



OLEVI

How to create, empower and keep great teachers

The first steps to developing a coaching
culture in your school.

Why a coaching culture is needed

Educators are predisposed to want to help people achieve their best – it goes with the territory. But school leaders who try to give their colleagues all the answers, or who swoop in and solve problems for them, are not necessarily providing their team with the tools to succeed.

It is like a Year 2 teacher stepping in to tie the shoelaces of a child in the playground. The simple act gets the child back out and playing more quickly, but it does not help them in the long run. They need to be given the support and confidence to tie their own shoelaces.

Similarly, we need to empower people to develop their own amazing techniques to solve issues themselves, and that is what coaching can do.

Like the pupil who has tied their laces and is ready for their next adventure, teachers who are trusted to develop their own strategies are happier, more motivated and ready to face even the most complex challenges. More importantly, so are their pupils.

However, getting to this point calls for a culture shift.

The difficulty is that schools are in a hurry to make improvements, and that's hardly surprising. With the disruption of the pandemic, the need to help pupils catch up and the prospect of Ofsted knocking at the door, you want a quick and efficient way to solve problems.

But telling someone what to do and leaving them to get on with it will not tackle a school's challenges.

What coaching does is to help school leaders put aside any natural 'I want to fix everything' tendencies so both staff and pupils develop their own skills.

How to implement a coaching culture

In a coaching culture, the first thing to do is listen – and empathise. Find out what the issue really is. Then you become a facilitator, helping the member of staff solve a problem for themselves.

For example, if there is an issue with low level disruption in a class, ask the teacher what steps they could take, what techniques they could use and how they could make the most of their own professional qualities as a teacher to address the challenge and engage the children.

There is no personal criticism, instead it is simply a way to enable teachers to develop their own strengths, with the focus on doing their best for their pupils.

School leaders move away from providing advice or modelling their own way of doing things. Instead, they listen, understand and encourage teachers to find the answers.

Ultimately, over time, people learn to self-coach. They ask themselves challenging questions and are always searching out opportunities to improve, thrive and progress.

Where to start

Like all change, the most important step is modifying your own practice. School leaders must make the shift from problem solver to facilitator. The school leader coach will apply the 80:20 rule of listening and talking, as outlined below.

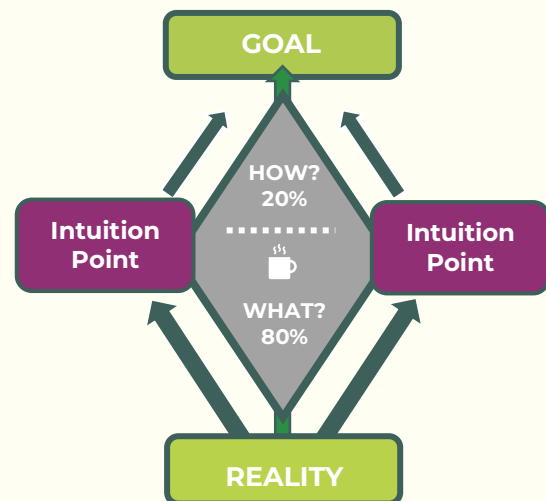
The 80:20 Rule

80:20 – the coach **listens for the 80%** of the time and talks for only 20% of the time.

Use the Diamond Model to manage the coaching process. Keep the teacher in 'the WHAT' part of the conversation for 80% of the time which will help them to fully explore and accept what is really happening and what they want to achieve. For the remaining 20% of the time, focus on the HOW. This is how they want to move forward by creating one or two tangible, positive actions.

OLEVI's Diamond Model

How to structure coaching conversations



What questions to ask

It is useful to have a set of pre-prepared questions to help staff identify what needs doing, when and how it will be measured. The examples below are a great place to start.

1

Where are you now?

2

Where would you like to be?

3

What do you already do?

4

How could you be more effective?

Q1 Where are you now?

This question helps ensure people not to only assess their current practice but can justify it too. The question should explore the person's strengths and areas of development – rather than either overly focusing on, or brushing over, the negative.

Q2 Where would you like to be?

This question should explore what the teacher wants their practice to look/feel/sound like next. It will encourage them to examine the rationale for change and identify how doing things differently will benefit them and their students. You could encourage the individual to write their responses to the question down in the present tense. For example, 'My Year 9s are all engaged in their learning' rather than, 'When my Year 9s are engaged in their learning.' This helps to keep it inspiring. The goal will also serve as the benchmark for measuring progress.

Q3 What do you already do?

This question keeps the conversation positive by establishing what is working well and therefore what the staff member should keep doing. People should be given the time to fully explore what they already do but also how they do it effectively to have impact.

Q4 How could you be more effective?

