Session Purpose & Outline

Session purpose:
- To share knowledge and ideas
- To explore possibilities for your context

Session outline:
- Theory
- Models
- Case Study
- Scenarios
- Recommendations

Introductions

- Quick introductions in pairs
  - name
  - LTO
  - role
- Have you engaged in peer mentoring before?
- What do you imagine the challenges to be?
- What do you imagine the affordances to be?

Being a Leader: The good...

I think the **challenge** is one of the big... the biggest things that I love about [my role] and also ... dealing with challenges with the **right people**.

I think if you're able to form **connections** with other middle leaders, **supporting each other** and the people element of it, it's really valuable.

And the not so good…

I was left to my own devices for so many things

There's a whole bunch of trudgery [sic] that's involved in our jobs – it's kind of administrative and and menial and and and lonely…

I think when you kind of go into those [leadership] roles, there's a self-doubt. There's the kind of impostor stuff. I certainly felt that in stages.

How do leaders learn?

Model of teacher knowledge development (Quirke, 2009)

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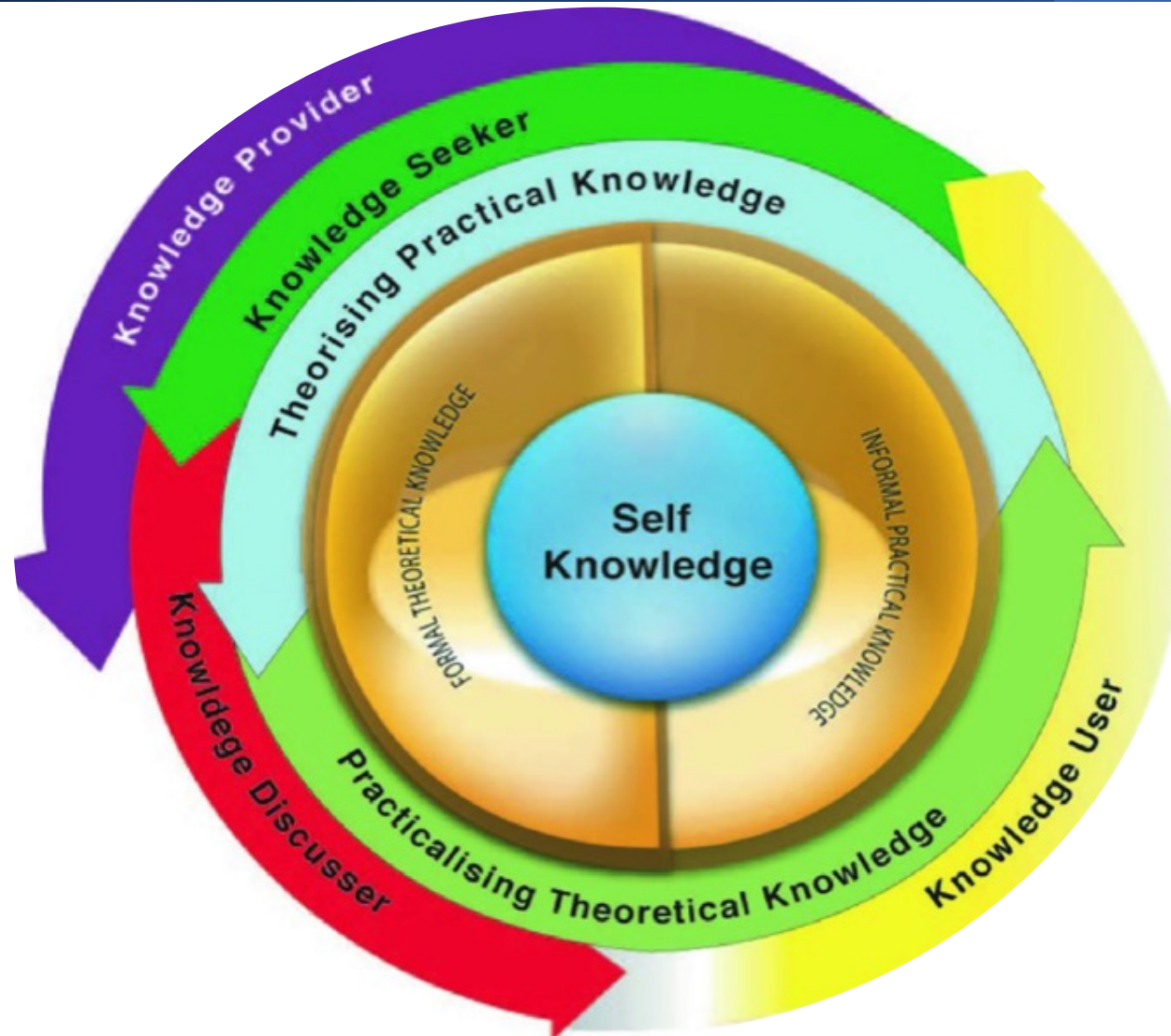
How do leaders learn?

