

ECT Mentor session

Module 9: Fulfilling professional responsibilities (II)

Week 1: Managing professional development

Session Elements



discussion with
mentor

Learning Intentions for this session

Your ECT will learn how to:

Develop as a professional, by:

- 8a.** Engaging in professional development focused on developing an area of practice with clear intentions for impact on pupil outcomes, sustained over time with built-in opportunities for practice.
- 8b.** Strengthening pedagogical and subject knowledge by participating in wider networks.
- 8c.** Seeking challenge, feedback and critique from mentors and other colleagues in an open and trusting working environment.
- 8d.** Engaging critically with research and discussing evidence with colleagues.
- 8e.** Reflecting on progress made, recognising strengths and weaknesses and identifying next steps for further improvement.

Introduction

In Year 1 of this programme, ECTs were introduced to the content of the Early Career Framework relating to Teachers' Standard 8: Fulfil wider professional responsibilities. In this final module of the programme, you will return to this content with your mentee to explore how they have developed as a professional and to look

ahead to how their professional responsibilities might evolve as their career progresses.

In this first session of the module, you and your mentee will look at how they can manage their professional development as they progress their career.

Research and Practice Summary

A new focus

Lauren, Beth and Keith are catching up over coffee at the end of a busy summer term. The three met at university and all started teaching at the same time. Now, looking towards their third year in the profession, they are sharing their latest news:

Lauren is looking forward to a new challenge as she takes up a job in an alternative provision setting for pupils temporarily excluded from school. She has really enjoyed teaching geography in a large middle school and developing her skills as a subject specialist. Her new role will mean working with small groups of pupils across a number of different subjects – not just geography. Lauren knows that her new pupils will have a range of educational and personal backgrounds and she's keen to plan the professional development that she needs to prepare well for this exciting role.

Beth is a science teacher. She's recently been promoted to curriculum lead for Key Stage 3 science. Her main priority for the coming year will be to lead work around improving the transition into Year 7 science for pupils coming from local primary schools. Beth hasn't had any contact with primary schools since her PGCE course – she knows that she now needs to read up on primary science and expectations of pupils as they move from primary to secondary schooling.

Keith is saying goodbye this term to his Year 6 class. He has really enjoyed teaching in Key Stage 2 for the last two years; now he's moving down to Reception to take on a new challenge. He is wondering how best to prepare for such a different group of pupils in just a couple of months' time.

Lauren, Beth and Keith all face new challenges in the coming year. What

professional development activities could they undertake to ensure that they are well prepared for their new roles?

During the early years of your career, you can make rapid progress in your development as a teacher through effective professional development. However, not all professional development is equally effective – the type of professional development and how you engage with it make all the difference.

In Module 5, you learned about the characteristics of effective professional development. As you continue to progress in your career it will be important to engage in learning activities that best support your development. As you gain more autonomy about how you manage your professional development, remember the following characteristics of activities most likely to help you develop:

- **focus** – having a specific focus on something that is likely to improve pupil outcomes is a central feature of effective professional development. If professional development is too broad, or focuses on things unlikely to benefit pupils, then it is unlikely to be ‘effective’ overall
- **collaboration and expert challenge** – working with colleagues, particularly those with relevant expertise, can make professional development more motivating. Colleagues can also provide support and challenge to help you develop, and as you continue to progress, you may find it helpful to expand the range of networks that you engage with to continue to develop your subject and pedagogical knowledge
- **sustained** – one-off professional development tends not to be very effective. Most changes to how you teach require sustained focus and effort; this is especially important when you want to change habits that you have embedded in your practice, such as how you use questions to explore pupil understanding or how you respond to poor behaviour during lessons
- **practice** – there is often a big gap between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’. Practice, sustained over time, can help you to embed habits and routines so that you can move from simply knowing about an aspect of effective teaching to using it regularly and purposefully in your teaching
- **evidence-informed** – evidence can help you to develop in many different ways, including helping you to prioritise areas of your practice that are likely to have the

greatest impact on learning. Being evidence-informed helps you to recognise and avoid fads that are unlikely to benefit your pupils

Combining these approaches will be more effective than relying on any one approach alone. For instance, you could engage in professional development that involves collaborating with colleagues and wider networks to critically discuss evidence and identify areas of focus that are likely to benefit pupils, followed by sustained practice with expert support and coaching.

Preparing for a new responsibility

Beth has decided to draft an action plan to help her prepare for her new job. She describes her first learning goal and actions:

- improve my understanding of primary science teaching
 - a) use my alumni membership from my PGCE course to access the university online library and read some journal articles about approaches to teaching science in primary school; bring at least one of these articles to the school journal club to discuss with colleagues
 - b) find some organisations that support primary science teaching and engage with the resources they make available online (e.g. Primary Science Teaching Trust); discuss this with other teachers in the science department as a way of making sense of the resources and sharing learning across the team

Keith suggests that Beth could also visit his primary school to see some science teaching in action, and he offers to come and observe Beth with a Year 7 class in return. They agree this would be good professional development for them both as they will experience science teaching in a different setting and Beth will receive some useful feedback on her practice. The friends have an open, trusting relationship which will help them to reflect together and share challenge, feedback and critique that promotes their professional learning. Beth thinks this would be a great idea. She asks Keith to focus on the analogies and explanations she uses to explain scientific concepts, and whether he can help her to make sure that she builds on what pupils will already have learned at primary school.

Beth is able to exploit a number of opportunities to learn here. Reading

academic papers with colleagues is a good way to engage critically with research so that her work is evidence-informed. Subject and phase associations often provide useful practical resources as well as helping teachers to network within their community. Although Keith and Beth were both new teachers recently, after two years they should have sufficient expertise that they are able to act as learning resources for each other, too. Beth will have to make sure that she puts her learning into practice and that she sustains this practice over time.

Mentor Meeting Activities

The mentor meeting activities for Module 9 are deliberately discursive and flexible to accommodate the context in which your mentee is working, as well as their career development pathway and aspirations. You are encouraged to shape your discussions accordingly.

Review and Plan: 10 mins

- (1) Start this session by allocating some time for you and your mentee to read this week's research and practice summary.
- (2) Clarify the Learning Intentions for this session with your mentee.

Plan and Theory to Practice: 35 mins



1. Discuss with mentor

The vignettes above illustrate different ways that recently qualified teachers might need to plan their professional development as they encounter new challenges in their work – for example, as they plan to teach new subjects, work with pupils with different characteristics or move into new contexts. Teachers who do not face such specific changes still need to manage their professional development so that they can continue to improve their practice over time.

Spend the time available in this ECT mentor meeting talking to your mentee about their professional development priorities over the coming year and the strategies that they could draw on to address these priorities.

To help shape this discussion you could:

- ask your mentee to explain to you the requirements of any formal roles that they will take on next year within their current school, or in a new school if they are changing jobs
- encourage your mentee to outline areas of interest in their phase/specialism in which they would like to develop further expertise
- refer to the outcomes of your mentee's most recent review undertaken as part of your school's performance-management cycle – in particular, the targets that were set for the coming cycle
- reflect with your mentee on their strengths in managing their professional development recently and, more broadly, since they became a teacher
- reflect with your mentee on areas of relative weakness and identify next steps for further improvement
- explore with your mentee opportunities for professional development in their phase and specialism that you each know about

Next Steps: 5 mins

You will have time in the final session of this module to complete a formal action plan with your mentee. For now, encourage them to make notes of any ideas that they have about specific actions they would like to incorporate into this plan and to keep these safe until the final session of the module.

Note the date of your next mentor meeting, when you will discuss in more detail how your mentee manages professional relationships.