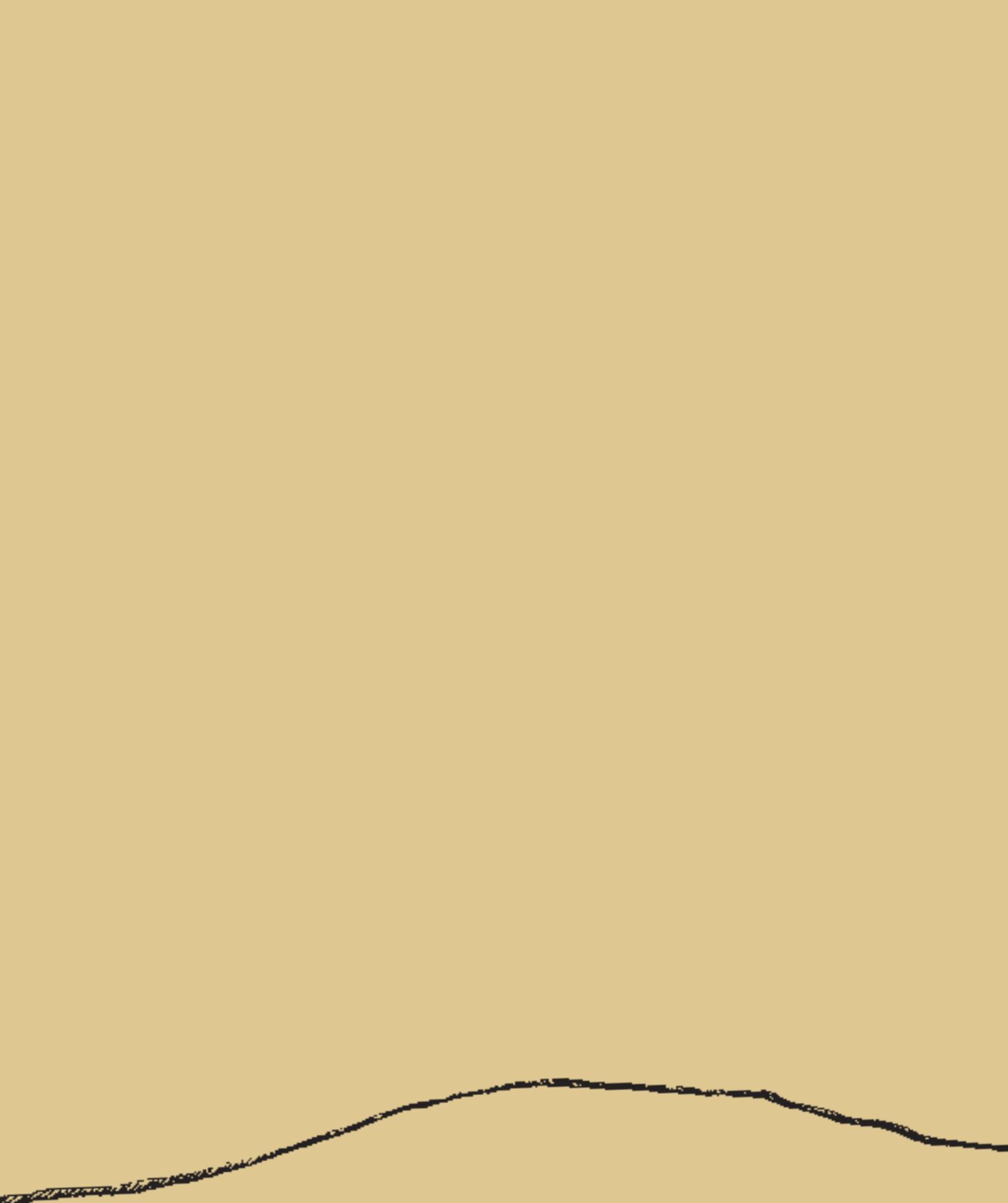


www.ncsl.org.uk

Leading Coaching in Schools



Leading Practice Seminar Series



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Introduction

Coaching seems to be everywhere at the moment. Not only is it gaining a higher profile at national policy level, its use is growing in professional and school development. This workbook aims to help school leaders make sense of coaching theory and develop approaches to coaching in their schools.

Given the increasing trend for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, it would be surprising if professional development for the adults in schools did not place a similar emphasis on self-direction. There is also a fast-growing appreciation of the power of effective individualised support in the form of coaching or mentoring, and for collaborative forms of learning. Indeed, the value placed on such learning relationships by school leaders and teachers at all stages of their careers has led to the integration of coaching, mentoring and collaborative learning within many professional development programmes, from initial teacher training to headship preparation and leadership development.

There is strong evidence that coaching promotes learning and builds capacity for change in schools. Two extensive studies (Cordingley, Bell et al, 2003, 2005) into effective continuing professional development (CPD) point clearly to the value of teachers learning with and from one another. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) recognised that plenty of mentoring, coaching and associated CPD was already occurring in schools, and commissioned the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) to collate knowledge about the features and practice of effective coaching and mentoring within educational professional development. The resulting National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching provides the foundation for this workbook.



About this workbook

This workbook seeks to:

- set coaching and mentoring in the context of other educational developments
- explore underpinning principles for the successful sustained practice of coaching
- outline key elements of coaching practice
- identify implications for school leaders, most notably issues around culture, behaviour and practicalities in school systems, structures and processes
- offer working illustrations from schools
- provide some challenges and practical ways forward for school leaders who wish to develop their work in embedding a coaching culture in schools

A range of resources associated with the workbook can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

This workbook draws on:

- EPPI and CUREE studies of CPD and coaching
- coaching perspectives from outside education
- a number of NCSL Leading Practice seminars
- our own accumulated experience and practice in leadership development
- the work of school leaders who are deeply committed to embedding coaching practices in their schools

Propositions

This workbook is based on six propositions about the role of school leaders.

- Leaders have a moral responsibility to promote everyone's learning, both adults and pupils.
- Leaders have a moral imperative to develop the next generation of school leaders.
- High-quality coaching in schools supports professional development, leadership sustainability and school improvement.
- Leaders therefore have a responsibility for providing the processes, structures and resources to support coaching.
- Central to these propositions is the role of learning conversations, which make tacit knowledge explicit and engages staff in open and honest feedback.
- Leaders should model the dialogue and personal approaches that create a culture of high-quality coaching interactions across the school.

Seven action implications

What should school leaders do in response to these propositions?

Not only does this workbook provide a rationale for coaching and examples of interesting practice from schools¹, it also offers structured support for leaders who wish to embed coaching practices throughout the school. These are grouped under seven “**action implications**”.

1. To develop a system, first develop yourself.
2. Make sense of the whole.
3. Create systems.
4. Focus on principles.
5. Equip staff with coaching skills.
6. Review and reward good coaching practice.
7. Use and build external links and networks.

A challenging agenda of initiatives

Recognition of the importance of professional development has never been higher. School leaders are responding to a variety of highly significant initiatives around teaching, learning and school organisation. Viewed separately, these might appear to create a highly complex set of agendas. However, there are common threads across these developments. We believe that school leaders who invest time in developing coaching help staff to see the complementary nature of these initiatives, and so derive greater value from them.

The DfES CPD Strategy is a recognition of the importance of professional development and teacher learning in promoting high standards of pupil learning. In common with other agencies, the DfES has sought to develop this strategy on the basis of evidence.

The strategy draws on the review by EPPI, which considered the impact of collaborative continuing professional development on classroom practice. The review identified a range of benefits:

- improved learning for pupils
- clear focus on pupil learning
- increased self-efficacy: teachers felt they could make a difference
- increased motivation
- willingness to take risks
- deeper commitment to accessing research and evidence regularly



¹A number of short case studies of schools that have worked extensively on coaching that are referred to in this workbook are provided on the NCSL website www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching. This workbook also references case studies developed by CUREE for the DfES www.curee-paccts.com/dynamic/curee40.jsp?m=46#K-P

The EPPI review showed that these benefits were linked with CPD that provides:

- opportunities for collaboration with both peers and experts
- observation, feedback and shared interpretation of classroom experiences
- processes to encourage, extend and structure professional reflection and dialogue
- sustained programmes that enable teachers to embed new practices in their own context
- scope for teachers to identify their own starting points based on their own analysis of both their own and their pupils' learning needs

The approaches to coaching that we explore here are designed to exhibit all of these characteristics.

National strategies

The Primary National Strategy and Key Stage 3 National Strategy both have specific leadership dimensions. Both strategies emphasise the importance of collaborative professional development, peer support between teachers and school leaders, and professional dialogue linked to modelling, action and review. Indeed, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy Guide for School Leaders (DfES, 2004) stresses the importance of creating time for staff to learn together as a principle of school improvement, and the Primary National Strategy provides cover time for leadership teams to work and learn together.

Headteacher standards and learning-centred leadership

The revised headteacher standards are designed to provide guidance on the expectations of headteachers and provide a framework for professional learning. They place emphasis on the development of others, on building a collaborative learning culture in the school, and on finding ways to ensure that work is focused on pupil learning and achievement. The identification of ways in which school leaders impact on pupil learning has been the subject of extensive research activity by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), which has resulted in two suites of materials on learning-centred leadership. www.ncsl.org.uk/lcl

This research, like the work on distributed leadership and growing tomorrow's leaders, has clearly demonstrated the significance of leaders employing coaching approaches and developing a culture of 'learning conversations' to support pupil learning.

Developing leadership capacity: growing tomorrow's leaders

The arguments for investing in the development of others emerge from a number of different strands of NCSL work; for example, the extensive work around widely distributed leadership capacity, and the identification and development of leaders for the future². Whether it is the realisation that leadership needs to be shared widely in the complex and demanding context of school leaders, or the quest to ensure that there are sufficient future leaders in the system to secure succession when the current generation moves on, there is remarkable convergence about the importance of coaching.

² Details of these can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/distributedleadership; www.ncsl.org.uk/research_and_development/research_activities/randd-capacity-index.cfm; www.ncsl.org.uk/researchpublications

Teachers' pay and review: the work of STRB

The DfES Five Year Strategy indicates that career progression and rewards should be directly linked to those teachers who contribute most to pupil learning, develop their own expertise and develop the practice and skill of colleagues. In the most recent remit for the School Teachers' Review Body, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has indicated a desire to see coaching and mentoring become an embedded part of professional practice, with teachers being self-directed in their learning, and with focused and supported observations as part of the coaching culture. In parallel with the developments in coaching, teacher appraisals will become teaching and learning reviews.

Transforming the School Workforce

The overarching aim of the Transforming the School Workforce (TSW) programme is to improve the recruitment, retention, quality and status of all members of the school workforce. The focus is on developing a school workforce that has the professionalism, teamwork and leadership to deliver further rapid and sustainable improvements in standards. The initiative seeks to do this by, in part, ensuring that our teachers are using cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning, are working effectively in teams with other teachers and support staff, and are committed to their own professional development. Whilst there is little explicit attention to them, coaching and mentoring must play a key role if this process is to be successful.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/la/capacitybuilding/beacons/r5/tsw/?version=1

Personalised learning

Coaching is not confined to the adults in the school. For many, the personalisation agenda is an expression of beliefs they have held about learning and student entitlement for some time. Some of the best personalised and individualised approaches are founded on good early years and primary practice. Schools that have highly developed approaches to assessment for learning and the use of learning mentors and peer coaching for pupils will be practised in the area of individualised support, together with the emphasis on learning relationships, high-quality listening and questioning, modelling and learner responsibility that these approaches imply. Indeed, all these approaches have informed the development of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy.

www.ncsl.org/mediastore/image2/randd-personalised-learning-individuals.pdf

Understanding coaching in schools

What is coaching?

There is no single, straightforward answer to this question. Coaching takes many forms: from life coaching to executive coaching – the aims, purposes and practices can be quite different. Our response to this question is guided by NCSL Leading Practice seminars and work with a number of schools and school leaders who are steeped in coaching endeavours.

