

ECT Mentor session

Module 5: Fulfilling professional responsibilities

Week 2: Workload and wellbeing

Session Elements



analyse
artefacts



discuss with a
mentor



collaborative
planning



sharing of practice

Learning Intentions for this session

Your ECT will learn how to:

Manage workload and wellbeing, by:

- 8m.** Using and personalising systems and routines to support efficient time and task management.
- 8n.** Understanding the right to support (e.g., to deal with misbehaviour).
- 8o.** Collaborating with colleagues to share the load of planning and preparation and making use of shared resources (e.g., textbooks).
- 8p.** Protecting time for rest and recovery.

Introduction

In the training session for this module, you explored ideas around being (a) professional. One of the key responsibilities of any professional is to manage their workload and wellbeing. Teaching can be a demanding profession, with surveys consistently finding that teachers work long hours. A specific challenge for teachers is that there is not a clearly defined end point for their work – for instance, resources can always be ‘a little better’. Therefore, it is crucial to effectively prioritise your

workload and to determine when 'good is good enough'.

Research and Practice Summary

Managing Aisha's workload and wellbeing

Aisha became a teacher because she wanted to make a difference to children's and young people's lives, but was finding it was increasingly taking over her own life. It felt like the work never ended – from planning and marking to writing reports and contacting parents – and she was never good enough.

Aisha's mentor said that it was not uncommon to feel this way as an early career teacher, but that there were practical things Aisha could do to make a difference to how she was feeling.

What could Aisha consider to improve her own workload and wellbeing?

As organisations, schools typically have extensive routines, such as those linked to sanctions and rewards and data reporting. Adopting these systems is important, but it is also important to personalise these systems and routines to support efficient time and task management. The Department for Education's workload survey has identified data entry as a significant source of unnecessary work. Developing an efficient system that works for you is important in retaining control over processes that are part of your work.

As part of your school's systems and routines, it is important to exercise your right to support. This includes the support you receive from your mentor as well as the support you can expect from other colleagues – for example, support from senior colleagues to help manage behaviour.



When thinking about your own systems and routines to support efficient time and task management, consider:

- **medium-term planning** – inevitably, there are crunch points in each week and half-term at school. By having a medium-term plan, you can even out these crunch points by moving around more flexible deadlines. Adding key dates from your school's calendar is a good starting point

- **data entry** – entering data into online systems is important, but it can become very burdensome. When entering data, ensure it is correct the first time. Also, if you do not understand why data is being collected, ask for clarification before you begin, so you do it right the first time
- **prioritisation** – there are things that need doing and things that it is nice to do. By prioritising your work and starting with the non-negotiables, you can more effectively manage your workload. Pupil safeguarding is always a priority; making teaching materials look attractive with fancy designs is less important, as it usually has little impact on learning

Using and personalising systems

Aisha knows that completing homework can improve pupils' outcomes, particularly for older pupils. She has tried this year to focus on the quality of the homework she sets and its relevance to in-class learning.

Aisha finds it challenging to effectively track and follow up on homework not returned by pupils. In particular, using a combination of digital and paper-based systems is not working well for her: she has occasionally misplaced homework that pupils have handed to her outside of lessons and often not realised that homework has been missed for several lessons by some pupils.

After asking colleagues for advice, Aisha makes the following changes to her system:

- **one tracker** – Aisha tracks homework using her planner. She records when homework is submitted and if pupils were absent when it was set. This means that she does not have to hold this information in her mind and the tracker also saves time when it comes to report writing and parents' evenings
- **dedicated time** – during each lesson, Aisha sets aside time to collect in homework, while her pupils are working. This ensures that collection is not rushed and her lessons do not overrun. Aisha also no longer accepts homework at other points in her day
- **follow-up** – after the last lesson of each day, Aisha spends 10 minutes reviewing homework submitted and entering information into the school's online system as necessary. By doing this consistently every day, workload remains manageable. The homework completion rate has gone up as Aisha's pupils know she will adhere to her school's policies and follow up promptly on

any missed homework

By making these changes, Aisha has saved herself time and worry in tracking homework. She is adhering to her school's system in an effective and efficient manner.

