

Wipro Meeting Recording

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Richard Pountney

I'm Richard Pountney and I'm the lead for the mentoring strand of the Wipro programme and I'm here today with Anthony Wells. Anthony, would you like to say a few words?

Anthony Wells

Hi, I'm Anthony Wells. I'm an executive deputy in North Lincolnshire. I work across two schools, Hibaldstow and Scawby. I lead also lead DT across both those schools.

Richard Pountney

Thank you. Anthony, could you say a little bit about your experience of mentoring before you started the programme?

Anthony Wells

So before the programme I had done several mentoring courses. They were all aimed at working with trainee teachers and early year career teachers. A lot of the strategies and things that we had used through that programme, those programmes that have actually been more around coaching and supporting to develop practice.

Richard Pountney

Now as you know in the training that we provided for you, which was a mix of face-to-face workshops and online webinars, we looked at helping you strengthen your mentoring practise and importantly understanding how teachers practice develops and how we can improve their practice through challenge. What were the highlights of that for you?

Anthony Wells

So through the online course and the face-to-face meetings, we came across several aspects of mentoring that I've not actually looked at in detail before. Obviously I could say a lot of the fans that I've been looking at before were for supporting early career teachers and trainee teachers, whereas the shift in focus to working with

established professionals and colleagues to be able to develop their skills to improve their practices, really key to this project, which is why I got involved in the first place because I thought it was an exciting project, developing my skills that I looked into, particularly around sort of constructive feedback, developing the open communication, that sort of the expertise and enthusiasm to support those the mentee in developing their practice in the classroom and into their leadership of their subject.

Richard Pountney

Thank you. That's excellent. At the end of that programme of training that we provided, we asked you to select several of your sessions that you'd had with your teaching fellow and to put into practice some of the ideas and strategies, techniques of mentoring that we'd worked on together. Do you recall what those were? And could you say a little bit about how that went?

Anthony Wells

So in our initial meetings, we did a lot of work around goal setting, planning for what her ongoing project was actually going to be. We had specific sessions where we talked about the rationale behind the project, what the focus and the purpose was going to be and making sure that was crystal clear in her work that she was going to do in developing her own practice because we felt that was important to get really tight so that when she then developed that programme and to roll it out to other colleagues that she worked with, that they understood the purpose of why this project was going ahead, how it was going to strengthen the practice in the classroom and allow the children to become better and more effective learners in that area of STEM. We spent quite a bit of time having constructive feedback and dialogue through the mentoring sessions where any barriers and hurdles that were coming up, such as where there was an issue around children using technology to watch videos of the skills being practised, there was a barrier in there because some of the children didn't have the expertise with the technology to be able to access it. So through our discussions, our questioning that we had it allowed us to unpick why that was a barrier and how we could overcome it in different ways. So using picture prompts rather than the video tools but still having that there for those that might actually be able to access that, particularly when she moved it the project further into the year ones and year twos.

Richard Pountney

Thank you. So what? What are you reflecting then on the impact of the mentoring sessions that you'd had, first of all on your fellow and perhaps on yourself?

Anthony Wells

So for me, the mentoring sessions actually really help my own practise as a leader in a school. I do a lot of work with other professionals around their professional development, so being able to have the opportunities to develop my skills in this way, through the course and learning those extra techniques that I could have. What it allowed me to is improve my own practice going forward with the colleagues in my own schools. It also has allowed me to take the opportunity to work with another colleague, our fellow, and she and her ideas that she has got and the model of practice that she has put into her classroom, I've actually taken that idea myself and established it into one of my schools already and I'm thinking that in September, we're going to roll it out into one of our other foundation stage classrooms as a really good model for effective STEM practice in our schools.

Richard Pountney

That's really interesting, Anthony. Thank you very much indeed.