

## What is coaching?

Coaching is usually seen in ITE as an aspect of mentoring that is specifically focused on helping a trainee to develop specific professional skills and competences. It is particularly helpful in the latter stages of training because it encourages trainee teachers to be analytical about their teaching and to continue this analysis after the coaching ends. It often supports experimentation with new classroom strategies and seeks to create a climate in which trainees are willing to take risks as they strive to improve their practice.

**Coaching** is usually a three part process;

1. The analysis of current teaching to identify the area to be developed and to plan how it can be improved.
2. A taught lesson, observed by the mentor-coach. The coach records what occurs in the lesson, and may take video for later analysis. (subject to the school policy for video recording in classrooms).
3. A post-lesson analytical and reflective discussion which leads to further cycle of planning and development.

An important element of coaching is the professional dialogue between coach and trainee. It can be useful to identify and unpack what were the 'critical incidents' in the lesson. These are not necessarily negative. It might be how a question was asked, or the form of an introduction. This is where video can help because it is an objective witness to the incident, uncluttered by varied memories or perceptions. Download the trainee support sheet [Videoing a lesson](#) from the University of Nottingham.

Relevant episodes of the lesson can be replayed to assist the coach and trainee to discuss and understand what happened. This can take the analysis in unexpected directions and fuel better understanding.

## Reading for ITE trainers/mentors

- Rawding, C. and Tapsfield, A 'Mentoring' in Jones, M. (ed) (2017) *The Handbook of Secondary Geography*. Sheffield: Geographical Association
- Lofthouse, R. and Leat, D. 'Coaching for geography teachers' *Teaching Geography*, Autumn 2006. It must be borne in mind that this article was not written about trainee teachers, but the principles of coaching and unpacking critical incidents are very relevant in the ITE context.