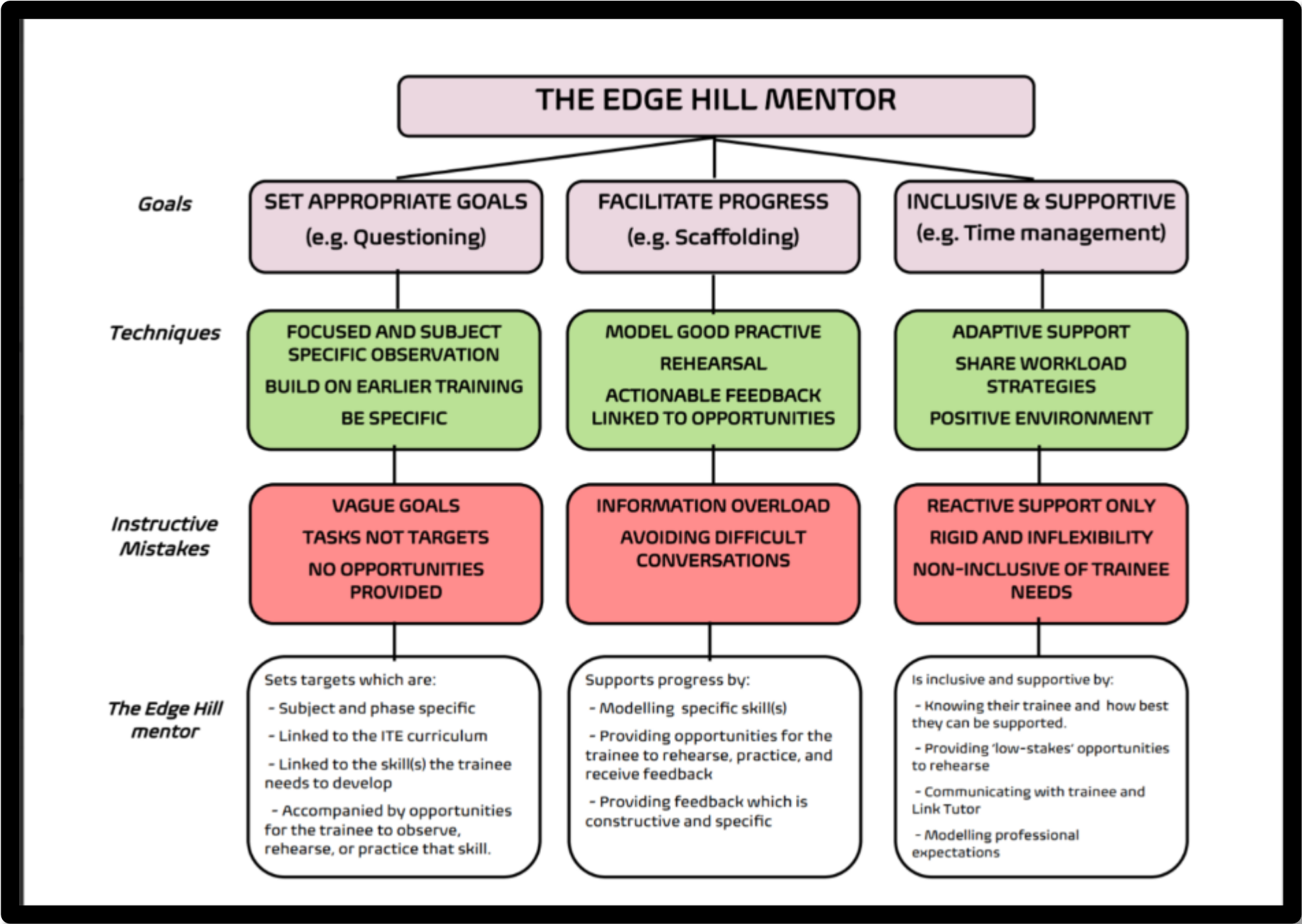


Guidance for Link Tutors on providing feedback to mentor

Quality Assurance of mentoring and link tutor feedback will focus in 2025-26 on three key areas, identified from EHU QA analysis in 24-25, Proxima Mentoring Unit research, the [Thematic Monitoring Visit report 2025](#), and the [OFSTED toolkit 2025](#). The three key areas are set out in the Refresher update and New to Mentoring EHU training units online in the Abyasa mentor portal, underpinned by research:

- Creating an inclusive and supportive environment
- Target setting of appropriate goals, including subject specific feedback
- Facilitate progress by promoting explicit opportunities to achieve appropriate goals

The Mentoring concept map from Proxima, with Edgehill mentor links below provides focus for developing mentoring in 2025-26. The mentoring glossary and research links, which can support specific feedback are included later on in this document.



