Mentoring in Higher Education

Case Studies of Peer Learning and Pedagogical Development

Edited by
Clare Woolhouse · Laura J. Nicholson

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Mentoring in Higher Education

"It is refreshing to recognise such a diversity of contexts, practices and approaches to mentoring relationships and the centrality of these to our work as educational professionals. The editors have done an excellent job in combining complementary research accounts from tutors mentoring students as well as peer academic mentors in Higher Education. Chapters within the text consider mentoring for social justice in addition to a philosophical look at the relational ethics of mentoring. This International collection is critical to understanding how we can all play a role in mentoring to liberate and educate."

—Dr Christine Lewis, *PG Cert Mentoring and Coaching Course Leader, Edge Hill University, UK*

"For anyone working in higher education this book offers great tips and advice on how to use mentoring on a practical level. The book is also enhanced by drawing on global perspectives. For educational purposes, this book would be a very useful teaching resource for lecturers in education, but also as guidance to any students studying at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level to understand how they can engage with mentoring to enhance their personal learning journeys."

—Dr Mel Bull, *EMCC Accredited Coach and Mentor, MBTI Practitioner and Insights Practitioner, Senior University Teacher in Leadership and Leading Change, Executive and Professional Education, University of Sheffield, UK*

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Editors
Clare Woolhouse
Faculty of Education
Edge Hill University
Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK

Laura J. Nicholson
Faculty of Education
Edge Hill University
Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK

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Clare Woolhouse would like to dedicate this book to Rob who always knows how to make me laugh even at the end of those long difficult weeks we can experience as HE tutors.

Laura J. Nicholson would like to thank Paul for always being there as a constant source of support as we peer mentor each other through life! Laura would like to dedicate this book to her two wonderful children, Tallulah and Sam, who make life very happy and make sure there's never a dull moment.

Foreword

This timely new collection explores the place, role and importance of mentoring as a form of collaborative learning that responds to the social justice aims of enhancing equitable practices within higher education. The chapters engage with case studies and empirical and philosophical research that broadly respond to concerns raised within a variety of cross-disciplinary fields framed within a global context, including higher education studies, mentoring and coaching, and vocational, life-long and professional learning.

The text brings together 16 chapters by established authors who are researching within the broad theme of mentoring in higher education settings with either students or colleagues. While many of the chapters have a UK focus, other chapters explore practices and experiences in Europe, South East Asia and the USA. The book will be essential reading for students and academics studying or engaged in mentoring within higher education, particularly those involved with vocational courses such as teaching or nursing or those studying education more broadly.

Contributors include David Allan, Brittany Arthur Mellon, Marinda Ashman, Emma Ball, Claire Ball-Smith, Christiane Boehr, Mary Brydon-Miller, Stefani Carlson, Janet W. Colvin, Alice Deters, Victoria L. Dickman-Burnett, Vicky Duckworth, Linda Dunne, Amanda Fulford, Terra Greenwell, Claire Hennessy, Sandra L. Hogue, Carla Kent, Vini Lander, Le Nu Cam Le, Allison JoAnn Lester, Bronwen Maxwell, Laura

J. Nicholson, Juan Antonio Núñez Cortés, Gillian Peiser, Pham Hoai Anh, Gillian Pye, Miriam Raider-Roth, Sara Rodriguez-Cuadrado, Dawn Roseberry, Amanda Santos-Colon, Whitney M. Stewart, Pamela Theurer, Susan Tyler, Sue Williams, Clare Woolhouse and Annabel Yale.

The co-editors are Clare Woolhouse, Reader in Education, and Laura J. Nicholson, Senior Research Fellow, both working in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University, UK.

Ormskirk
Lancashire, UK

Clare Woolhouse
Laura J. Nicholson

Preface

The editors have sought to draw together a range of philosophical viewpoints and ontological stances to discuss a variety of empirical case studies conducted within and about mentoring in higher education, situated within local, national and international policy and practice. While each piece of work can be framed as broadly qualitative, every chapter offers different examples of practice, theoretically grounded to cover key issues such as relationships and communication; professional development and peer learning; equality and social justice; mentor and mentee identities; expectations within higher education; and time, workload and trust.

This text offers a clear and unique approach to thinking about mentoring in higher education by explicitly exploring how mentoring supports social justice as well as educational aims. Furthermore, to support the use of the book for educational purposes, we have sought to actively engage the reader in academic and critical reflections via a short "overview" at the start of each chapter and a "points for discussion" section at the end.

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Lancashire, UK

Clare Woolhouse
Laura J. Nicholson

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Notes on Contributors

David Allan is Senior Lecturer in Further Education and Training and a post-doctoral researcher at Edge Hill University. He has been a principal researcher for a number of projects and has mentored colleagues both within Edge Hill and externally. His principal research interests lie in the field of inclusion and social justice, in particular, school disaffection and pupil marginalisation, vocational learning and student voice.

Pham Hoai Anh is the deputy head of the Professional English Department at the Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam. She oversees the BA in International Professional English which trains professionals who can become English teachers, secondary teachers who teach other subjects in English, translators and interpreters. Her research focuses on language teaching.

Marinda Ashman is an associate professor in the Department of Student Leadership and Success Studies at Utah Valley University. She has served as faculty director over the Peer Mentor Program, Student Success, and Leadership Courses and department chair, and she is program chair. She teaches on first-year experience, career, and leadership courses and conducts research on peer mentoring, resilience, and grit.

Emma Ball is Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is an experienced secondary

school practitioner and mentor coordinator for trainee teachers. She has collaboratively secured internal research funding to develop and implement a peer mentoring scheme. She is studying for her PhD, focussing upon the use of peer mentoring as a learning pedagogy for promoting student engagement.

Claire Ball-Smith had a decade-long career as a secondary school teacher in both the UK and abroad, in Kenya, as a teacher of history and English, a head of Year and head of Department. She now works at the University of York as director of Initial Teacher Training within the Department of Education. Her research interests include effective mentoring within university-based professional programmes (teaching, social work, nursing and medicine).

Christiane Boehr is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Cincinnati. She teaches undergraduate courses in English Composition, Professional, Technical and Scientific Writing and is an instructor for German at the Tri-State German-American Society in Park Hills, Kentucky. Her research interests include feminist rhetoric, relational context, and writing as an embodied experience.

Mary Brydon-Miller is a participatory action researcher working in both school and community settings. Her work focuses on climate change education. She is serving as extraordinary professor at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, is a recent Benjamin Meaker Fellow at Bristol University, and a former Fulbright research scholar.

Stefani Carlson is the director of Congregational Learning at Congregation Emanu El in Houston. She has been a leader in Jewish education for more than 15 years. Her research focuses on relational learning communities in part-time, Jewish educational settings. She recently received an MA in Educational Studies, with a concentration in Foundations of Education and Social Change, from the University of Cincinnati.

Janet W. Colvin is the associate dean for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Utah Valley University and a professor in the

Communication Department. She is fascinated by the different factors that affect the world of communication and what influences our ability to communicate. She devotes her research time to studying peer mentor and tutor relationships, refugee issues and how communication affects diversity and inclusivity.

Juan Antonio Núñez Cortés is an assistant professor in the Department of Philology and its Didactics within the Faculty of Teaching Training and Education at the Autonomous University of Madrid. There he teaches didactics of language and written and oral communication. His research interests focus on the didactics of language, in particular, in teaching reading and academic writing, as well as teacher training in the same discipline.

Alice Deters is a doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati. Her research interests include equity and access in higher education, college readiness, and university-school-community partnerships. She serves as the assistant program director at Breakthrough Cincinnati. As a graduate research assistant, she supports Bearcat Academy, a partnership between the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Public Schools, to promote college awareness, readiness, and preparation.

Victoria L. Dickman-Burnett is a professional academic editor and a recent PhD graduate of the University of Cincinnati. Her research interests focus on sexual violence prevention in secondary schools with an emphasis on school and classroom climate. Her research seeks to democratize the process of school-based research, and she frequently works with teachers and students as partners in the research process.

Vicky Duckworth works in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University. She has developed considerable expertise as an educationalist and researcher in the field of adult literacy and education. She is deeply committed to challenging inequality through critical and emancipatory approaches to education, widening participation, inclusion, community action and engaging in research with a strong social justice agenda.

Linda Dunne has taught in higher education for 20 years in the areas of inclusive education, disability studies and mentoring. She has co-authored

a book on the application of theory to research and has authored many articles which have appeared in peer-reviewed education journals.

Amanda Fulford is Professor of Philosophy of Education and associate dean in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University. She teaches postgraduate students in professional learning and supervises doctoral students. Her research interests are in the philosophy of education, and public and community philosophy. She is co-editor of the “Debating Higher Education” series with Springer and has authored numerous articles which have appeared in international, peer-reviewed journals.

Terra Greenwell is a principal at Ramsey Middle School in Louisville, Kentucky. She has dedicated her career to improving outcomes for students in high-need schools. Her research focuses on rethinking education to embrace the unique talents, skills, and interests of twenty-first century students.

Claire Hennessy is Senior Lecturer in Education and Early Childhood Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. During her teaching career in higher education, she has developed research interests in internships, methods of delivering feedback, student engagement and mentoring. She has co-designed and implemented a successful peer mentoring scheme for undergraduates for which she won a Liverpool John Moores University Vice Chancellor award.

Sandra L. Hogue is a literacy leader of Accelerated Improvement Schools in Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, where she promotes the acceleration of literacy for over 30 elementary, middle, and high schools. Her research is grounded in fostering urban competence for new teachers working in high-need urban schools.

Carla Kent is an assistant principal within Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville. Her research centres around school-based mentorship in high poverty, low-performing schools. She recently received the Blake Haselton Change Agent Award for work as an advocate in leading the push for new teacher support and mentorship.

Vini Lander is director of the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality at Leeds Beckett University. Her research uses critical race

theory to analyse racial inequalities in education. Her teaching develops students' and teachers' understanding about race and education.

Le Nu Cam Le is a tutor within the School of Foreign Languages at the Hanoi University of Science and Technology in Vietnam. Over the past 20 years, this university has pioneered programmes that focus on linguistic skills in a technical environment, which is an increasingly prevalent and important trend for welcoming investment and technology transfer.

Allison JoAnn Lester is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cincinnati and the director of Curriculum and Evaluation at Breakthrough Cincinnati. Her research focuses on how one's relationship with/to/from/in/between spatial dimensions of place shapes one's identity and seeks to help cultivate learning spaces where one's rich historical and cultural narrative can be fostered and sustained through socially just transformative paradigms.

Bronwen Maxwell is head of Commissioned Research at the Sheffield Institute of Education, and deputy head of the Centre for Development and Research in Education, Sheffield Hallam University, where she leads large-scale research and evaluation projects for national and regional organisations. She focuses on (i) teacher knowledge, learning, development and well-being, and (ii) evidence-informed practice, the implementation of policy and school-led research.

Brittany Arthur Mellon is a faculty member at the University of Cincinnati. She oversees cooperative education experiences for computer engineering students and is currently a doctoral candidate focusing on Educational and Community-Based Action Research. Her research concentrates on using participatory action research methods to understand the experiences of women in engineering.

Laura J. Nicholson is Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University. She publishes in international, peer-reviewed journals, supervises PhD students, mentors academic staff with their research and serves as editor and reviewer for several journals. Her research focuses on the psychology of education, particularly facilitators of student engagement and motivation. Another research strand is mentoring

and social justice. She is a chartered psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Gillian Peiser is Senior Lecturer in Teacher Education at Liverpool John Moores University. Her research interests are in teacher development, research-informed teacher education, intercultural learning and enrichment learning for students from non-traditional backgrounds. She works closely with teacher mentors in her professional role and has been the principle investigator on a research project titled, "Mentoring Across Professions".

