

Mentoring is an approach that is widely used in many contexts for the purpose of helping people to learn and develop, both professionally and personally. Numerous and frequently contradictory definitions of mentoring are to be found, with accompanying models of how mentoring is best approached. Whilst different models might utilise different terminology and vary in emphasis regarding the role of a mentor, what remains consistent is the view that mentoring is a supportive, learning relationship. The mentor, with his or her more extensive experience, is there to support the learner's development, and the quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee is extremely important.

In education, school-based mentors play a vital role in the development of trainee teachers. As with mentoring in other contexts, there is a focus on learning, development and the provision of appropriate support and encouragement. What differs in this educational setting is that there is an element of assessment that is integral to the mentor's role. The Marjon Mentoring Model is offered with a view to clarifying the purpose of mentoring, what is expected of mentors and trainees in the mentor-trainee relationship, and the nature of developmental support that mentoring should provide. It recognises that trainees are expected to grow in both competence and confidence as they progress through their placements. It also recognises that trainees will be paired with more than one mentor as they move from one placement setting to another, and that a degree of consistency in respect of the quality of mentoring that they receive will improve these transitions. For the trainee, there is a cyclical process in their development as they progress through placements and then on to their first professional appointment.

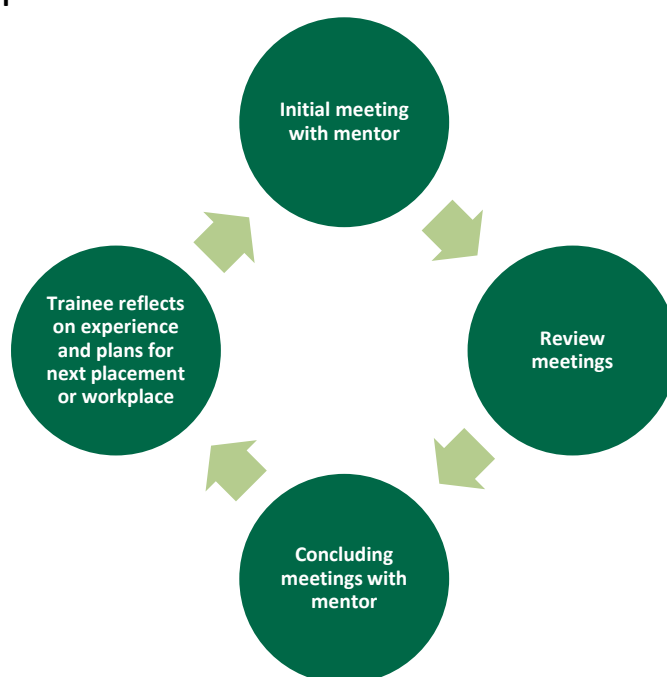
DEVELOPMENT LEVEL OF TRAINEE – VARIATIONS IN COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE LEVELS



CORRESPONDING FOCUS OF SUPPORT FROM MENTOR TO TRAINEE

This model suggests a need for flexibility in approach. As experienced mentors will be aware, each trainee progresses at different speeds and their growing competence may not be matched by a growth in self-confidence or vice-versa. Some may experience dips in self-belief or have unrealistic perceptions of their own ability. Part of the mentor's role is to offer constructive feedback that enables trainees to move through these dips and enable them to become confident and capable, outstanding teachers. A critical element of this model is the mentor's ability to provide the appropriate support to address the trainee's competence and confidence levels at a point in time. They must also make changes to their approach as the trainee makes progress. Underpinning the model is an assumption that mentors will invest energy in building constructive, professional relationships with trainees and recognise the importance that their own role plays in the trainees' development.

THE CYCLICAL MENTORING PROCESS FOR TRAINEES, INVOLVING MULTIPLE MENTORS AND ENTRY INTO EMPLOYMENT



The initial mentor-trainee meeting is an opportunity to establish the boundaries of the professional relationship that will follow and address mutual expectations. It is important to address, discuss and agree the following:

- ❖ Frequency and quality of contact – how often and for how long will meetings take place?
- ❖ How open and honest will dialogue be?
- ❖ The purpose of feedback and how it will be delivered and received
- ❖ The development of targets and goals for the trainee

This meeting will set the tone for subsequent sessions and the degree of approachability displayed by the mentor will influence the extent to which the trainee will seek their advice and guidance in the future.

Review meetings should be held regularly (weekly) and provide an opportunity to:

- ❖ Review the trainee's targets and goals
- ❖ Provide the trainee with feedback
- ❖ Recognise the trainee's achievements
- ❖ Provide the trainee with an opportunity to discuss any challenges that they are experiencing
- ❖ Develop and agree goals and action points to take forward to the next review meeting

Final summary meetings at the end of placements will cover similar ground to a review meeting but, in addition to the formative feedback (still relevant for the trainee's ongoing development), there is likely to be some concluding, feedback summary and a final review of the placement, including how well the mentoring process and relationship has worked.

MENTORING THE MENTORS

An important influence on the success of any mentoring relationship is the amount of training, preparation and ongoing support that mentors themselves receive to enable them to fulfil the role to the best of their ability. This model assumes that once mentors have been appropriately trained they will be provided with regular, ongoing support in the form of a mentor's mentor. Meetings will be held on a 1:1 basis, in a group setting, or both, providing a forum for the school-based mentor's own development with a view to increasing their confidence and competence in the role.