: The secret to retaining Gen Y teachers

### *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Anne Knock*

Recently, I spent some in a school with teaching teams comprised of early to mid-career teachers who fit neatly into the \*Gen Y demographic. For the uninitiated this means that they were born in the early eighties, through to 1990. These teachers were passionate and committed, they loved the kids and loved their job. Within the shared learning spaces, the content was well-structured, teachers had clear roles throughout the learning session, and most importantly, the students were engaged in the activities. The learning environments I observed, each with around 90 primary students, had a calm and productive culture.

I watched the teacher activity in the space and their interactions, I could see how much the teachers enjoyed working together. At regular intervals, they would check-in with one another to make adjustments or talk about students. Should an issue emerge with a student, one would deal with it, while the others kept the learning humming.

The success of this shared learning environment was, in part, due to the effectiveness of the teaching team. I asked them about this context,

***“Would any of you want to go back to one-teacher with one-class?”***

The answer was a resounding ‘No’. They loved the idea of the team, the collaboration and collegiality and the sense of collective effectiveness.

Perhaps prioritising teaching teams may have wide-ranging benefits:

*Australia as a nation is failing to retain the best people in the teaching profession. Attrition rates are worryingly high with researchers estimating around 30% to 50% of teachers leaving in the first five years. (McKinnon and Walker, 2017)*

What if teacher isolation played a part in this departure? Would a teaching-team approach in the learning environment more closely align to the preferences of Generation Y?

McCrindle Research states that “by 2020 most Baby Boomers will have retired while Generation Y will dominate employment, comprising 42% of the workforce” (emphasis mine) and that is only a few short years from now. I believe that moving away from traditional, privatised pedagogy will provide better for job satisfaction for teachers, and will be better for the students.

### **Who are Gen Ys?**

Very tech savvy – bringing social media and productivity skills to the workplace.

The global generation- culturally diverse, mobile careers, travellers and globally aware

McCrindle Research (MR) have outlined the top five factors for Gen Y to attract and retain and meet their workplace needs) I have looked at these through the lens of the Gen Y teacher.

### **Work/Life Balance**

Whether we like it or not, work-life ‘in-balance’ trumps when pressure rises. Can AI take away parts of the role that are routine and time-consuming, to enable focus on more rewarding and relational aspects of being a teacher?

### **Workplace Culture**

Social connection with co-workers is an important retention factor. Teaching-teams in a shared space, may meet this need. Counter to the isolation and stress of one teacher to 30 students, “they want community, not a workplace. Friends, not just colleagues” (MR).

### **Varied job role**

A well-functioning teaching team enables variety and teachers are able to grow in their strengths and pursue passions. Differentiation across the shared classes and a cross-curricular approach also creates the context to try new things.

### **Management style**

How we lead and manage Gen Ys matters. Rather than an authoritarian, top-down approach, preference is for more open and honest communication. Also providing regular support, mentoring, feedback and recognition. These attributes support a culture of trust.

### **Training**

Investing in growing teacher capacity is a critical retention strategy, “Generation Y’s who receive regular training from their employer are motivated to stay with their

employer” (MR). Considering how important culture and the social elements of the role are to Gen Ys, then team-

based professional development is even better.

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## Long live metacognition ... lessons learned from a life in the field