Gillian Pye is a programme leader for the BA Hons Teaching, Learning and Child Development degree at Edge Hill University. Prior to this, she worked for many years in secondary education and is a passionate advocate for evidence-based practice in her teaching. Her research interests focus on students' engagement with feedback and feed-forward processes and the benefits of peer mentoring in raising the self-efficacy of students.

Miriam Raider-Roth is Professor of Educational Studies and Educational and Community-Based Action Research, director of the Action Research Centre, and director of the Mandel Teacher Educator Institute at the University of Cincinnati. A graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, her research focuses on the relational context of teaching and learning, action research, and feminist qualitative research methods.

Sara Rodriguez-Cuadrado holds a degree in Psychology (Autonomous University of Madrid) and a PhD in Neuroscience (Pompeu Fabra University) and has postgraduate qualifications in Education. She is Lecturer in Psychology at the Autonomous University of Madrid. Her research interests cover psycholinguistics, education and disabilities.

Dawn Roseberry is a school counsellor for Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville. Her research focuses on the impact of out of school suspension on academic motivation. Prior to becoming a school counsellor, she was a Youth Services Centre coordinator working to remove barriers to academic success.

Amanda Santos-Colon is an instructional resource teacher within Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville. Her research focuses on the effectiveness of school-based mentorship. She received the Blake Haselton Change Agent Award from the University of Louisville for her work as an advocate, promoter and leader in mentoring support for new educators.

Whitney M. Stewart is a resource teacher and offers consulting services through WM Stewart Consulting. She has held various instructional roles, and her educational leadership focuses on professional development in cultural responsiveness, data analysis, and instructional technology. She researches culturally responsive teaching and Afro-cultural learning orientations.

Pamela Theurer is in her thirteenth year of serving students in public education and her eighth year as the Coordinator of Teaching and Learning for Edgewood City Schools. Prior to her experience in public education, her career focus was on early childhood education in instruction, administration, and adult education. Her practitioner experience is what has driven her research interests in leadership and the superintendency.

Susan Tyler has been director of Continuing Medical Education (CME) at the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine since 2008. Previous roles include the Manager of CME Accreditation at the American Academy of Family Physicians and Director of CME at the University of Texas Health Science Centre Medical School in San Antonio, Texas. She earned her PhD in Educational Studies from the University of Cincinnati.

Sue Williams is a senior lecturer and course leader for the BA Hons Teaching, Learning and Child Development degree and University Learning and Teaching Fellow in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University. Her research interests include peer mentoring, the assessment for learning and formative assessment strategies used in higher education, and student mental health and wellbeing.

Clare Woolhouse is a reader at Edge Hill University. Her teaching relates to sociological approaches to education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She mentors PhD students, early career researchers

and academic colleagues new to teaching in Higher Education and is Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research adopts a feminist, post-structuralist approach to exploring identity formation, multi-modal methodologies and pedagogies, with particular attention given to aspects of educational difference, inclusion and social justice.

Annabel Yale is Lecturer in Early Years at Edge Hill University. Her background is Psychology and Social Science, and she has expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods. She is actively researching into student expectations, including experiences of higher education, personal tutoring and employability in higher education. She is involved in the work-based learning modules in Early Years Education.

Abbreviations

AERA	American Educational Research Association
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CFET	Certificate in Further Education and Training
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education, England
ECF	Early Career Framework
ECR	Early Career Researcher
EdD	Doctorate in Education
EERA	European Educational Research Association
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HE	Higher Education
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council (England)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency (UK)
ITE/ITT	Initial Teacher Education/Training
K–12	Kindergarten to 12th grade (USA)
Key Stage 1–4	Stages of the state education system (UK)
LEA	Local Education Authority
LS	Lesson Study

MA	Master of Education
MRes	Master of Research
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
NSS	National Student Survey (UK)
NUS	National Union of Students (UK and various other countries)
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
PGDE	Post-Graduate Diploma in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status (England)
REF	Research Excellence Framework (UK)
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training course (England)
SEA	South East Asia
SENCo	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (England)
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework (UK)

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1

Introduction

Clare Woolhouse and Laura J. Nicholson

This text is positioned within the cross-disciplinary field of mentoring in higher education (HE) and highlights the key themes that emerge in relation to the pedagogy of mentoring and the potentials of peer learning. In selecting the chapters for this book, the editors felt that it was important to frame the issues around the practice of mentoring within HE specifically, whether it be between students and tutors, students and their peers or between professional colleagues. Therefore, the chapters explore these various forms of mentoring via philosophical pieces, case studies and empirical research conducted within individual settings drawn from different national contexts, while linking to the globalised context in which the various authors work.

The text adopts a clear and targeted focus on mentoring in HE. This is important for exploring the place, role and importance of mentoring as a form of collaborative learning that responds to the social justice aims of enhancing equitable practices. The content also responds to the existing literature to address concerns raised within a variety of cross-disciplinary fields including HE studies, mentoring and coaching, vocational, lifelong and professional learning. With this in mind, the text will be of

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C. Woolhouse (✉) • L. J. Nicholson
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK
e-mail: woolhouc@edgehill.ac.uk; laura.nicholson@edgehill.ac.uk

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interest to students of HE, particularly on vocational courses such as teaching or nursing, or those studying education more broadly, as well as to academic colleagues working within HE settings. What follows is a brief section defining the key terminology used within the book, an outline of the purpose and structure of the book, and finally a summary of the chapters contained within.

Defining Key Terms

Mentoring has been described in many ways and has often been aligned with processes that involve the development of good communication and close professional relationships such as coaching, counselling, advising and teaching (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). While Galbraith (2001) concentrates upon the differences in age, status and experience between mentor and mentee, other writers have given more attention to the reciprocal nature of the relationship that can be developed within the mentoring process (e.g., Addington & Graves, 2010). For example, Faure (2000, p. 23) defines mentoring as "a relationship that meets a development need, helps develop full potential, and benefits all partners; mentor, mentee and the organization". Taking a similar stance, Collins (2009, p. 80) states that "mentoring is a protected relationship in which learning and experimentation can transpire; potential skills can be developed, and in which results can be measured in terms of competencies gained". Thus, it would seem that mentoring can be identified as a form of educational process concerned with the personal and professional development of individuals through intentional and strategic relationships that will ultimately also benefit the organisations within which individuals work. This can traverse groupings based on age, knowledge and skills or status (such as student and tutor) within education settings, but not always.

This interpretation fits with the ideas and practices explored within this text, although, as demonstrated in a number of chapters, mentoring within HE settings can materialise specific characteristics in situ and often adopts a peer approach. This can be between students (see Chaps. 2, 3 and 4) or between individuals with similar status or professional roles

who share their knowledge, skills and pedagogical experience in a more reciprocal manner to support each other's professional development (see Chaps. 10, 11, 12 and 14). This focus on peer support particularly echoes existing literature and research conducted with staff working in vocational faculties within HE such as education (Cullingford, 2016; Harvey, Ambler, & Cahir, 2017), health (Clement & Welch, 2018; Cullen et al., 2017; Hafsteinsdóttir, van der Zwaag, & Schuurmans, 2017; van der Weijden, Belder, Van Arensbergen, & Van Den Besselaar, 2015) and social care (Katz, Elsaesser, Klodnik, & Khare, 2019; Leedahl et al., 2019).

Why a Book About Mentoring in Higher Education?

While the work of mentoring, and particularly vocational mentoring, occurs across the education and employment sectors, it can be framed as an essential "lifeline" for professionals and their students working within the current HE context. Over the past 20 years, there has been a drive for HE in different national contexts to submit to the "neoliberal turn" which has infiltrated different forms of education demanding regulation, measurement and efficiencies (Ball, 2015, 2016). To address this, many HE academics have sought to carve out opportunities to explicitly counter this neoliberal trend by developing identities and practices that are not framed in terms of the audit and performativity culture (Leathwood & Read, 2013). One route for this has been the expansion of informal and formal collegial support and mentoring (Arthur, 2016; Goodsell Love, 2012). In the context of HE, collegial mentoring can provide space for colleagues to work together rather than in competition, to learn and develop as tutors and researchers in ways that can maintain a sense of integrity and academic freedom. As noted by Lander and Nicholson (Chap. 13) and Maxwell and Duckworth (Chap. 15), this approach can provide space for a reciprocal sharing of knowledge, offer experiences for enhancing personal growth and fulfil collective purposes such as social justice aims as well as professional development (see also

Duckworth & Maxwell, 2015; Kroll, 2017; Woolhouse, Albin-Clark, Shirley, & Webster, 2019).

As detailed within a number of chapters in the first section of this text, mentoring is not a practice that is contained or boundaried, and mentoring as a practice has also become a more integrated part of HE students' experiences at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Crisp, Baker, Griffin, & Lunsford, 2017; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Hansman, 2016; Murphy, Haller, & Spiridakis, 2019; Sheridan, O'Sullivan, Fisher, Dunne, & Beck, 2019). Indeed, in the various chapters, different models of mentoring emerge depending on the groups of individuals involved and the particular contexts in which they are situated. For example, Pye, Williams and Dunne (Chap. 3) describe their design of academic peer mentoring for students, which echoes some of the key factors outlined by Ball and Hennessy in their models for mentoring (Chap. 2). Building on these ideas, the various authors seek to offer a philosophical engagement with mentoring as a concept and share a range of pedagogically framed case studies to demonstrate the breadth and depth of current mentoring and peer-learning practice in HE. For example, Colvin and Ashman (Chap. 4) outline a large peer mentoring scheme in Utah, USA, that shares some similarities with the approach detailed in Chaps. 2 and 3. Stewart et al. (Chap. 10) consider HE peer mentoring in Kentucky, USA, with a focus on professionals involved in academic research that has resonance with Woolhouse and Nicholson's work that addresses UK practice (Chap. 14). To compliment these, Boehr et al. (Chap. 11) offer the point of view of mentees; the authors describe the practicalities and outline the experience of peer mentoring when framed within a cohort model, which offers a useful contrast to many of the other chapters in the book.

Furthermore, in a number of chapters, attention is drawn to specific national or trans-national locations in order to explore how similar approaches to mentoring can be (re)negotiated in different ways, within situated contexts. To this end, Rodriguez-Cuadrado and Núñez Cortés (Chap. 8) provide an overview and specific example of mentor training from Spain, and in Chap. 12, Allan, Pham and Le consider an example from Vietnam, addressing how the process of mentoring can be adapted in response to a cultural context. While many of the chapters detail the

beneficial aspects of various mentoring approaches, the difficulties and issues are also considered. In Chap. 9, Fulford takes a philosophical approach to the issues of time and availability, which have been repeatedly identified as key barriers for productive, meaningful and supportive mentoring in different HE educational settings and national contexts (Dietz & Scheel, 2017; Fong, 2016; Langdon et al., 2016; Sawatsky, Parekh, Muula, Mbata, & Bui, 2016.).

Last, but not least, this book is designed to be of particular interest to practitioners and tutors within HE settings who are keen to explore the concepts of mentoring/peer mentoring and associated learning approaches and/or who wish to engage with such pedagogies to support students in their settings. Examples of this include Yale's chapter which has a particular focus on how mentoring can be successfully incorporated into the role of HE personal tutors (Chap. 5), while Peiser (Chap. 6) and Ball-Smith (Chap. 7) consider the importance of mentoring for professional placements.

