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Module 6 – Co-design learning through Mentoring, Critical Friends and Shadowing

Unit 6.2 – Fitting Context, Purpose and Skills

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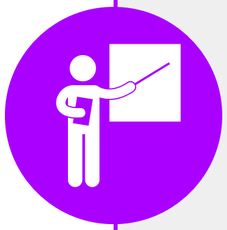
4 Skills Developed Through the Methodology

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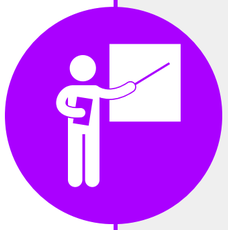
The Context and Purpose

Purpose



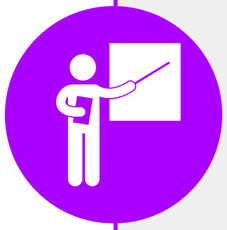
- Ideal for complex educational challenges, curriculum reform, and integrating new pedagogies such as blended learning or project-based learning.

Context in the classroom



- Improve an existing lesson or learning scenario through peer feedback
- Learn a new practice through observation and reflection

Contexts Where It Works Best for teachers



- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- New teacher induction programs
- Cross-departmental collaboration initiatives

Goal Alignment



- Best suited when the goal is not just individual development, but the co-creation of a tangible, high-quality learning product (lesson plan, curriculum unit, assessment).

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Competencies Needed to Implement the Methodology

Competency	Mentoring	Critical Friends	Shadowing
Active Listening	Essential for understanding mentee's needs and context.	Crucial for truly hearing the work being presented before offering critique.	Important for non-intrusive, deep observation of practice.
Constructive Feedback	Providing supportive guidance and developmental suggestions.	Delivering rigorous, evidence-based critique focused on the work, not the person.	Offering objective observations and data points from the field.
Reflective Practice	Guiding the mentee through self-assessment and goal setting.	Engaging in deep self-reflection on one's own assumptions and biases.	Analyzing observed practice against one's own theoretical knowledge.
Facilitation Skills	Managing the relationship and setting clear expectations.	Structuring the critique process to ensure psychological safety and productivity.	Maintaining a low profile and documenting observations systematically.

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Contextual conditions

1. Protected time for professional dialogue
2. Clear roles (mentor, mentee, observer, critical friend)
3. A school culture focused on learning rather than judgement

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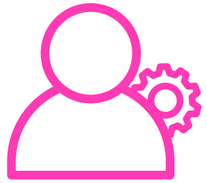
Skills Developed Through the Methodology

01 -



- Reflective and metacognitive teaching practice

02 -



- Higher-quality lesson and learning design

03 -



- Professional dialogue and collaborative problem-solving

04 -



- Practice-based learning through observation (shadowing)

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Skills Developed Through the Methodology

Co-Design & Collaboration

Professionals learn to move from individual planning to shared, collective creation of learning materials.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Deepened understanding of how to teach specific content, validated through critical feedback and real-world observation.

Systemic Thinking

Ability to see the lesson/curriculum not in isolation, but as part of a larger educational ecosystem.

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Skills Developed Through the Methodology

Empathy

Increased understanding of colleagues' challenges and contexts through shadowing and shared design experiences.

Leadership & Agency

Development of peer-to-peer leadership skills and a stronger sense of professional agency over curriculum.

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References

MENTOR Toolkit; OPM Mentoring Workbook; Frontiers in Education; Critical Friends Approach (EU); Emerald Insight; SAGE Journals.

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