1 From Trainee to Newly Qualified Teacher

Your Immediate Professional Needs

Ruth Heilbronn

As a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) you already bring many skills to your new profession from your previous experience and from your initial teacher education. You may be embarking on a period of formal induction training and assessment, with an established induction tutor, or going through your school’s in-service training programmes. The foundations you lay down for your professional development will support you throughout your career. As an NQT you should be attached to a mentor who supports you at this stage of development.

In England and Wales all NQTs have to complete a statutory induction period amounting to a school year if full time (or the part-time equivalent) in order to be able to teach in state maintained schools. Some form of support for the induction period is also in place in many countries, for example in most states in the United States of America (USA) and in Australia and New Zealand. At the time of writing, Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar follow the regulations for England and Wales. Scotland has a two-year probation period and Northern Ireland has an induction stage in their teacher education programme. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) with Induction in these countries is recognised in England and Wales and vice versa. The requirements to follow these regulations in the countries stipulated will henceforth be referred to as ‘statutory induction’.

The statutory induction policy has two main principles:

• a national entitlement for NQTs for support and professional development;
• assessment of NQTs against defined national standards.

The statutory induction period is intended to provide NQTs with a ‘bridge’ between initial teacher education and the role of an established professional (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE] 1999a, para.1). Evaluation of the first two years of the
policy showed that it has helped NQTs to become more effective teachers in terms of their own feelings of confidence in their growing professional expertise (Department for Education and Skills [DiES] 2002d).

At the end of the statutory induction period NQTs are assessed against induction standards and have to show that they still meet the standards for QTS, which is awarded at the end of the initial teacher education period. These are part of a larger framework of standards which go through the various stages of teaching. They can be viewed on the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) website, which includes a range of support materials (TTA http://www.tta.gov.uk/induction).

Whether you go through a period of statutory induction or not it is essential to understand how to manage your professional development opportunities and to build on them throughout your career. Researchers and experienced mentors have stressed the importance of keeping a balance between professional development for our own growing skills and the assessment function of training programmes (Simco 1995).

This chapter introduces some basic notions relating to your professional development as an NQT and situates this development in the context of your teaching career. It explains how you can work with your induction tutor, or other school-based mentors, to support this development.

**OBJECTIVES**

By end of this chapter you should understand:

- the importance of the role of professional development and the place of the newly qualified period of training;
- how to work with your induction tutor or mentor to achieve your professional development priorities;
- the role of a Professional Development Portfolio in structuring your development;
- the benefits of reflection and evaluation in this developmental process.

**YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

As a teacher you exercise your professional judgement many times throughout the school day. The teacher’s job is multifaceted and embodies many skills, and a wide grasp of subject knowledge, knowledge about how to teach, and about the pupils. You are constantly learning, which is one of the reasons why many people stay in teaching. As a responsible professional you will keep these skills and knowledge up to date, and extend their range. So being in charge of your own professional development is itself an important skill, to enable you to grow and extend as a teacher. The process you begin at this point will benefit you throughout your career and start you off on the right path, in charge of your own progress. Understanding ways in which development can occur is especially important for you as an NQT, because a great deal of your learning occurs this year, building on what you have already achieved and consolidating and progressing throughout the year. It is advisable to
be actively monitoring progress and steering it in a preferred direction.

You may find it helpful initially to read the section ‘Transition from student to newly qualified teacher’ in *Learning to Teach in the Secondary School*, 3rd edition, as a way of thinking through some issues of induction and support in your new post. It might be helpful to think about some of the phases you might go through during your first full year of teaching, and beyond. These might be:

- **Early idealism**: strong identification with pupils; idealism and the rejection of the image of the older cynical teacher.
- **Survival**: shock at the reality of the classroom environment – the complexity of the situation is overwhelming, and both individual pupils and many lessons are a blur. Resort to the quick fix and tips for teachers approach to development, which provides some respite from the constant demands on the teacher’s knowledge, judgement and sympathy.
- **Recognising difficulties**: an awareness of the difficulties and their causes; an appreciation of the limitations of what teachers can do to alter situations; over-concern, but an understandable concern, about personal performance; the question uppermost in the teachers mind is ‘Will I make it?’.
- **Reaching a plateau**: beginning to cope with the teaching situation and achieving some success; anxious to establish routines which work and a growing resistance to trying new things; success has been earned and the teacher does not wish to upset routines and behaviours which work; the focus is on successful management, less on pupil learning.
- **Moving on**: a recognition of the need to pay more attention to the quality of pupil learning – without support and intervention by successful, experienced teachers this process may not blossom. If unsupported there is a danger of ‘burn out’ by committed teachers trying to cope alone, or of the ‘moving on’ grinding to a halt.

