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MA Education Mentoring and Coaching

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Part 1: A critical analysis of a Journal article (2500)

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The article under scrutiny can be accessed by following the citation below:

Gardiner, Wendy and Weisling, Nina (2016). "Mentoring 'inside' the action of teaching: induction coaches' perspectives and practices". *Professional Development in Education*, 42(5), pp. 671-686.

American Philosophers Gardiner and Weisling have attempted to deepen Schwille's (2008) 'temporal framework'. Their article has scrutinised 'inside' mentoring practices and evaluated educative mentoring approaches, through a qualitative methodology. The research questions posed in their article include:

'which, if any, 'inside' practices did coaches employ; what facilities and inhibits coaches use of 'inside' practices; and what do coaches perceive are the benefits and limitations of employing 'inside' practices?' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:672).

The article under scrutiny creates the impression that the research was manipulated to support fixed outcomes, of which were determined before the research was carried out. This notion becomes evident through the select use of literature, which only supports the findings of this new research and does not challenge the outcomes of it (see Schwille 2008; Gardiner 2012; Bullough 2012). This standpoint is strengthened through the fact that the authors have presented an insufficient argument for the purpose of this article. This perspective becomes unmissable due to the lack of hypothesis and objectives, and is exacerbated by the limited conclusions and future recommendations suggested. Furthermore, although the article is current, especially with the majority of references being drawn from post 2000 literature, the core works that support the research are drawn from one of its own authors, Gardiner's, prior philosophies (see Gardiner, 2011; Gardiner, 2012). In addition, the academic aptitude of this article must be questioned due to its limited sustenance of literature, poorly developed explanation of outcomes and lack of ethical considerations.

Bolton (2014), has suggested, that studies similar to this one, that omit their aims, are easiest to understand by articulating the research questions as the aims of the research. Therefore, if the research questions become the investigations aims, it is evident that they support each other and are interlinked to address an overall question. If this approach is adopted for the aims, then we can assume that the objectives are the use of the methods selected; interviews, observations and coaching documents. When applying the aims and objectives through this approach, the content and context of the research derives purpose. Therefore, when reassessing the context of the study it is evident that the investigation is assessing the relationship between 'inside' and 'outside' mentoring practices. Furthermore, it evaluates this relationship and values them as separate entities, ultimately deepening the debate on how mentoring is carried out effectively.

The results obtained are initially presented in separate themes; 'Stepping-in', 'Coteaching' and 'Demonstration teaching'. However, in the article discussion they are evaluated as a single entity in relation to each other. Therefore, the authors are trying to delineate which of these three coaching techniques is the most effective. To summarize the outcomes, of this study, into a single statement it would read, 'the coaching techniques scrutinised all have arguments for their use, it is best determined by the mindset of the coach when and how to use them, but it must be remembered that each technique is restricted by its own limitations'.

Therefore, a shortcoming of this article is that it provides very little knowledge on which 'inside' mentoring technique is more effective. However, when the research questions are revisited, it becomes apparent that they do not aim to justify which technique is more effective, but rather just evaluate them. Nevertheless, the research conducted does reiterate the findings of earlier studies, suggesting that the outcomes of mentorship is strengthened if those involved can maintain a good relationship whilst the support is ongoing (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005). Furthermore, the most significant finding of this research is its reassurance that mentoring does have a positive impact when both 'inside' and 'outside' practices are carried out collectively.

This study presents a wealth of knowledge for coaches/mentors within an educative setting. In particular, this study is useful as it raises awareness of the risks involved in formative mentoring outcomes, therefore demonstrating the depth of consideration required during the decision making process. The evaluative research participants' remarks in this study advance Brockbank & McGill's (2012), ideology that the more knowledge the mentor possess the more effective the 'inside' strategy, the belief that learning is attained in 'real time' classroom experience via intentional scaffolding. Therefore, this means the explanation of feedback gains depth and the receiver of feedback can engage with the reflective notions of Kolb's (1984) learning cycle. Furthermore, this investigation has demonstrated that all those involved in the learning process need an understanding of 'inside' pedagogy practices, otherwise the mentee will not acquire the 'rewarding' sensation of witnessing self-progress. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) support this notion and together imply that if the rationale behind the coaching intervention and its feedback are not identified by the person who is being mentored then the significance of the process is reduced.

This investigation has suggested that out of the three 'inside' practices critiqued, 'particularly co-teaching and demonstration teaching, had potential limitations that could have a significant, negative impact on the coaching relationship' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:682). Therefore, the research conducted assumes that 'stepping in' has the largest positive impact on the coaching relationship, as it is omitted from this statement. The article also articulates that all three 'inside'

practices are worth trilling over an extended period of time, as their impact gains significance parallel to that of the mentees understand of 'inside' practices.

Penultimately, this enquiry has supported arguments made by other authors that for mentoring and coaching to be effective the learner needs to be critical of their own practices (see Brockbank & McGill, 2012; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2005; Connor & Pokora, 2007). This means 'inside' classroom experiences presented to the learner should allow them to suggest their own alternative strategies on how to improve their practices. Finally, this study has revealed that the supportive process needs to be balanced between intervention and intervention follow-ups. This notion follows the same rhetoric as Gardiner's (2011, 2012), research findings. However, this time Gardiner has developed her point further by claiming that if 'inside' and 'outside' processes are done independently it can have a 'negative impact on the coaching relationship, and therefore on teacher practice' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:682).

A limitation that restricts the outcomes of this research is its sample. The study was conducted in 17 K-8 urban American, high poverty schools. Consequently, the demographic of this research is restricted and the terminology of the article itself could lead to different interpretations, due to key definitions having numerous English understandings. A clear example of miscommunication in the study becomes apparent when 'induction mentors' are referred to as 'coaches', with neither term having an explicit definition. Within the sampling discussion, there is no explanation as to why or how these school were selected, which consequently weakens the argument. Cohen and Manion (2011), indicate that if there is no consensus on why a particular sample was chosen there could be an ulterior motive to the research, skewing the credibility of results.