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Peer mentoring in Education

3 prominent types of mentoring in schools

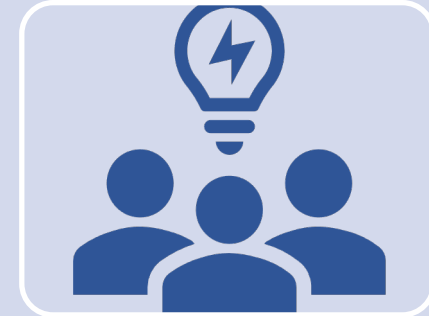Kemmis et al (2014) Tynjälä et al (2021) - schools in Finland, Sweden & NSW

Supervision

e.g. New staff member needing to pass probation/registration

(elements of assessment)

Support

e.g. Support & guidance for new staff

(more experienced supporting less experienced)

Collaborative self-development

e.g. Peer-led group learning

(values equity, autonomy, safe, open discussion)

Outcomes

Does

1. **Improve skills and knowledge**

2. **Strengthen professional identity**

- Offer new ideas and views

- Promote agency & motivation

- Empower participants as change agents

- Improve collaboration skills

And can…

- Contribute to self-reflection and support self-understanding

- Increase wellbeing by:
  - reducing stress
  - helping with problems
  - reducing professional isolation
  - providing a network

- Support organisational goals

Tynjälä, P. et al. (2021)

Key factors for success

Methodological

Purpose

What is done

Principles

Social

Group membership and dynamics (homogeneous v. heterogeneous)

Open, confidential environment
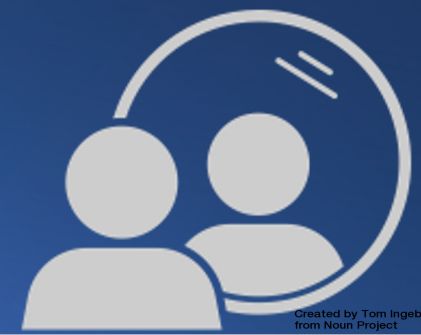
Motivation for meeting

Physical

Easy time, location

Means of meeting and/or collaborating

Administrative

Well organised/set up

Tynjälä, P. et al. (2021)

Reflection 1

Each of the three types of peer mentoring has its benefits.

- Which, if any, do you currently use at your language centre?

- What benefits and/or drawbacks can you see for use by academic managers?

