Module 7, week 5

ECT Mentor session

Module 7: Engaging pupils in learning

Week 5: Structured reflection upon how alterations to the ECT's teaching are promoting good progress and demonstrating good subject and curriculum knowledge

Session Elements

reflection

collaborative learning

rehearsal

independent planning

Learning Intentions for this session

In addition to their focus, the case studies are a reminder how to:

Increase likelihood of material being retained by:

2h Balancing exposition, repetition, practice and retrieval of critical knowledge and skills

2i Planning regular review and practice of key ideas and concepts over time

2j Designing practice, generation and retrieval tasks that provide just enough support so that pupils experience a high success rate when attempting challenging work

2k Increasing challenge with practice and retrieval as knowledge becomes more secure (e.g., by removing scaffolding, lengthening spacing or introducing interacting elements)

Support pupils to build increasingly complex mental models, by:

3g Revisiting the big ideas of the subject over time and teaching key concepts through a range of examples

3h Drawing explicit links between new content and the core concepts and

principles in the subject

Help pupils apply knowledge and skills to other contexts, by:

3k Ensuring pupils have relevant domain-specific knowledge, especially when being asked to think critically within a subject

And develop pupils' literacy, by:

3n Supporting younger pupils to become fluent readers

3p Modelling reading comprehension by asking questions, making predictions and summarising when reading

Introduction

So far in this module, your mentee has agreed with you a development focus in relation to Standard 2 and/or 3 and framed this as an exploratory question. They collected some data about their normal practice, the insights from which they shared with you last week when you also agreed an alteration to their practice based upon the research of the ECF.

Next week, your mentee will present the findings of their Module 7 inquiry.

This week is an opportunity for you to check on the progress your mentee is making with the change in their practice. You can help them to prepare for next week when they present their findings. You might also allow them some time to analyse any evidence they have collected so far.

Case Studies

You have seen these case studies before: they explore how 2 teachers—improving their practice and without adding to their workload—conducted their own practitioner inquiries into promoting good progress and demonstrating good subject and curriculum knowledge.

The case studies set out the issue the teacher was interested in, how they gathered evidence about the impact upon pupils of their own normal practice and how they decided to introduce an alteration to the way they taught.

We also now get to see what happened next to Yemi and Kishan as they introduced the small changes to their practice.

When reading these cases, your mentee will need to take account of their own pupils' characteristics, the context of their classroom and the nature of the material that they are teaching.

Embedding retrieval, practice and challenge

Yemi is a chemistry specialist teaching a Year 10 class who are motivated and able to work independently. She notices that some students are able to finish sets of problems involving drawing the atomic structure of an element quickly and accurately, whilst others need support and are often left behind. She also feels that they are not able to then apply this knowledge in thinking about which elements are more reactive. She talks to a colleague who she shares this class with, and they suspect that recall of key points about atomic structure and the periodic table might be at play here.

They decide they need to develop their practice in this area so come up with an exploratory inquiry question together:

> *To what extent do we give pupils opportunities to recall key knowledge about atomic structure and the periodic table?*

The 2 teachers decide to work together to investigate this. In one lesson, they ask pupils to try to answer a set of problems which ask them to draw the atomic structure of a few elements and to then explain how reactive they are. They do not provide any resources for this and explain to the pupils that they are setting a very challenging task and that pupils should try and identify where they struggle if they can. In the next lesson, the other teacher gives them a similar set of problems but makes this 'open book', allowing them to draw on a textbook to help, but asking them to note down what

they have to look up. From considering their exercise books and talking to the pupils afterwards, they find that:

- pupils need to recall the basic facts of the structure of atomic shells
- pupils who answer questions quickly, already know ‘rules’ about which groups in the periodic table are more reactive
- pupils who complete questions are able to relate their knowledge of atomic structure to their knowledge about reactivity
- Conclusion: all pupils need to know the ‘rules’ about which groups in the periodic table are more reactive before they can answer questions with a high degree of success or apply this knowledge to other problems; they realise that this is probably always true about the importance of core knowledge (3.5)