(Adapted from Maynard and Furlong 1995: 12–13)

This support is vital and can be gained from experienced teachers in the school. You can also do a great deal to help yourself, and this chapter aims to give you some ideas in this direction.

**WORKING WITH YOUR INDUCTION TUTOR OR MENTOR**

One essential element of support will be your work with an experienced mentor. If you are working in one of the schools which follows the statutory induction regulations referred to above, an induction tutor supports and assesses your progress throughout the induction period. The precise recommendations are laid out in Circular 90/2000 (DfEE 2000) (available online at [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/)).

There are also books which can help both you and the school to understand your entitlement and responsibilities if you are undertaking statutory induction, (e.g. Bubb 2001 and Bleach 2000). We recommend that you gain a clear understanding of the whole process so as to achieve the maximum benefit from this crucial period. The Teachernet website has good links for useful information on induction (available online at [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/)). This site is also useful for any new teacher going through a probationary period or just wanting tips and advice.
PART I: BEING A TEACHER

Briefly, statutory induction should comprise:

• a 10 per cent lighter teaching timetable than other teachers in the school;
• a job description that doesn’t make unreasonable demands;
• meetings with your school ‘induction tutor’ (mentor), including half-termly reviews of progress;
• an individualised programme of support, monitoring and assessment;
• objectives, informed by strengths and areas for development identified in the Career Entry Development Profile, for you to meet the induction standards;
• at least one observation of your teaching each half term with oral and written feedback;
• an assessment meeting and report at the end of each term that is sent to the local education authority (LEA) which acts as the regulatory ‘Appropriate Body’; procedures to air grievances at school and at Appropriate Body level.

You may also be able to draw on the following whole school support:

• a school induction programme in which you and other NQTs share experiences and/or receive in-service support;
• a self-help support system for NQTs in your school or in the local area – you may have to organise this yourself;
• an in-service programme for NQTs run by the LEA;
• in-service courses for NQTs run by the local higher education institution – some courses may be free if associated with initial teacher education partnership arrangements.

We use the title ‘induction tutor’ to refer to the formal role for support and assessment as outlined in Circular 90/2000 (DfES 2000). However, the need for an experienced guide or mentor to act as both support and assessor is crucial throughout your period as an NQT, whether or not you are undergoing a period of statutory induction. Precisely who this person is varies from school to school. The role may be taken by the officially designated induction tutor, or another member of staff, with the induction tutor being in charge of the formal aspects of monitoring overall provision and overseeing the assessment process.

It is very important that you sort out from the beginning of your NQT period who will take these various roles, if they are taken by more than person. What should be common to all the titles is the underlying process of mentoring. Your professional relationship with the primary mentor, whatever his or her title, is essential. One feature of that relationship is openness. As an NQT, you should examine your capacity to ask for, and your willingness to receive, advice. We suggest that you also think beyond the person designated as your primary mentor and think about how you can develop a network of support from within the school and from within your department, from peers across the school.

Previous NQTs have said that the whole school culture has a great impact on their development. Schools with successful induction practice had a shared understanding and ethos of a learning environment for all staff and pupils. Where schools were supportive, NQTs recognised the input of a variety of staff: for example, one secondary NQT talked about receiving ‘invaluable support’ from heads of year over behaviour issues. A primary NQT said ‘the whole staff’ helped her. Several NQTs explained how the staff as a whole, together with good LEA support, can make for a positive induction experience (Heilbronn et al. 2002: 383). These schools have a ‘learning culture’ and induction is an integral part of
the wider professional development of all members of staff. Research continues on what constitutes an effective professional learning community (EPLC) and the relationship between the EPLC and the other areas of learning, e.g. work-based, informal and continuous professional development. McMahon et al. (2002) have pointed out that ‘interest in the concept of a professional leaning community and its perceived importance stem from the belief that when teachers work collaboratively the quality of learning and teaching in the organisation improves’. Such a community has ‘the capacity to sustain the learning of all professionals and other staff with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning’ (McMahon et al. 2002).

