

## **Emma Hollis Podcast Episode 2**

**James Coleman:** Hello, and welcome to the first episode of our new series of TEMZ podcasts. My name is James Coleman and over the next academic year, we'll be speaking to a number of guests from the teacher training world to gain their knowledge and expertise. We kick off the series by chatting to NASBTT Executive Director, Emma Hollis. Emma tells us why the TEMZ has been created and what impact NASBTT hope it will have on teacher educators, as well as giving important advice and how to support both yourself and your mentee during the uncertain time that we're working in. That and much more coming up on this year's first, TEMZ podcast.

Okay, so I'm delighted to say Emma's with us. Hi Emma, how are you?

**Emma Hollis:** Hi, James. I'm well thank you.

**JC:** Good and it's wonderful to have you on the very first NASBTT TEMZ podcast. To kick us off, tell us a little bit why NASBTT have been working on creating something like the TEMZ?

**EH:** Absolutely. So it's exciting to be here and exciting that we're launching this series, thank you for organizing James. The TEMZ, that this twofold thinking behind the TEMZ really and the first is the bit that's closest to my heart, which is about making the role of the mentor acknowledged as absolutely central to the importance of developing ITT trainees, early career teachers and even beyond that. We know anecdotally that the relationship between a mentor and a trainee teacher, for example, can be the difference between a fantastically successful year and a year that a trainee really struggles with and that's also true NQTs, RQTs, the ability to engage with a mentor who understands how to identify their specific needs, how to bring them on and how to work with them can really transform the development of a teacher in their early career. But what we're also seeing is that far too often mentoring is handed to the person who last puts their hand up in the room or the person that happens to have an hour on their timetable, without any real thinking about the skills, the knowledge, the understanding, the desire to work with early career teachers, all of those things that are needed to make that relationship work really well. And we're part of what we do at NASBTT is to try and change that discourse. So we're trying to help schools, school leaders, mentors themselves see just how crucial that role is, how important it is, and how central it is to getting it right for our teachers and then ultimately, for the children that we're teaching. So the idea of a central professional learning space where mentors could come together could start to identify those skills that I talked about. What are those skills? Where are my strengths? Where perhaps my areas for development and if there is an area for development I can identify, how do I go about doing that? That was the thinking behind this. And then the other arm of it really was that our members were coming to us saying they love our TEP's. They love the work that we're doing to help them develop their mentors but how could we help them to support their mentors further? And so those two ideas convened and the TEMZ was born.

**JC:** I guess one of the biggest challenges in probably every Ofsted report we've ever seen over the last decade really always links to consistency of mentoring and how to support mentoring. It's a challenge that lots of providers have had for a long time. Can we overemphasize just how important, I know you've already touched on it just then but overemphasize just how important the mentor is in the year of a teacher of a trainee, or as you say, in an early career teacher or someone who's maybe moving into middle management is having support from that perspective. Just how important is that mentor?

**EH:** You're absolutely right and it is every single Ofsted, not the Ofsted of the be and all, but every single Ofsted report you ever read, will mention consistency of mentoring, quality of mentoring and almost always even where it's identified as a strength of a partnership and it often is identified as a strength of a partnership, there's almost always kind of more work that can be done and I think that's always going to be true when you're dealing with lots of moving parts, which you always are with mentors coming in and out of roles. It's not a, you know, it's not a specified role that you think, right I'm going to be a mentor and that's my job for the next 10 years and I can devote myself entirely to doing that and that's part of the issue around mentoring is that is something that we're expecting people to do in addition to their day to day role, their day job, but the skills are very different. It is very different being a mentor to an adult learning to teach than it is to be a teacher for obvious reasons and so that that kind of centrality of the mentor role, you're quite right James can't be overemphasized. It is the be all and end all really of making your program of ITT or your support for your NQT's work really well as a provider when I was running a SCITT and I was running a teaching school I entirely relied on my mentors to we, you know, we would plan and develop programs and ways of thinking and areas of research that we wanted to share with our trainees, but we relied on the mentors being able to put that into action for them in school and it is that army of mentors that you work with who bring your programs to life.

