

ECT Mentor session

Module 9: Fulfilling professional responsibilities (II)

Week 2: Managing effective working relationships

Session Elements



discussion with
mentor

Learning Intentions for this session

Your ECT will learn how to:

Build effective working relationships, by:

- 8f.** Contributing positively to the wider school culture and developing a feeling of shared responsibility for improving the lives of all pupils within the school.
- 8g.** Seeking ways to support individual colleagues and working as part of a team.
- 8h.** Communicating with parents and carers proactively and making effective use of parents' evenings to engage parents and carers in their children's schooling.
- 8i.** Working closely with the SENCO and other professionals supporting pupils with additional needs, making explicit links between interventions delivered outside of lessons with classroom teaching.
- 8j.** Sharing the intended lesson outcomes with teaching assistants ahead of lessons.
- 8k.** Ensuring that support provided by teaching assistants in lessons is additional to, rather than a replacement for, support from the teacher.

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 are returning to this content with your mentee. In this week's session, you are focusing on how your mentee manages effective working relationships.

Research and Practice Summary

Building working relationships in a new job

Felipe has recently moved to a new town, with a new job in a local school. Taking a moment to reflect at the end of a busy first half-term, Felipe is proud of how he's built positive working relationships with his new community. It's been hard work, but already, Felipe can see how his efforts are paying off for him and his pupils.

Felipe has made a real effort to get to know his new colleagues. He volunteered to help out at the school open day as a way of meeting colleagues beyond his immediate team and also shared his knowledge of assessment strategies at a recent staff CPD event. He makes a real effort to engage with colleagues around the school, too, offering help wherever he can.

Having learned as an NQT how important it is to engage positively with parents and carers, Felipe made a real effort to contact home for all of his pupils in the first few weeks of term. He highlighted something positive that he had noticed about each pupil – their effort, their enthusiasm, their progress or their behaviour, for example, and introduced himself as a teacher new to the school. He invited parents and carers to contact him with any questions or comments and made sure that they were coming to the next parents' evening. He knew that building these relationships now would make it easier to address any challenges that might arise later. A number of pupils have thanked him for the positive feedback and Felipe can see them really making an effort with their learning.

Finally, Felipe has recently had a really positive meeting with his school SENCO to discuss his pupils. Now that he has a good understanding of the learning needs of his pupils, he is in a good position to adapt his teaching to accommodate these needs and build on interventions pupils are receiving elsewhere. He is looking forward to working

with his teaching assistant to make sure that their support in his lessons is as impactful as it can be.

Felipe's proactive approach in his new job shows his strong understanding of his professional responsibilities. By forging strong relationships with colleagues, parents and carers, Felipe is both supporting his pupils' academic progress and contributing to the wider life of his school community.

As you continue to develop into a more experienced teacher, you will play an increasingly leading role in the school. This will include contributing to the school culture and fostering a feeling of shared responsibility for improving the lives of all pupils within the school community. Over time, you will also find ways to support individual colleagues and play an increasing role within the team of colleagues that you work with.

You will recall from last year that when working with colleagues, it can help to:

- **understand specialist roles and responsibilities** – it is important to know what specialist colleagues (e.g. SENCO, careers advisor, pastoral lead) do and how this links to your own role, particularly where colleagues are responsible for pupil safeguarding
- **coordinate support** – it is important to coordinate your work with these specialist colleagues, using established processes for activities such as referring pupils for additional support, and you should feel confident approaching these colleagues to simply ask for advice (e.g. asking a SENCO for advice about support specific pupils)
- **make links** – making links between the work led by specialist colleagues (such as out-of-class interventions) and your own interactions with pupils can help to reinforce key messages and improve the coherence of pupils' learning, which will support pupils to apply their learning from specialist interventions to their learning in class
- **communicate effectively** – each of these approaches requires effective, often two-way communication, so consider how to do this effectively and efficiently

For many teachers, their most frequent relationship with a specialist colleague will be

work with teaching assistants. When working with teaching assistants, there are specific things that you should consider. First, remember that teaching assistants can have a dramatic effect on learning, but the benefits are maximised when you collaborate effectively with them. Key things to remember include:

- **sharing lesson intentions** – it is critical to ensure that teaching assistants understand what your aims are for the lesson and how they can work effectively with you. Making time to share planning and prepare teaching assistants is an important part of lesson planning
- **supplement, rather than replace, yourself** – teaching assistants are most effective when they add value to what you are already doing; if they replace you, effectively reducing pupils' access to you as the teacher, this can negatively affect pupils' learning overall
- **make links to support learning** – if teaching assistants are leading targeted interventions outside of lessons, you should ensure that you understand what happens in those interventions and seek to make connections with what happens in class

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.



1. Discuss with mentor

The research and practice summary above illustrates different ways that recently qualified teachers work with parents, carers and colleagues to improve outcomes for pupils.

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

To help shape this discussion you could:

- reflect with your mentee on how effectively they currently work with colleagues across the school to contribute to the wider life of the school
- reflect with your mentee on how effectively they currently work with specialist colleagues (including the SENCO and teaching assistants) to ensure that the appropriate support is in place for pupils
- reflect with your mentee on how effectively they work with parents and carers to improve pupils' motivation, behaviour and academic success
- explore with your mentee the implications for how they manage their working relationships and any changes to their work role in the coming year
- discuss with your mentee strategies, including those which you use regularly and those which you don't, which could help your mentee to manage their working relationships more effectively
- consider with your mentee any working relationships which they are finding particularly tricky to manage, and discuss specific strategies which might help to resolve these challenges experienced

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 their workload and well-being.