In order to further enhance the relevance of this text for HE practitioners and tutors, every chapter provides a clear and short overview at the start and posits questions for reflection and discussion at the end. This offers a route for readers to more actively engage with the ideas and examples included within the chapters and also possibilities for similar peer mentoring programmes or schemes to be developed, delivered and sustained in their home institutions.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into two sections. Section I covers mentoring with undergraduate students in HE and includes peer mentoring within students (Chaps. 2, 3 and 4) and the mentoring of HE students by tutors (Chaps. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Section II explores other types of academic mentoring in HE contexts including professional peer and cross-cultural mentoring and concludes with three chapters that have a focus on mentoring for social justice. Each of the chapters addresses a particular aspect of mentoring in HE. There is a focus either via theoretical or philosophical engagement with the topic or through situated case studies that draw

out the pedagogical practices, challenges, opportunities and/or potential outcomes of mentoring.

To aid with practical engagement with the book within educational contexts, the questions for discussion and reflection at the end of each chapter are designed to engage the academic reader and enable individual chapters to be utilised within teaching and learning contexts such as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees or as part of professional development courses.

Section 1: Mentoring with Undergraduate Students in Higher Education

The first section of the book contains nine chapters that adopt different approaches to investigating how mentoring has been deployed to support the development of undergraduate students within HE contexts. The studies under investigation have a key focus on students enrolled on professional, vocational courses, in which communication, trust and the sharing of knowledge, skills and experience can be considered the corner stones of productive professional relationships.

Peer Mentoring Between Students

Chapter 2 by Ball and Hennessy critically explores a variety of models encompassed under the umbrella of peer mentoring between students in HE. It considers how mentoring can be used to support learning and contribute to the development and management of the "student experience". In addition, consideration of how such approaches attend to institutional priorities and performance indicators are also reviewed. Attention is drawn to the practical application of peer mentoring, using examples and points for reflection.

In Chap. 3, a student academic mentoring programme for second-year undergraduate students is explored, based on case study research at a university in England conducted by Pye et al. The mentoring process under discussion involves a tripartite structural approach utilising

individual, small group and in-class student mentoring. The empirical research data discussed was collected via documents such as student attainment, and mentor and tutor evaluations which were enhanced with qualitative discussions. The chapter explores the experiences of undergraduate students, some of whom were peer mentors and some mentees to frame the benefits of a mentoring approach that takes various forms rather than a singular approach, as this can be flexible and adapted to suit the needs of mentors and mentees.

In Chap. 4, the role and importance of credibility and trust within the peer mentoring relationship are explored. In this chapter, Colvin and Ashman explore the process involved in instances where peer mentoring utilises a more experienced student to help a less experienced one. The chapter draws on empirical data gathered from over 650 students who were using peer mentoring as a learning tool, and their argument is grounded on exploring how what may seem a straightforward expert–novice interaction of peer mentor/mentee can be complicated when there are questions of credibility.

The Mentoring of Higher Education Students by Tutors

Chapter 5 offers an alternative perspective on the topic of mentoring by focusing on students' perceptions of the student–personal tutor relationship. Yale considers how mentoring pedagogies can underpin a positive student–personal tutor relationship and provide a strong foundation for learning, developing student confidence and mediating some of the challenges faced by students in their first year of HE. Yale questions assumptions underlying student support mechanisms, the implicit messages such assumptions send to students, and how this positions them: either as autonomous and independent learners, or as in need and dependent. In addition, there is a consideration of how HE institutions can develop a mentoring system which is integrated within the wider learning context, which both students and personal tutors are invested in.

Chapter 6 considers the important role HE plays in the preparation of professionals entering fields such as nursing, teaching and social work

and the challenges posed by bridging academic settings and professional workplaces. Peiser argues that this has particular significance in the UK, with policy makers calling for “evidence based” or “evidence-informed” learning, which requires extended engagement from workplace mentors and increasing synthesis of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Thus, the chapter is focused on the opportunities and challenges for mentors, particularly within pre-service teaching, and considers the implications for curriculum development in HE.

In Chap. 7, Ball-Smith argues that the relationships developed between professional placement mentors and university-based tutors are crucial for supporting students during their professional training. She notes that a university and their partner schools will develop individual procedures and practices that are needed to traverse the perceived boundaries of school (practice) and HE (theory). Accordingly, Ball-Smith explores the different ways in which mentoring can be developed with a focus upon identifying the mentoring models and pedagogical practices which are most likely to benefit the pre-service teacher in a critical time of their professional development. In addition, consideration is given to the tensions that can arise for students who are simultaneously working towards an academic award and a professional award.

To further engage in the dialogue around how national policy can inform the mentoring support offered by tutors to HE students, Rodriguez-Cuadrado and Núñez Cortés consider social, political and educational scenarios surrounding Spanish mentor practices. Within Chap. 8, they consider how such factors inform the concept of mentorship, its history, practices and implications for a myriad of educational disciplines within the Spanish context. To do so, they particularly address the organisational and pedagogical aspects of writing centres and programmes, initiatives that increased considerably in popularity after Spain gained access to the European HE area.

Chapter 9 is deliberately placed within the centre of the text as Fulford addresses the challenge of “time” that will be familiar to those involved in designing programmes of study that involve mentoring, and which is an underlying concern threaded within other chapters. Fulford adopts a philosophical approach to unpick the difficulties involved in the need to find time for regular meetings when developing close professional

relationships within HE settings. She does this by engaging with the French existentialist philosopher, Gabriel Marcel's work around dichotomy of "disponibilité" and "indisponibilité" ("availability" and "unavailability", respectively).

Section 2: Academic Mentoring in Higher Education Contexts

Building on the ideas and themes offered in Section I, Section II of the book includes seven chapters that consider how peer mentoring and collaborative learning have become a central aspect of learning for professional colleagues working within HE settings.

Professional Peer and Cross-cultural Mentoring

An innovative autoethnographic stance is taken within Chap. 10 to foreground the personal perspectives of five individuals involved in a Doctorate in Education (EdD) dissertation mentoring group. Stewart et al. use various "running a marathon" metaphors to offer an engaging discussion of their experiences; the relationships they developed, the strategies they utilised to maintain the group's momentum and the challenges they overcame, which echo the difficulty of finding time raised within Chap. 9. The chapter concludes by offering a range of insightful suggestions for practitioners wanting to enhance mentoring practice in their own settings and the points for discussion are separated into three areas related to the roles involved in cohort mentoring: graduate students, mentor professors and university programme directors.

The theoretical underpinning and pedagogy involved in a peer mentoring group of doctoral and master's students in Ohio, North Western USA, are studied in Chap. 11. Through collective and individual reflective discussion of their experiences over a year, Boehr et al. consider the factors that enabled continued and productive engagement with research dissertations while also acknowledging the pressures and difficulties various members of the group experienced. The analysis is informed by

feminist research, praxis, and mindset as they consider how they built an advising/mentoring process that recognised and maintained intricate connections between the body, mind, heart and relationships (Jordan & Schwartz, 2018). In particular, there is an emphasis on how they became more intentional and explicit about caring for themselves and for each other within an intensive educational context that requires high focus and productivity.

In Chap. 12, Allan, Pham and Le adopt a traditional definition of mentors as "people who use their knowledge, power and status to assist others to develop their careers" (Tonna, Bjerkholt, & Holland, 2017, p. 211), to explore the relationship between HE tutors in four countries in the West defined as "developed" (England, Germany, Ireland and Romania) and those in two countries identified as "developing" (Vietnam and Laos). The discussion particularly focuses on the inter-country implementation, the shifting role of mentor/mentee and the cross-cultural tensions experienced. This is enhanced through a focused case study from Vietnam and the description of a shifting model for mentoring which could be implemented across other contexts within which cultural differences arise.

Mentoring for Social Justice

This final subsection of the book draws together three chapters that explore questions around the possibilities for mentoring in HE to further social justice aims. These chapters particularly consider how mentoring as a pedagogical process might offer opportunities for self-development and empowerment that extend beyond the content of a programme of study, while also considering the challenges that are faced.

In Chap. 13, Lander and Nicholson examine how the role of teacher educators in university-based programmes fulfil a vital role in the preparation of future teachers that has been undermined. Lander and Nicholson draw on empirical data derived from a case study involving qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted in one university in North-West England. In doing so, they illustrate how teacher education has been undervalued within the academy because of a clear tension between the

need to teach and support student teachers and the lack of mentoring around research. They argue that this research mentoring requires consideration because it is needed to facilitate the transition from “teacher” to “academic/active researcher” in the field of teacher education.

The theme of empowering learners and utilising mentoring to further social justice aims is continued within Chap. 14. Woolhouse and Nicholson explore empirical data gathered from over 300 teaching assistants studying a part-time professional development course to consider the benefits and challenges of peer mentoring. To do so, they construct a dialogue to draw together the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) with that of Freire (2000, p. 41) to frame peer mentoring as a “practice of freedom” that they argue can develop a supportive community of practice for a group of educational professionals whose work and experiences are often undervalued and overlooked.

The concepts of inequality and transformation have been central to the work by Maxwell and Duckworth. In Chap. 15, they re-engage with these and Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of capital to posit how a transformational model of mentoring, grounded upon values of respect, equity, care and social justice can counter neoliberalism and expose the discriminatory landscape of capitalism. They argue that a mentoring model that embraces inclusive forms of “transformational pedagogical capital” can challenge inequality and work towards social justice aims by offering a process that can empower HE learners and strengthen the communities they belong to.

The book closes with a final, concluding chapter in which the key themes and ideas presented in the various chapters are drawn together. It is noted that mentoring can take various forms; it may be one to one; face to face; small group; online; between student peers; between students and tutors; or between professional peers. In the conclusion, we reflect on how the various chapters illustrate that there is no homogeneous or definitive approach or model for mentoring, and that different adaptations arise depending on the nature of the relationships involved and the specific national contexts.

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Section I

Mentoring with Undergraduate Students in Higher Education

2

De-mystifying the Concept of Peer Mentoring in Higher Education: Establishing Models for Learning

Emma Ball and Claire Hennessy

Overview

There has been a significant change in the landscape of higher education in the UK since the introduction of higher tuition fees in 2012 (Hubble, Bolton, & Bellis, 2018). The consequence of this has been seen as a shift in student values, with evidence suggesting that students are now more concerned about their teaching and learning experience (Williams, 2012). As a result of this, some higher education institutions (HEIs) have placed a greater emphasis on improving the student experience (Temple, Callender, Grove, & Kersh, 2014). Mentoring, across all aspects of the student journey, has been advocated as having benefits to students, staff and the HEI (Andrews & Clark, 2011) and thus can be seen as an integral tool in helping to provide a positive student experience. This chapter reports on a review of publicly available data regarding UK universities and proposes a "continuum of mentoring", highlighting four different approaches which mentoring can take to support undergraduate study. The chapter further considers one type of mentoring, namely the development of a peer mentoring scheme in a UK HEI and how this has been established and subsequently maintained. Evaluatory data is used to highlight the benefits of the scheme, alongside the limitations of what such a scheme can actually achieve.

