GROW is a very well-known model for coaching which is equally useful for mentoring (coaching and mentoring are often paired in the research literature). The letters stand for:

- Goal
- Reality
- Option
- Way forward

GROW was developed in the 1980s and has been very widely used for coaching in many contexts. GROW enables coaches or mentors to ask powerful questions that enable their mentees to reflect on their situation, set goals, and develop solutions so that they have autonomy in the process, rather than being given solutions.

'Goal' questions

This first part of the session is about either helping the mentee to set a goal to work towards or reviewing progress towards an already agreed upon goal. This goal can be a short-term or long-term goal that will be revisited over the course of many sessions, and each mentoring session helps the mentee to decide on actions to take in order to reach their long-term goal. The focus for each mentoring session is also set during the start of that session.

- What would you like to achieve from in this session today?
  - Can we achieve that in this session, or should we break it down?
- What do you want to achieve? (long-term goal)
  - When do you want to achieve it by?
  - What might be some steps along the way?
  - How can you word this positively?
- How do you feel about the goal in terms of it being realistic, positive, challenging, and inspiring?
- What would you like to happen that is not already happening, or what would you like to not happen that is currently happening?
- What challenges are you facing at the moment?
- How will you know that you have achieved this goal?
  - What will you be doing?
  - What will the children be doing?
  - What will it look like in the classroom?
- How will you measure the achievement of the goal?
- How will achieving this goal address children's needs?

  - What evidence do you have that this is a need?

  - Is this the most important need to address?

- How will you know that the problem or issue is solved?

- Does this goal fit with your overall career objectives?

- Does this goal fit with the setting's objectives?

'Reality' questions

This part of the session involves discussing and examining the factors relating to achievement or non-achievement of goals. The mentor should use active listening skills to understand the mentee's perspective by focusing on what the mentee is saying and paraphrasing them to check for understanding. During this part of the session, mentors should focus particularly on offering challenge (for example, by checking for alternate explanations) and seeking and using evidence in order to encourage the mentee to view the goal, problem, and their actions from many perspectives.

- What progress have you made towards your goal?

  - What evidence do you have?

  - What has helped you move towards your goal?

- What is happening now? (what, who, when, how much and how often)

  - What evidence do you have?

  - How do you know that is accurate?

  - What are other people's perspectives on what is happening?

  - What is missing?

  - What are some possible alternate explanations?

- What have you have already done?

  - Why did you choose to do that?

  - What happened as a result of that? (for the mentee and for the children they teach)

  - What were the intended and the unintended consequences?

- What are some obstacles you are facing?

- What is working well at the moment?

- What is worrying you most?

- What does your inner critic say to you about what is happening?

- Who else is involved?

- Who will help you as you move forward?

- What have you done that has worked previously in similar situations?

- What resources or strategies have you not tried yet?

- What qualities or resources do you have that will help you?

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'Options' questions

As a result of the reality discussion, the mentor and mentee identify options that the mentee could take to move towards their goals, including any tools, strategies or pedagogies they can use. These ideas can be mind-mapped to aid in the discussion. This part of the discussion is about exploring and critiquing many possibilities, with the mentor providing challenges and offering expertise where appropriate.

- What could you do to change what is happening?

- Can you think of some possible actions you could take?

  - If you had 50% more confidence, what would you do?

  - If success was guaranteed, what would you do?

  - What is the most outlandish thing you can think of doing?

  - What would you do if time was not a factor?

- What have you seen other people doing in this kind of situation?

- Which of your strengths could help you to change this situation?

- What do you think parents would want you to do in this situation?

- If you could just work with these children alone, what would you do?

- Have you thought about…?

- Is this an option you might try?

- Which option appeals to you the most?

- Is there anything you need to stop doing in order to achieve your goal?

- What is the most important option at this time?

- What are some of the barriers to these options being successful?

  - If that barrier was removed, how would that change things?

- What factors could help you to decide which option is the best for achieving your goal?

  - What evidence do you have that these options will be effective in this situation?

  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options?

- Who or what would help you to progress towards your goal?

- What would you specifically like feedback on?

'Way forward' questions

Decide on which of the options the mentee will implement and set a goal. Committing to specific actions will help the mentee move towards their goal. Agree on any support the mentor will provide, such as observations, and agree on a time for the next session.

- What option or options do you choose to act on?

- What will be your first step, and when?

  - What else will you do, and when?

- When will you start? When will you finish?
  - How will you keep track of your progress?
- What will you have tried before the next time we meet?
- Is there any support you need from me or from other people?
  - How will you obtain that support, and when?
- Is there any other learning you need to do?
- What are some possible obstacles or challenges you could face?
  - How will you keep yourself motivated in the face of those challenges?
- How will you know if your action or actions have been successful?
  - How will you celebrate when you have been successful?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your motivation / commitment level to this action? (if the answer is low, then you should revisit the discussion about what actions to take)
  - What would need to happen to make this 10?
- Would you like me to observe you trying this action in a lesson?
  - What do you want me to look for during the observation?
  - Shall we meet briefly at the end of the observation to discuss immediate thoughts? (this could be a good idea if there will be a long time between the observation and follow up mentoring discussion)
- Is there anything else we need to discuss today?
- When will we meet next?

References

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