

# Acronyms

<b>AfL</b>	– assessment for learning	<b>TIPD</b>	– Teachers' International Professional Development
<b>APP</b>	– assessing pupil progress	<b>TLR</b>	– teaching and learning responsibility
<b>AST</b>	– advanced skills teacher	<b>TQM</b>	– total quality management
<b>CAT</b>	– cognitive abilities test	<b>VITAE</b>	– Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness
<b>CEDP</b>	– career-entry development portfolio	<b>VLE</b>	– virtual learning environments
<b>CM</b>	– curriculum manager	<b>WSV</b>	– within-school variation
<b>CPD</b>	– continuing professional development		
<b>CUREE</b>	– Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education		
<b>DfE</b>	– Department for Education		
<b>EAL</b>	– English as an additional language		
<b>ESSA</b>	– English Secondary Students' Association		
<b>G&amp;T</b>	– gifted and talented		
<b>GROW</b>	– goal, reality, options, will		
<b>HLTA</b>	– higher level teaching assistant		
<b>ICT</b>	– information and communications technology		
<b>IEP</b>	– individual education plan		
<b>LA</b>	– local authority		
<b>L2L</b>	– learning to learn		
<b>NCSL</b>	– National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services		
<b>NLP</b>	– neuro-linguistic programming		
<b>NQT</b>	– newly qualified teacher		
<b>P4C</b>	– Philosophy for Children		
<b>PD</b>	– professional development		
<b>PDP</b>	– professional development portfolios		
<b>PSHEE</b>	– personal, social, health and economic education		
<b>PLC</b>	– professional learning community		
<b>PLTS</b>	– personal learning and thinking skills		
<b>PM</b>	– performance management		
<b>QCDA</b>	– Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency		
<b>RPP</b>	– reflective practitioner programme		
<b>SEDA</b>	– Staff and Educational Development Association		
<b>SEF</b>	– self-evaluation form		
<b>SEN</b>	– special educational needs		
<b>SENCO</b>	– special educational needs coordinator		
<b>SIP</b>	– school improvement plan		
<b>SIT</b>	– senior leadership team		
<b>SMART</b>	– specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time specific		
<b>SWOT</b>	– strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats		
<b>T&amp;L</b>	– teaching and learning		
<b>TA</b>	– teaching assistant		
<b>TDA</b>	– Training and Development Agency for schools		

## Accessing different types of professional skills development – continually advancing T&L

Skills development can be delivered in many different formats – **Gareth Morewood** looks at the key approaches showing how these can work well within a professional learning community where reflective practice is the norm

**While professional development is not a new concept, it is only relatively recently that it has been seen as an essential part of being a professional.**

*The single most important factor in delivering our aspirations for children is a world-class workforce. (The children's plan, building brighter futures, DCSF, 2007)*

This does not happen by accident. Given the continually changing nature of education, staff need access to ongoing and pertinent professional development throughout their career. Continuous professional development takes many forms – it is not just about the offsite training course that happens once in a blue moon. It is widely recognised as any:

*...professional development activity for school staff which adds to their professional knowledge, enhances their professional skills and enables students to learn more effectively. (Bolam et al, 1993)*

The box above right lists common activities that the then DCSF – now the Department for Education (DfE) – highlights as representing CPD for school staff. However, there are other activities that can also provide CPD – see the box below.

However professional development is viewed within your school, it is essential that it is embedded and part of the whole-school culture. It is important to have the young people for whom the school caters at the heart of things.

### Creating a professional learning community

Within any setting, establishing and sustaining ongoing learning opportunities is an important part

#### Common CPD activities

- Training courses
- Qualifications
- School-based training
- Briefing/team meetings held at school
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Secondments
- Workshadowing
- Project work
- Observations of colleagues
- Opportunities to be observed and to receive feedback

#### The goal of a professional learning community is improved student achievement

of developing both professionally and personally. The professional learning community (PLC) is seen as a powerful staff-development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement (see: [www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html](http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html)).

The goal of a PLC is improved student achievement. Bolam et al (2005) define a PLC as a community that:

- represents a collective effort to enhance student learning
- promotes and sustains the learning of all professionals in the school
- builds knowledge through inquiry
- analyses and uses data for both reflection and improvement.

Within the school, PLCs can be both formal and informal – professional discussions in the staffroom, more formal departmental/faculty meetings, cross-department staff groups, links with other schools, and so on. Whatever approach you choose, your PLC should be structured to promote positive interaction and support all school staff in the areas set out in the box top left on page 12.

