

Mentor Conference 24.02.21 Q&A session - your questions answered

Thank you for the wide range of questions raised at the recent Saffron Teaching School Hub & Chafford Hundred Teaching School Hub mentor conference. We hope we have answered them here and have given you some practical next steps.

1) What one thing would you recommend that I read if I am a new mentor?

- A good overall read for mentors is 'Mentoring in Schools' by Haili Hughes- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mentoring-Schools-colleague-aligned-Framework/dp/1785835238>
- NASBTT have a series of Essential Guides for Early Career Teachers (these are short books focused on different topics – such as Assessment, SEND etc. and would be good to use with trainees. <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/essential-guides-orders/>
- WALKTHRU by Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli is a practical book to use as mentors with trainees and uses an instructional coaching research base. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Teaching-WalkThrus-Five-step-instructional-coaching/dp/1912906767>
- Prof Caroline Daly (UCL Institute of Education) has sent a useful quick read guide to the Early Career Framework – you can read/download this [here](#).

2) Is the NASBTT Teacher Educator and Mentoring Zone also relevant for Early Years?

The TEMZ is absolutely relevant for an EYFS practitioner. As the TEMZ is designed to be a starting point for mentors, a lot of the advice and guidance is quite general and relates to a wide range of practice. With that in mind, the principles of being a good mentor will be present whether you are working in a nursery class or Year 6, which hopefully means there is still some valuable guidance for an EYFS practitioner. In terms of specifics, the free CPD modules 'reading and phonics' and 'EYFS framework' that are part of the NASBTT learn package will both be very relevant, as will 'supporting SLCN in Early Years'. You can access the TEMZ here: <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/temz/>.

For further information about the TEMZ, you can contact James Coleman at teachereducators@nasbtt.org.uk.

3) I feel that my trainee is suffering trauma (the way you described a trainee of yours is exactly like mine). How do I broach this subject? And how do I help them as best I can?

I would encourage you to look at the suggested approach on the Trauma Practice handouts from the session at the Mentor Conference. This could be used like a script. As mentors feel more confident with this as an approach, you may want to include your own questions. The main thing is to think in small steps, sit with the silences, reflect on strategies used in the past and build on those in a solution focused way. When trainees are unable to engage in these discussions, it is likely they need a break or professional help. The idea round the approach on the handout is that the trainee can start thinking in logical steps that feel manageable again. I would encourage participants to look at the case study too. You will be able to see that although the trainee seems in extreme distress with a long history of mental ill-health issues, some of the support strategies were those very commonly used in ITT. They just needed to feel heard.

Emma Day is happy for you contact her further if you have any other questions – emma@etpscott.co.uk

4) Do you have any suggestions about balancing the role of both school and class mentor as I currently do both?

This is about making it clear to the trainee what hat you are wearing and when and being transparent. Good instructional coaching as a school and class mentor uses the same underlining principles. I would advise that you

ensure that you get other senior leaders/subject experts to observe the trainee and look at their evidence of progress to ensure there is a robust QA process in place. This will support you and the trainee to feel confident in the support offered and the judgements being made. If the trainee is struggling, involving the ITE provider at the earliest point would be a good idea. They then can offer a level of external QA, while you offer the on the ground support and pastoral care for the trainee on a day-to-day basis.

5) I would love to get any further reading on mentoring for art & design secondary.

We are not aware of mentor specific reading for art, but an excellent book on mentoring with some good practical advice is 'Mentoring in Schools' by Haili Hughes. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mentoring-Schools-colleague-aligned-Framework/dp/1785835238>

You might also find the following book useful: 'Mentoring Design and Technology Teachers in the Secondary School: A practical Guide (Mentoring Trainee and Newly Qualified Teachers)' by Suzanne Lawson and Susan Wood- Griffiths.

Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli's WALKTHRU's book offers a very practical instructional coaching approach to mentoring that is very visual and might be helpful and would work with all subjects and phases. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Teaching-WalkThrus-Five-step-instructional-coaching/dp/1912906767>

Prof Caroline Daly (UCL Institute of Education) has sent a useful quick read guide to the Early Career Framework – you can read/download this [here](#).

6) Do you have any advice for people currently mentoring trainees in practical subjects as they will have missed a huge part of the training experience they should have had this year?

This is a difficult issue. I think the way I would approach this issue is to narrate what each lesson would have looked like had it have been practical and live. You need to model this process and thinking for them.

We can also ask trainees to plan lessons that would have been practical and review their plans, offering valuable insights into where this might go wrong and how to set up group activities successfully.

Setting reading on the principles of setting up effective group learning is also useful to help plug gaps. Kagan's Cooperative Learning (PIES Principle) is a good example of this and would-be useful research to support both you and the trainee.

Watching videos of live lessons and reviewing them together is another good training activity to do. (There are lots online, but you may have some of your own prerecorded). Trying to prioritise practical teaching experiences on the trainee's timetable from now on as we return to school will be key too.

As employing schools, we will need to be aware that our new ECTs in September will have less practical teaching experience and may need more support/CPD in this area than in previous years. This is something we will have to plan for and be sympathetic to.

7) Is it possible to have contact details for the speakers to use in INSET days at school please?

Many of the speakers are experts in teacher training and teacher education and may not be suitable for whole staff CPD, but more suited to working with teams of teacher educators. They are all happy to you to contact them. If you would like to request a particular speaker's contact details, please contact Pauline Haslam phaslam@swchs.net.

8) How do we support trainees with workload and time management?

Hopefully, some of the strategies shared in the mentor conference on time management of the training year

might act as a starting point. Do a review of all the commitments required of your trainee and map this with them half termly/termly. Create an action plan with timescales and then use the weekly timetable/afterschool slots to carve out bespoke time for each aspect, ensuring the school and provider demands are equally accommodated. See the mentor conference PowerPoint slides for more ideas on how to do this – you can view/download these [here](#).

9) What sort of guidelines can you give a mentor for knowing that a threshold has been passed to trigger a Support Plan for a mentee who is not meeting the course requirements?

This is often provider specific and I would contact your ITE provider for advice if you are worried. They can advise on the benchmarks for a support plan. As a rule of thumb, a support plan would be triggered when we see a pattern of the trainee not meeting targets, not making progress and seemingly not able to act on feedback and advice that has been given. A support plan might also be put in place for trainees who are finding it hard to manage their time and need support with meeting deadlines and managing all of the demands of ITE training.

The key thing is that we note that trainees are here to be trained and should not be the finished article yet. Some trainees will need more structured support, team teaching/modelling/intervention than others and the support plan must recognise this and put it into action. All support plans should be viewed in this way and seen as supportive processes by all involved.

10) Will there be other events like this for mentors? I loved having some CPD from experts.

Thanks for your comment. We are glad you found it helpful. Yes, we do plan on having more of these events for both mentors and trainees going forward. We will keep you informed of any new events. Please get in touch with us if you have a focus in mind that you would be interested in learning more about. We want to be responsive to your CPD needs.

11) Will there be experts at a future conference with a focus on Early Years?

Thanks for your comment. We will certainly look at getting a guest speaker on this topic at a future event.