All of those employed to participate in the mentoring research were systematically selected from a limited demographic, all female, all aged between 28 and 36, all teaching between 5-10 years and all mentoring between 2-6 years. Therefore, we can conclude that the demographics of the individuals who carried out the 'coaching' are homogenous, which makes the outcomes more intriguing. Hereby, when the research was scrutinised the impact of varied controlling factors became clear through the alternate contribution of each participant. Alternatively, Creswell (2013), suggests that by having a limited sample demographic the results can become easily misleading and not reflect the full picture. Finally, the coaches selected were in 'full release', meaning they were free from their teaching responsibilities in order to work exclusively with new teachers (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016). This raises concerns over the motive that the participants might have had in contributing to the investigation and is not an accurate application of research, as in a realistic environment coaches would not have access to a 'full release' scenario (Alderson and Morrow, 2011).

The methods selected commit to making promises that the article cannot uphold. For example, Gardiner and Weisling, has suggested that during the 'outside' debriefing sessions the participants were provided feedback on their observations 'without judgement' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:674). However, literature would argue that this sentiment is not accurate as the researcher cannot promise that those participating in the research are not exposed to the researchers experimental judgements (Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Cohen and Manion, 2011). Dewey (2007), furthers this point by suggesting that everyone is subjected to 'subconscious judgemental thoughts' based on their life experiences to date. Therefore, due to the lack of explanation on how these judgements are prevented it is not something that the participants should have been assured.

Furthermore, due to the methods of this investigation being qualitative the study itself has not emphasised whether the findings are significant. Consequently, the study lacks breadth and indulges itself in a critical debate orientated around its own findings. These findings are weakened by the analysis of results, which ignorantly omits the flaws of the research. For example, 'two of six coaches reported...', hereby, the article is misleading as it expects the reader to interpret that 'two of six coaches' is a significant finding (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016). Whereas, if this statement was analysed in statistical terms, e.g. Pearson correlation, it would be deemed insignificant because there is a lack of data to support its claims.

The raw data collected through observations and interviews triangulate the findings of this study. Hereby, the observations and 'mentoring' initially were an open construct, which over time developed into common themes that could be explored via interviews. Both methods of data collection followed a process of refinement where data was coded into a 'meta-matrix'. By systematically coding the data in this format the outcomes of this study have gained significance as they can be cross referenced with alternative theories (Walliman, 2017). However, the 'three individual, structured interviews' pose a threat in the form of bias, as we do not know why these participants were selected. Therefore, we could assume that the participants have been probed to support prior significant outcomes from the 'coaching documents' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:674). Furthermore, the interviews conducted were inductively analysed. Hodges (2001), suggests that this can lead to a misrepresentation of results making people assume the outcomes are significant because the coding has been manipulated to omit any alternative interpretations.

Additionally, a shortcoming with the raw data is that it has not been critically analysed, just compared and presented at face value. Therefore, although this is the extent of the analysis required by authors to achieve the sought outcome, the significance of understanding the deeper emotive

rational behind the findings hasn't been noted. Consequently, this means the research lacks validity as the participants true meanings could be falsely interpreted (Robinson, 2009).

The largest cause for concern within this article is its lack of ethical consideration. The research omits all evidence on how it protected the participants involved and how it acquired consent off of them. Therefore, the research validity is limited as one cannot contemplate the extent of risks to the participants and the consequences these risks had. Furthermore, Rozenzweig (2007), suggests that research conducted, like this study, have limited reliability of the outcomes because the adverse impacts have not been documented e.g. Hawthorn (falsified behaviour due to being observed) and Halo (observers cognitive bias influence on the research) effects. Gardiner and Weisling, could respond to this by acknowledging that they opted for a professional research approach (Sole purpose to collect research and not cross personal boundaries with the participants). Ultimately, this would reinforce the outcomes' significance, as it demonstrates the researcher had a minimal impact on the data collection process (Creswell, 2013).

Due to the results of this study being presented in a raw data format, issues arise from the principles of anonymity and confidentiality not being applied legitimately (Wiles, 2008). The main concern here being that the study fails to suggest how it will hide the true identity of those involved. In addition, the results section of this article is relatively brief and does not reflect the scale of the data collected. Cohen and Manion (2011), have suggested this often happens so the researcher can present the argument they want, rather than the argument the data has identified. This notion is strengthened by Bolton (2014), who suggests that if data has limited outcomes, it is often a shortcoming on the author(s) behalf to consider their own positionality. Therefore, the lack of supportive participant quotations and limited discussion of authors positionality leaves the article open to prejudiced ideologies. However, this article is still credible of academic publication. Cohen and Manion (2011), have outlined the criteria set forth for an article to be published and although this article does have shortcomings, it satisfies the necessary criteria, and has original conclusions, of which are assured by the methodology.

The research conducted has been significant as it has presented a different homogenous context for the best way to facilitate mentors' practices. When compared to a British context it becomes apparent that there are similarities and contrasts in the approaches to mentoring. Therefore, the investigation raises interesting notions concerning the attributes that an effective mentor requires. Additionally, the article reiterates a modern day approach to education, stressing how independent the learning process is and that most progressive students qualities do not always have a 'literal interpretation' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:681). However, the article is restricted by its own

approach, the briefness of particular concepts paves the way for the methodology to be seriously scrutinised. A clear example of this arises as the article states that 'Coaches implemented a coaching cycle in which they worked collaboratively' (Gardiner and Weisling, 2016:674). At no point does the article examine the key concepts mentioned in this approach, meaning the grasp of 'coaching cycle' and 'collaboratively' are left to the reader to interpret and apply, i.e. what is considered 'collaboratively'?