This is the important point at which the next operational steps or action plan is articulated. Consider how change will happen in clear, actionable stages. Encourage them to shape well-defined goals e.g. what will be taking place, with which group of students; when exactly this will happen; and how will effectiveness be measured and evaluated?

Example coaching questions

WHAT:

- What is happening?
- What do you mean by...?
- Are you saying that...?
- What do you want the result to be?

HOW:

- What could you do more of?
- What could you stop doing?
- Who would you like to speak to?
- What strategies could you investigate?
- What do you need to do, by when?



What could coaching look like in your school?

Below are three scenarios to demonstrate how a coaching conversation would differ from a more regular mentoring conversation.

A Year 9 teacher struggling with behaviour in class

It is breaktime in the staff room and a Year 9 teacher is complaining that some of her pupils always play up and are less motivated on a Friday afternoon.

It would be tempting to simply share your own tactics of dealing with this type of disruption, but that will not necessarily help the teacher to solve the issue. Instead, by using the coaching approach, you allow the teacher to resolve the challenge in a way that suits their own teaching style and builds their confidence to tackle future classroom issues.

Coaching tips for this scenario:

1. **Encourage** the teacher to explore what the issues could be, are the pupils really misbehaving, or are they tired or distracted?
2. **Focus** most of the conversation on encouraging the teacher to explore and accept what is happening in the classroom when the pupils behave in this way.
3. **Inspire** them to identify what they want to achieve by making change. What is their aim?
4. **Ask**, but not suggest, what steps the teacher could consider taking to address the issue.
5. **Empower** them to think about their own set of skills and qualities and how these can be used to help them solve the problem.
6. **Challenge** the teacher to take ownership of the issue and encourage them to think of one or two new actions they could try, to see if it changes the pupils' behaviour.



A new Head of Art needs to change elements of the art curriculum following a mock Ofsted inspection.

The new Head of Art is unsure how to improve elements of the art curriculum following a mock Ofsted inspection. The senior leader is not a subject specialist so cannot mentor them but needs to ensure the Head of Art is challenged to learn and embed the necessary new knowledge and skills.

How can coaching inspire the Head of Art to be able to do this and help the school build a culture of challenge and change?

Coaching tips for this scenario:

1. Set up several coaching sessions with the teacher. Motivate them to embrace new learning and encourage them to reflect on this by taking actions to embed the improvements within their practice and role.
2. Before the next coaching session check that the necessary learning is happening so it can be fully explored when you next meet.

Questions to ask

- Who could you observe and what you would be your focus?
- Who would you like to speak to?
- What questions will you ask?
- What research (e.g. academic journals, books, podcasts) will you explore?
- What specific strategies will you investigate and pilot in your own classroom?
- What 'takeaways' are you hoping to gain from your learning?

An experienced Teaching Assistant needing development following an appraisal

An experienced Teaching Assistant is having their initial appraisal meeting of the year. Their new line manager really wants to make this a professional conversation that empowers them to achieve and own a personal goal that will positively impact themselves, the students and the school.

Coaching can support this process as it is built on a culture of reflection and self-awareness. In this scenario coaching questions can encourage the teaching assistant to think more deeply about their role and how they interact and support students. This will create clarity of purpose that will empower and motivate them to feel more confident. By exploring how they feel about their role and how they would like to develop, the teaching assistant will feel more valued and trusted to move forwards.

Using the GROW approach, a more informal style of coaching questions would work in this scenario:

- **GOAL questions:** What do you want to focus on achieving professionally this year? When you achieve this, what do you hope will be the positive impact on you and your students?
- **REALITY questions:** Out of 10, where do you think you are now? What made you reach this conclusion?
- **OPTIONS questions:** What do you think might work in this situation? How can you weigh up the pros and cons of each of these options?
- **WAY FORWARD questions:** What option or options are you going to move forward with? Keeping the goal in mind, what do you specifically need to do, and by when?

Coaching is a catalyst to positive change

Coaching is about giving teachers the time and space to express their individual voices as professionals by giving them the courage and confidence to take the initiative in the classroom.

Coaching works because it is an active process. Coaching is not 'done to' someone, but in collaboration with them.

