Reflective place and space
Instructions
Stage 1
Reflective Co-Mentoring

In groups of 2

Person A talks about a professional ‘issue of concern’ – ‘the stone in the shoe’ type of problem

No interruptions!

After a maximum of 5 minutes they indicate they have finished
Instructions
Stage 2

Person B spends up to ten minutes asking person A questions

Clarifying person A’s topic of concern and helping them explore it in more detail.

Asking questions, not giving advice
Some ‘rules’ and guidelines for how to make this most effective

“What happens here, stays here”. (The ‘Vegas rule’) – you might want to agree to this explicitly at the start

The ‘listening role’ – it is all about listening rather than telling the other person what you think or giving advice. This provides support and a space for them to explore their issue in more depth.

So, before giving your opinion, ask yourself if it’s wiser to ask a question.
Instructions

Stage one: FIVE MINUTE TASK

• In groups of 2
• Person A talks about a professional ‘issue of concern’ – ‘the stone in the shoe’ type of problem
• No interruptions!
• After a maximum of 5 minutes they indicate they have finished

Stage two: TEN MINUTE TASK

• Person B spends up to ten minutes asking person A questions
• Clarifying person A’s topic of concern and helping them explore it in more detail.
• Asking questions, not giving advice
In this session

- Part 1
  - Activity
- Part 2
  - Connecting reflection and resilience
  - Chronology of our work
- Part 3
  - More activity
  - Your reflections
Who we are
Susannah Wilson  Rob Bray  Heather Fotheringham

From UHI: The University of the Highland and Islands
Working in a period of 'fluidity'

- Covid-19: changing expectations of lecturers
- Covid-19: changing expectations of learners
- GTCS registration: changing professional learning requirements
- SQA consultation: changing assessment systems
Importance of Professional Learning

"Teachers' resilience can ...be nurtured at various stages through initial training, [and] continuing professional development"

Day et al., 2011
Conflict:

"Professional learning comes through immersion in practice and community" (Husband, 2018).

...But the context in which we have been working has resulted in isolation within our practices.
The Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES): For staff

At individual, team, departmental, and institutional level we will engage in professional reflection and review processes concerning the effectiveness of our learning, teaching and assessment practices, to identify areas for enhancement and to actively plan a better educational experience for current and future students. Our collaborative review processes will be inclusive of academic staff, professional service teams and colleagues, and students.
LTES: For students

We will support the development of our students as **reflective practitioners**, as investigators, and as researchers in ways that are appropriate to their subject and level of study. Reflection on practice, including in relation to professional standards, will be embedded throughout the learning experience. As students progress through different levels of study, there will be an increasing focus on research activities that have a real-world relevance and value.
Enhancement Theme at UHI

- Are reflective practitioners
- Maintain their own wellbeing
- Embraces flexibility and sustainability in LTA
- Responds flexibly to external circumstances

Resilient staff

Resilient students

A resilient university

A resilient curriculum
Why reflect?

Research at UHI showed two main types of motivation to engage in Reflective Practice (Bray and Fotheringham 2022)

1 For personal development
   - to improve practice
   - to overcome inertia and challenge complacency
   - as a part of one’s identity
   - for one’s psychological well-being and growth
   - for support

2 To meet the needs of professional bodies
   - Mandatory registration of Tertiary Education teaching practitioners
   - ... requires ongoing professional development evidenced against professional standards - (including reflection - GTCS 2018)

   “These Standards will be used for a range of purposes including: .... Developing critically reflective and evaluative practitioners;” (p3)
Why reflect?

Reflection: Thinking about what has happened, or is happening, to plan better for the future

“I've discovered recently that …. when you're often concerned about something… when you learn that other people…. are having the same concerns as you. … it is a massive relief”

“When I'm my best self, I'm engaged in reflective practice”
Barriers to reflective practice

**Concrete barriers:**
- Resources, time, money, structures and processes

**Attitudinal barriers:**
- Psychological, attitudinal and cultural factors

"....I can go days maybe even ... without hearing from a colleague."

"we don’t have enough team practice, time to sit and reflect"
We launched Reflective Practice at Argyll College in 2022

… with the aim of “developing a Reflective Practice culture"
The main outcome:
Reflective Co-Mentoring

A novel technique
Meets the need for staff to meet in a focused, safe space to discuss their own professional issues
Feedback has identified that it meets several needs

• “It was good to have some time to exchange experiences and reflect on practice with colleagues,”
• “…. useful to talk outside one own curriculum area…
• “This is about being able to talk off the record”
...also reflects the priorities within the literature...

Communities of Practice (e.g. Wenger, 1998) and a social theory of learning (e.g. Wenger-Trayner et al., 2015).

Professional Learning as “contextually situated” (Opfer and Pedder, 2017, p. 377).

Importance of dialogue for effective Professional Learning (Stoll and Kools, 2017).
Reflective co-mentoring

Again

Person A and person B switch roles

Person B talks for 5 minutes

Person A questions for 10 minutes
Contact us

rob.bray@uhi.ac.uk

susannah.wilson@uhi.ac.uk

heather.fotheringham@uhi.ac.uk
Thank you
References

Bray, R. & Heather Fotheringham H (2022): How, why and why not – the reflective practice of teaching staff at a Scottish university, Reflective Practice, DOI: 10.1080/14623943.2022.2090325


