

Dialogue



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## Coaching for teaching and learning: a practical guide for schools

### Guidance report

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## About the guidance report

This guidance report is designed to offer information and support for teachers and school leaders. It is based on a two-year research project, conducted by Newcastle University and funded by CfBT Education Trust and the National College. The full findings of the research project are available in the report 'Improving coaching: Evolution not revolution', published by CfBT. Further coaching resources are available from the National College website: [www.nationalcollege.org.uk/coaching](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/coaching).



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*If all stakeholders recognise the characteristics of coaching from one another's perspectives it is more likely that coaching will succeed.*

## 1. Introduction

Teacher coaching in schools takes various forms, but is commonly conceived as a means of providing personalised professional support to teachers through discussion about their practice. Coaching takes time to organise and facilitate within any organisation, and as time is precious in all schools it is important that coaching, where used, works to maximum effect.

### 1.1 The research project

This guide, written following a two-year research project, undertaken by the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University and funded by CfBT Education Trust and the National College, is intended to support the development and improvement of coaching in schools. The research is fully documented in the research report (Lofthouse *et al.*, 2010). An intention shared by researchers and teachers participating in the research has been to consider what constitutes good quality coaching and how it can be achieved.

### 1.2 The purpose of this guide

The guide is designed to be of value both to schools who are planning to develop coaching to enhance teaching and learning as a new endeavour and to those where coaching already exists. It will provide guidance for establishing models of coaching which are:

- focused on enhancing teaching and learning
- beneficial to all coaching participants in terms of professional learning
- sustainable over the long term.

It will indicate a series of approaches that can be used to develop coaching practices. These can be used as a step-by-step approach, providing a sequence of activities to support coaching development or selected to implement specific changes in coaching practice.

### 1.3 Who this guide is for

The guide will offer information and support for the following:

- **Coaches** who work with colleagues to provide them with support to develop their practice, often observing lessons and always creating opportunities for professional dialogue
- **Coachees (the coached teachers)** who engage with coaching and who usually suggest the focus for the coaching process
- **Coaching co-ordinators** who support and manage the work of coaches, acting to negotiate opportunities for individuals to be involved with coaching (as both coach and coachee), and to ensure the quality of the coaching provision
- **School leaders** (including governors) who through school improvement planning and budget management legitimise and are ultimately accountable for the outcomes of coaching within their schools.

If all stakeholders recognise the characteristics of coaching from one another's perspectives it is more likely that coaching will succeed.



## **1.4 How to use this guide**

The guide initially provides information about the emergence of coaching and how it is different to mentoring. It argues a case for coaching in schools, and also indicates some of the core tensions that exist. It then becomes more practical, providing advice for facilitating and improving coaching practice. A number of steps are suggested for this, as follows:

- Conducting a coaching review
- Establishing coaching practice
- Using video to support coaching
- Scaffolding coaching conversations
- Understanding the different dimensions of coaching talk
- Developing the quality of coaching practice
- Leading and sustaining coaching.

Each step is introduced with a trigger question and concludes with review questions. These can act as prompts for thinking, and preferably for discussion amongst a coaching development group.

## **1.5 Background to coaching**

It is not difficult to find individual schools, networks or even whole local authorities who have used models of coaching as part of their professional development programme. These models are often based on or influenced by one of the following:

- The National Strategy materials (DfES, 2003), which advocated coaching as a means to embed the developments in teaching and learning across the various strategy strands
- The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, who use coaching models within a number of their programmes including Leading from the Middle, Leadership Pathways and NPQH
- CUREE (the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education), who have developed a suite of modules on Effective Coaching and Mentoring
- An array of commercial materials and programmes which indicate approaches to coaching which often have features giving some distinct profile
- Individual teacher or school engagement with a Higher Education provider of Masters-level professional development with a coaching element, which tend to draw on some of the above, providing theoretical and practical perspectives.

For the most part these models share certain characteristics. For example they propose coaching in schools almost always as a one-to-one approach, although occasionally they utilise triads. In addition they tend to recognise the significance of trust between coach and coachee and also position the coachee as having the personal or professional resources to pursue change with the support of the coach.





## 1.6 Coaching versus mentoring

In some contexts coaching and mentoring are used almost as interchangeable terms. Without doubt they are both valuable processes. It is true that the boundary between them is somewhat permeable and that often the same individuals in schools carry out or participate in both processes. It is however valuable to define the term 'coaching' for the purposes of this guide and the research it is based on. A national framework for coaching and mentoring was developed by CUREE (2005) resulting from the Mentoring and Coaching CPD Capacity Building Project. The CUREE framework distinguishes between three related processes as follows:

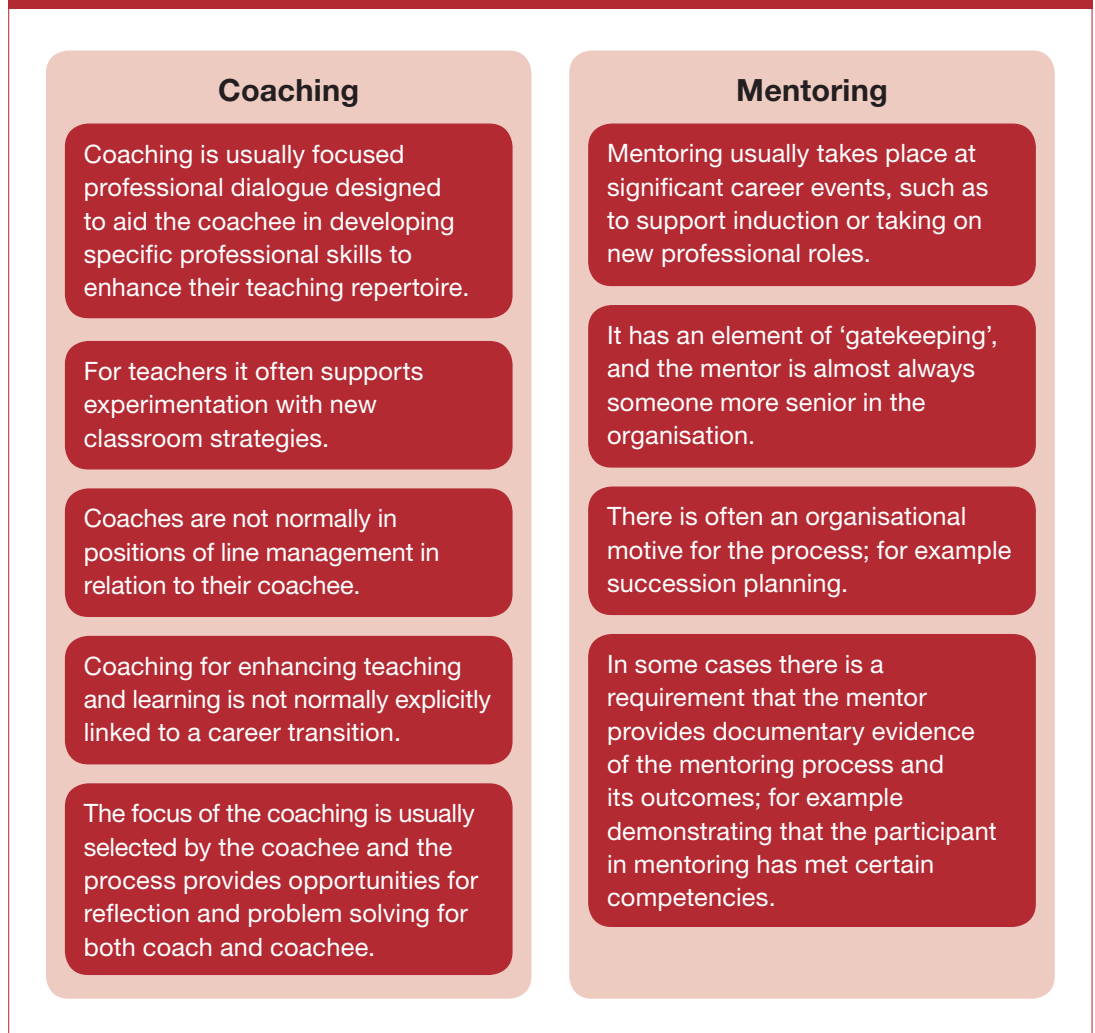
- **Mentoring** is a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions.
- **Specialist coaching** is a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice.
- **Collaborative (Co-) coaching** is a structured, sustained process between two or more professional learners to enable them to embed new knowledge and skills from specialist sources in day-to-day practice.

To further support the recognition of the differences between coaching and mentoring the CfLaT research team use the following defining features: see Figure 1 on page 8.

As this guide is being written, the TDA is launching the new Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL), being offered by university, local authority and school consortia across England. The provision of a school-based coach for all participants in this programme is a fundamental characteristic of the course. The MTL framework provides its own definition of the coaching role which has some overlap with both mentoring and coaching as outlined above. Its principal aim is to support teachers studying MTL in aligning professional practice development in the specific context of their schools with Masters-level study.



Figure 1: Comparison between coaching and mentoring (CfLaT)





When teachers' learning is based on their genuine assessment and understanding of pupils' learning they can start to make adaptations to their practice which can lead to real differences in outcomes.

## 2. The case for coaching

### Trigger question

Why develop a coaching model in your school?

This section starts with the 'big picture': coaching within strategic CPD, the levers and tensions that exist in developing coaching. It then outlines some of the common approaches to and tensions within coaching. As such it will help you to locate your school's policies and practices in a broader context, and may provide indicators of alternative approaches that you may wish to trial.

