



A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

Effective Mentoring



The Northern Territory Department of Education



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1. Introduction

This guide is designed to support the further development of experienced teachers in their important role of mentoring less experienced colleagues.

It is a guide rather than an instruction manual because it assumes that you, the reader, are an accomplished teacher with a broad range of tried and tested teaching strategies combined with a well-developed understanding of the subjects you teach. It assumes that you already work well with colleagues and now want to further develop or deepen your skills and capacity to mentor a new teacher or less experienced colleague.

This means the practices referred to in this guide, drawn from research, are offered for reflection and as options to be considered and adapted rather than simply implemented. The ideas represent opportunities to think about and experiment with your practice and to expand your professional repertoire. This should lead to an approach to mentoring that is appropriate to you, your circumstances and the colleagues you are supporting.

Although this guide is designed primarily for people new to mentoring, many of the ideas and practices should also be relevant for more experienced mentors.

How is this guide organised?

A Teacher's Guide to Effective Mentoring is divided into **seven chapters**.

1. Introduction
2. What is the purpose of mentoring?
3. How well does our school context support effective mentoring?
4. What kind of mentor will I be?
5. What do I need to know and do as a mentor?
6. What does the international research say about effective mentoring?
7. What might this mean for me?

A series of reflective questions, prompts and possibilities are offered for you to consider throughout this guide. These are provided to promote a reflective approach to the text, which recognises an essential need for you to decide how best to support your new colleague.



The pin symbol signifies activities and reflection points throughout the guide.

What role do mentors play in meeting Teacher Registration Board requirements?

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is the national body that defines and sets out the professional standards that teachers must achieve to qualify for full registration. These standards reflect the qualities, practices and behaviours necessary to be an effective teacher in contemporary Australian classrooms.

AITSL, on their website, say:

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. The Standards define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st-century schools, which result in improved educational outcomes for students.

The Standards do this by providing a framework that makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public.

Teacher standards also inform the development of professional learning goals, provide a framework by which teachers can judge the success of their learning and assist self-reflection and self-assessment. Teachers can use the Standards to recognise their current and developing capabilities, professional aspirations and achievements.

AITSL see the standards as contributing to the professionalism of teaching, raising the status of teaching and what it means to be a teacher.

Mentors play an important supporting role for new teachers as they navigate their way through the requirements of the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory to move from provisional to full registration. These processes are a key aspect of inducting new teachers into the profession and are aligned to the AITSL professional standards.



The mentor supports a new teacher through Teacher Registration Board processes by:

- in conjunction with their principal or line manager, discussing and helping the new teacher to understand how the process works
- exploring what the AITSL standards mean and look like in practice
- evolving how the new teacher might go about developing practices that enable them to achieve the standards
- helping them identify and capture evidence that demonstrates achievement of the standards and can be used to support their application for full registration.

One of the mentor's roles is to guide and support their colleague through the registration process, rather than evaluate, judge or assess their performance against the standards. Mentors help new teachers to recognise how they're progressing in relation to the standards and help them to know when they're ready to submit their application for registration as a fully registered teacher.

2. What is the purpose of mentoring?

What do we mean by mentoring?

The term 'mentor' is used in this guide to describe a knowledgeable, experienced, and highly proficient teacher who works with and alongside a new teacher or less experienced colleague – quite closely at first but this gradually diminishes as the new teacher becomes more capable and confident. A mentor is not an instructor and the mentee is not a student; they are both colleagues.

Mentors know a great deal about teaching and learning, students, parents and the school, which often leads to a kind of practical wisdom that can't be printed in a book – this knowledge and know-how is invaluable to new teachers.

Mentors come in all kinds of shapes, sizes and packages with different skills and ways of working. What makes you, as a mentor, different from your teacher colleagues is that you have volunteered to help someone just starting out as a teacher, new to a particular teaching context or wanting to develop their teaching practice.

A lot of time, thought, energy and effort is needed to become a great mentor. This document provides a range of activities throughout so that you can reflect on and record what you believe mentoring is and what effective mentors do.





An ideas tree...

Creating an ideas tree will allow you to clarify your existing beliefs and understanding of what mentoring is and what you perceive mentors do.

On a piece of A3 paper jot down these questions:

- **What is mentoring?**
- **What do mentors do?**

Write down whatever comes to mind as you think about and unpack these questions.

When you can't think of anything else to add, alongside each entry respond to the following question:

- *If this is what mentors do, what might that mean for being an effective mentor?*

In the example ideas tree that follows, intended only as an illustration, you can see how responses to the questions above can be unpacked and deepened.



Example ideas tree...

What is mentoring?

Think about your experiences of mentoring and/or being mentored to frame up your responses. For example mentoring could be:

- *When someone offers just the right kind of support, well-suited to the emerging needs of the person they are mentoring because they deeply understand that person and have an extensive repertoire of possible practices/responses which they can draw on, tweak and adapt according to circumstances and needs.*

What do mentors do?

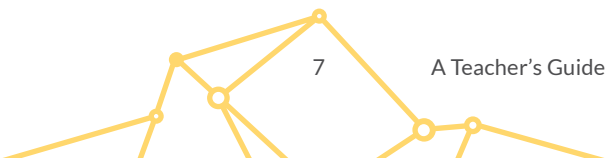
Again, drawing on your own experiences of mentoring – what do mentors actually do? For example, maybe mentors:

- *put the other person 'at ease'*
- *draw their colleague out, creating conditions in which they want to speak*
- *listen attentively*
- *refrain from 'jumping to conclusions'*
- *are flexible and open to new learning.*

If this is what mentors do, what might that mean for being an effective mentor?

If one of the items you jotted down was 'listens attentively' write down alongside this what you believe that could mean for your practice. How would you behave? What would the new teacher see/hear you doing if you were being an attentive listener? Perhaps you are:

- *engaging fully with my colleague, I wouldn't be fiddling with other things, I would be fully present with them, perhaps leaning forward in my chair...*
- *maintaining eye contact or writing down what the new teacher says*
- *listening, without feeling the need to interrupt, interject or have 'answers'*
- *waiting for a pause before asking a question or seeking clarification.*





Why do we need mentors?

The research is clear on the need for mentors. Having regular access to a classroom mentor is profoundly important to new teachers and their development. Without mentor support, new teachers can flounder and may leave the very profession they have spent years studying in order to join. Consider the system, social and personal costs such early departures bring about and the long-term losses to teaching this represents.

As a mentor you offer new teachers an anchor of support in an often challenging, demanding and sometimes chaotic transition from graduate to classroom teacher or urban to remote teaching context. Effective mentoring has a formative influence on the practice of new teachers and has a significant impact on the level and depth of learning amongst students of those teachers. Without good mentors the quality of teaching and learning offered by new teachers is demonstrably less effective and new teachers experience more stress and anxiety. If this results in them leaving the profession, the whole system suffers.

Other significant roles you could play as a mentor include the following.

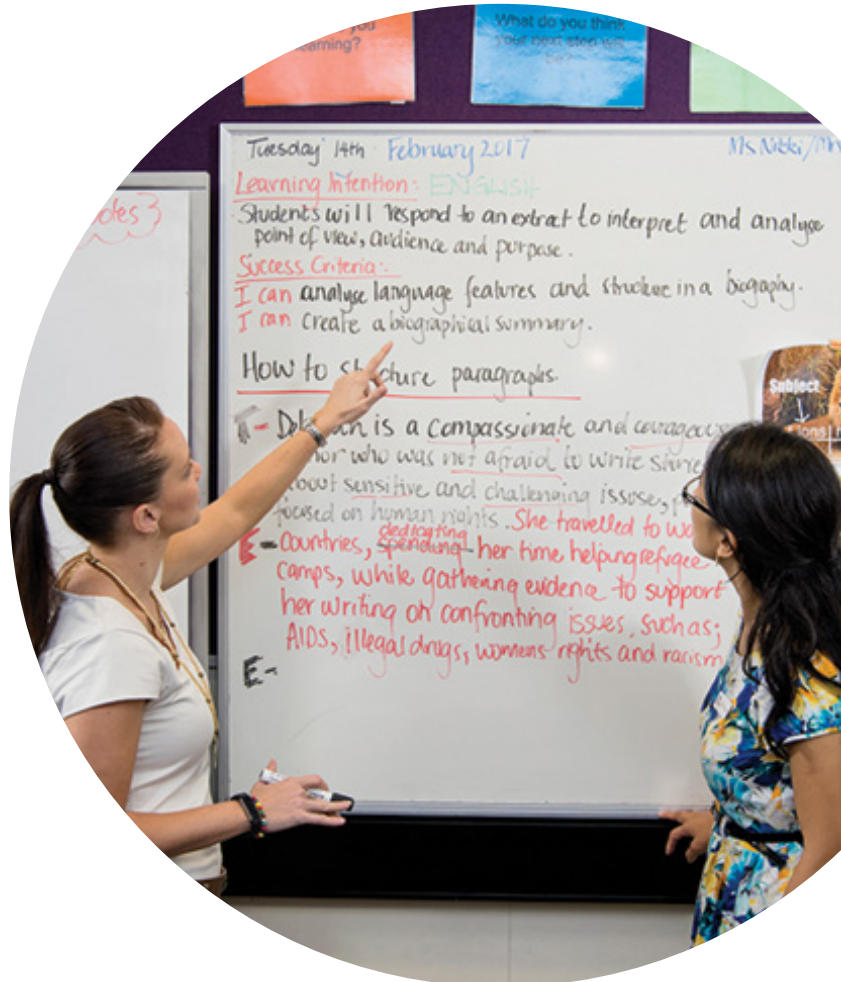
- Offering an ear to listen – being interested rather than interesting
- Identifying, acknowledging and appreciating what a new teacher brings to the school
- Being passionate, positive and professional in your work with new teachers – offering strong role modelling while becoming a trusted colleague
- Being approachable, accessible and available when really needed (new teachers identify these qualities in their mentors as being very important)
- Assisting teachers to navigate and find their way through the school culture – and to understand how things are done around here
- Encouraging your new colleague to make decisions and to exercise an appropriate degree of autonomy so that they can develop their own approach to teaching
- Encouraging new teachers to experiment with their practice
- Fostering positive, productive relationships with all members of staff, students, their families and the wider community demonstrating respect for culture and diversity.

Mutual benefits of mentoring

There are potentially many benefits of mentoring for both mentor and new teacher as well as benefits for the school, the system and the profession. Having opportunities to offer deep, practical knowledge, both pedagogical content and experience, can be a very rewarding and mutually beneficial aspect of effective mentoring.

Other significant benefits include:

- an increase in the rate of professional growth, self-reflection and problem solving capacity for both mentor and new teacher
- an increase in confidence, self-esteem, morale and sense of identity
- opportunities for learning new skills, teaching strategies and communication techniques, including how to engage in rigorous evidence-informed conversations
- a greater sense of inclusion or reduced feelings of isolation
- opportunities for close collaboration, shared challenges and the sense of achievement that comes from successfully working through such challenges
- learning from frequent opportunities to talk about teaching and learning, students, strategies and successes as well as challenges
- opportunities to capture and analyse evidence of student learning, leading to professional insights for both the mentor and new teacher
- developing a sense of belonging, as a contributor to the school and its community.



What type of support (beyond just the technical) could you, and other members of the school community provide, and what might the benefits of such support be for the new teacher?

In what ways can you make yourself available and accessible when the new teacher needs support and how might this be an important aspect of effective mentoring?

How might you position yourself and new teachers so that they can deepen their understanding and insights into teaching and learning, and to becoming independent teachers?



3. How well does our school context support effective mentoring?

We have already explored the extent to which effective mentoring is important for developing new colleagues, what this means for their practice and the potential such support has for keeping new teachers in the profession. There are compelling reasons for schools to develop enabling structures and processes in which successful mentoring relationships can develop.

How enabling is our school culture and the structures and processes we have in place to support new teachers? What might we need to put in place to make mentoring work for us?

Considering our school's learning architecture

The term 'learning architecture' refers to the conditions in which a school becomes a place for professional talk, evidence-informed inquiry, and where a community of professional learners is systematically fostered.

The elements of a school's learning architecture are called 'enabling structures' – in particular the scheduling of regular committed time and space to reflect, meet, discuss and share evidence and insights into professional practice. Enabling structures also include a formal induction process, professional learning communities, a team-teaching culture, team coaching arrangements and classroom observation schedules.

