

Year 1 January 2026 Cohort ECT/Mentor/IT Bulletin section April 2026

Welcome to the third Early Career Training Programme (ECTP) Bulletin from Vantage Teaching School Hub for the Year 1 January 2026 cohort. The purpose of this Bulletin is to share relevant information regarding the ITTECF Training Programme with Induction Tutors, Mentors and Early Career Teachers (ECTs). We will circulate these Bulletins at the start of each new module in the Full Induction Programme Calendar.

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The second half of the Spring term has seen ECTs and mentors work through Module 2 of the Training Programme. Thank you to ECTs who attended the seminars relating to Module 2: 'How do pupils learn?' in February 2026 & to new Y1 mentors who attended their seminar in February 2026.

The Diagnostic Activity

As a reminder, ECTs need to complete a diagnostic activity in the form of a series of questions, at the start of Module 3 before any of the content of the Module is released. ECTs will answer questions based on their prior knowledge.

Mentors will also complete a diagnostic activity about the ECT's classroom practice and together they will agree whether the ECT should release the 'Core' or 'Summary & Stretch' content for each of the 5 sections of Module 3.

Please note that the ECT can release the content via the checklist without the mentor.

Although this is not advised, it has been put in place in case a mentor is absent from school or there are functionality issues on Brightspace for a mentor.

Further guidance is given in the section on 'Navigating Brightspace'.

The screenshot shows the Brightspace interface for 'ECTP Module 3: Diagnostic activity'. On the left, there is a navigation sidebar with a blue header containing 'Module 3: What makes classroom practice effective?' and 'Unit 1 of 12'. Below the header, the sidebar lists several items: 'Welcome', 'Exploring this module as a mentor' (with a checkmark), 'Module overview', 'Introduction', and 'Before you begin your diagnostic activity'. At the bottom of the sidebar is a button labeled 'ECTP Module 3: Diagnostic activity'. The main content area on the right has a title 'Summary' and a section 'Description'. The description text reads: 'This is a formative diagnostic activity to support you and your mentor identify the most appropriate content to focus on for each session during this module. This is not a formal assessment, it is a purely formative tool to support your development. Your mentor will also complete a series of questions about your ability to apply the concepts in this knowledge check to your teaching practice. These two diagnostic activities, along with a developmental conversation with your mentor, will provide you with guidance on whether to complete the 'core' or 'summary and stretch' content for each session in this module.'

Moving into Module 3

This week heralds the start of Module 3 in the Early Career Programme Calendar. In this Module ECTs will focus on, 'What makes classroom practice effective?'

As with the other Modules, ECTs have their weekly self-directed study to focus on which takes between 30 – 60 minutes per week.

The weekly interactions with their mentors are clearly set out in the mentor's Programme Handbook. Every week there is a recommended stimulus of either a 10- minute drop-in observation or a discussion.

We advise mentors to use their Programme Handbook when leading the weekly interactions and to make very brief notes in these pages.

We hope that mentors and ECTs are developing their confidence with Instructional Coaching and deliberate practice.

An overview of the content of Module 3 for ECTs is below:

Module introduction

This module focuses on the features of effective classroom practice. It draws upon the principles of learning, which you explored in Module 2, and reviews how those principles translate into action.

This module is divided into five sessions plus your 10-minute diagnostic activity. The sessions in this module are:

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1. Review and explanations **(35 minutes)**
 2. Modelling **(65 minutes)**
 3. Guided practice **(45 minutes)**
 4. Independent practice **(45 minutes)**
 5. Questioning **(45 minutes)**
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Each session will be supported by a mentor interaction: guidance to support you to prepare for these can be found at the end of each session.

You'll have the option of completing either the core or summary and stretch version of each session. You'll be guided towards the most appropriate content for you based on the outcome of your diagnostic activity, which you'll complete shortly.

Optional – Excellent Teaching in Special Schools

Course overview

The aim of this course is to further support early career teachers working in special schools. The course sits alongside your ECF modules and aims to build on, contextualise and supplement learning for ECTs working in special schools.

This optional course contains 8 units and is designed so that you can pick and choose the units and sessions that are most relevant to your practice and the pupils that you work with.

