



Learning Coach Guide



Introduction

Learning Coaches at Preston Lodge High School form part of the wider professional learning support structures of the school. Learning Coaches are volunteer members of staff who are allocated a small amount of time to carry out their role. The purpose of this handbook is to clarify this role and support Learning Coaches to have impact on staff learning, and ultimately, on student learning.

Leadership

The Learning Coach team is led by the PT Classroom Practice, who is also a Learning Coach, and meetings are held monthly. In addition to items arising, meetings focus on developing a collective understanding of our strengths and areas for development in terms of classroom practice.

Context

Learning Coaches operate within a wider system of support for professional learning in the school. In addition to their primary role, Learning Coaches feed into these additional systems in a number of ways. These include:

- **'PLPL'** – An in-house programme of professional learning courses. This is led and managed by the Learning Coach team and many of the courses are provided by members of the team also.
- **In-Service/CAT Programme** – This programme is determined by SMT/EMT/SLG. However as Learning Coaches are members of the Strategic Learning Group, input from Learning Coaches is often a feature of this programme, particularly for learning related content.
- **PRD** – The professional review and development process is a key aspect of personal staff development. Staff may identify their Learning Coach as a professional learning resource in their CLPL programme for the session.
- **Learning Festival** – The Preston Lodge High School Learning Festival is led and managed by the Learning Coach team and many of the workshops are provided by the team also.
- **Cramlington Strategic Alliance** – Learning Coaches play a role in attendance at Strategic Alliance meetings and in feeding back outcomes to the wider staff.

Key Roles

In addition to feeding into the systems outlined above, Learning Coaches have got two primary roles. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Providing individual coaching for staff to support them in developing their classroom practice.**
- **Sharing relevant classroom practice, ideas and literature with the whole staff.**

Learning Coaches are allocated a group of staff from across the school at random on a pro-rata basis.

Sharing Practice and Literature

Learning Coaches are expected to do their best to stay abreast of the latest developments in classroom practice and the literature surrounding this. Learning Coaches should manage an effective system for sharing this knowledge, along with items of practice from within the school, across the whole staff. All members of the Learning Coach team should be involved in contributing to this process, however one or two Learning Coaches may volunteer to manage the process.

Managing a Coaching Conversation

The primary role of a Learning Coach is to provide individual support for members of staff to develop their classroom practice. Our model of coaching is based on East Lothian Council's Corporate Policy and Improvement team's Coaching Awareness training, which new Learning Coaches attend. Their description of what coaching is and is not is as follows.

Coaching:

- *is a very positive approach to effecting change and making positive improvements*
- *can help to build self-awareness, responsibility and self-belief, enabling you to quickly move forward and achieve your desired goals*
- *provides dedicated time for the exploration of any underlying limiting beliefs, which may be acting as barriers to progress*
- *is results-oriented, which in itself provides a powerful motivational force.*

What Coaching Is Not:

- *Coaching focuses on solutions, rather than seeking to explore and understand specific problem issues.*
- *Coaching is neither mentoring nor consultancy.*
- *Whilst mentors and consultants act in an advisory capacity, the role of a coach is not to advise you, but rather to assist you to find solutions to your issues.*

Source: [Corporate Policy and Improvement, ELC](#)

In alignment with ELC's approach to Coaching, we use the 'GROW' model to structure our coaching conversations:

Goal Setting

Reality checking

Options

What is to be done, When, by Whom and the Will to do it.

More information on this model can be found in [ELC's Corporate Policy and Improvement Coaching Handbook](#). Coaching conversations are entirely voluntary and will normally be initiated by the coachee. Learning Coaches are encouraged to approach staff on their list informally to ask if they would like to be coached.



In addition to the GROW model, Learning Coaches may also wish to use aspects of the [professional enquiry](#) process to structure coaching conversations, particularly when the coachee is focusing specifically on an aspect of classroom practice. Questions which might assist in this context include:

- *What is it you want to achieve?*
- *What would this look like?*
- *How could you evidence this change?*
- *What could you do differently to achieve this change?*
- *What will you do differently?*
- *How will you do it?*

The coaching proforma in the appendix is based on the GROW model and can be used to record the outcomes of the conversation. Notes are normally made by the coach to allow the coachee the freedom and time to think, however the completed proforma should be left with the coach at the end of the meeting. At least one follow-up meeting should normally be arranged, with further meetings arranged if necessary. The contents of coaching conversations should normally be confidential unless the coachee explicitly gives permission for the coach to share aspects of the discussion.

The 'Expert' Question

There is likely occasionally to be a tension between the coaching approach outlined above, and the expectation that Learning Coaches should be 'experts' in some way. The coaching process should therefore be clearly explained at the outset to manage the expectations of the coachee. Learning Coaches are likely to have a particular expertise in a number of areas and it's perfectly acceptable and desirable to share this expertise with others if they want it. However, this can occur outwith the coaching conversation as one of the actions points identified by the coachee.



GOAL SETTING

- *What do you want to achieve out of this session?*
- *What could we work on now that would make the biggest difference to your teaching?*
- *What are the goals you want to achieve?*
- *How will you know when you have achieved these goals?*
- *When do you want to have achieved your desired outcome?*
- *In one sentence what would your goal be?*



REALITY CHECKING

- *What is the current situation like?*
- *What's working and not working?*
- *Where are you in relation to your goal?*
- *What obstacles or barriers would stop you from moving forward?*
- *Why haven't you reached that goal already?*
- *Who else is involved?*
- *What will happen if you don't achieve your goal?*
- *What will happen if you do?*



OPTIONS

- *What could be your first step?*
- *What else could you do?*
- *Who might be able to help?*
- *What would others suggest?*
- *If you could start with a clean sheet, what would you do?*
- *What are the different ways you could approach this issue?*



WHAT IS TO BE DONE, WHEN, BY WHOM AND THE WILL TO DO IT

- *What are you going to do?*
- *How and when will you do that?*
- *Who will you involve?*
- *On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to this goal?*
- *What is stopping it from being a 10?*
- *How will you know when you have done it?*
- *What could arise and hinder your plan?*
- *When will you start?*