



## **PGCE Guide to Giving Feedback to Trainees**

### **Why**

The purpose of feedback is to improve the teaching and to ensure the progress of the trainee and the pupils. It seems an obvious statement but it gives us a helpful frame of reference when embarking on a reflective conversation about a trainee's lesson. When you consider your feedback through the lens of 'will this help improve the quality of teaching and learning' you may find you adjust your approach. Looking at every point you wish to discuss and checking whether this will directly help or whether, whilst it is a valid point, it may not serve its purpose if delivered at this time or in a certain way.

### **When**

Following on from considering whether a feedback point will help or hinder the progress of a trainee, the timing of feedback can greatly influence its impact. Factors which affect a trainee's ability to accept feedback could include;

- Tiredness
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Having already been provided with many targets
- Low confidence

Understandably we want to give feedback promptly, before the lesson and its nuances have been forgotten but it is advisable to consider carefully and agree together the best time to hold a discussion.

It is also worth considering, at the early stages, the timing of feedback around a lesson plan. Early trainees may not yet have developed flexibility in being able to respond to suggested changes to lesson content. In such cases, it is advisable to talk through the lesson content before the trainee has committed their plan to paper and the point of no return.

### **Frequency**

Trainees will be working with a number of host teachers who each bring a rich range of diverse teaching skills. Each will have their own passion and area of expertise and will be keen to see the trainee grow in that particular skill set. Certainly it is important for a trainee to excel in all areas of the Teacher Standards however to try and work on all of them simultaneously can be a daunting and seemingly insurmountable task for a trainee who is being told by numerous people numerous different areas to work on. This can lead to difficulties with prioritising and a trainee failing to achieve a single target; a frustrating experience for host teacher and trainee alike. It is not necessary to give feedback after every lesson; trainees need time to assimilate and develop teaching strategies to achieve their targets. Once the trainee and their mentor have decided on the focussed few targets for a given week, considering selecting a single lesson where more detailed feedback will be given so the trainee feels reassured that their teaching will be discussed but not

overwhelmed by the quantity of feedback. Adhering to the given focus can also protect you from wishing to cover every point for improvement, instead work with the trainee in more detail on these narrower aspects.

## **Features of Effective Feedback Conversations**

The nature of feedback will change over the course of the year. Initially the trainee may not be able to reflect or evaluate their practice effectively, relying on you to tell them how it went and what they need to improve. The aim however should be for this dynamic to change, that eventually the trainee is leading the discussion, able to identify the strengths and impact of their teaching and also things they would adapt and change for future. In these early stages, it can be difficult for a host teacher to 'let go' of their class and allow someone to do things differently to them; it is important to consider when talking through how a lesson went whether the teaching had the intended impact on learning, not 'was it what I would have done?' Generally speaking, effective conversations can be characterised by

- A 2-way discussion
- An exploration of the learning in the lesson
- Resulting in manageable and achievable steps forward
- Trainee encouraged to self-reflect
- Balance of praise and action points
- Not personal
- Not 'do what I do'
- Celebrating steps taken towards a target rather than expecting it to be achieved instantly

## **Points to Consider**

- When considering the points you wish to raise in a feedback conversation ask yourself 'will this help improve teaching and learning?'
- Check your trainee is physically and emotionally able to engage in a feedback conversation.
- Talk with the mentor about the focus of the targets for the week/check with host teachers when they are giving feedback/agree with trainee a specific lesson for detailed feedback.
- Allow the trainee to lead the conversation
- Celebrate steps taken towards a target
- Giving a few focussed targets