It is also important to acknowledge the study conducted by CUREE that led to the National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching. Their work set out to identify and summarise the core principles of mentoring and coaching from a wide range of activity and contexts in order to produce a common reference point for practitioners. It also clarifies how the knowledge and skills developed as coaches or mentors in one context might be built on and applied in another context.

We know from CUREE's (2005) study that coaching is increasingly popular within schools in England as both an important part of CPD and as a vehicle for distributing leadership.

Although the terms coaching and mentoring are often used interchangeably, the evidence from the CUREE (2005) research suggests that:

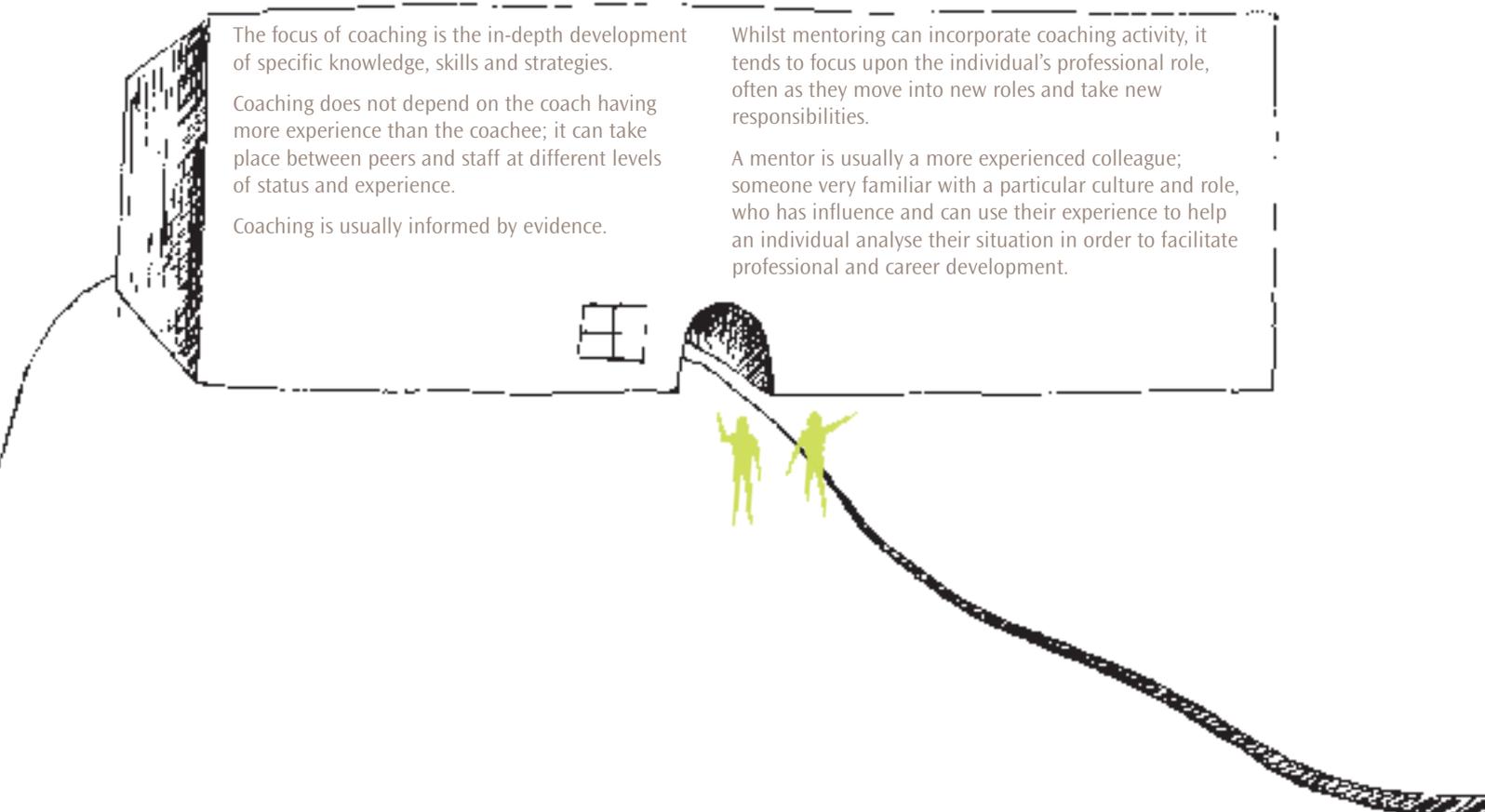
The focus of coaching is the in-depth development of specific knowledge, skills and strategies.

Coaching does not depend on the coach having more experience than the coachee; it can take place between peers and staff at different levels of status and experience.

Coaching is usually informed by evidence.

Whilst mentoring can incorporate coaching activity, it tends to focus upon the individual's professional role, often as they move into new roles and take new responsibilities.

A mentor is usually a more experienced colleague; someone very familiar with a particular culture and role, who has influence and can use their experience to help an individual analyse their situation in order to facilitate professional and career development.



The National Framework for Coaching and Mentoring offers definitions and comparison of mentoring, specialist and collaborative coaching. (See www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching)

Although our focus in this workbook is on coaching, much of it also applies to mentoring³.

At a whole-school level, coaching may be framed as a dedicated initiative for professional development and school improvement or be an element within other initiatives such as Investors in People, Assessment for Learning, performance management or CPD more generally.

Whilst it takes many different forms, coaching is principally a joint enterprise in which one person supports another to develop their understanding and practice in an area defined by their own needs and interests. The coach will help the learner to identify a clear focus upon which to work. They will secure a positive rapport with their colleague, listen intently to their needs and concerns, ask probing questions that help clarify the area for development and ask challenging questions that raise their awareness of the issue in focus. The coach will help the learner identify new behaviours and help them embed improved performance. Coaching often involves integrating new or alternative approaches into the professional's existing repertoire of skills and strategies.

Coaching interactions of this nature can be short informal learning conversations, as well as longer, sustained and formally structured CPD opportunities. Although informal, such conversations are most effective when driven by clear principles that are linked to action.

In a recent NCSL Leading Practice seminar, Richard Boyatzis offered research evidence to show that tapping into people's passion and dreams is a crucial first step in motivating the change process. Like Neil Suggett, Headteacher of Hayes Park Primary School, we believe that:

"Coaching is about unlocking potential in order to maximise performance – it's about bringing out the best in people."

In order to achieve this within an environment in which there are also strong accountabilities, it is important that coaching is an appreciative process that builds upon people's desires and aspirations. This does not mean that tough professional issues are avoided or the rigour of professional development compromised.

The CUREE (2005) study showed that the following are important in securing rigour:

- the attitude to professional learning of all participants in coaching and mentoring partnerships
- the degree of self-awareness of coaching partners
- the protocols surrounding coaching

We address each of these later.

³ The website www.coachingnetwork.org.uk provides a helpful discussion about a range of subjects, including the differences between coaching and mentoring.

Coaching and emotional intelligence

Until very recently, most work in the field of coaching took place outside education. Coaching for senior staff is common in a number of business fields. In many of these developments, the influence of the sporting model of coaching has been apparent. Yet, as Sir John Whitmore⁴ states, there is very little coaching in sport – what passes for sports coaching is often instruction.

Instead, he sees coaching as a ‘means of helping people uncover and bring out the best in themselves, their people and the teams with whom they work’. This resonates with the work of Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Anne McKee (Goleman et al, 2002) who have been highly influential in describing and drawing links between emotional intelligence and performance.

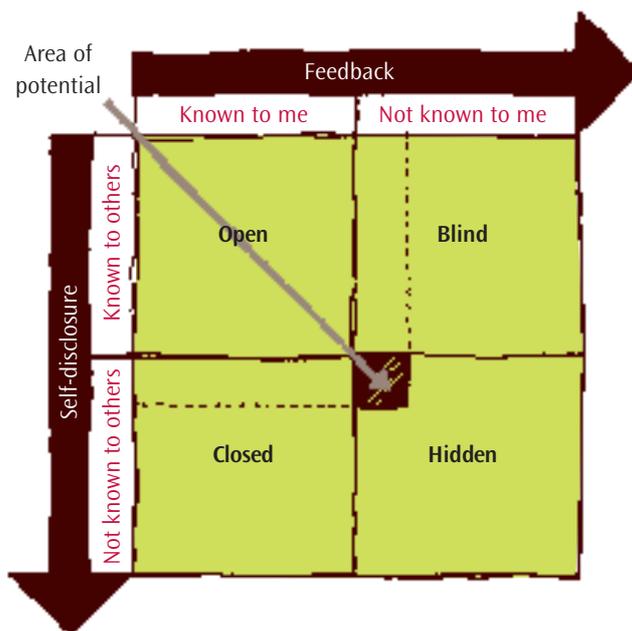
John Whitmore claims the following.

- Emotional intelligence (EQ) is an attitude, a way of being.
- Coaching is a behaviour, the practice of EQ.
- Both are invaluable life skills which can be developed.

Coaching is the practice of emotional intelligence – both are invaluable life skills.

He sees the two key principles of coaching as **raising awareness** and **taking responsibility**. Both these notions are further explored in this workbook.

By rooting the work of a coach in the dimensions of emotional intelligence, Whitmore argues that, for a coach to be successful, it is necessary to have a good awareness of self. Only then can the coach begin to build an awareness of others. In NCSL’s Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH), co-coaching draws on the Johari Window to help develop greater self-knowledge, bringing more of what is hidden into awareness and offering the potential for new behaviour.



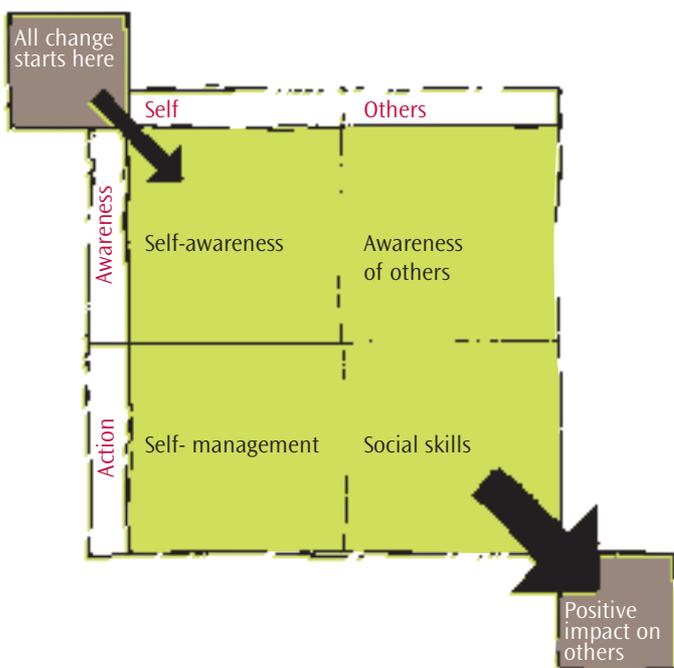
- Change comes through people’s actions.
- We cannot or should not seek to re-bake people.
- They cannot change unless they are aware.
- Confronting unawareness can be a gift.⁵

The combination of self-awareness and self-management leads to the social skills needed for coaching.

⁴ Author of ‘Coaching for Performance (Whitmore, 2002)’ and contributor to our first Leading Practice seminar on the subject.

⁵ With acknowledgement to Robert Wilson.

Four quadrants of EQ



This model goes some way towards explaining why coaches derive as much benefit from the experience of coaching as the learners. Acting as a coach helps develop both your emotional intelligence and professional skills. Indeed CUREE's work showed that:

*"It is widely accepted that the opportunity to learn through becoming a mentor or coach has a dramatic and positive effect on the skills of the mentor or coach. This is not yet systematically exploited in CPD plans, except within a few schools active in ITT. **Learning to be a coach or mentor is one of the most effective ways of enabling teachers or leaders to become good and excellent practitioners**; current practice appears to concentrate the opportunity amongst those who already excel."*

(CUREE, 2005, p.7)



A National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching

Grounded in evidence from research, the National Framework offers 10 principles that will inform coaching programmes in schools and help increase their impact on student learning. These principles explore the characteristics of effective professional learning relationships, and apply equally to mentoring and coaching.

