

# Principles of mentoring and coaching

The DfES recognises that the ways mentoring and coaching are used depend on the context. There is no intention to impose a uniform model. These ten principles, based on evidence from research and consultation, are recommended to inform mentoring and coaching programmes in schools and to help increase the impact of continuing professional development on student learning.

Effective mentoring and coaching involves:

## **a learning conversation**

structured professional dialogue, rooted in evidence from the professional learner's practice, which articulates existing beliefs and practices to enable reflection on them

## **a thoughtful relationship**

developing trust, attending respectfully and with sensitivity to the powerful emotions involved in deep professional learning

## **a learning agreement**

establishing confidence about the boundaries of the relationship by agreeing and upholding ground rules that address imbalances in power and accountability

## **combining support from fellow professional learners and specialists**

collaborating with colleagues to sustain commitment to learning and relate new approaches to everyday practice; seeking out specialist expertise to extend skills and knowledge and to model good practice

## **growing self direction**

an evolving process in which the learner takes increasing responsibility for their professional development as skills, knowledge and self awareness increase

## **setting challenging and personal goals**

identifying goals that build on what learners know and can do already, but could not yet achieve alone, whilst attending to both school and individual priorities

## **understanding why different approaches work**

developing understanding of the theory that underpins new practice so it can be interpreted and adapted for different contexts

## **acknowledging the benefits to the mentors and coaches**

recognising and making use of the professional learning that mentors and coaches gain from the opportunity to mentor or coach

## **experimenting and observing**

creating a learning environment that supports risk-taking and innovation and encourages professional learners to seek out direct evidence from practice

## **using resources effectively**

making and using time and other resources creatively to protect and sustain learning, action and reflection on a day to day basis