It is vital that professional learning opportunities exist across all sectors of school staff, breaking down barriers, such as perceptions that teaching and non-teaching staff cannot both play key roles in developing ideas and ensuring an ethos of professionalism across all staff is promoted and supported (see Morewood, 2009).

At Priestnall School, where I am the Director of Curriculum Support, some of our non-teaching staff with responsibility for guidance and welfare have recently undertaken the Leading from the Middle qualification, delivered by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services ([www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/professional-development/lftm.htm](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/professional-development/lftm.htm)). Once the preserve of heads of department, valuing this development opportunity across different school sectors is vital in improving standards across the whole school and in promoting equality between teaching and non-teaching staff (for further information on the development of support staff, see *Curriculum Briefing: helping hands – using in-school support to boost learning*, vol 8, no 1, 2009).

When developing a PLC appropriate to your school's context, you need to ensure that it fits within your whole-school vision and sits comfortably in the development plan.

A core characteristic of the vision is a clear and determined focus on student learning (Louis and

#### Other forms of CPD

- Working in a range of settings/classes
- Participating in Inset training days
- Familiarising yourself with school policies and procedures
- Visiting useful websites, such as the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), Department for Education and those of professional associations
- Setting up a staff network in a cluster or area
- Developing a specialism, such as speech therapy, maths or science
- Undertaking the role of mentor
- Becoming a school governor
- Working with teaching staff to develop new ideas and approaches
- Becoming a union learning rep
- Taking responsibility for an area of work within the school

### Key PLC purposes

- **Reflecting and learning together.** In our time-starved workplace, curriculum managers need to make every opportunity to provide for collaborative learning, for example using projects for professional development courses for implementing a whole-school initiative, encouraging staff to be part of university research projects and so on.
- **Reviewing student work and relevant data.** The review of work and data should be part of an agreed timetable published in advance.
- **Planning for student success.** For example, targeted revision and intervention sessions are extremely effective.
- **Focusing on students who are not making progress.** It is important that there is whole-school coordination of such interventions – a student engaged in one activity should not be excluded from another equally viable one because of the time at which they are available. It is also powerful if staff collaborate on common themes to provide more sustainable understanding and ensure all subject areas teach similar methods.

(Source: Gibbs, 1988)

### Key elements of reflection in Gibbs' cycle

- A clear description of the situation
- Analysis of feelings
- Evaluation of the experience
- Analysis to make sense of the experience
- Conclusion where other options are considered
- Reflection on experience to examine what you would do if the situation arose again

Kruse, 1995). Each student's potential achievement needs to be carefully considered, in line with expectations around the personalisation of learning (see: [http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/Personal,%20learning%20and%20thinking%20skills%20leaflet\\_tcm8-12831.pdf#false](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/uploads/Personal,%20learning%20and%20thinking%20skills%20leaflet_tcm8-12831.pdf#false)), enabling a true sense of 'shared' values. In such a community, the individual staff member is responsible for their actions, but the common good is placed on a par with personal ambition.

### Reflective practice

Donald Schön first introduced the concept of reflective practice as a critical process in refining your skills (or professional and personal attributes) in 1987. Reflective practice can be seen as a way for beginners in a discipline to recognise similarities between their own practices and those of successful practitioners, a key part of any professional growth. Reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering your experiences in

applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline (Schön, 1996).

If reflective conversations are supported through positive promotion of good work – for example, a weekly teaching and learning tip or intervention technique – then they can more naturally become part of everyday professional practice.

While there are several well-documented models of reflective practice, one that resonates strongly when working within a large educational setting is the Gibbs' reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988). The box below left outlines the key elements that the cycle encourages within the reflective process. The cycle is illustrated in the box below.

