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# BUILDING BLOCK I: MENTOR'S PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

## UNIT I - ME AS A BEGINNING TEACHER: RECALLING MY PATH

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Mentor teacher training programmes should be recognised as priority actions in the education system, so that they produce changes and extend support to teachers, renewing the teaching career while improving their professional performance, their well-being and, consequently, the students' school success.

This unit aims to support the training of teachers who intend to become teacher mentor, using a **reflective approach**, being invited to critically analyse their professional, personal and relational experiences and thus contribute to understanding the needs of the teacher mentee, overcoming the various difficulties and developing their competencies as mentor teacher. This perspective favours their immersion in an intentional, pragmatic and meaningful process, providing them with the articulation of theoretical knowledge with experiences to act in a reasoned and pertinent way in the face of different professional challenges.

This guiding framework understands that reflective action presupposes a different type of training from that which prepares the teacher as a technician, based on compliance with a set of instructions designed and provided by others. Reflective education advocates practice-based development (Schön, 2000), in which the teacher-mentor is recognised as a professional who plays "an active role in formulating both the aims and objectives of his/her work and the means of achieving them". In this sense, this view advocates the ability to create their theories from reality, thus contributing "to building a broad base of knowledge about teaching" (Zeichner, 1993) throughout their career.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To enunciate the strengths of the future teacher mentor, both personally and professionally, as a way to promote the successive improvement of his/her performance
- To understand the specific needs and challenges of the teacher mentee
- To identify mentoring strategies as references for effective implementation

### **CONTENTS**

- Self-reflection on significant personal experiences as a teacher mentor
- Sharing and discussion of ideas related to those experiences

## DURATION, ACTIVITIES AND DYNAMICS

Estimated working time: 90m

Running time for activity and dynamic:

Activity	Dynamic	Duration	Total Duration
1. My teachers	1. Thinking about my teachers	20m	20m
2. Mentoring thought metaphorically	1. My mentoring relationships	10m	50m
	2. My career path	40m	
3. Round table around mentoring	1. Some quotations	20m	20m
			90m

### Activity 1: My teachers | 20 Minutes

History reveals that many of the characters we know, in different areas, were teachers to others who are also great references for Humanity: Alexander the Great had Aristotle as a teacher mentor; Beethoven and Mozart had Haydn, etc. Even if many other personalities are not necessarily so famous, the experiences you have at a certain moment with your teachers have an impact on your personal and professional life, as they result in the development of multiple skills.

#### *Dynamic 1 – Thinking about my teachers |20 Minutes*

With this as a motto, learn about some historical teacher mentor [The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring | Top 25 Mentoring Relationships in History (evidencebasedmentoring.org)] and recall your teacher mentor (see [Annex 1](#)).

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- Who were your teacher(s) mentor(s)?
- What were their main personal and professional characteristics?
- How can you be inspired by that experience as a future teacher mentor?

### Activity 2: Mentoring thought metaphorically |50 Minutes

In an educational/training context, metaphor is considered to be a source of insights into teachers' thoughts and feelings (Connelly et al., 1997). It can also serve as a tool through which a teacher stands back and reflects on their practice as an external observer (Leavy et al., 2007). Researchers use metaphors developed by teachers as a way to gain insight into what teachers think about their work and thus facilitate their professional development (Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou, 2010). This perspective is also important in the sense that beliefs and action are inseparable and "one construct tends to influence the other" (Haney, Lumpe, Czerniak, & Egan, 2002).

#### *Dynamic 1 – My mentoring relationships | 10 Minutes*

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Reflect on the mentoring relationships you have experienced throughout your life, using a metaphor to best describe them and explaining the reasons for your choice.

### *Dynamic 2 – My career path | 40 Minutes*

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A road map is suggested as a metaphor for your career path, recognizing that maps show the big picture and thus providing food for thought based on the following topics (see [Annex 2](#)):

- Where did it start?
- Where did you want to go?
- Which roads did you follow?
- Which roads did you not follow and why?
- What other places would you like to visit and were you given the opportunity?