It is worth remembering to draw on the expertise within the whole school and to seek out advice because ultimately your progress depends on your taking initiative for your own development. You have experienced the support of a mentor, or designated tutor, during your initial teacher education course. Clearly, as you are now a qualified teacher, this new relationship ought to be different as you take more responsibility for your own development and are more proactive in identifying and setting targets and drawing up agendas for meetings with your induction tutor/mentor. In the following comments we use the term ‘mentor’ to refer to the primary support and assessment role, with the understanding that this role is usually, although not always, taken by an induction tutor.

It is both your responsibility and that of your mentor to direct your attention to areas of strength and weakness and to ensure that progression in teaching takes place. Importantly, your mentor should ensure that you increase your understanding of pupil learning, which is at the heart of good teaching. Nevertheless, you should have a stronger and more active role in setting the agenda as the year progresses. In addition, as your concerns as a NQT move beyond subject work and look to wider school involvement, questions about your pastoral role and other professional skills and knowledge required by a teacher arise and should be examined and discussed (see also Chapter 4).

We turn now to ways in which you can work with your mentor. It is essential that this role is clearly defined. Inevitably, a mentor has more than one function, one of which is to assess your progress. Some roles of mentors are listed in Reflective Task 1.1. It is important that you establish quite early on what you can expect in terms of patterns of meetings, how frequently they can take place, at what time, where and for how long. The length of time of such meetings is less important than the focus and purpose of them.

Earlier in this chapter, the question of openness was mentioned. If possible, try to insist you meet in a quiet place in which free and open discussion can take place and, in addition, where you can be reasonably free of interruption. If you can set aside at least 30 minutes a week for such a meeting you should have time to talk through developmental issues, provided the purpose of the meeting is clear. You are likely to need more time at different periods. You need to set an agenda in consultation with your mentor and for both of you to know what each expects of the other. It may require you to bring material, for example related to your lessons, or an evaluation of a week’s lessons with a class. On the other hand, your mentor may wish to report on lessons which she or he has observed and so a report is required in duplicate for discussion. Ideally, such a report should be given to you in advance. Other issues for discussion should be identified. Statutory induction procedures lay down what should happen in formal meetings for review and assessment and the content of the meetings (DfEE 2000). These procedures are important, but so are the ongoing mentor meetings, which should take place regularly.

At the end of the meeting, any agreed action should be recorded so that both you and
your mentor know what needs to be done next. A set of notes arising from the meeting, comprising a short record of what was talked about, what was agreed and proposed action is helpful to you, both as a reminder and a record of events. In a formal induction programme this must be recorded and advice on how to do this can be found on the TTA website at the end of this chapter.

**Reflective task 1.1**

**What is your mentor to you?**

Identify words from the list below that:

1. represent the role you wish your mentor to take on;
2. do not describe the relationship you want with your mentor;
3. need discussion with your mentor;
4. are missing and you wish to raise with your mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>colleague</th>
<th>guide</th>
<th>appraiser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protector</td>
<td>motivator</td>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultant</td>
<td>assessor</td>
<td>listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helper</td>
<td>diagnoser</td>
<td>trusted guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reviewer</td>
<td>facilitator</td>
<td>counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expert</td>
<td>challenger</td>
<td>critical friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discuss with your mentor the ways in which she can respond to your needs and promote your development. Remember, your mentor has a responsibility to you, to the school and to the profession.

During the early weeks and months in your first post, there are a number of issues that may be prominent; one such issue is behaviour management (Chapter 7). In such a case, you may wish to discuss the ways in which you deal with particular situations or individuals. Whereas your induction tutor/mentor may know very well the general context of the class you describe, you should come prepared to discuss the details of the problem (see Reflective Task 1.2).

**Reflective task 1.2**

**Preparing for a meeting with your induction tutor/mentor**

Identify a class with which you have particular issues, either in general management terms or with individuals. List briefly:

- the behaviours to which you object;
- the lesson plan, activities and demands on the pupils;
- any action you have taken and the results of that action;
- evaluations you have of lessons with this class made by you, a colleague or head of department;
- any factors in your teaching which may contribute to the situation;
- any special information you have about pupils in the class that could contribute to the events;
- action you propose to take which could be used as a basis for discussion.
LESSON OBSERVATION

For many NQTs issues to do with pupil learning and progression soon emerge. Indeed, if progress in teaching is to be achieved, it is on aspects of pupil learning that attention must soon focus. These concerns include assessment and recording, the appropriate use of language and ensuring access to the material in the lessons by most pupils. These issues may be met, in part, by a consideration of the teaching methods adopted and your willingness to try out and apply a range of methods. All or some of these concerns may be made the focus of a session with your induction tutor/mentor.