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Introduction

The complexion of UK higher education (HE) has changed significantly in recent years following the £9000 fee cap increase imposed by the Coalition Government (2010–2015) for undergraduate students in 2012–13 (Hubble et al., 2018). These changes in financial structure have readdressed the funding balance and placed a greater emphasis on individual contribution rather than that provided by the state. This has resulted in variable financial positions for universities and promoted immense competition between HE providers. Simultaneously, there has been a growth in enrolments (Murphy, Scott-Clayton, & Wyness, 2017) to a record level despite an initial decrease. Even with this tuition fee increase, the diversity of the student population has also changed and there have been notable increases in entry rates for different groups of students, including disadvantaged young people, and those from widening participation and non-traditional backgrounds (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2015; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018; Moore, Sanders, & Higham, 2013). This is statistically supported by figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency where in 2018, 20.7% of English 18-year-olds from "low participation neighbourhoods" entered HE, compared to 11.2% in 2006. The reform and subsequent compositional shift is a cause for consternation for providers. Williams (2012) has argued that it has created a consumer-driven culture and changed students' values and perceptions of teaching and learning. It has amplified the need for UK HE providers to respond to the challenges of recruiting, retaining, maximising performance and

E. Ball (✉)
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Faculty of Science,
Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK
e-mail: E.L.Ball@ljmu.ac.uk

C. Hennessy
School of Education, Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

improving graduation rates for a broader variety of students (Arnold & Pistilli, 2012; Kovacic, 2012; Siemens et al., 2011; Van Barneveld, Arnold, & Campbell, 2012), and to become more accountable for "value" in its widest context (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

The neo-liberal marketisation of the student experience (Kagan & Diamond, 2019) has created a student as consumer culture (Nixon, Scullion, & Hearn, 2018). It has also coincided with a sector-wide call to reconsider how the "student experience" is managed and how the "totality of a student's interaction with the institution" is supported (Temple et al., 2014, p. 3). One of the most notable outcomes is a sharper focus on teaching and learning, particularly in the light of the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework 2016 and a need to provide "value" (Department for Education, 2016). Currently (and consistent with previous research findings; see Fox & Stevenson, 2006; Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001), institutions are challenged with creating teaching and learning environments that support a growing number and different demographic of students who may need supplementary support. This could suggest why the use of formal and informal peer-to-peer androgogies have gained widespread popularity in recent years based on the recognition that they are an inexpensive means of recruiting, retaining and developing students through, within and beyond the academic lifecycle. These, although not exhaustively, include outreach activities (see Bergerson & Petersen, 2009), transition and induction support (see Chester, Burton, Xenos, & Elgar, 2013), student-to-student interventions related to retention and success (see Thomas, Hill, O'Mahony, & Yorke, 2017) and work-related/graduate employability (see Murdock, Stipanovic, & Lucas, 2013). Thus, there is an increased focus and accountability on higher education institutions (HEIs) to recruit, retain and develop employability of students.

In this context of a changing nature of HE where there is a growing emphasis on retention and student satisfaction, mentoring, and more specifically peer mentoring, is of increasing significance. Momentum for HEIs to develop mentoring schemes has been gathering pace, and with it the academic interest in how these schemes best function. It is the intention of this chapter to examine the concept of mentoring holistically and then focus on peer mentoring more specifically. It will do this with an exemplification of a peer mentoring scheme which has been designed and

implemented in one UK HE provider. The following section will explore the far-reaching concept of mentoring and attend to the various activities under the umbrella of mentoring that exist in UK HE.

Mentoring in Higher Education: Review of Current Practice

Mentoring as a term is used interchangeably both in theory and in practice. Crisp and Cruz (2009) highlight that there are a variety of understandings of the term but little theory to underpin its function definitively when used with students. Instead of attempting to seek a definition of mentoring, it was important to establish an operational overview of the types of mentoring activities that currently exist within UK HE. To investigate the current role of mentoring in the UK, we conducted a review of a random sample of UK university websites to elucidate the types of mentoring currently being used and operationalised. This review was carried out in summer 2018 and 25 university websites were searched for the term "mentor" and "mentoring". Specific features of each mentoring scheme were noted, for example, when mentoring takes place, where students are in their academic level of study and any other key features of the scheme.

This, albeit, small review of publicly available information on university mentoring revealed that there was a wide scope of activities that exist under the umbrella term of mentoring. Since HE providers are responsible for their own curricula, recruitment practices and supporting students into employment, the forms of mentoring varies in type and function between one institution and another. From this information, a continuum of mentoring-related activities was developed, as illustrated in Fig. 2.1, along with how this continuum of mentoring can be conceptualised across the journey of an undergraduate student.

This continuum can start well before enrolment and can involve student mentors making contact with potential students whilst they are still attending school or college, as a recruitment strategy. These activities could be identified as "Outreach and Aspirational mentoring". Mentoring can then continue throughout the students' time in HE, that is,

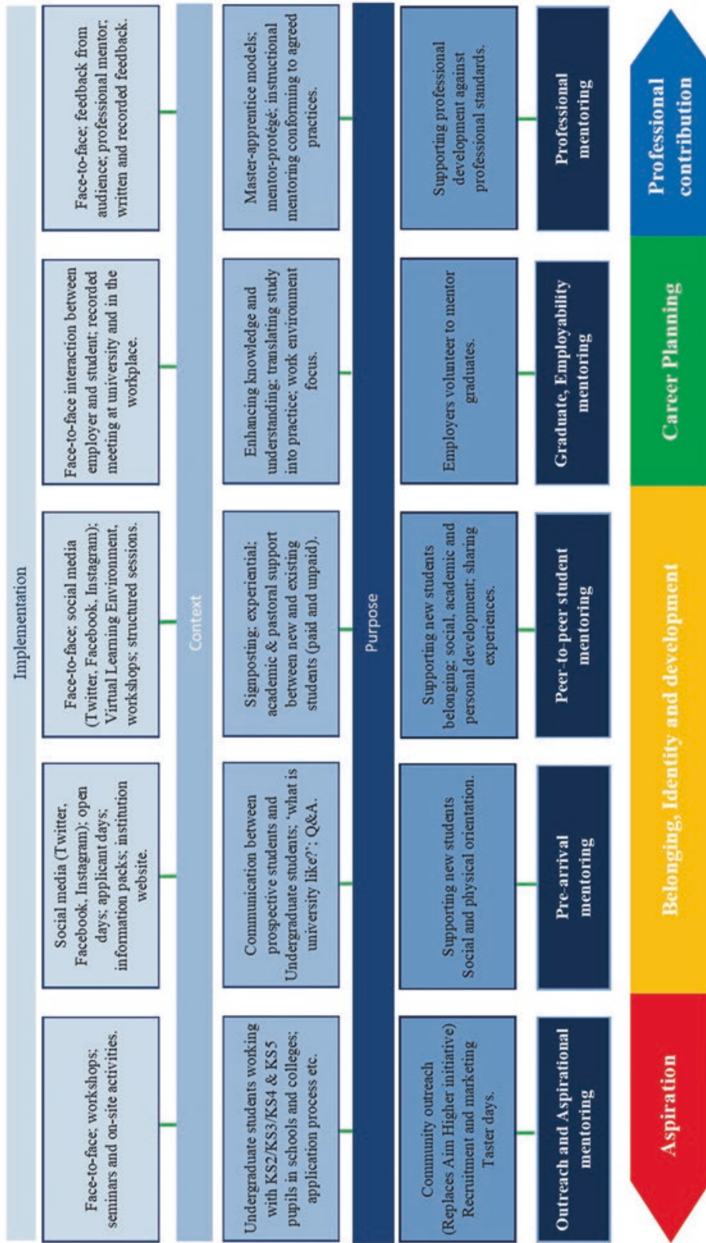

Fig. 2.1 Continuum of mentoring activities in higher education

“Pre-arrival mentoring” and “Peer-to-peer student mentoring”, before also extending into post university/professional life, where mentors may be professionals or employers, referred to as “Graduate Employability mentoring” and “Professional mentoring”. Mentoring can therefore be subdivided into four categories where it can offer support along the undergraduate journey right through to employment after university. These four categories are: aspirational; belonging, identity and development; career planning; and professional contribution, and will be explained in more detail below.

Aspirational Mentoring

This can have an important role in supporting potential students to “convert” to taking up a university place after an offer but before enrolment. This is a critical phase in the recruitment cycle in HE. Castleman and Page (2013) highlight that potential students who had a peer mentor before arriving at university were more likely to take up a university place.

Belonging, Identity and Development

Peer mentoring can assist undergraduates to have a sense of belonging to the university and to the programme of study. Thomas (2012) describes one of the keys to the sense of belonging to an educational institution is interpersonal relationships in which peer mentors can have a critical role developing with new students. It is important for new undergraduates to feel engaged in both the academic and social life which peer mentors can support by providing examples of their experiences. Peer mentors are able to provide a relevant and recent picture of what university life is really like, which academic teaching staff may be unlikely to be able to realistically portray.

Career Planning

Mentoring in this circumstance is offered by employers to mentor students who take up work placement opportunities. Research by Spence

and Hyams-Ssekasi (2015) highlighted that successful mentoring of students could result in increased employability skills and self-confidence. This example illustrates that mentoring could develop career direction for students who need further assistance in this area.

Professional Contribution

Mentoring of students also has an important role in education for more vocational occupations. In this context mentors are experienced staff given the role of supporting students whilst on placements which are a compulsory part of learning on these types of undergraduate programmes. These could include professions such as nursing, teaching and social work. Peiser, Ambrose, Burke and Davenport (2018) describe how workplace mentors in these fields are linchpins in assisting knowledge transfer from the codified information presented in university to practical application.

In recognition of the recent changes in HE education highlighted at the beginning of the chapter it is not surprising that there has been an increased appetite in mentoring that promotes belonging and identity within the undergraduate student lifecycle of which peer mentoring plays a significant part. In the last decade, the concept of peer mentoring has received significant attention as an area of academic research. More recently, there has been a focus on how such activities work in practice and how they are operationalised. A specific focus on peer mentoring-related activities will be the focus of the chapter from here on.

Peer Mentoring in Higher Education

Within a HE context, peer mentoring relates to the concept of reciprocal peer support and learning whereby a more experienced second- or third-year student "mentor" assists a novice first-year "mentee" in enhancing their overall university experience (Andrews & Clark, 2011; Dorsey & Baker, 2004; Lev, Kolassa, & Bakken, 2010). In recent years, it has become an increasingly popular means of providing guidance and advice

(Dedrick & Watson, 2002) and a supplementary mode of emotional and pastoral support (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). By engaging in an individual or group relationship that is mutually empowering (Cropper, 2000; Topping, 2005), students are able to reflect on and navigate around problems they face personally as well as academically and establish solutions (Bonin, 2013). Peer mentoring can provide pastoral and academic support where skills and knowledge can be developed through the sharing of experiences both on-line (Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013) and face-to-face amongst undergraduate students of all levels throughout the academic year. Moreover, it is particularly powerful in informing the first-year undergraduate experience, specifically whilst transitioning from post-16 education and subsequently commencing induction in HE (Chester et al., 2013).

Similar to broader definitions of mentoring, there are a number of conceptualisations and definitions of peer mentoring which have been proposed. Sands, Parson and Duane (1991) conclude from their research with academic staff that the peer mentoring role can fluctuate. They identify four different types of mentor: a friend, career guide, information source and intellectual guide.

Benefits of Peer Mentoring

By the nature of its function, peer mentoring is designed to be positive and have desirable outcomes for HE providers (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). The value ascribed to peer mentoring for HEIs nationally and internationally is a key focus of the literature. There is also a wide body of literature that attends to exploring the benefits for students who perform the role of mentor and those who are the mentee (Kalpazidou Schmidt & Faber, 2016). Andrews and Clark (2011, p. 71) describe that this as a “win-win-win” in the mentor relationship. There are positive outcomes for students involved and for the institution because of the potential improvements that such a scheme can have on reducing rates of attrition and promoting success (Fox & Stevenson, 2006). From a student’s perspective, peer mentoring offers the opportunity to network with peers

and develop student initiative to take responsibility for their own learning and academic and social development (Packham & Miller, 2000). Collings, Swanson and Watkins (2014) illustrate that within the first weeks of commencing HE, those students who experienced peer mentoring were more likely to feel integrated into university life. Given the diversification of the student population in recent years, evidence suggests that it is necessary to provide more support for students from day one of their studies and prior to arrival (Soilemetzidis & Dale, 2013).