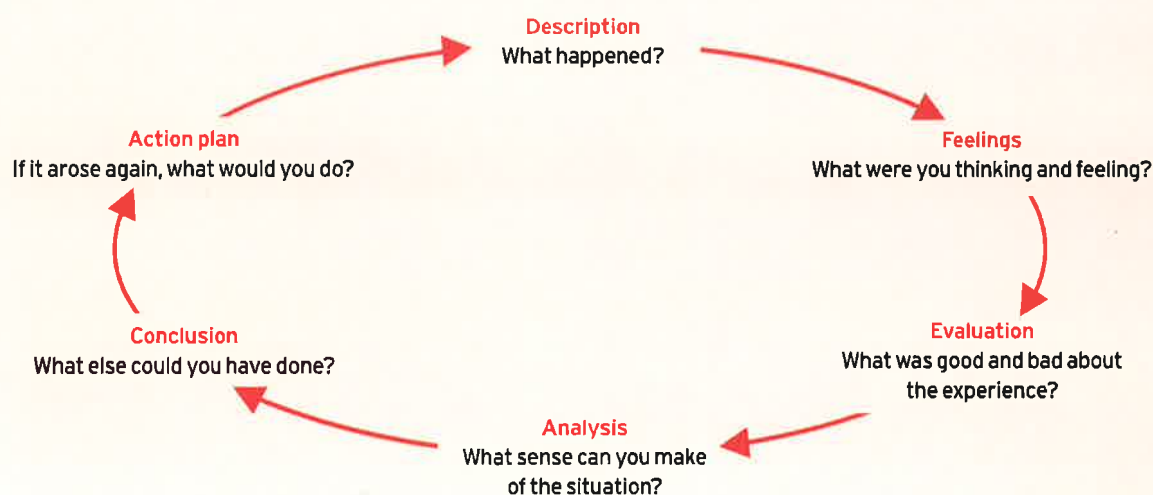
Simply providing a framework, based on Gibbs' cycle above, with spaces to 'fill in' during a reflective part of a meeting, can provide an opportunity for staff to evaluate and analyse. Starting with a period of reflection, using a well-established structure, can then allow greater debate and analysis from a more informed perspective.

### Thinking it is all worthwhile

Any form of professional development is most effective when teachers 'buy-in' to the concept. There is a growing body of evidence about what does and does not make CPD work. Much of this evidence is based on detailed reports of changes in teacher practice that have improved student progress and learning.

Very often, specific elements of such activities, such as modelling, classroom observation and coaching have been understood more as part of school or curriculum development, or classroom pedagogy, than as CPD. While some schools will have these systems and elements well established, others will only recently have started to interpret thoughtfully what they know about both student and teacher learning. Using a reflective model to structure and support this (see the box below) often helps.

### Gibbs' model of reflection



(Source: Gibbs, 1988)



## What do we want from CPD?

If CPD encourages development, supports experimentation, and provides convincing evidence of its worth then this will promote increased confidence, and subsequently teacher 'buy-in', which is essential for effective professional development. The School Zone website provides tips for CPD success – see the box right.

Sometimes, more informal opportunities are as powerful in the development of teaching staff. In my early years as a newly qualified teacher, great value was put on the professional conversation in the staffroom or in the canteen. In some settings, gaining confidence in development is an important first step.

Often, some of the less obvious professional development activity is the most effective – the box below gives some examples.

## Coaching

Over the last few years, coaching has been at the front of our agenda for CPD. The TDA approach to the value of coaching puts the emphasis on new and recently qualified staff (see: [www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/epd/epd\\_methods/coaching.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/epd/epd_methods/coaching.aspx)).

However, if supported properly, coaching can benefit all staff and provide the structure and opportunity to explore in more detail elements of practice that sometimes just get swept along with

## Tips for CPD success

- Create opportunities for teachers to become explicitly aware of what they already do and know – plus activities that encourage the development of a reflective culture among teachers where they can discuss in some depth and on the basis of evidence (such as videoclips) or shared experiences, the ways in which they and other colleagues teach

- Create opportunities for teachers to understand new ideas and approaches: to see theory demonstrated in practice and be exposed to new expertise

- Provide support for experimenting with new ideas and approaches so that teachers can work out the implications for their own subject, the students, the school and community and provide sustained feedback and support over time for teachers engaged in changing their practice

- Provide convincing evidence that the strategy or method being taught has direct benefits for student learning.

(Source: [www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/career/training/CPD\\_Difference.asp](http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/career/training/CPD_Difference.asp))

the tide. As the TDA acknowledges:

*Professional dialogue with a peer can be highly effective as a way of promoting reflection and expanding knowledge* (see: [www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/epd/epd\\_methods/coaching.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/epd/epd_methods/coaching.aspx))

The coaching model I have experienced was a part of a triad: coach, coachee and observer. In this model, the coachee is linked with a coach and another member of staff. These members of staff are usually across

## Less obvious professional-development activity

- **Teaching and learning skills groups:** allowing specific focus on elements such as developing questioning, assessment for learning (Afl), plenaries, deep learning, data analysis and so on. These groups allow staff to look specifically at areas of interest or development. It is important to offer membership of any such groups to a cross-section of staff and to promote opportunities for personal development, such as mainscale teachers taking a lead role in the development and implementation of a whole-school initiative. This can be useful not only for the school – as additional projects can be undertaken – but also for the individual staff involved. What better career development than influencing whole-school learning and teaching development?