**JC:** So yeah, if the army mentors is a great phrase, it's those people that that's army of yours. You know, some of those people will be really experienced mentors. Some of them will have worked, perhaps with other providers lots of times, but maybe you're working with your provision for the first time. Lots can change for a mentor whether they're experienced or inexperienced. If there is a mentor listening to this, and perhaps, you know, it's middle of August, and they're preparing themselves for taking on a training in September, how can they interact with the TEMZ do you think to support them in being as prepared as they possibly can be for September?

**EH:** Yeah, I think the, that's one of the challenges we were trying to solve or partly solve in the development of the TEMZ is that mentors quite often will work across a variety of providers and providers change their processes year on year in, you know, in response to things they've learned and new national priorities. But ultimately, there is something around the central skills, the central knowledge, the central understanding what it is to be a mentor that we felt that we could really drill down to and crystallize so that that would be the same whether you're working with University A, SCITT B, Teaching School C, those central kind of that central framework for professional knowledge and understanding could be common across all of those different types of providers. And yes, you might need to get to grips with slightly different paperwork and slightly different ways of doing things but that's a much more kind of logistical issue, but the central bits are what we've developed in the professional framework. So the professional framework is kind of divided it so it's roundel it's divided into four main areas is that right James, you have to remind me if I'm wrong!

**JC:** No, that's absolutely right.

**EH:** Within each of those four main areas there are subsections, which explore in more depth and specific areas of your practice. So in terms of engaging with it as a either a new mentor or as a very experienced mentor, take a look at the roundel to start with have a look at the four broad areas. Have a think about kind of an honest chat with yourself about where you know your strengths are and where perhaps, you know there's a little bit more work to do or an area of interest that you'd like to develop further. And then the way the website is set up, it allows you to kind of drill down more and more into each of those areas, and will then signpost you to some interesting reading,

some articles, Ted Talks. It will also give you three key things that you can go away and do in your practice tomorrow to start to embed this in a really positive and actionable way.

**JC:** The framework itself, one of the things you mentioned them was that, you know, lots of different providers or everyone will work in a slightly different way. Is the framework something that you individually within NASBTT have come up with? Or did you work alongside other people creating that framework? Where did that framework come from?

**EH:** Absolutely, it was a collaboration. So we brought together a really fantastic group of colleagues from across the University to Teaching Schools, SCITT and School Direct School sectors. So we had a real broad, a broad church of different perspectives, different approaches, and we brought those together, we thrashed things out we, we drew on some research that had been really successful in the Netherlands. Sort of our equivalent, an organization called Velon in the Netherlands have been doing this for around 15 years and they first developed their framework 15 years ago and have been tinkering with it and developing it ever since. So we drew on that for some inspiration but then we, we rewrote, pulled apart, rewrote again, sent it round it was a real collaboration before we got to the place we are now.

**JC:** The TEMZ s is relatively new, this is our first podcast and people will be engaging with it for the very first time. What sort of plans do NASBTT have for the TEMZ kind of moving forward as it shifts and grows and develops? What can people expect once they've signed up as it starts to grow?

**EH:** So initially, it will be more content. So there is at the moment there's loads of content on there already and the team that have been putting that together have done a great job in sourcing what's out there, what's great quality what's out there, and really accessible. That was one of our kind of key drivers in this is we know that you as mentors are incredibly busy people. So we're not trying to give you huge epic sagas to read and massive pieces of research that are going to take you months to decipher. What we're trying to do is distil really great research, really great knowledge, really great stories into very bite sized easily digestible pieces for you, and also in a variety of different media. So some things that you'll read, some things that you'll watch, some things are interactive CPD sessions that you'll undertake through NASBTT Learn. And so we're looking initially to expand that, that library of content so that we are making sure that it's fresh and up to date and the latest thinking is included. Over time we'd like to see it develop into even more of a professional learning community. So allowing you to directly connect with other mentors, be able to set up forum or groups where you can link with other mentors with similar interests to you, or mentoring in the same subject or those kinds of things where you can start to learn from one another, and throw a question out there and ask for people's opinions and share your stories and let us know if you're doing something really successfully. Or you've come across something that you're really excited about, then for you to be sharing that with us and for it to become a really interactive resource. And beyond that, we want to hear from you. So as you say, James, it's really new. We've got some fantastic people signing up to use it already. We've had some great anecdotal feedback, but please do keep that coming because we're learning as we're going. So if there's something you'd like to see on there that isn't or there's a great piece of research you've read or a fantastic article or a video that you've seen that you think should be included. Let us know and we'll make sure that it goes on there.

