



# Mentoring

Getting it right ✓

## IN A WEEK

**Jonathan Gravells**

Series editor: **Susan Wallace**



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## Meet the author

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*I am a consultant specialising in mentoring and coaching, and over the last 13 years or so I have had the opportunity to work extensively in the education sector, as well as with multi-national companies, the National Health Service and small charities.*

*In addition to being a practising mentor and coach myself, I have spent much of my time running training courses for mentors and coaches in schools, colleges and universities. I live near Lichfield in Staffordshire and, when not working or writing, I divide my time between cycling, family history and preventing a large garden from reverting entirely to natural wilderness!*

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*I am Emeritus Professor of Education at Nottingham Trent University where part of my role has been to support trainee teachers on initial and in-service teacher training courses. My own experience of classroom teaching has been mainly with 14 to 19 year olds, and I have also worked in a local authority advisory role for this age group. My particular interest is in the motivation and behaviour management of reluctant and disengaged learners, and I've written a number of books and research papers on this topic. My work allows me the privilege of meeting, observing and listening to teachers from all sectors of education. It is to them that I owe many of the tips and ideas contained in this series.*



## Introduction

Welcome to **Mentoring: Getting it Right in a Week!** Over the course of the next seven days you will learn all you need to know to be an effective mentor to your colleagues and to ensure that mentoring in your school or college is implemented, evaluated and embedded in a professional and sustainable way.

This book is aimed squarely at the busy classroom teacher, providing practical advice and helpful strategies in accessible, bite-sized chunks that are brief and to the point, and illustrated with clear examples, showing how you can put your new-found skills and knowledge into practice day by day. If you are already mentoring someone, then you may find it easier to spread reading these chapters over a longer time, even several months, in order to fit in with the frequency of your mentoring sessions. This will give you time to put some of the techniques and strategies into practice. But, however you choose to engage with the book, the chapters are designed to enable you to assimilate the important concepts and practices of mentoring in an easily digested and entertaining way.

Whether you are a new or experienced teacher, working in primary, secondary or further education, you will find this book both an engaging first introduction to mentoring and a useful opportunity to refresh and maybe extend your knowledge. Can you really become a great mentor in a week? Well, it's fair to say that great mentors, like great teachers, never stop learning and improving. But we certainly hope that, by the time you finish this book, you will be a more skilful and confident mentor than when you started.

Furthermore, because we know that great teachers are often given the 'career development opportunity' of actually implementing mentoring in their school, this book will not only introduce you to the skills and

techniques you will need to be a good mentor, but will also enable you to impress your leadership team with your knowledge of how the school as a whole can ensure it gets the most from this important development process. (In fact, your head teacher may also benefit from reading this book!)

Over recent years, mentoring has attracted more and more attention as a critical element in the professional development of teachers, featuring in Ofsted reports, and taking a higher profile in schools' strategic plans for raising performance and quality of teaching. In 2008, a research team from the University of Nottingham and Leeds' schools of education conducted a literature review of the available research from around the world on mentoring new teachers. They concluded that mentoring could result in a wide range of benefits for individual teachers and schools, including:

### For those being mentored

- reduced feelings of isolation;
- adaptation to expectations and norms of institution/profession;
- increased confidence and self-esteem;
- professional growth;
- improved behaviour and classroom management skills;
- improved time management;
- improved self-reflection and problem-solving capacities;
- gaining perspective on difficult experiences;
- increasing morale and job satisfaction.

- For the mentors themselves
  - positive impact on personal and professional development;
  - improved ability to learn and reflect on own practice;
  - opportunity to talk to others about teaching and learning;
  - new and improved teaching styles;
  - improved communication skills;
  - satisfaction and pride in helping others succeed;
  - enhanced career planning by identifying own priorities.

- For the school as a whole
  - increased retention and stability;
  - staff getting to know each other better;
  - increased collaboration;
  - more developed culture of professional development;
  - more cost-effective training and development of staff.