Ten Principles - A National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching

<p>A learning conversation structured professional dialogue, rooted in evidence from the professional learner's practice, which articulates existing beliefs and practices to enable reflection on them</p>	<p>Acknowledging the benefits to the mentors and coaches recognising and making use of the professional learning that mentors and coaches gain from the opportunity to mentor or coach</p>
<p>Setting challenging and personal goals identifying goals that build on what learners know and can do already, but could not yet achieve alone, whilst attending to both school and individual priorities</p>	<p>Combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists collaborating with colleagues to sustain commitment to learning and relate new approaches to everyday practice; seeking out specialist expertise to extend skills and knowledge and to model good practice</p>
<p>A thoughtful relationship developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep professional learning</p>	<p>Experimenting and observing creating a learning environment that supports risk-taking and innovation and encourages professional learners to seek out direct evidence from practice</p>
<p>Understanding why different approaches work developing understanding of the theory that underpins new practice so it can be interpreted and adapted for different contexts</p>	<p>Growing self-direction an evolving process in which the learner takes increasing responsibility for their professional development as skills, knowledge and self-awareness increase</p>
<p>A learning agreement establishing confidence about the boundaries of the relationship by agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability</p>	<p>Using resources effectively making and using time and other resources creatively to protect and sustain learning, action and reflection on a day-to-day basis</p>

Effective coaching is dependent on the learner's willingness to be open and honest and to put their plans into action. The National Framework sets out the requirements for learners as well as coaches. Key responsibilities for learners include:

- understanding their own learning needs
- reflecting on their own practice
- taking an increasingly active role in their own learning
- acting on what is learned to improve pupil learning

What skills are needed?

What skills and qualities should coaches have in order to respond to the challenges of supporting professional learning?

A coach learns to make their knowledge and expertise accessible to professional learners through active listening and skilled questioning rather than through instruction.

Coaching practice in schools is built on four essential qualities:

- a desire to make a difference to student learning
- a commitment to professional learning
- a belief in the abilities of colleagues
- a commitment to developing emotional intelligence

The headteacher and other school leaders have an important role to play in promoting everyone's desire to make a difference to student learning and their commitment to their own and others' professional learning. We talk more about this later.

Coaching is grounded in five key skills:

- establishing rapport and trust
- listening for meaning
- questioning for understanding
- prompting action, reflection and learning
- developing confidence and celebrating success

A more detailed range of skills for coaching is described in the National Framework. See www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching



Developing rapport and trust between the coach and learner is an essential precondition of effective coaching. In structured coaching sessions, being clear about the confidential nature of the dialogue and the learner's ownership of the process are important starting points. Good coaches develop a feel for when to listen and when to ask the right questions. Through practice, they understand when to support and when to challenge. They help learners to diagnose need, design options, experiment with behaviour and consolidate success.

Coaching at Hayes Park Primary

Hayes Park Primary School has a well-established culture of coaching. Its senior coach believes that coaching works best when the coach:

- is very focused and is able to relate continually each stage of the activity back to the learner's goal
- is a good listener and can pick up the nuances of the learner's talk
- is patient and a good judge of when to ask a question and how to ask it
- can formulate questions in response to the discussion with the learner
- can rephrase questions and prompts when there is a silence
- avoids putting forward answers
- avoids preset questions

In successful coaching, both the coach and learner take responsibility for ensuring that new, and improved, practice ensues. It is also important that successes are celebrated. In addition to promoting the value of coaching as a form of professional learning, this communicates successful practice to other staff who may wish to experiment with the innovation in their own area.

How are these skills developed?

Coaching skills are best developed through practice throughout one's career. For some purposes, a basic awareness of coaching skills, curiosity and a willingness to learn will be sufficient for success. In some circumstances, a specialist knowledge of pedagogy or curriculum will be essential, whilst at other times, deep understanding of the coaching process will be the critical element.

There will be a range of opportunities to draw on, for instance:

- career mentoring and practice coaching in initial teacher education
- the coaching roles of ASTs and Strategy Consultants
- the school based coaches in NCSL's Leading from the Middle programme
- the co-coaching work in the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads

All these, plus many other coaching and mentoring courses, can be used to develop coaching in the school and support the career development of staff. **Action implication 5** provides further examples.

Expert coaches are not manufactured simply by attending a number of dedicated training days. Becoming an expert coach is an ongoing career-long commitment to one's own and others' professional learning.

What does a coach do?

First and foremost, a coach will have the ability to form and sustain learning relationships. In the NCSL publication *Leadership Development and Personal Effectiveness* (West-Burnham and Boyatzis 2005)⁶, John West-Burnham argues that leadership development is rooted in such relationships. To achieve these, coaches need to:

- establish high levels of trust
- be consistent over time
- offer genuine respect
- be honest, frank and open
- challenge without threat

Important as the relationship is, it is equally important that the coach holds on to the notions of developing awareness and responsibility in the learner. It is worthwhile, therefore, reminding ourselves of what coaching is not.

⁶ *Leadership Development and Personal Effectiveness* (West-Burnham, 2006) is an NCSL publication, developed from the Leading Practice seminar entitled 'Understanding the Emotional Dimensions of Leadership' (2004), which was led by Richard Boyatzis and John West-Burnham. The publication draws on the work of both Boyatzis and West-Burnham.

Coaching is not about:

- giving answers or advice
- making judgements
- offering counselling
- creating dependency
- imposing agendas or initiatives
- confirming long-held prejudices

As a general principle, it is not the role of the coach to provide answers or give advice. A core purpose of coaching is to support the development of the thinking and learning processes of the professional learner. Although specialist coaches may offer their own knowledge or experience, this occurs in response to direct requests as the learner seeks out specific information. We cover this area in more detail in [action implication 5](#).

Integrating coaching, mentoring and performance management

Sweyne Park Secondary School has developed a database of staff expertise which is used to support staff who wish to develop a skill or practice. Through mentoring sessions, staff are encouraged to observe a colleague who has been identified as having particular skills in a particular subject or teaching strategy. Staff feel comfortable about being observed and discussing aspects of their practice where they have identified a problem or where coaching support has been offered.



Who coaches and who is coached?

In the most developed forms of coaching, everyone in school is coached and everyone has the opportunity to coach and may experience a variety of coaching relationships within schools.

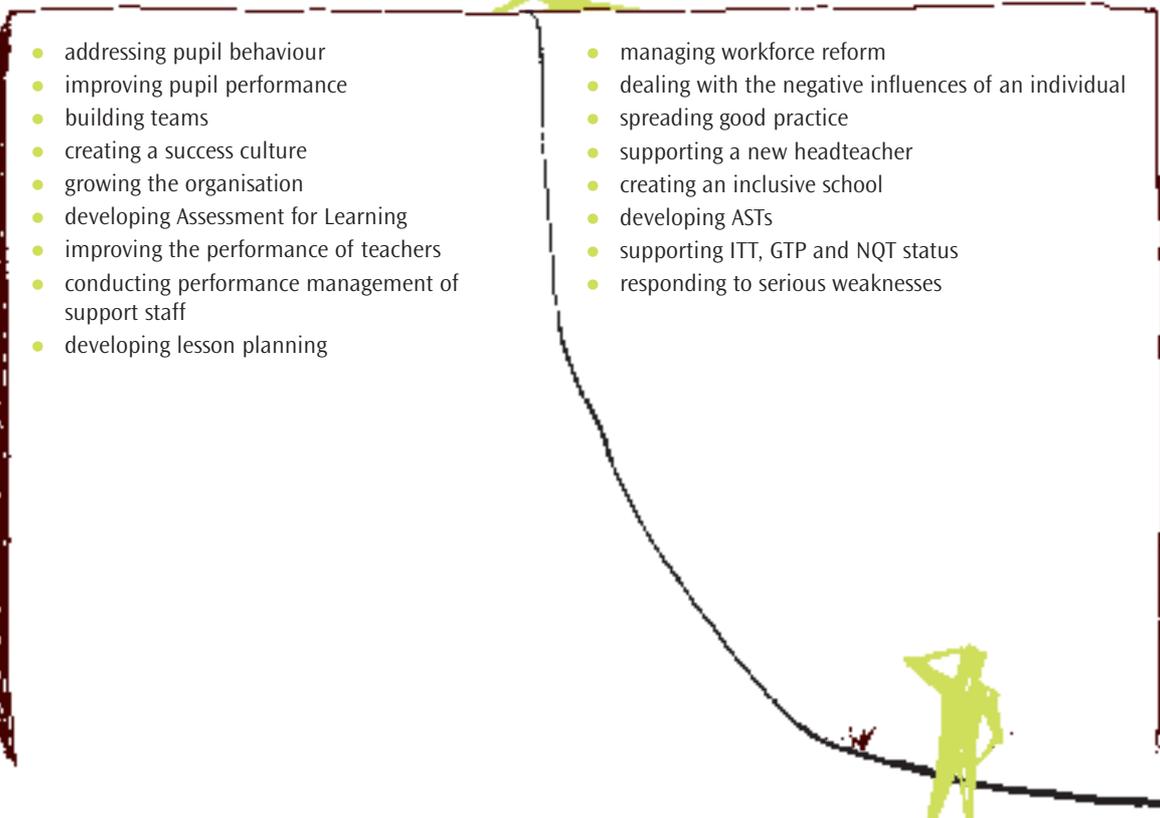
Form of coaching	For example
informal coaching conversations	where a school leader or peer uses coaching principles in short informal conversations about an issue raised by a colleague. As well as supporting the development of thinking and practice, this can model professional learning dialogue
specialist coaching	working with a colleague who has specialist knowledge, such as an advanced skills teacher (AST) or National Strategy consultant. By virtue of their experience and expertise, a specialist coach supports development in a specific area of practice, for instance in Assessment for Learning or classroom environment. In addition to specialist expertise, specialist coaches will have developed an understanding of coaching principles, skills and qualities
co-coaching collaborative (peer) coaching	working in a structured way with a colleague on an issue of mutual need and interest, such as using more interactive questioning to develop pupil literacy. From the earliest point in their careers, staff can be encouraged to contribute to the support of others. Within the broader area of classroom environment, for instance, a new teacher could offer expertise in effective display or access to resources, as part of co-coaching. Individuals will require a basic understanding of coaching skills and protocols
team coaching	working as a department on behaviour management, led by an external or expert coach with expertise in this area
expert coaching	working with an expert coach to develop coaching skills, where expert coaches model and develop coaching skills across the school. Expert coaches can help develop one or more lead coaches to provide a focus for coaching as a key instrument for CPD. Expert coaching may form part of external training for coaching or be part of in-school development of coaching practice. Expert coaches will have, and develop in others, a clear understanding of the adult learning principles that underpin effective coaching in schools and high-order coaching skills and qualities. They understand and focus upon the process of professional learning as well as supporting an individual's focus
pupil coaching	promoting pupil-to-pupil coaching is a powerful learning process. Coaching that works in similar ways at all levels in the school provides a robust mechanism that reinforces its importance as a learning tool
self-coaching	when reflecting on issues of professional concern, coaching principles and protocols can be usefully used to structure self-coaching

It is helpful to anticipate a progression in coaching experience, skills and aptitudes throughout one's career.

When should we use coaching?

It is important to start where people are at. As mentioned earlier, the work of Boyatzis and others shows the importance of starting from learners' own motivations and interests. The same is true for coaches and the school. There may already be a range of coaching expertise and enthusiasm amongst staff. Developing coaching within the school may be most effectively developed by working with a small group or department which has an initial interest in working with coaching. In other contexts, a whole-school approach may be more appropriate. A key role for the head is to ascertain where to start.