Alteration to Practice: Yemi’s approach to embedding retrieval, practice and challenge

Yemi and her colleague look at the Research and Practice Summaries from Module 2, in particular those covering ECF 2h, 2i, 2j and 2k. They realise that they need to build in retrieval practice as well as increasing the challenge of the exercises over time. They decide to plan 3 revision activities, which they will spread over the next 3 lessons (whilst still teaching other content). In them, they will:

- repeat questions which ask pupils to recall the structure of atomic shells, and practise drawing structures (2i)
- as their recall becomes more secure, ask pupils to make predictions about reactivity based on which group and element is in the periodic table, and based on the atomic structure (2j)
- increase the complexity of the task, by challenging the pupils to consider reactions that occur between different (ionic) elements (2k)

What happened next?

- Yemi taught the 3 revision sessions
- from her pupils' work, she noted that more of them had stronger recall, with fewer misconceptions appearing in their work
- more of her pupils were able to confidently take on the next level of challenge, but some still struggled
- as she moved to the next topic, she decided to take a similar approach to embedding retrieval, practice and challenge, with an extra alteration: she set a retrieval quiz each week for her pupils to do at home—she expected that this extra retrieval practice would provide just enough support so that pupils experienced a high success rate when attempting challenging work (2j)

Supporting a class with reading comprehension

Kishan is a Year 3 teacher in an inner-city school and is pleased with how his class are developing fluency with reading. Having learned about this during his ITT year, and in Module 2 of his ECF year 1, Kishan has promoted reading for pleasure by reading aloud with his class and using a range of different texts and genres including fairy tales, poetry, fiction and some non-fiction. However, he notices that they sometimes struggle to discuss the feelings and thoughts that characters might have and to draw on the texts to understand the motives involved. This becomes clear in his whole-class questioning and pupil written work around comprehension. Following a discussion with another Year 3 teacher, Kishan decides to consider the details of which texts they struggle with and which they find easy to comprehend or think critically about.

He drafts an exploratory inquiry question:

> Under what conditions are pupils more likely to be able to comprehend the motivations of characters in a range of texts?

To answer this question, Kishan and his colleague decide to review a sample of pupil work on reading comprehension and see if there was any relation to the types of texts being read. What they find suggests that:

- when the pupils know the context well, they comprehend motivation more easily, and they can make critical connections (3.6); the pupils are able to explain the actions of characters more readily when they know the story and context well (e.g., when it is about a child rather than a magical creature in a fairy tale)—they also found a text more difficult when it was set around a farm
- skills that pupils demonstrate in one area do not necessarily transfer to another (3.8); pupils are sometimes able to make claims about the intentions and feelings of characters in fiction, including in fairy tales but seem to really struggle in poetry
- pupils can connect details more readily, and understand the relationships between them when they appear more closely together; in non-fiction, pupils are able to infer motivations if they are described in the same paragraph as a description of the character but struggle when reference to the character is a long way from the context which leads to the action—for example, a newspaper-style account of why an elderly lady is waiting by the letterbox is a long way from text saying that people receive a card from the queen when they are 100 years old

Alteration to Practice: Building critical thinking and transfer skills

Reflecting on the evidence he had gathered so far, Kishan went back to the Research and Practice Summaries from Module 2, in particular relating to 3g, 3k, 3n and 3p. He found the useful reminder around how pupils need to be secure in their understanding before they can think critically or transfer their knowledge or skills from one domain to another. He thought it would be helpful if his pupils could experience models of how to question, make predictions or summarise to improve reading comprehension. He therefore decided to reorganise the next sequence of learning with the following principles in mind:

- using himself as a model first, thinking out loud as he was reading: asking questions—'Why do I think Biff did that?', making predictions—'I think Biff is going to find the key', and summarising—'So I think that children all got home safely because they helped each other when they needed it' (3p)
- making sure that pupils have a clear understanding of the context presented within the text and support them in asking questions to do this (3k)
- presenting the same type of narrative first (e.g., fiction) until they are confident in considering motivations of characters before introducing other forms (e.g., poetry)

- as those new forms are introduced, being explicit about how the same comprehension skills might still apply, despite the different form (3g)
- using succinct texts to start with, and considering using more involved or lengthy texts for those pupils who seem to have a good grasp early on (3n)

What happened next?