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the first-year university experience and how HE institutions can improve the transition and induction process for new students. It appears that the diversity in teaching, learning and assessment methods (Jessen & Elander, 2009) within formal (pre-19 years) education, contributes to students feeling under-prepared upon entering HE. Therefore, peer mentoring is one of many methods that can be used to support new students making this transition. HEI's have a strong emphasis on the student engagement agenda with the National Union of Students describing that "students will need support and coaching to engage effectively as partners and this support could come from sources other than academic staff, including current students" (National Union of Students, 2015, p. 7). Peers are in a strong position to create such relationships and conversations of mutual understanding in comparison to academic staff. It is recognised that new students need to feel connected to their chosen institution, have a sense of belonging through regular contact, and see that interpersonal relationships have stability (Thomas, 2013). As such, social engagement is also possible through peer mentoring. It has the potential to create a sense of belonging through working one-to-one and in smaller personalised groups (Etter, Burmeister, & Elder, 2001). Moreover, Rodger and Tremblay (2003) advocate that peer mentoring can have a positive impact on engagement with a programme of study by alleviating high levels of anxiety about undergraduate study. It is the spontaneous and collaborative nature of peer mentoring that represents a unifying learning experience between peers when students participate in an academic learning community (Snowden & Hardy, 2012), a term coined by Wenger (1998) as "communities of practice". The growth of peer mentoring perhaps

reflects how universities are turning to learning communities of students to supplement classroom learning and assist students to settle into HE (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Moreover, it represents an increasingly popular mode of support (Clark, Andrews, & Gorman, 2013).

Implementing a Peer Mentoring Scheme

The authors of this chapter have successfully designed, implemented and maintained an undergraduate peer mentoring scheme within different faculties across an institution. The original rationale for the introduction of the peer mentoring scheme was twofold. It would contribute to undergraduate programme level strategy that would minimise the number of students withdrawing after the first year and support overall student satisfaction across the programmes. In addition, it would respond to a growing appetite from the student body to have more inter-level peer interaction. It was envisaged that a peer mentoring scheme could promote a greater sense of belonging and identity to programmes and enable students to share their experiences with others who were experiencing student life at the same time. The following sections of the chapter will outline and exemplify the peer mentoring scheme that was established and act as a guide for others who would like to establish a similar scheme. It will then draw on key evaluatory data to highlight the successes and limitations of such a scheme.

Formalising the Roles and Responsibilities of the Peer Mentors

When establishing the scheme, it was initially critical to formalise the role, functions and parameters of the peer mentor role. As the literature highlighted, the variations of such a role are wide and dependant on the requirements of the student cohort. The agreed focus of the role became for peer mentors to share their experiences and signpost new students to services within the university. Peer mentors would require training on university services but would also be able to draw on their own

experiences of studying on the programme to inform their role. As a result, a training package was developed and became a compulsory component of becoming a peer mentor. Peer mentors were also required to operate within a code of conduct and agree to confidential practice.

Operationalising the Peer Mentoring Scheme

Figure 2.2 illustrates the cyclical nature of the process of the peer mentoring scheme throughout the academic year.

As highlighted in Fig. 2.2, the new mentors supported a range of activities designed to support first-year undergraduates throughout the academic year. Peer mentors were able to meet with potential new students when they visited the university for open days and answer any questions as a result of such visits through a Twitter feed. Peer mentors then took a critical role in induction week, supporting new students with queries, attending taught sessions and introductory activities. As the academic year progressed the crux of the scheme was "peer mentoring networking events". These were sessions of approximately an hour long which were organised every two weeks for the new first-year students to come together with the peer mentors for an informal chat and the new students could pose any questions to the mentors as the year progressed. Academic staff played a limited role in these events and they were led by the peer mentors.

Exploring the Success of the Peer Mentoring Scheme

Once established, it was critical the peer mentoring scheme was evaluated whilst in its infancy to determine the impacts of the established scheme on new students, peer mentors and academic staff. This section reports on the findings of the evaluation of the value and purpose of the peer mentoring scheme outlined in the section above. Focus groups were conducted with a sample of academic staff (who worked to support the mentors), peer mentors and students involved in the peer mentoring scheme. All focus groups and interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and were transcribed verbatim for further analysis. The participants were

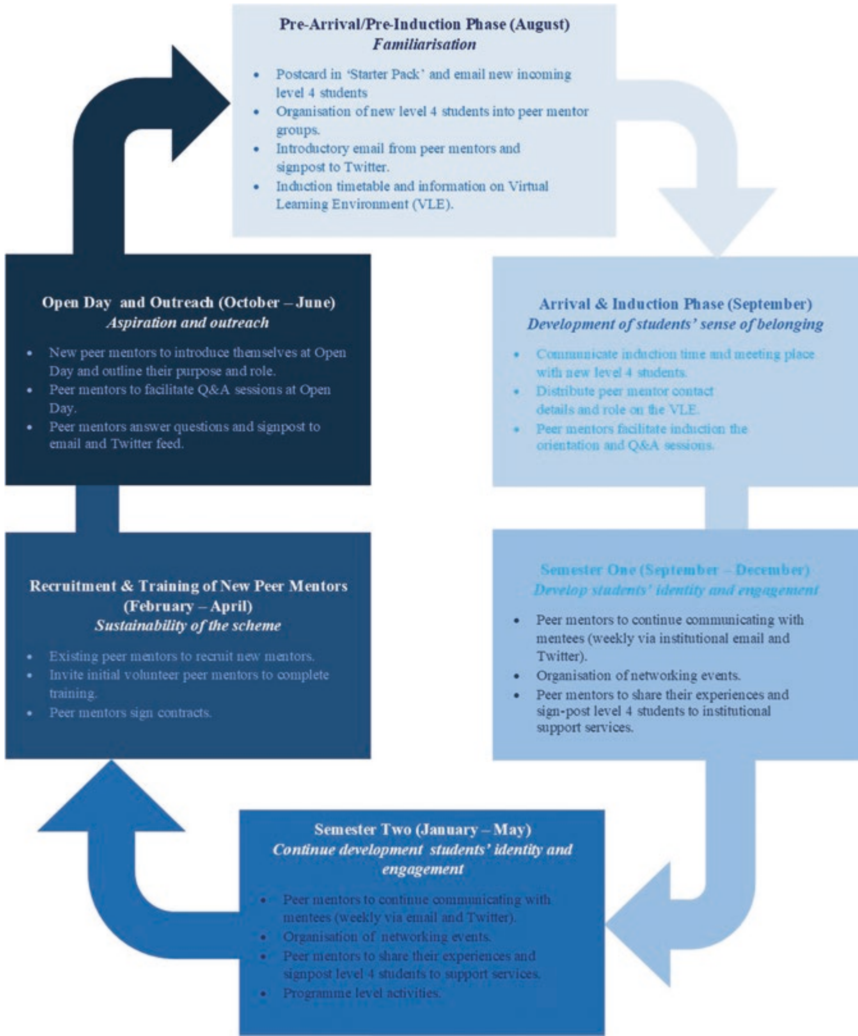

Fig. 2.2 Cycle of peer mentoring activities throughout the academic year

anonymised and their responses coded and subjected to thematic analysis. Eight focus groups were conducted in total. Four focus groups were carried out with first-year undergraduate students (n = 30), two focus groups were carried out with peer mentors (n = 15) and a further two focus groups with members of academic staff (n = 16). Appropriate

ethical procedures were followed and ethical approval granted by the institution where this research was conducted. There was a particular focus upon a "search for meaning and understanding" (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 150) in the responses and the discovery of themes and sub-themes. The research indicated positive outcomes afforded to staff and students who were engaged in the peer mentoring scheme. These were increased sense of belonging and student identity, and awareness of support.

Sense of Belonging and Identity

Concurring with other research on peer mentoring (Carragher & McGaughey, 2016; Snowden & Hardy, 2012) this research indicated that peer mentoring could enhance engagement in an academic programme of study. This was evident for both the mentors and the new students being supported. New students used positive adjectives to describe the peer mentors, including "friendly", "helpful" and "caring". New students commented that they saw faces that they recognised around campus, who were on their programme but not in their year of study. One student commented:

> You see people in the library and you say "Hi" you know that they are on your programme and you immediately have something in common with them. (New student)

New students appreciated the honesty that peer mentors could bring about university. This helped new students feel more settled and content with how university life would be for them. One new student highlighted:

> On the day we had Mentors leading us around the campus they told us what would be most relevant to us and what were the interesting things, rather than just being told "there's the library". They told us the real things as well. They didn't tell us all the fluffy things; they told us the real – this is what it's like. (New student)

For the peer mentors also, they developed a greater sense of engagement and attachment to their programme team. This came as a result of feeling that they were valued and was poignant, particularly for those peer mentors who had previously lacked engagement (both socially and academically) in the earlier period of study and did not perceive themselves as “role models”. For peer mentors, there was an overwhelming sense of responsibility and ownership associated with the role, which seemingly elevated their profile with both their peers and academic staff on their programme of study. Further, their negative experiences formed a positive dialogue with new undergraduates about “what they could have done” and “what they did not do” which evoked reflection and seemingly endorsed their credibility with academic staff.

The majority of peer mentors expressed that performing the role of a mentor was a “transition” for them too. By engaging with the scheme, mentors stated they were developing a number of skills that were enabling them to re-shape and re-create their identities not only as students but as employable graduates, as one staff member commented about the peer mentors she was working with:

> Peer mentors told us that they had developed a number of skills as a result of being a peer mentor such as confidence, leadership, communication and self-responsibility. (Academic staff member)

The reciprocal nature of peer mentoring between students at different levels of study was unanimously acknowledged as positive. By communicating with fellow students of a similar age, students identified a subtle feeling of relatability as one new student commented:

> It’s good to have someone of a similar age here, they can explain the hard side of university, how are you doing in your halls, money and social stuff. I asked them hard stuff, because I am not going to ask a lecturer that. I’ll ask them on a student basis and what it’s actually like because they understand. (New student)

Staff commented that interaction of this nature promotes a connectedness not only between peers but also within their programme. They note

that in some cases there is the development of long-term professional kinship and programme cohesion.

Awareness of Support

Both students and staff universally accepted that student mentors were suitably informed and up-to-date with the institutional services available and had become "experts" in signposting students to support services. This was identified by staff as something unique that the peer mentors could offer.

> The peer mentors will be the experts on what services we have at the University, so I suppose the staff don't always have time to know exactly what's going on, what's available for students, but that's what the peer mentors know. (Academic staff member)

Of significance was the value assigned to the informal sharing of experiences and the positive influence this posed in terms of signposting students to the appropriate institutional support services. This new student commented:

> I was really struggling in the first week and felt really homesick. I felt silly saying it but when they [peer mentor] told me there were people I could speak to, I felt 100% better. (New student)

The unique knowledge base of peer mentors about support for new students had been incredibly powerful in shaping the financial position of one student, who commented that:

> Having met with my mentor, who was ex-forces like myself, he told me about funding that I could access …I saved £18,000 as I have got my fees paid for two years. (New student)

Overall, it was identified by staff and students that peer mentoring was a "down-to-earth" way of triaging issues and maximising the use of institutional resources. In addition, staff pointed out that the process

complimented rather than replaced the role of academic staff and subsequently reduced their workload in dealing with pastoral issues. Staff in particular identified that the peer mentors were a supplementary pair of "eyes and ears" and the peer mentors offered a "preventative rather than treatment approach" to dealing with low level queries. Whilst adhering to the contractual agreement pertaining to student confidentiality, mentors became a critical component of the early detection of student issues. Mentors were able to recall cases where they had identified a student needed help and used their knowledge and experiences to refer them to the appropriate service. Directing students to academic, emotional and financial support were frequently identified.