We asked school leaders about the purposes they might use coaching for. Their responses show the wide range of purposes that might be addressed:

- 
- addressing pupil behaviour
 - improving pupil performance
 - building teams
 - creating a success culture
 - growing the organisation
 - developing Assessment for Learning
 - improving the performance of teachers
 - conducting performance management of support staff
 - developing lesson planning
 - managing workforce reform
 - dealing with the negative influences of an individual
 - spreading good practice
 - supporting a new headteacher
 - creating an inclusive school
 - developing ASTs
 - supporting ITT, GTP and NQT status
 - responding to serious weaknesses

What are the benefits of coaching?

Whether it is framed as a structured initiative or as a professional conversation, coaching can be seen as:

- a means of whole-school or departmental improvement
- personalised professional learning for staff within schools
- a process that promotes self-directed professional learning
- a learning-centred mode of professional dialogue
- a process that builds capacity for leadership

Recent international research shows that collaborative CPD such as coaching offers significant benefits for practitioners and pupils.

For pupils there are enhanced: learning outcomes, motivation, organisation, questioning skills and an increased choice of learning strategies including collaboration.

For teachers there is enhanced: self-confidence, willingness and capacity to learn and change, knowledge and understanding, a wider repertoire of teaching and learning strategies and increased confidence in the power of teaching to make a difference.

For school leaders there is enhanced: leadership of learning. That is all of the benefits for pupils and teachers, together with enhanced organisational effectiveness.

(National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching, DfES, 2005)

In addition to these benefits, there also appears to be better staff retention and loyalty to the school; as well as reduced variation in attainment across departments. Developing coaching abilities also provides useful life skills that can be used in non-professional and domestic situations.



Leading coaching in schools

What is the leader's role in promoting coaching?

A good coach communicates a belief in people's potentials and an expectation that they can do their best. The tacit message is, 'I believe in you, I'm investing in you, and I expect your best efforts'. As a result, people sense that the leader cares, so they feel motivated to uphold their own high standards of performance, and they feel accountable for how well they do.

(Goleman et al, 2002, p.62)



Creating the conditions for successful coaching

David Clutterbuck (2003) argues that leaders who get the most out of their staff spend a high proportion of their time and energy coaching others. They delegate, create a strong sense of purpose, motivate their teams and attract and retain talent. Significantly, they free up time in order to focus on strategic activity instead of succumbing to chronic busyness and continual fire-fighting. A key role is creating a climate that supports coaching across the school.

So what exactly is a coaching climate? David Clutterbuck contends that you have a coaching climate when:

- There is good understanding about what effective coaches and learners do.
- There are strong role models for good coaching practice.
- People welcome and actively seek feedback (even the most senior leaders).
- People are able to engage in constructive and positive confrontation.
- Coaching is seen primarily as an opportunity rather than as a remedial intervention.
- There is mutual responsibility for coaching between leaders, coaches and learners.
- People are recognised and rewarded for their activity in sharing knowledge.
- Time for reflection is valued.
- There are effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing barriers to professional learning.
- People look first within the school for promotion.
- Personal growth, team development and organisational learning are integrated and the links clearly understood.

Action implications: seven ways to build coaching in your school

“As a leader it is my responsibility to create the conditions for staff to succeed – coaching is one way to achieve this.”

Although setting up and maintaining school structures and systems that promote and sustain coaching are important, school leaders also create a culture for coaching through their actions and words. However, you won't find an action implication entitled, 'Get the culture right' in this workbook. All improvement initiatives refer to the importance of culture – what creates a culture are the steps taken every day by leaders and others – not just what, but how. The action implications presented here, therefore, are offered as practical suggestions which, taken together and over time, support an appropriate culture. How they are acted upon is up to you.

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Action implication 1

To develop a system, first develop yourself

“How do I create a culture of coaching?”

Desirable as the practice of coaching may be for the professional growth of staff, organisational development and pupil learning, it is not without challenges for headteachers and other school leaders. It is important that leaders model the emotional intelligence required for effective coaching relationships and demonstrate this through coaching conversations. Through increasing self-awareness, both leaders and coaches build their awareness of others and support them in taking responsibility for outcomes.

Two major issues are dealt with in this section:

- power relationships
- listening, questioning and learning conversations

Power relationships

One key awareness for school leaders is a sensitivity to the influence of power relationships on professional learning.

The National Framework principles identify the importance of:

agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability

This acknowledges that there will often be power differences within coaching relationships. It is important, therefore, to be explicit about power differences and to agree ground rules that minimise them. The greater the power differential, the more important it is that coaches have a high degree of awareness and integrity.

The potential effects of power relationships should not be underestimated, and leaders need to develop an awareness of the degree to which they are influencing through their position in coaching interactions. This can be particularly challenging when there is pressure for results, or when the coach feels that they have a better solution than the coachee might propose. Nonetheless, if leaders are sincere in their aspiration to develop others' awareness, responsibility and capability, this represents a critical development for themselves.



As an individual

Consider the following questions.

- How do I know how open staff are with me about their work?
- Which staff give me upward praise and critical feedback? What could they tell me about the barriers that might exist in a coaching relationship where I was coaching someone lower in the formal hierarchy?
- Do I have other information about my work with others (eg 360-degree feedback)?
- How can I make myself more alert to interference from power relationships?

With staff

Brainstorm a list of responses to the following question.

- What might the barriers be when a coaching session is being conducted between people who have different status in the school hierarchy?

Then agree the steps that will minimise such potential barriers.

Undertake a confidential review of how staff are finding line management coaching relationships.

Find below some of the tensions raised by school leaders.

- Ask how many of these apply to you.
- What other tensions are there for you?
- How can you accommodate such tensions?

“I am the one accountable, so how do I hand over responsibility when I am not confident that the other person can a) do it, or b) takes it as seriously as I do?”

“The person tries so hard, but they just can’t acknowledge their shortcomings – how can I avoid de-motivating them by pointing them out?”

“I have been in their position, I know the answer – I want to give them the solution and save us both a lot of time.”

“Being new in post, I find it hard to hand queries back to people – they seem to expect solutions from me.”

“I can’t afford to let them fail – it must be right – I can’t just hand it over to them.”

“I disagree with how they see things – I find myself wanting to persuade them I’m right.”

“Coaches hold back their knowledge for the sake of others” (John Whitmore)

*“I think that you have to realise as a mentor that in fact **your** perception of something is not valued. [...] You really need to understand what the mentee thinks the situation is and work from there, because the whole issue is not to create dependency.”*
(George Berwick, Headteacher, Ravens Wood School)

“Where does coaching end and guidance, training and performance management begin?”

It is critically important to make clear distinctions between coaching, guidance, advice, training and performance management. They are not the same thing.

The term coaching can bring an association with sports coaching and directive guidance for improved performance. Shifting these assumptions is an important first step. Although specialist coaches may offer guidance, it is important that learners understand that they are responsible for directing their own learning and that the role of the coach is to support their learning in a non-judgmental way rather than provide answers. Staff must understand that coaching is a voluntary activity.

The place of advice, guidance and direction is a frequent theme in discussions about coaching. Where coaching occurs between more and less experienced colleagues, or more and less senior colleagues, the coach should have great awareness of the impact and implications of their status and of providing solutions and answers to learner's dilemmas.

It is also crucial that learners understand the nature of coaching interaction and expect to be supported via skilful questioning rather than being offered solutions to their problems. As noted earlier, offering ideas, suggestions and timely information are not in themselves inappropriate, where learners seek guidance from coaches. However, it is vital that coaches understand that this can discourage self-direction and block sustainable learning.

The willingness of professional learners to trust coaches is related to the extent to which a coach is able to make their expertise available without engaging in guidance or breeding dependency. (CUREE, 2005, p.6)

Listening, questions and learning conversations

“Like a lot of people at the top, we tend to be a bit deaf. [...] I have to work very hard to be a good mentor. I am a didactic teacher, teller, not the best listener in the world, you know, that sort of approach, so I have a different style and it's good for me to mentor, because that forces me to listen more than I probably would do as a leader.”

(George Berwick, Headteacher, Ravens Wood School)

“You develop a feel for when to listen and when to ask the right questions.”

(Neil Suggett, Headteacher, Hayes Park Primary School)

School leaders are used to operating under pressure, providing solutions, drawing (and sometimes jumping to) conclusions from what is said to them. This can get in the way of listening, hearing and understanding spoken and unspoken messages. All training programmes for coaching will spend time on the skills of listening and questioning, but it is important that school leaders develop self-awareness about their own listening, questioning and style of dialogue.

The quality of questioning in a coaching session or coaching conversation is the key to the developmental nature of the dialogue. Questions can lead dialogue in many directions and can liberate speakers to take their thinking to deeper levels, or constrain them in superficial discussion. See the aides-mémoire for questioning and listening in [action implication 5](#).

Dialogue that promotes critical thinking and an active engagement by the learner is a key component of effective learning processes.

(West-Burnham, 2005, p.29)

Although clear structures and guidelines are important, it is essential that leaders provide strong positive models of coaching practice. The work of Linda Lambert (2002) highlights the importance of learning-centred conversations and the crucial role that leaders have in modelling such interactions. Short coaching-style conversations that are focused on practical and immediate interests model learning-centred dialogue and demonstrate the style of interaction valued by leaders.

Some of the most successful work I've been involved in here has come from focused conversations with staff. Sometimes a conversation can move them on and move you on as well.

(Holmes, 2003)

Developing the most fertile conditions for coaching requires school leaders to be increasingly attuned and skilled in the art of learning conversations. In working with individuals, and especially groups or teams, it is helpful to operate within a mindset of dialogue rather than debate. This helps us resolve some of the tensions identified above.



Ground rules for dialogue

- The purpose of dialogue is to understand and to learn from one another (you cannot win a dialogue).
- All dialogue participants speak for themselves, not as representatives of special interests.
- Treat everyone in a dialogue as an equal: leave role, status and stereotypes at the door.
- Be open and listen to others even when you disagree, and suspend judgement.
- Search for assumptions (especially your own).
- Listen with empathy to the views of others: acknowledge you have heard the other, especially when you disagree.
- Look for common ground.
- Express disagreement in terms of ideas, not personality or motives.
- Keep dialogue and decision-making as separate activities (dialogue should always come before decision-making).
- All points of view deserve respect and should be acknowledged.

Try using these descriptors as a starting point for agreeing your own guidelines for dialogue and learning conversations.

Two useful publications to draw on:

GTCE (undated) Learning Conversations at www.gtce.org.uk/shared/medialibs/31435/93128/Learning_Conversation.pdf

NCSL (undated) Learning conversations in learning networks at

http://livegroup.co.uk/nlc2005/eventsite/downloads/nlc_cdc_learning-conversations-in-learning-networks.pdf

Debate vs Dialogue⁷

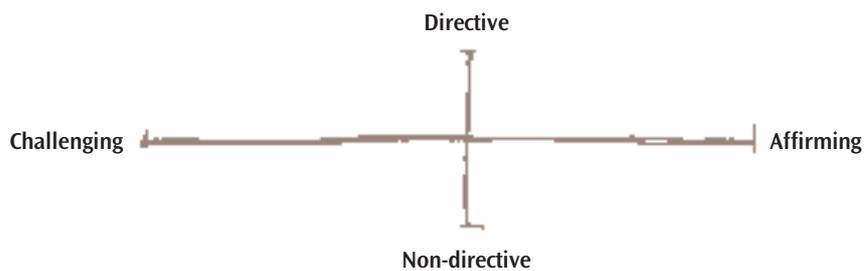
Debate <i>arguing to win a point</i>	Dialogue <i>aiming for consensus</i>
assuming that there is one right answer (and that you have it)	assuming that others have pieces of the answer
combative: attempting to prove the other side wrong about winning	collaborative: attempting to find common understanding about finding common ground
listening to find flaws	listening to understand
defending your assumptions	bringing up your assumptions for inspection and discussion
criticising the other side's point of view	re-examining all points of view
defending one's views against those of others	admitting that others' thinking can improve one's own
searching for weaknesses and flaws in the other person	searching for strengths and value in the other position
seeking an outcome that agrees with your position	discovering new possibilities and opportunities



⁷ Adapted from Canadian Policy Research Networks, Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future

Within coaching interactions, therefore, advice and guidance should be avoided and suggestions offered with caution. The expertise of the coach thus becomes a stimulus to unravel and reflect upon skills and practice.