### *Activity 3: Round table around mentoring | 20 Minutes*

Quotations are intended to clarify, support or illustrate a particular issue. The following have been chosen to trigger discussion about the specific needs and challenges of the early career teacher and the process of developing a future teacher mentor. After reading the quotes, choose the ones you would use as a strategy to promote a discussion in the mentoring relationship, commenting on your choice.

### *Dynamic 1 – Some quotations | 20 Minutes*

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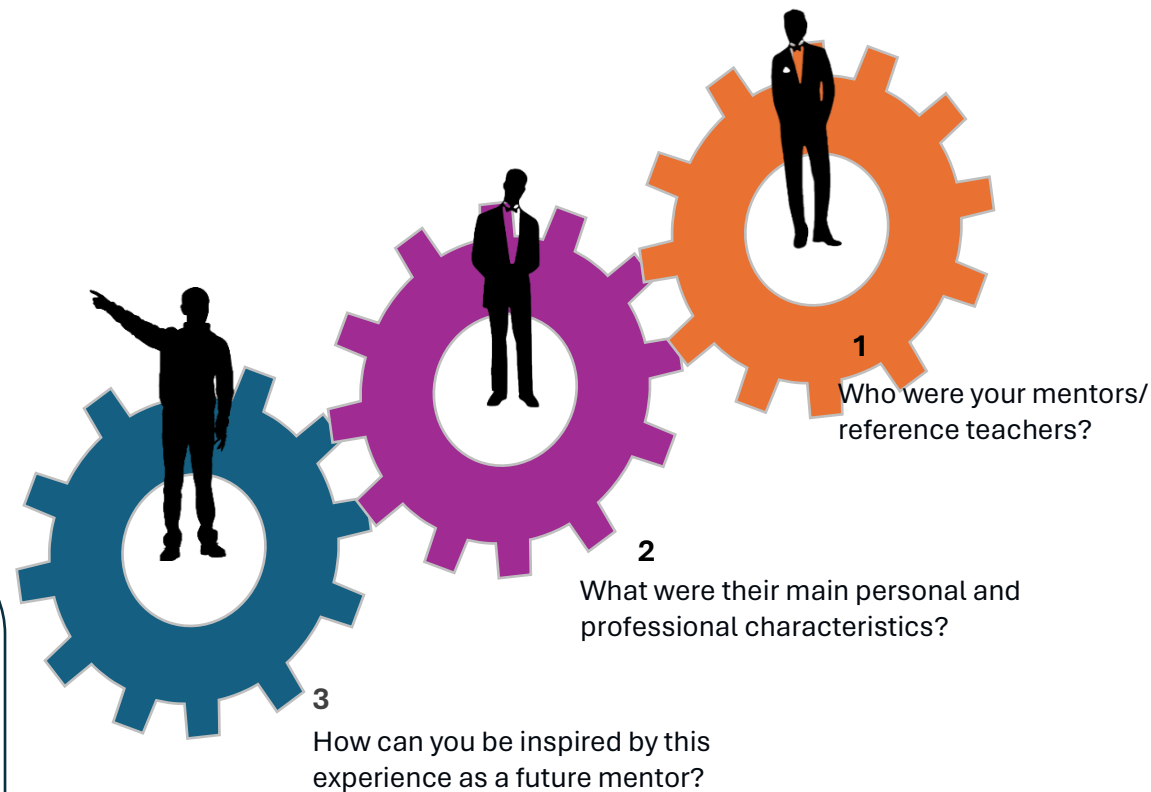
- a. We tend to see ourselves primarily through the prism of our intentions, which are invisible to others, while we see others primarily in the light of their actions, which are visible to us (J. G. Bennet quoted in F. Kofman 2006).
- b. The delicate balance of 'mentoring' someone is not to create them in your image, but to allow them to create themselves (Steven Spielberg).
- c. Looking to the past should only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who I am so that I can build the future more wisely (Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed).