Positive Outcomes, Limitations and Challenges of the Peer Mentoring Scheme

The evidence of the positive "feel good" impact of peer mentoring cannot be denied which refutably helps to enhance the student experience. All parties involved in the peer mentoring scheme highlighted what a positive impact that mentoring brought to different students. However, some of the limits of peer mentoring must also be highlighted. Retention, for example, is often seen as one of the benefits of peer mentoring (Collings et al., 2014) but it is difficult to determine a causal impact of the retention of students as a direct consequence of the employment of such a peer mentoring scheme. Although this was only a small sample of students, there was no evidence within focus group data to suggest that students were retained on a programme of study specifically because of peer mentoring. Although peer mentors created a climate of integration which arguably supports undergraduate students continuing to engage with their programme (Yomtov, Plunkett, Efrat, & Marin, 2017), the findings of this study suggest it is difficult to directly link the two factors of retention and peer mentoring.

It must also be highlighted that the benefits of peer mentoring in HE are reliant upon positive engagement of both peer mentors *and* academic teaching staff. Getting the correct students to act as peer mentors is critical to the success of the scheme, as is "buy in" from academic staff.

Moreover, defining the roles and responsibilities of the peer mentor at the point of inception of the scheme are equally as important. Staff teams all need to know what the potential benefits of peer mentoring can be. Staff taking part in the focus groups who were working to support mentors highlighted the need for an understanding from colleagues as to the purposes of peer mentoring and what it could achieve. One staff member commented that to make the scheme sustainable all staff needed to refer students to their peer mentor as almost an additional support service. This, in turn, gives additional credibility to the scheme as all staff were promoting and being seen to be valuing it. A successful mentoring scheme therefore needs an appropriate staff member who drives the concept forward. Whilst peer mentoring can have the potential to contribute to the institutional strategy on student experience, and, consequently key performance indicators, the key function of peer mentoring is not to improve such metrics but often to assist students gaining a "connection" with the university and feel part of a course community. These factors are not always formally measured, and can sometimes, make "proving" a justification for peer mentoring difficult.

Conclusion

It is clear that there has been an increased interest in mentoring in the HE sector, and more specifically a growth in developing peer mentoring schemes which can be used to develop student identity and a sense of belonging to an academic community. The use of such schemes can be used successfully to enhance the student experience. Each peer mentoring scheme may have its own characteristics which are likely to be driven by institutional priorities that relate to the student experience across the trajectory of an undergraduate. The evidence from the peer mentoring scheme examined in this chapter concurs with previous studies of peer mentoring about the positive impact peer mentoring can have. However, there needs to be a critical understanding of the limitations of what peer mentoring can achieve. Peer mentoring, for example, may not be the solution to retaining new students. Also required is a consideration of how peer mentoring can be successfully implemented. Academic staff

need to have a clear understanding of the governance of the scheme and how it can be successfully maintained and sustained. This includes staff being aware of the roles and responsibilities of the peer mentors and accounting for the additional workload that supervising such a scheme can generate. Peer mentoring relies on a partnership between academic staff and peer mentors and both parties understanding the aims and objectives. Once this combination of factors has been achieved, there is the potential for a successful scheme to be established and maintained.

Points for Discussion

The points below can be considered by those working in a HE setting who would like to establish a peer mentoring scheme. Such points for reflection are a result of the practical experiences of developing a sustainable peer mentoring programme.

1. What appetite is there amongst staff and students for such a scheme on the academic programme in question? A desire by staff and students to have a scheme is a key factor in establishing a sustainable scheme.
2. What type of peer mentoring scheme do you want to establish? How will this be informed by the needs of the students and staff?
3. How will the scheme be operationalised within the setting?
4. How will the scheme be maintained year on year? What will the cycle of activities be and how will these be embedded on to the programme in question?

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3

Student Academic Mentoring: Collaborative Peer Learning and Support for Undergraduates

Gillian Pye, Sue Williams, and Linda Dunne

Overview

This chapter discusses an undergraduate student academic mentoring project, based on case study research at a university in England, UK. A group of Year 2 undergraduates mentored Year 1 students on an Office for Students education-based degree. The tripartite structural model of mentoring involved individual, small group and in-class student peer support. The benefits of undergraduate mentoring have been widely documented and summarised (Crisp, Baker, Griffin, Lunsford, & Pifer, 2017; Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan, & Wuetherick, 2017) and the student academic mentoring project was found to be particularly beneficial in relation to student socialisation, participation, attrition and transition from post-16 to university education. Scaffolded, collaborative learning initiated co-caring communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and helped to engender a sense of student well-being and belonging. The student academic mentoring project subsequently cascaded and developed, whereby experienced student mentors had ownership of the training process for budding mentors and became instrumental in the undergraduate recruitment and induction process.

G. Pye • S. Williams • L. Dunne (✉)
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK
e-mail: linda.dunne@edgehill.ac.uk

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on undergraduate student academic mentoring (SAM) and draws on findings from case study research, evaluation and ongoing practice to highlight the benefits and challenges of a particular model of peer mentoring. The SAM project initially involved Year 2 undergraduate students mentoring Year 1 students on a Faculty of Education degree at a university in the northwest of England, and, as discussed later, the project subsequently expanded within the faculty and across the university.

The three-year work-based learning education degree originated as part of the UK's Higher Education Widening Participation (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2013) policy agenda, and incorporates study pathways into teaching and/or working with children and young people. The degree attracts a range of students including 18-year-olds and mature students returning to education through non-traditional routes. The students who participated were of White British ethnicity, from a working-class background and most of them had part-time employment in order to finance their undergraduate studies. This is characteristic of the degree cohorts and university demographic, and reflects research findings that suggest that students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to choose to go to universities that have open access, encourage diverse applicants and have an ethos of belonging in an academic culture (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010). The impetus behind the creation of the SAM project arose partly from a university-led focus on retention, but it was also intended as a way of addressing new student fears, anxieties or insecurities relating to academic study, and to encourage a greater sense of belonging.

Mentoring and Communities of Practice

As indicated across the chapters in this book, mentoring can take various forms; it may be one to one; face to face; small group or online; between student peers or between students and tutors. There is no homogeneous

approach or meta-paradigm of mentoring and differing models emerge from specific contexts (Loots, 2009). Conceptual models of mentoring, in a wider sense, include the apprenticeship model (learning by emulating a skilled practitioner); competency model (practical training), and the reflective practitioner model where a person takes an active role in demonstrating skills (Kerry & Mayes, 1995). In the context of higher education, a variety of approaches utilising aspects of these models are often adopted, including dyadic or one-to-one mentoring and peer tutoring, and these are variously referred to via acronyms such as PAL (peer assisted learning), PASS (peer assisted study sessions), SPAM (student peer assisted mentoring), SI (supplemental instruction) as well as SAM. In the SAM project that forms the focus of this chapter, mentoring took the form of a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge, skills and experiences with someone less experienced in a social relationship of mutual trust, predicated on care (Pye, Williams, & Dunne, 2016).

Lave and Wenger (1991) place learning in social relationships and in situations of co-participation where socialisation and engagement provide the context and structure for learning to take place. From this perspective, learning involves participation in a community of practice that provides an encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and in identity formation in relation to these communities (Wenger, 1999). The SAM project was underpinned by a notion of learner communities of practice and an underlying aim was to demystify learning cultures and academic practices in higher education that can sometimes deter students (Campbell & Campbell, 2007) through peer interaction and support. The nature of SAM was aligned with nurturing and caring aspects of mentoring that encompass reflective practice (Anderson & Shannon, 1988) and the creation of co-caring, supportive learning communities reflected the project team's "sincere desire to help students succeed" (Jacobi, 1991, p. 505).

Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of *capital* (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) are helpful as a lens to explore student mentoring practices and to envision a flow of "pedagogical capital" between mentors, mentees and learner communities (Duckworth & Maxwell, 2015). Economic capital relates to money and wealth; social capital refers to people and social relationships; cultural capital includes knowledge, skills and education,

and symbolic capital may be seen as the resources available to an individual on the basis of prestige or recognition. Bourdieu framed social capital as accrued actual or virtual resources acquired by individuals or groups through the possession of "more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). This form of capital can accrue as a result of a personal investment strategy involving exchanges of, for instance, words, time, attention, care, or concern and as it implies "obligations" (Ihlen, 2005, p. 494) it has particular relevance here as the social, and obligation to others, became an adjunct to the academic aspects of the SAM project.

Student Academic Mentoring Project Design

At the initiation and setting up of the SAM project, a group of Year 2 students on the degree volunteered to engage in a training and development process to prepare to mentor Year 1 students on the same degree. Mentors are more able to offer support in academic module tasks which they have already undertaken themselves, where they have an understanding of the assessment process and requirements (Saich, 2008), and when mentors have already been through the learning processes that their mentees are participating commitment from both mentor and mentee is strengthened (Mee Lee & Bush, 2003). The mentor training sessions focussed on aspects of mentoring that included practical-oriented activities around communication skills, support strategies and mutual trust and rapport building, and were underpinned by in-practice working virtues of collaboration, obligation, openness and an ethic of care (Noddings, 1996).

On completion of the training, the Year 2 student academic mentors (SAMs) were subsequently "matched" with five Year 1 students who had volunteered to be mentored at the start of their academic year. They were matched in relation to personality, disposition, background, life experiences, aptitude and so on. For example, one student who had children was matched with Year 1 students who also had children and was able to share how she managed these responsibilities alongside academic study. More formalised models of mentoring, like the SAM project, are often

characterised by a mentor and mentee being carefully matched and although the dynamics involved in this kind of relationship can present challenges (Campbell & Campbell, 2007; Christie, 2014), attempts at mentor matching can increase mentee motivation, engagement and participation (Bernier, Larose, & Soucy, 2005; Saich, 2008). When involvement in mentoring (from mentor or mentee) is compulsory or integrated into formal academic study and assessment, difficulties may arise, for example, in terms of time and allocation of mentor, and the voluntary nature of the mentor–mentee relationship was, in retrospect, a crucial aspect of the establishment and further development of the SAM project.

Student Academic Mentoring Research

Following institutional ethical approval, case study research on the newly established SAM project was co-conducted with the degree programme leaders, tutors and SAMs over the course of an academic year to address broader questions around the benefits and challenges of undergraduate student academic mentoring. A case study approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the project over a sustained time period and an evaluation of its impact from within a natural setting (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). At the initiation of the project, the new Year 1 student cohort completed a pre-mentoring questionnaire, designed to ascertain feelings, perceptions, attitudes towards, and experiences of academic study and mentoring. Interactions and activities were subsequently observed where students and mentors were operating in the "real" environment (Silverman, 2013) of the mentor active classroom. Researcher participant observation gave access to, and a greater awareness of, the more salient issues which assisted in analysis and subsequent joint interpretation of analysed data (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011). A post-mentoring questionnaire was completed and the mentored students, SAMs and tutors were interviewed at the end of the academic year to gain their perspectives. The focus group interviews were conversations with a purpose (Denscombe, 2010) and provided an opportunity to explore in some depth the benefits, challenges and complexities of the SAM project from multiple perspectives. Follow-up focus group interviews were also

conducted that allowed the mentored students a supportive arena for group feedback.

Analysis is a researcher's equivalent of alchemy; the elusive process by which raw data is turned into "nuggets of pure gold" (Briggs & Coleman, 2007, p. 68). The first stage of analysis was data management and data reduction (Elton-Chalcraft, Hansen, & Twistleton, 2008) and the creation of an audit trail, whereby steps were re-traced through the whole process. Content analysis involved coding and cross referencing of the data sets (Gibbs, 2008), with the aid of thematic mind maps that elicited themes.

