Nottingham Trent
University

Employer Toolkits

Workplace Mentor Guide

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Keep

1. What are Coaching, Mentoring and Sponsoring?

Effective coaching and mentoring are a great way to enhance the skills, knowledge, performance and behaviours of placement students.

Coaching and mentoring are very similar. **Coaching** aims to produce optimal performance and improvement at work. It focuses on specific skills and goals, but may also impact on an individual's personal attributes, such as social interaction or confidence.

Whilst **mentoring** in the workplace tends to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague shares their greater knowledge to support the development of an inexperienced member of staff over a longer period.

Sponsoring a placement student involves advocacy. It could include retaining them within your professional network, providing ongoing career advice, providing work references, even suggesting they join your organisation in a graduate position.

2. Why mentor a placement student?

The benefit to the student

Mentoring is a development approach simply based on the use of one-to-one conversations to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge or work performance.

Allocating a workplace mentor to a placement student provides an additional opportunity to develop the student, so that they maximise their potential and assist your organisation in reaching its goals.

The benefit to the mentor

The feedback we have receive from workplace mentors is that they are motivated by the opportunity to give back and share their experiences to support placement students as they navigate their career choices and decisions. It can also provide an opportunity to reflect on your own practice and increases job satisfaction through supporting others and investing in the workforce of tomorrow.

# 3. What skills/attributes are needed of a Mentor?

- Being able to actively listen, and seek clarification

- Build rapport and show empathy

- Being able to understand what the student wants from their work experience and their career ambitions

- Being able to offer considered and constructive feedback, reframe situations and identify challenges

- Being able to help the student set achievable targets and SMART goals

- Being able to role model required behaviours in the workplace
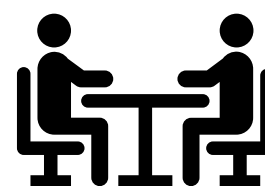
4. Mentoring Tools

Active Listening

Listening actively, concentrating on what is being said, rather than passively hearing, is the most basic skill you'll rely upon throughout the mentoring period. Listening helps build rapport.
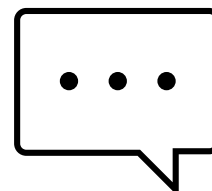
Find a space and time that will facilitate open communication. Use body language to show the student has your attention, such as eye contact. Reflect on the important aspects of what has been said to show your understanding.

Try the following techniques to demonstrate active listening:

- Paraphrasing - explaining what has been said but using different words
- Restatement of meaning: "So, what you are saying is ….?"
- Reflection of feelings: "You are clearly upset that ….?"
- Questioning for clarification: "What do you mean by ….?"
- Encouraging the mentee: "That's interesting, I'd like to know more"
- Summarise the conversation: "So what your saying is …."
- Tolerate silences.

Giving Feedback

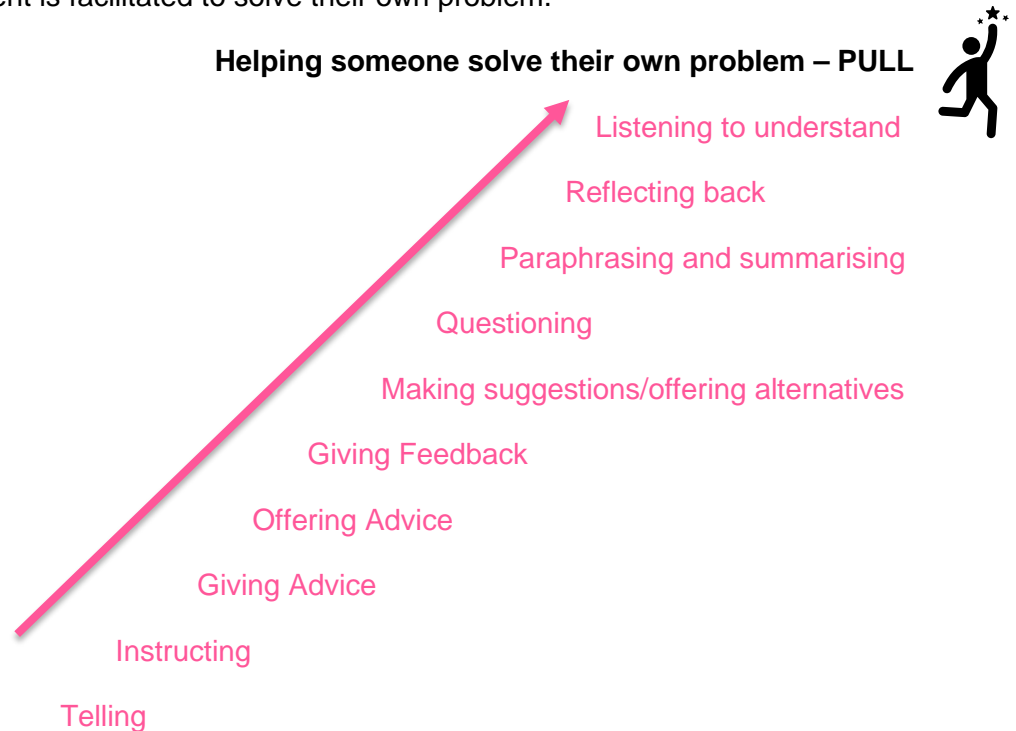Feedback is a two-way process, both parties can learn from each other.