### 2.1 Strategic CPD: the role of coaching

Teachers' learning and development underpins school improvement and provides a vehicle for raising achievement and attainment. When teachers' learning is based on their genuine assessment and understanding of pupils' learning they can start to make adaptations to their practice which can lead to real differences in outcomes. It is possible to identify core principles which apply to the most successful CPD provision. In the Educational Practices series, Helen Timperley's 2009 summary *Teacher professional learning and development* (based on a systematic best-evidence synthesis of published research) identifies these core principles. Amongst these is the need to create conditions which allow:

- teachers to experience and develop understanding of an integration of knowledge and skills
- teachers to gain multiple opportunities to learn and apply information
- teachers' beliefs to be challenged by evidence which is not consistent with their assumptions
- teachers to have opportunities to process new learning with others.

Coaching can provide a means by which these and other key principles can be achieved and thus teacher learning can be enhanced. Coaching is a form of collaborative CPD and can thus be a strong dimension of teachers' professional learning in school. As such it needs to be managed as part of a strategic approach to CPD. It is therefore a genuine alternative to what constitutes most teachers' CPD, which has been found to be rarely collaborative or informed by research, but instead tends to involve passive forms of learning, and is poorly and embedded in work contexts (Pedder *et al*, 2008).

### 2.2 Teachers' learning and students' learning

The link between teachers' learning and students' learning acts as the main lever for the development of coaching in schools. Whatever the nature of the school there is a constant imperative to improve, both in terms of student attainment and wider outcomes (as exemplified by the framework for Every Child Matters). The majority of the school day, both for students and teachers, is spent in lessons. What goes on in lessons is exceptionally complicated, influenced not just by the quality of planning, but also the relationships, learning environment and motivations of all participants. Teachers are frequently set performance management targets that are embedded in this complexity, and while targets help to focus attention they rarely act as *the means* for improving practice. The performance management cycle as operated in most schools can thus act



*Teachers and school leaders are becoming more acutely aware of the relationships between engagement, feedback and learning for students, as exemplified by the assessment for learning agenda.*

as another case for the implementation of coaching. When it works well, coaching starts to tackle the complexity of teaching and learning, providing opportunities for the interrogation of teachers' practice and its consequences. As it is an individualised professional development activity, coaching can be finely tuned to the concerns of specific teachers working to support their own students.

Teachers and school leaders are becoming more acutely aware of the relationships between engagement, feedback and learning for students, as exemplified by the assessment for learning agenda. This was reiterated by John Hattie's meta-analysis of influences on students' learning, published in his book *Visible Learning* in 2009, which demonstrated the link between 'challenge and feedback, two essential ingredients of learning' (p38). The significance of this here is the parallel relationship between challenge and feedback in teachers' learning. Teachers' roles are challenging, but sometimes teachers focus on the burdensome nature of the job, rather than the intellectual and practical challenges it throws up. They tend to adopt set teaching routines and often wait for examination results, performance management and Ofsted inspections to indicate how well they are doing. The burdens of the role, and the relatively blunt instruments available for feedback, can lead teachers to overlook some of the fine detail of practice. Coaching is one way that teachers can redress this balance.

And just as every child matters, every teacher matters too. Employee well-being is a core concern of all effective school leaders. Teachers' well-being is another complex dynamic, but largely influenced by their sense of worth and opportunity to make a significant contribution to the school community. In turn these are partly influenced by the nature of relationships between teachers, their colleagues and their students. Coaching creates opportunities for trusting, open professional relationships to develop and these help to develop the school's social capital. As social capital contributes to the overall resource available to the school to successfully undertake its core business and continue to improve, this can provide a further case for the implementation of coaching.

### **2.3 Recognising the core tensions in developing teacher coaching**

While there is a strong case for developing coaching it is naïve to assume that it is easy to achieve in a school context, especially if the imperative is for rapid change in student outcomes. One reason for this is the typical clash of cultures between coaching models and many school improvement mechanisms. Coaching tends to have its roots in psychotherapy and counselling in which the establishment of trust is paramount and confidentiality is assured. When coaching is established as a means of school improvement, it comes under a managerial culture, characterised by hierarchical relationships and auditing processes. In the latter scenario information about practice and professional conversations derived from coaching may be expected to be fed into the 'system'. This locates coaching in the school's target-generating and monitoring procedures, and may deter participants from exploiting some of the potential to share and tackle their personal concerns and queries related to practice that coaching can offer. Our research evidence indicates that the conflation of coaching with monitoring of teachers' practice is not uncommon and raises significant challenges for school leaders. This reinforces our conclusion that leading and managing coaching is much harder than it might at first appear. An alternative way to understand coaching is as a means to construct new knowledge and practices in the context of the school. Recognising coaching as a creative lever rather than an accountability tool helps to distinguish it from other organisational procedures. Promoting coaching as a means to celebrate and share good practice, rather than simply adopting it in deficit scenarios is also critical. However this can involve a significant mind-shift on the parts of school leaders and participants.



*More commonly coaching is made available to a small number of teaching staff who fall into pre-determined categories, or offered on the CPD agenda to any colleagues who wish to fit it into their pre-existing workload.*

Another relationship to define in coaching development is between coaching and performance management structures and procedures. Good practice in our research schools allowed coaching to be a performance management tool, not a slave to performance management.

An additional difficulty is the relatively limited language available to teachers and school leaders when discussing coaching practices. While the organisation of coaching practice can be readily discussed, it is more difficult to define the precise nature of effective coaching conversations. Having taken the step to distinguish coaching from mentoring, the next step is to be familiar with ways of describing features of coaching conversations. This became a significant element of the research project.

## 2.4 Differences in coaching practices

Significant variability exists in the approaches taken to establishing coaching within schools. In a few instances coaching has developed into a universal entitlement, with all teaching colleagues expected to be involved as coach, coachee or both, during the course of a year. At the other end of the extreme, coaching is a relatively minority affair, initially carried out by a small number of staff almost under the radar of the school leadership. More commonly coaching is made available to a small number of teaching staff who fall into pre-determined categories, or offered on the CPD agenda to any colleagues who wish to fit it into their pre-existing workload. These differences in availability of coaching can be related to the extent to which coaching, performance management and school improvement are linked. They can also be related to the way that coaching is initiated and how the coaching partnerships are established. It can also be influenced by the expressed purpose of coaching in the school; in some cases there is a clear school agenda, in others the focus is deliberately left in the ownership of the participants. It is clear that coaching tends to evolve with time, often as new co-ordinators or school leaders take responsibility for it, although there is evidence that if core champions of coaching leave the school it can fizzle out. This pattern indicates the requirement that coaching is embedded in a systematic approach to CPD, capacity building in teaching and learning and school-wide succession planning. Once it is recognised that coaching acts as a significant CPD opportunity for the coaches themselves, some of the barriers to development are lifted, as the investment in developing coaching capacity becomes a virtuous cycle.

### Review questions

Given the current state of play in your school what case can you begin to make for coaching in your school?

### Review questions

Who are the key stakeholders and what are the costs and benefits of introducing coaching for each of them?



*It may be valuable to set up a small working group, perhaps including staff working at different levels in the school, and possibly a member of the governing body.*

### 3. Conducting a coaching review

#### Trigger question

How much do you know about the coaching practices in your school?

In order to plan development of coaching it is useful to review the current context for coaching and the nature of existing coaching activity in school. It is worth making a decision about who undertakes the review. It may be valuable to set up a small working group, perhaps including staff working at different levels in the school, and possibly a member of the governing body. What follows are questions that can be asked in an initial review of coaching practices in school, categorised under key focus areas. The questions could form the basis of a systematic review, or an opportunity for discussion and may stimulate initial actions in the development of coaching in your school. Some of the questions are deliberately open, and further sections of this guide will indicate their significance.

#### 3.1 Supporting coaching

These questions encourage you to explore the ways in which coaching is currently contextualised in the school's CPD strategy.

- Is there a clear understanding of the differences between coaching and mentoring in the school?
- What training has been offered to teachers relating to coaching? How many teachers have been included in this? What models of coaching were promoted through the training?
- How is coaching led and managed? What key roles are there? Is there a reporting structure? What does this involve?
- Are the benefits of coaching established within the senior leadership team, and is there a clear rationale for coaching as a result?
- Is coaching in school focused on teaching and learning and/or on leadership development?
- Are key colleagues and senior leaders modelling engagement in coaching as a positive, productive CPD activity?
- At a school level is there an intention that coaching is aligned with strategies for CPD, performance management and/or school improvement? How is this operationalised?

#### 3.2 Participation in coaching

These questions focus on the levels of engagement with coaching, and the patterns of participation across the teaching community of the school.

- How are opportunities to engage in coaching communicated to teachers?
- What is the level of participation? Are specific staff groups involved? If so, what is the pattern and is this coincidental or deliberate? If intentional what is the rationale for this?
- What are the current arrangements for coaching? Four main patterns exist, as shown in Figure 2 opposite. Does your school adopt one of these approaches, a hybrid of approaches or an alternative?



Figure 2: Variations in the relationship between coaching and performance management



### 3.3 Intended purposes of coaching

These questions allow you to focus on the ways that coaching is used in your school, and may help you to distinguish between the range of possible purposes for coaching, identifying those which are most critical in your context.

- If there is coaching for teaching and learning, what is it being used for?
- Can the senior leadership team and colleagues involved in coaching distinguish between the more and less desirable purposes for coaching outlined in the boxes in Figure 3 (page 14)?
- Do any of the purposes identified above dominate in your school? If so – are you happy that the current scenario is the most appropriate one?

