



The National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers

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TEACHER EDUCATOR & MENTORING ZONE

Challenge and Support



3 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

1

Analyse your own practice, or that of your team or department? Is the learning environment you have collectively created for you and your mentee supportive and safe?

2

Ensure your mentee is evaluating their own practice by giving them time to reflect on lessons and asking questions.

3

Engage with the training programme that is in place and ask the mentee about their recent training day. What did they learn? Is there anything they want to implement or try based on what they learned?



A trainee in September will have a very different set of needs and targets compared to a trainee in July





There is a fine balance to strike between supporting someone to achieve their potential whilst ensuring that you are also challenging them in the difficult moments. Ultimately, this often comes down to the ability to have a professional relationship with your mentee. Your mentee will no doubt have moments of feeling out of control or out of their depth. In these moments, a mentor who takes the time to explain that feeling this way is completely normal and part of the process can go a long way to ensuring your mentee does not crumble under the pressure of a lesson going horribly wrong or feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility of leading a subject for the first time. It is just as important to ensure that once your mentee has reflected on what could have been done differently, that you challenge them to face the problem with confidence and not to avoid it. Experienced practitioners are well versed in a lesson not quite going to plan or having to stop, cancel everything and start again halfway through a new topic in maths; it is not always that easy as a trainee or ECT. It is these moments when the best mentors step up and shine.



Recognising that you have a responsibility to support your mentee in the trickiest parts of the year, as well as pushing them to achieve all that they are capable of, is the delicate balance that mentors have to strike. The key to being able to do this is both trust and consistency. Creating a consistent environment, that is also safe, will allow your mentee to feel confident enough to take risks and, importantly, analyse their own practice to enable them to become self-reflective and aware of their own progress. Metacognition and the ability to understand how it is that we learn best is a key component to becoming a reflective and engaged practitioner. You, and your colleagues, can play a large part in developing these skills for your mentee by finding the delicate balance between supporting them during the tough times and maximising those weeks of glorious progress through appropriate challenge.

