Supporting the delivery and evaluation of lessons

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Abstract

This chapter discusses how you can support a beginning Religious Education teacher in the delivery and evaluation of their lessons. It covers how prior experience that the beginning teacher has had is important in how they deliver lessons, and how you will support them to recognise the impact of this. Further, this chapter identifies central practices that allow experienced teachers to thrive, and how these can be applied to mentoring your beginning teacher. It will also discuss how you can support your mentee to measure pupils' progress when delivering a lesson and evaluating its success. Finally, this chapter deliberates the importance of using data and assessment to help your mentee plan, teach and evaluate their lessons.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at how you can support beginning RE teachers with the delivery and evaluation of their lessons. The chapter is designed initially to help you think about the prior experiences of the RE teacher whom you will be mentoring and where they may be in terms of their confidence in the classroom. Once a mentor understands what a beginning teacher already knows, they can effectively support them in their practice and enable them to deliver and evaluate their lessons. The chapter starts by looking at case studies of beginning RE teachers and explores the different stages they may be at when you start working with them. The case studies will provide you with space to reflect on beginning teachers as individuals and the different ways in which you might wish to support them to develop their practice.

The second section looks at stages of development as a RE teacher and identifies guiding principles which will allow beginning teachers to flourish and succeed in their practice. This part of the chapter is written as a guided journey to embark on with your mentee. It supports you in helping a beginning teacher to visualise the teaching process, set clear learning objectives, measure pupils' prior learning, and gives practical ways in which they can measure progress during and at the end of the lesson. Strategies for supporting the beginning teacher to develop the ability to evaluate their own teaching are also explored.

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Consider the prior experiences your beginning teacher has had delivering lessons and how this will direct your support for them
- Reflect on central practices that have allowed experienced teachers to thrive and understand how these can be applied to mentoring your beginning teacher
- Be able to support your beginning teacher in delivering a lesson and evaluating its success.

The prior experiences of beginning RE teachers

When beginning RE teachers arrive at schools, they come from a range of backgrounds with varying amounts of teaching experience and a range of religious understanding. You may be mentoring trainee teachers, early career teachers or those from other subject areas teaching RE as an additional subject. Some are theists, some atheists and some agnostic. Some see the subject as an academic pursuit, and some see it as a vocation. Mentors must recognise the uniqueness of the beginning teacher in front of them and, in order to support them in delivering and evaluating lessons, know their starting point.

There is no typical beginning teacher, and your role as a mentor is to work with them as individuals. The amount of experience they have had before starting will influence their confidence during their time in school. Task 12.1, *'Reflecting on the background of beginning teachers'*, highlights the variety of starting points that you may encounter in your work as a mentor. It provides you with an opportunity to reflect on the differing levels of support beginning teachers might need in the delivery and evaluation of their lessons.

Task 12.1 - Reflecting on the background of beginning teachers

Case Study One - Jatinder
When Jatinder finished her undergraduate degree in Theology and Education Studies, she worked as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for two years before applying for PGCE. Once she had secured a place on the course, she began working for a school as a cover supervisor to gain experience and earn money before the course started. During her PGCE year, she undertook two contrasting school experiences. Her first school experience was at a school in an affluent area, where many parents were professionals, and the school had a reputation for high academic standards. Her second contrasting school was in an area of deprivation with little social mobility. Teachers worked hard at this school to raise aspirations and encourage pupils to be the first in their families to go to University. During her second school experience, she interviewed for and was offered a teaching position in her placement school.

As an early career teacher, Jatinder may feel more confident in the classroom than colleagues who came to teaching straight from University or other careers. She is well experienced and has already spent time building relationships with her pupils during her time as a PGCE trainee at the school. Her experience and the length of time she has spent in the classroom means she will have a good sense of whether learning has occurred and some understanding of pupil progress. In terms of mentor support in delivering and evaluating lessons, it may be helpful for Jatinder to have an early lesson observation to

identify the level of support she might need. If she is observed to be confident in the classroom and has good relationships with her class, her mentor can focus on further professional development. For example, having been shown some examples, she could be encouraged to produce differentiated materials for a range of needs in the lesson. She could also be guided to engage with form tutors and support staff in school to learn more about the individual needs of pupils in her classes. The mentor could also support Jatinder by identifying a class and asking her to complete a weekly reflective journal that focuses on her delivery. Time should then be made to talk through the reflections and offer advice and guidance on future practice.