Course outline

This course is broken down into the following units:

1. Unit 1: Communication and interaction
2. Unit 2: Cognition and learning
3. Unit 3: Social, emotional and mental health
4. Unit 4: Sensory and/or physical needs
5. Unit 5: Behaviour
6. Unit 6: Understanding and developing early communication
7. Unit 7: Effective use of Teaching Assistants
8. Unit 8: Assessment

ECT Seminars

The ECT Seminars for Module 3 will take place as follows:

Wednesday 6 th May 2026	Year 1 ECT Seminar 3:1 4pm – 5.15pm Y1 Jan 2026 ECTS	Via Zoom
Wednesday 20 th May 2026	Year 1 ECT Seminar 3:2 4pm – 5.15pm Y1 Jan 2026 ECTS	Via Zoom

Seminars

Seminar 1: Using examples and non-examples

Explaining difficult or abstract concepts can be challenging but is crucial in supporting pupils' understanding. Therefore, this seminar will support you to:

- consider how examples and non-examples can support learning
- know what makes examples and non-examples effective
- reflect on your own use and application of these in the classroom

Seminar 2: Using questioning to extend and challenge thinking

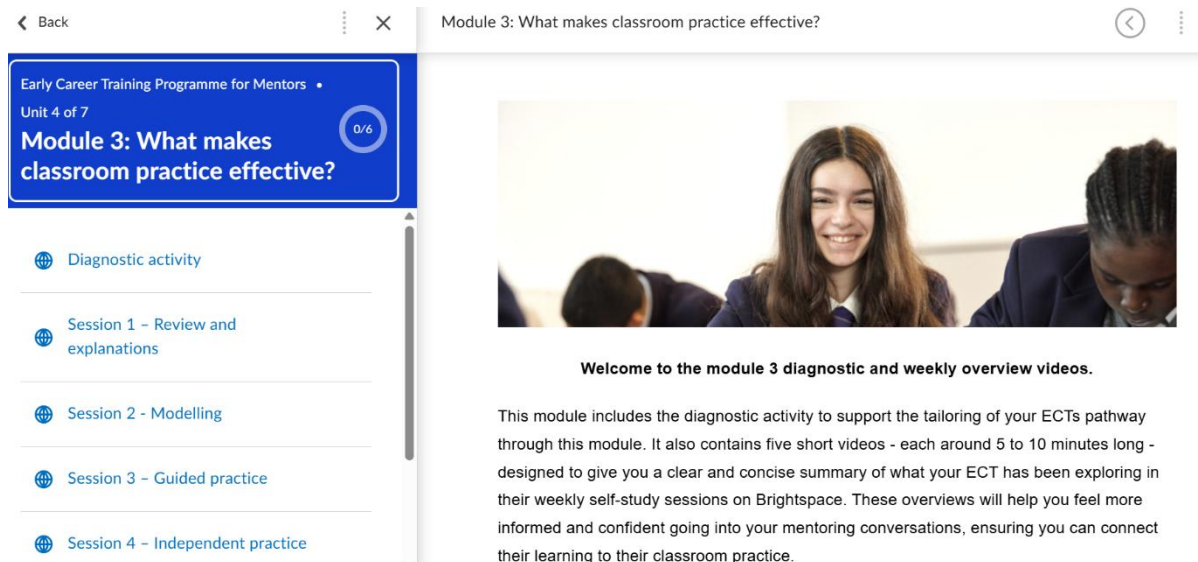
The best teachers ask lots of questions – but the quality of those questions are key. One way we can use questioning purposefully is to extend and challenge pupil thinking.

Therefore, this seminar will support you to:

- consider the 'questioning culture' in your classroom
- explore questioning strategies to extend and challenge thinking
- consider how you respond to pupils' answers to questions

An overview of the content of Module 3 for Y1 mentors is below:

The overview videos **are mandatory for mentors to watch** before their weekly interactions with their ECT. These support mentors in understanding the self-study that ECTs have been engaged in and help to focus the meetings. Guidance is also in the Mentor Handbook 2025. When a mentor logs into Brightspace and accesses these videos and any of the optional content, this supports their engagement on the programme.



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Unit 4 of 7
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Module 3: What makes classroom practice effective?

- Diagnostic activity
- Session 1 - Review and explanations
- Session 2 - Modelling
- Session 3 - Guided practice
- Session 4 - Independent practice

Welcome to the module 3 diagnostic and weekly overview videos.

This module includes the diagnostic activity to support the tailoring of your ECTs pathway through this module. It also contains five short videos - each around 5 to 10 minutes long - designed to give you a clear and concise summary of what your ECT has been exploring in their weekly self-study sessions on Brightspace. These overviews will help you feel more informed and confident going into your mentoring conversations, ensuring you can connect their learning to their classroom practice.

Diagnostic activity

This is a formative activity to support you and your ECT identify the most appropriate content to focus on for each session during this module. This should not be used as a formal assessment of your ECT, it is purely a formative tool to support their development.

The following questions will ask you about your ECTs application of key ITTECF concepts covered in this module to their teaching practice. This does not require an observation of your ECT and should instead draw upon your holistic understanding of your ECT and their development. When answering these questions, it might be useful to draw on;

- Past observations and discussions with your ECT
- Past notes from mentoring sessions
- Any notes and information from their ITT year.