### *A Practice Insight Paper by Rachel Lofthouse*

#### **This is not the beginning**

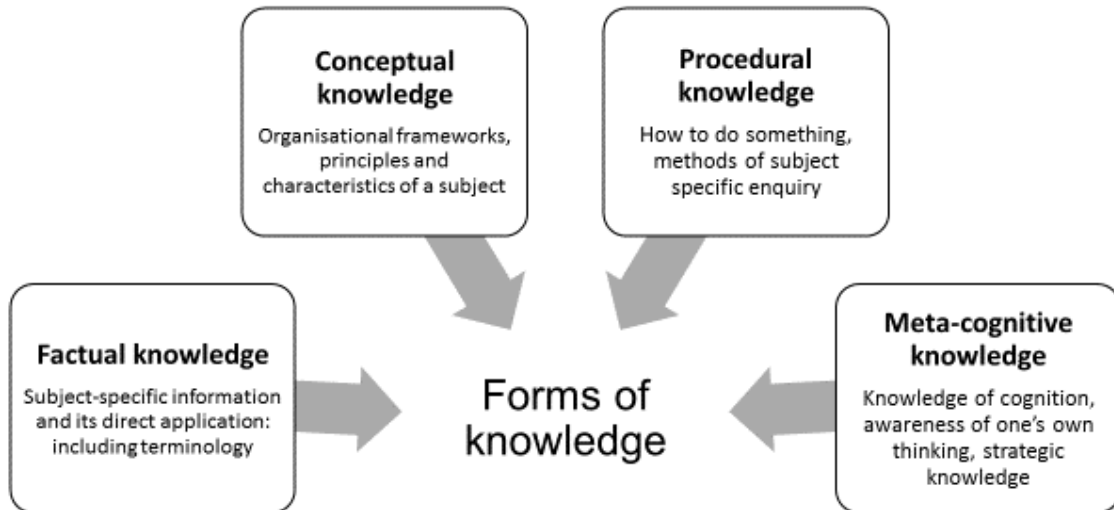
In April 2018 the EEF published its much heralded guidance report on 'metacognition and self-regulated learning' on its website, which they are posting in hard copy to every school in England. Many of us have worked to support teachers to develop their students' metacognition for the last two decades, and while the EEF guidance report does offer a renewed way of understanding the significance of metacognition, we should give credit to the wider body of professional work and research that existed prior to the application of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in this area. To some extent that is what this short paper will do. It will offer insights into how **coaching, collaborative teacher enquiry and lesson study** have been used to create opportunities to expand professional knowledge and develop teaching practices in this area. Each one will be illustrated with a vignette from work that I have been involved with, but many other teachers, teacher educators and consultants could offer their own examples.

So, first let's start with some thoughts on **metacognition**. One way that I have found useful to understand metacognition is to recognise it as a form of knowledge which is related to other forms of knowledge. For example, I have used the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) as a means of conceptualising this and also making it concrete in planning lessons and schemes of work. This taxonomy as illustrated in figure 1.

Sometimes we use shorthand to describe metacognition as 'thinking about thinking', but this does have the disadvantage of sounding a little vague, so at least in the diagram above some more flesh is put on the bones. It is worth stressing at this point that although the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy categorises forms of knowledge this is not meant to imply separation; each develops in conjunction with the other. While this taxonomy stresses metacognition as a form of knowledge we can also determine metacognitive skills which allow learners to self-regulate. These include the overall disposition and motivation that learners have towards activities that promote

Figure 1

The nature of knowledge and ways of knowing:  
based on the Revised Bloom's taxonomy



learning such as planning, questioning, monitoring and reviewing their own thinking, work and progress. Hence the current buzz-phrase of 'Metacognition and Self-regulation'.

There seems to be a dismissal of the phrase 'teaching thinking skills' as a pedagogic intention in the current discourse, but it is worth recognising that this concept was well established and accepted in the recent past, and this paper will make use of this phrase. Teaching thinking skills involves both the teacher and pupils paying attention to the cognitive processes that facilitate learning, and this

demands pupils' active participation in learning activities and explicit talk about the learning process as well as the subject content of the lesson. Typically teaching thinking skills lessons involve group dialogue around a challenging task and whole class debriefing with some focus on metacognition. The teacher is active in modelling, scaffolding, facilitating and providing instruction and explanation which support pupils' thinking. Critically the teacher also debriefs the learning and the thinking that supported it during a debrief, usually conducted with a whole class through skilled questioning

and prompting and giving pupils adequate opportunities to provide in depth responses. Thinking skills teaching can either be infused within the subject curriculum or be taught as an independent dimension, and the EEF's conclusion that there is evidence for infusing metacognition within subjects has greatest impact has validity.