The extent to which these enabling structures are effective depends on the time and resources

available to support them, the skills and capabilities of the people enacting them and the extent to which these structures are aligned with and support each other.

The learning architecture usually reflects a school's values, priorities and culture – the fewer enabling structures, or the poorer quality and development of these structures, we can assume that professional learning has a lower priority.

Although you may not have direct control over the learning architecture and enabling structures and processes at your school it may still be helpful to know about the structures that support and lead to more effective mentoring. You will also be better equipped to explain, discuss and negotiate enabling structures and processes with school leaders.

Enabling structures to support mentoring

In Chapter 6 we identify a range of factors which enable effective mentoring, as identified in the international research. The most significant of these relates to the quality of support offered by mentors, underpinned by enabling structures and processes present in schools.

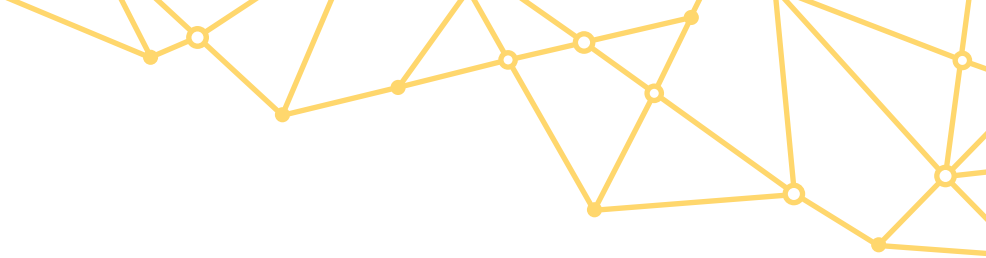
Four main themes emerged from the research.

1. How mentors were selected and paired with new teachers
2. The broader context of support available at a school, which included collective responsibility for supporting new teachers
3. Whether or not there was sufficient scheduled time for mentors to work with new teachers
4. The extent to which a school promoted capacity building through collegial, evidence-informed inquiry.



Research revealed that more effective mentoring was made possible by the following structures:

- time allocated for mentoring – as a reduced teaching allotment, with time for support and professional learning activities built into the work day of mentor and new teacher
- carefully considered teaching load and class/student allocation, which took into account the new teacher's experience and learning needs
- regular and timetabled mentoring support meetings, weekly or fortnightly, with additional meetings when needed
- mentor and new teacher worked in close physical proximity to one another
- mentor and new teacher were teaching the same year or subject level
- the role of 'induction or mentor coordinator' existed as a leadership position in larger schools – this indicated that induction and mentoring were seen as a priority
- active support from school leaders was evident for both new teachers and mentors – this recognised that mentors need support as well as new teachers.



How and why are enabling structures important?

Take a few minutes to consider each of the enabling structures listed on the previous page.

On a blank page, draw up three columns, headed:

- Enabling structure (copy from dot points on p.11)
- This enabling structure is significant because...
- Without this enabling structure it would mean...

Jot down the reasons why you believe each element is significant and what the implications of that element's absence might mean for a new teacher and how it might impact you as a mentor. (Undertaking this reflective exercise will better equip you to discuss and negotiate structural enablers with school leaders).

If all of these enabling structures are present then it is much more likely the mentoring relationship will be effective. When several of these elements are absent, for instance, if meetings are infrequent and ad hoc, the mentor and new teacher work in different year levels or subject disciplines and are located in different parts of the school, it is more likely that a mentoring relationship with such constraints will be less effective.

Research has shown that new teachers reported more positive experiences of mentoring when their mentor:

- was approachable, accessible and willing to be engaged
- was supportive, empathetic and understanding
- had good communication skills
- was able to offer honest and helpful advice
- had good pedagogical and subject knowledge and experience.

A mentor with this combination of skills, professional knowledge and dispositions, together with the enabling structures of a highly supportive learning architecture, make effective mentoring relationships much more likely.





Considering operational constraints

Sometimes operational constraints will make one or more of the enabling structures difficult or beyond the scope of a school to practically manage. This means that other enabling structures may need to be strengthened, or a 'missing' enabler may need to be compensated for or attended to in another way.

For instance, if it was impractical for you and the new teacher to work in the same year level or subject discipline, how could the impact of this be reduced? What else might need to be in place to support you and the new teacher in such circumstances?

What if it were impractical for you and your colleague to work in close physical proximity, how could the need for such nearness be addressed?

What if timetable allotments have already been organised and it is difficult to find sufficient time to meet and work together? What if your meetings are infrequent and often shorter than you both need?

Each of these questions represents a significant professional challenge, which will need to be discussed and addressed with school leaders – mentors cannot tackle such challenges alone. Lack of sufficient time and space effectively compromises the mentoring relationship.

In such circumstances the mentor may be perceived as difficult to access and therefore unable to share their experience, pedagogical know-how or offer advice or guidance – which is exactly what the new teacher needs.

Well-prepared and experienced mentors operating within a supportive learning architecture, with enabling structures – time, space and organisational support – are needed in these circumstances.



Something to try...

Work through the checklist on the following page to help you consider the extent to which your school has created the conditions to support successful mentoring experiences.

- What is in place already?
- What is missing?
- What next?
- Who needs to be involved now?



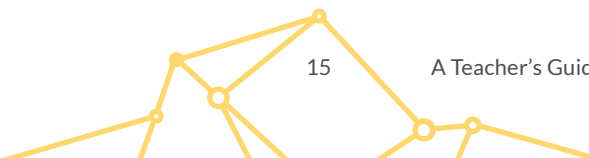


What enabling structures are present at my school?

Rather than simply 'ticking the boxes' below, indicate with an '**S**' if this structure is a strength in your school, an '**M**' if it is moderately supportive, and an '**N**' if not yet.

You might use this tool to support a chat with your school leader.

- There is a carefully formulated induction plan and support materials that new teachers work through when they first commence at this school.
- Careful consideration is given to the pairing of mentors with new teachers and the extent to which mentor and new teacher are professionally and interpersonally well-matched.
- The school has a broad range of people, mechanisms and processes to support new teachers, it isn't just seen as the mentor's responsibility.
- Mentor and new teacher have sufficient time allocated to meet and work together.
- Mentor and new teacher have regular and timetabled mentoring meetings.
- Mentor and new teacher share reduced face-to-face class time, recognising a need to have time away from the classroom to work together.
- Mentor and new teacher have opportunities to engage in professional learning.
- Consideration is given to teaching loads and class allocations consistent with the experience, capability and needs of the new teacher.
- Mentor and new teacher work in close physical proximity.
- Mentor and new teacher are teaching the same year or subject level.
- Mechanisms are in place to regularly track and discuss the development, morale, professional confidence and sense of self-efficacy of the new teacher.
- School leaders provide active, direct support for both new teacher and mentor.
- Mentors access a network of support arrangements within and beyond the school.
- The school has a collegial approach to teaching and learning, where people support and collaborate with each other.
- There is a strong focus on professional learning throughout the school.
- Mentors, and the work they undertake, are highly regarded and respected.
- Mentoring is seen as a priority, central to achieving stronger student learning outcomes, capacity building and school improvement.
- An induction or professional learning leader supports mentors and mentoring.





4. What kind of mentor will I be?

Considering my professional stance

We each bring a professional stance to the ways in which we work with others, which reflect our values, priorities, assumptions and what we believe to be important. This influences what we say and do and how we work with those around us.

Our stance is reflected in the ways we position ourselves in relation to our colleagues and how we position them when we work together. Our stance can be quite complex, dynamic and multi-faceted as we often behave differently depending on the people we are with and the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Locked up tight in the ways our beliefs might be – we can take up different positions as mentors once we are mindful of the impacts these positions have on others.

Some questions you might like to reflect on in relation to your own professional stance:

- How do I position myself in relation to colleagues?
- How do I position others?
- Do I take up different stances in different circumstances?
- How can I become more aware of the role my stance plays in being a mentor?

In this chapter, **professional stance** is explored in terms of:

1. how we approach others
2. how we position others (and our assumptions about them)
3. our underlying dispositions
4. what this might mean for being a mentor.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the prompts throughout this chapter.

You may find it helpful to jot down your responses, so that you can reflect on the implications for you in your role as a mentor.

How do I approach others?

We often send clues about our stance in how we approach others. Buried inside these clues are our habits and assumptions, which may be hidden from us until we shine a light on them. As you respond to the following prompts, think about your responses in relation to working with a new teacher or a less experienced colleague.



Ask yourself – where do I stand, in relation to:

- Who knows best?
- Showing, telling or sharing?
- Whose voice has the most weight?
- Who talks, who listens?
- The purpose of the mentoring?
- Being asked a 'silly question'?
- Who sets the agenda? Who chooses the focus?
- How things will be decided?
- Being approachable, accessible and available?
- How we work together, (including when and where)?
- Who will benefit most from mentoring?
- Who has the last word?

What clues can the new teacher glean from my approach that may reveal to them my professional stance? Are these the kinds of clues I want to send? Is this the kind of mentor I want to be?

How might this affect the way I mentor?

These aspects of your stance will have significant implications for how you work as a mentor. In responding to the prompts above, what are you noticing about yourself and what this might mean for your practice as a mentor? How might a discussion about these aspects of stance, with the new teacher, inform your work together?



How do I position less experienced colleagues?

The ways in which we position others reflect significant aspects of our professional stance and may reveal our assumptions about the people with whom we work. It is important to note that when we position a colleague in a particular way we are also positioning ourselves.

As you reflect on the different ways in which you position a new teacher, as prompted by the list below, consider the possible assumptions you might harbour about that person.

How do I position a new teacher (and how might that position me)?

Do I position them...

- as a *trainee* whose practices need to be scrutinised, weighed and judged?
- as an *audience* whose role it is to pay attention, observe and listen?
- as a *participant* whose role it is to take part in the mentoring support provided?
- as a *contributor* to the learning, who brings or adds something to our work together?
- as a *collaborator*, that I work alongside as we analyse, discuss and learn together?
- as a *co-creator* and initiator, someone who thinks for themselves, is self-starting, creative and capable – we design and create together?
- as a *learning leader*, someone who plays a significant role in shaping and facilitating the learning of others, including my learning?

Our assumptions are, in a sense, the teeth of a trap; they potentially limit the possibilities for how we might engage with others. If we position our new colleague as a trainee whose practices

need to be scrutinised, weighed and judged, what are we assuming about them and about ourselves?

If we position our colleague as a contributor or collaborator how are our assumptions different? What might this mean for how we are positioned? For example, if we position our colleague as a trainee, how might this position us, as their instructor? Or if we position them as a collaborator how are we positioned?

How might the way I position a new teacher affect the way I mentor?

If these aspects of your professional stance represent options and choices for how you might position a colleague, what practices and ways of working would support such choices? For instance, if you wanted to position your colleague as a contributor, what would you need to do as a mentor to position them this way? What would we hear you saying and see you doing? If you wanted to position your colleague as a collaborator how would you need to work with them? What role (position) would you take up? How might this affect their professional learning (capacity building)?

Positioning is not a one-way street, however – sometimes it is our colleagues who position us by taking up a position themselves. A less experienced colleague may prefer to be an ‘audience’ to our expert knowledge and know-how or their lack of experience (and confidence) may make them reluctant to be a ‘contributor’ or ‘collaborator’. It often feels good to be positioned as an expert and to have others defer to our superior knowledge and know how, but how might this contribute to the development of the new teacher?

How might being alert to such possibilities affect how we work with each other?

How might we benefit from a shared understanding of this tendency for each of us to position the other through our stance and the role we adopt?



What are my underlying dispositions?

The combination of the professional stance we adopt with our underlying dispositions greatly impacts our effectiveness as mentors.

We each bring a range of dispositions to how we work with others. For example, some people tend to have a critical eye and see challenges in something before any benefits. This could result in a tendency to focus on faults and problems rather than strengths and successes.

Some people look for opportunities to offer positive and affirming comments, about the skills, capabilities or achievements of others, which reinforces confidence and a sense of capability.

Others are drawn to asking tough questions and may feel uncomfortable offering praise or affirmation. Some people have a strong desire for order and structure, which could result in a need for control and more frequent oversight to achieve such control. Some people tend to focus on small details and want to know all the ins and outs before proceeding while others are more interested in 'big picture' ideas.

