



Teacher Educator Story 9



Read through this story and see what teacher educator dilemma(s) you can spot.

This academic year, as the school-based teacher educator (SBTE), I had to supervise the training of three school-led student-teachers in my school. Two of them made excellent and rapid progress and one, Simon, whilst making progress, was slower in his grasp and competency of the Teacher Standards.

The teacher mentor was becoming frustrated that whilst Simon was receptive to feedback the impact was marginal and some targets were ongoing.

The first term we kept the timetable to 8 hours with the first four weeks of term being dominated with observation and team teaching before moving into collaborative planning, and finally, the student-teacher taking the lead for all 8 hours by the Christmas break. As SBTE I needed to remind the teacher mentor that this was normal...a guy off the street with no experience of teaching being able to plan and deliver 8 hours a week and generally achieve the learning outcomes for most students was progress. No, he wasn't differentiating effectively or embedding formative assessment but these were much more advanced training priorities to be addressed in the second term. I jointly observed one of Simon's lessons and as a non-specialist put a focus on pedagogy and planning. In our debrief the teacher mentor highlighted where stretch could have been added or tasks done differently, and whilst I acknowledged this was important I kept drawing the conversation back to 'Did the students make progress as a result of Simon's planning, teaching, resourcing and questioning?' She answered 'Yes' and so at the end of the first assessment point we agreed the student-teacher was making steady progress with clear areas for development. A grade 3 was awarded but with measurable targets of what to do to achieve a 2 by the next assessment.

The student-teacher went to the second school and again I suggested that we both visit Simon to see how he was progressing in a new context. The teacher mentor really enjoyed this experience and found it interesting to see how another school was delivering Spanish to 11-14 year olds. There was a distinct contrast in the pedagogical style and so without this direct comparison the teacher mentor stated that Simon had clearly moved forward in his practice. There was no longer the 'I would have done' aspect to feedback. A grade 2 was given at the end of the second assessment point.

On return to the home school Simon was still encountering issues with differentiation and assessment of learning, which had been targets for over a term. The teacher mentor approached me saying they didn't know what else to say so together we created a list of 3 strategies that we wanted to see embedded in Simon's lessons, every week, across classes. By scaling back and focussing explicitly on these standards we hoped Simon would feel he could address these concerns. All observations leading up to the final visit by the university tutor saw these targets being met. In preparation for the final assessment the teacher mentor and I met to moderate the final grade. The teacher mentor was still unsure if Simon had completely secured a 2 grade and so we sat with a highlighter and a profile provided by the university of what an outstanding student-teacher looks like. We discussed each statement in relation to Simon and highlighted where he was consistently meeting this statement. At the end of our discussion about 70% of the profile was highlighted. I asked the teacher mentor what this meant, to which she replied 'Well he's definitely good'. The areas that remained un-highlighted naturally formed targets for the NQT year and we could confidently grade the student-teacher a 2 overall with aspects of outstanding. These targets were focussed on curriculum knowledge, use of data and the wider professional role.



It was helpful when you....

Positive feedback

- Read the story and discuss how you think the SBTE feels, and what concerns you think he/she has, at each stage of the story. What positive feedback would you give him/her?
- How do you think the mentor feels, and what concerns do you think she has at each stage? What positive feedback can you give her?
- What positive feedback could you give to a student-teacher or colleague? How might your feedback support their development and help them to be more receptive to on-going feedback?



Meaningful assessment

- Consider the strategies that the SBTE and mentor used to assess Simon's progress. How did these strategies support consistency and quality of mentor assessment at the end of the first term and the third term.
- What strategies do you use to support the quality of assessments that you are involved with? Share your ideas together.
- What can you take away from this that will develop your assessment practice?



Reflecting together

- Consider what you have learnt from this story and from the activities you have participated in.
- Share this with the group.