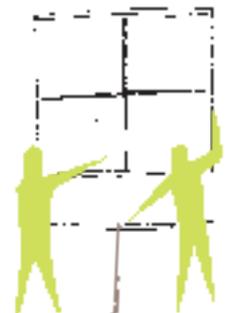
Use this matrix to consider how the approach and behaviours of a coach might differ in each quadrant. What are the implications of each quadrant for leadership behaviour?



You might like to consider the following questions.

- Are there appropriate behaviours for peer, line management, expert, lead and specialist coaches in each of these quadrants?
- How can coaches ensure that non-directive interactions remain challenging?
- How should coaches respond when learners have blind spots about areas of their practice that need to improve?
- When are affirming interactions appropriate?

School leaders must be clear about when more directive approaches such as training, performance management or competence procedures are appropriate.



Action implication 2

Make sense of the whole

“I’ve got poor Key Stage 3 results ... how can coaching help me?”

Take time with staff on understanding and agreeing the following:

- the rationale for coaching
- what is needed for this school
- the school’s approach

The rationale for coaching

The crux of leadership development that works is self-directed learning; intentionally developing or strengthening an aspect of who you are or who you want to be. (West-Burnham, 2005, p.4)

Perhaps the first and most important place to start with staff when developing coaching in school is with the notion of self-directed learning and the value we all place on taking charge of our own development, our own actions and our own accountabilities. Staff will be very familiar with the concept of developing such self-direction in pupils and the notion that no one can do this on their own: the nature of support, stimulus and challenge is key. The following exercise provides staff with the opportunity to think about and discuss with others the help that they themselves have had in their own background, and how this encouraged their own self-directed learning journeys⁸.

Ask staff to think of a special person in their childhood or career, someone who helped them develop.

Then ask:

- What did they do?
- What qualities and behaviours did they display?
- How did you feel as a result?

Once they have had a chance to think about the person and respond privately to each of the questions, give some time for them to discuss their thoughts with a partner.

Then ask the whole group to list the things the helping person did and, secondly, how they (the staff) felt as a result. Record these on a flip chart and then compare with the lists overleaf.

⁸ Inspired by activities in NCSL Leading Practice seminars by Sir John Whitmore and Richard Boyatzis



They:

- treated me as an equal
- listened to my point of view
- believed that I could...
- challenged me
- were fun and enthusiastic
- showed trust and respect
- gave me time and full attention

I felt:

- special
- valued
- confident
- safe and cared for
- supported
- self-belief

There is likely to be considerable commonality.

What is needed in this school?

Subsequent discussion will highlight that such features characterise most relationships that support learning, growth and development. Although focusing on these personal attributes creates a feel good factor that is important in establishing coaching and mentoring as a professional development process, it is not sufficient in itself. It is important to be clear how coaching contributes to improvements for pupils.

Use the list of external developments and contextual issues given in the introduction to this workbook as a starting point for informing and promoting discussion about the big picture.

- **DfES CPD Strategy**
- **Research on effective CPD**
- **National strategies**
- **Developing Tomorrow's Leaders**
- **Professional responsibilities – headteacher standards**
- **Teachers' pay and review**
- **Personalised learning**
- **Transforming the School Workforce**

In the light of the exercise in which staff considered a special person, or someone who helped them develop, consider how coaching might help the school's approach to these initiatives.

(see also 'What are the benefits of coaching?' in the previous section).

Spending time with staff on the rationale for coaching and mentoring, and winning commitment to the process and benefits, is a vital stage in developing school practice. Nevertheless, the visible commitment of the headteacher and other school leaders is essential if there is to be integrity in the whole-school approach.

Some reflective questions for the head and senior team:

Why are we working on coaching in this school?

How will we demonstrate that we believe coaching will be beneficial for our performance (individually and collectively), as well as for students?

What makes us nervous about coaching (either personally, or for the school)?

Has the head got a coach? Will he or she have one?

What training or preparation for coaching has each member of the senior leadership team undertaken?
If there are gaps in what we have done so far, what will we do about it?



Have we discussed our own experiences of coaching (or being coached) as a team?

Do we ever act as an action learning set⁹ in our team and use the resources amongst us to help individual members address work problems? What do we need to do in order to do this? What might stop us?

How open are we with one another in our feedback? Can we think of a time when we weren't open in feedback and discuss it now, so that we can identify what got in the way, or what we might have done differently?

What outcomes do we want from an extra emphasis on coaching?

What outcomes should we realistically expect over the next 12 months?

How will we find out about the practice and effects of coaching in a year's time?

⁹ action learning sets are a specific protocol for collaborative learning. An example can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching/ or www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms/316.php





The school's approach

It is important that staff understand how coaching can address their own practical concerns as well as school aims. Whether coaching develops informally and grows organically in receptive departments, or springs from a structured whole school initiative; it is important to be clear with staff about the approach taken and how it aims to address pragmatic issues.

Thomas Sumpter School coaching development programme

At Thomas Sumpter School in North Lincolnshire, there was an imperative to improve poor performance across the school. The headteacher, Angela Briggs, adopted a very structured programme of coaching development for heads of department, using the expertise of external consultants, in this case local authority advisers.

In stage one of the process, the consultants met with the head to undertake the following:

- objectives of support discussed (Year 9, Year 11 borderline)
- stages of support agreed
- timeline established
- consultants allocated to departments

At stage two, the consultants met with the heads of department:

- working relationship established (trust)
- subject teaching and learning audit completed:
 - audit tool
 - subject data analysed (Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, tracks formative assessments)
 - observation records
 - results of pupil work scrutiny
- observation schedule arranged

At stage three, the consultants fed back to the SLT, and the school's teaching and learning focuses were shaped in response to the consultants' feedback:

- copy of subject audit returned to SLT
- consultant or head of department meets with SLT
- SLT agree on the teaching and learning focuses:
 - Assessment for learning
 - learning styles

Stage four involved setting and agreeing the following success criteria for the consultants' support:

- leadership and management at least 'satisfactory' (middle managers)
- quality of teaching and learning across the department is at least 'satisfactory'
- individual pupil targets achieved:
 - defined from the value-added data
 - judged half-termly (teacher assessment or test)
- consultants' judgement on the capacity of the middle managers' ability to sustain improvements

In stage five, the consultants observed the heads of department and gave feedback on the following:

- observations focused on specific teaching groups
- observations with dual teaching and learning focus:
 - whole school, eg assessment for learning
 - department, eg managing group work
- consultants demonstrate constructive feedback which identifies:
 - areas of strength
 - areas in need of development
 - strategies to improve

In stage six, the consultants and head of department worked together to develop coaching practice with other departmental staff:

- joint planning (teacher, head of department or consultant)
- observation of teacher with consultant in the role of coach (head of department observes and critiques the process)
- observation of teacher with head of department in the role of coach (consultant observes and critiques the process)
- evaluation against original success criteria

Clearly the process continued from these stages, as the school's aim is to achieve the success criteria outlined in stage four and to build the capacity to sustain these once the consultants' work has finished.

When the consultants left, therefore, the following continued:

- class teachers (and head of department) undertook observations of leading teachers:
 - within their department
 - in other schools
 - in other departments
- specific INSET was planned and undertaken:
 - whole school on quality of teaching and learning
 - departmental INSET on leading learning
 - leadership and development programme (middle managers)
- middle management development programme (coaching model) cascaded to other schools



Action implication 3

Create systems

“How do we infuse school with coaching conversations?”

In schools that have well established cultures of coaching, not only do staff see coaching as an entitlement – a key element of their continuing professional development; they are also clear about their responsibilities as professional learners. Creating systems that define both an entitlement to professional learning and the responsibilities of professional learners is a crucial task for school leaders.

Even staff who are open to coaching can find it difficult to find time to make it happen, so it is important to use or create structures, systems and funding to support coaching. Although it takes longer to coach than to direct or instruct, it reaps benefits in the long term as leadership capacity is developed. Clearly, this will often require an investment in both time and money. Coaching is an investment in the future, so invest early for long-term gain¹⁰.

In his NCSL Research Associate report, Darren Holmes (2003) says:

If coaching is to have maximum impact as a potent tool for transforming schools, schools need to take a more strategic and systematic view.

(Holmes, 2003)

Coaching does not need to be an additional initiative. It can be an intrinsic element of other developmental and school improvement initiatives that already exist.

It will be important to agree internal coaching relationships:

- as part of leadership and management activity
- as part of AST roles and teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) postholders
- as part of teaching and learning CPD
- as part of specific coaching that forms an element of a CPD programme



¹⁰ The Key Stage 3 Strategy document *Leading and Coordinating CPD in Secondary Schools* (DfES, 2005) devotes a whole section to creating time for CPD.

¹¹ Details of action learning set protocols can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/media/3FC/0C/newvisions-guide-learning-processes.pdf or www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms/316.php.

Consider the following as a tool for mapping the forms of coaching and mentoring relationships you have, or wish to establish, in your school.

How are coaching and mentoring relationships built into leadership and management activity and TLR posts?

- included in job descriptions
- central to Investors in People and performance management processes
- time allocated for one-to-one sessions between head and SLT members
- time allocated for one-to-one sessions between SLT members and TLR postholders
- time allocated for one-to-one sessions between TLR postholders and their team members
- peer coaching relationships established between TLR postholders
- central to the work of team, department and school leaders

How are coaching and mentoring relationships built in as part of teaching and learning CPD?

- central to learning and teaching and CPD policies
- time allocated for peer observations and feedback
- use made of leading teachers or ASTs for observation, feedback and coaching
- teachers given regular opportunity to learn in collaborative groups, such as Action Learning Sets¹¹
- lead coaches established in school
- regularly used in support for pupils
- developed as a skill for pupils, with training and review provided
- a key means of support for NQTs and ITE
- an element of induction for new staff

What arrangements are made to ensure that coaching within CPD programmes (eg LftM, NPQH) is given status?

- time allocated for whoever has the role of coach or mentor and coachee
- any external training for coach supported by in-school preparation
- coachees have some choice about coaching partner
- review takes place at end of programme





A	B	C	What do we do about this?

A = well established, **B** = present but inconsistent, **C** = not really present



Clarifying responsibility: encouraging self directed learning

A central role for those leading coaching in schools is to clarify the responsibilities that staff have as professional learners. If we are to continue offering pupils the best learning opportunities staff must view themselves as learners and understand what this entails. Central to the commitment to professional learning is the aim of becoming increasingly self directed, and having the confidence to experiment with new practice.

Horsell Village Infant School: Using dialogue to make the implicit explicit

Headteacher Pat Dennison believes that the knowledge, wisdom and artistry of teachers should be available to all. She contends that:

“Excellent teachers operate at such a profoundly unconscious level that there is a danger that much of what they know remains locked within them. In order to build the intellectual capacity of the school we decided some time ago to create and develop a culture of continuous dialogue – a kind of “how do you do that?” unpicking of unconsciously competent practice which would make the tacit explicit and therefore more accessible.

“Staff have developed a common vocabulary which breaks down barriers and facilitates understanding. They have a strong sense of their own responsibility, but instantly recognise in themselves any kind of block on resourcefulness; in those circumstances they will seek a coaching opportunity with a coach of their choice. They will set up quick meetings, often of short duration, which will help them look at options and decide on action. The notion of team leaders feeling that they should know answers has gone.

“People who ask for help expect to be questioned, not given solutions”.