Our different perceptions of time and its relative importance can be another significant disposition that may affect how we work with others.

The following prompts are offered as though they were two ends of a continuum. You may not be at one end or the other but somewhere in-between. Your responses may also differ depending on the

circumstances. However, there is perhaps a benefit in considering where you might ordinarily locate yourself on these imaginary continuums while reflecting on what this might mean for being a mentor.

Do you tend to:

- see the challenges or difficulties in something or are you more likely to focus on potential benefits and opportunities?
- focus on faults and problems more often than strengths and successes?
- ask tough questions more frequently than recognising accomplishments or offering affirmation and praise?
- have a critical eye when thinking about things or are you more likely to see them with an appreciative gaze?
- value order and structure or do you prefer to see where things go?
- want to control situations or immerse yourself in them?
- focus on the details more often than the big picture?
- see every minute as precious with not a moment to spare?



How might these dispositions affect the way I mentor?

If these dispositions impact your mentoring role, are there any in particular that you recognise as supporting or impeding your practice? How can you strengthen those that you see as supporting effective mentoring and manage those dispositions that you see as getting in the way of your practice as a mentor?

If we recognise that new teachers will also have a range of dispositions, what are the implications of alignments or differences in how you each approach your work? What would happen if you have a strong preference for order and structure and the new teacher would much prefer to see where things go? Or vice versa?

Whose view prevails or are there alternatives?

What might this mean for being a mentor?

What are the implications of your responses to the prompts in this chapter for your professional stance and being a mentor? How might your stance and dispositions affect:

- building a mentoring relationship?
- developing mutual confidence/trust?
- offering, or responding to requests for, ideas or advice?
- engaging in professional conversations?
- capturing and collating data and evidence?
- analysing practice together?
- overcoming challenges?
- promoting independent practice and a (growing) sense of self-efficacy?

Each of these aspects of being an effective mentor is affected by the different stances and dispositions we bring to our work. The combination of them will influence how effective we can be.

How might this affect the way I mentor?

If being an effective mentor means being more mindful about your professional stance, where should you focus your attention at the beginning of a mentoring relationship?

Identify one or two aspects of your professional stance in each of the four elements on page 16 and as revealed in your responses to the prompts. Make deliberate efforts to change or adapt your stance to the needs of your colleague and the circumstances in which you are both working.

For example, if you decided that being ‘approachable, accessible and available’ was a crucial aspect of your stance, how would you make this visible to the new teacher and viable in your context? What steps would you need to take for this to be the new teacher’s experience of working with you? If another aspect of your stance was that ‘there is no such thing as a silly question’, how would your new colleague come to understand this implicitly and without hesitation?

If we take those two aspects of your stance and consider them in light of how you position the new teacher – we can see that things will be very different if that teacher is positioned as a collaborator rather than an audience.

How might the idea of ‘there is no such thing as a silly question’ be different if your new colleague is positioned as an audience compared with being positioned as a collaborator? (Who will they be expecting to ‘answer’ the questions?).

If we take this reflection a little deeper and begin to consider the impact of our dispositions, if ‘there is no such thing as a silly question’ and the new teacher is positioned as ‘a collaborator’, what is the impact of ‘focusing on problems and faults more often than strengths and successes’ for your collaboration? How would this be different



if your focus was reversed and there was greater emphasis on strengths and successes?

Now if we take all that into consideration and reflect on the implications for ‘building a mentoring relationship’ or ‘overcoming challenges’ it becomes possible to see the way in which every aspect of our stance and the ways in which we position our colleagues impacts our mentoring practice.

This chapter offers a great deal to think about, so at this point you may be feeling a little daunted or overwhelmed – that’s ok, you just need to find somewhere to focus your efforts.

You may find it useful to choose just one or two aspects of your professional stance to experiment with and strengthen at one time. You may find that changes in these two aspects of your stance flow through to others.



5. What do I need to know and do as a mentor?

Who am I mentoring? What kind of support do they need?

New teachers arrive in their new schools with a mixture of excitement, curiosity and trepidation – some will be more excited than anxious, others more anxious than excited.

In particular, graduate teachers will have spent a significant period of their lives as students, first at school and more recently at university. During these two extended periods they will have experienced the practice of many teachers and will have formed their own views about what it means to be a ‘great teacher’ and how such teachers behave.

The transition from student to teacher and the translation of their perceptions of ‘great teaching’ into practice are likely to be more challenging than many graduate teachers expect. They will have had classroom experiences as student-teachers, however, the first few weeks of teaching independently are likely to disappear in a blur as almost everything they do will be new. In a sense everything they try will be a ‘practical experiment’ in teaching and learning.

However, it is not possible to generalise about graduate teachers any further than this because they will be as diverse as the students we teach in our classrooms. They will be stronger in some areas than others, they will be challenged by different aspects of practice, they will require different levels of support and guidance, and some beginning teachers will be able to articulate or reveal what they need more clearly than others.

Just as we need to find out a great deal about the learners in our classrooms in order to effectively scaffold their learning, we also need to thoroughly understand the teachers we are supporting.

How can we understand new teachers and what they might need?

Some things to consider first...

- Whenever there is a significant difference in knowledge, experience and expertise between two people there is a related imbalance in the power relationship.
- The gradual deepening of a mentoring relationship, via different forms of professional conversation and collaboration, is essential to deepening the professional learning that such relationships enable.
- The experience of talking with someone who is much more experienced and knows more about teaching and learning than we do can be intimidating. (How might experienced teachers make themselves less intimidating so that new teachers feel valued as they learn with and from them?)
- Different people are more comfortable/ready to talk about some things than others.
- Some people know more, or can do more, than we might assume.



Strategies and options for supporting new teachers

As a mentor it is important to consider how to keep the professional learning of the new teacher as the focus of the support offered. This allows mentors to find ways of enabling new teachers so that they have a strong voice in determining what sort of support they require and how it might be offered.

In this chapter we explore a range of strategies, including classroom observations and professional conversations (of gradually increasing rigour and depth), to help mentors to thoroughly understand and support teachers from induction through to proficiency and/or full registration.

Readers are encouraged to experiment with the strategies offered. The options available to mentors in this chapter include the following.

- The 4Cs: Clarifying, Consulting, Collaborating and Coaching
- Classroom observations as a means of prompting reflective inquiry
- Facilitating different types of conversation matched to new teacher need and readiness
- Engaging in challenging or difficult conversations and the role that trust plays
- Evidence-informed conversations, a contemporary alternative to feedback
- Using the Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle
- Facilitating mentoring conversations using the Department of Education's Eight Learning Management Questions.

The 4Cs: Clarifying, Consulting, Collaborating and Coaching

Working with the connected practices of Clarifying, Consulting, Collaborating and Coaching offers mentors a series of complementary strategies for understanding and supporting the practice of a new teacher.

The 4Cs offer four different ways of working with a new teacher depending on their needs and readiness to engage with their practice more deeply. There is also a sense that the 4Cs offer a means of supporting new teachers in the transition from probation to full registration with the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory.

The practice of 'Clarifying' and asking clarifying questions is central to effective mentoring and can help to reveal the kind of support a new teacher needs.

Effective mentoring depends on listening closely to, and understanding, the person with whom you are working. Clarifying can be supported by writing down what your colleague says – this will allow you to return to specific comments or observations later that may benefit from further clarification.

The goal of the mentor when clarifying is to be fully present for their colleague and to be 'interested rather than interesting'.

What kinds of questions are clarifying?

- When you said... what were you thinking about?
- What makes you say that?
- Could you say a little more about...?
- I am not sure I understand, could you explain that a little more?
- Which of these ideas (raised by the new teacher) is more important or urgent for you?
- If you had to choose (ideas raised by the new teacher), which of these would help most?

Questions such as these will reward mentors with a deeper understanding of their colleague, their context, circumstances and needs as well as offering clues about whether they may benefit more from Consulting, Collaborating or Coaching support.


Asking clarifying questions, rather than analytical, critical or interrogative questions can be quite challenging at first; the goal of clarifying questions is to understand something more fully from the new teacher's perspective. Clarifying questions help the new teacher to think more clearly and the responses generated can be as revealing and helpful for your new colleague as they are for you.

Well-formed clarifying questions should lead to quite powerful insights for the new teacher.

Worth considering...

What would happen if you offered support without spending much time helping your colleague to clarify and organise their thoughts? How much practice have you had asking such questions?





When Consulting the mentor responds to the new teacher's questions or requests for information or ideas, and takes into account a stated (or implied) need for specific knowledge or know how.

The mentor, drawing on their broader experience and deeper repertoire of practices, supports their less experienced colleague with options and alternatives to consider, to which they would not otherwise have access.

When consulting, the ideas, possibilities and solutions flow from mentor to new teacher.

The mentor is positioned as 'the expert', the 'giver' and the person who has the greater knowledge and agency in the relationship. It is also quite common for new teachers to position a mentor in this way, particularly at the beginning of a mentoring relationship. They may want (or need) answers and solutions and the mentor can be seen as a ready source of possibilities for practice.

It is also quite common for mentors to position themselves as a consultant.

A technique for gradually increasing the level of agency (the new teacher making decisions) can be achieved by increasing the number of options and alternatives offered. This encourages the new teacher to recognise that there are multiple ways of addressing the same teaching goal or challenge and encourages them to weigh up possibilities and make considered professional decisions. This also encourages the new teacher to engage with you in a professional conversation, which allows you to help them deepen their thinking in relation to the options offered. Clarifying questions can be used to good effect in these circumstances.

Evidence can also play an important role in the consulting relationship when used to help the new teacher decide between options offered. This encourages the new teacher to see evidence as an important influence in the decision-making process.

Worth considering...

What are the implications for you and your less experienced colleague if consulting support becomes the only option available to you both? What if such support makes your colleague happy, it's what they 'want' - are there any risks with sticking simply with consulting?

When Collaborating the mentor engages with their colleague in a shared approach to analysis, problem-solving, decision-making and reflection. Their less experienced colleague has generally signalled a willingness to engage in joint work and brings their own ideas and possibilities to the collaboration.

However, the mentor may also prompt collaborating by asking questions such as: Is this something we could work on together?

Collaborating introduces a greater sense of equality and collegiality into the mentoring relationship, offers opportunities for creative input as it calls for contributions from both mentor and new teacher. Collaborating encourages new teachers to take on greater responsibility (more agency), it fosters joint or negotiated decision-making and readies them for working in teaching teams. Collaborating also leads to a growing sense of self-efficacy and achievement.

Evidence can play a more significant role when collaborating as the mentor can support their colleague to analyse and dig more deeply into whatever evidence they have captured together. The new teacher will feel less vulnerable when analysis is undertaken with their more experienced colleague.

Worth considering...

The relationship between mentor and colleague shifts when the mode of support offered involves collaborating. How and in what ways could this shift be significant? In what ways might you both benefit?

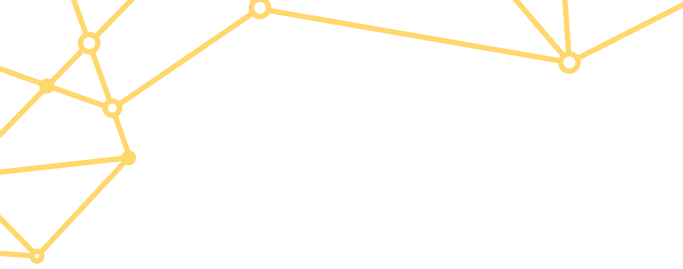
When Coaching the mentor supports their colleague through skilful questioning and probing, creating the conditions in which their colleague arrives at their own course of action. When coaching, a new teacher is ready to use his or her own evidence and knowledge to decide where to go next. The coach functions as a sounding board, mirroring back their colleague's ideas and possibilities for practice, supporting them through questions they ask rather than offering suggestions or ideas of their own.

Evidence can play a key role in coaching when it becomes central to the new teacher's practice in designing, reviewing, assessing, analysing and discussing learning. The new teacher recognises evidence as being essential to a productive coaching conversation. The coach supports the teacher by asking rigorous analytical questions.

Worth considering...

To what extent would it matter if we just stuck with clarifying, consulting and collaborating and did not get to coaching support? Or, why not support a colleague just with coaching, why do we need the other Cs? How could the new teacher benefit from knowing about the 4Cs, understanding the options they have available to them and choosing their own level of support?