Case Study Two – Simon
Simon has always wanted to work with children and young people. He is a late applicant to the PGCE course and did an undergraduate degree in Applied Theology and Youth Ministry. He has worked in youth clubs and churches with children and young people, but he has not had any experience of teaching in a classroom. It was too late for him to gain experience in a school setting before his training programme commenced.

Simon's experience working with children and young people comes from a youth work setting, which is very different from the classroom. Relationships between a youth worker and a young person differ from that of the pupil and teacher. Simon will need support in recognising the difference between these roles. In this scenario, Simon's mentor may need to model good relationships and ensure that he knows that there is a difference in professional boundaries between a youth worker and a teacher. A teacher is not 'alongside' a young person in the way a youth worker is. It may be that Simon needs to observe and then team-teach lessons before taking responsibility for a full lesson. His mentor might also consider concentrating on year seven and eight classes allowing him more time to observe year nine and beyond to build confidence. A key issue for Simon might be understanding whether learning has taken place and to what extent. It is good practice for beginning teachers to have a notebook to hand to each class teacher to write brief comments during informal lesson observations. For Simon, it might be helpful for teachers to write what went well (www) and even better if (ebi) for each lesson, highlighting areas of good practice and making suggestions for next time.

Case Study Three – Sara
Sara comes from a religious background and has a degree in Theology. She would like to be a Head of RE within two years of qualifying. She is aware of others who have achieved this and feels she is able. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she has kept in touch with the Ofsted recognised outstanding Church Secondary school that she attended. She has undertaken work experience there.

Sara's situation is different again. Although she has had experience in school and feels confident in her knowledge of religious studies, her experiences are limited to one school setting. Sara needs to know that all schools are different and that teaching practices vary not only between schools but between classes. Sara is very confident in her abilities, and it is important that at the start of her teaching practice, she is encouraged to recognise her strengths and areas for improvement without her feeling criticised. A clear understanding of the importance of the evaluation process and how reflecting on practice

and developing a range of skills sets in the classroom will enable her to achieve her longer-term goals. Sara needs to know that those things take time and that teaching practice is called practice for a reason.

These three case studies illustrate that all beginning teachers have different starting points in delivering and evaluating lessons. This means mentors need to dedicate some time to asking questions that will elicit the teacher's relevant experience and training needs. Consider the following questions to support your reflection on the case studies provided and the starting point of the beginning teacher with whom you are working.

- Consider each of the case study examples of beginning teachers. Now you are aware of their backgrounds, what specifically do you feel you need to do to support the individual in delivering and evaluating their lessons?
- Think about the possible opportunities and advantages their experience and perceptions could bring to their lesson delivery and evaluation.
- Think about your own mentee and their experience to date. What do you need to be mindful of when meeting with them to discuss the delivery and evaluation of their lessons. What specific things do they need to develop further? Are they realistic in evaluating their own practice? What can you do to encourage and support them further?

The components needed for effective delivery and evaluation of lessons.

Becoming a teacher and learning how to deliver and evaluate lessons takes time; however, with structure and guidance, the journey can be one of discovery and fulfilment, with plenty of success along the way. In their review of the underpinning research of 'What makes great teaching?' Coe et al. (2014) offer six components of great teaching that can be used to support beginning teachers in delivering and evaluating their lessons.

Using these six components as a starting point, we have identified seven areas for you to consider in the context of your work with beginning teachers. These areas will be utilised to enable you to support your beginning RE teacher throughout this chapter:

- Subject knowledge
- Imparting knowledge
- A safe learning space
- Managing the classroom
- Adapting practice
- Teacher identity
- Being professional

Subject knowledge

Strong subject knowledge is critical in delivering effective lessons. Not all RE teachers have a degree in RE or Theology, and even those who do may not have covered the material needed to teach a range of world religions. It is important to ensure beginning teachers have both access to and understand the syllabus your school follows, or the locally agreed syllabus and GCSE exam board specifications. You can do this by ensuring that they have access to short, mid and long term planning materials, providing them with GCSE textbooks and having subject content as an agenda item in meetings so that there is an opportunity to discuss upcoming topics. Building confidence in a beginning teachers subject knowledge supports them in the delivery of their lessons and should also be part of lesson evaluation.