The National Framework for Coaching and Mentoring identifies four key responsibilities:

- seeking and responding proactively to specialist expertise
- discussing practice and core concepts
- understanding your own learning needs
- observing, analysing and reflecting on practice

How might you adapt the following contract for professional learning?

- I am responsible for directing my own professional learning.
- I will diagnose my own professional learning needs and develop a personal agenda for learning.
- I expect to use data and reflect on observation or videos of my practice to inform my continuous development.
- My professional learning both builds on what I already know and seeks to fill gaps in my expertise.
- I will be proactive in seeking out colleagues with the knowledge and expertise to support my professional learning.
- I will seek knowledge and information pertaining to my own learning foci.
- I will ensure that my personal professional learning supports departmental and school goals.
- If I ask for help I will expect to be supported in my own learning rather than given solutions.
- I expect to stay informed about new local and national initiatives.
- I understand the benefits of coaching, mentoring and collaboration within school as well as externally provided CPD.
- I understand the importance of sharing successes and learning from mistakes.
- I am willing to support others both informally and via collaboration, and coaching (or mentoring) relationships.



Although the coachee's willingness and ability to learn, develop and take responsibility for new action is vital, in reality, staff in any school vary greatly in their openness to change, their skill level, their eagerness to develop and learn and their belief in themselves. School leaders and coaches need to adapt approaches according to individual differences.

Try using the matrix below to consider how the approach might be different for individuals in each of the four quadrants.

- Firstly think of one person for each quadrant. This helps base your thinking on direct knowledge and experience.
- Then consider how each of the actions listed below the matrix might be applied in each of the quadrants.
- Record the outcomes in the appropriate quadrant.

High motivation		
Low motivation		
	Low skill	High skill

- Identifying learning goals
- Providing support for progression
- Modelling, observing and articulating practice
- Sharing planning
- Establishing the relationship
- Providing feedback
- Providing guidance and direction
- Drawing evidence from research and practice
- Supporting reflection
- Listening
- Questioning
- Reviewing
- Action planning

Action implication 4

Focus on principles

“How do we ensure a culture of appropriate challenge?”

“We focused on three things: the principles, a learning contract and a code of ethics. Working on things like coaching question stems – not a script, just suggestions that people can build on was really helpful.”

(Leading Practice seminar delegate)

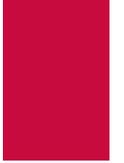
An important early step for the school is to clarify the principles and purposes of coaching. The National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching provides a helpful and coherent set of principles, core concepts and skills that schools can use as a stimulus for their own work. These principles can provide an excellent starting point to develop agreements and guidance for coaching practice in your school.



National Framework principles

In our school this means

A learning conversation structured professional dialogue, rooted in evidence from the professional learner's practice, which articulates existing beliefs and practices to enable reflection on them	We will...
Setting challenging and personal goals identifying goals that build on what learners know and can do already, but could not yet achieve alone, whilst attending to both school and individual priorities	We will...
A thoughtful relationship developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep professional learning	We will...
Understanding why different approaches work developing understanding of the theory that underpins new practice so it can be interpreted and adapted for different contexts	We will...
A learning agreement establishing confidence about the boundaries of the relationship by agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability	We will...
Acknowledging the benefits to the mentors and coaches recognising and making use of the professional learning that mentors and coaches gain from the opportunity to mentor or coach	We will...
Combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists collaborating with colleagues to sustain commitment to learning and relate new approaches to everyday practice; seeking out specialist expertise to extend skills and knowledge and to model good practice	We will...
Experimenting and observing creating a learning environment that supports risk-taking and innovation and that encourages professional learners to seek out direct evidence from practice	We will...
Growing self-direction an evolving process in which the learner takes increasing responsibility for their professional development as skills, knowledge and self-awareness increase	We will...
Using resources effectively making and using time and other resources creatively to protect and sustain learning, action and reflection on a day-to-day basis	We will...



A large rectangular area with a red dashed border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. Each line consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.





What about different models of coaching?

Once the principles of coaching are clear, you may wish to draw on one of a number of models of coaching that are in widespread use. Our case study schools drew on models by John Heron, Donald Schon, client-centred consultancy and Sir John Whitmore's GROW model. The benefits of adopting a particular model are as follows.

- It readily offers a common vocabulary and set of practices.
- It helps ensure a standardised process.
- It therefore brings a confidence and structure that can be very helpful.

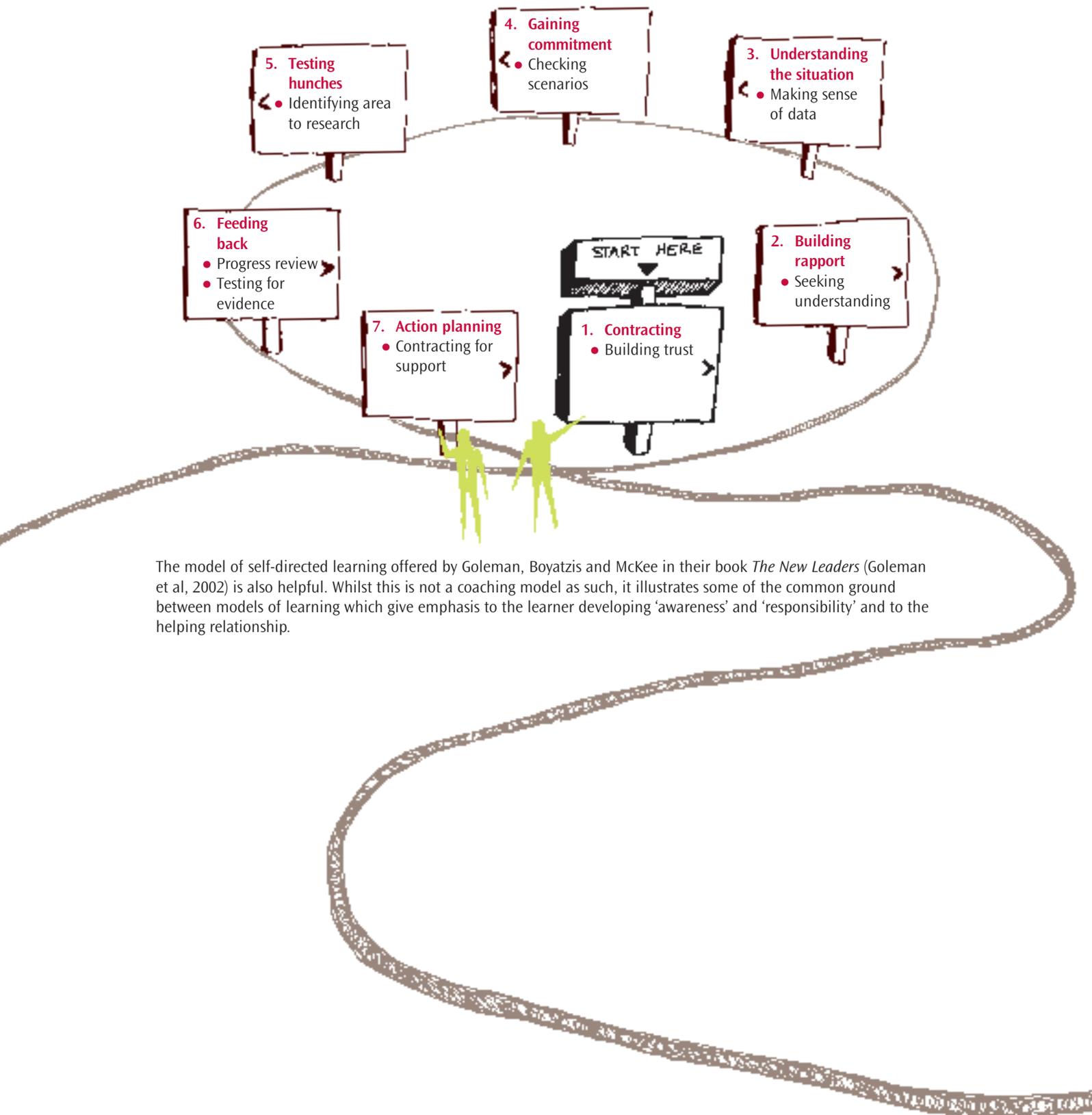
There are two potential downsides to adopting a specific model.

- Some people might, in the early stages at least, feel inhibited by following a model and pay more attention to progressing through set stages than engaging in deep learning (a bit like learning to drive).
- Additionally, once a particular model is adopted, people can see it as the only legitimate route to coaching. As demonstrated by the CUREE research and the variety evident in various CPD and leadership programmes, there are a number of legitimate approaches.

The GROW model outlines four basic components or stages in the coaching process:

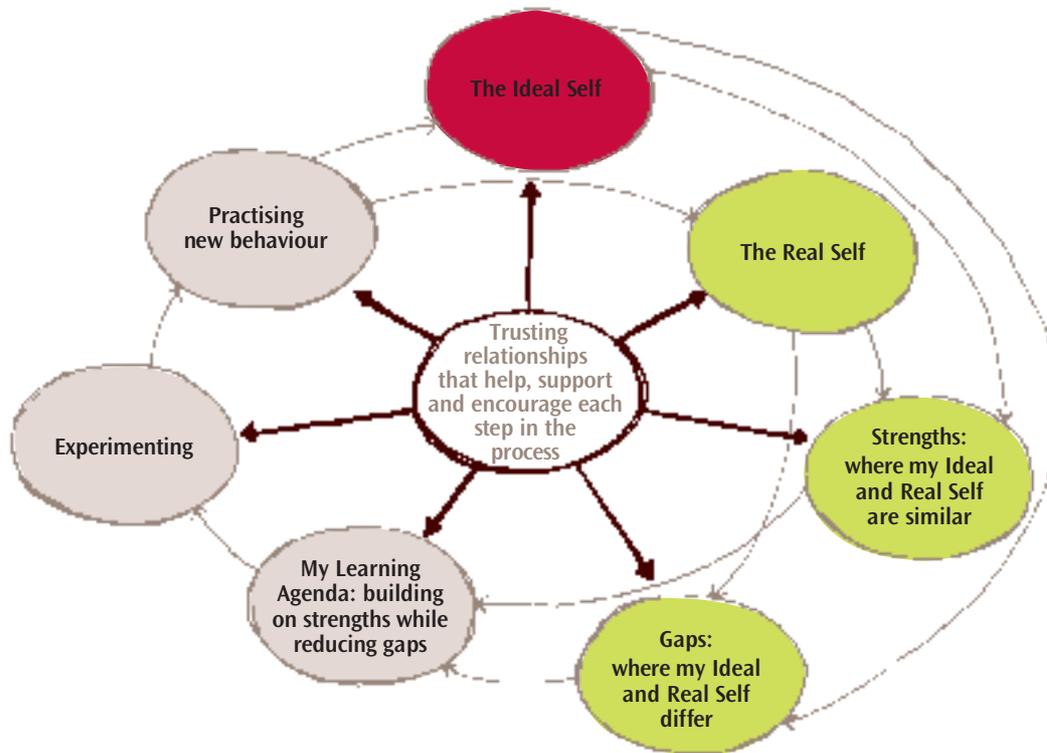
- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| G - GOAL | What do you want? |
| R - REALITY | What is happening now? |
| O - OPTIONS | What could you do? |
| W - WILL | What will you do? |

Other models follow a similar cycle of considering: what is desired; the current reality; what could be done; what help is needed; what options are available and on to action. The following model for co-coaching is used within NCSL's Leadership Programme for Serving Heads.



The model of self-directed learning offered by Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee in their book *The New Leaders* (Goleman et al, 2002) is also helpful. Whilst this is not a coaching model as such, it illustrates some of the common ground between models of learning which give emphasis to the learner developing 'awareness' and 'responsibility' and to the helping relationship.

Boyatzis' Self-Directed Change Model



© Richard E Boyatzis, 2001

Whatever model you choose, the following frame is designed to help you consider whether the coaching approaches adopted address key learning aims.