Something to try...

Reflecting on an experience of supporting or being supported by one of the 4Cs, jot down your experience below.

Identify a successful experience of either supporting or being supported by someone via one of the 4Cs – Clarifying, Consulting, Collaborating or Coaching. Consider and reflect on the strengths and limitations of your experience.



Reflecting on an experience of supporting or being supported

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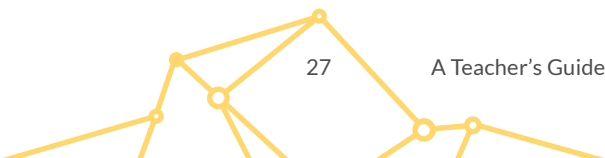
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Classroom observation as a means of supporting professional learning

One way of supporting colleagues is through the use of classroom observations.

Classroom observation can be a powerful strategy when creating opportunities for ongoing professional learning. Through carefully designed and facilitated observations and reflective follow-up sessions, it is possible for all teachers to gain valuable insights about teaching and student learning and to more deeply understand their own ever-developing practice.

Mentors will play an invaluable role in supporting the process when they ensure:

- the purpose, structure, focus, documentation and ways of reflecting on the classroom observation are negotiated with the new teacher beforehand
- there is adequate follow-up after the session, involving a reflective and analytical conversation, which is described later in this chapter.

When the new teacher is given a strong voice in how the experience unfolds and then has opportunities to debrief afterwards, it is likely to be a more successful learning experience for both new teacher and mentor.





Something to try...

You and one or two experienced colleagues engage in a 30 minute **mini-inquiry** to discuss and clarify your understanding of classroom observations and develop your stance (see Chapter 4) in relation to this practice.

Briefly respond to the questions below.

- What has been your experience of classroom observations?
- Were you observed or were you the observer? How were the experiences different?
- What was the purpose of the observation?
- How did you feel about observing or being observed?
- What did you learn? What were the enablers and barriers you experienced?
- How did the observation improve your practice?
- How might the experience have been improved?

Were there any common themes in the shared experiences? To what extent were the observations purposeful, positive and supportive of the development of teaching practice? How do you know?

What are you thinking about now that you might not have considered before? Share and discuss this with your colleagues.

Why use classroom observations?

There are generally three purposes for classroom observations in a mentoring process.

1. To stimulate and initiate new practice. The new teacher observes an experienced teacher in action to learn more about a specific technique or strategy that they wish to initiate in their own practice.

2. To develop current practice. The new teacher is observed by an experienced teacher/mentor who will document specific observations and data in relation to an area of practice that the new teacher would like to strengthen.

3. To help capture and analyse evidence related to student learning that is then analysed and discussed together.

In the Northern Territory, mentors are also expected to support new teachers through a probation process to assist them in meeting Northern Territory teacher registration requirements set against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, so there is a fourth purpose for observing a colleague.

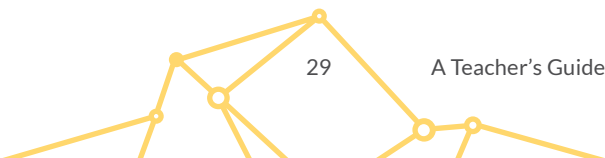
4. To support teachers in their quest to gain full registration as a teacher. Mentors observe teachers and support them by identifying, and helping them to document evidence of standards of practice as part of their journey to full registration.

It is worth noting that there is at least one other potential focus for classroom observation; performance management.

Classroom observation as performance management is generally a process designed to judge the extent to which a teacher's practice is considered effective, usually by a line manager. This purpose can complicate the mentoring process as described in this guide, where the focus is positive collegial support and building trust.

Classroom observation as performance management may conflict with the trusting, respectful and non-judgemental relationship that mentors and new teachers need to foster effective mentoring.

Observations for the purpose of performance management lie outside the scope of this guide.





Designing, structuring and agreeing on a process for successful classroom observations

Classroom observations can be divided into three phases:

1. pre-observation (**before**)
2. observing (**during**)
3. analysing and reflecting (**after**).

Each phase has several elements that need to be carefully considered so that the observation experience is productive for everyone.

Mentors and the colleagues they observe need to be clear about:

- the purpose for the observation
- the focus of the observation
- each person's role
- what evidence is to be collected and how
- when (e.g. immediately after the observation, the next morning etc.) and how (e.g. using a protocol to guide and prompt the discussion) the new teacher and mentor will analyse and reflect on what was discovered
- the most appropriate actions to take following the observation.

Each classroom observation should be treated as a unique opportunity for learning, designed to meet the needs of the new teacher, drawing on the professional expertise of the mentor.

On the following page are examples of questions and prompts that mentors and new teachers may wish to consider when negotiating and agreeing on a process for classroom observation.

You will notice that the table is organised in a way that implies the new teacher is an observer of a more experienced colleague *BEFORE* they are observed by that colleague. This establishes a way of working that is non-judgemental, helping the new teacher to understand how colleagues can learn with and from each other.

Negotiating the parameters for classroom observation

What do we need to agree on when observing classroom practice?

Identifying the purpose for our observation:

Is the observation to *stimulate new practice* or to *refine and further develop current practice*?

WHEN?	If the purpose is to stimulate new practice... then the new teacher observes the more experienced colleague.	If the purpose is to refine and further develop current practice... then the more experienced colleague observes the new teacher.
BEFORE	Setting a focus and agreeing on our roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the new teacher want to learn more about?• How does this connect to the learning focus of the new teacher's students?• What is the new teacher already doing in this area?• What does the new teacher want to achieve or change?• Who might be the best person for the new teacher to observe?• What should the new teacher be looking for/at the observation?• How will the new teacher record what is observed?• How and when will we analyse and make sense of what is observed?	Setting a focus and agreeing on our roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What classroom practice is the new teacher working on and why?• What evidence does the new teacher want me to collect?• How does the new teacher want me to document the evidence they've asked me to capture?• What does the new teacher want me to focus on and do, during the lesson?• How and when will we analyse and make sense of what is documented?• How will we get the students' perspectives?
DURING	Collecting and documenting data: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who does what during the session? (E.g. document what the teacher is saying and doing, how the classroom is organised, use of materials and resources, take photos, interview specific students, collect work samples, document transition points, document some of the students' conversations or responses, etc.)• What roles will each of us play?	Collecting and documenting data: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who does what during the session? (E.g. take photos, interview specific students, collect work samples, record transition points, document some of the students' conversations or responses etc.)• What roles will each of us play?
AFTER	Making sense of what we saw, reflecting on and analysing what we discovered and deciding to do next. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start with the new teacher's observations before the mentor offers their experience or insights.• What did the new teacher notice?• What is the new teacher thinking about now?• What might this mean for the new teacher's practice? What changes might the new teacher want to make?	Making sense of what happened, reflecting on and analysing what we discovered and deciding what to do next. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the evidence say to the new teacher?• Does the data reflect how the new teacher felt that things went?• What is the new teacher thinking about now?• What might that mean for the new teacher's practice?



Something to try...

With the new teacher design and develop a one or two page classroom observation template that enables you to document what you have agreed to observe prior to a classroom visit.

Make sure that in your design you consider how you will document:

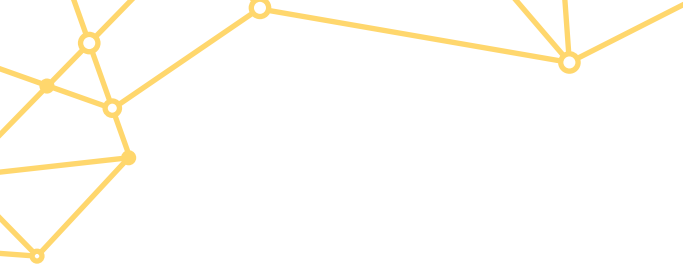
- the purpose for the observation
- the focus of the observation
- what the observer and teacher will do
- how and what data is to be collected
- how and when the debrief will take place
- what next?

Facilitating professional conversations

Perhaps the most productive strategies employed by mentors with colleagues involve engaging in professional conversations.

Talking with each other is a natural way to share experiences and to uncover issues and challenges so that we can make sense of what is going on and learn from each other. It makes sense that professional conversations are the cornerstone of mentoring. Significant aspects of facilitating effective professional conversations involve choosing the most appropriate form of conversation to have and finding the right balance between empathy, challenge and support.

Too much empathy, challenge or support will encourage high levels of dependency and uncertainty, likely to lead to feelings of inadequacy. Too little empathy, challenge and support can lead to teachers feeling isolated, misguided and unsure about how they are going.



By creating time for simple, open conversations, mentors provide opportunities for colleagues to reveal what's on their mind. Mentors will gain insights into the needs of the new teacher and together they can determine what kind of support is needed.

Listening with the intention of truly understanding what your colleague needs is an important skill for mentors to develop. Constant 'on the run' conversations run the risk of masking any issues or challenges that may grow into something more difficult to manage later on. Beginning with simple, open conversations should lead to opportunities later for deeper conversations where thornier issues or challenges might be discussed and appropriate plans for action developed.

Skilful questioning and the ability to genuinely listen are vitally important skills for mentors to master. Using these skills, along with developing an empathetic disposition and being authentically interested in the new teacher's growth and development, are factors that contribute to more effective mentoring relationships.

In this chapter we describe different forms of professional conversation and how these can be facilitated to support the professional learning of new teachers, while also considering the role they can play in determining the focus of these conversations. The four types of professional conversations explored in this guide include:

- **technical conversations** that focus on information, policies and processes
- **wellbeing conversations** which focus on the new teacher's confidence and sense of self-efficacy
- **planning and design conversations** that focus on designing for learning
- **reflective and analytical conversations** that encourage new teachers to consider their practice, its impact on learners and options for future actions.



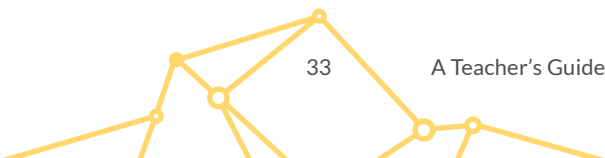
Why is there a need to distinguish between different types of conversation?

The four conversation types listed above represent a continuum from the most straightforward and least challenging, technical conversations, through to more complex and demanding conversations, which have a reflective or analytical focus.

Mentors will find that it makes sense to gradually build the intellectual (and potentially emotional) rigour and demand of the conversation as the new teacher becomes more confident and as trust in the relationship builds.

The extent to which a new teacher will be ready to engage in rigorous, analytical, evidence-informed conversations will depend on the extent to which their confidence and sense of self-efficacy has developed. Entering into such a conversation at the beginning of a mentoring relationship is likely to be unproductive and may alienate the new teacher.

Being mindful of the quality of professional conversations, and reviewing and reflecting on these from time to time, will help to recognise how well each conversation type is supporting mentoring practices.



Technical conversations

Technical conversations are often the easiest to have as they deal with a need for ordinary, everyday information such as processes, policies or procedures.

All teachers require specific information, which is often readily available if you know where to look or who to ask. This type of conversation will occur each time there is an unfamiliar school requirement or event that the new teacher encounters. After providing the information they need, the teacher usually won't need to ask again.

Topics commonly at the centre of these conversations include: assessment schedules, where to locate resources, report writing and timelines, excursion notices, professional expectations, behaviour management policies, and other school policies and processes.

Mentors may even pre-empt these conversations as specific events in the school year come up. It will be clear that this will be a new experience for the teacher to negotiate and mentors can make the transitions smoother and less worrying for them. Mentors draw on knowledge of the school context and will usually be able to provide an answer to their colleague's query.

Wellbeing conversations

These conversations focus on the new teacher's confidence and sense of self-efficacy – they reveal more about how they're feeling than their work.

Mentors use this form of conversation to learn more about their colleague's perceptions about their teaching, and any anxieties or insecurities they may have. A wellbeing conversation can also reveal how they are building relationships with students and colleagues, challenges or concerns about time-management and a need for entitlements such as preparation and mentoring time.

Wellbeing conversations focus on the new teacher's emotional welfare within the context of their new career and context, and the 'dailyness' of their work. As stresses can build gradually or suddenly, there is a need for regular check-ins and debriefings.

During such conversations mentors will often empathise with the new teacher and find ways to encourage and reassure them. Mentors become an ally in a new and sometimes daunting environment.