**JC:** I know one of the things you're really passionate about is kind of driving that, the profile of the mentor within teacher education, whether that's working with a trainee, whether that's working

with an experienced teacher. What sort of things are NASBTT trying to do is try and build the profile of the mentor beyond just the TEMZ I guess?

**EH:** Yeah, absolutely. So we do that at several levels. The kind of highest level, we do it in terms of trying to influence policy. So I spend a lot of my working life talking to various teams at Department for Education about upcoming policy or existing policy changes or direction of travel for the sector and in every one of those meetings I champion the role of the mentor, the importance of the mentor the importance that the mentor has given time, space, recognition, commitment from their school leadership teams, to do their job well. And part of doing your job well is a just simply having the time to do it but also being given the time and space to explore what it means to be a great mentor beyond your kind of instinctive understanding of that. So at that level where we're promoting. We also work with our provider members so we lots of our training and development that we run involves helping SCITT and HEI leaders to develop their mentors in a in a kind of top trickle-down approach if you like. So we talked to them about our learning as we've been finding the best research reading around what makes great mentoring, we then develop that into CPD which we share with providers who can then disseminate that down to their mentors and link to that we also have our teacher educator programs which are NASBTT badged mentoring and coaching development programs which we license out to members to be able to deliver. Working with mentors we also do bespoke versions of those ourselves so kind of direct training with mentors. And we're just in a very exciting stage at the moment of working with an organisation to move those into an online version as well so that we can allow mentors to access them in the widest possible sense and engage with things in a variety of different ways face to face, synchronous, asynchronous, and so on. So every level we're promoting the importance of mentors, the mentoring role, and actually mentorship which goes beyond the one to one mentoring role. So it's something I also spend a lot of time talking to the DfE about is how mentoring needs to pervade a school culture so that a school has a culture of mentorship, which goes beyond the one to one relationship and becomes about there's that old phrase about it takes a village to raise a child and I always think it takes a whole school to raise a teacher. So it's about the learning support assistant who pops their head in the door because they can see things aren't going quite to plan and sees if they can help. It's about the person who spots that you're not having a great day and brings you a cup of tea in the staff room and has a little chat with you to see if there's anything they can do. It's about the SENCO who actively seeks you out to share information about the child that they know is in your class and it's about the head teacher who makes sure that there's a spirit of collaboration within their school and not competition so that teachers want to share their planning and they want to support and lift up their colleagues rather than kind of competing with them. And that, that goes beyond that one to one mentoring role that we've been talking about and that you might see in the TEMZ but becomes something much broader. And I think that's also a really important thing to champion alongside.

**JC:** Yeah, absolutely and for that, that wider overview is crucial in in terms of supporting not only the trainee but supporting the mentor to be able to perform their role as effectively as they need to.

**EH:** Absolutely, yeah.

**JC:** So for someone who's probably listening to this away from TEMZ away from NASBTT, potentially, for you, as an individual, a mentor, what sort of qualities would you be looking for from your very best mentors? What things you what, two or three things do you think really make the very best mentors stand out from the rest?

**EH:** Really good question. So I think the things I would be looking for is somebody who is passionate about the role so it hasn't been given the role forced, you know, the role hasn't been forced on them, but it's something that they are actively interested in doing, because they want to make a difference. And what's really interesting when you start to lift yourself out of the classroom/teacher role where you have that direct impact on children and start to work in teacher educator roles where you're working with adults, your impact suddenly becomes much wider very quickly. So you're impacting on your ability to improve the life chances of children suddenly becomes much greater. So being really passionate about improving the life chances of young, young children and young people through your work as a teacher educator. I also like to see people who really look for the best in the person they are mentoring and not attempting to create a mini me. So there are a whole variety of really different ways that you can be a fantastically successful teacher. And I think the ability to look inwardly and see what it is that makes me a great teacher but also look outwardly and say, but what might this person have that's different to me, but which I can help to develop and that's quite a tricky thing to do sometimes and quite a subtle skill for a mentor, because the temptation often can be this works for me, therefore you should do the same. Sometimes that's not the best way forward for that particular person because of the way their personalities or the way they engage with children or their particular views.