Supervision

e.g. New staff member needing to pass probation/registration

(elements of assessment)

Support

e.g. Support & guidance for new staff

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Collaborative self-development

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(values equity, autonomy, safe, open discussion)

Model 1

Harvard Business Review: How to Help Your Employees Learn from Each Other

by Kelly Palmer and David Blake November 08, 2018

Model 1

Structure

- formal program
- online or in person
- pairs or groups
- weekly sessions

Notable elements

- encourages networking throughout organisation

- dynamics of hierarchy disappear

- safe space for risk-taking without fear of manager evaluating performance

- employees more likely to have frank conversations about development with peers than with managers

Model 2

BetterUp: How to implement peer to peer learning in the workplace

by Maggie Wooll, 10 June, 2021

Model 2

Structure

- formal pairing; relaxed peer learning lunches; social learning tools; group reflection
- peer learning facilitator (neutral, no authority)
- create safe environment (guidelines, code of conduct)

Notable elements

- encourages connectivity and collaboration
- provides safe space to ask questions and raise concerns
- boosts employee morale and sense of belonging and connection
- increases engagement through employees actively learning and teaching
- improves retention and productivity
- manager abdicates authority to empower employees

Model 3

Peer Group Mentoring – The Finnish Model *Verme*

"… sharing and reflecting on [participants'] experiences, discussing problems and challenges they meet in their work, listening, encouraging one another, and, above all, learning from each other, and learning together."

Model 3

Structure
- formal structure, adapted to individual contexts
- 4-8 members
- meet 1/month for 12 months (can go longer/shorter by agreement)
- appointed 'mentor' who facilitates – often a more experienced member but seen as an equal in all respects

Notable elements
- autonomous, but set up by provider
- agreed rules of activity (e.g. confidentiality, themes for discussion, no dominant members)
- voluntary
- focus on learning and support - no assessment elements

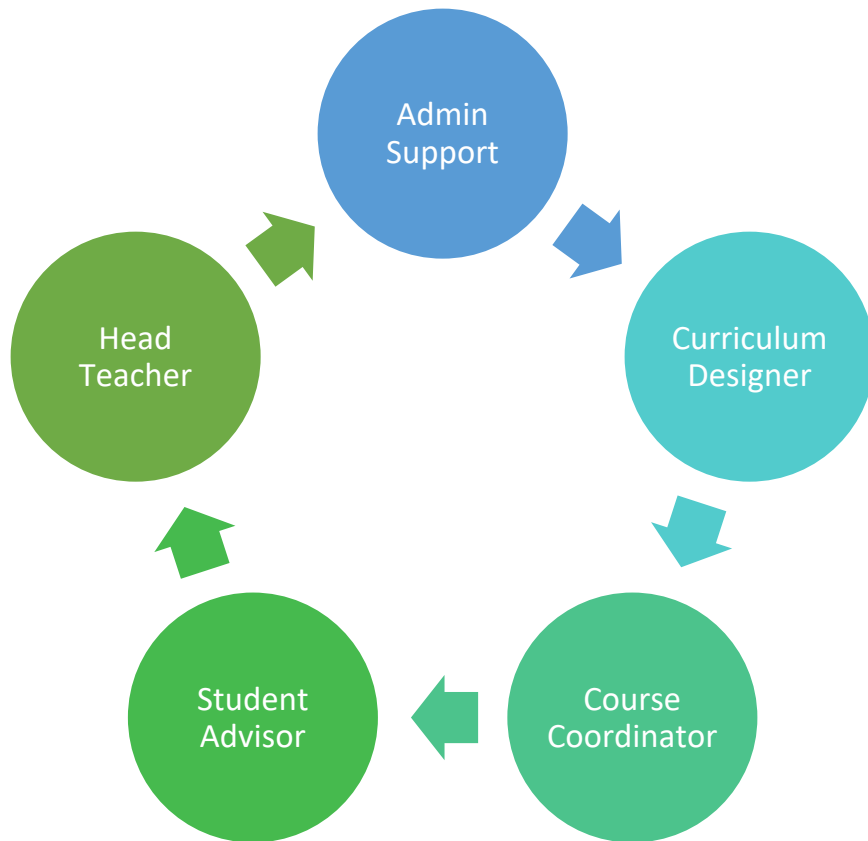# Reflection 2

Discuss <u>in new pairs</u>

- Quick introductions again
  - name
  - LTO
  - role

- Do you see any benefits so far?
- Any challenges?
- How might your current team react to peer mentoring using these models?