In conclusion, the lack of evidence presented throughout this article to support its purpose is weak. However, this lack of evidence is apparent because 'inside' practices is a relatively new idea. Therefore, it is too early to determine the relevance of this article and its credible influence on mentoring and coaching. The article is significant as it raises interesting ideas in terms of the impacts and rationale behind why and how 'inside' coaching practices are carried out. However, these discoveries need to be treated with caution because of the inadequate account of methodologies. Ultimately, the research presents an unconvincing argument because of its oversimplified justification of results. The use of six research subjects, all of a similar nature, shows an interesting account into the nature of these individuals. However, this sample could be seen as a shortcoming, as it is relatively small and homogeneous. In the future, this research could gain depth by placing it into a large context and sample. Hereby, 'stepping in', 'co-teaching' and 'demonstration teaching' could be critiqued with an added quantitative measure, meaning the study would gain significance through depth. Nevertheless, regardless of the scale of this investigation, the enquiry questions posed at the start have been addressed by the research conducted and therefore at face value the findings can be accepted.

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Part 2: Critical review of mentoring and or coaching policy and practice in own setting (5000)

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Introduction

There is an array of critical incidents associated with individuals' personal experiences of mentorship in education. Moberg and Velasquez (2004), have suggested that the majority of critical incidents transpire due to a dysfunctional relationship as a consequence of varying interpretations of different subjective natures. Therefore, a fundamental step to critically analysing any incident of mentorship, is to define what exactly mentoring is. Thus, the mentor's role has been defined as to:

...support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be (Parsloe, 1997:5).

With this definition being so broad, and just one of many within the field of mentoring and coaching, the Welsh Government have deemed it necessary to outline expectations and practicalities of a mentor-mentee relationship, so it can be analysed on a deeper level (see **Figure 1**).

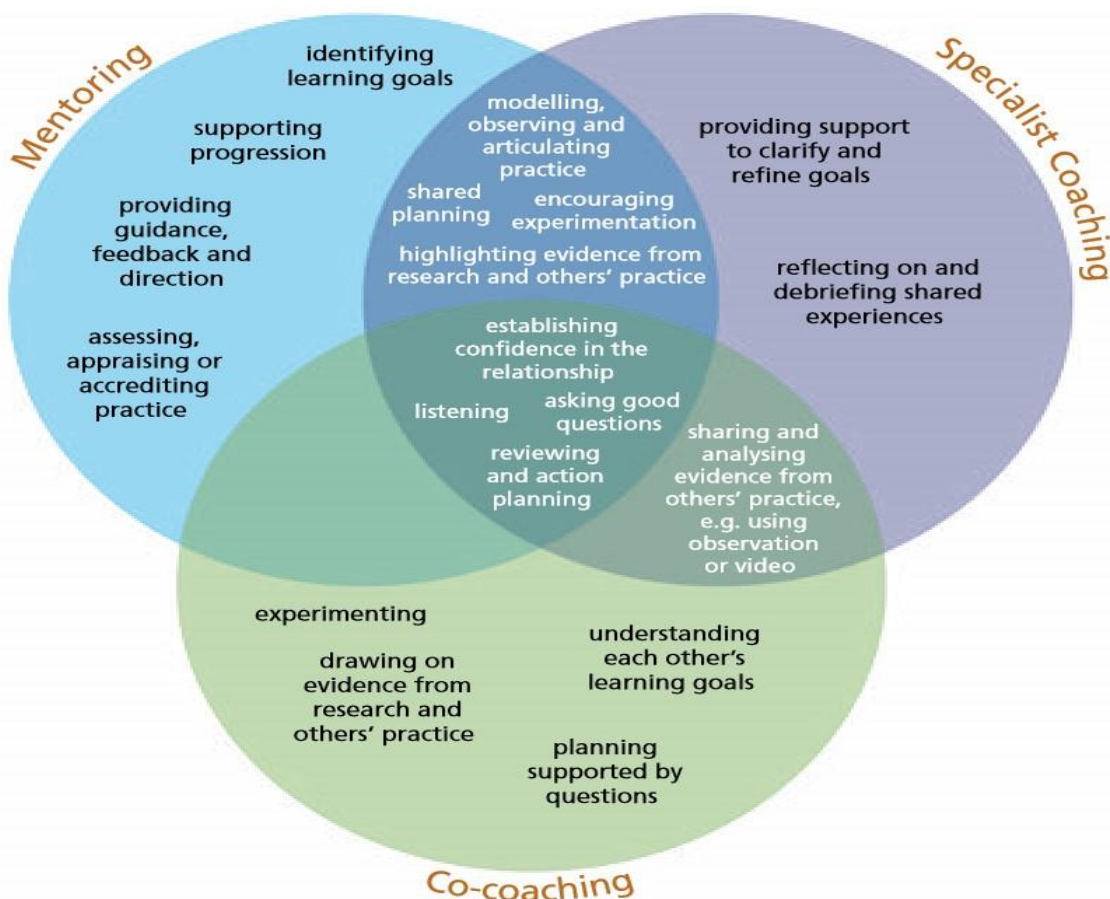


Figure 1: The interconnectedness of mentoring, specialist coaching, and co-coaching (Welsh Government, 2015)

Figure 1 demonstrates why issues arise within the mentoring and coaching field. The overlaps within the centre of the diagram create confusion for when determining which of the roles around the edge of the diagram should be carried out. Therefore, it is essential for those who provide support to be aware of qualities specific to the mentoring/coaching role that is appropriate to the current scenario. When cross referencing Figure 1 with the Welsh Government's (2015), 'New Deal for the Education Workforce' it becomes evident that there is no intention to impose a uniform model for mentoring and coaching. However, there is a suggestion of ten 'recommended' principles (see **Appendix 1, Figure 2**) which should help improve the prospects of mentoring across welsh schooling (Learning Wales, 2016).