Benefits of Student Academic Mentoring

The Year 2 SAMs operated in a variety of ways to support Year 1 students in fostering a supportive learning culture (Bruffee, 1984). As indicated, the tripartite structural approach of the SAM model involved (a) individual, (b) small group and (c) in-class mentoring. Individual mentoring comprised of one-to-one contact, with the academic mentors voluntarily engaging with their mentees face to face and electronically to respond to questions relating to, for example, academic study, assignment writing and preparation for the school-based placement that formed part of the degree. Small group meetings were facilitated by the mentor and were similar to Darwin and Palmer's (2009) mentoring circles, and student experiences and ideas were shared in smaller groups of up to six students to co-create learning. The small group mentoring occurred, roughly on a fortnightly basis. During in-class mentoring, the mentor joined their mentees in lecturer-facilitated Year 1 academic study sessions and liaised with the lecturer regarding the focus and aims of the session, which were designed to guide and support academic writing. The mentors worked collaboratively on writing tasks in a co-construction of learning (De Backer, Van Keer, & Valcke, 2015). The SAM project findings, evaluations and ongoing developments signified that undergraduate peer mentoring is beneficial in multitudinous ways and is positively related to a variety of developmental and academic outcomes. The project had a

positive impact on mentees, mentors and on wider undergraduate cohorts, and the benefits and challenges are summarised below.

Mentee

The research and evaluation of the SAM project signified that peer learning via a tripartite mentoring model was particularly beneficial in relation to addressing and appeasing new student fears around beginning academic study. Students who had regular one-to-one mentoring benefited from the individualised guidance and support on aspects of academic writing, but there were benefits for all students within the cohort as they were exposed to learning conversations that added intellectual richness to an emergent learning culture (Elder, 2012; Smith, 2013). Mentees responded positively when discussing their academic support and indicated that they felt assured and more at ease about assignment planning, writing and referencing and, over time, gained confidence in their academic abilities. A Year 1 student commented:

> At first I was overwhelmed by the idea of writing a university-level assignment and didn't think I could do it. My mentor reassured me gave me pointers to improve my writing style. (S5)

The Year 2 SAMs were in a unique position as a source of pedagogical capital and as they had previously completed the assignments that the Year 1 students were doing they were well-placed to direct, support and encourage their mentees; one commented: "It was great to hear mentors talk about the assessment they had done before" (S2). Being able to talk about school placement, and how the degree related to schooling and education, was also beneficial for the mentees and appeared to allay anxieties. Over time, the small group model of mentoring came to be recognised as mentor study groups and those involved cultivated friendships and relationship networks, with a consequent strengthening of student social capital.

Mentees identified the whole-class academic support sessions, where collaborative working between tutors, mentors and students occurred, as

being a particularly helpful support mechanism for reflection and sharing of ideas. In this approach, because the SAMs interacted with a greater number of students aside from those having an assigned mentor, they become visible and "recognisable" to the first-year student cohort, and this demystified the SAM role, enabling students to witness and experience the mentor role and mentoring experience.

Mentees appeared to benefit from exposure to mentoring in academic as well psychosocial ways (Mladonevic, 2012) and increased student self-efficacy and motivation was evident: "I feel excited by assignment writing now. I enjoy talking things through with my mentor and the group" (S7). Students asked questions of themselves and their writing and the nature of these learning conversations became more reflective via gentle but in-depth questioning by SAMs when supporting and scaffolding the learning of their mentees. This was corroborated by a tutor interview where it was remarked that: "There were lots of really interesting conversations going on…the mentors were really challenging the students" (T1). A student sense of belonging is reinforced when socialisation, enjoyment and academic activities occur simultaneously (Smith, 2013); this was apparent in the SAM project and was created via social interaction, care and dialogue.

It has been suggested that mentoring improves students' transition to university, by either helping them to attend university or once they are there, to be retained through to degree completion (Lunsford et al., 2017) and there was evidence that SAM encouraged students to remain on board with their studies. One student who experienced mental health challenges had a renewed commitment to study, reflecting the ethos and spirit of the project. A tutor commented that:

> A student who was quite worrying, in that he could have dropped out…I think the mentoring process with its ethos… brought him on and encouraged him to write his assignment and become more focussed. So, this student, who we could have potentially lost, stayed. (T2)

Referring to an emergent sense of student bonding within the developing mentoring culture, the same tutor commented that:

> The students themselves were taking on this mentoring culture, and perhaps gathered the student in and encouraged and motivated him…whereas, maybe you know…perhaps tutors and lecturers were a little too remote? (T2)

The tripartite mentoring model was well-received by the mentees and the one-to-one mentoring, in particular, provided a safe space for mentees to express any concerns or worries about aspects of academic study in a supportive learning culture.

Mentor

Mentors (SAMs) also benefited from the experience of participating in mentoring activities and exhibited a feel-good factor from being able to help another student. They signified that the models of support were something that they would have appreciated in their own studies, and reported on the positive impact of the matching of the students to mentors, and on collegiality: "I got on with the students and this made it easier to work with them on the academic stuff" (M2).

As with their mentees, the SAMs also experienced reinforced self-esteem and confidence: "I have gained more confidence in completing my own assignments after doing this…I have learned a lot about how to offer others help and support" (M1). In terms of the kinds of teaching and learning related activities undertaken the SAMs were mostly confident in supporting students in areas that they had previously studied themselves and felt that they had deepened their own knowledge by revisiting topics already studied; although there were initial fears stemming from the unexpected and unfamiliar: "I was apprehensive at first because I didn't know what to expect…after the first few sessions I felt I knew what I was offering in terms of support" (M2). SAMs concurred that is was a daunting prospect to be trusted to work with other students: "I wasn't sure I knew what to do; but when I started I knew I had the skills to do this" (M3).

A mentor's own learning improves as they learn to support, guide and teach others and in developing their interpersonal skills they increase

their own employability (Mladonevic, 2012; Smith, 2013; Thomas, 2012). The SAM project consolidated career choices: "The mentor scheme has helped confirm for me my future career direction…mentoring is what I want to do" (M1).

Tutor interviews substantiated the benefits of the mentoring role: when asked if they felt it had an impact on the SAMs they commented:

> Definitely – I think particularly for one of them who wants to follow mentoring as a career. It has enabled her to grow enormously. It has built her confidence…and to believe in her own abilities…and helped in realising she really wants to do this. (T1)

> I noticed a level of professionalism has grown: they [mentors] were coming in with resources after the first week, with suggestions, or had been and looked at something. Alex said "you know they got back to me the same day" so there was a level of engagement between them. They responded like you would with a class, responding to people's needs. So I think in terms of growth for the second-year mentors…certainly. What I saw was a degree of professionalism growing. (T3)

The SAM project in providing a framework or model for mentoring, enabled those who wished to pursue mentoring as a future career to gain in-situ practice and direct experience. In a sense SAM was a form of work experience for the mentors and helped them to decide if mentoring, as a career path, was for them.

Challenges

Although the SAM project was largely successful and benefited those involved, there were potential drawbacks and a particular challenge for the SAMs related to time, which can be problematic in peer mentoring (Broadbridge & Swanson, 2005; Lunsford et al., 2017). A number of the SAMs had employment on the days they were not required at university or in a work-based learning school setting and on occasions, after a positive start to the academic year when SAMs were more available to attend

academic support sessions, as the year progressed their availability reduced, although mentoring and support communications continued via email which can sometimes be a viable alternative (Smailes & Gannon-Leary, 2011). In the absence of some of the SAMs the students created their own informal self-study peer-support groups that mirrored the work of the mentors. This was another unanticipated, positive outcome of the SAM project and signified that students, in replicating the SAM framework of support, were using their ingenuity and developing independence.

Another challenge that emerged was largely related to relationships and mentor – mentee boundaries. There is perhaps an inevitability that mentors and mentees may become close and emotionally attached, given the nature of the relationship (Collings, Swanson, & Watkins, 2014). "Mentor" as "friend" is often a mentor–mentee outcome, but the academic focus of mentoring may become distorted by "becoming friends" from the start (Christie, 2014) or by over-familiarity. Zier-Vogel and Barry (2013) suggest that the ethics of the mentoring relationship is crucial and cannot be left to chance and issues that arose in the SAM project, such as the blurred boundaries between what may be termed "professionalism", friendship and dependency have subsequently been explored via scenarios, role play and problem-solving activities during training sessions. The training also considered the development of transferable skills such as dependability, teamwork and communication in relation to the mentor own understanding of professional relationships that would be required for the world of work.

Subsequent Developments

SAM initiated co-caring communities of practice and subsequently developed and cascaded, whereby Year 3 students mentored Year 2 students, who mentored Year 1. The experienced Year 3 SAMs became involved in the training process for budding mentors and took ownership of the mentoring interview. Year 2 and 3 SAMs became instrumental in university student recruitment processes and talked about their role and the degree at open events. SAMs attendance at university taster sessions

for potential applicants led to the establishment of contacts and collegiate relationships between SAMs and future students and this strengthened a pre-degree programme sense of belonging. SAMs also participated in Fresher induction events and activities to support those settling into university life and their visibility and involvement during student induction week, where they arranged pre-induction informal meetings, was particularly beneficial for those new students who experienced additional needs. Students who faced unexpected challenges, such as mental health, personal issues or bereavement also gained support from SAMs. In the present context, student mental health and well-being has become a strategic priority for many universities and mentoring can play a valuable part in supporting and helping to address challenges that may occur in relation to all aspects of learning (Collings et al., 2014; Leenstra, Keeler, Arthur-Cameselle, & Russell, 2019).

Conclusion

Mentoring relationships are to some extent embedded in educational processes in higher education (Lunsford et al., 2017) and the mentoring project discussed in this chapter signified that mentoring can provide the grounding for the nurturing and development of strong collegiate relationships within a learning community of practice. In symbiotic relationships based on mutual trust, student engagement with academic study was increased and, as a by-product, social capital was accrued. Student motivation, cooperation and co-construction, can foster a collegial commitment to a degree programme of study that is particularly valuable for students from working class backgrounds who may, for whatever reason, feel that they do not fit in or "belong" at university (Ostrove, Stewart, & Curtin, 2011; Reay et al., 2010). The cultivation of collegiate belonging and the forging of student identities became an underpinning ethos and principle of the SAM project in the continued pursuit of a more equitable and socially just higher education system.

Points for Discussion

1. How might different models of mentoring, such as the tripartite model discussed in this chapter, assist a mentor and mentee?
2. How can specific learner communities of practice and a sense of student belonging be established and maintained via peer mentoring?
3. What are "healthy boundaries" in relation to mentoring and how can these be established and maintained?

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4

Credibility: What Role Does It Play in a Peer Mentoring Relationship?

Janet W. Colvin and Marinda Ashman

Overview

Peer roles develop over time. A new mentor begins to interact with students and then gradually becomes more secure in their role (Packard, Marciano, Payne, Bledzki, & Woodard, 2014). Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that not only does the mentor become more secure in their role, but as that security develops, legitimacy is also conferred by those with whom they work. In fact, students may not even seek out a mentor if they do not see the mentor as being credible and helpful (Packard, 2003). What may seem a straightforward expert-novice interaction of peer mentor/mentee can be complicated when there are questions of expertise, legitimacy, and credibility. In this chapter we examine whether the title of peer mentor, in and of itself, bestows credibility or not through surveys and reflections about the peer mentor/mentee relationship. We look at how students define credibility, ask if credibility matters in the higher education context, and examine the roles of a peer mentor to see if they play into the issue of credibility.