- **Reading groups:** allowing time to analyse literature and read around topics to inform colleagues through group discussion. These can provide support for staff in a different way to more traditional professional development. The benefit of such activities can be that staff do a lot of the reading when it suits them. Often the most effective format is having agreed meetings scheduled with sufficient time to read through agreed material in between. Having a clear focus for discussions and outcomes is essential, as it is important that actions are clear and development opportunities that arise from the groups are supported.

- **Practitioner research:** staff providing detailed research into specific areas – often this can add to postgraduate qualifications through the Teacher Learning Academy ([www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk](http://www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk)). The personal development offered by, for example Masters degrees, with learning how to assess and report on interventions and projects in a different style is extremely useful in enhancing personal practice. Such research can often be used for self-evaluation form (SEF) evidence as well.

- **Teacher learning communities:** where a group of eight or so staff

meet regularly to discuss particular teaching and learning issues. Often this can provide an opportunity for staff not usually responsible for leading a group of professionals – those not on a teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) point – to lead and for more senior staff to be in a supportive role. Sometimes teaching and learning groups and personal research and learning communities complement each other. For example, a specific focus on the development of questioning across KS4 may well lend itself to a teaching and learning group that develops the rationale and research brief, a learning community that discusses and develops the ideas and parameters for trial, and an opportunity for one or two staff to 'write-up' findings as part of personal research. Such 'joined-up thinking' needs support from the top, as do all teaching and learning activities (see the interview on coaching in the box at the top of page 15), if they are to be effective and truly influence student achievement.

- **Building up a staffroom resource bank:** that individuals can turn to this for advice on particular teaching and learning issues. Many schools have areas of the library for staff reference; often this comprises teaching and learning books and journals. Taking responsibility for your own professional development is an important part of being a 'professional'. The production of articles and personal staff write-ups also provides useful support across institutions; many teachers benefit more from an abstract from a colleague than a book or research paper. Accessibility and understanding of the value of teacher time is a key factor to consider.

- **Informal discussions over coffee/out of school:** often new staff feel insecure in their existing practice, let alone their development; an opportunity for an informal discussion is useful for a number of reasons, especially in securing confidence and so laying the foundation for further professional development

## GROW model of coaching

**Goal** – the coach and the coachee set their goal for the session, such as assessing students' prior learning with greater success

**Reality** – looking at where things are at the moment (the coachee's current view of reality)

**Options** – ways forward or strategies for reaching the goal

**Will** – the commitment to which action to take, rating the level of commitment on a scale of 1–10

**Mentoring can support changes in roles and development of new ideologies and techniques**

## Advantages of coaching

- Dedicated time to discuss issues
- An opportunity for reflection on practice
- The opportunity to iron out problems and look at a range of options
- A coach to move you forward and keep you on track
- An agreed strategy to go away and trial, and report back on
- Opportunities to deepen thinking

different subject areas and often across different T&L responsibilities and management and leadership positions, which can provide richer professional development opportunities and future links, than working with staff with whom you are regularly developing learning. An initial meeting allows for the setting of specific objectives and points for consideration – the agenda. Then a lesson is observed by the coach and observer and filmed to assist with the review and coaching process. Reasonably quickly after the observed lesson, all three meet to discuss the agreed observed points and evidence this through the video. This allows for a focus of development and this is often supported by the coachee when observing other colleagues, either as part of the original triad, or in forming a new one that supports their identified needs more appropriately. Success factors include:

- having appropriate time to complete the sessions effectively
- being trained sufficiently and understanding the methodology clearly
- having clarity as to the purpose of the coaching.

Having had clearly briefed pre-observation meetings and also the opportunity, should staff wish, for sessions to be recorded on video, the power of structured peer observation and support is an extremely effective one. Many schools adopt the 'goal, reality, options, will' (GROW) model of coaching. With this model, each coaching session (which lasts around 45 minutes) is structured in the manner outlined in the box above left.