The main function of this paper, given that it is written for CollectivED, is to focus on how teachers can work **collaboratively**, in a structured fashion, to develop their own and each other's understanding of teaching thinking skills. The EEF recommend that 'Schools should support teachers to develop their knowledge of these approaches and expect them to be applied appropriately'. It is worth noting at this point that this is exactly what the now much-maligned National Strategies in England were aiming to do, with explicit modules on metacognition as well as professional development structures such as teacher learning triads, and networked learning communities being proposed and supported. However, it is good to see that this is where we have got back to nearly two decades later; and it would appear that the EEF and DfE expect the recently established Research Schools to get on with the job, supported of course with their

big boxes of Metacognition and Self-regulation reports (photos of which have been excitedly shared on twitter). To elaborate on their instruction to schools to support teachers the EEF's more specific guidance can be summarised as follows;

1. Sufficient time needs to be provided both to train teachers and to allow them to practise and embed the new methods.
2. High quality professional development is needed if teachers are going to make the difference in their classrooms.
3. Teachers need high quality tools, such as textbooks and resources, and support, such as on-going mentoring and coaching.
4. Support from senior leadership in the school is key to making that happen effectively and consistently.

Now we know. Again, I do not think there is anything new here, and many of us who have been working in this field would have concluded the same four points. We are often also able to point to examples of practice which lacked at least one of the 'fab four' elements, hence leading to less than effective implementation of enhanced pedagogies. So - I am not complaining, the message still needs hearing loud and clear. It is particularly helpful to have

mentoring and coaching highlighted as valuable tools, and the remainder of this paper will focus on professional development activities which work when they enable teachers to work together and have focused professional dialogue.

### Thinking it through together

#### 1) *Subject networks focused on metacognitive pedagogies*

During my nine years employed as a secondary teacher and head of department I was lucky that I could contribute to two networks of teachers who were developing effective approaches to teaching thinking skills. One of these was Newcastle University's Thinking Through Geography group, and the other was Northumberland Local Authority Humanities Thinking Skills Network. Both brought teachers together with the explicit ambitions of developing our knowledge and expertise through co-planning and shared trialling of thinking skills lessons, reviewing and writing about our experiences. The sessions were facilitated by David Leat (then a teacher educator at Newcastle University) and Mel Rockett (the LA advisor for Humanities), but over time the expertise of the participants in the networks grew, aided by the fact that the networks each ran for several years. We had been far more

than trained, we had all gained an invaluable education helping us to shape our future pedagogic practices and support others in our own schools and beyond. The Thinking Through Geography group also published two books (both winning awards from the Geographical Association), the structure of which were quite unique at the time (Leat, 1998, Nichols and Kinninment, 2000). In them we shared the lesson resources and planning rationales for the thinking skills strategies we had designed and trialled, and alongside this included detailed analysis of how these had worked in practice. By including three examples of each strategy (such as mysteries and living graphs) we demonstrated that these were adaptable across topics and key stages and that the pedagogic design principles were accessible to other teachers to create their own. There was a strong focus on discussing aspects of the debrief as our collective experience had taught us not just how significant this was, but how it required particular teaching skills to do it well.

#### 2) *Coaching*

And so to another example. While I was still a teacher I became part of a TDA funded North-East Schools-based Research Consortium which was focused



on developing approaches to teaching thinking skills. The consortium explicitly set out to create the conditions for teacher development indicated by the four points of guidance (although in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the EEF was not even imagined). I was first involved as a participant teacher-coach, because (due to my experiences in the networks described above) I was knowledgeable and experienced in teaching thinking skills. The coaching was influenced by the work of Costa and Garmstorm (2002), and also drew on the Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education (CASE) approach to supporting teachers to develop metacognitive practices. Coaches were supported to develop their coaching skills prior to coaching and also during the period of coaching. It was almost a model of coach supervision. As coaches we worked with selected colleagues in our own schools, talking to them about how they were planning thinking skills lessons, observing them teaching and following this with coaching conversations. The coaching went beyond the post-mortem approach to lesson feedback, but very deliberately fed forward into future planning, and extended thinking outwards beyond the specifics of the lesson and into key pedagogic principles. Twenty years on, the coaching conversations I had with my Science colleague Matt Smith remain some of the episodes of professional

interaction that I can recall most profoundly, as well as his lessons that I co-planned, observed and discussed with him. In this case the power of coaching certainly worked on the coach.