Linking the Welsh Government's ideology into the wider realm of education it becomes apparent that coaching and mentoring are both driven by a 'performance' approach. The rationale for coaching/mentoring is to improve the performance of an employee. This interpretation, therefore, demonstrates that the learning process for teachers must be about their own practices and that a teacher must reflect on these practices and then apply their findings to new experimentation circumstances. Ultimately, this notion demonstrates that Kolb's (1984) Experiential Model of Learning is as relevant to teachers, as to their pupils (See **Figure 3**)

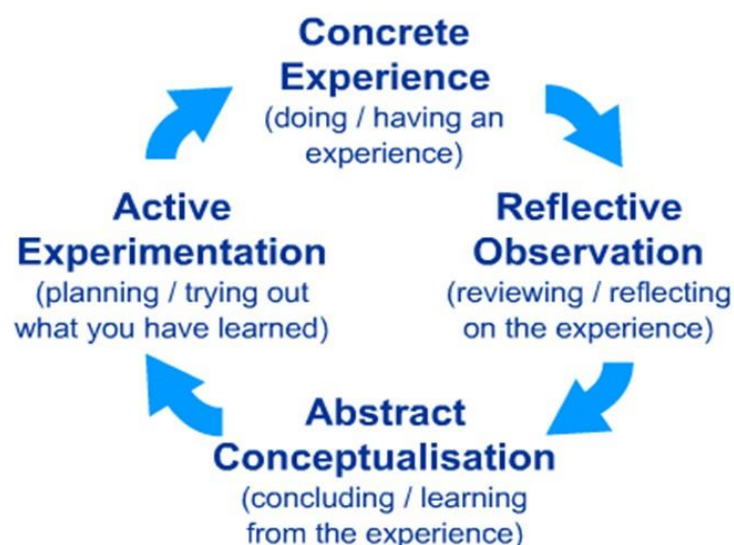


Figure 3: Kolb's Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984)

Clutterbuck and Megginson (2006), suggest that confusion arises between mentoring and coaching as they both have a shared purpose. It is how this purpose is derived that sets them apart. According to Back and Booth (1992), these two derogates are deemed separate entities based on their opposing mindset in the social science realm. Coaching favours an 'objectivist' mindset in search of cause and its onset effect, whereas, mentoring seeks a 'subjectivist' approach, in search of a

descriptive solution. However, the confusion continues as both of these approaches are 'Mental models', which means they are deeply ingrained assumptions or generalizations that influence how we understand the world and how we take action (Senge, 1992:8). Therefore, it is evident that the outcomes of both mentoring and coaching could be alike, however the process to reach these outcomes, and which is more effective, is open to interpretation.

It is also key to understand that there is no single learning theory that embodies the entire human learning process. Clutterbuck and Megginson (2006), have suggested that this issue arises due to the recognition that there is little agreement upon what learning actually is. Therefore, the measured outcomes of both coaching and mentoring cannot be uniform. Brockbank and McGill (2006), have recommended that to fully understand the outcomes of learning, i.e. what has been learnt through mentoring and coaching, we need a holistic approach, involving behavioural, cognitive psychologists and progressionists. Therefore, it can be assumed that the most significant coaching and mentoring outcomes are achieved by those who can inspire the learner to do, think and feel.

With effective mentoring and coaching accessed through a holistic mindset Figure 4 offers four quadrants, each with its own approach to retrieve the mindset goal.