It is important that schools invest time in allowing this process of coaching to take effect; it is not something that can simply be 'done' or 'ticked off'. Coaching as a structured system of professional development is a time-rich activity but definitely one that has proven links to the improvement of learning and teaching. Staff involved in coaching sessions note a number of advantages, including those set out in the box left. The box below provides some useful resources.

Before setting up a coaching system in your school, it is worth going to see a system that is established and speak with staff who have been through the process already. Learn from their experiences and see how the model they have adopted has bedded into their whole-school provision for professional development. The case example in the box at the top of page 15 shares the insights of one of the members of our teaching and learning faculty on what they learned from their experience of setting up a coaching programme.

Coaching is most effective when:

- the person wants to grow and develop
- there is a gap between where they are now and where they want to be
- there is a need to design and implement a plan of action.

The core skills a great coach requires are:

- listening for understanding
- questioning for clarity
- preparing action
- providing support and challenge (source: <http://hayesparkcoaching.com/index.htm>).

## Inset

Historically, during my teaching career, Inset has been viewed purely as five or six days throughout the year when the students do not attend and a series of sessions are put on for teaching and support staff. The modern view of Inset is considerably different.

It is important to see training and professional development as an ongoing, fluid process, as opposed to being defined by specific calendared days. Over the last few years, there has been an increased focus on personalised learning, both for students and staff alike. It is important that staff take responsibility for their own professional development and training needs, and that they have an opportunity to personalise their training as required.

Establishing a clear structure of shorter, ongoing training opportunities, as opposed to simply leaving training to the designated days, affords a more fluid and effective response to staff need. Disaggregating Inset days, adding to holidays and spreading the designated training hours throughout the year as twilight sessions often boosts staff morale and allows for a more appropriate spread and timing of training need. This year, for example, we agreed to have a Friday and Monday disaggregated in November, providing a long weekend for staff and students and the time is allocated on Wednesday-evening twilight sessions throughout the year. However the specific time is structured, consultation with staff is essential, as staff perceptions and attitudes to training is a vital starting point.

Over the last four years, I have established a series of Monday-night training sessions to support new colleagues, feeder primary staff and other interested visitors. These sessions are based around the curriculum support faculty and its response to supporting vulnerable learners with specific needs, taking advantage of inhouse expertise, which often provides more appropriate PD, suited to the specific needs of the individual and their role within the school, than if they were to be involved on an external course or qualification. Sessions included:

- an introduction to specific learning difficulties – identification and strategies for the classroom
- understanding the brain – an introduction to brain development and language
- understanding attachment – strategies for supporting students in your classroom

After the recent series of sessions, feedback has

## Useful things to know: coaching videos

- See a real coaching session in action at: [www.teachers.tv/video/2504](http://www.teachers.tv/video/2504)
- Watch a video on mentoring and coaching as CPD at: [www.teachers.tv/video/5079](http://www.teachers.tv/video/5079)



## Case example: setting up an effective coaching programme

### Setting up a coaching programme

Setting up a coaching programme is the trickiest part: poor coaching is worse than no coaching and requires careful training. There needs to be opportunity and reason for coaching to exist and it is not always the case that people just suddenly decide to want to be coached. Staff may resent it if it is seen as part of an imposed structure so it must be 'bought into' by staff right from the start.

### Identifying the best coaches

The Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE, see: [www.curee-paccts.com](http://www.curee-paccts.com)) has suggestions on the qualities of coaches and the skills required. Akin to a counsellor, they need the ability to empathise but also to distance themselves so as to find the probing questions that unlock the potential of the client, without being too involved. Not everyone can be an effective coach.

### Training counsellors

Training should be seen in two parts. First there should be an introduction to what coaching is looking at, how it compares and relates

to mentoring and the language and structure of a session. There should then be a period of consolidation with another trainee and an observer before taking 'proper' sessions. The second part is the ability to meet and discuss further strategies exploring how some elements of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) can assist in rapport building.

### Making coaching an essential part of professional development for all staff

Coaching needs to be built in to structures and requires a committed leadership. One example of good practice from a school in Gateshead is that every new member of the school is required to take part in a coaching cycle.

### What we have learned from experience

Without leadership actively involved and the structures in place to necessitate a positive coaching experience, impact will be low and only isolated pockets of improvement will occur. Coaching needs the clear and active backing of the headteacher of the organisation to encourage others to commit the time to it.

been extremely positive, as the focus is very much on specific transferable classroom skills.