We have a **culture** of old hands and fresh eyes where both are valued. There is much informal **mentorship**

Possible Peer Mentor Models

Stand-alone school example

- Admin Support
- Curriculum Designer
- Course Coordinator
- Student Advisor
- Head Teacher

Chain school example

- Academic Manager
- Curriculum Designer
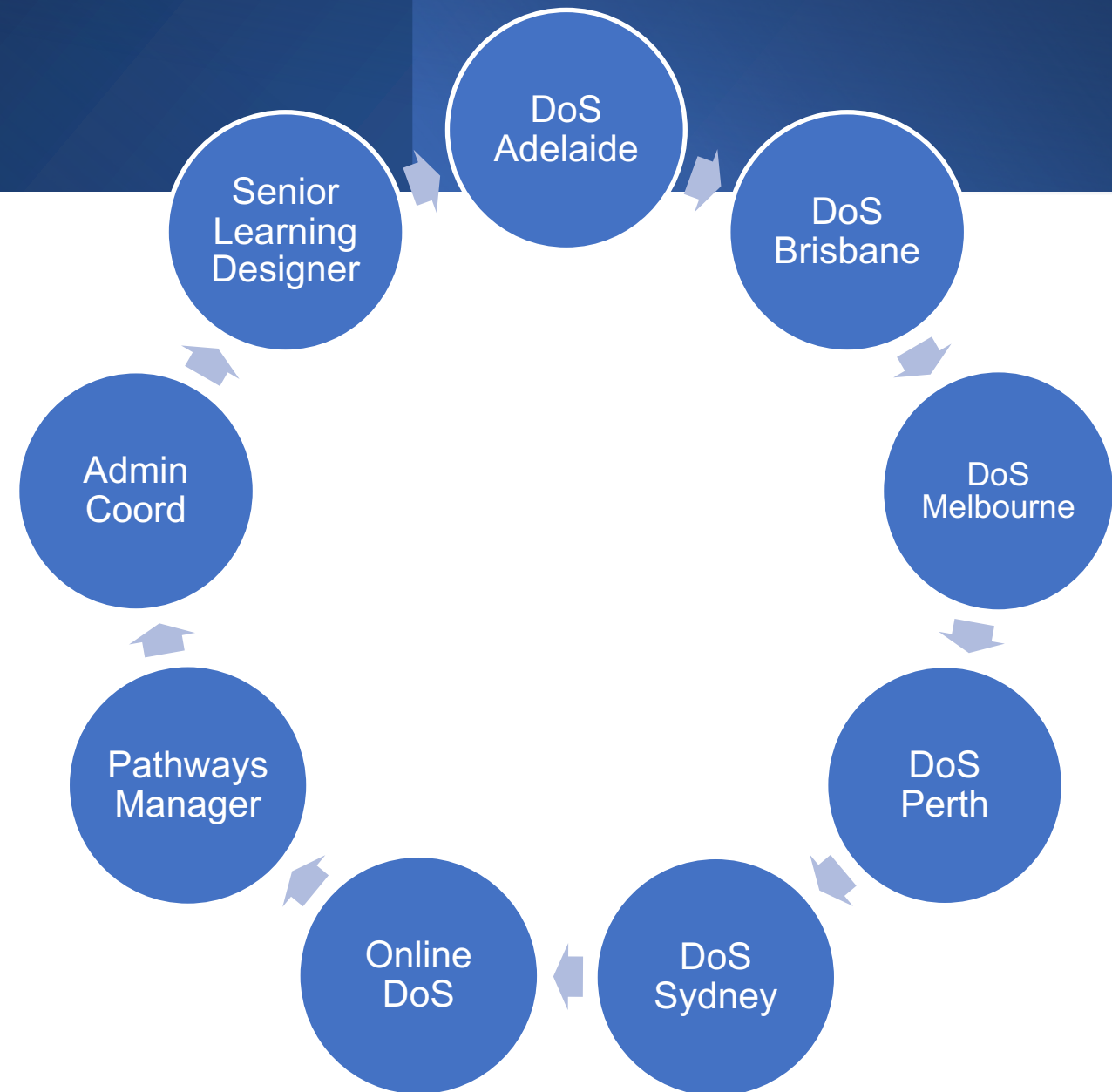- Academic Manager
- Student Advisor
- Academic Manager
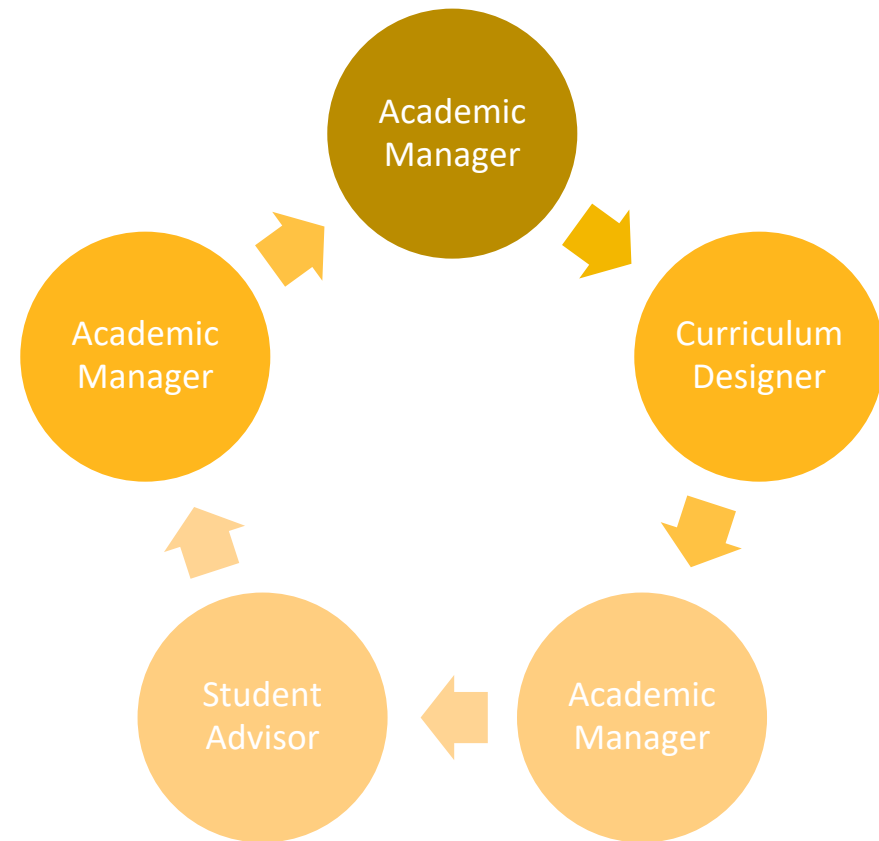
Case Study

