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Stoke and Staffordshire Teacher Education Collective

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Professional Learning Conversations

The essential work of teacher educators: developing adaptive expertise.

This is a section from the SSTEC website and can be found at: <https://sstec.online/teacher-educator-essentials/>

Adaptive expertise is recognised as being principled. We develop our expertise by relating observed practices to principles generated from the evidence-based for teaching. Informed professional dialogues are one essential way that such connections can be made. By providing easy access to principles and examples from the evidence-bases we believe that this will help TEs to make explicit, why we make the choices that we do in teaching. In this way teacher educators support beginning teachers (BTs) who have an exploratory, evaluative and elaborative professional nature.

Exploratory. This is characterised by:

- Seeking clarity, through 'unpacking' the thinking that lies behind what has been observed. This should be done in relation to one of the five areas. It is important to give a strong focus to the exploration, otherwise the conversation could become overwhelming, if too many concepts are covered, or too generic, if it is just a description of what has happened.
- Accessing relevant information in relation to a shared professional purpose, in other words, we use the concept to build coherence and avoid the fragmentation or atomisation of professional knowledge.

Evaluative. This is characterised by:

- Focusing on valuing the impact of our actions, both on pupils and on professional learning. Evaluation is carried out in relation to what we value in the profession, and the educational purpose of why we value what we value is made explicit. This enables appropriate support and challenge in relation to the development of professional learning.



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Evaluative (cont.)

- Valuing deep conceptual knowledge. Evaluation is predicated on using evidence critically so as to enable a systematic professional knowledge development. We can challenge assumptions and misconceptions.
- An atmosphere or trust built through a sense of shared purpose – the improvement of professional knowledge and understanding so that education is transformational for our pupils.

Elaborative. This is characterised by:

- Drawing on evidence beyond the context, so that learning can be professionally enabling rather than an approach being restricted to a particular context.
- Being explicit about the five core areas. These are referenced regularly so that professional knowledge is deliberately and intentionally related to these. This will help you to be discerning and selective in noticing and responding to what matters.
- Valuing coherence in professional learning. This helps both you and your beginning teacher to contribute to professional knowledge conversations beyond your context.

What might adaptive expertise look like in teacher education?

It could involve

- Joint lesson planning, with a focus on one of the five areas, to make explicit how professional understanding informs our pedagogic choices
- Discussing the school curriculum with the BT and explaining how the curriculum has been designed to support learners in your school setting.
- Model how you develop your own subject knowledge and awareness of key curriculum concepts to the BT so they understand the importance of this throughout their teaching career.
- Sharing and modelling assessment practices within the class, key stage and school as a whole
- Sharing useful resources and documents around assessment practices Joint planning (modelling how building in assessment opportunities should be part of the planning process)