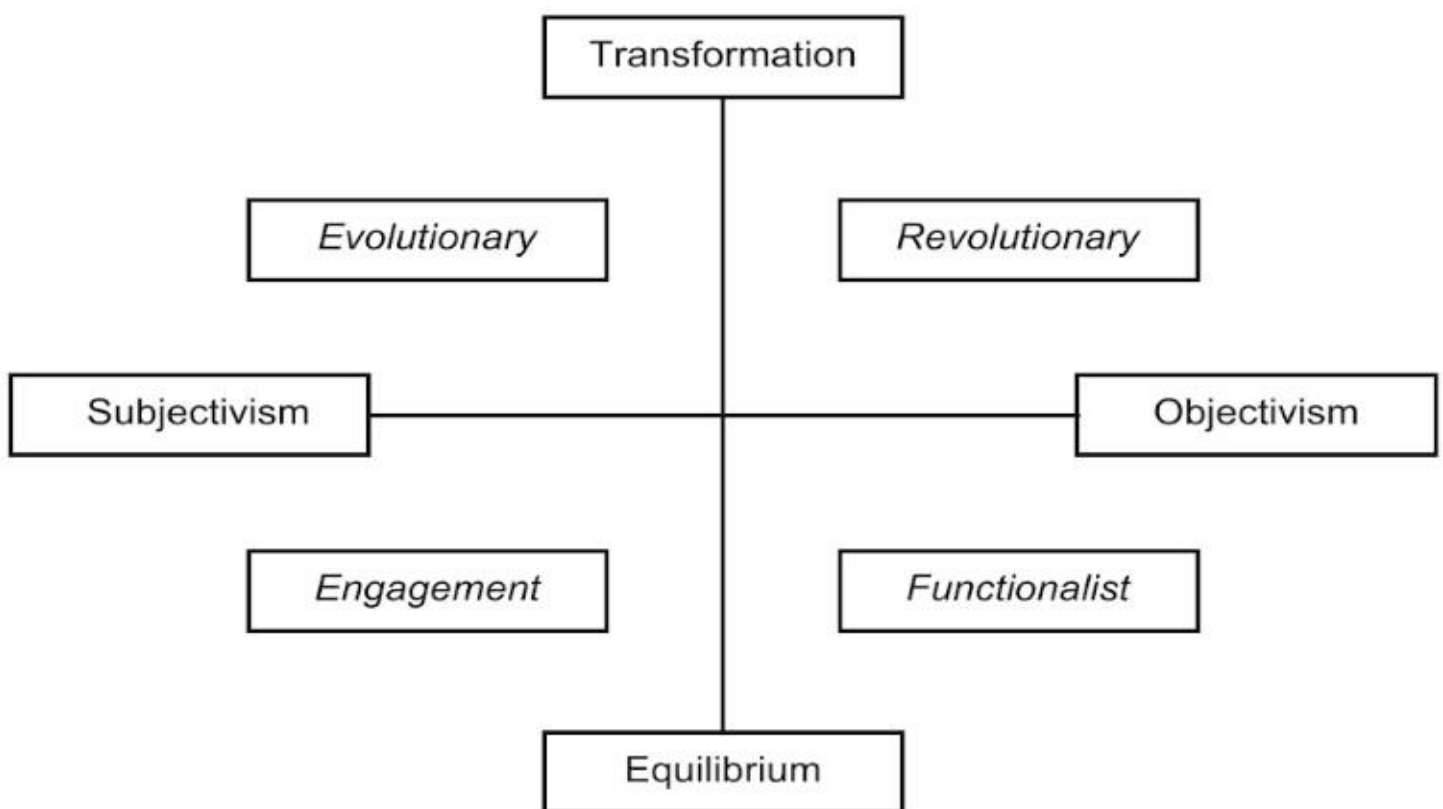


Figure 3: Mentoring and coaching approaches (Brockbank & McGill, 2006:11)

The four approaches, in Figure 3, can be applied to both mentoring and coaching. Their attributes work as follows:

- Functionalist – to assume an objective real world, with aim to improve performance and surpass challenge and questioning.
- Engagement – to recognize the subjective nature of the participant through a nondirective status quo.
- Revolutionary – promote transformation through radical change.
- Evolutionary – acknowledges the subjective world, respects the participants own goals and examines the power structure that inhabits learning.

(Brockbank & McGill, 2006:25).

It is worthless to critique these approaches against each other, as they are all applied to different learning climates. Wicks (1999), supports this notion. He has evidenced that all four mentoring and coaching approaches contribute to a wider educative context:

No-one can afford to stop learning when they leave school. To maintain their employability, people will need to keep learning at different stages throughout their lives. There will be those who have been too busy to learn a language or to master Information Technology, skills which can improve our employability as well as being fun to do...but learning is not just about employability. New research...shows that...learning improved...enjoyment of life...self-confidence...health (Wicks, 1999).

To conclude, the intricacy of mentoring and coaching is a complicated phenomena, which is stimulated by variations of meaning and application of coaching and mentoring, the perceptions of various stakeholders and the wide range of contexts, to which both entities can be applied.

Personal Critical Incident – Involving Various Perspectives

It is important to understand the uniqueness of a critical incident, and that any incident is 'created' by the way in which its significance is interpreted (Tripp, 1993). Therefore, to truthfully access the significance of an incident the reflection process needs to involve all four stages of Brookfield's ideology - assumption analysis, contextual awareness, imaginative speculation and reflective scepticism (Brookfield, 1998). Following Brookfield's theoretical framework it becomes possible to engage with my own personal incident (see **Appendix 1**).

Through linking my personal experiences to academic literature it becomes apparent that this incident arose as significant because of my own cognitive dissonance (Davis, 2003). Whereas my core belief was that behaviourist classroom layouts, e.g. seating pupils in rows, was to be avoided at all costs because evidence presented by my PGCE tutor suggested that doing so hinders the learning process. Therefore, my reflective skepticism, which is restricted by my own knowledge, had an influence on why tensions first arose. Brookfield (1998), suggests that by implementing an unexamined ideology, previous knowledge can become threatened, meaning the receiver of new knowledge might approach this with defensive tactics. Furthermore, because I did not expect behaviour management in the observed lesson to be one of the themes of feedback it led me to react defensively. This defensive reaction was worsened by the insufficient attention to the process of why behaviour issues were arising. In addition, the rigid oversimplification of feedback meant I could not contemplate how it would progress my learning process (Smith, 1996). Consequently, this made myself less responsive to the feedback. However, all of these reactions can be considered NQT norms, because my actions lack experienced awareness of what best practice looks like. On the other hand, this means the feedback acquired could be considered highly effective as it sets myself in motion to cater to the schools 'paradigmatic assumptions and instinctive reasonings' (Brookfield, 1998:30).

Evaluating my experiences in school helped me determine the psychology of this incident. A key influence in the mentor-mentee relationship breakdown was the miscommunication of expectations. Prior my initial NQT observation I was given no prospects of what to advocate or expect. Davis (2003) explains that if an observation has no context or clarity there is a likelihood that the observed subject will find it difficult to initially accept the validity of observation outcomes. As a consequence, all future observations have been surrounded by negative emotions due to the unawareness of what in particular the observer is critiquing.

Upon reflection, it is evident that the key fundamentals of a successful mentor-mentee relationship had transpired from the perspectives of both parties, meaning feedback was no longer acknowledged as constructive. Cohen has determined that when linear outcomes are set forth by a mentor this could be a consequence of the lack of mentorship training and compulsive attitude of being deemed a mentor without choice (Cohen, 1988). Connor and Pokora (2007), have identified that this is often the case when SLT are involved because they are considered leading practitioners who should pass on their knowledge. Alternatively, Hobson et al have argued that 'not all teachers make good mentors' and that an effective mentor draws on their own experiences and reapplies these through a supportive, open and trustworthy dialogue (Hobson et al 2009). Therefore, it is an essential part of mentorship that the mentor is self-motivated and is aware of how to carry out their role. With the feedback under scrutiny being the first I acquired, the concept of personal expertise on how to understand it was defective. Because the feedback was not subjected to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and revision of practice I interpreted it as passive comments, which would never be followed up. This sentiment is strengthened by the lack of coherence between feedback and Schon's (1983), 'reflective practitioner' model. When placing my feedback into this model it becomes obvious that my persona interpreted the advice offered as feedback for the sake of feedback, rather than constructive criticism.