ILSC Australia (five campuses)

Case Study Model

Purpose

- operational efficiencies through peer training
- safe and collegial ethos through peer support
- growth and development of other leaders in team
- efficient way to distribute leadership

Structure

- both formal and informal
- both online and in person
- both pairs and groups
- both weekly and ad hoc sessions
- the structure is dynamic and keeps evolving over time

Case Study Model

Notable elements

- some training sessions are formal and structured

- team also encouraged to meet informally of own accord

- team often referred back to each other when they ask me questions

- modelling the behaviour and setting the tone are key

Note: very small example, small sample size, insignificant from research perspective, but from practical standpoint there could be some helpful ideas
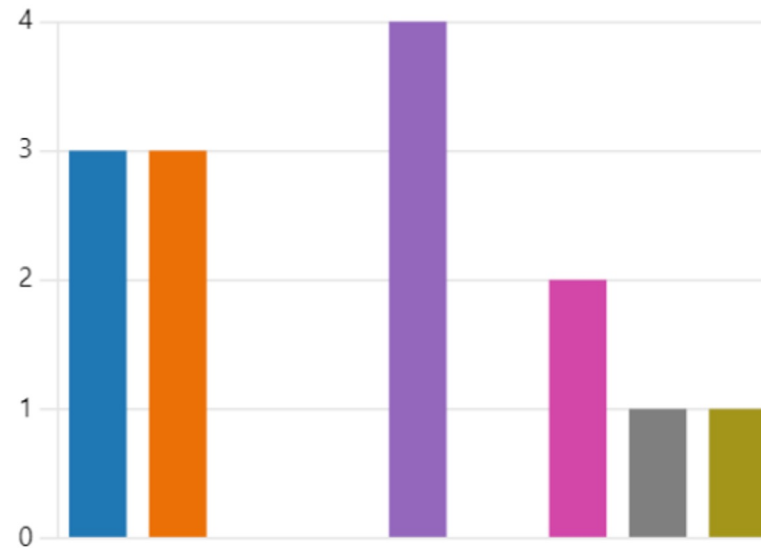
Case Study

9. How do you feel about your manager having less centralised influence and control and less technical understanding of the tools/resources/systems/processes/procedures that you are trained into by your peers or that you train your peers into?
   Choose all that apply:

More Details

🔵	Makes me feel more empowered	3
🟠	Makes me feel less micromanag...	3
🟢	Makes me feel a little neglected	0
🔴	A manager should have technic...	0
🟣	A manager should rely on their ...	4
🟤	It costs me more time overall	0
🟣	It costs me less time overall	2
⚪	I don't mind either way	1
🟡	Other	1

Case Study

What were the positive or negative aspects of peer mentoring/training for you? Did it assist in your own organisational and procedural knowledge and professional development?
If so, how? If not, why not?

- *I think very positive as it's good to hear others' opinions and lean on expertise or knowledge that you don't have. Often we catch ourselves in a bubble of our own thoughts, and a quick check can often help with efficiency.*

- *I believe peer mentoring/training is beneficial for all. The positives outweigh the negatives. Positives: it enhances specific skills such as IT systems and processes, and managerial processes. It increases confidence when you master the skill and can mentor/train another person to also upskill. It creates networking opportunities and allows for more connection opportunities in the field. Negatives: massive time constraints balancing the day-to-day demands and tasks and setting time aside to train/mentor can be a challenge.*

Case Study

(cont.)

- *....having both formal and informal peer mentoring has been invaluable in learning processes and systems...I think the DoS group itself is what leads to the peer mentoring being so successful here as each DoS comes with unique skills and good industry knowledge so we all learn from another...whenever we have a discussion or a meet up...there is comfort knowing that someone will have the answer and have a strong trust system in place which has been the foundation of the mentoring taking place.*

- *I can't see any real negatives with peer mentoring, as it provides a safe and supportive environment to support, learn and grow together. The only proviso in terms of negatives is that it does not become a competitive relationship, which can undermine the supportive nature of peer mentoring.*

Case Study

Do you ask your own Head Teacher/Coordinator teams to mentor or train each other?

I do as they all have different skills and expertise to bring to the table. We constantly chat about processes and work on best practices so we learn and adapt as the environment does.

Yes, as they have a lot of skills & experience to offer their peers and team members, and it also empowers & develops them. Of course, you need to choose what and with whom they mentor and train, as we need to consider their individual skills and knowledge.

Yes - those with experience in the role are the best people to train those entering the role.

Case Study

Do you wish to keep engaging in informal peer mentoring/learning in your organisation into the future? Why/why not?

I would – it's important to be connected with others.