Whatever the modern trend or focus, it is vital to have a clear understanding of what makes for good training – the box below outlines the need to set 'SMART' training objectives, while the box below right outlines other factors to address to achieve effective training.

### Mentoring

Any mentoring role is based on a direct professional relationship between the mentor and the member of staff being mentored. It should not be assumed that mentoring is only suitable for staff in the early stages of their development; often mentoring can support changes in roles and development of new ideologies and techniques. However this relationship is established, it is a personal and specific one, and I have always favoured providing written guidance with regard to roles and responsibilities to avoid uncertainty and potential confusion. Features of

**It is important to see training and professional development as an ongoing, fluid process, as opposed to being defined by specific calendared days**

### SMART training objectives

Training objectives (personal to each member of staff) need to be SMART:

- **Specific** – what is the training need and what results are expected?
- **Measurable** – how will the training improve the current situation/develop the staff professionally and how this will be measured?
- **Agreed** – all training should be agreed by everyone as part of a cohesive and structured programme
- **Realistic** – outcomes of the training and CPD must be realistic and relevant
- **Timebound** – a clear and realistic time limit needs to be set for when the training needs to have taken place and its results be assessed

effective written guidance may include the elements set out in the box at the bottom of page 16.

Effective mentoring is enhanced in schools where there are well-developed and managed systems in place to plan, monitor and evaluate the work of both mentors and trainees. Participation in mentoring partnerships encourages schools to reflect on and improve their own practice – see the box at the bottom of page 17.

Linking the mentor and mentee can be the most crucial part of the process. Sometimes, seemingly very different colleagues provide ideal matches. A good mentor is someone who has been where the mentee is now and got through it – sharing their experience and knowledge becomes a key part of the successful mentoring relationship.

### Achieving effective training: factors for success

- **Have clear and evaluated objectives**
- **Have open opportunities for development** (accessible training for all)
- **Encourage others:** peer support and encouragement is powerful
- **Be flexible to individual needs:** consider training in different ways and at varying times, to fit around their other commitments
- **Involve your staff in decisions:** consult prior to establishing schedules and training plans
- **Be inclusive:** monitor the age and range of employees attending training so that no one is excluded and then analyse the need from staff to inform future provision
- **Gain feedback:** consistent and regular evaluation informs future training and also provides evidence of existing provision.

### Possible functions of a good mentor

- May suggest new ideas you have not thought about and support the development of them
- May question your decisions and provide support as a 'critical friend'
- Will help you shape your future strategy and support development, both personally and professionally
- Will support and congratulate you when things go right, and provide support and encouragement when things do not go right
- May disagree with you at times and provide constructive criticism, and supportive development
- Will be on hand to help you review the situation when things go wrong, support you positively and help you learn from mistakes

(Adapted from [www.nowletsgetstarted.co.uk/business\\_mentors.aspx](http://www.nowletsgetstarted.co.uk/business_mentors.aspx)).

With a good mentor, you can:

- learn from his or her expertise
- receive feedback on your performance and abilities
- learn what it takes to succeed in the school and profession
- learn specific skills and knowledge that are required for your success
- develop a broader networking base
- have a sounding board to bounce ideas off and a vent for your frustrations.

(Source: [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV\\_93.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_93.htm)).

The relationship needs to have a clear structure and not become just a chance to have a chat or moan about common issues of disquiet. It is essential that mentors have clear guidance and the necessary skills to retain positive professional relationships with mentees. Any such training should allow the participants to:

- understand the role of the mentor
- develop the skills necessary for mentoring
- develop strategies for meetings with the mentee.

A good mentor will provide support and encouragement that is not always constrained by an agenda or fixed management function – see the box above.

**It is important that staff take responsibility for their own professional development and training needs, and that they have an opportunity to personalise their training as required**

Successful mentoring is a balance; it is important that the mentor is not too controlling or too overtly supportive. Both the mentor and mentee need to understand that dedicated time should be allocated, and agreed; if either party is not fully committed it will result in anxieties and disaffection, consequently resulting in an ineffective relationship. While a lot of mentoring is common sense, the following pitfalls should be avoided:

- power (instead of partnership)
- control (instead of cooperation)
- manipulation (instead of mutual respect)
- unclear goals/no plan for success

(Source: [www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/barker/5377/Mentoring/BenefitsAndPitfallsMasonandBailey.pdf](http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/barker/5377/Mentoring/BenefitsAndPitfallsMasonandBailey.pdf)).