### 3.4 Practical arrangements for coaching

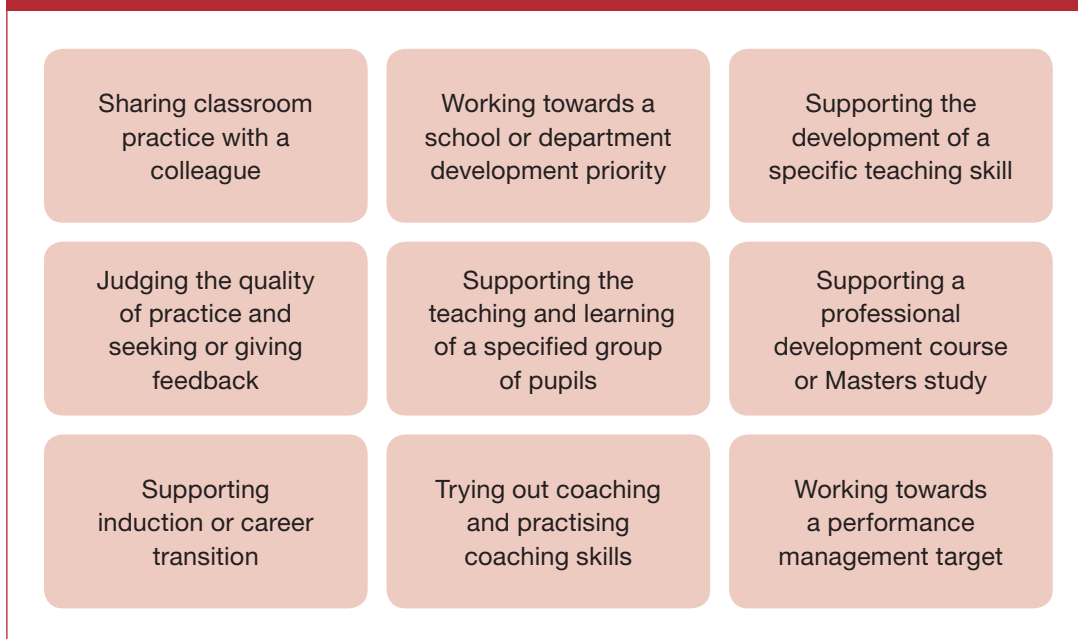
These questions allow you to reflect on the ways that coaching episodes are organised in your school, and may help you to determine alternative approaches worth exploring.

- How formal are the arrangements for coaching? Do all participants follow a similar process?
- Which of the practices in Figure 3 best describe coaching structures in your school? How are different approaches combined? Is the current situation the most desirable one?

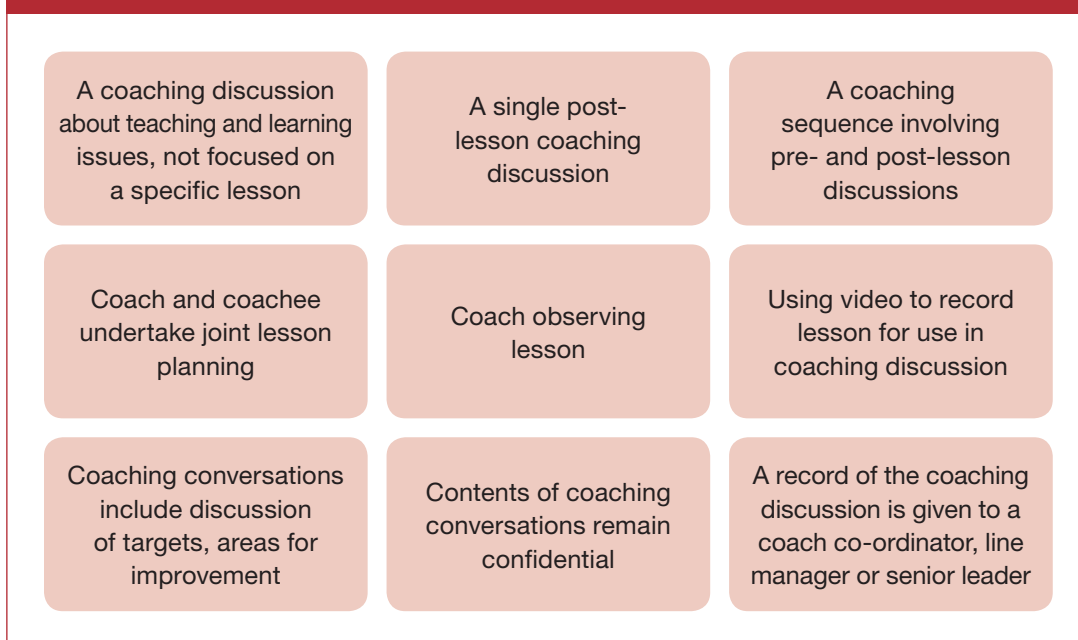


- Can the senior leadership team and colleagues involved in coaching distinguish between the more and less desirable coaching activities outlined in the boxes in Figure 4 below?

**Figure 3: Purposes of coaching identified in the research project: including more and less productive purposes**



**Figure 4: Practical arrangements for coaching identified in the research project: including more and less productive purposes**







*What has this coaching review told you about coaching in your school? Are you happy with the current situation?*

### 3.5 Experiences of coaching

The following questions are useful to test out the levels of actual and potential 'buy in' to coaching. Investigating them will help you to recognise the perceptions and experiences that your colleagues have of coaching.

- Do teachers show an interest in being involved with coaching?
- How are their experiences of coaching currently evaluated formally or informally?
- Is there evidence that teachers perceive it to be beneficial? If so, in what ways?
- Are teachers who have been coached interested in becoming coaches?
- Do teachers experience any tensions when participating as coach or coachee?
- Do any colleagues who have worked in other schools have useful experience of coaching, and how can this be learned from?

### 3.6 Plans for coaching

These final questions will help you to consider the ways that coaching is, or could be, systematically planned for within the school.

- Does coaching appear in the school development plan?
- Are there any current plans for altering the way coaching is used or offered to teachers?
- Who has been consulted in developing these plans, and have any key stakeholders been missed out in these discussions?

#### Review questions

What has this coaching review told you about coaching in your school? Are you happy with the current situation?

#### Review questions

If you are keen to develop coaching further, who is best placed to lead coaching development; how will they be supported?

#### Review questions

How will you know if you have been successful in developing enhanced coaching; what are realistic success criteria?



*Are we facilitating coaching that is likely to make a difference to teaching and learning?*

## 4. Establishing coaching practice

### Trigger question

Are we facilitating coaching that is likely to make a difference to teaching and learning?

### 4.1 Coaching partnerships and coaching cycles

One of the recurring discoveries within the research project was that every school has established a unique version of coaching, regardless of the initial stimulus for coaching. However, our research evidence indicates that coaching is most productive when it is offered as a cycle rather than a one-off event. Participants find that repeat cycles can be used to home in on identified areas for development and discussion. Most coaching cycles are focused around a specific event, often a lesson, although this event may be an alternative aspect of professional practice. This guide focuses on coaching for improving teaching and learning and thus emphasis is given to lessons as professional practice.

An essential element of successful coaching is the initial establishment of the coaching partnership. Schools vary in their approach to setting up coach and coachee pairs, as indicated in the previous section. Whatever the approach, feedback from research participants indicated that when they felt a sense of 'ownership' over the process of pairing colleagues, the process got off to a more satisfactory start. There is no evidence that basing coaching on line management structures or duration of teaching experience is ideal. Indeed good coaching often exists in a non-hierarchical structure, drawing on individual teachers' interests and specific expertise. In ideal situations coaching can be seen as a democratic and inclusive component of the school community. See Figure 5 on page 17.

### 4.2 Creating a climate for coaching

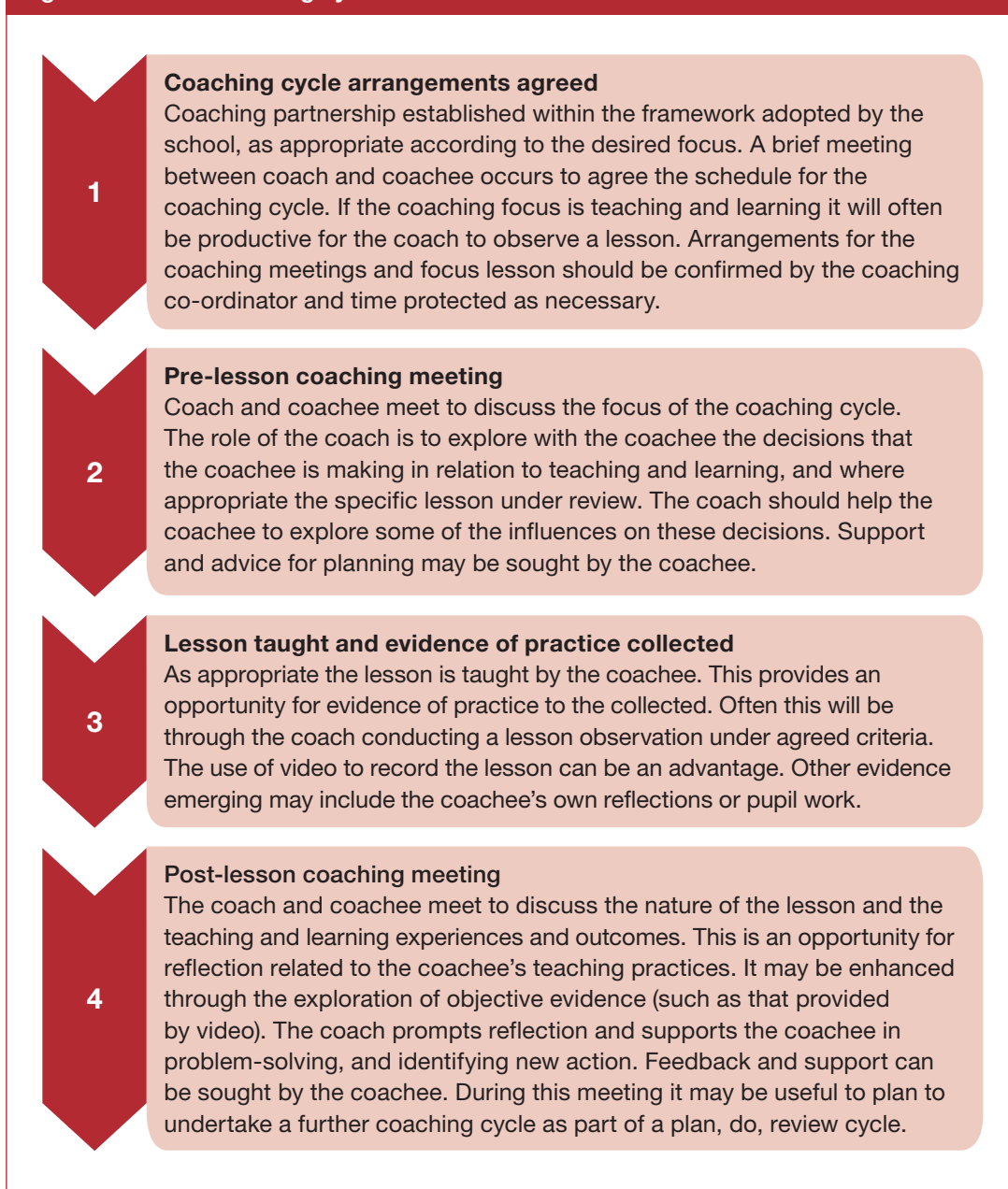
In the few schools identified in our research where coaching is systematically built into the CPD strategy and time allocated to it (within both the core timetable and directed time) coaching was found to flourish. This involved the strategic leadership of coaching by the SLT within the overall CPD strategy. It is obvious that for coaching cycles to involve the four elements shown in Figure 5 on page 17 and to include the potential for repeat cycles, significant thought must be paid to organising this within the school timetable and teachers' workloads. Schools participating in the research project had a range of successful and less successful approaches to this. The most common request from coaching participants with regard to improving coaching was the provision of additional time to undertake coaching cycles and practise the skills of coaching.