**JC:** That can take quite a quite calm, you need to be quite confident in your own skin, don't you, especially if you're a new mentor, you need to be very confident with your own teaching style to be able to step back and acknowledge that perhaps the way you're doing something isn't going to work for someone else. And then have a conversation with that have a conversation with that person around okay, well, these are the areas that I use or these are the things I prioritise they work for me because of x, y & z but I can see that for you that isn't potentially to going to work because of x, y & z for you. And that certainly when you're early on in your mentoring career, that that can be quite a difficult process to go through.

**EH:** It really can because it can almost feel like you're being critical of your approach to things. And I think that leads into the third thing I'd be looking for really nicely which is someone who is also willingly on a personal journey of development and discovery. Because actually, unless you can acknowledge that you're not a finished article and none of us are we never finished articles unless you can acknowledge that and be open to discussion and change and debate and thinking about why do I, why do I do it that way? And yes, this does work for me. But why does it work for me and unpicking that. And as a mentor, that's actually if you embrace it, and you can, you can work within that idea of moving forward and developing and thinking it can be a really exciting role and it can really help you develop. The best CPD I ever had as a teacher was mentoring others because in unpicking what I was doing, I was growing far more as a teacher than I ever had through any other type of CPD, but you do have to be open to that process of change and thinking about what you're doing and discussing that with, with somebody who is more junior to you ultimately, either in age or stage it could be either and as you say, James that can sometimes feel really uncomfortable but being comfortable with being uncomfortable and having those discussions, I think can make all difference.

**JC:** Based on my experience really, but I think it's something that that I've spoken to other people about too, is sometimes again early on in the mentors career, if a trainee or whoever they're mentoring asks a lot of questions they can, they can end up being quite defensive about that. And actually appreciating and understanding that at the step, the level of understanding that that trainee is at the moment, asking questions is exactly what they need to do. And it's not that they're asking

them because they're questioning whether you're good at doing that, it's because they maybe don't understand it yet. Or it's because they want to understand how and why you're doing something.

**EH:** Absolutely. And we always say to children don't we, there's no such thing as a silly question and that, we need to mean that. We need for that to be true, but that's also true of working with, with trainees and NQT's and an early career teachers. They're asking because they want to know and so even if you feel that they're asking and it's almost questioning what you're doing, if you see that as an opportunity to unpick for yourself and for them, what it is you're doing and how you're working, you'll both find that you grow as a result of that.

**JC:** One of the biggest challenges if you know any teacher, whether we're talking about mentoring, whether we're talking about marking, whether we're talking about assessment, whether we're talking about planning, time is not something that a lot of us have. A mentor who perhaps is really excited about the idea of investing in someone else, all the brilliant qualities that you've just listed all the things that we would know, we want our mentors to have, if they're sat there thinking I want to do all this, but I'm really worried that it's going to consume me by doing all that it's going to take up my entire week when I already have very little time anyway. What sort of reassurance can you give them, maybe advice that you could give to someone who's becoming a mentor about whether or not it needs to become something that is all encompassing, that takes up their entire week? Does the role demand that does it need to be that?

**EH:** I don't think it does need to be that I think it can become that and I think as educators, we do tend to throw ourselves into things wholeheartedly and we do allow our roles to consume what we do. That's a fairly typical trait that I see in teachers and something that we really do have to guard against. And one of my other passions, aside from mentoring and teacher education, is mental health and well-being of teachers. So I would very much guard against that and I'm glad you asked that question James, because it's really important that with all of the things I talked about, needing to have them wanting to work with trainees or in cuties and having that passion, the most important thing is, is self-care. So it's the, it's a bit of an old Hackneyed phrase now, but that, you know, put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others is absolutely true. If you're not centered and calm and able to feel in control of what you're doing, then you're not going to be able to help the trainee or the NQT that you're working with and you're not going to be able to help the children and that you're teaching. So absolutely you do need to take care of yourself first. In terms of advice, I wish I had a magic wand or could solve the fact that schools are so time poor, the TEMZ isn't going to overnight solve that problem. I think what we are trying to do is centralise lots of information from many different places, so save you lots of time in terms of going away and finding the information you might need and putting it all in a in a one stop shop place for you. So we're hoping to save you some time from that perspective. But the only piece of advice I can really give in this situation is communicate. So keep communicating communicate with your, the person you're working with, whether that's a trainee or an NQT and explain to them the times you do and don't have available and make that really clear. Communicate with your Senior Leadership Team. Explain to them they may have forgotten just how much time and effort it takes to develop a new teacher, you would really hope they don't haven't forgotten because they've been through it themselves. They've been new teachers and they've you know that the time it took to develop them should still be in their minds, but they're busy people too, and they can forget. So communicate with them, talk to them, explain to them the time that things are taking but do it with a positive solution driven focus. So rather than I haven't got enough time to do this, so I can't do the job. At the moment I'm struggling with to find enough time for my trainee, could I suggest that and come with a solution