The mentorship process I was involved in was comprised of objective instructions, arguably, this doesn't reflect British Department for Education (DFE) primary NQT competences. DFE (as cited in Hutchinson, 1994:306) stated that newly qualified teachers should have acquired initial training in the necessary foundation to develop...vision, imagination and critical awareness. Therefore, the feedback received is limited as it does not recognize the psychological implications of being instructive. Ultimately, by cross referencing this interpretation with the humanist approach to learning, it becomes obvious that the style of feedback received does not stimulate deeper learning for the mentee, resulting in future disengagement from support (Brockbank & McGill, 2012).

Alternative literature suggests that the mentor in question could be thought of as having a highly effective approach to mentoring (see Smith, 1996; Davis 2003; Back & Booth, 1992). In particular, Back and Booth (1992) have implied that a mentor role is to provide challenge through direct professional guidance, which is inaccessible if the mentor fosters a friendship stance. Furthermore, Clegg et al (2002) has identified that anyone can be considered a mentor if they offer 'non-threatening' and 'evaluative' advice. Although the feedback in question is considered a directed instruction, it has been left to the mentee, myself, to discover the evaluate meaning of why the feedback was issued. Therefore, my own expertise should relate this incident to the functionalist mentoring approach and critique myself through the evaluative process.

Cohen (1988) suggests that when mentors facilitate the mentorship process they need to combine feedback with the opportunity to enhance cultural awareness and aesthetic appreciation. Russell's (2005) ideology suggests that NQTs are subjected to harsh targets because it equips their mindset for longer term goals. This belief, potentially, reflects the approach that my mentor took with me.

The assumption analysis of this incident demonstrates it could have arisen as an issue due to the large number of abstract definitions of mentoring. If mentoring is implied as 'the more experienced parting with their knowledge', then the controversy of this incident appears minor. Whereas, if Hall's (2003) definition, 'mentoring exists in many forms which are at least partly defined by the origin, purpose, nature', is applied then it is obvious that the feedback received does not reflect the depth required in the mentoring process (Hall, 2003:1). Therefore, the diverse nature of what mentoring is, could be perceived differently by those involved in the process and as a consequence has contributed to cause of this incident. Additionally, the format in which feedback was received has challenged my perceptions of the schooling social structure. This notion has been recognized by Hall (2003), who suggests that when an unprecedented event take place it becomes deemed critical because it provides a new set of unchallengeable ideologies, which can appear threatening to the learner past norms. Furthermore, Hutchinson (2007) has suggested that if the mentor does not advocate how the mentee can close the gap between current practice and recommended new practices a stagnated relationship between those involved in the process can appear. Therefore, it is obvious why literature suggests that a key element to the mentoring process is not just the passing on of experience, but having an evaluative approach to this experience (Brockbank & McGill, 2012).

Through applying an imaginative speculation approach it becomes evident that the mentor should have highlighted the incident causes, which led to the feedback in question, rather than just proposing a solution. In doing so, the very nature of the problem and alternate solutions could be investigated deeper. Passmore (2007), has demonstrated that this style of feedback would have been more effective because it allows the learner to challenge and develop their own ideologies, rather than just opting for a snap shot solution. This style of mentoring reflects Vonk's (1993) 'participant-involved' approach to support. By using this approach the mentee gets to thrive from their mistakes, because they have the ability to evaluate alternative possible practices, meaning they gain ownership of their own progression.

According to John's (2000) Model for Structured Reflection, the most significant element of the learning process is derived from considering the incidents alternative outcomes. Applying this ideology, to this scenario, in the future a ramification is not to interpret the notions suggested by the mentor as a personal attack. Thus, meaning the role of the mentee must involve deeper questioning

of feedback and not just accepting descriptive comments. By applying this philosophy to this scenario the negative emotions stimulated by my persona could have been avoided. In addition, the 'acceptance' of feedback was not challenged in this case. Smith (1996), has proposed that by considering alternative approaches and by facilitating the feedback further through self-indulged explanation, the relationship between the mentor-mentee could have been critiqued deeper. This theory is strengthened by the argument that the more knowledge the mentee possesses the more constructive the dialogue with the mentor (Brockbank & McGill, 2012). Penultimately, Schon (1983), has recognized that one negative experience can set in motion the mindset for all future occurrences. By applying Schon's (1983) theory to this incident my psychological conditioning becomes more likely to place emphasis on my own private struggles rather than placing them within the broader political processes underway in the school.

To conclude the critical incident in question became apparent due to miscommunication between the mentor and mentee. The lack of experience both individuals had in partaking in their role meant that emotions were unstable due to unknown, judgemental expectations. The trigger of turbulence in relationship was the contrast of feedback expectations by the mentor and the mentee. This tension was increased by the formality of feedback. A solution to reduce the unnecessary tensions could involve the mentor and mentee meeting more regularly and upholding open, informal, discussions regarding any concerns.

School Mentoring and Coaching Policy

Concerning my schooling mentoring and coaching policy, or rather 'Teaching and learning development' document (deemed this due to its lack of future innovation and proposed action targets), there is a incentive that involves five ideologies of how learning should be monitored and developed across the curricula. These are titled; Coaching, Learning walks, Formal observations, Support and Learning newsletter. Therefore, there is a complete omission of mentoring and how NQTs should be supported. Furthermore, the document has no clarity in terms of defining supportive actions across the school and lacks structure due to it over-simplification and poor definition of coaching. The document provides a single statement that lays out coaching's purpose, which it suggests coaching is to provide 'staff with frequent feedback on how to improve their practice' (Document X, 2017:2). Although, the directive of coaching is broad and open to interpretation, the school in question has created a formal structure for the feedback that coaching observations should provide (see **Appendix 1 Figure 5**).