Yes, it is such valuable PD in a role where we are so time poor.

We should also have dedicated hours in our work week for more formal sessions, as the time constraints can often push these mentoring opportunities to the bottom of the priority list.

Reflection 3

Discuss <u>in new pairs</u> (quick intros first)

- What do you find interesting about the results of this case study?

- What do you feel were the most positive outcomes?

- What are the real or potential negative aspects?

Possible team benefits

Technical/practical aspects

- Utilise team's technical skills
- Transfer tacit knowledge
- Cross-train team
- Socialise new hires
- Break down silos
- Save yourself time

Team socio-emotional aspects

- Reduce team inhibitions
- Build connections, trust, cohesion
- Foster an ethos of helpfulness
- Boost engagement through appreciation and camaraderie
- Encourage psychosocial support network
- Improve retention through staff satisfaction

Leader self-reflection

Leader self-reflection aspect

- Embrace notions of stewardship and servant leadership
- Consciously relinquish power and control
- Do not assume you are the 'expert' due to your position
- Allow your team to make mistakes; allow them to self-correct
- When they admit a mistake, seek to retain their dignity
- Humbly work towards succession planning

Peer mentoring: a helpful way to promote distributed leadership within our organisations

Reflection 4

Discuss <u>in pairs</u>

- Does anything here resonate for you at this stage?

- Is there anything here you might consider taking on in your context?

Scenario 1: Stand-alone school

Scenario 1 to consider <u>in groups of 3</u> (5 minutes)
- Team:
  - Two Head Teachers (one experienced, one new), one Learning Designer, one Coordinator, one Student Advisor
- Needs:
  - Bringing the broader team together to break down silos and to train each other
- Building the conditions:
  - How would you build the conditions for the peer mentoring to work?
  - What would you do to encourage them to work as a team?
  - How would/wouldn't you set it up?
- Outcomes:
  - What do you think the challenges might be?
  - And the affordances?

Scenario 2: Your school

Scenario 2 to consider <u>as individuals</u> in your actual LTO (5 minutes) pen & paper or device

Who is your team of people you would like to start peer mentoring each other?
- Roles, experience

Needs?
- Consider your context

Building the conditions:
- How would you build the conditions for the peer mentoring to work?
- What would you do to encourage them to work as a team?
- How would/wouldn't you set it up?

Outcomes
- What do you think the challenges might be?
- And the affordances?

Feedback

Share from either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2

- Any questions at this point?

- Share in pairs (only what you are comfortable sharing)

- Would anyone like to share with the whole group?

Possible challenges

Challenges

- Differing expectations
- Commitment
- Assumed roles in the group
- Finding time

Recommendations

- Paying attention to group formation and fostering collegial relationships
- Integrating theoretical understanding with practical know-how

Opportunities

Leaders: consider mentoring opportunities within our sector for yourselves

Connect here and now to set up your own small sector peer group if you wish

You

IATEFL LAMSIG

NEAS Leadership CoP

A trusted counterpart

Conference workshops

English Australia AMSIG

Online communities

Further reading

References

- Kemmis, S., Heikkinen, H. L. T., Fransson, G., Aspfors, J., & Edwards-Groves, C. (2014). Mentoring of new teachers as a contested practice: Supervision, support and collaborative self-development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *43*, 154-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.07.001

- Quirke, P. (2022). Teacher knowledge development. In H. Mohebbi & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics* (pp. 595-600). Springer International Publishing AG. https://doi.org/ https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79143-8

- Tynjälä, P., Pennanen, M., Markkanen, I., & Heikkinen, H. L. T. (2021). Finnish model of peer-group mentoring: review of research. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1483*(1), 208-223. https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14296

Resources

- Better Up: Resources for organisations and leaders https://www.betterup.com

- HBR: Harvard Business Review https://hbr.org

- HRM: the Australian HR Institute news site https://www.hrmonline.com.au/

Thank you!

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