that means that you had to you're not adding additional pressure onto your Senior Leadership Team because you're coming ready made with the solution and they're just going to be more open to working with you in those circumstances, I think.

**JC:** It feeds back to that idea of being vulnerable and being okay with being feeling vulnerable in that moment and communicating that. So being a mentor doesn't necessarily mean you have to know everything. First of all, if your trainee comes to you and says something with a new bit of research from one of their training days that you've never seen, don't feel like you need to know what that is. You may not know what that is, you know, my teacher training was a decade ago, there'll be lots of things that trainees will have now that I will possibly never even heard of and that's great. That's, the benefit of being a mentor is that you're being exposed to these things that you maybe wouldn't know already. But again, I think there's an element of vulnerability there. You need to be able to say to your trainee, you know what, I don't know about that. Let's sit down and talk about it. So you can talk me through how it works, or, you know what actually, I'm feeling a little stressed at this time. Do you mind if we have a meeting in an hour or so once I've managed to catch up with these books rather than feeling like you have to do it at that time, specifically, because you were, that's what it said on your timetable. Being able to be vulnerable and demonstrating to the trainee can be really powerful.

**EH:** Absolutely. And it's really important that we do demonstrate that kind of self-care to trainees because we want to bring up a generation of teachers who understand how important that is. So modelling what you would expect other colleagues to do in terms of taking time for yourself, communicating that you're having a bad day that I'm feeling a bit stressed that I'm a bit worried about this. Absolutely right. It's really important that that you model that. You also touched on something about mentors not needing to know everything and that is so true. And it can you can, it's almost the same as when you're teaching. If children, ask you a question you don't know the answer to sometimes the temptation can be to panic and worry and of course, as you become more experienced as a teacher, you know that you don't need to do that. Because what you'll say to the children is, I don't know, let's find that out together. Or, you know, let's, who can find a book that has the answer to that, or there's all kinds of techniques you can use where you're not exposing any ignorance, you're just showing, your modelling to the children how you can learn together. And this is the same thing we would expect from mentors with their trainees. As a mentor, you're by no means expected to have all of the information that the trainee could possibly need. But what you can and should be doing is signposting the trainee to where they might find that information. So your network of colleagues the SENCO the LSA that really knows how to deal with a particular child's needs the you know, the teacher who really manages that kind of behaviour issue on a windy Friday afternoon that you can say go and watch what they do all of those that knowledge of the people that your trainee can learn from, which comes back to the mentorship concept is it's you're not expected to have all the answers, but part of your role is to signpost the trainee or the NQT to where they can find them.

**JC:** Is it a myth, by the way that wind impacts the behaviour of children because I got told that from the very start of my teaching career that windy days were the worst days for children's behaviour. That's something that's been backed up by science?

**EH:** I don't believe there is scientific study, but my personal experience of teaching is that is absolutely true. And if I ever had a practical lesson planned for an afternoon and it had been windy lunchtime, I would scrap it and do something else entirely because it does send kids bats, I'm sure!

**JC:** I used to just days to just blame my terrible behaviour management skills and the fact that there was a slightly stiffer breeze during the afternoon than there was in the morning! And there'll be lots of providers as well as mentors, listening to this and from their perspective, how can they get mentors to engage with the TEMZ? What sort of process is there in place you know, practically, for providers who are thinking yes, great TEMZ sounds like something I really want my mentor to be involved with? How can they get them involved? How can they get them a sign up into the TEMZ?