(Hobson et al, 2009)

In May 2014, Sir Andrew Carter was appointed to chair an independent review into initial teacher training. One of the specific remits of this review was to look at what elements create really effective mentoring. In his review, Sir Andrew called for a set of non-statutory standards *'to help bring greater coherence and consistency to the school-based mentoring arrangements for trainee teachers'*. The Teaching Schools Council invited a group of practising school leaders to help carry out this piece of work and consulted with a range of mentors, mentees and those responsible for managing initial teacher training in schools. They reported back in July

2016 with a set of national standards, and this document is now available on the gov.uk website ([www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/536891/Mentor\\_standards\\_report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536891/Mentor_standards_report_Final.pdf)).

It describes mentor standards in four distinct but interconnected areas:

- personal qualities;
- teaching;
- professionalism;
- self-development.

The stated purpose of these standards is threefold:

1. To foster greater consistency in the practice of mentors by identifying the effective characteristics of mentoring.
2. To raise the profile of mentoring and provide a framework for the professional development of current and aspiring mentors.
3. To contribute towards the building of a culture of coaching and mentoring in schools.

Many of the key findings and recommendations of this report are echoed in the chapters that follow. Furthermore, because the report promotes the use of mentoring beyond initial teacher training, the guidance and the strategies in this book are deliberately aimed at *all* mentors, whether working with trainee teachers, NQTs or more experienced colleagues.

The book begins by looking at exactly what mentoring is and how it works.

On **Day 1** you will learn about the role of the mentor, how to structure productive mentoring conversations and how you can help your mentee to do their best thinking. As outlined in the standards, it emphasises the need for mentors to provide appropriate support and challenge as well as signposting other sources of expertise and knowledge. Equally importantly, you will learn to distinguish between your role and responsibilities as a mentor and those responsibilities that you should leave firmly with your mentee.

On **Day 2** the focus is on how to make mentoring work well in your school, touching on key recommendations from the standards, such as a systematic process for identifying and training mentors, and the importance of providing continuing mentor development. Day 2 will also help you to identify what you want the mentoring to achieve and how to get and maintain colleagues' commitment to the process. Importantly, you will learn more about the negative consequences of getting mentoring wrong.

On **Day 3** you will learn about the importance of building the right quality of relationship with your mentee. Establishing trusting relationships and empathising with a mentee's challenges form part of '*personal qualities*', the first of the four standards specified in the TSC report. You will be introduced to strategies for ensuring a 'safe space' for your mentoring conversations and the necessary ground rules for making this work. Finally, you will discover how to locate the boundary between being a supportive mentor and being a sympathetic colleague or friend.

**Days 4 and 5** focus on the specific skills you will need to develop in order to be a great mentor. As recommended in the national standards, these include a range of interpersonal skills, such as listening, questioning as well as summarising and reflecting back and using shifts in perspective to re-frame challenges and blockages to development. The standards rightly emphasise the importance of mentors being able to provide effective

feedback, and so you will learn more about the different ways a mentor can apply this crucial skill.

On **Day 6** you will find out more about how these skills and techniques can be combined to enable you to address some of the common challenges that all mentors encounter at some time. These include:

- raising your mentee's self-awareness;
- helping your mentee develop productive relationships with colleagues, students and parents;
- building resilience in your mentee;
- supporting your mentee to achieve sustainable behaviour change.

The national standards also emphasise the importance of mentors continuing to develop their practice, and so on **Day 7** you will be given strategies for evaluating your practice and the effectiveness of the mentoring, with a view to improving the quality of mentoring at both an individual and school level.

In order to help you navigate all of this easily, each chapter (or Day) follows the same format, comprising a number of interlocking elements.

**Chapter opener:** The day's topic is introduced and put in context with a brief explanation of why it is important and how it links to other subjects covered elsewhere in the book.

**Individual strategies:** Every day you will be offered specific strategies that you can try out in your own mentoring practice. These will be summarised in one page or less and will be accompanied by the following features.

**Strategy in action:** Every strategy will be illustrated by an exercise, an example of a scenario or a conversation which will show you how the idea might look in practice, and under what kind of circumstances it might be used. Of course, in order to keep things punchy and digestible, these examples are inevitably abbreviated versions of what might happen in a real mentoring conversation.