Providing mentors with high-quality feedback helps them to develop but also allows us, as the ITE provider, to assure the quality of the mentoring which our trainees receive during their placement.

Mentors receive written feedback on their mentoring via the QA checks during the placement at QA2 and QA3.

Mentors can access their feedback via the 'free text' comments which Link Tutors enter onto Abyasa. Link Tutors can support mentors by signposting how to access their feedback. The feedback provided should summarise and reflect the verbal feedback already given, identifying areas of mentoring strength and, ways in which the mentoring could be developed. In short, mentors should know if they are mentoring effectively, or not, and how to improve if needed in relation to the three key aspects above.

The Lead Mentoring team will continue to sample feedback from LTs to mentors in each Professional Practice. This information feeds forward into information and actions taken during the professional practice, Professional Practice and Evaluation Reviews (PPER), Mentor and Link Tutor celebrations and development. This year we will share individual feedback with staff on a rolling programme.

Feedback to mentors in relation to Effective Feedback WDS (QA2)

The feedback provided to mentors and entered online should relate to the WDS and lesson observations which have been submitted up until that point, noting the importance of the WDS for the Edge Hill cycle and approach to mentoring. Feedback may relate to; creating a positive environment to support trainee, accuracy of assessment of the trainee against the weekly curriculum, appropriate target setting including opportunities for development, detail of trainee responses, use of research/engaged reading in the mentor meetings, completion/submission of WDS by deadline.

<p>QA2. EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK WDS</p> <p>Feedback on effective use of the ITE curriculum through the WDS</p> <p>Consider if a positive, professional environment has been created, with induction and inclusive mentoring established. Check the weekly documentation so far, does it evidence the EHU mentoring cycle, including formative discussion/review of the progress the trainee has made that week in relation to their curriculum, professional behaviours, targets with clear steps to succeed are captured succinctly on the WDS form by mentor. Lesson observations should be completed each week of the professional practice. .</p>
<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors use the ITE curriculum expertly to provide support for trainees. • Mentors have an up to date understanding of relevant research. • Mentor uses all documentation e.g. subject handbook to provide clear, developmental and concise feedback for trainees. • Insightful questions and statements are used that help the trainee elaborate their understanding and knowledge of the EHU ITE curriculum. • Mentors provide opportunities to demonstrate and explain effective teaching strategies. • Ensure induction includes introduction to key staff and sharing of key information i.e. safeguarding, behaviour, staff code of conduct, access to teaching resources, timetables and IT systems. • Appropriate activities and opportunities are arranged across the school to support trainees to meet their targets i.e. with subject leads, role models, experts or key members of the teaching team. • Workload and wellbeing are discussed by the mentor and trainee, reflecting on strategies which take account of teacher workload. • Mentors assess the progress of the trainees formatively referring to the key official documents on a weekly basis, when judging if the trainee is making appropriate progress • Mentor supports progress in wider school life, including interaction with parents, trainee engagement with wider professional responsibilities and professional conduct. • Mentor considers in their feedback the importance of addressing different needs within the classroom e.g. SEND, EAL and disadvantaged pupils.

Feedback to mentors (QA3)

Where mentoring is of high-quality, trainees make good progress and require very little day-to-day monitoring from the Link Tutor. The feedback from the Link Tutor should assist the mentor to develop or to continue to demonstrate high-quality mentoring which enables the trainee to make progress. Feedback may relate to; accuracy of assessment of the trainee against the weekly curriculum, appropriate target setting including opportunities for how trainees can achieve targets, Subject specific feedback, use of exemplars or pertinent research, the use of the EHU approach to mentoring, the way in which feedback is provided to the trainee or the questions which are posed, the links made to prior and future learning, and how the mentor is making use of their training and development (such as the Refresher/New to Mentoring training and/or optional modules).