In addition to the arrangements for partnership and the need to allocate sufficient time to coaching teachers engaging in coaching need to recognise the ideal form of coaching dialogue. In broad terms they need to pay attention to the nature of the contact they are engaging in. Most significantly they should understand the need to establish trust between each other. A core element of this is the degree to which the coaching conversation is deemed to be confidential. It is essential to ensure that coaching conversations and related lesson observations do not become the substance of staffroom gossip. If there is an explicit intention that coaching helps the school to identify excellent practice worth sharing there need to be agreed mechanisms by which this can be facilitated.



*Many schools are still grappling with the core tension of the relationship between performance management and coaching.*

**Figure 5: 'Ideal' coaching cycle**



Many schools are still grappling with the core tension of the relationship between performance management and coaching. It is worth thinking very carefully about how your school will resolve this. Figure 6 on page 18 indicates the types of relationships between performance management and coaching indicated through the research.

When coaching is predominantly used to address concerns about weak teaching it is not surprising that it can become viewed unfavourably by the school community. Rather than becoming an



**Figure 6: Possible, but not entirely unproblematic, links between coaching and performance management**



opportunity for school development, if it is seen by teachers as aggressive remedial action, it will not be actively sought out. This stigma can remain for some time, meaning that even if a new model of coaching is implemented in the school teachers can be unwilling to volunteer to participate. As well as the reality it is important to deal with any myths that evolve in the school relating to the relationship between the two. However, sometimes it is necessary to recognise that there are significant issues with teaching and learning in a school, and in these contexts the significance of line management and accountability for improvement need to be clarified and communicated. If coaching is to be used within this context, its purpose as a means of ‘coaching up’ teaching performance needs to be indicated and agreed as a suitable mechanism. An important message in this context is that coaching can support teachers who genuinely wish to improve to develop their practice, and can be used to improve teaching and learning across the school as a whole. This may encourage engagement from teachers who otherwise may feel picked out for special coaching attention.

- Review questions** Are all those teachers who wish to participate in coaching able to? How is this facilitated within the timetable? Could the situation be improved?
- Review questions** In your school is the purpose of coaching clear? Is there clarity in the relationship between coaching and performance management? If not, how can this be resolved?
- Review questions** Are the most effective and respected teachers identified as both coaches and coachees in the school?



*Do we make best use of available technology to support coaching practice?*

## 5. Using video to support coaching

### Trigger question

Do we make best use of available technology to support coaching practice?

### 5.1 Practical and legal advice for use of video

While we recognise that for some teachers using video to support the coaching process is a particular challenge, there is evidence from our research that when initial anxieties have been overcome it is seen as beneficial. There is also evidence, however, that video is not used to its maximum potential.

Teachers making use of video footage of lessons should recognise that it is classified as 'personal data' under the Data Protection Act 1998. There are also implications of the use of video in relation to safeguarding requirements in schools. There may be some students for whom the school does not have permission to make video recordings. Most schools have clear policies in place in relation to the use of video-recording during lessons and watching it after lessons. If your school does not have an appropriate policy it is essential to establish this prior to making use of video for supporting coaching. This policy should act as guidance and reassurance to teachers, pupils and parents about the purpose and scope of the use of video.

Any video of teaching should be seen as in the 'ownership' of the teacher. Without their consent, it should not be used for any purposes other than to support the coaching process. The video should only be seen by the coach and coachee, and care should be taken about where video files are stored to restrict access by others. These criteria are critical in maintaining the trust upon which coaching is based. See Figure 7 on page 20.

### 5.2 The value of video

What is gained from using video depends on how it is used before and during the coaching session. The normal practice is for both the coach and coachee to watch the video prior to the post-lesson meeting. A key outcome of this can be that it acts to promote recall of the features of the lesson, which can help the coaching conversation get under way more quickly. From the teacher's perspective it gives them a unique view of their own practice, for example allowing the teacher to gain insight into how students were engaging with the lesson, allowing them to hear themselves provide instructions or explanations, and spotting individual students' behaviours or evidence of learning missed while teaching. The video also acts as an objective witness to the lesson, so can be referred to if the coach and coachee have differing memories or perceptions of the lesson. Video can also be used by the coach to watch the recording of the lesson if they are unable to observe in person, thus helping to resolve issues of timetabling lesson observations. It is also possible to use video to remind the participants of the lesson from the previous coaching cycle, thus acting to link two cycles together.

### 5.3 Improving the use of video

As already suggested, while participants report the value of using video, our analysis of coaching transcripts indicates that it is rarely used to maximum benefit. In particular the number of times



*Pupils do get used to being filmed, but you can expect it to cause some distraction on the first occasion...*

**Figure 7: Practical tips for using video for coaching**

**Ethics and legislation regarding the use of video**

- Pupils for whom there is no permission to video can usually remain in the lesson, but you need to consider where they are seated in relation to what the video will capture. Recordings of them speaking as part of the lesson are not restricted in the same way as visual images.
- Remember that you need careful consideration of privacy if you ask a technician to copy/download the footage.

**Use and limitations of video technology**

- Before using video think through the implications of using the specific technology available, and how the video footage can be stored and viewed.
- Most people find that the less obtrusive the camera is, the better – even if that compromises some of the video quality. However, the camera needs to be close enough to capture an adequate sound recording.
- Video will not capture all the details of the lesson, so it is still highly valuable for the coach to observe the lesson. Decide which elements of teaching and learning to focus the use of video on.

**Reducing the impact of video on lesson**

- Static cameras on tripods may cause less disturbance than a hand-held one, but think about whether it is necessary to move the camera around during the lesson to capture more information. Make the best use of available technology.
- Pupils do get used to being filmed, but you can expect it to cause some distraction on the first occasion; you may even decide to do a dummy run before using it for the coaching lesson.

that specific aspects of the video are played and replayed to enable close scrutiny of practice during the coaching conversation itself is limited. Coaching conversations often move with some pace, overlooking the opportunity to rewind the video and therefore re-frame the lesson experience. Essentially the video footage gives maximum potential for unpacking the lesson. It also allows the coachee to work in a more self-directed fashion to prepare for the coaching conversation.

Remember to use the video with discretion according to the focus agreed for coaching. It is the case that video will always provide more potential practice evidence than you have time to deal with in a single coaching cycle, and thus it can become a distraction from the agreed focus. Use the video in different ways when watching it before the meeting and during the coaching meeting itself. Before the meeting the coach and/or coachee may have time to replay the majority



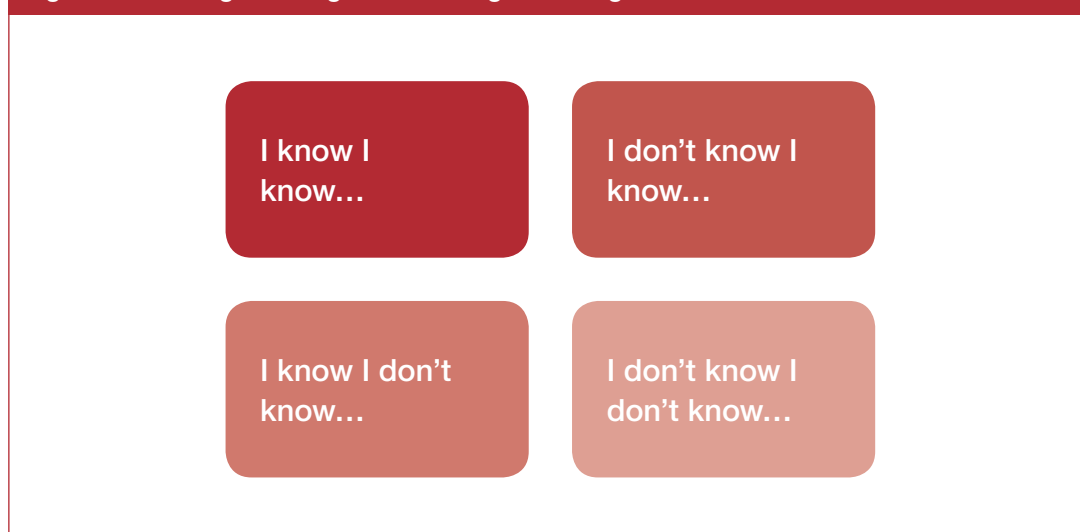
*The coaching process supports reflection on the 'unknowns', with the aim to locate more securely the coachee's practice in the 'known knowns'.*

of the lesson (although selective fast-forwarding is appropriate). This allows them to select the critical moments they may wish to discuss during coaching. During the coaching meeting itself it is best to review short focused elements of the video rather than replay long sections. Use the selected extracts as exemplars of patterns of teaching or learning behaviours, or as specific focuses for discussion about key moments of the lesson. This will help to keep the coaching meeting dynamic while making best use of the video as evidence of practice. The desired outcome of any video-based coaching techniques is making both pupils' and teachers' learning visible. This allows for greater openness in the coaching conversation, and helps both coach and coachee to develop an improved understanding of evidence of both progress in, and barriers to, learning (teachers' and pupils'). See Figure 8 below.