### **3) Lesson Study**

To bring this paper more up to date I will finally reflect on the use of an adapted form of Lesson Study (Lofthouse and Cowie, 2018) through which Newcastle University PGCE students developed their understanding of metacognition and self-regulation and worked to activate and develop that knowledge in real lessons. This is based on collaborative planning, observing and reflecting on lessons with specific attention being paid to a selected group of pupils and their learning (Dudley, 2015). The process helps student teachers to develop a critical perspective on the teaching thinking skills in a 'safe' and supportive, but challenging environment. It is significant that lesson study is driven by the participants and is characterised by the reciprocal sharing of ideas and strategies in their own classrooms. This allows for authentic professional learning as teachers start to integrate evidence from practice, theory and research. This can change their understanding of the significance of developing a wide subject teaching

repertoire, to which teaching for metacognition contributes.

### Conclusions

In a paper co-authored with former Newcastle University colleagues David Leat and Sally Taverner (Leat et al., 2006) called *The Road Taken: Professional pathways in innovative curriculum development*, we identified phases in teacher engagement in pedagogic innovation, from 'initiation', through 'developing questions from practice' and onto 'commitment'. These research conclusions drew on data from the Schools Based Research Consortium project referred to above. These phases of engagement do however seem to ring true in other contexts with similar aims. We argued that underpinning the transitions between the phases (which not all teachers made) was the necessary space and time for pedagogic creativity. This is fostered by access to new ideas, engagement in problem solving and professional conversations and the permission to think and act creatively to make connections between ideas and practice. From the same project we identified three stages which describe the development of collaborative practices which can be summarised as follows:

**Stage 1: the personal.** Teachers focused on their own understanding rooted in developing classroom practice and analysing data which emerged. They arrived at generalizations, and perceived its relevance to their teaching situations.

**Stage 2: the collegial.** The group setting (typically at a school level) became significant as a community in which research was designed, conducted and analysed, in an environment characterised by professional intimacy.

**Stage 3: the collective.** The collegial group had developed sufficient confidence to work with others across the consortium (in other schools, the Local Authorities and university), allowing the research evidence to be more commonly recognised, and collectively explored across a wider range of settings.

This analysis reinforces the significance of teacher collaboration and solidarity, through the emergence of the collegial and collective networks. It also recognises the role of authenticity, in that the transitions happen when teachers learn to develop a metacognitive-based pedagogy in real time, with their own students, colleagues and in extended networks within which they became confident professionals.

I think what might be missing from the EEF's guidance on supporting teachers is a recognition of these stages of transition and how we support them. A 'train the trainers' to train the teachers to teach for metacognition approach is unlikely to gain much leverage. Yes, time is essential and high quality professional development and resources make a difference (although these cannot be conjured out of thin air), and real support from school leadership teams is critical. Coaches and mentors will make a difference but themselves need time and support to gain the skills and knowledge needed. Experience tells us that coaches and mentors often find themselves robbed of the time to do the job well, and are sometimes offered help

in the form of a template or model to follow, which actually can just make the coaching or mentoring instrumental and formulaic. Professional collaboration in whatever form it takes needs real deliberation, development of expertise, supervision and an understanding of the many nuances in each context to work. Let's hope that these can be achieved. Long live metacognition and self-regulation....

### **This is not the end**

In June 2018 CollectivED summer seminar is based on supporting teachers to teach for metacognition, so this is not the end! Look out for related papers in forthcoming issues.