**EH:** Share the link for them to sign up it's really simple, it's free so there's nothing for them to pay. They just have to give a very small amount of information so that we know that they are who they say they are, and then they have access to all of this great material, including a load of the modules from NASBTT Learn so some CPD that they can engage with. All of that is completely free. So please encourage them to sign up by sharing the link to do so. And hopefully as you do your mentor training as we go into the next academic year, you'll be talking to them about it when you're when you're developing your mentor training and perhaps even using bits of the research from it yourself or using a fine you know, one of the TED Talks appeals to you could work that into your mentor training, but make it part of the everyday discourse. And if you are one of the providers who is including signposting for your mentors in the weekly conversations that they have with trainees, you could be signposting them to things through the TEMZ. So I know that some providers, for example, are saying this week I'd like you to have a conversation with your training about Cognitive Load Theory, for example. Well, perhaps you could say, if you'd like to brush up on your own knowledge, this is where you can find it and signpost them to where they'd find it in within the TEMZ, that that kind of approach.

**JC:** I think the NASBTT Learn offering for certainly for mentors have if they've not been a mentor before and that they may not know about NASBTT Learn, what is that? And how can mentors engage with that?

**EH:** NASBTT Learn is an online library of CPD. It's asynchronous CPD, which means that the person engaging with it can do it in their own time, at their own pace and it's very interactive. It can be used on a mobile device or on a laptop or PC and there are a whole range of different titles. And we've curated those for the titles that are most appropriate for mentors to engage with. So you could, they get a digital badge on completion, so that can be part of their own CPD that they can use as part of their performance management and they'd have evidence towards that. But it is an online library of great quality CPD.

**JC:** For any mentors, I think looking to you know, perhaps develop some practice beyond the soft skills that the TEMZ will point you towards, I think is a really good option for those mentors to be able to engage in and as you say, if providers want to point them towards specific CPD that they would like their mentees to engage with, again, that can come part of that, which I think is really valuable. And away from mentoring Emma, and I haven't told you this prior to the podcast purposefully, we do our we do our 'Big Five' on the podcast. And the 'Big Five' are five questions that a couple will relate to teaching and then there's a couple others just to find out a little bit about you as an individual away from perhaps teacher education. Are you happy to take on our 'Big Five'?

**EH:** I am happy to take on the 'Big Five'.

**JC:** Excellent, there's nothing to catch you out is the first thing to say. So, we'll find out whether we can catch you out. I won't say that until we've done them. It's a, first question, fairly straightforward

one probably for you. So your most , what do you believe is the most important trait or characteristic as a teacher, first of all, so, from your experience of years of teaching, what do you think is the most important characteristic or trait as a teacher?

**EH:** A genuine investment in wanting to develop the whole child beyond Maths and English beyond what can be examined. But really caring about a child as a whole and everything that that brings all their foibles, all the all the quirks, all their all their strengths, all the things that make them the amazing human beings that they are.

**JC:** Hard to disagree with that! Your favourite and this is going be hard for you because I know you love reading so I'm going say your favourite book, but that is a very difficult question. So if you can't think of your favourite, you might have an all-time favourite straightaway. If you can't think of your favourite then maybe one over the past 12 to 18 months that you've read, that's had a real impact or something that you will recommend to someone else.

**EH:** Such a tough question James.

**JC:** I know, I know.

**EH:** The most dog-eared book that has been dropped in the bath and picked up and re-read and pages folded over is the Time Traveller's Wife. So that's probably, the if you looked at my bookshelf, the one you would say I love the most. It's certainly the book I've re-read the most. In terms of the book that's had the most impact on me as a bright-eyed university student and I read 'Brave New World' and that totally changed the way I thought about society. So that's my kind of highbrow answer. But the Time Traveller's Wife is the one that I've probably read the most often.

**JC:** I've not read that, that is immediately on my list.

**EH:** Great book. I've never watched the film because I just feel like it will probably ruin a fantastic book.

**JC:** Yes, I did. That's always the case. Was it Captain Corelli's Mandolin did that come out as a film eventually?

**EH:** Yeah it did

**JC:** I read the book right before I watched the film and it was the biggest mistake I could have made

**EH:** Yeah can be so disappointing can't it.

**JC:** Absolutely. Actually, those listening on the podcast won't know but Emma's in a Ravenclaw t-shirt today. The one thing I would say is that I think the Harry Potter books and the film's I don't think there's much, I enjoyed the film's nearly as much as I enjoyed the books.