Exploring the relationships between things known and unknown in teachers' professional practice provides potential moments of learning in coaching. The things unknown create both opportunities and barriers in professional development. The coaching process supports reflection on the 'unknowns', with the aim to locate more securely the coachee's practice in the 'known knowns'.

Depending on the confidence of participants in using video for this kind of fine detail review it may be appropriate to provide training opportunities or chances for coaches and coachees to share their developing practice. Listed below are some techniques that could be practised by coaches and coachees to develop the use of video to support coaching. The ideas provided are not an exhaustive list, and it would be worth gathering together additional suggestions generated by the coaching participants. Using video may act as a launch pad to the next coaching 'act'. It may indicate that seeking specialist coaching to develop specific pedagogies would be of value. Overall it should increase the participants' capacity to focus on the detail of teaching and learning. The key to improving the use of video is to refine the ways in which video evidence of practice is scrutinised. Questions, feedback and challenge from the coach, based around the concrete evidence from the video, help the coachee to develop more secure professional knowledge, and a problem solving attitude. See Figure 9 on page 22.

**Figure 8: Making learning visible using coaching**





**Figure 9: Techniques for enhancing the use of video in coaching through the use of concrete evidence of practice to challenge teachers' thinking**

Before the meeting watch the video in full to determine the amount of time given to different lesson features, such as teacher talk, group work, whole class discussion, independent work. Be ready to discuss how this evidence relates to the plans for the lesson. Does the pattern have an impact on learning?

Use the video to make a record of the questions asked during the lesson by both teacher and pupils. What types of questions are they? How are they responded to? Who engages with questions? What impact do questions have on learning?

Use the video to look at pupils' questions. What do pupils' questions indicate about their learning? How much proactive questioning by pupils is stimulated during the lesson? Do pupils productively engage with their teacher and other class members?

If the coachee apparently lacks confidence in their practice use the video explicitly to identify positive features of teaching and learning, dwelling on the decisions that the teacher makes (during planning and the lesson itself) that result in positive behaviours or outcomes.

Look for critical incidents in the lesson (not necessarily negative). Use the video to replay the incident itself and identify what the triggers are that lead to it, and what the subsequent outcomes are. If the video extract is replayed more than once use each occasion to look at the events from alternative perspectives.

Focus on interaction and the nature of classroom talk: to what extent are the teacher and pupils paying close attention to each other, how receptive are they of each others' contributions, what does their body language indicate? How effectively do lesson participants take turns and support each other in contributing to the lesson?

Listen to the language being used in the lesson. How is subject terminology or 'thinking' or 'learning' language used? To what extent do the teacher and pupils mirror each other in the use of language? What impact does this have on progression during the lesson?

Use the visual evidence that is provided by the video. What movement is there around the room, how do the teachers and the pupils make use of the room itself and other resources for learning? Do pupils tend to limit their learning interactions to the pupils sitting closest to them, or are they more widely distributed in nature? Does the lesson appear inclusive in terms of engagement patterns?





*What technology is available for developing the use of video in coaching? How confident are coaches and coachees in using the technology? Is any technical support required?*

**Review questions**

What technology is available for developing the use of video in coaching? How confident are coaches and coachees in using the technology? Is any technical support required?

**Review questions**

Are the ethical issues fully understood in relation to using video? What further safeguarding procedures are needed?

**Review questions**

How sophisticated are participants in their use of video to support coaching? How can they develop their practice further? What support can be offered to the participants?



*Can we offer guidance to coaching pairs focusing on specific teaching and learning themes?*

## 6. Scaffolding coaching conversations

### Trigger question

Can we offer guidance to coaching pairs focusing on specific teaching and learning themes?

Our research demonstrated that many areas of teaching and learning practice make fruitful themes for coaching cycles. For our sample of coaches and coachees, issues related to student engagement and motivation came top of the list. These were closely followed by classroom talk, student group work, starters and plenaries, assessment for learning and behaviour for learning. Clearly while there is an overlap between these elements of teaching and learning, finding opportunities to focus on specific practices was of benefit. Feedback from research participants also indicated that they would find it useful to have prompts to support their focused discussions. An area for development in many situations is specific pedagogic knowledge to support coaching. It is the case that in ideal scenarios coaches offer their coachee genuine enthusiasm for and experience of the focus area. This allows the coaching partnership to develop a level of expertise based on sharing practice and co-enquiry through discussion and use of evidence emerging from this. It is unlikely that coaches will always feel that they have significant expertise in the area, although it is possible that acting as coach supports the development of expertise.

The development of pedagogy-specific coaching prompts may support coaching participants to focus their conversations and identify relevant practice evidence. An example is given here, on the broad theme of assessment for learning. This focuses on possible areas for discussion and types of practice evidence that might usefully be collected. At a school level a coaching development group may find it useful to construct more of these. Ideally they would act as basic templates to which coaching participants would add further ideas based on their experience. These can then become a means by which effective pedagogic knowledge and ideas for associated coaching practice are disseminated and support offered to new and established coaches.

### Example of Coaching Guide: Assessment for Learning (A4L)

#### Possible themes for discussion during coaching for A4L:

During the coaching cycle you may find the following themes for discussion useful. It is likely that one or more of these will be dovetailed with the coachee's focus for development. The list is not exhaustive.

- What are we looking for in terms of positive student response?
- What are the planning implications of A4L?
- How can we make practical strategies for A4L work to their full potential?
- What does progression look like in relation to A4L for both the teacher and the pupils?
- What specifically needs to be really understood about the subject in this context and how does A4L help?

#### What kind of evidence might be useful?

It is important to balance out a focus on **teaching** with the necessary focus on **learning** and as such the coach and coachee will particularly want to consider the lessons from the pupils'



*What are the most common teaching and learning focuses for coaching in our school? Is expertise evolving? How can this be captured and shared?*

perspective. It is not always easy to do this, and we all too often play the long game and wait for evidence of student outcomes from formal assessment opportunities. This may not always be helpful in coaching.

Alternative sources of evidence may include **talking to pupils** and **looking in detail at their work** to investigate the following questions:

- What has been understood by pupils and how does it relate to the learning objectives?
- What were the students' experiences during the A4L process and were these uniform or varied?
- What classroom dialogue (in groups or between teacher and pupils) supported the A4L process? How can this dialogue be characterised?
- How are students making sense of the information they are given and the language used in relation to A4L?

With time it may be useful to use the coaching process to add further information to the guide. For example this might include:

- **Assessment for learning principles**
- **Common misconceptions related to A4L**
- **Good practical strategies**
- **Common problems/barriers in developing practice**
- **Useful resources and how to access them**

**Review questions**

What are the most common teaching and learning focuses for coaching in our school? Is expertise evolving? How can this be captured and shared?

**Review questions**

What barriers to developing excellence in teaching and learning exist? Do teachers have gaps in their pedagogic subject knowledge? How can coaching help? What other forms of professional development could complement coaching cycles?



*How can we determine the quality and impact of the coaching conversations?*

## 7. Understanding the different dimensions of coaching talk

### Trigger question

How can we determine the quality and impact of the coaching conversations?

As coaching is a talk-based form of professional development the nature of the coaching dialogue is a critical concern if it is to be effective. Of course to improve coaching conversations, some frameworks are needed to determine the nature of the talk and a language is needed to describe and define it.

### 7.1 Introduction to the dimensions

The characteristic features of coaching conversations were a focus area of our research. Evidence from coaching transcripts indicates that this also provides a key area for developing the quality of coaching practice. Through analysis of coaching transcripts it became evident that a number of significant dimensions of coaching talk existed. These are outlined here (see Figures 10a, 10b and 10c), with an explanation of their significance and suggestions for enhancing coaching dialogue. At first these may seem complicated, but many of our research partnership teachers readily internalised them, stating that the dimensions gave them a lens through which they recognised their coaching behaviours. With time, and an opportunity to review their own coaching practice, coaches indicated that the dimensions of coaching became more familiar and accessible to them. Indeed they became a tool that coaching participants (coaches in particular) were able to make conscious use of in their efforts to improve their coaching, and a language to talk about coaching practice with.

Coachees, coaches and co-ordinators wishing to focus on coaching dimensions as a means to develop their practice may find the complete list of interaction functions useful. See Figure 11 on page 28.

### 7.2 Typical coaching patterns

Our research indicated that much coaching is routine and follows set patterns. Initiation is predominantly by the coach, and this typically involves the coach asking the coached teacher questions about how they think either the whole lesson or particular parts of it 'went', leading the coachee to explain, justify, clarify and evaluate episodes in the lessons. Often the coach then evaluates the coachee's self-evaluation. The selected episodes are frequently those parts that were the focus of discussion in the pre-lesson session, although it is rare for lesson planning and teaching to be explicitly linked through the conversation. Thus a number of lesson episodes are evaluated. There are relatively few extreme positive or negative comments. Most of the extremely negative comments come from the coached teacher where they are particularly unhappy with an aspect of the lesson. This is often balanced with positive comments from the coach. While this pattern represents a valid approach to evaluating practice, it can become repetitive and only infrequently leads to challenge or new ideas for developing practice.