- Kishan reorganised his sequence of learning as planned
- he modelled out loud the reading comprehension skills of questioning, predicting and summarising
- he focused reading comprehension tasks first on fiction, made sure his pupils were sure of the context present in the texts and helped them build their comprehension skills there
- when he later introduced other genres, he made explicit how similar the skills of reading comprehension were, and where they might be different
- many more of his pupils were able to articulate when *this* is similar to *that*; these pupils enjoyed making connections between different subjects or topics—a few did not
- as he moved to the next topic, he decided to take a similar approach; for those few who were still struggling to comprehend motivation in different types of text, he decided that they needed more practice working on the types of text (short stories) where they were having more success—their knowledge was not yet secure in the one area to allow them to transfer it elsewhere

Mentor Meeting Activities

Throughout the session, try to refer explicitly to the Learning Intentions, and encourage your mentee to record key points in their Learning Log. Tailor your use of the Theory to Practice activities below in response to the Review and Plan sections

of this session.

Review and Plan 5 mins

(1) Start this session by briefly following up the actions that the mentee set at the end of last week's mentor meeting. Ask your mentee to summarise

a. what they did
b. the impact of this on pupil learning (including how they are evaluating this)
c. what they will do going forward to build on these actions

Clarify the Learning Intentions for this session with your mentee.

Theory to Practice 35 mins

1. Reflection

Last week, your mentee shared with you their assessment of their normal practice in relation to their focus for development in Standard 2 or 3. You agreed then on an 'alteration to their practice'—this may have been a simple small change, or something more fundamental, depending on your mentee's circumstances.

Help your mentee to reflect on their progress with implementing the alteration to their practice. Remember, you should not expect them to have done everything yet, and not everything will be 'going well'.

These might be useful questions to ask:

In relation to…	What's going well, or not so well?
how you are implementing the change to your practice	
how you are gathering evidence of impact on your pupils	
how your pupils are responding	

Look back at the 2 case studies to find out what happened next to Yemi and Kishan. Note that they tried to implement the changes to their practice. They were largely, but not entirely, successful. Because they were able to reflect on what was going

well, and not so well, they were able to introduce further small changes to their teaching.

2. Collaborative Planning and Rehearsal

Next week, your mentee will present to you the findings of their exploratory inquiry for Module 7. This is not intended to be a formal presentation, but it should at least be a structured oral report.

It would be useful to share with them the sort of structure their report might take

Please tell me what your original exploratory question was, and how it related to the ECF.

Remind me what you discovered about the impact upon your pupils of your normal practice in that area.

Tell me again what alteration to your practice you agreed to implement, and how that related to the ECF.

What improvements did you hope to see?

How did you collect evidence of any improvements?

What did you discover?

Invite your mentee to rehearse their report now—they can use again some of the answers they gave in the reflection exercise they just did.

3. Independent Planning

It is likely that your mentee is still in the process of gathering and analysing evidence for impact upon their pupils of the alteration to their practice. You could let them use some of this time now to do that gathering and analysing.

Next Steps 5 mins

Agree with your mentee how they will now put their learning from this week's session into practice in their teaching. Help your mentee to clarify:

1. the action(s) they will take and how these action(s) are expected to contribute to improving pupil learning
2. what success will 'look like' in relation to these action(s)
3. how they will evaluate their success in taking these action(s)

Note the date of your next mentor meeting, when they will present the findings of their Module 7 inquiry.