**A spot of theory:** While every effort has been made to try and keep this book focused on practical, accessible and easy-to-digest strategies for busy classroom teachers, we recognise that it is sometimes useful to have an idea of the theories underpinning some of the practices described. You may want to do additional reading for your own personal development, or you may need references for additional studies that you are undertaking. So throughout every chapter you will find 'A spot of theory' features. These will briefly signpost you to further reading and sources of information on the concepts discussed.

**If you only try one thing from this chapter, try this:** Towards the end of each chapter there is a recommendation of which strategy it would be most important for you to have a go at. Knowing how busy you are, we thought it might be useful, if you only have time to try one thing, to have some guidance as to what that might be. However, you are of course free to try out whatever strategies suit you best, or even to invent new ones of your own!

**Checklist:** At the end of the chapter you will be given a checklist of the strategies covered that day, so that you can record the results of trying them out for yourself, and note whether you would use them again. There is even room to record the success or otherwise of your own strategies.

In addition to all this you will find cartoons and diagrams, some of which help to summarise the various aspects of mentoring practice being presented, and others of which are included merely to provide some light relief.

It only remains to say that, if you are reading this book, it is likely that you are already a busy classroom teacher and therefore performing a challenging, occasionally frustrating, but potentially hugely rewarding role. Well, as a mentor, you are about to take on another role which, though distinct from teaching, is every bit as challenging and rewarding. You will be giving the colleagues with whom you work the gift of a dedicated, safe space in which to reflect upon and develop their classroom practice, and you will also be bestowing on them the combined benefits of your undivided attention, your empathetic understanding, your perceptive questioning and your respect for their expertise and resourcefulness in overcoming the changing professional challenges they must face. In so doing, you will help them to be happier and more successful in their work, help raise the performance of your school or college, and learn a lot about yourself into the bargain.

Happy mentoring!



## DAY 4: Helping your mentee develop

So far, we have examined what mentoring is, how it works and what such conversations should look like. Today we will begin finding out more about the skills and techniques you draw on as a mentor by focusing on your two most important tools: listening and questioning.

One of the greatest gifts you will give your mentee is that of being really listened to by someone who pays them the respect of believing they have the capability to master whatever particular challenge they happen to be facing. You are not their boss, with one eye on what they need to get done, and your approachability compromised by the responsibility to direct and assess performance. They already have one of those. You are not their friend, feeling the need to protect and rescue them with sympathetic agreement and quick-fire solutions. They already have plenty of friends (well, hopefully). Neither are you a family member, whom they may not wish to burden with work issues. No, you are someone who will devote quality time to really understanding their particular perspective and providing objective support.

You will adopt open body language, nod, make encouraging noises, summarise, maintain regular eye contact, and all those other things you have learned on training courses. But much more than this, you will actually give them your full attention. You will stop filtering their narrative according to your values and concerns. You will stop trying to problem-solve or rescue. Instead you will tune into the feelings as well as the facts. You will notice recurring themes in the language and imagery they use, and you will become aware of what they are *not* saying.

Remember, your primary aim is to understand, so when you do speak it will almost certainly be to ask questions. The best questions are those that help your mentee do *their* best thinking by:

- clarifying aims and outcomes;
- raising self-awareness;
- encouraging deeper reflection;
- re-evaluating perspectives;
- considering alternative strategies;
- deciding what to do.

They are not those that help *you* solve the puzzle.