Imparting knowledge

Good teaching in RE has questioning at the core of lessons. Rich, open, problem-based questions posed by the teacher and the pupils help shape and move the lesson forward. As Astley and Barnes (2018) argue, a good questioning technique in RE helps pupils explore the diversity of opinions in society and religious communities. When supporting beginning teachers to deliver and evaluate their lessons, it is important to assist them in developing the quality of their questioning. You can support beginning teachers in their delivery by providing them with an opportunity to discuss, question and observe you teaching your classes. Observing others can also support beginning teachers in developing their ability to deliver effective instructions and assess learning.

A safe learning space

Delivery of lessons will not always be effective, and mentors need to create a safe space that allows for mistakes to be made. Beginning teachers will learn by making mistakes and, as a mentor, you need to remember that your role is to create a safe space and positive environment for beginning teachers to practice their delivery. You can create this space for your beginning teacher through the effective use of positive praise.   Resilience and determination are as important to beginning teachers as they are to pupils.

The RE curriculum covers a range of sensitive topics. The classroom environment and teachers interactions with pupils must allow the opportunity for valuable, safe discussion to take place. Beginning teachers may feel uncomfortable at first teaching topics such as abortion, euthanasia or contraception. As you well know, pupils can sometimes make comments which may cause distractions or even upset. You must support your beginning teacher in the delivery of sensitive topics. You can do this by allowing the beginning teacher to observe you and your colleagues in delivering sensitive subject matter and/or ensuring you talk through these lessons in detail, considering what could go wrong.

Managing the classroom

It is important for beginning teachers to establish clear expectations, rules, and boundaries with their pupils. With rules and boundaries in place, they can effectively evaluate their practice against expectations. An important step in supporting beginning teachers in delivering their lessons is to remind them of the school's behaviour policies. Encouraging beginning teachers to use the school's behaviour policy to manage low-level disruption should mean that lessons are delivered effectively. Furthermore, reflecting with beginning teachers on their use of the school's behaviour policy can support in highlighting where things may or may not have gone well.

Adapting practice

We are all unique. Teachers, beginning teachers, teaching assistants, and pupils all bring different thoughts, beliefs and needs to the classroom. One of the areas beginning teachers find difficult and need support in is adapting their practice for all of those within their classrooms. They may fail to recognise that, in addition to adapting practice for those with a range of special educational needs and disabilities, they need to remember the protected characteristics of those within their classroom from different faith and cultural backgrounds as part of their adaptive practice. There will be those in a school community who come from non-traditional family backgrounds, and there will be a range of sexual orientations. When delivering RE lessons that may be considered controversial, the beginning teacher must recognise that school communities are made up of a range of unique individuals. Mentors need to recognise and point out to beginning teachers that, when delivering lessons, they must be mindful of the wide range of needs of those within their care and adapt their practice accordingly.

Teacher identity

Mentors need to support and guide beginning teachers as they develop and form their identity as a teacher and, for an RE teacher, this may involve reflecting on the way that personal faith and beliefs might impact their teaching. Although beginning teachers learn theory and pedagogy during training, it is through their classroom practice that they begin to understand their identity as a teacher. We can all identify different kinds of teachers through how they deliver their lessons. Pointing this out to beginning teachers, reflecting on their delivery with them, and discussing what kind of teacher they want to be will help them establish their own identity as a teacher.

Being professional

Reflecting on delivery and evaluating lessons is part of the role of a teacher as a professional. As a mentor to a beginning teacher, you must remind them to remain professional when delivering lessons. The unique nature of the role of an RE teacher means that sometimes there is a risk of over-sharing or perhaps being more lenient than we should. It is important that beginning teachers remain professional in their delivery and that

you support your them as they explore the importance of this for effective teaching and learning.