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**Book Review of  
Czerniawski, G. (2018) Teacher Educators in the Twenty-first  
Century, Critical Publishing**

**By Steve Burton**

Professor Czerniawski introduces this text with mirth: a claim that his publisher had insisted on the title for the book, and that it seems perhaps premature to be setting in stone the remit for our ‘Teacher Educators in the twenty-first century!’ However, even in introduction the book is clear in its resolve that Teacher Educators have a vital role to play in securing positive societal transformation. The text maintains this coquetry with the overarching political and social context of education and teacher education throughout.

The book takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the teacher education landscape, utilising examples of practice and policy largely from the English mainstream education sector. However, this does not limit its appeal to educators within either this sector or this geographical locale. It explores the political connection to teacher education, including the epistemological challenges around the ever-changing University-School relationship, and the impact that recent changes in approach - such as the development in SCITTs – have and could

have on the future of teacher education. With this shifting terrain as a context, the book then introduces the concept of identity development for Teacher Educators, and how these can differ between HEI-centred staff, and School-centred staff, and reminds us of what Czerniawski terms the sometimes schizophrenic nature of work in teacher education. We are introduced to the difficulties behind, and attempts towards developing and defining a professional knowledge base for teaching, and of particular relevance to novitiate Teacher Educators, Czerniawski familiarises the reader with Shulman’s important pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) model; a key base for a Teacher Educator’s analysis of or reflection on their own pedagogy in teacher education.

International perspectives of teacher education are provided in order to provide thought-provoking comparisons between both teacher education practice, and teacher education epistemology across Europe and the wider World. The book then uses this well established gestalt to propose that in order to effectively

respond to the competing tensions surrounding and influencing teacher education, we as Teacher Educators must engage in our own critical research in the field. It is this immersion in using critical research into our practice as both Teachers and Teacher Educators that is heralded in order to ensure that the author's fears around both the potential contraction of informed opinion, and the proliferation of the reductionist what works simplification of knowledge in teacher education are challenged at the level of the professional.

The text is diminutive in length, and eminently accessible in style. From the opening gambit, Professor Czerniawski takes the reader on an amiable tour of the teacher educator terrain, introducing historical context, social milieu, and the political environment in which teaching and teacher education are set. This helps the reader as it does not focus on any one element of 'doing' teacher education in a practical sense, but instead on the 'being' of teacher education, on considerations of the development of a Teacher Educator identity, on the development of Teacher Educator knowledge and how teacher education can rise to the challenges of the moving terrain in education. Reflective challenges are set for the reader

throughout, demonstrating the construct validity of the approach utilised by the text.

Although the title of the text (and the series to which it belongs, for that matter) aims the text squarely at Teacher Educators, its appeal is arguably much broader. Being based in the United Kingdom, it is easy for the author of this review to envisage Teacher Educators across all sectors of UK education finding value in this work, from QTS to EYTS to the Lifelong Learning Sector. However, the appeal of the text is wider still, as although the book uses examples throughout from the English system, the modus operandi of the script really examines the Teacher Educator as a person, as a contributor to the education system, and as a professional: concepts that transcend international boundaries. Additionally, students of education (particularly for example Med or MA Education students) investigating how training impacts on teachers, and those with an interest in education policy will all benefit from this text. Finally, I would suggest that academic staff development leads, be they based in Schools, Colleges, Universities or even in private organisations would find benefit in the political, social, personal and professional landscapes painted in this text.

## Leeds Beckett University

In summary, this is a multi-faceted textbook which (despite Professor Czerniawski's initial misgivings around the title!) delivers a riveting, politically and

socially relevant, and critical introduction to the domain of the Teacher Educator, an area arguably underserved by literature and attention currently.

## CollectivED Thinking Out Loud

### *An interview with John Campbell*

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.***

My name is John Campbell and I serve as Executive Director of Growth Coaching International (GCI). GCI is an international organisation based in Sydney that provides coaching and leadership development training for educators.