### Today's strategies

1. Watch yourself
2. If you only have a hammer
3. Let silence be your friend
4. Dig deep

## 1. Watch yourself

One of the tricky things about mentoring is that you have to master a range of skills and use these in a structured and purposeful conversation while maintaining a zen-like level of attention on your mentee. But you also have to combine this with a degree of self-monitoring, to ensure that you are indeed doing all these things and getting better at doing them. This ability to monitor your behaviour is crucial to your development as a mentor. Here are a few techniques based on principles you learned on Day 1:

- A. **Talking ratio:** Try reflecting back on your mentoring conversations and evaluating how much time you spent talking versus how much time your mentee did. Aside perhaps from an initial meeting where you may be having to explain the process and ground rules, you should be aiming to talk no more than 20 to 30 per cent of the time, on average. If you are talking more than this, there is a good chance you are driving the agenda and/or imposing solutions. Try asking your mentee for feedback.
- B. **Questions versus statements:** In a similar vein, divide your interventions into questions and statements. How much of the time are you asking as opposed to telling? Obviously hard and fast rules are misleading. But again, you generally want to be doing a lot more asking than telling. The desire to share one's own experience and expertise, for genuinely helpful reasons, can distract us from our main purpose of enabling the mentee to do their best thinking.
- C. **Open to closed:** So, are there any other 'triggers' you should watch out for? For example, if you find yourself moving from open questions (see Strategy 2 below) to increasingly closed questions, you may, albeit inadvertently, be adopting a more diagnostic approach and homing in on your own solution to the issue being addressed by your mentee. This can also manifest itself in an increasing frequency of questions, gradually transforming a relaxed, contemplative space into a police interrogation.

### A Spot of Theory

*In their book, Coaching and Mentoring at Work (Open University Press, 2007), Mary Connor and Julia Pokora refer to diagnostic listening (as typified by a doctor asking about symptoms to identify a patient's condition and recommend treatment) and how this differs from the active listening required of mentors.*

## Strategy in action

Let's take a look inside the thoughts of Krzysztof, a novice mentor, as he conducts a mentoring conversation with Mona. They have been discussing a difficult bit of lesson observation feedback that Mona had to give an NQT.

### Krzysztof:

“ So Mona, tell me more about that. (Yes, good use of a probe question, helping Mona reflect more deeply...) ”

### Mona:

“ Well, for me the hardest thing was the gap between what I observed and her perception of the lesson. I just couldn't think how to close that gap without crushing her... ”

### Krzysztof:

“ (That worked well. She's opening up more. Good eye contact, nodding. Wow, I'm on fire here... No hang on, wait a minute, what was she saying? ...) You see the thing with feedback is striking a balance between positive reinforcement and constructive criticism. The other person needs to feel you are ultimately on her side... (Damn, now I'm just pontificating and doing all the talking. Ask a question, for goodness sake...) So, what did you do? ”

### Mona:

“ Well I tried asking her how she thought the lesson went, hoping for some way in, but either she was in denial about what had gone awry, or she genuinely failed to recognise what went wrong. ”

### Krzysztof:

“ So you tried to encourage some self-assessment, but did you try more specific questions to get her thinking about the aspects of her practice that resulted in the lesson becoming a bit chaotic? ”

### Mona:

“ No, I'm not sure I did. What sort of things did you mean? ”

### Krzysztof:

“ (Oh damn! That was a closed question, wasn't it? How do I avoid just giving her solutions now?) Well, let me turn that question back to you Mona. What could you have asked that might have focused her on where she went wrong? (Woo-hoo! Classic recovery. That was close. Stop talking so much.) ”

### Mona:

“ So, like I could have asked how she felt the make-up of the groups affected behaviour and concentration levels later in the lesson? ”

### Krzysztof:

“ I think that's an excellent example. Go on. (Good, keep her thinking.) ”

### Mona:

“ Well I could have asked her how clearly she felt she explained what she wanted from each of the groups, what she did to take account of the different ability levels in the class, and what effect Jamie Clarke's behaviour in particular had on the lesson. But I dunno... I guess I still think the idea that this was a bit of a car crash would leave her in bits. ”

### Krzysztof:

“ (Goodness that's a lot of strong language. She looks really tense. Is something else going on here, I wonder?) How much of this is about your fears, Mona? ... ”

## 2. If you only have a hammer

Remember the old adage? Well, if you don't want every mentoring challenge to be a nail, then you need to practise using the full range of question types at your disposal, as well as recognising what sort of questions to avoid.