<p>QA 3: SUBJECT SPECIFIC FEEDBACK AND TARGET SETTING</p> <p>Discuss with trainee and mentor the feedback and developmental targets set, which are linked to the curriculum and focus on the trainee’s progress and on their impact on pupil learning. Targets will also relate to the trainee’s subject and curriculum knowledge linked to the ITE curriculum and research, through the subject component trackers and strand components which are linked to pedagogic understanding.</p>
<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observation or weekly feedback is subject specific. • Feedback includes a precise and clear statement of what went well and recognises strengths. • Feedback includes targets and how the trainee will be supported to achieve them. • Mentor and trainee discuss and analyse the next steps in learning for pupils. • Mentor prompts the trainee to reflect on strategies for adapting learning for pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged in their class. • Organise appropriate activities and opportunities for trainees to support them in meeting their targets. • Reflect on strategies which take account of teacher workload. • Link Tutor signpost support and resources for employability (final year only).

Examples of feedback provided to mentors

Link Tutors are asked to provide feedback which is authentic, constructive, and which identifies what makes that mentoring 'effective'. The examples below reflect the range of ways in which Link Tutors provide feedback to mentors. These show the variation in how feedback may be written/provided and the areas of strength/development within the feedback provided.

1. It is evident that F is benefiting from a rich and varied range of opportunities during her placement, which align closely with the Edge Hill University ITE Curriculum. You and F clearly have a good professional relationship, and this is positively impacting her progress. Weekly WDS meetings are consistently held, and areas for development are reviewed at the start of each session to ensure a clear focus on progression. The guidance offered to address these areas is both specific and actionable. Importantly, the feedback reflects on the learning that has taken place, rather than simply listing tasks completed. In response to previous Link Tutor guidance, action has been taken to ensure reflections are now written from your perspective as Mentor, while still capturing F's proactive engagement. This small adjustment has helped to clarify authorship without diminishing F's excellent contributions. Thank you so much for all the support you are providing to F - it is very much appreciated.

2. Induction has been thorough and has ensured a real welcome to your school for the trainee xxx. QA1 gave us an opportunity to discuss the reasonable adjustments required to support XXX. The adjustments have been made positively, ensuring high expectations for XXX. The WDS and lesson observations have taken place and you have been clear in setting out the targets, giving opportunities to observe others, talk to key staff and give XX time to rehearse with small groups before delivering to the wider groups. This has given XXX confidence, as the targets build on strengths.

3. Thank you for planning opportunities for [trainee name] to experience the wider responsibilities of a teacher as this will help to develop their professional behaviours. Working through the timetable and helping xxx to anticipate any pressure points has supported their ability to prioritise, develop strategies of using time effectively during PPA and has supported their wellbeing.

4. Good coverage of the Edge Hill ITE curriculum. You have facilitated a range of opportunities for the trainees to gain experience in key areas including assessment, for example, you have timetabled phonics observations so that xxx can deepen their understanding of subject specific assessment. You have been meticulous in tracking subject strands and components. This has helped to ensure the trainees have covered a breadth of curriculum areas. During the WDS you initiated a discussion around prior targets. Trainee made thoughtful contributions during the discussion and demonstrated they are reflecting on experiences and lessons. During lesson feedback, you encouraged the trainees to identify pupil learning and individual needs including SEND and discussed ideas for reinforcing prior knowledge and for adaptive teaching. In our one-to-one feedback meeting, we discussed lesson observations including subject specific feedback. We looked at the exemplars in the Mentor Resources section for further ideas. Thank you for agreeing to plan collaboratively so trainees become increasingly confident in planning activities to match focus area of learning.

3. [Mentor], many thanks for allowing me to observe your mentor feedback today. It was great to see the way you used questions to prompt XXX to reflect on her practice and the skills she was developing before you then affirmed the conclusions she came to. As we chatted about, you may want to encourage XXX to link her learning to what she has previously learnt in her university sessions or reflect on how this links to the research in this week's WDS/Weekly comms.

4. XXX you have provided high quality feedback and set appropriate targets associated with purposeful opportunities for development. The discussion regarding the responses to the weekly questions were thorough and meaningful. As an experienced mentor you have worked with trainee flexibly to maximise her progress through the curriculum so far. WDS conversations are impactful, and targets and opportunities are well constructed to focus on the key aspects xxx needs to address to be a successful teacher. Thank you.

I have updated the target setting folder for the Introductory phase of placement based on specific themes which you will have access to. This will give you prompts for specific focus and allow for measurable outcomes. Thank you for the support you are offering xxx.

5. When target setting, ensure to make the targets specific and provide steps on how to meet them. These could be related to observing specific staff with a focus in mind or focusing on a specific aspect of teaching or element of a lesson for the next observation. Remember to provide time for the trainee to observe this in action and then focus on groups of pupils or an individual pupil and be focused on lesson outcomes or more qualitative data, such as pupil confidence and risk taking. Your trainee may need prompting questions or statements to guide their reflections.

