John Hattie talks about creating opportunities of ‘deliberate conversations’ with learners: often such conversations don’t feel as natural as other conversations, and that’s fine. The benefits of mentors and mentees having a deliberate conversation about goals and expectations at the outset of the placement is that it fast-tracks the relationship building process, makes explicit any assumptions, and gives you both a record that can be referred to if there is any conflict or misunderstanding later.

To make such a focused conversation easier, use the following guide (based on a goal-setting coaching model), making notes as you go.

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| Building relationships and shared understandings | | |
| **Topics** | **Conversation focus** | **Notes** |
| **Take time getting to know each other** | * Share interests, hobbies, special talents, your ideas about teaching and learning |  |
| **Talk about mentoring** | * Share experiences of being in a mentoring relationship |  |
| * What did you each learn from those experiences? |  |
| **Goals**  What needs to be achieved?  What will success look like? | * What are the preservice teacher’s goals? Can they be clearer and more specific? * What are the mentor’s goals (for themselves and for the preservice teacher (PST)) |  |
| **Reality**  What are our assumptions and expectations? | * What does the preservice teacher need and want from the relationship? * What does the mentor expect/want from the PST? |  |

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| Deciding on mentoring options: how best might the mentor help? | | |
| **Topics** | **Conversation focus** | **Notes** |
| **Ways of achieving learning goals** | * Discuss possible ways PST would like to go about achieving learning goals |  |
| **Communication styles** | * How might you best communicate in terms of feedback, sharing planning, exploring teaching practices? |  |
| **Make a plan** | * What will the PST do? * What will the mentor do? |  |