### 7.3 More productive coaching discourse

As coaches and coachees become more familiar with the nature of their coaching conversations they can become more discerning participants. For example it is relatively rare that critical



Figure 10a: Dimensions of coaching conversations

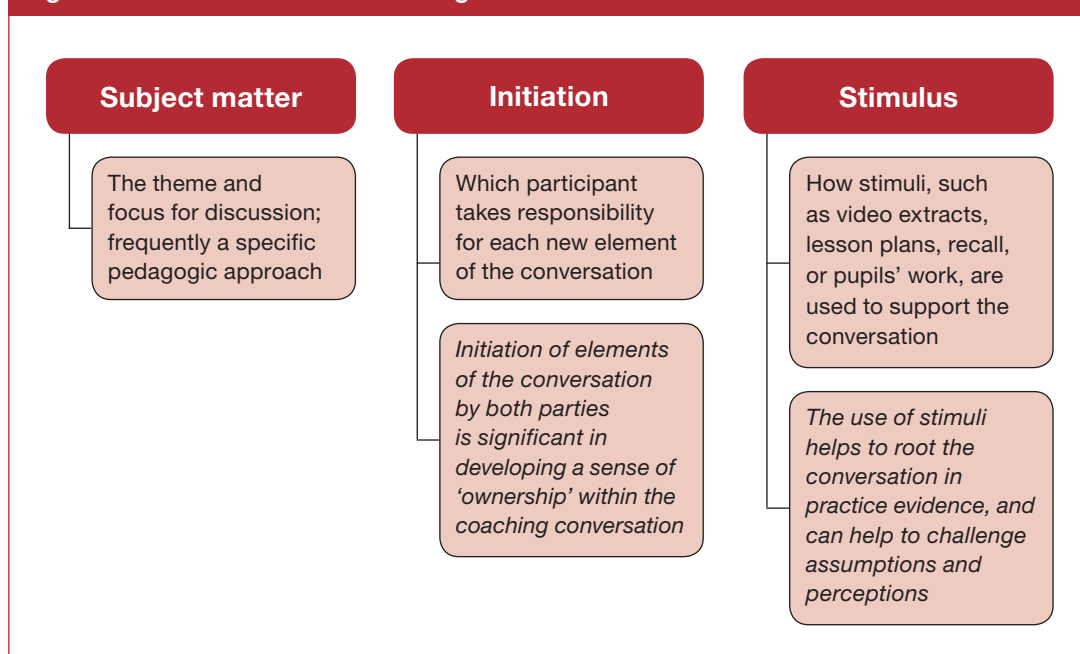


Figure 10b: Dimensions of coaching conversations

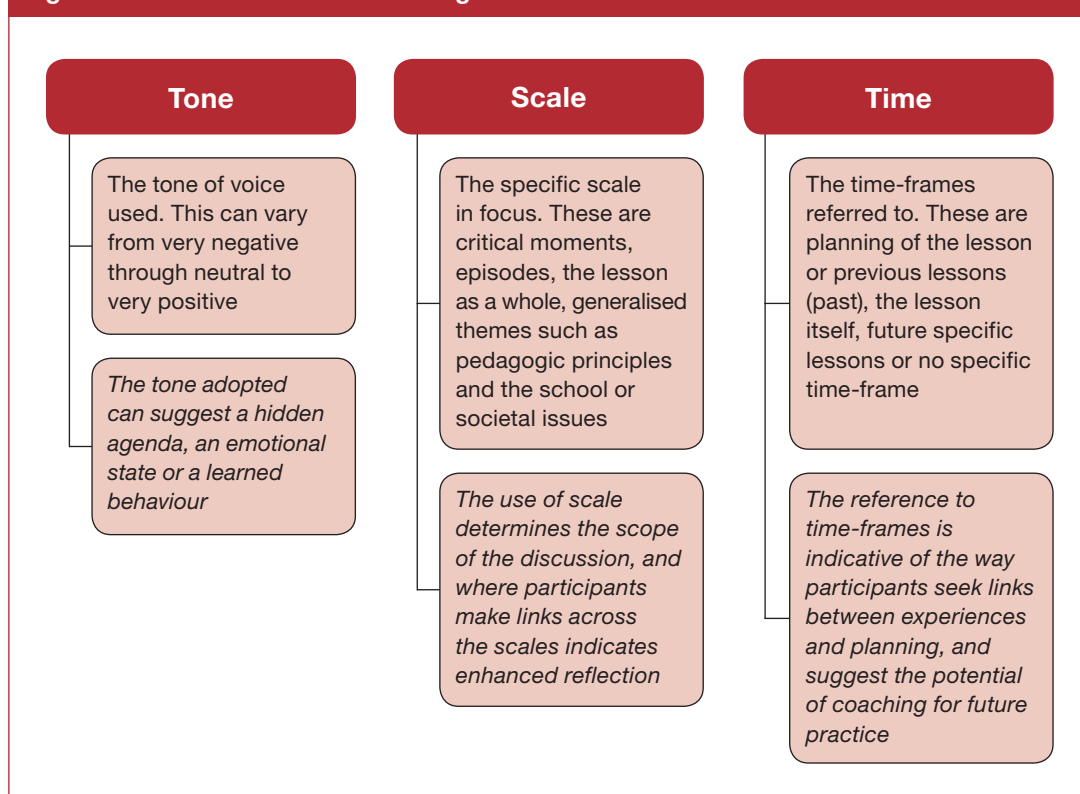




Figure 10a: Dimensions of coaching conversations

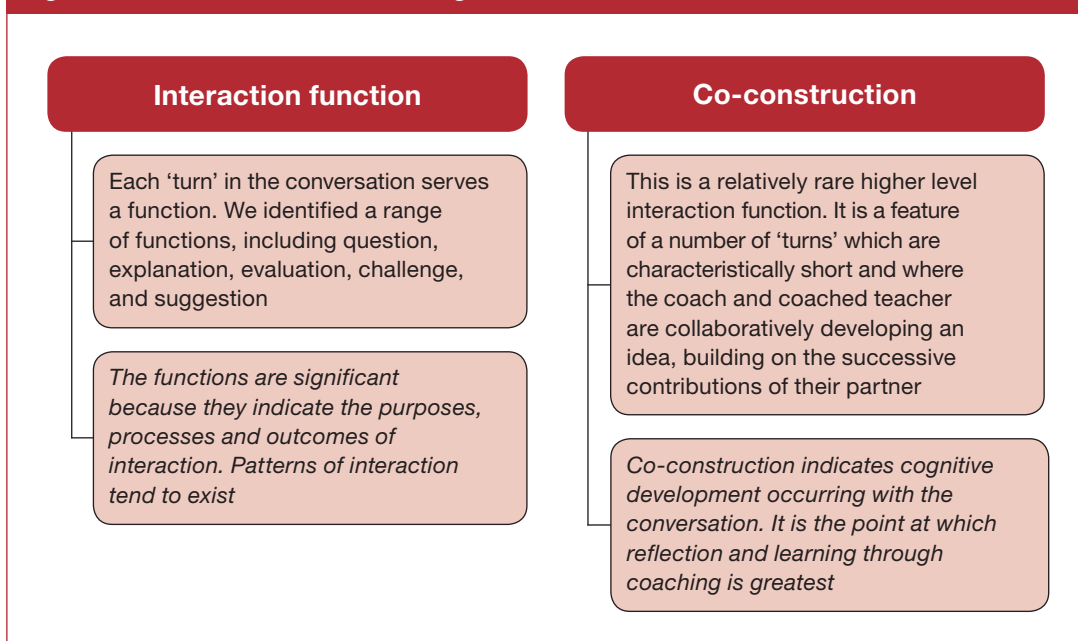
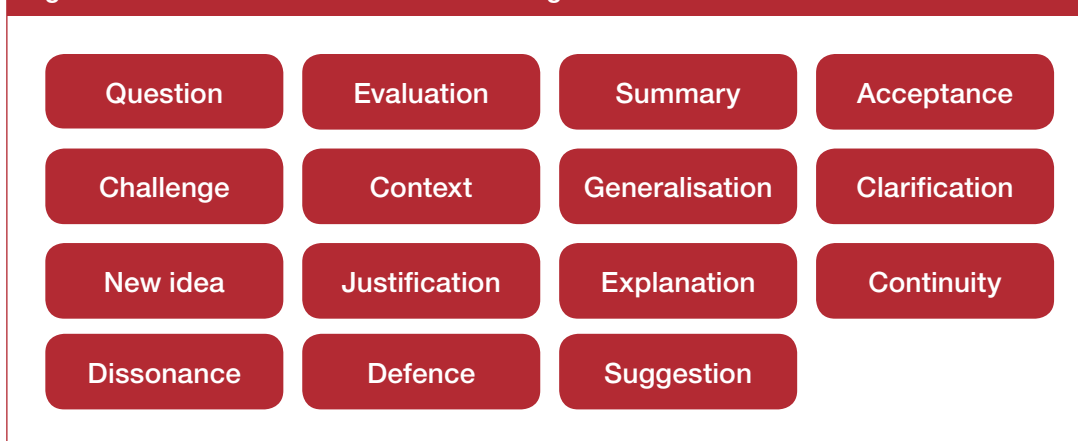


Figure 11: Interaction functions in coaching conversations



moments in lessons are identified and explored in coaching conversations, despite the fact that these are potentially powerful indicators of student learning and the impact of the teacher's pedagogic decision making. It is likely that greater scrutiny of video evidence as stimulus within the coaching conversation (for example) could lead to enhanced awareness of the critical moments in teaching and learning.