Boyatzis, R.E. (2001). Developing emotional intelligence. In C. Cherniss, R.E. and D. Goleman (eds.), *The emotionally intelligent workplace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Is coaching in your school structured to help people?

Learning aims	Coaching role Do coaches help learners to:	Yes	No	How do (or should) we do this?
Be engaged and motivated to learn	Create a vision? Establish expectations and ground rules?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Raise awareness of self and practice	Draw out values and assumptions? Address emotions? Seek evidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Take responsibility for action and application	Understand underpinning theory? Map options? Support experimentation and risk-taking? Help consolidate practice? Use resources creatively? Focus on impact on pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Self-direct learning	Seek out expertise and knowledge? Review action, outcomes and options in the light of external knowledge? Identify challenge and support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communicate successful innovation	Celebrate, share and network?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Action implication 5

Equip staff with coaching skills

“How can we make sure we do it well?”

School leaders will need to consider a number of issues in building capacity for coaching in their school.

- investing in skills development
- being clear about the core skills
- the importance of evidence

Investing in skills development

There may be considerable expertise already available in the school. Tapping into this is an important first step – it allows you to start where people are already confident and build from there.

George Berwick, Headteacher of Ravens Wood School in Bromley, bases the school’s emphasis on coaching relationships on an audit of the knowledge capital, organisational capital and social capital in the school, and how they are best used and developed for the benefit of pupil learning.

A key question for George is, “how do we move best practice around the school?” He believes that once staff realise that “they are the solution” and that the knowledge is at hand to transform the school, this encourages them to subscribe to the vision and approach employed to move towards this. This generates a sense of communal pride and a momentum for change which, with good leadership and management, accelerates the process. The critical issue for the head is to move school leaders from being prescriptive and feeling insecure when they do not have the answer to providing support and challenge for their teams.

The leadership team could consider these dimensions, perhaps using question prompts such as those shown here.

Knowledge capital

- What expertise do we have in school already?
- Who might be the most ready to train as coaches?

Social capital

- How well developed is professional dialogue already?
- How open and trusting is the school as a whole, or particular sections of the school?

Organisational capital

- How much capacity do we have in school to accommodate time for coaching, observation, feedback, training etc?
- What system or structural changes do we need to make?

As discussed earlier in this workbook, coaching practice in schools is built on four essential qualities and five key skills. School leaders need to plan carefully how these skills are developed systematically and sustained across the school, as part of the professional learning programme for the school, as well as in specific coaching training (if this approach is adopted) and as part of CPD programmes (such as Leading from the Middle).

Coaching skills are best developed through practice. As we noted earlier, expert coaches are not manufactured simply by attending a number of dedicated training days. However, training is one route to developing coaching capacity. Another is building co-coaching to complement and embed learning from training or specialist coaching.

The Hayes Park coach development programme

At Hayes Park Primary School, coaching is seen as a generic process that can be used by staff and pupils at a variety of levels in any school or organisation. Considerable investment is made in developing the capacity for coaching.

- The headteacher, Neil Suggett, trained on a six-month School of Coaching Programme in 2002 and began to coach colleagues inside and outside school.
- The deputy trained on a six-day Hillingdon Programme led by the head in 2003 and coached a range of colleagues in school. These school-based sessions had a dramatic impact and raised the profile of coaching at Hayes Park.
- Six teachers trained on a six-session school-based programme during the summer term of 2004 and conducted coaching sessions inside and outside Hayes Park.
- Six teachers and three teaching assistants trained on a second school-based programme during the autumn term of 2004 and also coached inside and outside Hayes Park.
- A whole-staff training day took place in February 2005, with formalised entitlement to coaching and coach development programmes.
- Increasingly, other schools are asking Hayes Park staff to facilitate coach development programmes.

The school-based programme is structured around six face-to-face sessions with systematic coaching practice and reading between each session as follows.

1. Introduction to the GROW model – practice coaching (3 hours)
2. Key skills – listening, questioning and preparing action (2 hours)
3. Leadership, management and coaching (2 hours)
4. Mentoring, counselling and coaching (2 hours)
5. Team coaching (3 hours)
6. The Hayes Park coach development programme (2 hours)

Another route is to develop people who have a natural talent for developing others, who are willing to take on the additional tasks of being a role model, coaching less able peers in coaching skills and, in some cases, being an upward coach to more senior managers. Providing these people with advanced skills training or the support of expert coaches is likely to pay dividends.

More information about the skills required by coaches, the responsibilities of professional learners, guidance on planning coaching initiatives and how to get the most out of external support can be found in the National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

Being clear about core skills

The following diagnostic inventory may be helpful in reviewing coaching skills. Perhaps work with a colleague to complete the inventory and compare perceptions.

Coaching skills inventory¹²

Use the rating scale

1 = high confidence

4 = an area for development

	1	2	3	4
<p>appropriate body language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable posture • sensitive eye contact • reinforcing and affirming gestures • open and positive, non-threatening, non-intimidating • mirroring 				
<p>questioning for understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of open questions – what, when, where, who • ask probing questions – how much, how often, how many • avoid closed and leading questions • start broad • question to narrow focus • use of questions to test, check and clarify 				
<p>listening for meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive engagement • be alert to what is important to the learner • regular summarising – use learner words • attentive body language to signal attention • accommodate and value silence 				



¹² The inventory is adapted from NCSL Headship Induction Programme materials.



	1	2	3	4
<p>giving feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● specific and focused on evidence● continuing understanding● checking feelings and emotions● summarising● building and explaining● create feedback loop				
<p>communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● clear and concise use of language● appropriate vocabulary● confirming and clarifying				
<p>managing structured coaching sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● agreeing the agenda● managing time● reaching consensus● maintaining the focus				
<p>personal qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● sense of humour● empathy and rapport● non-judgmental● supportive and engaged● honesty● enthusiasm● optimism				

Overleaf we draw attention to three key skills: listening, questioning and prompting action.





Listening and questioning aides-mémoire

Developing listening and questioning skills are fundamental to building the school's capacity for coaching. Try using the following questioning and listening aides-mémoire as development tools with staff.

Listening aide-mémoire¹³

<p>Listen and attend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the story• the words• key phrases• gestures• expression• intonation• silences• feelings behind words• body posture	<p>Listen to clarify meaning.</p> <p>Question to develop awareness and understanding.</p>
---	---

Questioning aide-mémoire

The following aide-mémoire has been adapted from the NCSL New Visions Programme for Early Headship as a tool for examining types and purposes of questions. It is neither comprehensive nor prescriptive, but offers one way of examining the ways in which questions can, either deliberately or unwittingly, lead dialogue in certain directions.

¹³ With acknowledgement to Robert Wilson.

Questioning aide-mémoire

Purpose and direction of questioning

Narrative

Description

Connecting to previous knowledge

Connecting to external research or practice

Finding analogies and metaphors

Analysis

Conceptual development

Challenge

Self-awareness

Identifying with others

Application and action

Explicit reference to the learning process

Sample openers and question stems

Tell us about...
What happened?
What happened next?

Can you describe it?

Can you think of anything similar from previous experience?
What did it remind you of?

How do you think that compares with what ... wrote on that issue?

What does this remind you of?
Is there a sound, image or picture you would use to describe this?

What are the implications of...?
Describe what you think led up to this or what caused it.
How does it affect...?

Are there any general principles you can draw from that?
If you were to put those ideas into a model or diagram, how would you draw them?

What would be the counter-argument to what you are saying?
Let's look at some different perspectives on this.
Can I play back to you what you have just said?

How did you feel...?
What would an observer have noted about your behaviour, tone of voice...?
What reasons did you give for...?
Were there any reasons that you didn't make public, but were present?

What did you observe about... 's actions?
Did you make any inference about that at the time?
Do you now?

What would happen if...?
How can ...be used to...?
What's the worst that can happen?
Let's look at all the options.
Do you have other examples of this?
What are your next steps?

What have we learned?
What did the process show us?
Do we have a new model for...?





Prompting Action

Action implication 3 outlined the responsibilities that professionals have for their own and other's learning. A key component is that reflection, enquiry and dialogue prompt new action and experimentation. Both Boyatzis and Goleman (Goleman et al, 2002) argue that sustainable development is more likely if we tap into people's professional aspirations and desires, and staff are encouraged to take responsibility for the next step in their learning and practice. This implies a belief in the other person, and handing over responsibility for finding solutions.

Implications for coaches

- Identify goals that build on what learners know and can do already, but could not yet achieve alone.
- Work on aligning personal aims with school aims.
- Observe, analyse and reflect upon professional practice and make this explicit.
- Build a learner's control and growing independence in professional learning.
- Provide information and feedback that enables learning from mistakes and success.

The importance of evidence

Most models of coaching stress the importance of using evidence to inform coaching interactions. Collecting evidence of practice and behaviour and their impact on pupils is a crucial phase in helping people to understand their current reality. By basing learning conversations on data and evidence from practice, school leaders demonstrate its importance. Holding open discussion with colleagues based on data from your own diagnostics is a powerful exemplification of this.

Observation of practice is a key source of evidence. However, many staff associate observation with performance management, Ofsted inspection and judgmental assessment of their practice. Encouraging peer observation is one effective method of breaking this association and developing engagement amongst staff¹⁴.

Protocols such as 'videologues' and 'research lessons' also help reframe observation as an appreciative activity that works towards an individual's professional learning and builds on their existing expertise. Examples can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

¹⁴ GTCE and NUT have produced a helpful guide within the Teacher's Professional Learning Framework: A guide to peer observation www.gtce.org.uk/shared/medialibs/31435/CPD/peerguide.pdf with further guidance at www.gtce.org.uk/cpd_home/peerobs





Learning from observation at Newhall Green Secondary School

Coaching at Newhall Green is a confidential process of peer coaching through which professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices, share ideas, teach one another and collaboratively solve problems in the workplace.

Classroom observation is central to their peer coaching process, but, unusually, the teacher coaches the observer. The school has deliberately adopted what it describes as 'a reverse coach-coachee' model, and a process was built around this that involved a pre-conference, lesson observation and a post-conference.

Pre-conference

At the pre-conference, the teacher who is coaching the observer explains the lesson purpose, what led to the lesson, and what will follow. Protocols, confidentiality and the specific focus of the coaching are established.

The observation

During the observation, spaces are provided where interaction and discussion take place. It is about coaching in action and both the coach and coachee or professional learner are active participants and learners. The model is intended to separate the observations from more formal lesson observations which the teachers saw as someone else's agenda and more about performance management. What the teachers continually reiterated was the sheer joy of engaging with another colleague's teaching, from a learning and not an accountability starting point. One of the teachers commented:

"We had never done it like this before; when we entered each other's room we became active participants. We engaged with the students and found opportunities to talk to each other during the lesson. Evette's teaching style was very different to mine, she did lots of group activities and I realised I must introduce more into my teaching."

Examples of focuses included group activity and using visual aids to support questioning. Intentionally, part of the coaching process occurs in the classroom whilst the teaching and learning are going on. This gives the coach and the professional learner the opportunity to identify and capture the nitty gritty issues that can have significant impact on learning about classroom practice but are often lost in later conversation.

Post-conference

These nitty gritty issues provide the starting point for the post-conference conversations. The teachers described these as detailed conversations, which provided opportunities to reflect on the key points of the lesson. The person being coached describes their experience in the classroom, and then the coach begins the process of prompting and probing a reflective dialogue to enable the professional learner to arrive at a deeper level of understanding of the experience and commit to new learning.

Sharing learning and innovation

The school has also recently established a reflective practitioner group, which meets on a regular basis to enable colleagues involved in paired peer coaching to share their learning with a wider group by describing and discussing their experiences. In this way, the school wants to create new knowledge in a collective form for the whole school community.

The group also uses videos of staff teaching.

