

# MENTOR HANDBOOK

## B9 | BEHAVIOUR: CHALLENGE

### STUDY

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THIS MODULE

Your teacher can support pupils to be more open to challenge if they understand:

- > Pupil motivation is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, prior experiences and perceptions of success.
- > Teachers who give pupils experiences of success build not only motivation but also resilience and belief in their ability to succeed.
- > Teachers with knowledge of how pupils learn can better balance challenge, support and promote pupil success, which makes them open to challenge.

Get yourself into a strong position to mentor your teacher by working through the following:



**CLICK TO WATCH  
MODULE VIDEO**

Or visit [ambition.org.uk/ecf](https://ambition.org.uk/ecf).



**READ THE EVIDENCE  
SUMMARY BELOW:**

#### TEACHING CHALLENGE

While pupils in Ms Sterling's class are generally keen to give tasks a go, they often take the safe option and seek support from their teacher or peers whenever possible. How can Ms Sterling help pupils to adopt behaviours that make them more open to challenge?

#### KEY IDEA

Pupils who experience success are more likely to be motivated, resilient and open to challenge.

## THE ROLE OF SUCCESS

Part of Ms Sterling's job is to maximise pupil learning – this means providing the right level of challenge. However, as well as offering challenge, it is also important that tasks enable pupils to experience a high success rate. This balance is a tricky one to strike.

Evidence suggests that if pupils struggle but are ultimately successful with a task, it is more likely they will remember the material (EEF, 2017). Where pupils have experienced success, they are likely to put in more effort, be more motivated and show more confidence in the future (Coe et al, 2014). This is because where pupils believe in their abilities to complete a specific task, they are more persistent at that task. Their investment is driven by their perceptions of success and failure, particularly if they have limited experience of meaningful success in the past (Gutman & Schoon, 2013).

## ESTABLISHING HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF SUCCESS

Research suggests that teachers should aim for pupils to be successful around 80% of the time (Rosenshine, 2012). Ms Sterling can build pupil expectations that they will succeed in a task by:

- > **Offering rewards and praise:** Providing extrinsic motivation when pupils attempt challenging work. Using positive reinforcement more than negative works best (IES, 2008).
- > **Attribution:** Linking effort and success for pupils when introducing or framing tasks (Coe et al., 2014).
- > **Avoiding lavish praise:** If used without merit, praise can lower pupil confidence in their own ability (Coe et al., 2014).

These strategies rely on a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It is worth noting that while teachers can harness extrinsic motivation to help get pupils started, intrinsic motivation is likely to get pupils to stick at tasks, particularly when things get tricky (Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016).

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING RAISES SUCCESS RATES

Ms Sterling can increase the chance pupils succeed at challenging tasks by using her emerging expertise in:

- > How pupils learn (Deans for Impact, 2015), for example taking care not to overload their working memories.
- > Her phase or subject specialism (Rosenshine, 2012; Coe et al., 2014), for example ensuring pupils have had enough input before they attempt challenging tasks, especially with specific barriers they might experience if the topic is particularly tricky, or they have special educational needs.

Her classroom climate is also crucial: when Ms Sterling sets challenging work, there will be times when pupils fail. Building a classroom where pupils trust that failure is okay is therefore important to help pupils deal with failure as a natural part of learning.

## NUANCES AND CAVEATS

The relationship between teacher expectations and pupil outcomes is indirect. Teachers can best convey high expectations by getting the balance of challenge and support right. This will ensure pupils experience success, which should increase their motivation and sense of self-worth, also supporting their resilience (Coe et al., 2014).

When engineering a high success rate for pupils, Ms Sterling must be careful not to remove challenge altogether. Setting pupils up for success in unchallenging tasks does not build motivation and can embed low expectations if pupils interpret this as low teacher expectations (Coe et al., 2014). Instead, Ms Sterling should ensure she provides enough scaffolding for pupils to be successful and withdraw the scaffolding as pupils get better at a task (Rosenshine, 2012). She can also explain why she is withdrawing scaffolding.