**EH:** I have to agree and I was just going say the same thing in terms of series of books then the Harry Potter books are, I have them on audiotape, audio tape that's showing my age - they're not on audiotape at all, they are on audio, audible on my phone and I go to sleep listening to the Harry Potter books every evening because I struggle to fall asleep and so Stephen Fry reading very quietly

in the background is what accompanies much, my husband is a long suffering man but that accompanies the first hour of our evening routine. So Harry Potter books and I agree the films are also fabulous. So, one of those rarities.

**JC:** Most important factor, or most important characteristic or trait now as a mentor. And we have explored that a little bit. But if you had to pick up one thing, not as a teacher now, but as a mentor, what would be the most important factor or characteristic or trait that you can think of as a mentor?

**EH:** Openness in a word, and I think that encapsulates a lot of what we were talking about earlier. So openness to the role, but also openness to exploring your own practice and the kind of best fit for the person you're working with, rather than having a closed idea of what teaching should look like.

**JC:** Excellent. One person from history to the present day. Okay, your hosting, so I should, I should frame this far better than I currently am - you're hosting a dinner party. Okay, Emma you can have five people, five people at this party and it can be anyone all the way through history to the President. The first person on that list. Who would they be?

**EH:** Stephen Fry seems come up twice now in this conversation. I just think he's fascinating. Plus he makes me laugh and for dinner party, what more do you need than that?

**JC:** Absolutely. If my Mum listens to this podcast to be fully agree with pretty much every single answer you've given so far, Stephen Fry is her absolute hero. So a very, very good choice. And then last but not least, and kind of looking forward to the next academic year or looking forward to this year. If you had one word to sum up what you want the next academic year to look like, what would that word be? Which in our current scenario is potentially quite difficult, but looking forward for the sector, if you could sum up what you'd want the next year to be like, what word would you use?

**EH:** Compassionate. And I think we need to have compassion for one another compassion for ourselves and compassion for the children that are going to be coming back having suffered or not coming back, we don't know. Having suffered this collective trauma that we're all going through. So I think compassion is going to be absolutely central to everything we do from this point going forward.

**JC:** And that leads perfectly really on to my last question or the last point that would be great to chat about and we should say now we're recording this in July in preparation to release out in September so let's place ourselves in September now and there's going to be lots of mentors who are listening to this who experienced or not are going to be in scenarios/situations that they've never experienced before. Anxiety potentially will be higher around almost every element of school life. And so mentoring with potentially will add to that in terms of their own workload or what they're thinking about. What advice would you give to those mentors who are listening to this now who are really excited about the opportunity to have a trainee, but are worried about everything around them going on is going to impact on that? Is there any advice you could give to those people?

**EH:** First of all, be kind to yourself, you know, we can't, we can't do it all. We're going to be asked to deal with so many situations that, as you say, are completely alien to us. I mean, I've been asked I was asked a similar question at a recent event for NQT's and I was almost trying to reassure the NQT's that in a way that's never happened before. We were all going to be novices in September. So those feelings that the anxieties normally have going into a new year in September of uncertainty

and not knowing what school is going to look like and the realities of the school day, everybody from it from the CEO of a MAT through to the teachers in the classroom, we're all going to be feeling that. So harness that use that. Talk to the person you're working with your trainee about it and goes back to my point earlier about communication be really open and honest about how you're feeling, because that will give them permission to feel that too. And you'll move forward together.

**JC:** Thank you so much for kicking off our podcast series. Brilliant, everyone. It's not been too painful.

**EH:** No, it's been a pleasure. Thank you very much.

**JC:** As always, it was a pleasure to speak with Emma and plenty for us to consider when ensuring we're working compassionately with others. Thanks to Emma for taking the time to appear on this week's episode and a huge thank you to you for listening. Our next episode is a fascinating chat with Di Swift, Director of Keele in North Staffordshire teacher training. Until then, don't forget to check out all the free resources available on the TEMZ website. And as always, thanks for listening.