

The Mentoring for Achievement Programme

These questions were asked by teachers between 2010 and 2014 when the programme was being presented to school staffs.

Questions:

1. What work do we, the teachers, do with the pupils?
2. What do we concentrate on?
3. Does the teacher have to communicate with the pupils in the motivational interviewing way?
4. Does the programme apply to all subjects in terms of the skills involved?
5. Is MAP a behaviour modification programme?
6. Is it academic or behavioural?
7. Does MAP not overlap with other programmes in the school, e.g. behaviour support?
8. How long does it take to complete the Weekly Report Form?
9. When does the WRF have to be completed?
10. If the child completes the work but the standard is too low for them (not working to their ability) do you put YES or NO for 'Class work...'? (i.e. where do you record the low engagement?)
11. Is it a roll-over programme, finish one 2-yr cycle before starting a second round?
12. What about the child who isn't interested in anything at all other than football?
13. How would individual + group operate in the week, and what is the benefit of one over the other?

Answers:

1. What work do we, the teachers, do with the pupils?

All the teacher needs to do is meet *the mentor* at the end of or the beginning of the week to give feedback on the student's functioning in class using the WRF. There is nothing else involved. Sometimes students tell their teacher their goal for the week but the teacher doesn't need to do anything with this other than be aware of it.

2. What do we concentrate on?

The teacher just has to be able to remember how that particular student who is in MAP has been doing that week so as to be able to give the Weekly Report Form information to the mentor.

3. Does the teacher have to communicate with the pupils in the motivational interviewing way?

No, the teacher doesn't have to change anything about how they work. The mentors have been specifically trained in the motivational interviewing approach.

4. Does the programme apply to all subjects in terms of the skills involved?

Yes – academic + social skills. MAP focuses on skills that help a pupil's school functioning so focuses on thinking, listening, concentrating, remembering to bring materials to class, following instructions, volunteering information, actively listening, looking at the book, etc so whether it be maths or English or PE or art the pupil can work on these skills. It means that where a pupil applies himself better to one subject than another he will be able to identify the skills he has and chooses to use in some areas and not in others.

5. Is MAP a behaviour modification programme?

Yes it is, but with MAP the behaviour modification is based on intrinsic motivation, autonomy and choice, more than extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is used to start the process that allows intrinsic motivation to develop. Extrinsic motivation is involved with the points given, the graphs, in the Weekly Report Form particularly 'Details about YES', as well as the positive mentor relationship. The student's intrinsic motivation develops through the experience of achievement meeting his goal on the one hand and, on the other, through reference to the 'dream'. Students modify their behaviours to gain more points, and to improve their skill levels in relation to their own personal 'dream'.

6. Is it academic or behavioural?

MAP is based on Social Learning Theory and works with the development of academic skills through changing behaviours that are seen to not serve the child, or help the child in his school functioning. In this way it could be said to be academic and behavioural but the focus is to help the child function better in school, and achieve better according to their potential. The sorts of behaviours targeted are: looking round the room, leaving books in bag, doing work too fast in order to catch up etc as well as disorderly behaviours. It also identifies behaviours, named as skills, the child has that are helpful in regard to school functioning.

7. Does MAP not overlap with other programmes in the school, e.g. behaviour support?

There can be an overlap between the work MAP covers and what behaviour support does. MAP does not focus on disorderly behaviour issues as the main focus but on broader school functioning behaviours taking in all relevant areas according to the WRF, that is attendance, punctuality, materials for class etc. Behaviours are named in clear and detailed terms so as to help children identify what it is they could begin to target in order to change a 'NO' to a 'YES' on the Weekly Report Form, to get more points, breaking down the steps the pupil would need to take to manage to change. The programme can be used as effectively for a pupil who is not functioning to her full potential due to poor concentration skills or shyness/withdrawn-ness as someone who is disruptive.

The issue of children being involved in various programmes is an important issue. Children can be 'over helped', which can be problematic for a variety of reasons including the effect of taking them out of their peer group so this of course would need to be taken into account.

8. How long does it take to complete the Weekly Report Form?

The WRF can be filled in in 2 or 3 mins.

9. When does the WRF have to be completed?

Ideally at the end or beginning of the week so that the work of the week can be reviewed, and before the mentor meets the student. The mentor will meet the teacher at an agreed time and will fill in the WRF with the information given by the class teacher/subject teacher. *Without the WRF the mentor has nothing to work with with the student.* Some people do it on other days in the week and review back to the same day of the previous week.

10. If the child completes the work but the standard is too low for them (not working to their ability) do you put YES or NO for 'Class work...'? (i.e. where do you record the low engagement?)

If the student is completing the class work that is set 'YES' would be circled. However, if the standard of the work is not high enough the student would be given a 'NO' for 'Satisfactory Behaviour'. This would be broken down in 'Details about the NOs' in behavioural terms. The teacher could specify the details of this behaviour as, for example, 'attention on other things during class'/'looking round the room'/'completing work too fast'/'writing carelessly' etc to

name the behaviours that lead to the low standard of work. This can then be worked with by the mentor in the context of habits vs skills and linked in to the pupil's dream.

11. Is it a roll-over programme, finish one 2-yr cycle before starting a second round?

No, new students can start each year. It is also ok to do it as a roll-over programme.

12. What about the child who isn't interested in anything at all other than football?

With a child like this the mentor will focus on the child's DREAM which is most likely connected and link it in to what is happening in the class through the habits and the skills being identified through the behaviours named in the WRF. If this child, in class, for example is not listening to the teacher or following instructions the mentor will ask the student how they think that way of working would affect them as a professional footballer. The mentor doesn't explain how it is likely to but requires the student to reflect and explore (motivational interviewing). Usually the student will say that the coach wouldn't be happy with their performance, they wouldn't be working well with the rest of the team, so they might not be picked for the team. The next step would be to explore what the child thinks would improve his performance as a team member to safeguard his place in the team. Usually children are quite quick to know what is needed, referencing listening carefully to the coach, getting down to the tasks quickly and really concentrating on the skills being practiced. The mentor would then explore how the student understands the way having these skills would impact on their work as a footballer. The link is then made to the classroom and how he isn't developing the skill of listening or concentrating while in school and what occasions in the classroom he sees where he could practice them – so that when he gets into the team he would have such skills very developed. In this way the mentor *allows the student to only be interested in football* but helps him to understand how that would impact on his dream (probably to be a footballer). The mentor would say that he can start to learn and develop these skills now in school, in class, learn how to really become skilled at paying attention, at listening, at following instructions etc. These could be referenced as teamwork skills over and above football skills. The students tune in to this very well and become intrinsically motivated. It has a strong impact on the students.

13. How would individual + group operate in the week, and what is the benefit of one over the other?

Mentors don't have to do both individual and group but might decide to do both depending on the needs of the students. What group work offers over and above individual session is the peer social dimension. This offers many things – peer affirmation, peer assistance in problem-solving, peer modelling of positive behaviours that lead to achievement, modelling

of the skill of reflection/taking time to think/not being sure but keeping focussed etc. A lot of this can be done in the individual sessions as well but the power of peer influence cannot be undervalued.

If both are done it is up to the mentor and the school to decide when to do either. It can be operated with the group being done at the end of the week and starting the week with individual sessions to re-focus the students on their goals. Some mentors though prefer to show the students their WRFs in the more private individual setting so do the individual sessions at the end of the week just after filling in the WRFs. The decision would need to be based on the specific students in the group.