

Masterclass Mentoring

Definition

The word 'mentor' comes from the friend whom Odysseus put in charge of his household when he left for Troy. He was the adviser of young Telemachus, a wise and trusted adviser or guide.

Description

Mentoring can be used to enrich applied/vocational GCSE and other study programmes by enabling small groups of pupils, or full classes of students, to meet on a regular basis with an adult who has specific expertise and experience with particular aspects of their study programme.

Our Place 2020 will see **Masterclass Mentors** sharing their knowledge, experience and expertise to pupils as they tackle an innovative challenge designed to develop their understanding of the issues around the development of sustainable communities whilst assisting them in meeting some of their coursework targets.

Benefits

Benefits for employers

- **Masterclass Mentors** can make a very positive impact on the knowledge, learning, aspirations, confidence, careers awareness and skills development of pupils.
- Employees, and their companies, have a unique opportunity to participate in a very rewarding and fulfilling activity.
- Employers and their employees have the opportunity to gain an in-depth insight into the learning framework of pupils in the 21st Century.
- Employers can use **Masterclass Mentoring** as a part of continued professional development for their employees.
- The skills and knowledge employees gain by becoming **Masterclass Mentors** can be transferred to the workplace and used to develop a range of training and development opportunities for the whole workforce.

Benefits for teachers

- Teachers have the opportunity to meet and establish working relationships with key employers.
- Teachers develop networks of useful connections in the industry.
- They keep up-to-date with crucial aspects of their course delivery i.e. the way 'real' businesses operate and how this might impact on their pupils when they progress in education and training.
- Teachers create a bank of contacts that might also be willing to offer other enriching experiences such as visits out and speaking to their pupils on specific course contexts.

- They can keep **Masterclass Mentors** informed about other school events such as awards evenings, etc, that may include the pupils involved in the **Our Place 2020** programme.
- Teachers can work with **Masterclass Mentors** to secure professional development placements for themselves in the industry – gaining an in-depth understanding of business, which they can then take back into the classroom.

Benefits for pupils

- Pupils see the relevance of what they are being taught to the ‘real’ world.
- They gain an unrivalled experience of working on a project closely linked to not only their coursework, but also to the sector they are considering for a potential career.
- They can ask questions of **Masterclass Mentors** who are ‘doing the job’ about aspects of their course.
- Pupils become motivated to raise their aspirations and standards and to achieve – as their **Masterclass Mentor** has already done.
- They develop social and communication skills with adults.
- Pupils develop their key employability skills including task and time management, independent learning and teamwork.
- Pupils feel valued and rewarded.

Dispelling the Myths

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) provides a realistic overview of ‘mainstream’ mentoring, including potential problems and disadvantages.

Education Business Link Organisations have run Mentoring Programmes for many years, most often seeing Year 10 pupils – Mentees – being matched with Business Mentors, with the matching closely linking pupils with Business Mentors recruited to reflect pupils’ potential future career or education paths.

For example a young person considering a career in the armed forces is matched with a mentor from the army, navy or air force. This type of Mentoring Programme can run throughout the pupils’ last two years of study (Years 10 and 11) with Mentors committing to a minimum of one session with their Mentee each month.

In designing **Our Place 2020** and developing the concept of **Masterclass Mentors**, one of the delivery partners – Education Business Connections Limited (EBC) drew on both its experience of matching scores of mentors with mentees through its Mentoring Programme and on the overview provided by the LSDA. By doing so, we are confident that both recruited **Masterclass Mentors** and the pupils they work with will have an enjoyable and mutually beneficial experience during their involvement in **Our Place 2020**.

The table which follows looks at some of the potential ‘trouble spots’ identified by the LSDA and outlines how the **Masterclass Mentors** component of **Our Place 2020** to be overseen by EBC avoids them.

Mentoring - Potential challenges identified by Learning and Skills Development Agency

Potential Challenge	How EBC's Masterclass Mentoring dispels the potential disadvantage
Pupils need to be matched to mentors with care. It can be time consuming and frustrating finding the appropriate employers.	Recruitment is the role of the delivery partners. Schools taking part in Our Place 2020 have expressed an interest in its central theme – sustainable communities – and the education business links organisations working on the programme will concentrate on recruiting Masterclass Mentors who can bring 'added value' to the work of teachers and their pupils.
The use of regular meetings can disrupt the course content or can be used to enrich.	Masterclass Mentors are specifically being recruited to support pupils and their teachers as they prepare for the Our Place 2020 competition element which has been designed to support pupils' learning – serving to increase their knowledge and stimulate their enthusiasm and commitment.
Employers require thorough preparation in training and ongoing support.	Full briefings will take place before Masterclass Mentors are matched with schools, with the matching recognising Masterclass Mentors' specific professional experience. They are already equipped with the knowledge they need to support pupils' learning. Regular e-communication, etc, will ensure Masterclass Mentors and teachers have ongoing support from 'delivery partners' staff.
Communication between mentors and pupils/school can be difficult.	Teachers and Masterclass Mentors will be encouraged to use e-communication as much as possible to maintain regular links, with all communication also sent through the specially designed e-communications system. This means any 'drop offs' in communication flows can be spotted early, and advice and support offered as required. Supporting teachers participation in industrial visits in their Masterclass Mentors' workplaces will strengthen relationships and communication.
Police checks can be lengthy and costly. Mentors need advice and guidance on child protection issues.	Masterclass Mentors will not be expected to work one-to-one with pupils, and teachers will be asked to be present whenever Masterclass Mentors work with pupils (learning alongside their pupils). Delivery partners will also issue child protection guidelines to all business supporters recruited before they begin working with pupils.
Employers will not be able to make every mentoring session.	The range of options for providing support for schools (e-mentoring, telephone mentoring, provision of resources, supporting teachers to access industrial visit opportunities, etc) mean Masterclass Mentors do not have to visit schools every week. They are at the end of a phone line or mouse button.
A structure and focus for each mentoring session is appreciated by mentors.	Masterclass Mentors are being requested to provide support, advice, guidance and to signpost pupils and teachers through a range of mechanisms. If they are invited into school, teachers will be expected to brief them beforehand and delivery partners are on hand to provide a wide range of resources, advice and guidance.
The scheme may be time consuming. A one hour meeting has to take into account travelling time.	The use of e-communication etc, along with the complementary large scale events to which Masterclass Mentors are being invited to should minimise the additional face-to-face contact required from Masterclass Mentors . Their attendance at schools will be carefully negotiated with schools.
Pupils may have agendas beyond the constraints of the mentoring programme.	The role of Masterclass Mentors is to support pupils to complete their entry into the competition being run as part of Our Place 2020 – the 'agenda' clearly defined and controlled.
The advantages of participation are not immediately obvious.	The chance to take part in the Our Place 2020 clearly offers something for all involved – and is an unrivalled opportunity to work together for the benefit of everyone.

