"Can we use coaching to enhance support for staff?"

Researchers:

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Rationale:

We *wished to explore the relationship between coaching and mentoring with a view to enabling staff to develop in areas of teaching and learning and wellbeing. Could non-judgemental, non-hierarchical coaching be used to spread good practise and empower staff to see themselves as leaders in teaching?*

A broad summary of our project follows:

- **Agreeing on a model**

   All participants met to discuss their aspirations for the project. We compared and evaluated the merits some of the most popular models for coaching. The G.R.O.W model (Whitmore, 2002) was taken to the best basis for questioning through peer coaching. Agreement was also sought on the values underpinning the trial. All participants wanted to explore the possibililty of using coaching with both trainees/NQTs (as opposed to more traditional mentoring roles) as well as more experienced teachers. The below link is to a document produced within that DAOS summarises the broad principles of this meeting:

   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1BJV6f2YT7qeUP3gUxpdhomykmlx7seJS

   All participants

- **Staff questionnaires to setup coaching pairs**

   Having trialed peer observations ourselves we decided to open it up to a wider staff trial. We gave staff a list of potential strengths and areas they wish to develop. Staff were then paired up based on strengths and development areas. Despite having differing levels of experience, teachers were able to bring their own area of expertise to the fore. Eg: I found it useful to get feedback on setting up practical work from someone more experienced at this type of teaching. The below link is show examples of the areas that staff selected from:

   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1zQkoCHokjQh_wn96e3-_J0gouraOSGTV

   Shashi Knott

- **Use of a script to structure sessions.**

  All participants found as experienced teachers it was difficult not to slip into a more didactic mentoring role. To help avoid this we used the GROW model as outlined above to generate categories of questions that could be used as the basis for a loose script for coaching meetings. In order to explore their usefulness we used these questions as a basis to evaluate or progress in each of our school contexts. The questions used are linked below:

  https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ta7YB-WRtsaX8NHj_tRHfducuFQzlk3x

  All participants

- **SWOT analysis of overall effectiveness**

  In order to conclude the findings of our trials we used the different perspectives of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A summary of the key points of our discussion is linked below:

  https://drive.google.com/open?id=1AqkC99z5CJ8iplRARuE9_9UU9B77OTa4

  A large part of the time was spent discussing the role of coaching in terms of CPD and performance management with schools concluding that going forward the following actions would be proposed:

  Coaching to be introduced as formal part of CPD time allocation (opt in) - one session per term.
    a. Session with coaching leaders on what coaching is, introducing the project and choosing areas of strength development (1 hour)
    b. Staff to choose whether they want to work on an area for development or they would like to showcase an area of strength and showcase their skills/practice coaching. Staff to be paired by coaching leaders and discuss/observe each other (2 hours)

  If there are outcomes from this coaching process that staff deem useful or positive they can be explicitly mentioned by individuals as evidence of development in targeted areas on their performance management. Likewise, line managers may prompt individuals to consider offering in an area of perceived strength. Otherwise, all aspects of the coaching process remain anonymous and participants are not obliged to keep written records.

  Shashi Knott/ Tim Leake

During our research, we found that coaching has potential to increase reflection, engender confidence and promote good practise in teaching.

We hope the outcomes from the research encourage staff in other schools to trial the use of coaching in order to better realise their potential.

Sarah Lofthouse and Tim Leake   **Research Group Co-ordinators**