Solutions to these concerns may be identified by observation of your lessons to see how you are tackling them. Lesson observation is one of the key mechanisms through which a new teacher can learn to improve practice, and this includes both lessons where you observe experienced teachers and those where you are being observed. Recent research questioned a range of professionals, induction tutors, NQTs, headteachers and personnel in local authority professional development roles about what constituted effective induction practices. Most of the NQTs questioned found being observed and receiving feedback very useful for their professional development. One said: ‘It’s vital. It’s so informative having someone watch you teach because you can’t see everything and sometimes you don’t see what you do well, as well as the things you need to develop.’ Another said, ‘I love showing my kids off as well … I choose my lowest sets … It raises their own self-esteem and it makes me feel really proud of them’ (DfES 2002d: 94).

So a key role of your mentor is to monitor your teaching, partly through observing your lessons. You should agree in advance which lessons are observed. Bear in mind that your mentor is a busy person and timetable restrictions exclude some options. In addition, it helps both your development and your observer’s task if you both agree in advance what is the focus of observation and agree how the observation will be recorded. The examples shown above in Reflective Tasks 1.1 and 1.2 indicate the type of shared context useful for discussion between you and your mentor. The data direct your discussions and provide you with a focus for professional development. You should seek ways to deepen the discussion by selective use of the current literature, e.g. education journals, the Times Educational Supplement and publications by your subject association, textbooks, etc. See, for example, ‘Further Reading’ at the end of this chapter.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

One very useful way to focus your development is to keep a professional development portfolio (PDP). You may already have a profile or a portfolio from your initial teacher education and this can form a good basis for further development in the NQT year. Towards the end of the year it can also document and support an increasing engagement with research and theory (see Chapter 6). The nature of schools and teachers is such that teachers engage in developmental work all the time. Some teachers are better than others at recognising their worth and presenting others with evidence. Everything teachers do in school is important and so is much of what is done out of school, since schools employ the whole person, e.g. your out-of-school activities and interests add to your repertoire of skills, on which you draw without any conscious planning. Having a specific place to file and demonstrate documents related to the totality of your own personal career makes you
more reflective, and this in turn is a good thing. The opportunity to reflect on your
development as a teacher is not a mere public relations tool for the career opportunities
you may wish to map out, although career development is important. The major advantage
of working with a portfolio is to support your work in schools.

Your PDP will be a structured collection of evidence of your work and critical reflections
on that evidence. These two strands are both important. Collecting evidence is important
at all stages of your professional life and of course if you are undergoing statutory induction
you need to keep evidence to show that you have achieved the induction standards. Your
PDP can be very useful, for example, if you are applying for a post of responsibility or
moving schools, and for any process of review. It is a working document which needs to be
constantly updated and revised.

The process of developing and updating your PDP has the following advantages. It:
• stimulates the collection of evidence about your teaching and research accomplish-
  ments and provides this evidence;
• promotes reflection about early teaching and other professional experiences;
• encourages discussion about teaching and professional activities with peers,
  department, year teams, key stage teams, etc.;
• stimulates thinking about a philosophy of teaching and a developmental or research
  agenda;
• assists in job applications;
• provides evidence of commitment to teaching, by articulating the principles and
  practice of teachers’ work.

There is a strong underlying element of self-evaluation and reflection in the creation
and upkeep of a PDP and much of the evidence you select for it is self-generated. If you
are undergoing statutory induction in England and Wales you should document your
progress against the induction standards. It therefore makes sense to incorporate references
to them in the portfolio. Later in your career, when engaging in any form of professional
review, it will prove extremely useful to have a wide range of evidence available, generated
from yourself and others, without having to gather any of it especially for the purposes of
the review. If updating and reassessing professional performance happens routinely at
convenient intervals (possibly half-termly), the material in the PDP will have been selected
within the context in which it arose and the statements in it will be relevant to the material
illustrated. The task at review is then one of selection only. This is why it is important to
use the portfolio as a working document and to keep updating it.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

If you are undertaking statutory induction you have reflected on where you are now, at
the end of your initial teacher education, and have completed the first section of the Career
Entry Development Profile (CEDP). It is published by the TTA, and information is available
on the organisation’s website (full details of the website and specific pages are printed at
the end of this chapter).