"The videos are about us and that is why we volunteered. I don't really want to watch lessons that involve children from a school that is unrelated to the context in which I work. I want to see lessons that involve interruptions and, at times, negative behaviour. In our videos you see warts and all and that underpins what coaching is about."

By using videos generated within their own context staff felt that the learning was "rooted in reality and had real purpose [...] they were not about having a cosy chat and then doing nothing".

All coaching and reflective conversations are part of a cycle of activity that is outcome focused. According to the teachers, peer coaching allows them to think about teaching and learning in ways that they hadn't previously done, and to try new ways of working without fear of failure. Having the opportunity to develop in this way was not seen as a luxury, or something that was a bolt-on activity to school development; rather it was a key priority and rigorous endeavour to improve classroom practice.

Action implication 6

Review and reward good coaching practice

“How can we assure the quality of a process that is confidential”?

If coaching is framed as an entitlement for staff, and staff increasingly view coaching as a potentially powerful vehicle for professional learning, they will be keen to offer feedback on its effectiveness. It is, therefore, possible to develop monitoring and quality assurance feedback on coaching across the school. Here is one example of a frame that could be used with staff to begin that process. This and the following frames support the review of both coaching culture and practice.

Review of coaching culture	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
• There is good understanding about what effective coaches do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There is good understanding about what effective adult learners do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There are strong role models for good coaching practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Staff welcome and actively seek feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Senior leaders welcome and actively seek feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• People are able to engage in constructive and positive confrontation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Coaching is seen primarily as an opportunity rather than as a remedial intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Leaders, coaches and learners take mutual responsibility for coaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• People are recognised and rewarded for their activity in sharing knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Time for reflection is valued.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• There are effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing barriers to professional learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• People look first inside the school for promotion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The links between personal growth, team development and school improvement are clearly understood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Collecting evidence of these processes offers an opportunity to spread successful practice into other areas. Professionals want to learn and develop as practitioners: once they see the enthusiasm of other staff for the coaching process, the more they will want to access their entitlement. Success breeds success. But rigour and quality remain important if successes are to be sustained.

Review of coaching practice

Does coaching in your school involve the following?

With the learner, coaches:	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
• identify the number of sessions, times, duration, venues and means of contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• clarify the expectations of the coaching session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• help the learner identify a focus or development goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identify the motivation for the goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• encourage the learner to take responsibility for development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• identify strengths of prior knowledge and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• help identify how strengths can help address the goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• help identify alternative sources of knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• support an enquiry process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• help develop evidence of current and enhancing practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• encourage experimentation and risk-taking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• break down practice into component parts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• help the learner address components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• support the synthesis of components	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• support the learner in raising their self-awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• bring attention to the cognitive processes involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• bring attention to the feelings involved and support the management of those emotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• invite specialists to model practise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• support the practice of new behaviour: repetition consolidates new learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• review the coaching session with the learner to reflect on the learning process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• celebrate successes with the learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• perform other relevant actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





Coach self-review

Are coaches:	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• aware of the cognitive and learning processes being modelled?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reviewing their own understanding of the goal in focus?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflecting on their own learning about the goal?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflecting on the learning process and their role as coach?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognising their own developing skills and knowledge?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• performing other relevant actions?				

You can download copies of all the practical activities in this workbook at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching



Action implication 7

Use and build external links and networks

“We’ve made a good start, but where do we go from here?”

As Brian Caldwell notes:

Schools that are innovative and have nurtured a climate of innovation are characterised by a network of linkages with a range of organisations, agencies and institutions in the public and private sector. (Caldwell, 2004, p.91)

Schools with highly developed cultures of coaching commonly have links with other organisations and networks that support their work and provide new expertise, knowledge and stimulus for reflection and development. Such links and networks help sustain and develop coaching within the school.

These schools also contribute to the education system by spreading their successes, knowledge and expertise to other schools via these links. In the same way that coaches benefit as much as learners do from their coaching collaborations, headteachers understand the benefits of reaching out to other schools to provide cascade training or other forms of professional development to share knowledge and expertise.

Links and networks at Newhall Green School

The school sees its involvement in the Manchester Collaborative Coaching School Network as fundamental in supporting activity. The involvement in the network according to the [lead coach]:

“provides a rich source of learning, training and support”

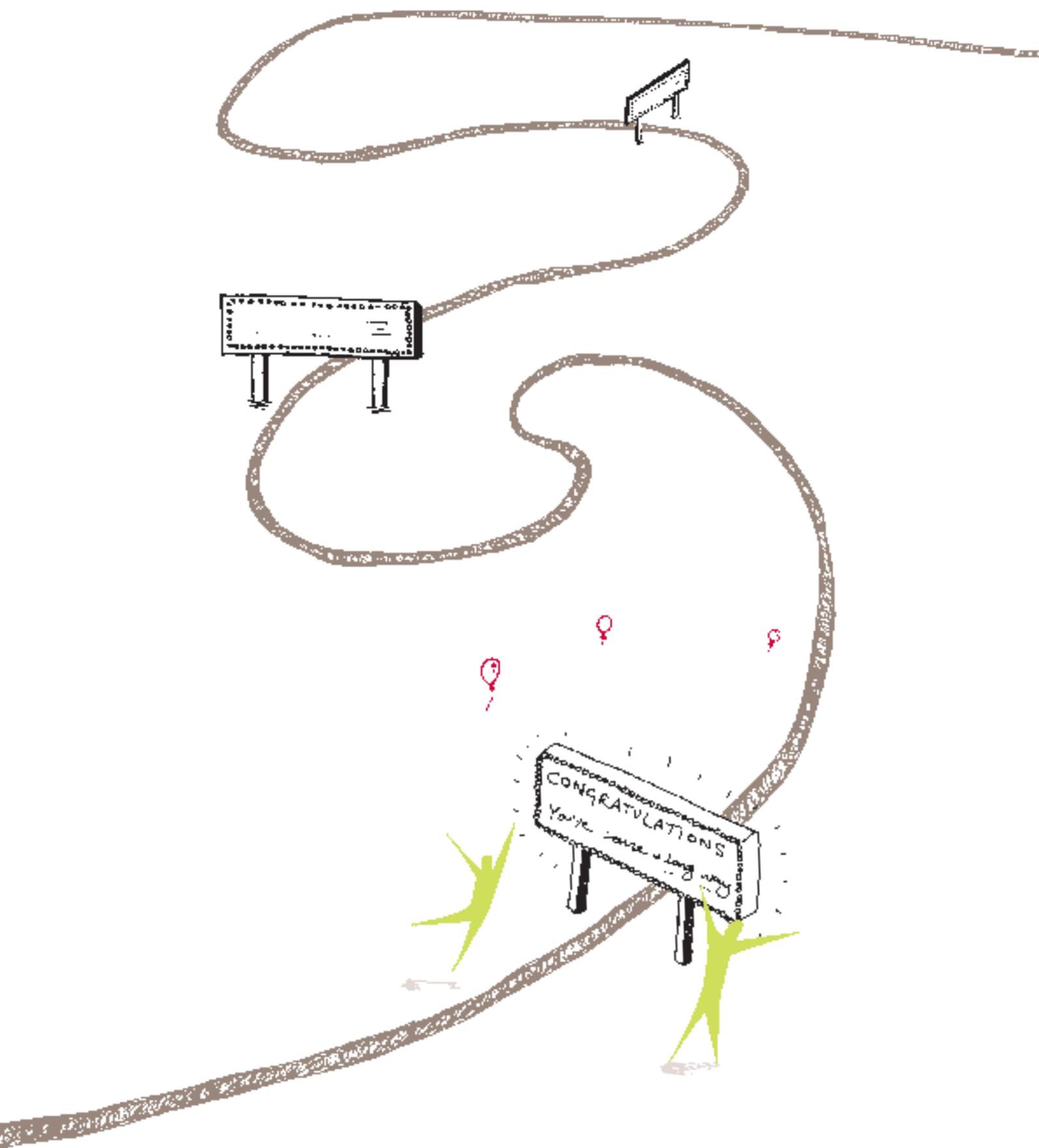
It was within the network the [lead coach] met colleagues from other schools to learn about their methods of coaching and to share experiences of practice. It was within the network that Newhall Green took its first steps to engage with coaching. The school constantly looks to the network for ongoing support, stimulation and also celebration. According to the school, this network is the place where the transfer of knowledge between schools occurs.

Links and networks at Horsell Village School

The head has belonged for a number of years to an action learning network of like-minded leaders. Recently the school has begun involvement in the primary leadership project and is poised to work within two further networks, one to develop learning and the other to develop tools of self-evaluation. The coaching model will be used extensively in these contexts.

The full case study can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

These examples show how schools draw knowledge about successful coaching practice from elsewhere, as well as communicating their own successes more widely. The examples also suggest the potential for coaching to move from being a vehicle for individual professional development and school improvement to being a key element in developing system wide leadership capacity. Interesting examples of this can be found amongst the case studies at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching



End piece

I am delighted that school leaders are increasingly recognising the value and importance of using coaching as a key skill both in their own professional development and in that of their staff. It is not just a remedial technique, but more a way of relating, a form of communication that brings multiple benefits. It is a natural way to help others to feel more ownership of their own lives and successes, leading to far greater involvement and personal satisfaction at work.

As our understanding develops of how people learn, perform, enjoy and are motivated, we need to be willing to adapt, and sometimes fundamentally change the way we do things to be more effective. The use of coaching is not a difficult skill to learn. Perhaps the hardest part is the willingness to give up what we did before, especially when it was a more prescriptive style. Change is a challenge for all of us, but in the modern world, it is inevitable and the better we understand the reasons for it and the effects of better methodologies, the easier it becomes.

Coaching should never be viewed as the flavour of the month or as just another new initiative. It is more importantly another step in the ongoing evolution of participative human interaction. As such it applies equally to leadership, to management, to parenting and to teaching and learning. Coaching demands authenticity, honesty and openness. It delivers mutual respect, support, trust and a sense of self-belief.

When I experienced for myself the multiple benefits of coaching many years ago, I saw its applicability to so many aspects of education. My schooling had not been a pleasant experience – it was all a matter of, do this and don't do that; or this is right and that is wrong. I was seldom allowed to think or to choose for myself, but times are changing. I celebrate the fact that the National College for School Leadership is indeed leading the way. It will not be long before coaching is used freely, widely and consistently with young people of all ages in the classroom, indeed this is already happening more and more. I believe that the adoption of coaching approaches will enrich the learning and the lives of all administrators, staff, teachers and pupils. I might even go back to school myself.

John Whitmore

Useful web links and further reading

NCSL offers a range of resources, links, useful publications and case studies of coaching in schools at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

CUREE have a number of useful publications available
www.curee-paccts.com/dynamic/curee40.jsp?m=46

The DfES Key Stage 3 National Strategy Guide for School Leaders (DfES, 2004) can be downloaded at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3/downloads/ks30405guide012304.pdf

NCSL Network Learning Group Learning Exchange Online
<http://nlg.systemassociates.co.uk>

The General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) publication, 'The Learning Conversation' is a helpful leaflet, based on examples from schools and research, about how a structured approach to professional dialogue can support professional development and impact on teaching and learning. Copies can be downloaded from www.gtce.org.uk/LearningConversations

GTCE Teacher Learning Academy www.gtce.org.uk/cpd_home/TLA

GTCE CONNECT network for school CPD leaders www.gtce.org.uk/connect

Teachernet offers guidance on a variety of CPD processes
www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/guidanceandgoodpractice

Collaborative Action Research Network www.did.stu.mmu.ac.uk/carn

The Coaching & Mentoring Network www.coachingnetwork.org.uk

Exemplar mentoring networks www.exemplar.com/people/11318_11863.asp

The Boston Plan for Excellence places coaching at the heart of its improvement initiative
www.annenberginstitute.org/Challenge/sites/boston.html
www.bpe.org/pubs/misc/BPS%20Coaching%20Model%206-01.pdf

A live version of this list is available at www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching

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