Mentoring: Glossary and references (1/4)

Term	Commentary	References
Acting alone	If mentors act alone , for example by withholding concerns from centre-based colleagues, mentees may not receive the support they need. This can happen when mentors, with good intentions, prefer to handle the mentoring relationship and all associated challenges independently, without involving or updating other colleagues who could contribute valuable help, perspective, or expertise. Instead, an approach where mentors collaborate, share insights and draw on the collective expertise of school and centre-based colleagues is most likely to help mentees. It can also ensure that mentors avoid becoming overburdened and receive the professional support the need as mentors.	Kemmis, S. et al. (2014) Mentoring of new teachers as a contested practice: Supervision, support and collaborative self-development. [URL]
Actionable feedback	Actionable feedback typically balances specific praise with constructive suggestions. Additional features of effective feedback include: a) Timeliness, i.e. feedback is most effective when given soon after the observed teaching practice, while the details are still fresh; b) Focused on growth rather than judgement, i.e. feedback should be focused on improvement and separate from performance management; c) Supporting reflection, e.g. over time, feedback is likely to become less directive and develop mentees’ autonomy.	Maxwell, B. et al. (2024) Effective mentor training, education and development: a qualitative multilevel meta-synthesis. [URL]
Anticipate pressure points	By anticipating pressure points , mentors can protect their mentees’ wellbeing and help them develop. Mentors anticipate pressure points when they foresee potential challenges, conflicts, or areas of stress that the mentee might face during their training year. Common pressure points might relate to working with a new class, managing workload following a timetable increase or going on second placement. By identifying these pressure points early on, mentors can proactively provide support, guidance, and strategies to help mentees navigate these challenges effectively.	Koballa, T. et al. (2010) Teacher thinking associated with science-specific mentor preparation. [URL]
Avoiding hard conversations	Avoiding hard conversations , for example about an area where their mentee could improve, can cause greater problems in the long run. Engaging in hard conversations, while challenging, is a crucial aspect of effective mentoring. It requires a delicate balance of honesty, empathy, and support to ensure that the mentee feels valued and supported while also being encouraged to grow and improve. Hard conversations can be profound learning moments, offering opportunities for reflection and development.	Selkrig, M. and Keamy, K. (2015) Promoting a willingness to wonder: Moving from congenial to collegial conversations that encourage deep and critical reflection for teacher educators. [URL]

Mentoring: Glossary and references (2/4)

Term	Commentary	References
Be specific	Being specific and breaking down goals can help mentees understand how to improve. Specific goals (e.g. <i>Use diagnostic questions to assess understanding</i> or <i>Use probing questions to extend understanding</i>) have three advantages over more general targets (e.g. <i>Improve questioning</i>): 1) They can be tailored to mentees’ needs; 2) They help mentors, by making it easier to provide support through modelling, rehearsal or focused feedback; 3) They break down complex practices and help mentees prioritise the next step in their development.	Kraft, M. and Christian, A. (2021) Can Teacher Evaluation Systems Produce High-Quality Feedback? [URL]
Build on training	By building on training , mentors can help mentees understand the links between theory and practice. Mentors can build on centre-based training in several ways, including: 1) Asking questions about ideas and strategies introduced in centre-based training; 2) Creating connections, for example by using consistent terminology and discussing how ideas can be contextualised in their school; 3) Setting goals that directly build upon ideas introduced in training.	Tang, S. and Choi, P. (2005) Connecting theory and practice in mentor preparation: Mentoring for the improvement of teaching and learning. [URL]
Focused observation	Focused observation helps mentors set appropriate goals and give actionable feedback. Focused observation typically includes three elements: 1) Concentrating on one aspect of teaching, usually agreed upon with mentees in advance; 2) Collecting evidence, such by as noting details of a significant interaction or moment in the lesson that can be discussed afterwards; 3) Providing feedback, typically including specific praise for what worked well and constructive feedback, leading to the setting of an appropriate goal for future development.	Hobson, A. et al. (2020) The Nature and Impact of Effective Mentoring Training, Education and Development. [URL]
Information overload	Mentees can experience information overload when mentors provide feedback about multiple areas at the same time. This can happen when mentors, with good intentions, share extensive resources, strategies, or observational feedback without fully considering the mentee's current knowledge level, experience, or the practicality of assimilating all the information provided simultaneously. Instead, mentees are likely to make more progress when mentors prioritise the information they share and support mentees to work on new ideas in steps and develop their expertise over time.	Education Endowment Foundation (2021) Improving Behaviour in Schools: Guidance Report. [URL]