Set up management tips

Senior staff (both in schools and in businesses) need to be supportive and informed of the **Masterclass Mentoring** scheme, its purpose and intended outcomes.

In schools, senior staff need to show an interest in the **Masterclass Mentors**, value the support they are offering pupils taking part in **Our Place 2020** and welcome them into the school. Senior staff may be needed to support the provision of hospitalities for **Masterclass Mentors** whilst in school – for example by signing a school dinner request form!

If face-to-face involvement is required to supplement e-communication and telephone calls, meetings can take place both in school and at the **Masterclass Mentor's** workplace.

Preparation

Before

- Both teachers and **Masterclass Mentors** should obtain support from their senior management.
- Teachers should not provide **Masterclass Mentors** with personal information of pupils.
- Pupils should be clearly briefed on any e-communication methods to be used – perhaps with them compiling their emails, letters, etc to the **Masterclass Mentor** but the communication being 'sent' by the teacher. Every school is different and teachers should explore existing school systems as a media for communication first – advising **Masterclass Mentors** appropriately.
- Teachers should prepare pupils for any visits by their **Masterclass Mentor**.
- Schools should plan for hospitalities – coffee, tea, lunch, etc.
- Classrooms should be arranged appropriately for the activity.
- School reception staff should be prepared to greet **Masterclass Mentors** on arrival.
- Teachers should prepare contingency lesson plans in case **Masterclass Mentors** have to cancel at short notice.

During

- Teachers **must always be present** to support the discussions.
- Teachers should observe how the **Masterclass Mentors** and pupils are getting on - body language, etc and provide constructive feedback to the **Masterclass Mentors**.
- Teachers are expected to join in the activity and take an interest in conversations.
- A clear indication of the completion of the session should be given by teachers - don't let the bell go and pupils vanish from the room.
- **Masterclass Mentors** should be thanked and teachers should stress how valued their support is.
- Schools should provide hospitalities for **Masterclass Mentors** i.e. tea, coffee, and a chance to discuss the partnership and the next steps.

After

- Teachers (or pupils) should write to **Masterclass Mentors** thanking them for their support, confirming the next session/step in the programme and what help is needed.
- Teachers should provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their experiences and plan for the next meeting, request for help, information, etc.

- Pupils may wish to keep in touch with **Masterclass Mentors** and letter writing skills can be polished - use mentors work addresses and school mail system for communication between the two – as set out in individual school protocols and procedures.
- Teachers should support the **Masterclass Mentors** in gathering evidence for their portfolios i.e. by taking photographs of activities, providing witness statements, etc

Teachers – Things to Consider

- Hospitality for **Masterclass Mentors** and arrangement of rooms.
- Can you get support through e-communication or by picking up the phone?
- Plan and prepare for unexpected surprises - for example what if the **Masterclass Mentor** and pupils do not get on!
- Prepare and brief your pupils.
- Work with the **Masterclass Mentor** to plan each individual session and to identify how they can help.
- Take ownership of ongoing co-ordination and confirmation of arrangements with **Masterclass Mentors**.
- Monitor the progress of the programme and feedback from pupils.
- Consider involvement of **Masterclass Mentors** in wider aspects of the school - awards evenings, etc, but recognise that they are very busy people.
- Consider what would you like to get out of an industrial visit with your **Masterclass Mentor**. Time will be precious – work with them to maximise you and your pupils' time away from the classroom.
- Consider how pupils benefit from a workplace visit and could the **Masterclass Mentor** host it?

Resources

Financial

- Telephone calls, postage and hospitalities need to be considered.
- Time – try and make sure the pupils are leading on the constructive use of the **Masterclass Mentors'** expertise. It is their challenge.

Health and Safety

Masterclass Mentors should **not be left alone or unsupervised** with pupils at any time.

If pupils visit their **Masterclass Mentor's** workplace a risk assessment will need to be carried out and parents kept informed. Your locally-based delivery partner can support schools in this process if required. Check with your school health and safety rep for any Health and Safety issues.

Local delivery partners will brief **Masterclass Mentors** about child protection issues in relation to their Child Protection Policy. Teachers should also provide any additional advice suggested by their school's nominated child protection officer. Similarly, any relevant health and safety guidelines that may involve them should be given to them.

Curriculum Context

Masterclass Mentors will benefit from an overview of how teachers see their involvement supporting pupils to complete both coursework and preparing for any exams they may be sitting (eg extracts of study programmes, criteria, etc). They can motivate, encourage, enthuse and support pupils in their attitude towards school in general as well as specifically to their coursework and can also potentially provide a resource of speakers and support visits to their workplace that can greatly enrich the knowledge and content of pupils' work.