The TTA website gives information on how the profile is designed, to give structured
guidance at ‘key milestones’ in your professional development: towards the end of initial
education and at the beginning and end of your induction period. The CEDP refers to
these periods as ‘Transition Points’, and provides guidance to help teachers ‘to make constructive connections between these points’. The CEDP is designed to be a flexible working document that can be used with other professional records. You take this record to your first post to consider alongside the Induction Standards, England and Wales, and the demands of your new post, in setting professional development objectives for your induction period. As soon as possible, you should share your CEDP with your induction tutor and your headteacher.

How will your PDP show your progress from your initial education year?

Teaching is a complex activity and classrooms are places where multiple interactions, interpretations and responses occur. The PDP is a vehicle for identifying and understanding key aspects of this activity. The portfolio should aim to capture significant aspects of teaching and learning in the NQT year and to record and analyse ‘critical moments’ in your development as a teacher. It should indicate your effectiveness as a teacher in the widest sense, in terms of pupil learning, thus providing evidence of professional teaching competence. This evidence includes:

1. the broadening and deepening of subject knowledge, by teaching new curriculum topics/areas, age groups or to meet particular pupil needs according to the phases taught;
2. pedagogic knowledge, exemplified by your development of resources or long-term planning, which show how you turn your subject knowledge into teaching and learning material, and into learning activities which can be assessed;
3. deeper understanding of pupils’ learning, and how to recognise the complexities of pupil development in a variety of ways, by identifying aspects of their progress – you could draw on the wide body of research related to learning theory, some of which forms the basis of the English Key Stage 3 strategy (see Chapter 5);
4. evidence of a wider contribution to pupils’ learning and development beyond the classroom;
5. engagement in research and scholarship (see Chapter 15);
6. evidence of meeting the induction standards in England and Wales – this includes the format required by the regulations, such as the CEDP and Developmental Record, which will form a part of your wider PDP.

What could go in the PDP?

The portfolio will contain items which you contribute and which come from other colleagues or sources. You could provide:

* an index and dividers, labelled and numbered, to make the portfolio easy to use;
* a reflective Teaching Statement;
* evidence of your wider teaching role, e.g. pastoral responsibilities, contact with parents, cross-curricular work, citizenship, etc.;
* your selection of further material which illustrates professional development,
including a copy of your CEP documentation if available, and a revised CV;
• reports from the termly statutory induction assessment meetings if you are undertaking statutory induction in England and Wales.

Other staff could give you:
• summaries of lessons they have observed;
• statements from colleagues about activities such as pastoral work, team planning etc. in which you have been jointly engaged;
• curriculum development and research reports where you have been involved;
• pupil statements or evaluations which show their response to your teaching or other input and initiatives;
• review statements by mentors;
• videotapes and photographs of key teaching or other episodes;
• evidence of attendance at induction meetings, content and participation; lectures/talks given to their groups of NQTs/teachers.

Reflection and evaluation

A process of review and reflection is essential to successful learning. This is based on the same principles which you apply to your own pupils’ learning, when you make sure that they have time to absorb and consolidate their learning. David Kolb (1985) has identified a learning cycle, which is reproduced in Figure 1.1 (see also p. 246 of Learning to Teach in the Secondary School, 3rd edition, in which the topic is discussed)

A model of practice-based learning which fits with this learning cycle is that of the reflective practitioner: that is, one who undertakes ‘reflection on action’ (Schon 1995). One of the foundations of this learning is understanding the processes involved. This is apparent when considering pupil learning. An example might be the rationale for the good practice of sharing the learning objectives of each lesson with the pupils, which

Figure 1.1 Kolb’s experiential learning circle (1985)
means telling pupils what they should be able to do or show to demonstrate their achievement (see also Chapter 8). The same process applies to your own professional development, as some writers have pointed out well (Joyce and Showers 1995). In terms of your NQT year, you should evaluate your work within your own learning cycle, which means that you start with your own teaching practice and with the help of your mentor reflect on that practice, in some of the ways suggested above. This process enables you to evaluate aspects of your practice, and this in turn forms the foundation of a new application. In other words, you teach a group again, or develop a topic, or try new behaviour management strategies. This new application stems from your guided and critical reflection on your own practice and in turn leads to further understandings and the development of your skills and knowledge about teaching and learning. (See also ‘the active learning model’ in Learning to Teach in a Secondary School, 3rd edition, p. 256.)