Although all these components may be needed for the delivery of effective lessons, there will be times where you find it is necessary to focus on some more than the others. Task 12.2 offers you an opportunity to reflect on these aspects of effective teaching in relation to the support you offer to beginning teachers

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Task 12.2   Reflecting on components needed for effective delivery and evaluation of lessons
Think about your time in the classroom supporting beginning teachers and consider the following questions:
- When have you had the opportunity to engage with these components?
    - Subject knowledge
    - Imparting knowledge
    - Classroom environment
    - Managing the classroom
    - Adapting practice
    - Teacher identity
    - Being professional
- What comes naturally?
- What do you need to develop further?

Central practices to support beginning RE teachers

Experienced teachers Knight and Benson (2014) provide a series of questions that can be used to reflect on the delivery of good lessons. They ask:

- What do my students need to understand?
- What will they do to generate those understandings?
- How will we all know they have been successful?
- What will their feedback be at the different stages?
- What performances will there be – both intermediary and final?

(Knight and Benson, 2014 p. 34)

Utilising these questions as a foundation, task 12.3 provides a subject-specific opportunity to reflect on central practices that will specifically support beginning RE teachers evaluate their teaching and support their delivery.

Task 12.3 Developing practices to help beginning teachers to deliver effective lessons
Complete the table 12.1, considering each question in turn. Reflect on how each practice would support the delivery and evaluation of effective lessons and the kind of targets you might set a beginning teacher to help them develop this aspect of their practice.

Table 12.1 – Central practices to support beginning RE teachers

Central practices that will help beginning RE teachers to deliver effective lessons	How might this support the delivery and evaluation of lessons?	Targets and actions to embed these in the delivery of a lesson
1. RE develops pupils' thinking through delivery that is based on honesty, receptivity, wisdom and truthfulness.		
2. Good questioning techniques in RE help pupils to explore a diversity of opinions.		
3. RE is enquiry based and enables pupils to reflect on their own worldviews and evaluate their own enquiries.		
4. Drawing on support from the RE community and the resources they publish will ease the delivery of lessons.		
5. Meaningful learning is promoted through interaction between pupils and religious content.		
6. Help pupils learn about religions and allow pupils to make personal reflections on their learning.		

Now consider the case study given in task 12.4. Discuss Alex's lesson with your beginning teacher.

Task 12.4 Case study

Alex wanted to introduce Sikhism to his Year 8 class. He decided to use an infographic, copied one between two, to explore data about Sikhs in the UK and beyond. He used this information to develop a quiz for the students: how many Sikhs do pupils think they are in the world/UK? In which countries do they think most Sikhs live? How many Sikhs wear the 5Ks? How many Sikhs have experienced discrimination?

Alex knew he needed to extend the questions he asked pupils beyond what, who, where, when and how, so he decided to throw it open to the pupils to develop deeper questions about the infographic. He gave them some question stems (a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) so that, to help pupils analyse the data, they could ask, "Is the information on ……. relevant?"; to evaluate "How would you feel if….?"; to create "What generalisations can you make about….?"

Once pupils had made some inquiries about Sikhism, Alex wanted them to think about some important values to Sikhs. He introduced Kirat Karni (honest living), Vand Chakna (sharing with others), and equality as teachings that focus on living without being self-centred. He asked pupils to use research and role-play to think about how these values might affect the day-to-day lives of Sikhs. To allow pupils to reflect personally on these values, Alex asked them to consider which values are important in their own lives. He encouraged pupils also to find out which Sikh values were compatible with the school values.

Alex used resources published by RE Today to support his lesson (Diamond-Conway, J (ed) 2019; Pett, S. (ed), 2019)

Discuss this case study with your beginning teacher and ask them the following questions:
- Can they identify any central practices in RE that would help Alex deliver a good RE lesson?
- What do they think might have worked particularly well in this lesson?
- Can they see any pitfalls or issues that may have arisen in this lesson?

Supporting beginning RE teachers to reflect on delivery and evaluation of lessons

The journey

It may help beginning teachers to use metaphor to help them visualise the delivery and evaluation process. Many teachers will recognise the allegory of teaching being like a journey that involves - to some extent - preparation, action and fulfilment. The preparation is helped by having a destination in mind. The action may end up at that destination by a straight or winding path. The fulfilment may come when you have got your feet up reflecting on the photographs! The journey is only productive if we assess our progress as we go along. It is no use moving towards the destination if half your fellow travellers have gone off in a different direction. Delivering and evaluating a lesson involves regular checks that the intended route is clear, the destination is still in sight and that your fellow travellers remain with you. Haydn (2016) reminds us that research suggests teachers need to be clear with pupils on the objectives for the lesson. A magical mystery tour may sometimes be exciting, but generally, a journey requires a clear destination! So, encourage the beginning teacher to share the learning objectives with pupils. The teacher can then measure whether pupils have moved towards it at the end of the lesson.