Both praise and constructive criticism are equally useful.

Either during planned meetings, or when an opportunity arises, offer feedback. Opportunities to do so could be linked to observing the student in a live situation or looking at work undertaken by the student.
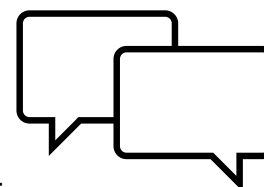
Push – Pull

Simply move away from telling people what to do. This may be a gradual process dictated by the students own personal development, self-confidence and abilities. The end game is always that the student is facilitated to solve their own problem.

Helping someone solve their own problem – PULL

Listening to understand

Reflecting back

Paraphrasing and summarising

Questioning

Making suggestions/offering alternatives

Giving Feedback

Offering Advice

Giving Advice

Instructing

Telling

PUSH – Solving someone's problem for them

The push – pull continuum of mentoring and coaching, Downey (2003)

The GROW Model

This model offers the mentor a framework to operate whilst doing their role. Working to this framework offers the benefits of a consistent approach and for the student they will learn what to expect. The goal could be short term, or long term.

Goal | Reality

Will | Options
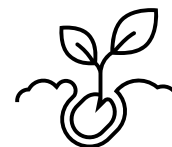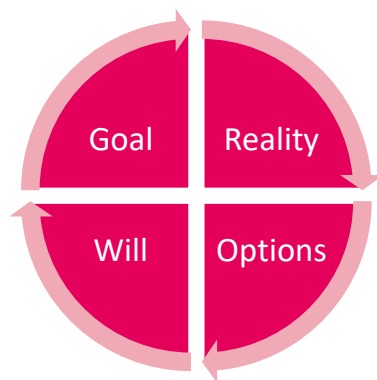
Remember goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (SMART).

Questions:

Sample questions a mentor could use. This is not an exhaustive list, but a set of examples.

GOAL	REALITY
• What do you want to achieve? • What do you really want? • What is the primary goal you want to achieve in the next month? • Which goal is your priority? Why? • Why do you want to achieve this goal? • What would be the best outcome from tackling this goal? • What would the benefits be if you achieve this goal?	• What is happening now? (What, who, when and how often) • Where are you now in relation to your goal? • What is still required of you? • What worked well for you? Why? • What do you think is stopping you reaching your goal? • Do you know other people who have successfully completed this goal? • What could you improve next time you try this task? • How would you describe what you did? Why? • On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being at the beginning, 10 you've successfully completed) where are you? Why?
WILL	**OPTIONS**
• How are you going to go about it? • What obstacles are getting in the way of success? • What do you think you need to do right now? • What roadblocks are you expecting and how would you get around them? • What resources can help you? • When are you going to start? • What will happen (or what is the cost) of you not doing this? • What do you need from me/others to help you do this? • How will you know when you've been successful? • On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being low, 10 being the highest possible) how committed are you to completing the options chosen? Why? • Is there anything missing?	• What are your options? • What do you think you need to do next? • What could be your first step? • What do you think you need to do in order to get a better result? • What have you done well before? How can that help you with your next step? • What is going to be the hardest/most challenging part of this task for you? • What is the best/worst thing about taking this option? • What could you do differently? • What would happen if you did that?