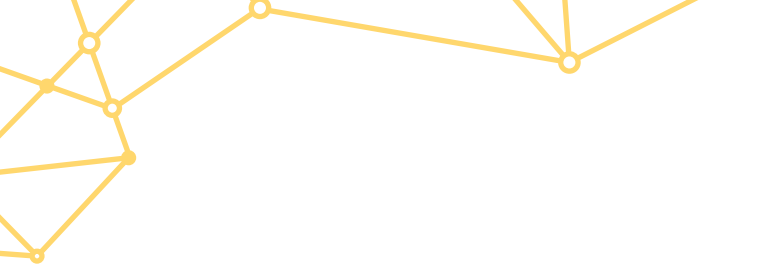
Conversations like this are more frequent in the early days of teaching when building a mentoring relationship is the focus and making sense of the working environment is a priority.



Something to try – a brainstorm

With your new teacher, peruse the school's induction materials. Identify and clarify anything that is a little mystifying for the new teacher then brainstorm a list of any other kinds of information or processes that they might need to know about.

Clarify what you can immediately, then tag each item on the list with the name of a person who might know answers to the questions or be able to help your colleague find out.



Something to try...

A scaffolded wellbeing conversation

With your new teacher organise to have a 'wellbeing conversation' using the scaffolded prompts below to help you learn more about each other and to discuss how you will work together. Allow at least 30 mins.

Mentor: Select a variety of images from magazines that could represent how your new colleague might be feeling in the first few weeks of school and how you might be feeling as a mentor as the year begins. The images will help you both to express and share how you are feeling about your work and will function as a lead-in to talk about how you want to work together.

Both respond to this prompt:

- If aspects of these images represent how you are feeling now, early in the year, identify which ones and explain how they reflect your feelings

Share your responses to these prompts:

- Similarities/differences? What might that mean for us?
- What are you most excited about this year?
- What are two things that are challenging you at the moment that you would like to work on with me?
- What would you like me to know about how you prefer to work to make sure we get the most out of our partnership?
- In what ways will our learning partnership be good for our students?



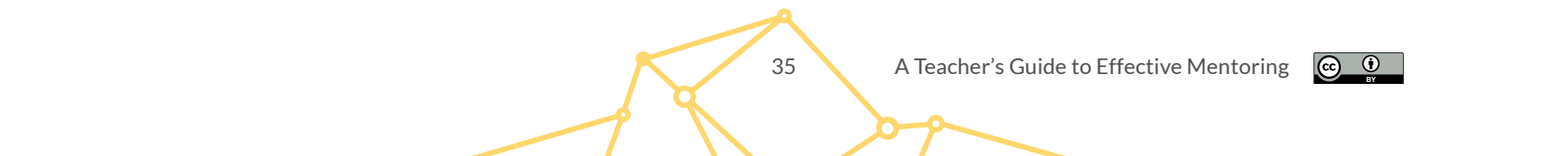
Planning or Design Conversations

Planning or design conversations are active and collaborative endeavours. Mentors work with new teachers to guide, question, challenge, offer options, probe for and seek solutions to challenges of practice. New teachers will be designing units of work, planning to use new strategies, working out how to assess student learning or how to evaluate the impact of something they have tried.

The focus of planning or design conversations is the teacher's work in the classroom, which should always connect to student learning.

Mentors in these conversations could refer to the 4Cs, (explained earlier in this chapter) to help clarify the different possibilities for support in this conversation. With the new teacher they will decide whether the mentor is needed in the role of consultant, collaborator or coach. The mentor will draw on their own experience and expertise to support their colleague as they work out learning goals for their students and identify success indicators to track the effectiveness of practices they have chosen to develop.

Planning or design conversations will continue throughout the year with the new teacher providing the focus based on their own professional learning needs, prompted by the identified learning needs of their students.



Reflective and analytical conversations

Reflective and analytical conversations encourage new teachers to consider the various aspects of their practice and its impact on learners to guide their future actions.

Mentors and new teachers use reflective and analytical conversations to gain insights into practice by analysing evidence related to a specific area of practice. Such evidence can reveal a great deal about the learning that occurred.

Mentors can help new teachers to make sense of classroom events by documenting and recording specific information that can be analysed and discussed afterwards. The evidence provides an objective starting point for new teachers to examine, question and compare what happened with what they intended to happen in the lesson.

Together the new teacher and mentor can consider the implications for future actions and build from a reflective conversation towards a planning one.

Mentors will find that they need to use skilled questioning techniques to clarify and probe the evidence to draw out different perspectives that may offer new insights, which will influence what the new teacher does next. It is important to use a variety of strategies to document classroom events. Analysing different forms of evidence will spotlight and amplify unexpected perspectives that will enrich the new teacher's thinking.

Strategies that mentors and new teachers might consider include: video of the new teacher teaching, student work samples, student interviews, lesson plans, classroom running sheets and data captured when mentor or teacher take up the role of 'student for a day'. Different forms of evidence offer potentially rich insights into the nature and impact of the new teacher's practice.

Something to try – a WOW conversation



This is a reflective conversation scaffold designed for teachers and mentors to share and discuss their classroom experiences. The WOW conversation invites insights and suggestions in response to the wonderings of both new teacher and mentor. Allow at least 30 minutes.

1. Prior to the conversation the new teacher and mentor agree to reflect on a specific lesson or period of time e.g. the past week. Using a sheet of paper divided into three columns – Wins, Obstacles and Wonderings – record important or significant events for them in that period.
2. The teacher and mentor bring their WOW documents to the conversation and these act as prompts for the discussion.
3. After the mentor leads the new teacher through analysing and discussing what is recorded, using both clarifying and probing questions, the mentor offers insights and suggestions to address the teacher's wonderings.
4. The new teacher then shares any new thinking or resolutions that have become apparent to them during or following the conversation.
5. The new teacher and mentor reverse roles, the new teacher supports the mentor to consider, analyse and reflect on their WOW document.



Giving and receiving feedback

There will be times when new teachers seek opinions and advice from their mentor and there will be times when mentors would like to offer an opinion or advice to their less experienced colleague.

The term often used to describe this process is, 'giving and receiving feedback'.

This process sometimes leaves the person 'receiving the feedback' feeling judged, demoralised and inadequate and the person 'giving the feedback', who is usually positioned as an expert, uncertain about its impact, especially when they encounter a dispirited response. Neither of these outcomes is ideal or desirable, nor will such responses support the development of an effective mentoring relationship.

The issue with feedback is that it always requires a 'giver' and a 'receiver', implying a didactic or 'transmission' approach to learning. It involves someone else's judgement, which is at odds with contemporary views of adult learning and how adults learn best.

Mentors and new teachers seeking opinions and advice from each other, discussing, analysing and designing learning together does not have to take the form of 'giving and receiving feedback' outlined above.

There are pedagogical alternatives that are better suited to supporting the development of effective mentoring relationships, such as evidence-informed professional conversations.

Evidence-informed conversations

Evidence-informed conversations are a contemporary alternative to the practice of giving and receiving feedback.

Earlier we explored different forms of conversation defined by their focus – technical, wellbeing and planning conversations as well as conversations that promote reflecting and analysing. Evidence-informed conversations fall into the fourth form of conversation as they involve analysis and decision-making based on insights derived from evidence. Such conversations are likely to be more challenging, require more time, more effort, more pre-planning and preparation, and involve deeper thinking and discussion.

Evidence-informed conversations create opportunities for new teachers to seek their mentor's opinions and advice and to benefit from their professional insights. However, that advice needs to focus on and be connected to evidence captured and analysed in relation to what the new teacher has chosen to work on or strengthen in their practice.

Analysing the evidence together will reveal specific professional challenges, which will provide a springboard for new teachers and mentors to share ideas and insights. They can discuss how the new teacher might address what has been revealed and identify options together. In an evidence-informed conversation the mentor's advice will be both focussed and supportive – offered as possibilities to consider rather than as 'expert opinion' to be implemented or a judgement or instruction to be acted on.



How to work with evidence as part of a professional conversation

Before mentors begin to refine their skills in facilitating evidence-informed conversations, it is important to consider what we mean by evidence and how we can work with evidence as an alternative to 'giving and receiving feedback'.

Evidence is any form of information that in some way captures, documents or creates a picture of something specific. Evidence may then help us to better understand the situation and allow us to act (or not) on what we have discovered.

Another way of thinking about evidence is that it's 'information' we can learn a great deal from. To become evidence, 'information' needs to be a 'lens' for something we want to learn more about. Information becomes evidence when it reveals something that is present or absent or shows us something we had not previously seen or recognised. We know that something is evidence when it allows us to understand something more deeply.

Anything can become evidence if it can be somehow captured or collected – sometimes this requires some ingenuity or pre-planning because a lot of what happens in a classroom, for instance what the students are doing or saying, disappears as soon as it is said or done. At other times what the students are working on becomes the evidence, just by retaining samples of their work.

When evidence is analysed it can help us to understand the extent to which learning intentions and teaching practices have had the impacts we set out to achieve. There are many forms of evidence that can provide new mentors and teachers with information that will enable them to discuss and reflect on practice in a purposeful way. The most useful forms of evidence to analyse will be those that most accurately reflect the teaching practices enacted, the student learning they prompted and the outcomes that resulted. Some forms of evidence that are useful include student work samples, student interviews, videos of teaching and classroom photographs that capture aspects of the teacher's practice as well as what students were doing or saying.

There are many possibilities for how mentors and new teachers might use evidence in their professional conversations. Mentors may at times be challenged to consider how best to use the evidence. Is it to affirm and encourage the teacher or does it enable the mentor to offer respectful insights that address any issues that arise?

Each of the following ideas needs to be considered in terms of the potential benefits and limitations each involves when preparing for evidence-informed conversations.



Purpose of capturing evidence is clear

This raises the question: ‘What might this be evidence of?’ It also raises considerations about the context of the evidence, reasons for collecting, who collects the evidence and why. The mentor can support the new teacher to understand why and in what circumstances they may want to capture evidence and what this evidence might help them to understand or decide. With this kind of discussion the mentor can play both a clarifying and consulting role early in the mentoring relationship, gradually moving to collaborating and coaching as the relationship develops.

Offered and discussed with care

Mentors offer and discuss evidence of what they have observed with respect and sensitivity. They offer insights, which are informed by their professional knowledge and experience, however this type of evidence is usually anecdotal rather than systematically collected and documented. In such circumstances mentors support new teachers to reflect on their work using evidence captured as a prompt for their conversation. This kind of discussion often positions the mentor in a consulting role.

Invited by the new teacher

The new teacher invites the mentor to help them consider what kinds of evidence could be collected, how it could be collected and in some cases to help them capture or collect that evidence. The new teacher invites the mentor to analyse and discuss the evidence with them. Such invitations allow the mentor to support and challenge their colleague to identify areas of success and concern and to discuss and identify next steps.

This kind of discussion can readily prompt clarifying, collaborating or coaching, sometimes moving backwards and forwards between the three roles.

Offers choices for change

Evidence can prompt new teachers to want to change their practice. Change is more likely when they are supported *but not compelled* to change. Mentors will respectfully and tactfully use evidence to support new teachers to canvas and discuss possibilities, weigh up alternatives and consider the implications of each of these options in terms of potential impact on students and what the new teacher is trying to achieve. This kind of discussion offers mentors the possibility of all of the 4Cs – *Clarifying* can play a particularly useful function in these circumstances, helping to reveal the kind of support needed.

Considers the context

Evidence is usually open to different interpretations rather than providing a simple statement of the fact. Mentors and new teachers need to consider the context of the evidence before making decisions about what it means and what actions to take.

Mentors and new teachers can work together to uncover multiple meanings in the evidence, being alert to the subtle clues that might otherwise be overlooked. The mentor can prompt the new teacher to consider the significance of the evidence, given the context, which has shaped or influenced what it now reveals. The mentor can ask questions that encourage the new teacher to explore the evidence more fully.

This again offers possibilities for each of the 4Cs – the clarifying role will be essential in these circumstances.



The evidence is essentially 'objective'

Factual information captured or collected is the focus of the conversation. It clearly relates to particular events, behaviours or practices. The facts are free from opinion, which allows the mentor and new teacher to discuss, analyse and interpret these from different perspectives – to decide whether the facts constitute evidence of desired learning. Clarifying, Consulting and Collaborating can all be used to good effect in these circumstances. As the new teacher becomes more accustomed to working with evidence the mentor can encourage them to take a lead role interpreting and analysing the evidence – the mentor shifts to a coaching role.