You may already be familiar with the idea of open and closed questions. Open questions are those which cannot be simply answered yes or no. They often begin with words like where, what, how, when, why, and they invite a fuller answer than closed questions. They are great for encouraging a mentee to talk more and reflect on a topic without imposing any particular agenda or judgement. As a good mentor, you will find yourself using a lot of open questions. For example:

- ☛ What was successful about that?
- ☛ Who can you think of who might be helpful here?
- ☛ When have you felt like this before?
- ☛ How might you go about doing that?

However, there will be times when a closed question, seeking only a yes or no answer, will be perfectly appropriate – when you are seeking clarification, for example, or ensuring a common understanding.

- ☛ So, are you saying your dilemma is...?
- ☛ And you say this needs to be resolved by...?

You may also use closed questions to pin down actions at the end of a conversation.

- ☛ Are we agreed then that you are going to... by... ?

But what about different sorts of open questions? Hypothetical questions are great for encouraging creativity or shifting perspective.

- ☛ What would you do if you were feeling at your most confident?

Then there are probing questions and challenging questions.

- ☛ Why do you think you felt that way?
- ☛ What are you doing that is preventing you from succeeding here?

There is even something called the 'miracle' or 'magic' question:

- ☛ Imagine you wake up tomorrow and the problem is solved, what would you notice is different?

Effective mentors use a wide range of questions to provide different sorts of help. However, they are careful to avoid the following:

- ☛ Multiple questions: *'Why didn't that help, what put you off, and what could you do instead?'*
- ☛ Leading questions: *'Do you think Trish got upset because you criticised her unfairly?'*
- ☛ Suggestions disguised as questions: *'What about adopting some sort of merit table?'*

## Strategy in action

Nira is mentoring Nathan, an experienced colleague who is already regretting agreeing to lead a school-wide literacy initiative. They have begun their conversation by agreeing that Nathan would like some help thinking about how to structure his task and where on earth to start. They have also agreed that this is not something about which Nira is able to offer her own experience. So she is using a variety of questions to help Nathan reflect more deeply:

**Nira:**

“ Can you think of a time when you have had to undertake something similar to this? (Effectively a closed question.)

**Nathan:**

“ Well nothing really on the literacy front, but I did have to organise a safeguarding inset day at my previous school.

**Nira:**

“ OK, and what would you say went well with that? (Open question.)

**Nathan:**

“ It all went pretty much to plan as I recall. Apart from just the administration and logistics going smoothly, I actually got a lot of nice comments about how involving the discussions and exercises were. Although, to be honest, I nicked a lot of those ideas from colleagues I'd talked to beforehand!

**Nira:**

“ So, what did you do that most contributed to the success of that project, do you think? (Probing open question.)

**Nathan:**

“ I'd have to say that the main thing was insisting on a really clear set of aims and objectives for the day. That and planning the hell out of it,

*I guess. I remember having a massive chart in my kitchen at home. It was like I was leading the D-Day invasion!*

**Nira:**

“ It also sounds from what you said earlier, that you had asked for ideas from colleagues. Is that right? (Closed question – checking understanding.)

**Nathan:**

“ Yes, I've always been a bit rubbish at the creative thinking thing...

**Nira:**

“ Really? What makes you say that? (Open question – challenge.)

**Nathan:**

“ Dunno really. I guess I've not really ever regarded myself as the creative type.

**Nira:**

“ Well, if you were one of these 'creative types' what lessons would you draw from your safeguarding project experience that you could apply to the literacy initiative? (Hypothetical, open question.)

## A Spot of Theory

David Megginson and David Clutterbuck, in their book, *Further Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring* (Butterworth Heinemann, 2009), illustrate a good questioning technique with a list of a hundred 'massively difficult questions'. Try starting your own collection!

### 3. Let silence be your friend

One of the key skills in being a great listener, and one which we have not yet mentioned, is not talking.