When analysing Figure 5 it is evident that the school has a very broad approach to coaching and therefore could be interpreted differently depending on who is delivering the coaching. Cohen (1998), has suggested that by not scrutinising a specific pedagogical strand, a person's potential to maximise their own performance can be limited. Aligning Cohen's (1998) notion with structure of the coaching in question means feedback is not open to discussion, as it is received via email, therefore the diagnostics stage of the CEDAR feedback Model, is completely omitted (National College, 2013). Without this stage the entire purpose of the CEDAR model and framework for excellent coaching and mentoring becomes defective. Brockbank and McGill (2012) further support that all stages of the CEDAR feedback model are required as without them the entirety of the learning process is weakened. Secondly, because the feedback is acquired via email the positive dialogue and process of constructing feedback, which can only happen face-to-face, evolves into a negative, unfavourable attitude (Lofthouse et al, 2010). However, when referring back to the original sentiment of the schools coaching document and the purpose of coaching, it states nothing concerning how improving practice will have an impact on the learners, it just hints that 'improved practice' can be acquired by following the comments within the 'Feedback Gift'. For those teachers who thrive of pedagogical awareness this style of feedback might be insufficient, as they want to identify the impact these new classroom practices are having on their learners. Therefore, this style of feedback is limiting the deepening of the learning process for teachers.

Although initially this approach to coaching can be seen as structurally poor, it does still follow a systematic coaching ideology (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2006). It seeks to transform the schools Estyn status through systematic change. The most encouraging element of this document is its 'Teaching and learning newsletter'. Half termly the school releases feedback highlighting and exemplifying areas of good practice. By using this step in the coaching process many of the attributes of a good coach are obtained, in particular it provides the entire process with clarity of coachee expectations and allows the progression to be led by exemplification (Starr, 2011:24). However, a problem with this exemplification is that teachers are ranked in accordance with how often they carry out 'good' and 'excellent' practices. Hobson et al (2009), argue that by processing the data in this way there could be an interpretation that the SLT are emphasising the assessment of teachers' performance at the expense of their own continued professional development.

Learning walks are the component of this schooling document that is emphasised for having the largest significant outcome. The document defines this element of the coaching process as a 'consistent unannounced observation' (Document X, 2017:2). The document also references that the purpose of Learning walks is to measure consistency in behaviour management and track pupils' book progression. Although this 'unannounced' element has been recognised as helping the SLT identify those who might require additional support, it could also be seen as unethical. Clutterbuck (2013), supports this claim as he has explored the consequences of a school that operates under the fear of the unknown. Clutterbuck (2013), suggests that due to the heightened sense of teachers constantly feeling at unease of when they will be observed it has drawn a negative impact on their alternate roles as a teacher. Therefore, the collaboration within the schooling environment is non-existent as teachers feel they are constantly in competition with one another.

The schooling document in question sets in motion nothing concerning NQTs or for how those who need additional support will acquire it. Therefore, there is a concern that the support received by those who require it may be inconsistent (Garvey, Stokes & Megginson, 2008). The obvious solution for this would be to rectify the current document and transform it into an actual policy, which concerns the treatment of NQTs. A clear brief outline of what the policy could envisage would mimic, but expand, on that of 'Bangor University Mentoring and Coaching policy' (see Bangor University 2014). The document could gain significance by using a coaching model, e.g. STRIDE (Thomas & Smith, 2004). By implementing this model the school could help individuals who require mentoring/coaching through the objective approach of Egan's (1998) 'skilled helper'. In doing so the school would be facilitating effective support as all those involved in the process would be aware of their own learning role, as has been as laid out in the national framework for mentoring and coaching (CUREE, 2005).

The school in question could additionally improve its community spirit by reducing its emphasis on observations and assessment of individual teachers performances. An adaptation here could be to alternatively stress that teaching values risk-taking and accepts that mistakes are part of the learning process. Ultimately, this would create an environment where teachers felt more comfortable addressing their own perceived limitations. Hall (2003), suggests that this is a powerful tool because it assists creating a collaborate school environment, rather than one that is operating under the fear of the unknown.

Ultimately, the worth of school coaching/mentoring is determined on the outcome that the school is deriving. The school in question, as part of their 'Teaching and learning development' document, has released statistics that suggests the coaching style discussed is effective as teaching outcomes have advanced from a mere 27% being good or better to 86% (Document X, 2017:1). However, these results are questionable as they have been acquired by internal members of staff, which could interpret Estyn standards to their own accord. To conclude, the DFE (1993) would approve of the coaching practice in question as it has had a highly effective approach to improving the quality of teaching.

Ethics in mentoring and coaching

Ethics is having an increasing significant role in the mentoring and coaching process. The expectation is that coaches and mentors should be aware of their potential impact on those they are engaged with. Clutterbuck (2013), has suggested that ethics is becoming increasingly integrated into teachers careers because they need to mitigate the negative consequences that feedback could uphold. In terms of mentoring Clutterbuck (2013) has recommended that to be an effective ethical mentor individuals must be able to contextualise the bigger picture, which only happens when the mentor has a deep insight into their own thinking and decision-making process. Reflecting on my critical incident in relation to this ethical dilemma, means it is not obvious whether the mentor in question was ethical. The impediment in question arises due to the feedback of the critical incident being acquired via email, this mean, myself, the mentee can only make a single interpretation of the feedback and cannot inspect the philosophy of the mentors recommendations.

Although, feedback was received via this method, since then I have discovered that it is schooling policy for feedback to be sent through email and not a fault of the mentor. The rationale behind this, is that the mentee can track their own progression. However, the objective, instructional phrasing of the feedback can be seen as a lapse in the mentors ethical judgement. Therefore, the phrasing of the emailed feedback could be considered ethical if it was presented in a non-directive format. Thus, to

rectify the critical incident in question the mentor could follow 'The Global Code of Ethics for coaches and mentors' meaning they admit to their own failing and demonstrate how they would alternatively present the feedback in the future (Associate for Coaching, 2016). Lee's (1993), suggests that by accepting responsibility of mis-portrayed action, future issues concerning 'problems of reactivity' can be avoided and that this sets a positive example for the school as a whole.