Follow-up discussions and analysis are well timed

Evidence is most useful to the new teacher when the follow-up discussion and analysis are sufficiently close to the particular event being reviewed and discussed. The event or learning which the evidence reflects need to be fresh in the teacher's mind. The more time that elapses between when evidence is collected and when mentor and teacher get together to discuss, the less impact it is likely to have.

Is practical and relevant

The evidence is about something that is useful for the teacher to understand and should offer them opportunities to act on, respond to or make changes because of what is revealed. Evidence concerning matters outside the control of the teacher will be of little value.



Something to try...

Think of a time when you were given feedback that was useful to you **OR** alternatively, think of a time when you were given feedback that was not useful to you.

- Who offered the feedback and why?
- What made it useful to you? What made it not useful to you?
- What happened as a result of this feedback?
- How could evidence have been used to make the experience more productive?
- How might the conversation you engaged in have been different?

Difficult or challenging conversations

Despite our best efforts to develop seamless and trouble-free mentoring relationships, which are always positive and encouraging, there will be times when a conversation we have becomes difficult or challenging for both parties.

We know when someone we are working with, or mentoring, is challenged by something we are discussing – they become defensive, agitated, perhaps visibly upset or quieter, more deferential or they respond in mono-syllables.

Sometimes the conversations we want to have with a new teacher will explore territory that one or both of us experience as difficult or challenging. These are the types of conversation we sometimes put off, engage in when we are frustrated with a colleague's practice or when we are insufficiently prepared, because a negative response was unanticipated.

There is a strong connection between the level of trust we develop towards each other and the extent to which we can have a conversation about something that is potentially challenging – the greater the level of trust the more likely it is that we can cope with talking about 'the hard stuff'. The less trust there is in our relationship, or the greater the difference in power between us, the more likely it is that challenging 'topics' will place one of us (usually the new teacher) in a vulnerable or defensive position.

While it is possible to engage in challenging conversations without first establishing a sense of trust, such conversations may not lead to the professional learning, insights or changes in practice they were intended to promote. However, we often believe that it is precisely these thorny issues that most need to be discussed if the person we are supporting is to progress.

How can we be respectful of a colleague's potential vulnerabilities while not shying away from what we perceive will make a difference to their practice?

Building trust is essential to engaging in challenging conversations

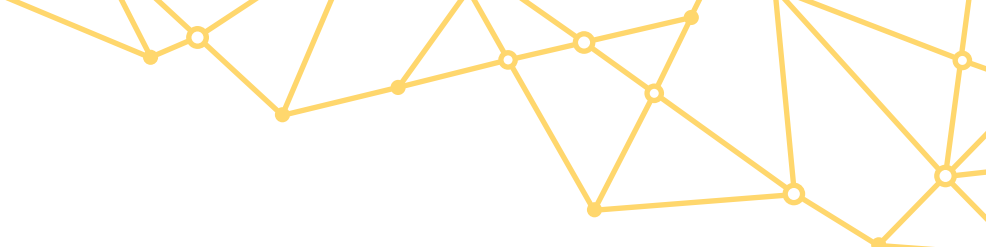
If we accept that developing a strong sense of trust is essential to productively engaging in challenging conversations and that trust will influence the extent to which a mentoring relationship succeeds, then developing trust is an important goal for mentors and new teachers.

How does trust develop in a mentoring relationship? What factors enable or inhibit trust?

Professional stance (see Chapter 4), our demeanour, disposition, tone and the language we use will significantly influence the level of trust that develops in a mentoring relationship. If we position ourselves as 'experts' and the new teacher as 'trainee' we are more likely to behave in ways that demonstrate that we know best and reduce the likelihood that new teachers will act independently. In such circumstances answers or solutions are likely to flow in one direction. The teacher will be expected to implement, not question, the theories and practices of their more experienced colleague.

If a new teacher is positioned as a contributor to the discussion, by being asked thoughtful questions or respectfully prompted to explain or elaborate, trust is more likely to develop. If the mentor's tone is supportive and curious rather than critical or condescending, trust is cultivated. If the language used is accessible, and the new teacher understands the concepts and terms used (or these are discussed and explained), it is more likely they will feel a sense of inclusion in the conversation. They are more likely to see themselves as a respected colleague rather than a student or novice. Trust grows alongside respect.

If the focus of a professional conversation between a mentor and new teacher, particularly at the beginning, is about the teacher's successes and wins rather than their faults and failures, trust and confidence are more likely to develop.



Faults and failures are often more obvious when someone first begins as a teacher, so it takes a great deal of discipline as a mentor to look for and focus on the positive aspects of a teacher's practice. Sometimes mentors are joined by the teacher in a critical review of their teaching, focusing on what they perceive to be 'weaknesses and mistakes' in their practice, ignoring or overlooking their classroom successes.

Confidence and trust can be compromised in an unsympathetic setting and conversations that set out to deal with a challenging subject become more difficult instead of easier.

The Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle

Research around effective mentoring advocates that mentors support teachers' induction into the profession and local context through collaborative inquiries into a genuine aspect of teaching and learning. The aim is to develop or further consolidate the teacher's knowledge and use of progressive, learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning.

One of the ways in which mentors can support this is through collaborative use of the *Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle* (the Cycle).

The Cycle can support a new teacher to identify their own professional learning needs based on the learning needs of their students. It enables them to:

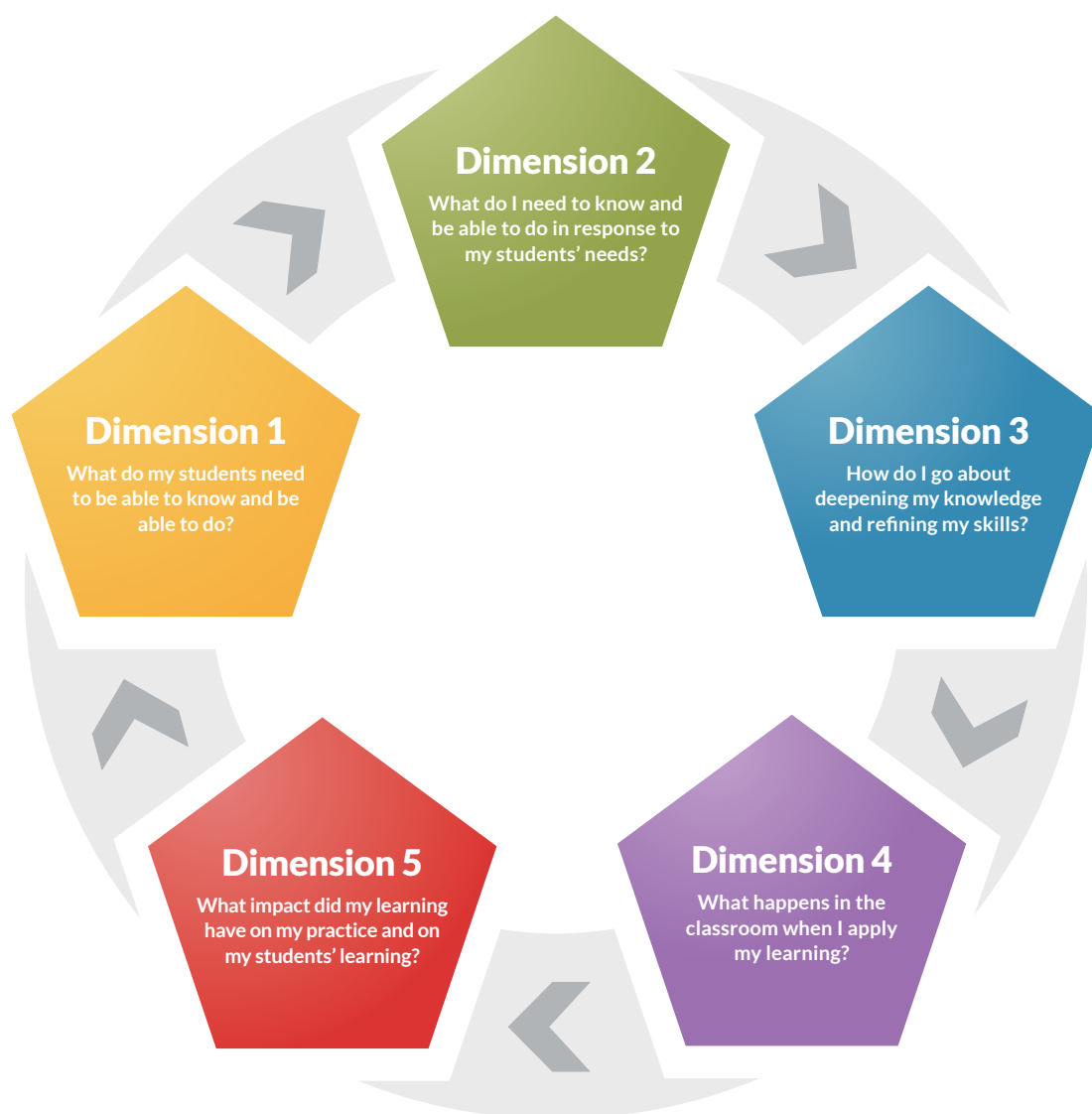
- recognise what their students currently know and can do
- work out what they need to know and do next
- reflect on and develop their own professional capacity to meet these student needs, by being clear about what they need to learn.

As their practice develops it is important that the new teacher is supported to reflect on and analyse the impact their teaching has on students' learning and wellbeing – the Cycle prompts this.

When working with a new teacher you can use the cycle in three ways:

1. to support you and the new teacher in identifying and attending to the teacher's learning needs
2. to support the professional learning of the new teacher through a collaborative inquiry that aims to progress student learning
3. as a wraparound when engaging in learning design conversations with the new teacher.

The Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle



The Cycle consists of five dimensions and is designed to prompt reflection and responses to the 'big question' which is at the heart of being a proficient teacher:

'Based on the needs of my students what do I need to know and do differently in my teaching practice to progress the learning of my students?'

In terms of the role of a mentor supporting the learning of a new teacher this can be translated as:

'Based on the needs of the new teacher what do I need to know and perhaps do differently to support their learning?'



The use of the Cycle by the mentor to support a collaborative inquiry positions both mentor and new teacher as learners.

The **five dimensions of the Cycle** can be adapted to support teacher mentors working with new teachers and are offered as a series of guiding questions:

1. What does the new teacher need to know and be able to do/learn (to meet the needs of their students)?
2. What do I need to know and be able to do to support and attend to the new teacher's learning needs?
3. How do I go about supporting the new teacher in deepening their knowledge and refining their skills and practices?
4. What happens in the classroom when I support the new teacher's learning (what are the impacts of the professional learning support I am providing)?
5. What impact did my professional learning have on my practice and on the learning of the new teacher?

At the core of this Cycle, when used to support the professional learning of new teachers, are opportunities to consider a range of different evidence sources, which position evidence at the centre of professional learning.

Possible evidence sources to consider:

- photos of how students are learning
- audio recordings of student conversations or responses to teacher prompts
- interviewing specific students
- collecting work samples
- video footage of the mentor and new teacher teaching
- video evidence of team teaching with colleagues such as assistant teachers in remote schools
- lesson plans or running sheets
- photos or video or observation notes of transition points
- photos or video of the ways in which the learning environment is set up to meet students changing needs.

These forms of evidence are important to the conversations between mentors and new teachers because they can help you both to:

- agree on a focus for an evidence-informed conversation
- identify and respond to the needs of students based on evidence
- prompt and facilitate an ongoing inquiry into teaching
- evaluate the impact of your professional learning on students' learning.

When using the cycle to collaboratively engage in an inquiry you will be able to:

- support the new teacher's knowledge and confidence when reflecting on their practice
- provide a support for the new teacher to articulate what they do and why they work in these ways
- develop and extend a shared professional language.

Use of the Cycle will also enable the new teacher to more confidently meet Teacher Registration Board requirements to progress from **provisional registration** to full registration.

The Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle is modelled on the work of Professor Helen Timperley and is a product of her 'Best Evidence Synthesis'.



