

ECT Mentor session

Module 5: Fulfilling professional responsibilities

Week 6: Revisiting professional development

Session Elements



sharing of
practice



collaborative
planning



action
planning

Learning Intentions for this session

Your ECT will learn that:

- 8.1** Effective professional development is likely to be sustained over time, involve expert support or coaching and opportunities for collaboration.
- 8.7** Engaging in high-quality professional development can help teachers improve.

Your ECT will learn how to:

Develop as a professional, by:

- 8a.** Engaging in professional development focused on developing an area of practice with clear intentions for impact on pupil outcomes, sustained over time with built-in opportunities for practice.

Introduction

In the ECT training session at the beginning of this module, your mentee considered some important aspects of what it means to be (a) professional and approaches to managing their professional development over time. This has been expanded through subsequent sessions in the module. In this week's self-directed study

session, your mentee has the opportunity to revisit their thinking around professional development and opportunities to continue their development over time. In this ECT mentor meeting, you will further explore these opportunities with your mentee.

Research and Practice Summary

Improving Harry's questioning

Harry is a very effective teacher who works hard to keep improving. His pupils are doing well and enjoy their English lessons, and Harry's colleagues recognise the excellent work he is doing.

Following a series of peer observations with colleagues, Harry has decided that he wants to further develop his use of questioning.

What should Harry think about when planning relevant professional development?

During the early years of your career, you can make rapid progress in your development as a teacher through effective professional development. Not all professional development is equally powerful, though – the type of professional development and how you engage with it make all the difference.

Overall, there is limited evidence that directly tests the efficacy of different forms of professional development. However, there are a number of important features that researchers think are associated with effective professional development.



Key features of effective professional development include:

- **focus** – having a specific focus on something that is likely to improve pupil outcomes is a central feature of effective professional development. If professional development is too broad, or focuses on things unlikely to benefit pupils, then it is unlikely to be effective at improving teaching overall
- **collaboration and expert challenge** – working with colleagues, particularly those with relevant expertise, can make professional development more motivating. Colleagues can also provide support and challenge to help you develop, both informally and through a more formalised coaching relationship

- **sustained** – one-off professional development tends not to be very effective. Most changes to how you teach require sustained focus and effort. This is especially important for changing habits, such as how you get a class to pay attention
- **practice** – there is often a big gap between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’. Practice, sustained over time, can help you to embed habits and routines so that you can move from simply knowing about an aspect of effective teaching to using it regularly and purposefully

As you have already learnt, reflection is an important part of developing as a professional. It can help you to identify progress made, recognise strengths and weaknesses, and identify next steps in your continued improvement.

However, it is important to remember that your judgement alone can be fallible, so you should aim to complement your reflections with information from other sources. Combining these sources of information with your professional judgement gives you the best chance of developing as a teacher.



Other sources of information to guide your professional development include:

- **research evidence** – using high-quality research evidence can guide you towards ‘best bets’ which are most likely to improve learning. This includes focusing your effort where it is most likely to matter, working out how to use your energy most effectively and avoiding fads that are not supported by evidence. When using evidence, it is crucial to remember two guiding questions: ‘is this evidence credible?’ and ‘is this evidence applicable to my own context?’
- **feedback from colleagues** – colleagues can bring a fresh perspective and may have specialist knowledge that can help you to improve. Seeking their constructive challenge, feedback and critique can help you to improve
- **pupil data and views** – ultimately, effective teacher professional development is about improving pupil outcomes. Therefore, it is important to use information about pupils, including their views, to inform your reflections. However, it is important to be mindful of the limitations of the data you are

using and to exercise professional judgement in interpreting this data, as you would in all cases

Harry's professional development

Harry knows that effective questioning can fulfil many different purposes, including checking pupils' prior knowledge. Therefore, questioning is a powerful tool in supporting pupils' learning. Harry also knows about some of the things that research evidence suggests can improve questioning, including:

- prompting pupils to elaborate when responding - to ensure that correct answers stem from a secure understanding
- allowing sufficient thinking time after posing questions
- targeting a range of pupils to answer questions, rather than relying on volunteers to respond to provide a better overview of the understanding of all pupils in a group

Despite knowing these things, Harry routinely finds that he does not do them consistently, instead reverting to old habits in the midst of classroom activity – this is the gap between 'knowing' and 'doing'. These 'old habits' are well-embedded and it will require sustained effort to improve Harry's approaches to questioning. To achieve this, Harry decides to focus on the three areas identified and to make this a sustained focus of his professional development. He actively plans lots of opportunities to practise, sometimes scripting out key questions or interactions in advance of a lesson. He also works with colleagues who provide advice about refining his questioning techniques, and he arranges to have some coaching and feedback over a 6-week period from an expert colleague. Harry's coach provides ongoing support and challenge around his goal of improving his questioning. Harry finds that this sustained focus on the 3 areas he's identified over a period of time really helps him to embed improved approaches to questioning in his practice.

Mentor Meeting Activities

Throughout the session, try to refer explicitly to the learning intentions, and encourage your mentee to record key points in their learning log. Tailor your use of the theory to practice activities below in response to the review and plan sections of this session.

Review: 5 mins

- (1) Start this session by briefly following up on the actions the mentee set at the end of last week's session. Ask your mentee to summarise
 - a. what they did
 - b. the impact of this on pupil learning (including how they are evaluating this)
 - c. what they will do going forward to build on these actions
- (2) Clarify the learning intentions for this session with your mentee.

Plan: 5 mins

At the start of this module, you looked at all of the *learn how to* statements for Standard 8 and conducted a module audit with your mentee. In some areas they will already be confident and skilled; in others they will want more practice and support from you and others. Look back at this audit now and use it to help decide how you and your mentee will make the most productive use of the suggested theory to practice activities below.

Theory to Practice: 35 mins



1. Sharing of practice

Spend some time talking to your mentee about how you manage your professional development as a teacher.

You could make reference to:

- in-school activities such as weekly teaching and learning updates, journal clubs or teacher learning communities
- external activities supported by your school, such as attendance at exam board training or local area networks
- activities you have undertaken in your own time, such as reading relevant literature, attending a weekend conference, participating in wider pedagogical or subject networks
- teachers in other settings about issues that affect all teachers



2. Collaborative planning

Work with your mentee to review the 'menu' of professional development activities that they drafted in their self-directed study session this week.

To further develop this resource, you could:

- help your mentee to review the details of each professional development opportunity, including:
 - any costs associated with the opportunity (include time and monetary costs)
 - how the opportunity meets the criteria for effective professional development
 - how relevant the opportunity is for teachers in your mentee's phase and specialism
 - how easily accessible the opportunity is
 - why this is good professional development – how is it expected to improve your mentee's professional practice?
- add details of opportunities that your mentee has not included, drawing on your knowledge of teacher professional development opportunities
- check that the 'menu' includes in-school activities, out-of-school activities supported by the school and activities that can be undertaken in your mentee's own time, if desired



3. Action planning

Work with your mentee to plan how they will engage with some of the professional development opportunities that they have captured on their professional development 'menu'.

To make this effective, you could:

- prompt your mentee to set SMART targets around engaging with professional development (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)
- help your mentee to complete any paperwork required in your school to engage with school-supported, external professional development
- ensure that your mentee's actions are compatible with effective management of their workload and wellbeing

Next Steps: 5 mins

Note the date of your next mentor meeting. This will be the final ECT mentor meeting of this programme for Year 1. In this meeting you will review your ECT's progress this year and look ahead to Year 2 of the programme.