Mentoring can be extremely helpful when used as a targeted support and development mechanism, for example, with a specific teaching and learning remit. When completely supported by whole-school leadership, this opportunity can only significantly enhance the quality of learning and achievement for the students.

### Maximising power of staff bulletins

Most schools and establishments have a newsletter or weekly bulletin. Ensuring staff read and use these to improve practice and learning is not always an easy task. It is important for staff to see the newsletter as something of value, so it should provide factual information and be easy to read.

Timing is also important; if it is a weekly issue, it needs to be accessible and not cumbersome. Sometimes a half-termly publication with some more in-depth discussion articles can be more effective. My personal preference, stemming from my experience as special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), is one of little and often; busy school staff value simple, distilled tips and ready-to-use strategies.

Achieving the balance between quality and easy-to-use information is not simple. Understanding your staff needs, through performance-management objectives, personal meetings and ongoing coaching

### Written guidance for mentors – elements to include

- **A clear outline of the principles of partnership:** understanding each other's role and expected outcomes for mentor and mentee
- **Policies for mentoring:** these must be relevant to the linguistic and geographical context of the school and (if appropriate) partner institutions – it may be more appropriate to match up mentors from similar ethnic backgrounds if working within a particularly multicultural setting, for example, or to link mentors with specific linguistic skills, depending on the work being undertaken
- **Requirements and expectations the school has:** any mentoring is conducted within established school expectations
- **Advice on the management of partnership and quality-assurance procedures:** understanding how outcomes are measured and quality is assured is an important part of securing a solid foundation from which the mentoring evolves
- **Well-defined roles and responsibilities for all involved:** a clear

understanding of the specific roles of the mentor and mentee is essential, and a dialogue on these during the initial meeting is a key element to success

- **Useful checklists and prompts:** having a clear agenda is essential for any meeting but, with mentoring, checklists and prompts as to the nature of the programme will support development
- **Specific requirements for assessing progress:** after agreeing the programme goals, guidance on how it is assessed must form part of the partnership; being unsure as to how outcomes are measured creates uncertainty and reduces the effectiveness of the relationship
- **Contact names and addresses:** establishing how and when contact can be made can sometimes avoid embarrassing situations or an expectation that the mentor is at the beck and call of the mentee, even out of school hours

(Source: Estyn, 2001)



and mentoring all help to feed into this bigger picture.

Staff who are difficult to reach can sometimes be encouraged to support new staff in areas they have strength in and may also share good practice through newsletters and publications.

### Learning logs

Using learning logs that allow teachers to share weekly teaching objectives with students quickly and easily (see: [www.learninglogs.co.uk](http://www.learninglogs.co.uk)) can provide a powerful additional strategy to support a range of student needs across all key stages. In a learning log, students record their own thoughts and ideas in response to the learning objectives or challenges set by the teacher in the lesson. As each log is a personalised response, the impact on individual student progress and learning is tailored to their needs but also provides a unique professional development tool for staff, in seeing student perceptions with regard to expected learning outcomes. Further investigation and trialling with a specific target group may be an appropriate way forward for individual schools.

### Reflective diaries

Reflective diaries can be an invaluable method of developing professional practice. To work well, staff need clear guidance on the purpose and role of the reflection, perhaps even linking it into other forms of development, for example, as part of a coaching triad. The box above right illustrates another use of such diaries. It is also important to convince participants of the real value of true reflective work: that it can offer invaluable insights into how students learn and experience activities.

### International professional development

The Teachers' International Professional Development (TIPD) (see: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/tipd](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/tipd)) programme has provided opportunities for teachers to experience best practice in international education by participating in short-term study visits to other countries. Since the programme was launched in 2000, thousands of teachers have benefited from the annual £3m in funding, visiting schools in more than 50 countries across the world, as far afield as South Africa and Singapore. I am one such beneficiary – see the box right.

### Ongoing development

Whatever training or development is undertaken, a clear and well-reported evaluation needs to occur, both for specific individual events and also for the overview of whole-year programmes. Providing a clear report to governors, detailing the specific training undertaken and the impact on staff development and student out-

### Case example: use of reflective diaries

I used diaries for initial research into the impact of a partnership in supporting students on the autistic spectrum at my school. One of the specialist teaching assistants, the specialist teacher and myself all kept reflective diaries on the impact of our own work on the inclusion of the young man whom the partnership supported. This research provided a wealth of additional development opportunities for the staff concerned and also for the wider inclusion agenda.

comes, secures a rigorous system that supports whole-school improvement and improves outcomes for the students. For more on effective evaluation, see the article on pages 37–44. See page 52 for useful resources for evaluating impact and for useful websites.