Identifying the objectives

The route and the destination the lesson will take, often referred to as aims and objectives for the lesson, necessitate measuring a pupil's prior learning. Research tells us that prior knowledge plays an important role in pupils' learning and suggests teachers learn how to break complex material into smaller steps. This involves 'discussing and analysing with [the mentor] how to sequence lessons so that pupils secure foundational knowledge before encountering more complex content' (DfE 2019 pg.11). In the learning 'journey', beginning teachers need to know their pupils' starting point. Some pupils may be closer to the destination (the desired outcome for the lesson) before the teaching starts. Below are some practical examples you could share with beginning teachers to help them deliver a lesson to reach the destination in RE lessons:

➢ Ask pupils, "How much do you know about karma?" Provide closed answers and ask pupils to show you on their hands:
   1. I have never heard of this word
   2. I have heard of this word but do not know a definition
   3. I can give a definition for this word
   4. I can explain how this word is linked to reincarnation

➢ Design a quiz, use a digital format or old-fashioned pen and paper! Ask pupils
   1. "How do you think you spell karma?"
   2. "What do you think it means?"
   3. "Which religion(s) do you think it is associated with?"
   4. "How do you think karma affects a believer's life?"

➢ Give pupils a statement to respond to using red, amber, green (RAG) cards or thumbs up/down - the important thing is that they show you, and you can quickly assess their prior knowledge:
   1. "I know what karma means and how it is linked to the concept of reincarnation."
   2. "I understand how the concept of karma may affect the life of a believer."
   3. "I can give my personal views on the concept of Karma."

Measuring pupil progress during the lesson delivery

Once the lesson is underway, progress checks are needed to ensure pupils are moving towards fulfilling the objective. Remind your beginning teacher that the teaching and learning may take a straight or winding path, but they are looking for some movement towards the destination! Research (Sweller, 2011) indicates that working memory can be overloaded and beginning teachers need to understand the implications of this for their practice. To avoid this, teachers need to avoid overloading working memory by 'discussing and analysing [with mentors] how to reduce distractions that take attention away from

what is being taught (e.g. keeping the complexity of the task to a minimum, so that attention is focused on the content)'(DfE 2019, p.11). Strategies to avoid memory overload may include chunking information, not presenting too much information at once and giving pupils regular opportunities to practise skills. Task 12.5 allows you to reflect on how you might approach these conversations with a beginning teacher.

Task 12.5   Measuring pupil progress

Read and reflect on the following case study of how this teacher measures pupil progress when delivering their lesson

Case Study

Nicky was teaching a Year 7 group on about the Five Pillars of Islam. She had used some 'hands up' and targeted teacher questioning and ascertained that pupils had mixed prior knowledge of these. Nicky presents the 'big question' for the lesson – What are the Five Pillars of Islam? Some knew the names, and others knew definitions. Some knew nothing. She used a card sort activity to ask pupils in pairs to match up the names and definitions of the Five Pillars. Following this, Nicky paused the class and asked for feedback, checking all pupils had them matched correctly. She decided to give pupils a choice of activities: draw and label a diagram on which pupils had to add the names and definitions of the Five Pillars, or explain why Shahadah is the first Pillar of Islam, or evaluate which might be the most demanding Pillar to follow, and why. She uses mini-whiteboards to ask pupils to respond to the 'big question', and after one minute, pupils show their progress.

- Reflect on this teaching episode with your beginning teacher and think about how pupil progress was measured. Can they identify good practice?
- Can your beginning teacher suggest other ways Nicky could have checked that all pupils had made progress?
- What does this quote about diagnostic assessment from the Education Endowment Foundation (2019) tell us about the purpose of monitoring pupil progress?