***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?***

One very formative learning experience occurred way back in the early 80s. I had been newly appointed as a curriculum consultant within New South Wales Department of Education, a role which required developing and facilitating a range of professional learning workshops for teachers. While I had been teaching secondary schools for 7 years I was very

new to adult education with no formal training--just a lot of enthusiasm for what I was doing.

Fortunately, in this role I had the opportunity to work with and observe some inspiring, highly skilled and professional adult educators. Over the first twelve months or so I just soaked up the whole experience, took onboard all that they were doing, reflected on it, talked about it further and then experimented, incorporating the approach and strategies I was observing into my own work. It was my first real exposure to mentoring though it was not formalised at that time. It also demonstrated to me how powerful learning on the job could be.

This was such an enjoyable, stimulating and shaping time in my career. I subsequently undertook masters level study in adult learning and later coaching psychology and moved into exploring coaching and mentoring as a form of professional learning. I have remained in the field ever since working with teachers and school leaders across the last 30 years. I am still learning, I still love it and am really pleased to have been able to make this my life's work.

***When you work with colleagues or other professionals to support their development what are the key attributes that you bring with you, and what difference do these qualities make?***

We are very respectful of the work that school leaders and teachers do every day, sometimes in quite challenging circumstances. This means that we appreciate the different contexts in which teachers and school leaders work. Every school is different so while we work alongside educators sharing what we have learned about coaching and mentoring we are aware that how this all plays out will be different in every school as educators apply the learning in their own context.

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

I have been strongly influenced by the thinking emerging from the Positive Psychology field over the last 20 years. I really like the focus on exploring what it means to flourish. It seems to me that educators have always had this as a focus - well before Positive Psychology emerged as a field of study.

In particular Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's work on Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan,2000) has had a big

influence on how we design professional learning experiences for teachers.

In essence SDT argues that all human beings possess positive tendencies towards growth and development that are enhanced environments that support three psychological needs: **autonomy** – having a sense of choice; **competence** - using capabilities to make an impact and **relatedness** – being in community with others. We always try and incorporate Self Determination Theory concepts within our workshops focusing on providing lots of choice and options, a clear and obvious sense of developing competency in knowledge and skills along with plenty of opportunity for networking and connection with other participants.

***Do you feel part of an educational 'tribe', and if so who are they and why do they matter to you?***

Yes, I do identify with the 'coaching in education' tribe. After years of being immersed in lots of different kinds of professional learning for educators I came to view that coaching and mentoring, well implemented, are among the most effective ways for teachers to learn and grow. Some important people for me in this tribe are colleagues like Professor Christian van Nieuwerburgh, Dr Jim Knight, and Professor Tony Grant at the



University of Sydney. At the practitioner level I admire the in school work of people like Andrea Stringer, Dr Deb Netolicky and Alex Guedes. Jim, Christian and Rachel Lofthouse push the boundaries of thinking in this area and are so committed to seeing their work impact on students' success and wellbeing. Andrea, Alex and Deb inspire by the way they make it real and difference making 'on the ground'.

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

Yes. Allocate specific time off class for observation, reflection and peer coaching. I think teachers coaching teachers can create such a mutually powerful learning encounter but it is hard to do if time is not specifically allocated to this form of collaboration.

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

This is an interesting one... I am nearing the end of my formal career so I can think back across more than 40 years. A couple of things stand out ...

One piece of advice could be captured in the phrase - *Know and Leverage Strengths*. I can't recall a specific source for this but it has been a really important

principle. I am much better off working in areas where I know I have strengths when compared to those where I know I struggle. Now, I know I still need to attend to things in my non strength areas and I have got better at doing that but I am aware of much greater creativity and productivity and longer periods of 'flow' emerging when I am working in strength areas.

A second principle is related to the first and again I am not sure of any specific source. I have found the advice to: *Follow the Energy Pathway* really helpful when making both big and smaller decisions as various forks in the road have appeared in both my personal and working life. I have come to realise over time that *Following the Energy Pathway* usually meant pursuing a path that was consistent with my core values and required the deployment of strengths. When I have consciously chosen a course of action and included this as part of my decision making criteria good things have usually happened.

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