The reflective teaching statement

As part of the process of reflection and critical evaluation of your work you should be able to articulate your understanding of the role of the teacher and give a reflective account of it, which includes the professional values underlying it. Personal statements are increasingly required as part of job or promotion applications so it is useful to have one updated in the portfolio. In addition, the statement helps you to focus on your own strengths and developmental needs. We suggest that you revisit it each term to provide a focus for evaluation and reflection. If you decide to make changes the new statement will take the place of the former one and you can incorporate your development in such terms as ‘during the term I developed from …’.

The statement explains how you have developed over the year and may refer to ‘critical incidents’ and evolving understandings of the role of the teacher, which form the basis of detailed analysis elsewhere in the portfolio. It should include how your views of the teacher’s role have developed. You may give particular examples of how the teaching methods you typically use reflect that interpretation of your role as a teacher, and how your teaching methods have been modified in response to changes in pupils, course materials, curriculum changes and other factors such as your better understanding of pupils’ needs.

After discussing the questions in Reflective Task 1.3 with your mentor or a colleague, try to write the reflective teaching statement and put it in your PDP.

Remember to revisit your reflective teaching statement and to amend it at intervals. It can be very useful as a baseline to view your own development. When you review the statement you could ask yourself what has changed and what has not and if you can see progress in your development.

If you are involved in statutory induction your reflective teaching statement could go in the PDP alongside your references and statements about the induction standards and you could include:

- specific objectives from review meetings which you have met;
- the termly statutory induction assessment objectives report, together with any supporting material;
- feedback/lesson observations;
- feedback on professional development activities e.g. in-service training (INSET) courses, planning meetings, observations of colleagues etc.;
PART I: BEING A TEACHER

Reflective task 1.3
Writing your reflective teaching statement

It is a good idea to work with another teacher or with your mentor to discuss your statement, since the process of discussion creates meanings and shared understandings. As you revisit the statement at each key stage (possibly termly) you can reconsider some of the areas, so that by the end of the year you are able to show your own progress by assessing how far you have achieved the goals you set yourself at the beginning. Write down brief answers to the following questions:

1. **Your teaching goals**: What are your priorities at the beginning of the year?
2. **Your subject knowledge**: How do you intend to maintain, broaden or deepen it? It is useful to think in the short and medium term here.
3. **Your views on pupil motivation, pupil learning**: What is your understanding of its importance and how might you influence it?
4. **Your relationships with pupils as groups and individually and with the wider school community**: How do you view them? Why?
5. **Assessment**: What interests you in differing approaches to assessment?
6. **Your personal and professional values**: How do they relate to your sense of vocation as a teacher?
7. **Scholarly activity**: How have your understandings been informed by your readings, etc.?

It is important to collect material for the PDP throughout your NQT year, as its great strength is the use you can make of it to structure your reflections on your own progress and development.

SUMMARY

The chapter asked you to consider phases and models of teacher development and identified the reflective practitioner model as one which offers you the opportunity to gain insights into your own teaching performance. In practice, of course, different teachers develop their teaching in different ways useful to themselves and, more importantly, in direct response to the needs of their pupils. The guidance and support of an experienced mentor are essential to your progress. Your commitment to reviewing and assessing your own progress at key intervals is also extremely important. Keeping a PDP and updating your reflective teaching statement can help you to do this effectively. Your NQT year is an important one in your teaching career and you will be making a difference to the learning of your pupils as well as contributing to your school. An induction teacher in the research quoted earlier said of her NQTs:

- reports from colleagues and reflective responses to these;
- objectives for continuing professional development.

It is important to collect material for the PDP throughout your NQT year, as its great strength is the use you can make of it to structure your reflections on your own progress and development.
In the vast majority of cases, they’re young people who are enthusiastic, enjoy their work, and you know I find it very refreshing and I learn from watching them. I think this is the thing that’s perhaps surprising, an experienced teacher can go and watch an NQT and still pick up some tricks.

(Heilbronn et al. 2002: 381)

So bear in mind, while you are undergoing the steep learning curve of the first year of teaching, that your contribution can be a very valuable one to your school.

FURTHER READING


Watkins, C. and Whalley, C. (1993) *Mentoring Close Up: Resources for School-based Development*. Harlow: Longman. This collection of resources is designed to support teacher development in schools. It is of direct interest to mentors and NQTs, providing models of learning and development. It is a source of many and varied activities.

Professional development support for newly qualified teachers is available from the following sites:

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) http://www.dfes.gov.uk.

General Teaching Council (GTC) http://www.gtce.org.uk.