It is also the case that only a few coaches challenge their coachee. Challenge does not have to be delivered with negative connotations; indeed, using 'we' rather than 'you' can be one means by which the coach aligns themselves with their partner. Challenge is important because it demands a response. It is in the nature of the response that the coaching conversation becomes more



*How can we judge the quality of coaching conversations without infringing the confidentiality of coaching?*

productive. A response to a challenge would typically be defence, acceptance or dissonance. Dissonance is a state in which existing conceptions are challenged by experience or feedback, and as indicated in the introduction, teachers' learning is triggered when their assumptions are challenged. Dissonance might be generated 'internally' by a teacher reflecting on experience, or it can be generated 'externally' by the coach if they provide a different interpretation of events, or evidence that contradicts the coached teacher's perspective. An appropriate response to dissonance is considering how critical moments in practice are generalised to past experience and projected to future action.

#### 7.4 Co-construction

While co-construction was rarely demonstrated in the coaching transcripts, where it occurs its impact is clear. It is a potential outcome of challenge and dissonance. Co-construction is a feature of a number of conversational 'turns' which are characteristically short and where the coach and coachee are collaboratively developing an idea, building on the successive contributions of their partner. This is the point at which coaching becomes a professional knowledge-creating process, which is likely to be advantageous to both the coach and coachee. It is possible that some coaches are holding back during coaching sessions, for fear of appearing too directive in the relationship. Good coaches use their skills to prompt their partner to challenge their own practice and work together with them to develop new suggestions for teaching and learning. This leads to new action in the classroom and an opportunity to review it. Co-construction is enhanced when the coach and coachee share a language to describe different pedagogical approaches and are willing to engage in predicting possible outcomes of altered practice.

#### 7.5 Developing the use of coaching dimensions

In practical terms it is worth thinking through how your school can determine the quality of the coaching conversations being held, especially when issues of confidentiality are at stake. It seems most likely that a coaching co-ordinator working closely with coaching participants can determine strategies for diagnosing the nature of the coaching talk and supporting its development. Use of audio- or video-recording of coaching conversations for review by the participants is one possible approach, as is the use of a triad system, where an approved observer witnesses the coaching conversation and gives feedback to the participants. Another possible strategy is to establish development groups who are able to work with each other to practise coaching conversations before reflecting on or showcasing examples of their coaching within the group. Our experience through the research process suggests that focusing on coaching dimensions as a means to improve the quality of coaching is a particularly productive activity.

#### Review questions

How can we judge the quality of coaching conversations without infringing the confidentiality of coaching? Is it possible to help coaching participants become more self-aware of the quality of their conversations? Can we agree a training and development strategy for coaches?

#### Review questions

Why do few coaching conversations achieve co-construction? If co-construction is critical in coaching, can this also be developed through other approaches to teacher development in school?



*From analysing the dimensions we have determined that the most productive coaching conversations involve co-construction, but we also recognise that this is relatively rarely achieved.*

## 8. Developing the quality of coaching practice

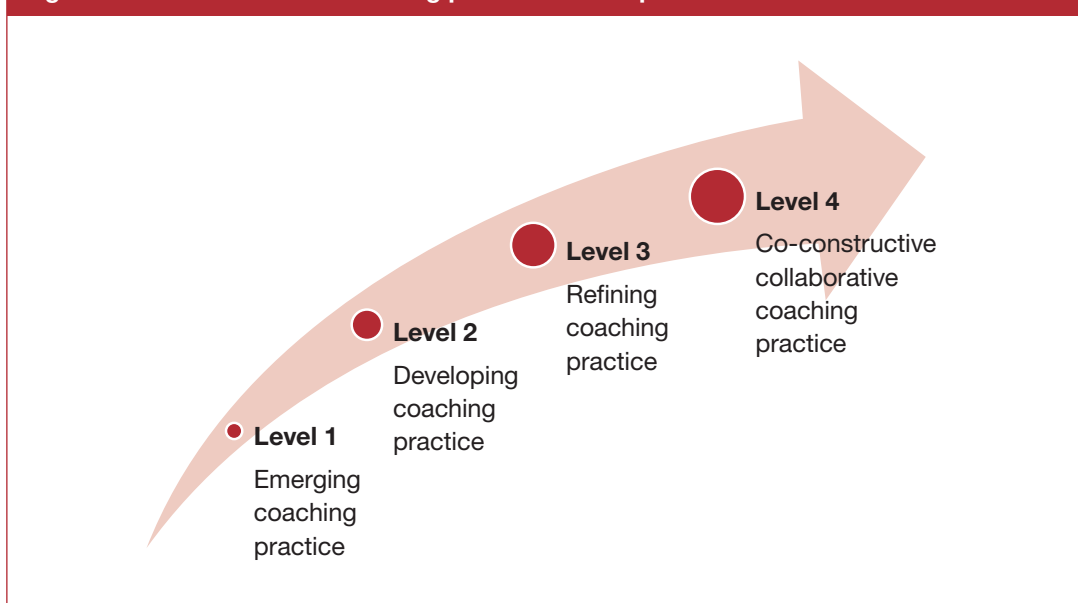
### Trigger question

How can progression in coaching practice be facilitated?

In working with teachers it became clear that in order to support them in improving coaching, a framework for understanding development in coaching practice was needed. While the dimensions provide individual descriptions of elements of coaching conversations, they do not indicate progression in practice per se. The question arises: what does progression in coaching practice look like? From analysing the dimensions we have determined that the most productive coaching conversations involve co-construction, but we also recognise that this is relatively rarely achieved. Key indicators of progression are the degree to which coaching triggers the coachee to analyse their practice critically and the extent to which reflection is prompted. The role of the coach is in scaffolding reflection, analysis and problem solving, but an ambition of the process is that once these habits become embedded the coachee achieves a degree of self-regulation. Thus four levels of coaching practice development were developed, based on analysis of transcripts of coaching conversations. These levels are indicated below in Figure 12 and in Table 1 (page 31).

Each level of coaching development can be described and aligned with the coaching dimensions. As the coach and coachee take conversational turns an effective coach will actively guide the conversation through subtle twists and turns of questions, prompts, feedback and challenges. It is at this micro-scale that the dimensions become significant. When looking for tools with which to improve coaching practice these dimensions provide a means to make progress through the four levels of coaching development. The relationship between the levels and the dimensions is illustrated in Table 1.

Figure 12: Four levels of coaching practice development







**Table 1: Levels of coaching practice development**

Description of coaching conversation	Characteristic dimensions of coaching conversation
<b>Level 1: Emerging coaching practice</b>	
<p>The coach asks questions which lead the coachee to give an account of episodes of the lesson by drawing on recall and anecdotal evidence, with a general focus on teaching. The conversation is largely descriptive. The lesson being discussed tends not to be considered in relation to wider educational contexts or the coachee's professional development or learning. However some comparison may be drawn with the coachee's past experiences.</p>	<p>Coaching is often 'led' by the coach (initiation) prompting coachee to recall elements of the lesson (stimulus). The coach's questions lead to descriptions and explanations, perhaps with some evaluation of particular practice and outcomes shared (interaction function). Discussion tends to focus on the lesson as a whole or key episodes within it (scale), and reference to former or future teaching is relatively limited (time).</p>
<b>Level 2: Developing coaching practice</b>	
<p>The coach asks the coachee to consider the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. The coachee describes the decisions they made before and during the lesson and how the pupils responded, drawing out links between teaching and learning. The coachee's wider experiences may be considered and this may lead to specific problems or issues being discussed. The coach and coachee might begin to consider the lesson in relation to the wider educational contexts or the coachee's professional development or learning.</p>	<p>Coaching triggers the coachee to start to justify their practice or the learning outcomes through clarification of intent (interaction function). This may be prompted by the coach's observation notes, video or other lesson artefacts (stimulus). Specific episodes within the lesson (scale) are related to the focus derived through the pre-lesson coaching conversation and teaching objectives which may in turn be related to previous experience (time). Suggestions (interaction function) may be made for development of practice.</p>
<b>Level 3: Refining coaching practice</b>	
<p>The coach and coachee discuss teaching and learning, making explicit use of evidence gathered during the lesson, focusing on learners' progress. The coach's questions prompt the coachee to begin to problem-solve, hypothesise and reflect on the significance of their actions or beliefs. The coach begins to challenge the coachee's assumptions about teaching and learning, leading to critical reflection and analysis of experience, knowledge and wider educational contexts.</p>	<p>The coach and coachee engage in dialogue (initiation) during which they jointly review the lesson outcomes, the coachee's reflections and/or video evidence (stimulus). Scrutiny of a range of 'evidence' at a variety of levels within and beyond the specific lesson (scales) allows them to challenge practice and begin to generalise (interaction function). Focus on future practice is productive and based on critical reflection (time and interaction function).</p>
<b>Level 4: Co-constructive collaborative coaching practice</b>	
<p>The coach and coachee collaboratively develop ideas, building on the successive contributions of their partner. There is significant focus on enhancing learning opportunities. The questions that they ask each other allow them to successfully explore their own understandings. Through reflecting on, and responding to, each others' contributions they identify alternative pedagogic approaches. This leads to exploratory talk related to opportunities for professional learning and development and the ways in which they might analyse the impact of this on pupils' progress. As such this is a knowledge-creating process.</p>	<p>Both coach and coachee are adept at navigating the conversation (initiation) so that the relationships between critical incidents, episodes, the lesson as whole and relevant pedagogical frameworks are discussed (scale). Conversation is such that the role of coach and coachee blurs as they explore practice, recognising and resolving dissonance (interaction function) so that new ideas emerge through their collaborative dialogue (co-construction). This creates a feedback loop which prompts future planning (time).</p>



*How can the level of coaching development be judged – for individuals and at a whole-school level?*

Feedback from research participants has indicated that being able to evaluate coaching practice and identify levels for development proves useful. The levels can effectively be read as success criteria. The key factor in coaching success will be that the process enhances teachers' metacognition in relation to their practice. There are a number of ways to define metacognition, and in this context it is perhaps useful to offer the following outline. Metacognition can be conceived as both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive skills. In terms of knowledge, productive coaching will aid both the teacher to develop knowledge of self, of tasks or problems and of strategies. In other words it will enhance the extent to which the teacher is confident in and critically aware of their role and their available repertoire; the pedagogical function and characteristics of the specific learning context and learners; and the range of options available to them as part of the professional decision making. In terms of metacognitive skills, productive coaching will support teachers in regulating their disposition to develop practice, their abilities in planning and reviewing the impact of teaching, and in recognising and putting into action ongoing refinements.