Your ECT will also complete a knowledge check on their understanding of the same concepts.

The results of these two diagnostic activities, along with a developmental conversation between you and your ECT, will provide you with guidance on whether your ECT should complete the 'core' or 'summary and stretch' content for each session in their modules.

Mentor self-study

In Year 1 of the Mentor training programme, completing the diagnostic activity at the start of each Module is classed as mandatory work, as is the viewing of the weekly overview videos for Mentors.

MENTOR SEMINAR FOR SUMMER TERM

The Mentor Seminar for the Summer Term 2026 will take place as follows:

New Y1 Mentor seminars combined – 18.5.26, 1.30pm – 4.30pm (face to face) OR 1.6.26, (online). Please see individual training calendars for your actual seminar date according to the seminar group you have been placed in.

Mentor training for mentors who are on our one-year training programme

The mentor seminars in the Summer Term have been combined and include: 'Balancing support & challenge'.

Then: 'Developing resilience'.

Invites to seminars for ECTs and Mentors

Invites to these events will be sent out a week before the seminars are due to take place via email. The email will also contain any resources or pre-reading/ information that is needed prior to attendance; we urge ECTs and mentors to read these carefully so that they are fully prepared for the seminars.

Attendance at these seminars is very important so please do let us know if there are any issues. Attendance and engagement at these seminars are part of the statutory entitlement for all ECTs.

We would like to remind everyone about the importance of ensuring that their cameras are turned on and microphones work during the online training and that participants attend the training ready to be active participants in discussions, whether the session is face to face or online, to get the most out of them.

Attendance at all of the seminars is recorded and this data is used to inform whether schools receive statutory funding from the DfE. Unfortunately, we cannot record a programme member as having attended an online session if their camera and/or microphone is not working. Please be advised that a facilitator may remove a programme member from an online training session if their camera and/or microphone is not working and this causes disruption to the training.

Navigating Brightspace

My Teach First is the home page that you log on to access the ECF Programme. The platform **Brightspace** is where all of the curriculum materials are housed and this is accessed once you log onto My Teach First.

ECTs

ECTs need to be engaged every week in their self-study on Brightspace related to the Module that they are currently studying. For this half term, Year 1 ECTs should be completing self-study based on **Module 3**. It is expected that ECTs log onto Brightspace for 30-60mins per week to complete their self-study before they have their weekly interaction with their Mentor. A summary of the self-study for Module 3 has been detailed above.

An ECT's engagement on Brightspace is tracked by Teach First and ECTs will receive reminder emails if they have not been completing their self-study regularly.

In addition to this there is optional content on Brightspace:

'Wellbeing' Modules that can be accessed at any time and 'Excellent Teaching in Special Schools' Modules.

The pathway to finding the **Wellbeing Modules** is:

Brightspace > ECTP2025 > Cross Programme > My Wellbeing

The pathway to finding the **Special Schools** content is:

Brightspace > ECTP2025 > All Courses > Optional: Excellent Teaching in Special Schools

As shown at the Welcome Conferences and in the main Bulletin section, we recommend ECTs watch the YouTube videos below to support in their understanding of Brightspace:

- [An overview of Brightspace as an ECT.](#)
- [Brightspace tips and tricks.](#)
- [How to complete your diagnostic activity as an ECT.](#)

Mentors

Mentors are expected to log onto Brightspace every week if they are mentoring a Year 1 ECT to view the weekly videos. A Mentor's engagement with this is tracked by Teach First and they will receive a reminder email if they have not regularly engaged with these.

Mentors are also expected to complete the Diagnostic activity about their Y1 ECT at the start of each Module & discuss this with them. This activity is mandatory.

Mentors are encouraged to track the progress of their ECT on Brightspace so that they can discuss this with them and escalate any issues to the Induction Tutor.

Here is the pathway that a Mentor can follow to check the progress of their Year 1 ECT:
Login to My TeachFirst > Click on ECTP2025 (Year 1 ECTs) > **Click on the chosen Module for ECTs** (Do not click on the Module for Mentors) > Click on Audit Users > Select the ECT

You will then be able to see an overview of their engagement in the content of the Module.

Below are the YouTube videos that we advise Mentors to watch to support in their understanding of the Brightspace platform:

- [An overview of Brightspace as Mentor.](#)
- [Brightspace tips and tricks.](#)
- [How to complete your diagnostic activity as Mentor.](#)

We hope that Module 3 runs smoothly for you all – remember we are here to help should you need any support.

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Best Wishes
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