"A helpful distinction can be made between using assessment to monitor a pupil's progress and using it to diagnose a pupil's specific capabilities and difficulties. Monitoring can be used to identify pupils who are struggling or whose progress can be accelerated, and diagnostic assessments can suggest the type of support they need from the teacher to continue to progress. When an assessment suggests that a child is struggling, effective diagnosis of the exact nature of their difficulty should be the first step and should inform early and targeted intervention".

Measuring progress at the end of a lesson

It is important to involve pupils in measuring their progress. Haydn suggests asking pupils the extent to which they have fulfilled the learning outcome, marking each other's work, or drawing up a mark scheme and success criteria. He asserts that "You cannot do the learning

for the pupils; they have to do it themselves, and your job is to show them how to do this" (Haydn, 2016 p.462). This is reflected in a recent policy report which states that beginning teachers should be 'Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues how to ensure feedback is specific and helpful when using peer- or self-assessment' (DfE, 2019 p.24).

Supporting beginning RE teachers to evaluate their lessons

Avoiding negative talk (or misplaced positives) in post-lesson analysis

It is good practice to discuss the lesson with the beginning teacher as soon as possible after they have taught it; we all know the feeling of waiting with intrepid anticipation for feedback. Also a discussion soon after the observation can ensure that the events of the lesson are easily recalled and targets can be set before the next lesson is planned. However, giving *time* for reflection will also bring fresh insight to the beginning teacher and the mentor. This wait can also help to clarify strengths and areas for development and identify the effective features of the lesson.

Three main aspects of focus in post-lesson reflection are firstly to consider if the lesson has been effective, secondly to identify implications for future practice, and finally to record the learners' educational progress. Holmes (2003) suggests using a checklist after a lesson to help beginning teachers consider the effectiveness of the lesson. There are many examples of similar checklists in literature (see, for example, Kyriacou 2009). However, the one below is specific to RE teachers.

Subject knowledge	✓	✗
Did I use keywords? Did I refer to specific beliefs, teachings and practices? Did I use key sources of wisdom and authority? Did I refer to forms of expression and ways of life?		
Imparting knowledge		
Did I share the lesson objectives? Did I check prior learning? Did I include regular assessment points? Did I use a range of questioning techniques Did I model and scaffold new learning? Did I review the learning objectives at the end of the lesson?		
Classroom interactions		
Did I maintain high expectations? Did I regularly interact with all pupils? Did I provide an appropriate level of challenge? Did I recognise the effort pupils make?		
Managing the classroom		
Did I follow the school behaviour policy? Did I manage the pupil's behaviour appropriately? Did I make effective use of the classroom space and prepared resources?		

Did I ensure pupils were on task and actively engaging in learning?	
Adapting Practice	
Did I adapt practice where necessary?	
Did I recognise individual pupils' needs?	
Teacher identity	
Did I recognise any bias I might bring to this subject matter?	
Being professional	
Did I act as a positive role model to pupils? Did I treat pupils with respect? Did I communicate effectively with pupils and other adults in the room? Did I set myself targets for further improvement?	

Table 12.2
Adapted from Holmes (2003)

A checklist like this could help a beginning teacher analyse how their lesson went in an objective way. Some beginning teachers will be predisposed to recognise the lesson's aspects that did not go according to plan or that learning was missed. Others may be more inclined to declare that a lesson went well as it fulfilled the lesson plan, even if effective learning did not occur. So, to avoid unnecessary negative or over positive talk, a checklist will help ensure a lesson's successful implementation serves intended learning outcomes (Kyriacou, 2009).

The post-lesson discussion

At the start of the journey, many beginning teachers are concerned about their own role within the lesson instead of the pupils learning. It is important for mentors to guide beginning teachers, both trainee and early career teachers, from a place of concern over their role in the classroom to a pupil-focused position. A beginning teacher needs to be able to evaluate their own lessons in order to make progress from self-focused to student-focused, and reflection is an important part of this process. Your role as a mentor will be to support the beginning teacher in evaluating their progress and becoming a reflective practitioner, so Task 12.6 suggests questions you can use to prompt post-lesson discussion.