In normal conversation we have a tendency to see silence as the enemy. We feel compelled to fill the shortest pause by saying something, anything. Silence is awkward and uncomfortable, an indication that we are somehow not doing our job of conversing properly. Small wonder then that, as an inexperienced mentor, you may find yourself:

- ☛ rapidly following up a great question with another, different question;
- ☛ asking a challenging question and then answering it yourself;
- ☛ moving the conversation into 'safer' territory;
- ☛ firing solutions at your mentee.

All because five seconds have passed without your mentee responding. (Of course, it feels like five minutes.)

So you may need to re-frame your idea of silence. Because, silence also shows you are listening. It slows the conversation down and sends the message that it's fine to just sit and think. It encourages your mentee to reflect more deeply, and, crucially, it gives your mentee the quiet space in which to do this. If you are worried it will all seem too weird, then use your ground rules discussion to talk about how it's okay to sit in silence occasionally, especially when thinking deeply about a difficult topic. It is a necessary part of creating a reflective space.

Two more misconceptions you may need to rid yourself of:

- ☛ **Demonstrating my skill and helpfulness as a mentor is all about my clever interventions.**
- ☛ **Just listening in silence is too easy and therefore a cop-out.**

There is nothing easy about holding on to a silence while attending 100 per cent to your mentee. Sometimes listening, acting as a sounding board and just being there for them is the most helpful thing you can do. Try this four-step approach to exploring a topic.

1. **Question:** Ask a powerful open question.
2. **Tell me more:** Do not simply accept your mentee's initial thinking. Press them to explore more deeply.
3. **Summarise:** Paraphrase back what you think the mentee has been telling you.
4. **Shut up:** Use silence to allow any insight arising from this exchange to surface.

## Strategy in action

Benjamin is being mentored by Cassie. They work in an inner city primary school which has begun to improve after some years of under-performance and protests from parents. Benjamin is disappointed about being passed over recently for promotion to assistant head, and is discussing his long-term career with his mentor.

### Benjamin:

“ Maybe I should give up on the idea of a leadership position, if I’m so obviously unsuitable. I mean I’m not sure what more I can do than take on projects successfully and consistently get outstanding reports on inspections...

### Cassie:

“ Mmmm, I don’t see anyone disputing your talents as an excellent classroom teacher, Benjamin, and I’ve personally seen you demonstrate leadership, when given the opportunity. So we have to consider what is stopping you being seen as assistant head material. What did you feel you answered well at the interview, and what felt more challenging?

### Benjamin:

“ Well, we talked about the various bits of the school improvement strategy, and I reckon I demonstrated some pretty good contributions in areas like raising physical activity and cracking down on poor classroom behaviour. Maybe I wasn’t so strong on after-school club stuff, with me having a bit of a long commute, but that’s all...

### Cassie:

“ OK, that’s interesting. Say a bit more about that.

### Benjamin:

“ Well, it’s a bit like all the work on transition from primary to secondary. Those network meetings with St Luke’s High School all took place in the evenings, and I already have to give up time for parents’ evenings and stuff.

### Cassie:

“ So I think what I’m hearing is that you can demonstrate a great contribution to the internal aspects of the school improvement plan, but when it comes to the head’s key initiative about integrating the school better into the local community and building bridges with parents and partners, you may have less to talk about.

### Benjamin:

“ Oh, I don’t know. I’ve never missed a parents’ evening...

### Cassie:

“ (Silence)

### Benjamin:

“ Well, ok, I’ve not felt able to get as involved in parent–teacher activities as some. I suppose, if I’m honest, I do find the community stuff a bit of a chore... Mmmmm, is it really a key initiative for the head? ....

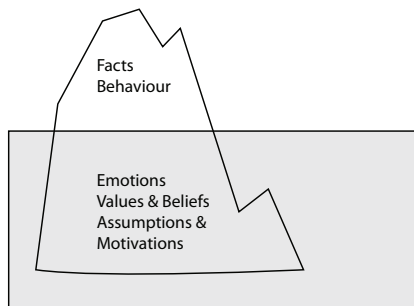
### A Spot of Theory

In her books, *Time to Think* and *More Time to Think* (Fisher King Publishing, 2009), Nancy Kline promotes the value of silence as being where the best ideas often emerge. (It’s fair to say it’s where your most effective questions sometimes emerge as well!)