To be really productive the coachee needs to take a very proactive approach to the conversation, seeking the support and challenge that a coach can provide. This increasingly proactive approach may be a symptom of greater metacognitive awareness and a sign that the reflective discourse is being internalised. The coach should also be prepared to have their assumptions challenged. The upper level of the coaching practice development framework also reminds us that effective coaches are likely to gain as much from the coaching process as their coachees. When it works well both participants gain genuine opportunities to reflect on their own practice and draw on a range of evidence and stimulus to develop contextualised knowledge about teaching and learning, which can then be fed back into practice. This is what is meant by collaborative co-constructive practice (level 4).

In addition to offering opportunities for coaches to reflect on their own teaching it is also the case that acting as a coach is in itself a powerful leadership development process; recognising that improving teaching and learning is a key function of school leadership. Effective coaching practices therefore support capacity building for school leadership and improvement.

**Review questions**

How can the level of coaching development be judged – for individuals and at a whole-school level? To what extent are the levels and the related characteristic dimensions useful in this process?

**Review questions**

How can individuals be supported in using coaching to enhance the generation and sharing of teaching craft knowledge? How can we support coaching participants to become more strategic and co-constructive in their coaching conversations?



*How can the potential tensions in developing coaching practice be mediated through effective leadership and management?*

## 9. Leading and sustaining coaching

### Trigger question

How can the potential tensions in developing coaching practice be mediated through effective leadership and management?

For coaching to be anything other than a minority affair demands vision, joined-up strategic thinking and effective leadership. Our research indicates that those schools in which coaching has become embedded create a leadership and management structure focused on enabling access to coaching for those who want it and providing effective training and support for coaches. Creating a post of coaching co-ordinator who acts as part of the senior leadership team, or as a mediator between the SLT and coaching participants proved to be advantageous.

The key research outcomes related to leadership and management of coaching, which schools are likely to find useful to reflect upon in relation to their own context, are outlined below.

### 9.1 Coaching as evolution not revolution

Establishing successful coaching appears to happen in phases and in the longer rather than the immediate term. Planning for coaching needs to link to school improvement, and should be sensitive to changes in the teaching and learning environment and teachers' emerging competencies. Good practice may mean allowing coaching to develop and extend organically through networks for the dissemination of success stories within the school. Coaching may also be seen as an evolutionary process in terms of the need for a long-term plan for training and development of coaches in order to maximise capacity and sustain expertise and growth. It only takes one or two key people to leave a school for a newly or poorly embedded coaching initiative to collapse.

There needs to be time for coaching to be built into the school timetable and directed time and appropriate finance to fund this if coaching is to thrive. Schools may find this most achievable if this resource relates to either departmental goals or staff development goals. Clear lines of responsibility in terms of managing the coaching time and budget allocation need to be established. Without these elements coaching will always be peripheral and not enshrined or sustained in school culture and structure.

### 9.2 Balancing the needs of the individual and the institution

Coaching has the potential to support the needs both of individual teachers and of the school as a whole, but only if managed appropriately and sensitively. Allowing participants to select their focus is one way of addressing this, and does not automatically mean a departure from school development priorities. The other significant issue when balancing the needs of both teachers and schools is the extent to which performance management and coaching are linked. Our research suggests that there should be an 'opt in' underlying this relationship. Staff may be advised that they can opt to introduce performance management targets into the coaching process if they wish to, rather than it being obligatory. The relationship can also be reversed, where coaching cycles are referred to in performance management cycles. Where the purpose and form of the relationship between the two are 'owned' by the participants rather than dictated by the system there is likely to be a more productive outcome.



*School leaders also need to pay attention to the practice of coaching if it is to be successful, and not leave these elements entirely to the participants to develop.*

### 9.3 Qualitative outputs

Schools will need some means by which to judge the outcomes of coaching. Indicators of coaching outcomes and success need to be identified that align with the subjective and complex nature of coaching work itself. Examples may include the development of in-house coaching guides. Evidence of new pedagogic knowledge and ideas for practice might also be found in teaching plans, departmental minutes and other shared evidence of good practice and learning resources. In order to ensure that coaching quality is able to improve over time it is also essential that there are clear lines of responsibility in terms of monitoring coaching practice without compromising teachers' privacy within the coaching framework.

### 9.4 Supporting the practical demands of coaching

Throughout this guide some attention has been paid to the practical demands of coaching, and these are also indicated above in terms of scheduling it and making an appropriately planned and resourced coaching offer to teachers. School leaders also need to pay attention to the practice of coaching if it is to be successful, and not leave these elements entirely to the participants to develop. For example it makes a big difference if policies related to the use of videoing in coaching are in place, with appropriate permissions sought. If a school leader explains what is happening to technical support staff, and allocates time in their workload to support the setting up of cameras and processing of video files, that also smoothes the way, and avoids multiple uncoordinated requests arriving in their inboxes. Some schools choose to develop a coaching contract which reinforces the confidential nature of the coaching process itself and states clearly the roles and responsibilities taken on by coach, coachee and school leaders. Such contracts often also highlight the potential relationships between coaching and performance management, but stress that this link is generated by the coachee if they choose it to be.

### 9.5 Prioritising high quality coaching

School leaders working with the coaching co-ordinator have a responsibility for ensuring that any resource dedicated to coaching leads to high quality experiences. This is related to the qualitative outcomes discussed above, but also relates to the nature of the experience for the participants. Providing adequate training for coaches, bringing them together to review practice (remembering the confidential nature of the conversations that they are having), and giving a voice to the teachers who are coached are essential elements in creating successful coaching. If there is evidence that coaching is slipping into cosy chatting then it is time for an overhaul.

The four levels of coaching outlined in section 8 provide a means to work on developing the quality and impact of coaching. This may mean audio- or video-recording some coaching sessions for review (with the permission of both participants). The more that is shared about the practices of coaching the more accessible good quality coaching becomes to all. Some schools opt for a triad system – with an observer sitting in on some coaching sessions to provide feedback to the participants.

### 9.6 Strategic planning of coaching within CPD

A final key component of the leadership and management of coaching is its position and role in overall CPD provision and development. Coaching can be an effective way to make best use of in-school good practice, both in terms of developing teachers as coaches, and also in discovering the untapped gems of classroom practice. All schools now align their CPD with school



*What have we learned about ourselves as school leaders, and the school culture in relation to facilitating teacher learning through the development of coaching practice?*

development priorities, and coaching can support this process. What should not be lost in doing so however are the unique opportunities and qualities of coaching as being owned and directed by the participants. If they are genuinely offered an opportunity to develop enhanced practice through coaching (not just a vehicle through which somebody else's agenda is peddled), coaching becomes a source of creativity in practice and school-contextualised knowledge generation. Finally, part of the strategic alignment of coaching and CPD is the issue of sustainability. Planning for the development and availability of coaching needs to be both medium and long term. A coherent sustainable coaching programme can provide continuity of approach and development in ever-changing school environments – but only if is planned for.

**Review questions**

How can we develop an effective co-ordination and leadership structure to enable coaching practice to evolve and succeed, which can be sustained in the longer term?

**Review questions**

What have we learned about ourselves as school leaders, and the school culture in relation to facilitating teacher learning through the development of coaching practice?



*What coached teachers and their coaches are doing (at the upper levels of development) is exploring and clarifying the relationships between their values, knowledge and practice.*

## 10. Conclusions

Working on coaching for teacher development in schools is worth the effort, but to do it well school leaders and coaching participants need to pay attention to the detail of its practice and purpose. In doing so, they can create new opportunities for the cross-pollination of ideas and the enhanced understanding of the role of professional knowledge in teachers' practice. Coaching can be seen as supported self-work. What coached teachers and their coaches are doing (at the upper levels of development) is exploring and clarifying the relationships between their values, knowledge and practice. This is not a philosophical debate but draws on concrete evidence to provide challenge and feedback into the system.

Good coaching encourages teachers to become more reflective, articulate, exploratory and metacognitive in relation to their work and its impact on learners. As such they are more aware of themselves and their capacities as teachers, more knowledgeable about the activity of teaching and the processes of learning, and more confident to deploy a wide pedagogic repertoire suited to the job. They also develop heightened metacognitive skills of planning, monitoring and refining, all of which ensure that teaching quality keeps improving.

Teachers and coaches need appropriate tools to help them to develop coaching practice. These include the use of video, the development of coaching guides for specific pedagogies, a language to describe dimensions of coaching, an opportunity to recognise these and a framework and means by which coaching quality can be developed over time. School leaders need to understand that coaching needs support and adequate resourcing if it is to achieve maximum impact; they need to develop an approach which is appropriate to the school context and the needs of individuals. Using the structure of this guide as a step-by-step guide may help this process.

Perhaps the most important message is that coaching does not offer a quick fix; instead it provides a vehicle for change through evolution, not revolution.



## 11. References and further sources of information

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