Learning Design using the Eight Learning Management Questions

The Northern Territory Department of Education's Eight Learning Management Questions guide teachers to intentionally design and differentiate quality, comprehensive teaching programs. The eight learning management questions is a deliberate strategy to help move teachers from a 'teacher-centred planning activity' to intentionally designing back from what is expected from students (achievement standards). Teachers then choose strategies that can close the gap between where students are now and where they are expected to be.

The Eight Learning Management Questions provide a foundation for structured learning design conversations between mentors and new teachers. When used in conjunction with the Evidence-based Professional Learning Cycle and the collaborative inquiry mentoring questions it facilitates conversations around planning,

delivery and reflection that focus on student learning needs and the professional learning needs of new teachers.

The Eight Learning Management Questions have been adapted from *Smith, Lynch and Knight, 2007, Learning Management, Transitioning teachers for national and international change*. See Appendix for a full elaboration.

The following Collaborative Inquiry Tool provides an overview of how mentors and mentees can engage in integrated and collaborative inquiry and reflection inclusive of the needs of the students, the new teacher and the mentor.



THE COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY TOOL

EIGHT LEARNING MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Starting with learners

1. What do the learners already know, do and value?
2. Where do the learners need and want to be?
3. How do the learners best learn?

Designing for learning

4. What resources are at my disposal?
5. What will constitute the learning journey and what are the contexts for learning?
6. Who does what?

Monitoring learning

7. How will I check the learner has made progress?
8. How will I inform learners and others about the learner's progress?

THE EVIDENCE-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CYCLE

Dimension 1

What do my students need to be able to know and be able to do?

Dimension 2

What do I need to be able to do in response to my students' needs?

Dimension 3

How do I go about deepening my knowledge and refining my skills?

Dimension 4

What happens in the classroom when I apply my learning?

Dimension 5

What impact did my learning have on my practice and on my students' learning?

MENTOR COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT

1. What does the new teacher need to know and be able to do/learn (to meet the needs of their students)?

2. What do I need to know and be able to do to support and attend to the new teacher's learning needs?

3. How do I go about supporting the new teacher in deepening their knowledge and refining their skills and practices?

4. What happens in the classroom when I support the new teacher's learning (what are the impacts of the professional learning support I am providing)?

5. What impact did my professional learning have on my practice and on the learning of the new teacher?

6. What does the international research say about mentoring?

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in wanting to understand and develop effective mentoring practices. People have been searching for ways to support new teachers, which enable them to provide high quality learning experiences for all learners.

This is in response to a growing demand for new teachers as baby boomers retire and leave the profession. This has led to a significant increase in international research into effective mentoring and induction processes and practices. Systems around the world are looking for ways to support and retain new teachers.

In this chapter we will explore some of the themes emerging in the research.

- What does the research say about mentoring? What clues or tips does it offer about being a more effective mentor?
- Which factors or practices get in the way of effective mentoring, things that I might need to avoid or overcome in my own practice?
- What else might I read (and perhaps discuss with others) if I want to understand more about being an effective mentor?



Common themes in the research

A review of recent research indicates that the most successful approaches to induction and mentoring incorporate quite similar practices, which lead to learning and growth for both mentors and new teachers. These approaches and practices enable new teachers to become more confident and capable professionals.

A number of common themes were uncovered in this review. These included:

- how mentors are selected and paired with teachers
- the need for mentoring to be situated in a broader context of support
- the time (and quality of time) available for mentoring and supporting new teachers – especially in the first two years
- schools that promoted capacity building through collegial, evidence-informed inquiry had more effective approaches to mentoring.

Selection and pairing of mentors and new teachers

Research¹ in this area suggests that the ways in which mentors and new teachers are selected and paired has an impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

Mentor pairings that considered local contexts, taking into account the new teacher's strengths and limitations and the ability of mentor and new teacher to get along both personally and professionally, were crucial to the success of mentoring relationships.

This research also found that mentors needed to be accomplished practitioners, able to model effective professional practices, as it was essential that new teachers developed a sense of 'professional respect' for their mentors. This meant seeing their mentors as knowledgeable, capable and experienced – someone they perceived to 'know what they were doing'.

This review commonly found that mentoring effectiveness was reduced significantly when the mentor was the new teacher's line manager. This may be because line managers are usually responsible for judging and assessing the performance of the people they manage. Teachers in such circumstances are perhaps more likely to defer to the expertise of line managers, to see them as 'bosses' rather than colleagues.

New teachers may also be reluctant to question their line manager or reveal personal or professional challenges. Mentors generally play a more collegial and supportive role than line managers; they are someone that does not judge their less experienced colleagues.

When selecting potential mentors, leaders needed to look for people who were:

- willing to make their work public (which implies a sense of professional confidence)
- able to explain and make explicit the factors underlying their classroom decisions and practices
- committed to the work of mentoring and being a mentor
- approachable and accessible (with an approachable demeanour)
- trustworthy – someone that keeps the confidences of others, that is implicitly trusted and respected by colleagues
- ready and able to empathise with others
- good listeners (which implies being able to create the conditions for a colleague to openly share what's on their mind)
- genuinely interested in the new teacher both personally and professionally.

1. Britton et al 2003; Cameron Lovett & Berger 2007b; Hargreaves & Fullan 2000; and, Hobson et al 2009.



Mentoring practices situated within a larger context of support

An important enabler of effective mentoring involves the provision of support and support structures within a local context, which promotes the learning of everyone in that context. This recognises that everyone, at some point, needs support for their professional learning.

Other research² identified that successful induction was made possible by effective mentoring and that mentors were most effective when they themselves received support. This involved access to a network of support arrangements both within and beyond the school.

Support from within the school included school leaders providing guidance, expertise and emotional support that recognised and acknowledged the complexities of mentoring. Support also took the form of collective understandings within a school about mentoring and common ways of working with others, which reflected school values. This was usually achieved through formal and informal meetings that involved mentors, mentees, members of the leadership team and other teachers.

Support was also provided through professional development opportunities that focused on building mentoring knowledge and skills and assisted mentors to understand themselves and their professional stance. Such development was most effective when it was ongoing and part of a deeper engagement with mentoring, where mentoring was seen as “central to the task of transforming the teaching profession itself” (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000, p.1).

Having a designated member of staff whose role it was to oversee sustainable mentoring practices within a school was also identified as a positive enabling factor for effective mentoring.

Several researchers, (Britton et al 2003, Hudson 2012) identified the effective use of several people to support teachers - someone that focused on assisting the teacher to strengthen their pedagogical practice, and others that supported the teacher to understand the local context and culture. In such circumstances support for new teachers was seen as a collective responsibility rather than the sole responsibility of a teacher-mentor.

2. Aitken, Sinnema, Meyer 2013; Britton et al 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan 2000; Hudson 2012; Hobson's et al 2009; Scherer 2012; and, Timperley's 2013.



The time and quality of time available for mentoring and support

Time was a central concern that either enabled or became a barrier to both effective mentoring and successful induction. A number of researchers³ clearly identified that schools where mentoring was most effective recognised and valued the importance of having time to collaborate, experiment and reflect.

This allowed teachers to further deepen their learning and encouraged the development of practical measures to support mentors and new teachers.

Some of these measures included⁴:

- Providing time for mentors and new teachers to regularly plan, share ideas, teach and reflect together and in doing so, time to develop the foundations of a respectful, trusting and professional relationship
- Reducing the face-to-face teaching time/load of graduate teachers, particularly during the first two years of their teaching career, thus enabling early careers teachers to utilise this time to:
 - observe other learning environments
 - engage in rich learning conversations including reflective learning conversations with a range of educators beyond their local context (other teachers, universities, experienced teachers in other settings and/or schools)
 - learn about their specific school and community contexts
 - meet with members of the leadership team to discuss and seek guidance on a wide range of matters.

Availability of adequate time and space for mentoring and support is essential – there is no substitute for the time that teachers spend with their mentors. This is one of the key structural enablers of effective mentoring which needs to be negotiated with school leaders. See Chapter 3 for a detailed elaboration of other structural enablers.

3. Aitken, Sinnema, Meyer 2013; Britton et al 2003; Cameron, Lovett & Berger 2007b; Darling-Hammond 2003; Hobson et al 2009; Scherer 2012; and, Timperley 2013.

4. Britton, et al, 2003; Hobson et al, 2009; and, Cameron et al, 2007.



Capacity building through collegial, evidence-informed inquiry

Capacity building through collegial inquiry and innovation has been well supported as a means of deepening a new teacher's learning and teaching practices.

Such collaborative practices have also been found to have a positive influence on the culture in which the learning takes place.

Other studies⁵ found that when evidence-informed conversations are at the heart of these inquiries, the mentor and new teacher are able to collectively focus on pedagogy and the practice of learning and teaching. They are able to concentrate on, and consider their impact on student learning in purposeful ways informed with evidence and creative intent. There is also the opportunity to gently and respectfully challenge assumptions based on the evidence captured or collected.

Such an approach supports the new teacher in being able to articulate what they do and why and therefore further develop and extend a shared language amongst teachers.

Overall, Malone (2013, p.31) found that what 'builds capacity are spaces where teachers feel open to share, learn, challenge, fail, innovate, and succeed both individually and collectively'.

Such practices have been found to have far greater impact on student learning and teacher practices than individual learning experiences – teachers learning with and from each other rather than in isolation. (Stoll, 2013).

Teachers are well placed to make decisions about what their students need to learn. They work closely with their students every day. They listen to what they have to say about their learning, they look for clues about what makes sense to their students and

what doesn't, they collect artefacts and samples of work that reveal something about their learners.

Over time teachers get better at seeking out, attending to and uncovering what students need to learn and the actions they can take to advance their learning.

Aitken et al (2013) endorse this view of the highly competent teacher, drawing on a wide range of resources including their knowledge, skills, dispositions, ethical principles and concerns for social justice. They also found that this was reflected in decisions teachers made about:

- **student learning priorities** – what learning is most important given where each of my students is now?
- **teaching strategies** – what evidence-informed teaching strategies will help me connect with each of my learners and are most likely to help learn this?
- **enacting these strategies** – how well am I enacting these strategies? In what ways are each of my learners experiencing their learning? What are my interactions and relationships like with each of my learners?
- **examining and analysing Impact** – what happened? Have I made enough of a difference for each of my learners?
- **identifying and acting on professional learning priorities** – what is most important for me, the teacher, to learn and do so that I can make a bigger difference for my students?

How is this important to mentoring? How does this reflect the need for collegial practices and a culture of professional learning in schools?

5. Aitken, Sinnema, Meyer 2013; Hobson et al 2009; Malone 2013; Scherer 2012; and, Timperley 2013.

What practices get in the way of effective mentoring?

Various international studies⁶ identified ineffective or counter-productive mentoring practices, which had a negative impact on new teachers, both personally and professionally. Such practices impacted quite heavily on whether new teachers remained or were lost to the profession. These same studies uncovered similar findings in relation to mentoring practices that were ineffective. The most significant of these included the following.

Providing insufficient support

This included a lack of much needed emotional support, particularly during the first weeks and months of a new teacher's career. Mentors were found to be particularly 'tough' on beginning teachers, dominating the relationship in a non-collaborative and non-inclusive manner.

Offering insufficient challenge

Some mentors were either unable, misread the needs of the new teacher, or were unwilling, to offer sufficient challenge to stretch their colleague's current levels of knowledge and expertise. Some mentors also failed to provide sufficient scaffolding to encourage self-challenge or critical reflection about their teaching and learning practices. Some of the reasons revealed for there being insufficient challenge included:

1. Mentors assuming they were the 'experts' who were certain about their craft and all they needed to do was pass on its principles to teachers. Instead Fullan and Hargreaves (2013, p.3) recommend '...new and experienced teachers work on and inquire into the problems of teaching and learning in a situation where everyone acknowledges that teaching is inherently difficult and even experts do not have easy answers'
2. Mentors failing to provide the teacher with sufficient and gradually increasing levels of autonomy and the freedom and opportunities to innovate and take measured risks
3. Mentors guiding the teacher into 'low risk' activities. Such mentors had also been reluctant to allow the teacher to take on responsibilities in the learning environment
4. An excessive emphasis on externally determined goals and agendas such as prescriptive criteria for teaching practices
5. Mentors tended to overly focus their interactions on technical matters such as classroom behaviour management, subject content. In doing so, mentors devoted 'little or insufficient attention to pedagogical issues, to the promotion of reflective practice incorporating examination of principles behind the practice, or to issues of social justice' (Hobson et al, 2009, p.211). The authors suggest that this may have come about due to some mentors' limited understanding of concepts such as critical reflection and their inability to see the relationship between theory and practice.