## 4. Dig deep

Why are questions so important? They make your mentee *think*. They acknowledge that your mentee has ideas of their own which you value. They help your mentee to plan, analyse and reflect. Most of all, they help your mentee to become more independent and self-reliant. So the quality and depth of your questioning is crucially important.

In both our listening and our questioning as mentors, we can operate at different levels. One of the barriers to progress that mentoring partnerships sometimes encounter is an inability or a reluctance to converse on a more than fairly superficial level. Often, in order to help mentees successfully reflect on experiences or dilemmas which may have occupied their mind for some considerable time before ever talking to you, you need to dig down below the surface facts and behaviour to the beliefs and assumptions which are driving these. You can picture it as an iceberg, where the 'visible' aspects of your mentee's account, the facts, and people's behaviour are the tip of the iceberg, but hidden below the surface are aspects we cannot see, like people's feelings, their values, assumptions and all those things that lie at the root of their behaviour.



Asking these sorts of questions will probably feel intrusive at first. But if you fail to dig below the surface then you will find yourself trapped in a superficial discussion of technique and behaviours, unable to help your mentee achieve any real insight because neither of you are confronting what motivation lies beneath the challenge they are facing. In other words, your mentee's struggle to manage their work-life balance *may* be all about time management techniques, but it is more likely that it will be at least partly about why they cannot say no to people, or why they set such high standards for themselves, or why they assume any attempt to delegate will fail.

### A Spot of Theory

*In her book, Adults Learning (Open University Press, 2001), Jenny Rogers uses the US Coaches Training Institute model to illustrate the idea of different levels of listening. Level one listeners are still thinking of themselves. They follow their own agenda and give advice. At level two you are focusing on the other person and following their train of thought. At level three you are alert to subtle changes in mood, hearing not just what is said, but also what is being implied or avoided altogether.*



## Strategy in action

You are mentoring an NQT who wants to improve her behaviour management. Firstly, think of the kind of questions that would constitute the visible section of our 'iceberg'. Jot these down. Now think about what kind of information the answers to these questions might give your mentee.

Then try to formulate some questions that tackle the hidden part of our 'iceberg' – questions that get below the surface of what is happening. Once more, try to imagine what the answers to these questions might tell your mentee.

Once you have done this, compare your thoughts with the examples below.

### 'Surface' questions

- ☀ *Can you give me a recent example of when you felt you failed to manage behaviour as well as you would like? What happened?*
- ☀ *Can you give me a recent example of when you felt you managed behaviour really well? What happened?*
- ☀ *Tell me what happens when you feel behaviour in the classroom is getting out of control.*
- ☀ *What behaviour management strategies have you tried? How well have these worked for you?*
- ☀ *Who do you regard as being really good at this? What do they do?*

### 'Deeper' questions

- ☀ *What constitutes good behaviour for you?*
- ☀ *What kind of relationship are you hoping for with learners?*
- ☀ *How do you feel when behaviour deteriorates? What response does this trigger in you?*
- ☀ *What are you assuming about your learners and what they want?*
- ☀ *What assumptions are driving your own behaviour?*

You can see that 'surface' questions will provide useful information about examples and specific challenges, but what 'deeper' questions provide is a better understanding of expectations and key 'triggers'. Only these sorts of questions will help your mentee to understand, for example, that it may be their desire to be popular, rather than ignorance of technique, that is preventing them from keeping order adequately.

**If you only try one thing from this chapter, try this\***

### Checklist

Use this to keep a record of what worked well for you and what didn't. Not every strategy will suit every school, or perhaps be practicable. There's a line at the bottom for you to add your own strategy, if it's not already included.

Strategy	Tried it with...	On...(date)	It worked	It didn't work	Worth trying again?
1. Watch yourself A. Talking ratio B. Questions versus statements C. Open to closed					
2. If you only have a hammer					
<b>3. Let silence be your friend*</b>					
4. Dig deep					
Your own strategy?					

## Further reading

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