# ANNEXES



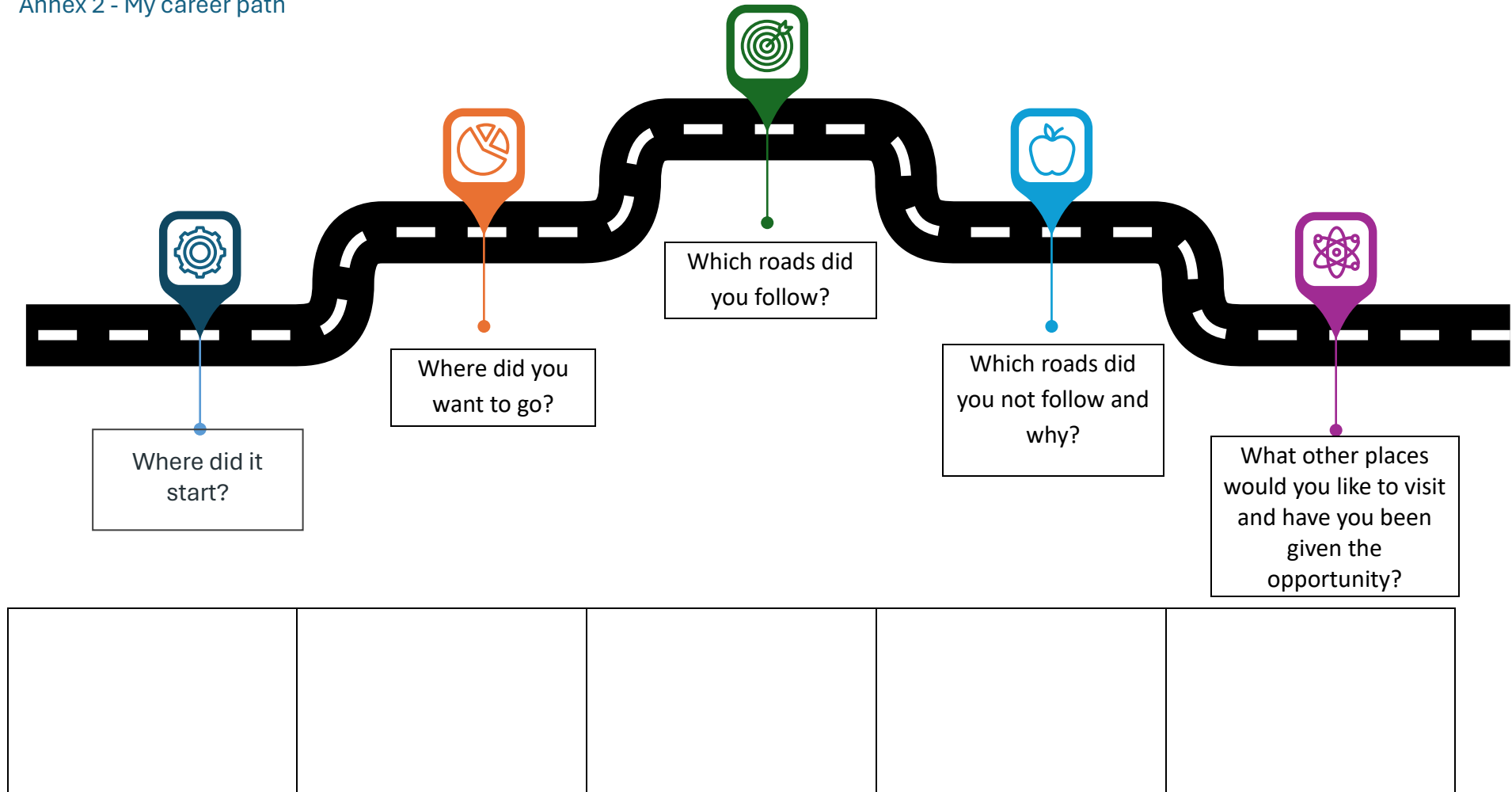
## Annex 1 - Thinking about my teachers

### REFLECTION





## Annex 2 - My career path





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