As a profession, teachers and other members of school staff have access to a range of different professional development opportunities, be they inhouse, external or even abroad. However different venues and experiences are used and whatever methods are employed, one thing is an absolute: any professional development needs to be focused, linked clearly into whole-school and personal objectives, and allow for individual, personalisation of learning. With so many different forms of development available, it is essential that you do not forget the skills that are on site. Never underestimate the impact of time in allowing staff to have professional conversations and support an open culture of dialogue and ethos of sharing practice.

**Gareth Morewood, Director of Curriculum Support, Priestnall School, Stockport**

As a passionate advocate for inclusive education, Gareth has written extensively on his philosophy of inclusive education and provision over the past two years and regularly speaks at national conferences on provision within mainstream settings for students with complex needs. Gareth is currently working towards a professional doctorate comparing his philosophical, inclusive views of being a SENCO against the perceived vision, as defined through the new national SENCO qualification. He writes here in a personal capacity.

### Case example: value of TIPD

I have been lucky enough to participate on a TIPD study visit twice, once in 2004 to Clarke County School's District, in Nevada, USA, and again in 2008 to Nijmegen in Holland. The visits were quite different and both afforded me an opportunity to develop professionally in a manner unique to the opportunity itself. In the USA in 2004, I had an opportunity to analyse the development structures and training opportunities across a vast and transient school population. Keeping standards high and ensuring schools have staff capable of delivering the curriculum was the task of one specific unit within the schools district. This was a massive task, and allowed me to develop specific elements of their practice within my own setting. Induction materials were extremely comprehensive and easy to use; such a model was essential when considering the huge numbers of new staff starting work each year. The development of performance-management systems for all school staff also provided me with a great opportunity to develop our now well-established teaching assistant development record, supporting professional development and providing career laths for all staff. In Holland, I was able to focus on vocational learning and the development of 'streams' of learning. This supported my personal understanding of the introduction of diplomas and vast range of alternative curriculum options available through personalised-learning opportunities.

### Useful things to know: mentoring and CPD resource

This video at [www.teachers.tv/video/3254](http://www.teachers.tv/video/3254) visits Yorkshire to see how schools there have created a support network for mentors, enabling them to share best practice and gain professional recognition for their work. In addition, Fiona Flynn visits Swayne Park School in Essex, which has a thriving culture of co-coaching, to find out how teachers can benefit from introducing new ideas into their teaching.



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## Useful resources

### Useful books

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### Useful websites

- Accelerated learning: [www.acceleratedlearning.com](http://www.acceleratedlearning.com)
- 'Benefits and pitfalls of mentoring': [www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/barker/5377/Mentoring/BenefitsAndPitfallsMasonandBailey.pdf](http://www.faculty.english.ttu.edu/barker/5377/Mentoring/BenefitsAndPitfallsMasonandBailey.pdf)
- Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education: [www.curee-paccts.com](http://www.curee-paccts.com)
- CPD can make a difference: [www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/career/training/CPD\\_Difference.asp](http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/articles/career/training/CPD_Difference.asp)
- CPD evaluation resources: [www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpdleadership/evaluate\\_impact.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpdleadership/evaluate_impact.aspx)
- CPD Leader: [www.cpdleader.com](http://www.cpdleader.com)
- Department for Education: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)
- The Goldsmiths Company – provides teachers with grants to take time out from the classroom for four to six weeks for personal and professional development; applicants need a minimum of five years' teaching for £5,000 funding: [www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk](http://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk)
- Learning to Learn: [www.learntolearn.org.uk](http://www.learntolearn.org.uk)
- Learning triads: [www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/establishing-school-staff-support-systems-4097](http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/establishing-school-staff-support-systems-4097)
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- National College: [www.nationalcollege.org.uk](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk)
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- Peer observation example: [www.teachers.tv/video/3406](http://www.teachers.tv/video/3406)
- Professional development: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment)
- TDA CPD evaluation resources: [www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpdleadership/evaluate\\_impact.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpdleadership/evaluate_impact.aspx)
- TDA performance management: [www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/performance\\_management.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/performance_management.aspx)
- Teachers International Professional Development Opportunities: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/tipd](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/tipd)