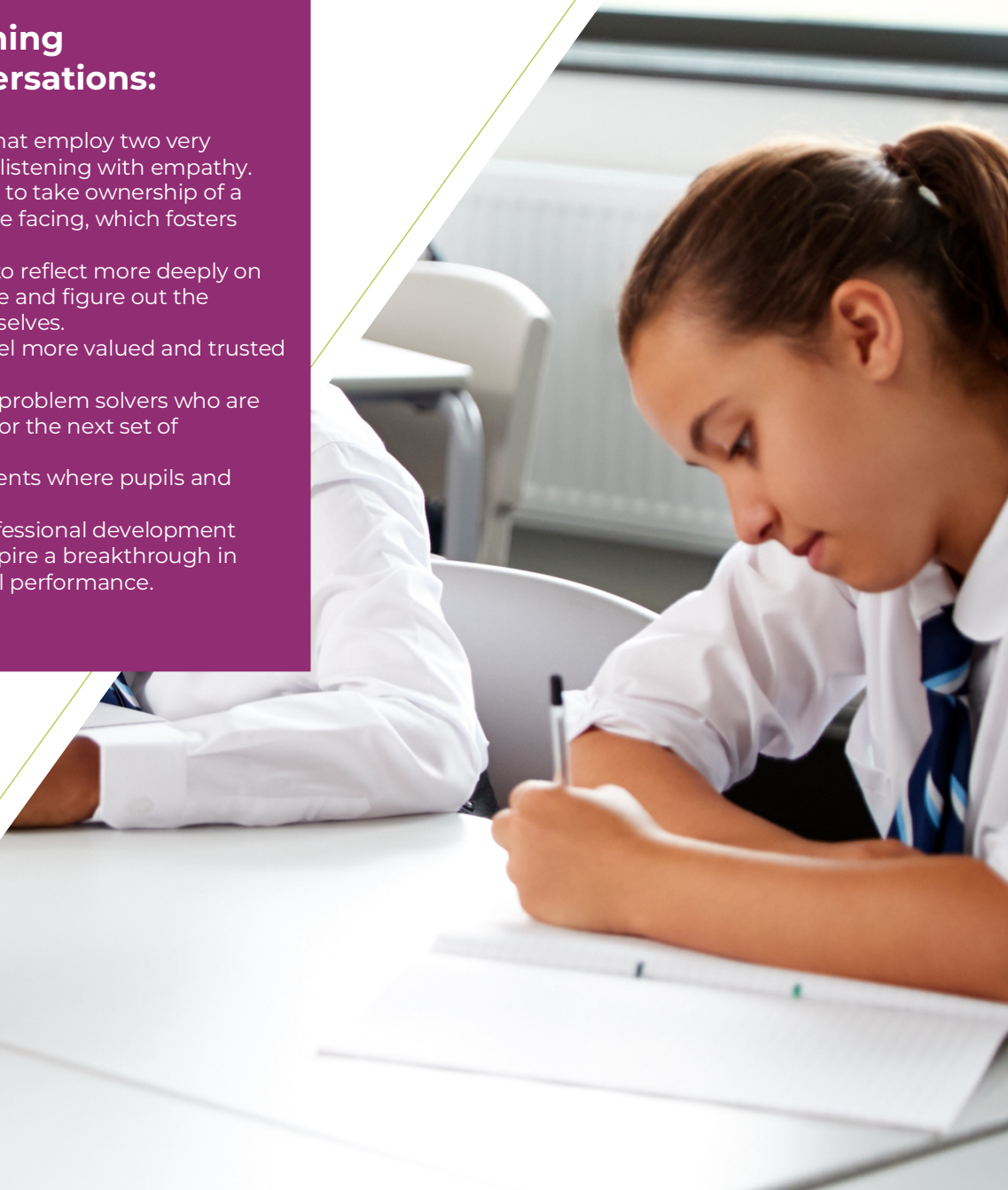
When a coaching culture is embedded throughout a school, coaching conversations become a part of everyday learning. It is where transformations start to happen as teachers are challenged and supported to search out new opportunities to improve, thrive and progress.

Everyone from school leaders to the pupils themselves can become a coach and learn to self-coach in the process.



Coaching Conversations:

- Are safe spaces that employ two very important skills - listening with empathy.
- Support teachers to take ownership of a challenge they are facing, which fosters personal growth.
- Enable teachers to reflect more deeply on their own practice and figure out the solution by themselves.
- Make teachers feel more valued and trusted as professionals.
- Create a team of problem solvers who are better prepared for the next set of challenges.
- Create environments where pupils and teachers thrive.
- Are powerful professional development tools that can inspire a breakthrough in teacher and pupil performance.



About OLEVI's coaching accreditation

OLEVI has trained over 20,000 coaches who have achieved the best outcomes for themselves, their teachers and their schools.

OLEVI coaching will:

- Transform school performance
- Improve pupil progress and engagement
- Improve OFSTED ratings
- Increase staff retention, enjoyment and wellbeing

“The relationship with OLEVI has been the single most effective tool in our school's improvement journey.”

Lorna Beard, Principal, Castle Academy

What makes OLEVI's coaching so different?

All advanced and professional OLEVI coaches are trained to:

**‘Coach the problem, not the person.
It's all about GROWTH!’**

IFCF Accreditation Body

Want to know how we can help your school?

Arrange a call with the business manager of OLEVI, Mona Bhatti to find out the difference coaching could make in your school.

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