The largest ethical concern noted in relation to the policy and incident in question arises from the ranking of teachers relative to their coaching feedback targets. This is an issue as anyone can request to read the schools' 'Teaching and learning development' document and in doing so the conditions of confidentiality are not maintained. Before the schooling coaching sessions started they should have sought 'informed consent' from the workforce. In failing to do so, the coaching in question is in breach of the 'Global Code of Ethics for coaches and mentors' (Associate for Coaching, 2016). In particular, the two confidentiality strands below need to be rectified:

2.9 - When working with a client, members will maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless release of information is required by law.

2.11 - Members will have a clear agreement with clients and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality will not be maintained (and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality where possible. (Associate for Coaching, 2016:2).

Ultimately, the overall ethical ideology that mentoring and coaching should follow, was set in notion before ethics even arose as a concern within the discipline. Cavan set the creed in place that 'while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better' (Cavan, 1977:810). Therefore, identifying that key to 'human dignity' in education is the communication and the alliance made between the mentor and mentee. If the purpose and outcomes of mentorship are discussed regularly, the professional development alliance should be ethical as both counterparts will be aware of each other's underlying circumstances and expectations.

Conclusion

After reflecting on the mentoring experience it poses the interpretation that I was irrational and that the incident arose due to my poor understanding of the mentors approach to supporting myself. Through accessing relevant literature I have improved my awareness of the different approaches to mentorship and the strategies that can be used to advance critically analysing teaching methods from various perspectives.

To conclude, the very nature of the critical incident in question involves a number of variables that are unique to this mentoring experience and as a consequence the conclusions are biased to my personal interpretations. Through collating my experience, with alternate perspectives and academic philosophies it becomes evident that positive mentality and openness to feedback are the two key components that can make feedback more powerful. In addition, to achieve the full worthwhileness of mentoring and coaching the entire learning process needs to be applied rather than one dimensional critical instructions. In order for this happen the mentor often requires further guidance themselves to deepen the mentees own practices. Therefore, the most common failing observed across schools is the insufficiency in policy to reinforce good coaching and mentoring practices.

The most effective mentoring is guided through such policies, which highlight the expectations of both counterparts and the purpose of support in the first instance (Podsen & Denmark, 2007). Through embracing mentoring via this mindset the dilemma of miscommunication is avoided and collaborative learning is promoted. Ultimately, this means the entire process of support becomes worthwhile, as mentorship can be seen as a step towards assisting peers' independence and self-progress, which reflects the purpose of mentorship.

Appendix 1

Critical Incident – Personal Case Study

Throughout my personal NQT induction experience there was inconsistent and an irregular amount of support and monitoring from my SLT induction mentor. One incident in particular demonstrated the uniqueness and how the mentor-mentee relationship needs to be treated with caution. This incident followed my initial NQT formal observation, for which I was only given two hours' notice to prepare. The observation itself presented no threatening emotions. However, the follow up feedback made me question my own professional approach to my colleagues and how the tone of feedback can lead to it having various interpreted.

Following the observation I was set a single non-negotiable NQT target – to reanalyse my approach to behaviour management, and that the best way to do this was to sit the pupils in rows and carry out 90% of the lesson with the pupils in silence. This target, which was sent to me via email, did not offer the skills required to progress my own teaching ability, or offer knowledge on where the behaviour management issues were originating from. Consequently, the sheer forcedness of this target made me feel judged and that my statutory support, set by the Welsh Government and required as an NQT, was not valued within the schooling system. Furthermore, the lack of explanation behind this feedback made me interpret its constructiveness with a lower value.

This incident triggered a renewed perspective towards my NQT observations, as they have become engaged with catering the lesson to the requirements of the observer and their immediate demands. By acquiring feedback in the format above, not only did it bring into question the significant impact the relationship between mentor and mentee has, but has heightened the awareness of self and how feedback from mentors themselves needs to be critically analysed in light of the mentees own targets.

Principles of mentoring and coaching

The Welsh Government recognises that the ways mentoring and coaching are used depend on the context. There is no intention to impose a uniform model. These ten principles, based on evidence from research and consultation, are recommended to inform coaching programmes in schools and to help increase the impact of continuing professional development on student learning.

Effective mentoring and coaching involves:

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;

a thoughtful relationship developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep professional learning;

a learning agreement establishing confidence about the boundaries of the relationship by agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability;

combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists collaborating with colleagues to sustain commitment to learning and relate specialist inputs to everyday practice; seeking out specialist expertise to extend skills and knowledge and to model good practice;

growing self direction an evolving process in which the learner takes increasing control over their professional development as skills, knowledge and self awareness increase;

setting challenging and personal goals identifying goals rooted in aspirations for pupils that build on what they know and can do already whilst attending to school and individual priorities;

understanding why different approaches work developing understanding of the rationale for new approaches so practice and theory can be developed side by side and adapted for different contexts;

acknowledging the benefits to the mentors and coaches acknowledging the professional learning that mentors and coaches gain from the opportunity to mentor or coach and using them to model professional learning;

experimenting and observing creating a learning environment that supports risk-taking and innovation and encourages professional learners to seek out and analyse direct evidence from practice;

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.



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Figure 2: Welsh Government's effective mentoring and coaching principles (Welsh Government, 2015)

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	GT
Feedback 'Gift' Form description		
Question Short answer text		
Previous feedback evidenced ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other		
Support: I liked...) Long answer text		
Question: I wonder... (why you chose to, what evidence have you for, would you repeat) Long answer text		
Challenge: I noticed that...(e.g. learning slowed when you, some children were off task when) Long answer text		
For next time: (one bite sized achievable goal to practice) Long answer text		

Figure 5: Coaching observations feedback sheet (Document X, 2017:4)

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