Pupil success at a task is an indication that they have successfully learnt lesson content, but not a sure sign – 'learning' and 'performance' are different.

# SELECT

Before you observe, first select a **DEVELOPMENT AREA** to focus on. Next, familiarise yourself with the **FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREAS**, as you will zoom in on one of these during your observation. Finally, craft a **PRECISE TARGET** when you observe your teacher (examples are provided below).

DEVELOPMENT AREA	FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA	EXAMPLE PRECISE TARGETS
Building complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Teacher sets tasks that build in complexity and supports pupils to see this challenge as positive and surmountable.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher asks questions that challenge pupils when their basic knowledge is secure.</li> </ul>	
Championing challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Teacher models the behaviours and mindsets involved in tackling challenging tasks and how to embrace and overcome errors.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher promotes challenge using consistent and intentional language, so pupils see it as desirable and understand how it benefits their learning.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher praises behaviours pupils use to tackle challenging tasks.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher helps build a sense of momentum and pace in the class by fostering challenge.</li> </ul>	<p><b>If your teacher is...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Not doing it at all:</b> Use consistent language to describe the benefits of challenging tasks and link this to the benefits to pupils' learning.</li> <li>&gt; <b>Doing it but needs some improvement:</b> When pupils are working on tasks they find challenging, remind pupils of the progress they have made through persevering with challenging tasks, e.g. "Last term you were doing ...; you have pushed yourselves, and now you are able to..."</li> <li>&gt; <b>Doing it well, but needs some stretch:</b> During or following a task that pupils found challenging, plan in reflection time that causes pupils to think about the progress they have made through tackling the challenging task. Encourage pupils to use the same positive, intentional language you have used with them to describe the benefits of challenge.</li> </ul>
Removing scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Teacher explains the importance of removing scaffolds and models how to gradually do so when knowledge is secure, and pupils are becoming more successful.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher praises pupils who, when they have secure knowledge, challenge themselves by removing scaffolds.</li> <li>&gt; Teacher gives pupils concrete and specific ways they can monitor their progress so they know when they should gradually remove scaffolds themselves.</li> </ul>	

**RECORD YOUR THINKING HERE**

DEVELOPMENT AREA	FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA	EXAMPLE PRECISE TARGETS
(select before observing)	(select whilst observing)	(select/write whilst observing)

# OBSERVE

Consider the following questions based on a short (approximately 15 minute) observation of your teacher.

What was your teacher's **previous** target? Are they meeting it? How do you know?

For the **DEVELOPMENT AREA** you are focussing on for this observation, what is your teacher already doing well?

Next, go to the previous page and select a **FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AREA** to further zoom in on. Then select (from the examples) or write one **PRECISE TARGET** (bite-sized action) to coach your teacher on. You can choose to stick with the previous target if your teacher have not made enough progress yet.

How will you model the target to your teacher to show them what good looks like? What questions will you ask to check your teacher understands the model? For example, 'How it is different from your current practice?', 'What impact might it have on your practice and pupils?', 'What links can you see between the model and the module principles (below)?'

**Reminder: Your model should help your teacher develop their ability in some of the following:**

- > Set tasks that stretch pupils, but which are achievable, within a challenging curriculum.
- > Remove scaffolding only when pupils are achieving a high degree of success in applying previously taught material.
- > Plan activities around what you want pupils to think hard about.
- > Support pupils to master challenging content which builds towards long-term goals.
- > Help pupils to journey from needing extrinsic motivation to being motivated to work intrinsically. .

Next, meet with your teacher to work through the 'Feedback' stage of instructional coaching. See the guidance on the feedback stage in the appendices of the Mentor Handbook for support.

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## REFERENCES

- Coe, R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S., & Major, L. E. (2014). What makes great teaching. Review of the underpinning research. Durham University. [bit.ly/ecf-coe](http://bit.ly/ecf-coe).
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