Task 12.6   Post-lesson discussion

Discuss these questions regularly with your beginning teacher and establish them as good self-reflection habits:
- How do you know a pupil has learned? What can you use as evidence?
- What do pupils know at the end of the lesson that they did not know at the beginning, and how was this evidenced?
- What were the common misconceptions, and how could you plan for these?
- What methods of assessment did you use to assess progress, and were they effective?
- If you had to teach the same lesson to the same group again, would you do it differently?

> What other questions do you think could help your beginning teacher to reflect on their lesson?

Further ideas to support the evaluation of lessons

Different strategies can be useful at different times and in different situations. You may want to consider some of the following strategies to help beginning teachers evaluate their lessons and demonstrate their progress over time. For example, setting targets might be used throughout the mentoring process, whereas RAG rating might be particularly useful in the early stages of supporting your beginning teacher.

What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) Journal

Give beginning teachers WWW and EBI on all lessons and learning episodes. Ask them to do the same.

Use these to support beginning teachers in reflecting on their lessons and progress.

RAG rating lessons

Red Amber Green (RAG) rating lessons in a teacher's planner can help beginning teachers to self-reflect on the success of their lessons, identifying where the need additional planning or support.

Setting targets

Encourage beginning teachers to set sharp, not blunt targets for their future practice.

Think about the following examples. These are blunt targets because they are written in very general terms:
Set high expectations for my class
Plan homework activities for my classes
Stretch and challenge my pupils

To make these sharp targets, they need to be specific, achievable and measurable, e.g.:

Plan a homework activity for 7X next lesson which is focused on helping pupils to understand why Muhammad (pbuh) fled to Madinah

Stress importance of plenary sessions and end of unit assessments

Be clear with beginning teachers about the importance of plenary sessions at the end of every lesson or learning stage as an opportunity for reflection and evaluation.

Use of assessment and data to support evaluation of lessons

Although a welcome addition to the subject for some, assessment has been a controversial issue in RE (Blaylock, 2000). However, as identified in many government policy documents, assessment is critical to effective teaching (DfE, 2019). Monitoring and assessment produces data that can be used to support planning, teaching and evaluation. School systems can provide teachers with data in terms, for example, of reading age, SEND, or Pupil Premium status. It is important to introduce beginning teachers to this data as soon as possible. This provides beginning teachers with information that can help them decide upon their seating plans and lesson planning and help them measure progress. Task 12.7 offers a structure for the way that you might approach this with your beginning teacher.

Task 12.7   Collating and using data to support teaching

- Discuss with your beginning teacher the data that is available to teachers within your school and make sure they know how to access this.
- Talk them through each data set, explaining how it might be used to support effective planning and evaluation of lessons.
- Co-plan a lesson where you use the data to inform the choices made (in the selection of resources, the structuring of tasks and the adaptions made for individual pupils)
- After the beginning teacher has taught the lesson ask them to produce a written evaluation where they link lesson outcomes to the data that was originally used.
- Encourage them to think about the following questions when evaluating their lesson:
    - How did the data impact on the planning of the lesson?
    - Is there anything that you did because of the data that went particularly well?
    - Is there anything you would like to know that the data couldn't tell you?
    - Have you generated any data in the lesson that helps you understand whether or not individual pupils have made progress?

Summary and Key Points

This chapter has explored how you can support a beginning RE teacher in the delivery and evaluation of their lessons as they learn to manage teaching and learning, and reflect on their experiences. In particular, the following points have been highlighted:

- The importance of the prior experiences your beginning teacher has had delivering lessons and how this will direct your support for them
- The identification of central practices that have allowed experienced teachers to thrive and an understanding of how these can be applied to mentoring your beginning teacher
- The opportunity to engage with case studies and practical strategies, which will aid you and your mentee measure the pupils' progress when delivering a lesson and evaluating its success.
- Understanding the importance of using data and assessment to help your mentee plan, teach and evaluate their lessons.

Further resources

Bowman, Tim. (2017) 88 Ideas to Teach More Effectively, Oxon: Routledge.

This is a little book with lots of helpful, practical and accessible ideas.

Quigley, Alex. (2016) The Confident Teacher: Developing successful habits of mind, body and pedagogy, Oxon: Routledge.

This book is useful in providing both practical and research-focused guidance in developing pedagogy and the effective characteristics needed in the classroom.

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