Working with colleagues can help to make you both more efficient and effective as a teacher. Collaboration is particularly important when it comes to planning and preparation, which can be a significant source of workload.

By working with colleagues, you can – together – develop better plans and resources than you could alone. Using shared resources, including published materials like textbooks, can also help to reduce your workload.

There are myths that sometimes discourage teacher collaboration in this way. Some teachers feel obliged to develop all of their materials 'from scratch'. Others are reluctant to use resources like textbooks, as they worry that they will be looked down on or that this 'lacks creativity'. Neither myth is true and they contribute to a toxic culture around workload.



To make the most of collaborative planning and shared resources, consider:

- what opportunities are there for collaborative planning? (e.g., where more than one teacher works with the same class, or teaches the same content to different classes)
- what shared resources can you access? (e.g., existing lesson/unit plans; pre-made worksheets or activity instructions; textbooks)
- how will you adapt these resources for your own classes and teaching style?

Managing your workload effectively will make a dramatic contribution to your wellbeing. Sustained heavy workloads can have long-term consequences for you as an individual as well as a teacher. Your first responsibility is to your health, and you can only do your best as a teacher when you are well.

While managing workload is important, it is not a substitute for sustained time away

from work. Therefore, it is important to protect time for rest and recovery both during the school holidays and during a standard working week.

Collaborative planning and preparation

To reduce their workload, and as part of their professional development, Aisha and a colleague collaborated to re-develop resources for one of their schemes of learning.

They began by jointly reviewing the existing resources for the scheme of work as well as the available shared resources, such as textbooks, that they had access to in school. Through this, they prioritised the areas they wanted to improve and split the work between them. They then reviewed the materials that each had developed before making final changes together.

By working together, Aisha and her colleague were able to save considerable time. They also avoided recreating lots of unnecessary resources – wherever possible, they adapted existing materials. By pooling their expertise as well as their time, the final product was better than either would have produced alone.

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: 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.

At the start of this module, you looked at all of the *learn how* statements for Standard 8 and conducted a module audit with your mentee. In some areas they will already

be confident and skilled. In others they will want more practice and support from you and others. Look back at this audit now and use it to help decide how you and your mentee will make the most productive use of the suggested Theory to Practice activities below.

Theory to Practice: 35 mins



1. Discuss with mentor

Talk to your mentee about the issues and strategies raised in this week's research and practice summary, and how they apply to your mentee at present.

You could explore the following questions:

- which issues explored in the summary are particularly pertinent for your mentee?
- what strategies does your mentee already use successfully to manage their workload and wellbeing?
- what, specifically, are the top 2 or 3 issues your mentee finds most challenge their workload and wellbeing?
- are there patterns to how these issues present themselves? For example, are they linked to their timetable, to weekly/monthly/termly cycles in the school calendar/other?



2. Sharing of practice

Share with your mentee strategies you have used, or seen colleagues use, that specifically address the challenges your mentee has highlighted.

As you share these examples:

- be as specific as you can about the nature of the issue, the actions taken and the impact of these actions on workload and wellbeing
- connect back to the principles/strategies identified in the research and practice summary above



3. Analysis of artefacts/collaborative planning

With reference to the mentee's planner, online calendar and/or other approaches to planning their workload, work together to devise practical strategies that:

- address the issues that most challenge their workload and wellbeing at present
- proactively help to pre-empt issues that may challenge workload and wellbeing in the future

To make the most of this activity:

- build on the positive strategies your mentee already has in place
- draw on the successful strategies that you have shared from your own practice and that of colleagues
- prompt your mentee to be as specific as possible in setting out the strategies they will put in place going forward. For example, if they are committing to at least one evening a week when they will not work beyond 5pm, use their planner to identify a day when this is most feasible/beneficial and encourage them to add this to their planner as a reminder
- explore opportunities for you to support your mentee, either with specific challenges or through collaborating on planning, preparation and/or making use of shared resources

Next Steps: 5 mins

Agree with your mentee how they will now put their strategies from this week's session(s) into practice. Help your mentee to clarify:

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

Note the date of your next mentor meeting, when you will check on your mentee's progress.