Mentoring: Glossary and references (3/4)

Term	Commentary	References
Modelling	<p>Modelling helps mentors demonstrate and deconstruct specific aspects of practice. Modelling is a powerful mentoring strategy because it involves showing rather than just telling, allowing mentees to see clear examples of effective practice. Modelling also enables mentors to break a complex skill into its constituent parts, and talk through both how skills can be enacted and how expert teachers think about their application. As a consequence, modelling facilitates reflective practice, for example supporting discussions between mentors and mentees about the contexts in which particular approaches might and might not be effective.</p>	<p>Education Endowment Foundation (2021) Improving Behaviour in Schools: Guidance Report. [URL]</p>
Promote positive relationships	<p>Promoting positive relationships helps mentees learn to work collaboratively and integrate into school life. Positive working relationships are also an essential driver of wellbeing and retention. Important relationships are likely to include those with other teachers, teaching assistants and parents, as well as relationships beyond the school, for example via subject networks. Mentors can promote positive relationships by modelling positive interactions, facilitating introductions with other members of staff and encouraging participation in school-wide activities.</p>	<p>Dreer-Goethe, B. (2023) Well-being and mentoring in pre-service teacher education: an integrative literature review. [URL]</p>
Reactive support only	<p>Mentors should proactively support their mentees rather than waiting until they are visibly struggling. A purely reactive approach is likely to reduce the impact of mentoring for three reasons: a) It is likely to increase stress and anxiety, for both the mentee and the mentor; b) It is likely to waste precious mentoring time; c) It may inadvertently increase dependency on the mentor, who may be relied upon to solve problems. Instead, an approach based on anticipating pressure points is more likely to build confidence, resilience and independence.</p>	<p>Koballa, T. et al. (2010) Teacher thinking associated with science-specific mentor preparation. [URL]</p>
Rehearsal	<p>Opportunities for rehearsal can help mentees successfully build new ideas into their practice. Rehearsal is a powerful mentoring strategy because it gives mentees an opportunity to practise in a safe space. Through rehearsal, mentees can refine their skills and gain fluency. Rehearsal is also likely to increase confidence and reduce the initial anxiety that often accompanies the application of a new teaching practice.</p>	<p>Krishnamachari, A. et al. (2021) Experimental Evidence on the Robustness of Coaching Supports in Teacher Education. [URL]</p>

Mentoring: Glossary and references (4/4)

Term	Commentary	References
Scattershot goals	<p>Scattershot goals, which are not linked in a clear, structured way, can undermine mentees’ development. Typically, mentees are likely to progress more quickly by pursuing sequences of connected goals that provide multiple opportunities to refine their practice in particular areas. While it is important for mentors to be responsive to their mentees’ emerging needs, scattershot goal setting can lead mentees to feel overwhelmed by the range of possible priorities and risk being demotivating if a lack of focus means that it is harder to make progress.</p>	<p>Gardiner, W. and Weisling, N. (2018) Challenges and complexities of developing mentors’ practice: insights from new mentors. [URL]</p>
Share workload strategies	<p>Sharing workload strategies can increase wellbeing by ensuring that mentees understand how to use their time efficiently. Mentors can help their mentees by drawing on their own experiences and expertise to help the mentee develop systems, routines, and approaches that enable them to handle the demands of their job effectively without becoming overwhelmed. Common focus areas might include: time management, e.g. using planners; curriculum and lesson planning; marking; and, working effectively with teaching assistants.</p>	<p>Hobson, A. et al. (2020) The Nature and Impact of Effective Mentoring Training, Education and Development. [URL]</p>
Vague goals	<p>Vague goals, for example <i>Improve behaviour management</i>, don’t tell mentees what to focus on or how to improve. Vague goals can create several problems, including: 1) Making it harder for mentors to tailor support to mentees’ specific needs; 2) Making it harder for mentors to facilitate progress, e.g. because it is harder to provide focused feedback; 3) Making it harder for mentees to break down complex problems, or work out what aspect of improvement to prioritise.</p>	<p>Kraft, M. and Christian, A. (2021) Can Teacher Evaluation Systems Produce High-Quality Feedback? [URL]</p>