The impact of such measures has been devastating in terms of the extent to which teachers, particularly beginning, were readied and equipped to function effectively as independent professionals.

These restrictive forms of mentoring often resulted in the promotion of conventional norms and practices 'rendering beginning teachers less likely to develop or consolidate their knowledge and use of progressive learner-centred approaches and less likely to challenge the inherent conservatism in teaching' (Hobson et al, 2009, p.211).

This means that we, as mentors, play a crucial role in shaping the profession of teaching, both now and well into the future.

6. Aitken, Sinnema and Myer (2013); Darling-Hammond (2003); Hargreaves & Fullan (2000); Hobson et al (2009); and Scherer's (2012).

Want to know more?

The following are a selection of the works reviewed for this guide, which have directly influenced the themes identified:

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Britton, T., Paine, L., Pim M, D.I., & Raizen, S. (2003). *Comprehensive teacher induction - Systems for early career learning*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands- Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Cameron, M. (2007) *Learning to teach. A literature review of induction theory and practice*. Wellington: New Zealand Teachers Council.

Cameron, M., Lovett, S. & Garvey Berger, J. (2007) *Starting out in teaching: surviving or thriving as a new teacher*. Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. *Keeping Good Teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do*. *Educational Leadership*. Volume 60, Number 08, May 2003, p.6-13.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F. & Shulman., 2005. L. Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (eds). *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do. The Design of Teacher Education Programs*. U.S.A., Jossey-Bass., p.390-439

Hargreaves, A. Fullan, M. (2000), 'Mentoring in the New Millennium' in *Theory into Practice*. Vol. 39, No.1, College of Education, Ohio State University.

Hobson, A., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. (2009). *Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25 (2009), 207-216.

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Malone, H.J. (2013) *Leading Educational Change: global issues, challenges, and lessons on whole-system reform*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Nemser-Feiman, S. *What new teachers need to learn*. *Educational Leadership*. Volume 60, Number 08, May 2003, p.25-29.

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Scherer, M. *The Challenges of Supporting New Teachers: A conversation with Linda Darling-Hammond*. *Educational Leadership*. Volume 69, Number 08, May 2012, p.18-23.

Smith, Lynch and Knight, (2007), *Learning Management, Transitioning teachers for national and international change*, Pearson Education Australia.

Stoll, L. (2013), *Capacity for learning: Getting serious about practice improvement*, in Helen Janc Malone (ed) 2013, *Leading Educational Change: global issues, challenges, and lessons on whole- system reform*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Timperley, H. (2013) *Learning-To- Practice: A paper for discussion*. Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland.

7. What might all this mean for me?

The authors of this guide assume that you are an accomplished teacher, well-placed to support the learning of a new teacher but still keen to learn and grow as a professional.

The aim of this guide has been to offer options and possibilities to strengthen your mentoring practice. We hope the ideas have prompted you to think and talk about mentoring and being a mentor and to reflect on what that means for you and a new teacher.

There are some ideas we can offer you with confidence.

The use of evidence promotes professional learning and makes a difference to the practice of teaching. The research tells us that capturing, analysing and discussing evidence can help teachers to make better decisions about their work. If you want to strengthen your practice as a mentor and build the capacity of your new teacher, then evidence could play a useful role.

The 4Cs provide four practical options to consider when working with a colleague. They provide a means of understanding and supporting a new teacher from their early uncertain practices through to becoming a more confident and capable teacher.



Being mindful of your professional stance and dispositions will allow you to more effectively connect with a less experienced colleague, while engaging in regular professional conversations will help you to build rapport and better understand how you might support them.

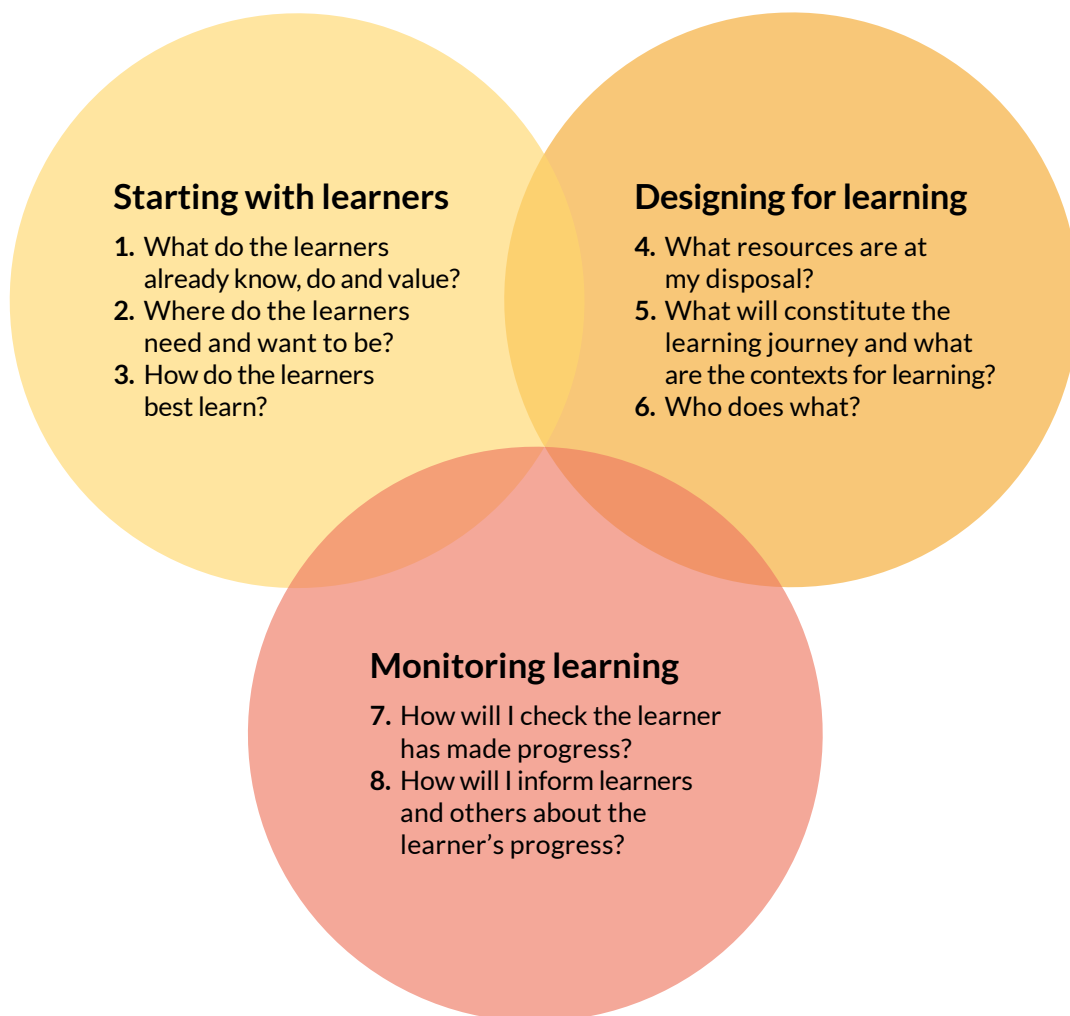
Using the Collaborative Inquiry Tool will facilitate and guide thinking and inquiry conversations in the mentoring relationship.

Why not try some of these ideas and see how they could work for you?

8. Appendix

Learning design using the Eight Learning Management Questions

The Eight Learning Management Questions (8LMQs) guide teachers to intentionally design and differentiate quality, comprehensive teaching programs. The 8 LMQs is a deliberate strategy to help move teachers from a ‘teacher-centred planning activity’ to intentionally designing back from what is expected from students (achievement standards). Teachers then choose strategies that can close the gap between where students are now and where they are expected to be.



(adapted from Smith and Lynch, 2006)

Starting with learners

LMQ 1 What do learners already know, do and value?

Developing a student profile

- Focus on students' values, interests, language background and current level of achievement in order to ascertain their readiness.
- Compile information about students through data collection and analysis.
- Use this information for developing LMQ 2 and LMQ 5.
- Data sets include:
 - student evidence of learning
 - diagnostic assessments e.g. On Demand
 - NAPLAN, Assessment of Student Competencies (ASC)
 - NT ESL levels
 - teacher records (current and previous)
 - school-based assessments e.g. SENA, Quicksmart, Accelerated Literacy
 - developmental continuum e.g. T-9 Net, First Steps, Talking Namba
 - Individual Education Plans (IEP).

Starting with learners / Profiling the student

LMQ 2 Where do the learners need or want to be?

- Define learning intentions and success criteria using achievement standards and content descriptions.
- Use achievement standards, learning intentions and success criteria as the main focus of the teaching and learning plan.
- Diagnose specific learning needs and determine personal learning goals with students.
- Identify the focus for ongoing teaching, learning and assessment.

LMQ 3 How do the learners best learn?

- Connect the student with the learning intentions and goals.
- Review the best way to deliver curriculum content (discipline knowledge).
- Determine specific strategies to support learning e.g. preferred learning styles, environments or modes, thinking skills, personality traits, previous experiences.
- Consider teaching strategies or pedagogical models which assist in differentiating the teaching. For example:
 - inquiry based learning
 - play-based learning
 - *Eight principles of language learning* to guide EAL/D teaching and learning
 - Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy, De Bono's Six Thinking Hats
 - scaffolding i.e. gradual release of responsibility
 - EAL/D teaching methodologies
 - use of first language for students' learning where necessary
 - involvement of students in the planning for learning
 - reflective practice.

Designing for learning

LMQ 4 What resources are at my disposal?

- Consider physical environment, human and technological learning resources.

Physical:

- classroom organisation, regularly used equipment e.g. manipulative materials, specialist learning area equipment e.g. science, cooking, art
- teaching team (teachers, para-professionals), community, field experts.

Technology:

- [Learning Links](#)
- [Australian Curriculum](#) online and [Scootle](#)
- diagnostic assessments ([Diagnostic Tool Selector](#))
- Student Achievement Information System (SAIS)
- Online resources.

LMQ 5 What will constitute the learning journey?

- Use the backward learning design model by focusing on what students are expected to achieve.
- Plan assessments prior to designing the teaching and learning sequence.
- Develop a learning sequence that:
 - provides conditions for success through tuning in (familiarisation), clear communication of learning intent, success criteria and expected behaviour, collaboration and participation
 - differentiates teaching and learning experiences in response to students' particular needs
 - models learning that is engaging and explicit
 - scaffolds activities that guide the application of thinking strategies and assists in processing new learning (guided instruction)
 - provides opportunities for students to apply their new learning
 - reflects on what was learnt, what helped the learning and next steps in the learning journey.

Designing for learning

LMQ 6 Who does what?

- Consider how to maximise contributions by utilising appropriate people to meet student learning needs. For example:
 - collaboratively plan with other teachers
 - collaboratively develop and share the delivery of the teaching and learning program with Indigenous educators
 - use experts where possible
 - organise contributions by the community
 - use student buddy relationships and student/peer conferencing and feedback.



Monitoring learning

LMQ 7 How will I check the learner has made progress?

- Assessment plans for ongoing monitoring of learning and adjustment to teaching (assessment for learning), student self-reflection and feedback (assessment as learning) and summative assessments (assessment of learning) are prepared at the beginning of the planning cycle.
- Ensure that assessment opportunities and tasks provide information on identified aspects of the achievement standards (refer to the Clarifying phase of the Quality Assurance Assessment Cycle).
- Develop assessments that reflect the following principles of assessment: explicit, valid and reliable, accessible, instructional, student centred and practical.
- Determine the management of collecting and organising evidence of learning throughout the teaching and learning sequence.

LMQ 8 How will I inform learners and others about the learning progress?

- Provide students with timely, specific and corrective feedback so they are able to evaluate their own progress and identify future learning goals.
- Use a range of evidence of learning from assessment opportunities to make an overall judgement (on-balanced judgement) to determine an A-E grade. Reporting should accurately reflect what the students know and how they apply that knowledge and understanding.
- Provide comments on student progress to enrich reporting information to parents. This is particularly important for EAL/D students and students with IEPs.
- Plan ongoing communication strategies with parents about student progress. Include the students in this process and refer to previous identified learning goals.

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