



The National Association of  
School-Based Teacher Trainers

[WWW.NASBTT.ORG.UK/TEMZ](http://WWW.NASBTT.ORG.UK/TEMZ)

TEACHER EDUCATOR & MENTORING ZONE

# Form Effective Relationships



## 3 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

1

Consider “contracting” your mentor / mentee relationship whether formally or informally to set appropriate boundaries and discuss how to get the best from each other and colleagues around you.

2

Include or engage your mentee in discussions with colleagues around you. Summarise your mentee’s priorities, targets, areas for development so that all colleagues are supporting in the right way and can plan time with your mentee.

3

Tread the fine line between professionalism and ensuring your mentee feels welcome and supported. Do not be scared to have a challenging conversation as this can be the start of a mutual respect that breeds a highly successful mentoring relationship. Be human! Leave early with your mentee one day and go for a coffee. Go for a walk together and grab a meal deal one lunchtime. Your mentee will be really grateful and you might find some common ground you did not know existed.

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

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It goes without saying that the relationship between yourself and your mentee is a key component when analysing the most effective mentoring relationships. If you are unable to build a professional relationship with your mentee, then it is unlikely that either of you will meet your potential as either a mentor or mentee. The key word is professional and the opposite ends of the scale are to be avoided. A relationship that is far too comfortable can lead to complacency and the inability to hold a challenging conversation through fear of it ruining an existing friendship. Equally damaging is a non-existent relationship that is in place purely because senior leadership told you to expect a trainee on Monday morning. As a mentor and depending on your setting, you may need to support your mentee in managing relationships with other colleagues who may have misconceptions about the mentee's responsibilities. The key is to remember that you are a professional carrying out a professional role. Being a teacher is a privileged position for us all to be in. To have the opportunity to impact on the next generation of teachers is a further privilege and something the very best mentors embrace.



Effective and professional relationships are not just based on personality and common ground. They are based on the best interests of both people involved and an understanding that, even if we do not all have the same views or interests, we are all human. Mentoring is easy when the person you are supporting just so happens to be perfectly aligned with how you see the world. The true test comes when you are supporting someone who challenges your own way of thinking and/or working. If you walk into any school or college across the country, each class will feel different; each lesson will be taught in a slightly altered way. This is the beauty of teaching and the mentees in our schools are no different. They are with you to learn but they are also there to become the teacher that they want to become. An effective and successful relationship between mentor and mentee recognises this.



If you are working with a trainee, there is also the unavoidable fact that you will be spending the majority of your working week with one person, especially in a primary or SEND setting. Sharing that much of your time with a friend or family member would be a challenge; sharing it with someone you have no previous relationship with is an even bigger challenge. Remember to find time to talk about things you care about away from teaching. Spend some time getting to know each other as people as well as teachers. This can have a profound impact on your mentee's enjoyment of the process and importantly yours.