J. W. Colvin (✉)
College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Utah Valley University, Orem, UT, USA
e-mail: COLVINJA@uvu.edu

M. Ashman
Department of Student Leadership and Success Studies, Utah Valley University, Orem, UT, USA

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Introduction

Over the years, peer mentoring has been utilized in many different ways by many different higher education institutions. Peer mentoring in general uses a more experienced student to help a less experienced one. In so doing, both benefit from the relationship (Rieske & Benjamin, 2015). The experienced student, or mentor, typically experiences personal growth (Falchikov, 2001), and the less experienced student, or mentee, has access to advice, support, and knowledge of the mentor (Astin, 1984; Falchikov, 2001; Miller, Groccia, & Miller, 2001; University of South Australia, 2003). Loane (2015) notes that this reciprocal relationship is valuable because it helps mentees transition to and become involved within the institution and contributes to students' academic and social support, retention, and academic achievement.

While there is no consistent definition of mentoring because of the variety of responsibilities, Colvin and Ashman (2010) found support for five specific roles that peer mentors play. The first role is that of being a connecting link. The connecting link role helps students inside and outside the class to get involved with their campus and education, find activities/resources/events that interest them, and perceive where they belong on campus. The second role is that of peer leader. Peer leaders develop and maintain leadership traits in the areas of authenticity, initiative, goal identification, planning, delegation, support, attitude, and example. Learning coach is the third role. This role facilitates learning in the classroom and guides students through the process of discovering how to approach learning. He/she fills the role of motivator and coaches students through the learning process. The fourth role is that of student advocate. A student advocate defends or maintains a cause for students, helps students find their own voice, understands the needs and wants of the students, helps students solve their own problem, and acts as a liaison between students and the instructor. The last role is that of being a trusted friend. A trusted friend develops relationships with students that goes beyond the classroom, keeps confidences and promises, is approachable, is genuinely concerned, gains the students' respect, and demonstrates character and competence (Colvin & Ashman, 2010).

Recognizing these roles can help both the mentor and the mentee understand expectations and the impact they have on the relationship. It can also lead to an understanding of how the legitimacy and credibility of the mentor is developed by mentors and seen by mentees.

The peer/student role is a complicated one that takes repeated interactions to evolve as those involved have to navigate ideas about expertise and credibility. Mentors have to develop skills and students need to learn to trust the mentors. Similarly, Colvin (2007) in her study of peer tutors found that not all students utilized the tutors even when they were available. Often students waited to see if the tutors could help them in ways the students wanted to be helped. If that did not happen, the students disregarded the tutors.

Collier (2017) speaks of peer mentoring and the benefits of students learning from students and the costs that institutions can save by using peers to increase persistence and completion. One factor is that credibility, according to Collier, is "made up of two components, expertise and trustworthiness" (p. 14). Hovland, Janis, and Kelley's (1953) research supports Collier's claim. Credibility is based on the trustworthiness someone is perceived to have and expertise, which is the degree of knowledge one possesses. Collier (2017) notes that mentees will automatically see the peer as trustworthy because both the mentee and the mentor share the same role: student. Lelis (2017) found that students who were in no position of authority but rather all in their first year of study were still seen as credible because they were both students. As the mentee receives information from a mentor, they must decide if the information is credible based on several factors: the understanding that mentors are message sources (Pornpitakpan, 2004) and the source's perceived self-interest influences how the mentee sees both trustworthiness and expertise (Collier, 2017).

Expertise comes because the peer mentor has already completed courses the mentee still needs to complete. In their study of how researchers develop credibility, Billot, Rowland, Carnell, Amundsen, and Evans (2017) found, "publication and citations were commonly mentioned as indicators of credibility" (p. 6), implying that external factors impact credibility. The more awards and publications acquired, the higher level of expertise the researchers gained which in turn increased their

credibility. Such external factors may impact ideas about peer mentor expertise as well.

Overall, however, credibility is difficult to define. Nordhagen, Calverley, Foulds, O'Keefe, and Wang (2014), along with many others, grapple with a definition of credibility as it does not have a universal definition. Many view credibility from their own perspectives of who they are and what their work means, and are influenced by attitudinal beliefs and structural factors (McKinney, 2006). Collier (2017) also hypothesized that perceived motivation is important, and shares the idea that learning happens through role modelling (Bandura, 1977). In addition, the type of mentoring impacts the credibility of the mentor. The mentee is more apt to accept the expertise of a peer relationship over a hierarchical mentoring relationship because the mentee views the peer as trustworthy.

> Because she is already an upper division college student … The mentor models the role of a successful college student by sharing her knowledge of faculty members' expectation for students, along with time-tested personal strategies that the mentor had used in successfully meeting those expectations. (Collier, 2017, p. 15)

The peer mentor is considered more trustworthy because she is a student too, and her motivation to help is assumed to be that "one student helps another because they are both in the same boat" (Collier, 2017, p. 14).

The Study

We now report on a study which sought to determine how students working with peer mentors perceived credibility. Specifically, the research questions were as follows:

- How do students define credibility in an academic setting?
- Does credibility of a mentor matter? Why or why not?
- Does helping students develop an understanding of the role of the university mentor (i.e., connecting link, peer leader, learning coach, student advocate, and trusted friend; Colvin & Ashman, 2010) affect perceptions of credibility?

Background

This study took place at a large open-enrollment university in the western United States. Established in 1999, the University Mentor Program (UMP) has served thousands of students as they transition to university life. Mentors (peer mentors) serve in the University Student Success (SLSS 1000) course after completing a preparatory two courses to apply and be selected to serve as a university mentor. The SLSS 1000 courses are taken primarily by incoming freshmen, students who are coming back to university after a break, students who have been in university but have not been successful in the past, or students who may be on academic probation. Previous research has been conducted on the effectiveness of peer mentoring in this program and has found it to be beneficial to university students. Student mentees felt they were more apt to connect to campus, engage in their learning, and rely on their peer mentor for support so they did not feel alone or discouraged as they navigated the demands of college life (Ashman & Colvin, 2011; Colvin & Ashman, 2010).

In addition to research on a broader scope of peer mentoring, a study which was not published but was used for internal programmatic justification, marketing, and improvement, was conducted on the UMP in spring 2010. Results showed that students valued the advice given to them by the mentor, that mentors motivated them to be more effective students, helped them have a positive attitude about life and school, were a good example of how to be a successful student, and that acting as an example helped the mentors become better students themselves.

Methodology

To extend the 2010 findings and answer the research questions for this study, in 2016, the researchers administered survey questions related to credibility in collaboration with the UMP to look closely at how credibility is created and what role relationship plays in credibility. Two surveys are routinely administered to each student in the SLSS 1000 course. The

purpose of the surveys is for the peer mentors in the UMP program to receive feedback from each student in their class about how they have done as a mentor during the semester. The pre-survey is given near the beginning of the semester, and the post-survey is administered near the end of the semester. The researchers collaborated with the UMP leadership to add questions about credibility to their survey so that students would not feel overwhelmed with an additional survey. The following credibility questions were added:

1. How do you define credibility in an academic setting?
2. Does credibility of a UMP mentor matter? Why or why not?

Within the first few weeks of the semester, the pre-survey was given to 772 students in 33 sections of SLSS 1000. After the pre-survey was given, five sections, with a total of 109 students, signed an informed consent form. Mentors created a presentation that was shown to students in these five sections in fall 2016 shortly after the pre-surveys had been taken. The presentation demonstrated to students what the mentors were trained to do. Part of the presentation included the five roles of mentoring, namely trusted friend, learning coach, peer leader, connecting link, and student advocate (Ashman & Colvin, 2011). Another part of the presentation demonstrated how each of these five roles is part of the student/mentor relationship. UMP mentors were given one of the roles of mentoring to explain and then shared in their own words what that role means and how they see that role in action in their mentoring roles with students. Additionally, the presentation demonstrated the process and training each mentor went through to become a mentor. Following the presentation, students were able to ask the mentors questions. This gave mentors an opportunity to further enhance their credibility as they shared their knowledge and connection of the roles to the relationship they could have with the students. Post-surveys were administered to all 33 sections of SLSS 1000 near the end of the semester.

In addition to the survey, throughout the semester, students in the five sections who listened to the presentation were asked to respond to the following prompts in discussion posts:

1. Please give an example of a time your mentor has fulfilled one of their roles this semester.
2. How has your mentor proved to you they were credible?

Students in these five sections were also asked to respond to two classmates' posts as part of the assignment and complete a final reflective paper about mentoring over the course of the semester.

Survey responses from all sections and discussion posts and final papers from the five sections receiving the presentation were analyzed by the researchers who independently read and re-read to understand what was being said. Through this process the two researchers kept separate notes about observations, relationships, and interesting participant comments which were then shared and discussed between them to help develop prominent themes and subthemes. After consistency was achieved between the two researchers, thematic analysis was conducted on the data, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), which can be used to capture "both manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying) meaning" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 298), where familiarization with the data is imperative. Such an analysis was an effective way to determine the impact that helping students develop an understanding of the role of the university mentor had in creating credibility. All names used from coding analysis are pseudonyms and comments are verbatim.

Results

Results were collected from the pre- and post-surveys in order to answer the three research questions asking how students would define credibility, whether the credibility of a mentor mattered, and if learning more about the five roles of a mentor affected the issue of credibility. Themes from the discussion posts and reflection papers were used to examine how the five roles of the mentor contribute to an understanding of credibility. There were a total of 377 coded responses in the pre-survey and 281 in the post-survey.

Defining Credibility

Survey results were examined for keywords. Word counts were then tabulated based on the number of keyword occurrences, including double coding where multiple definitions were mentioned in single responses. The themes reflecting how students defined credibility the most included trust, experience, and no response/other.

Trust The theme of trust relates to things such as belief in the mentor and the honesty of the mentor. This theme received the greatest number of comments in both the pre- (n = 183) and post-surveys (n = 130). Students made comments like "credibility is being trustworthy," "the quality of being trusted and believed in," and "that you keep your word." Students felt credibility in an academic setting meant they could trust the person/material/and so on. Students also equated trust with honesty. They made comments such as "being honest," "being honest in your dealings and admitting [you] aren't perfect," and "credibility is the honesty in doing/citing yours and other's work." This demonstrated that students feel credibility in an academic setting can mean a variety of things in the area of honesty.

In comparing pre-surveys to post-surveys in the area of trust, students felt trust of the mentor was more important than any other definition of credibility. There was a difference however in how students hearing the presentation responded versus those who did not. Out of all of their responses, students not hearing the presentation began the semester listing trust as important 54% and at the end only 46% of the time. However, students who did hear the presentation started the semester listing trust 29% of the time and at the end of the semester increased to 48% of their responses listing trust as important.

Experience Experience included comments (pre-survey: n = 89, post-survey: n = 86) related to experience, knowledge, and applicable credentials. The following comments describe how students define credibility in

an academic setting: "having the experience and training to validate/backup what [you're] saying," "for a mentor, that they have gone through [experiences similar to student] or are going through and can help you through [your] experience," and "having the experience and knowledge of something."

Experience was also identified as having credentials. Comments by students like "degrees and experience," "having a documented record of your credits," and listing words such as "reliable" and "reliable sources" show that students think being credible is based on the credentials earned and being reliable. Responses for all sections, regardless of receiving the presentation or not, stayed about the same from the beginning to the end of the semester.

No Response/Other When asked about credibility in an academic setting, many students (pre-survey: $n = 54$, post-survey: $n = 43$) either responded with "I don't know," left no comment at all, or responded with comments that did not fit into any clear category. Comments like "use it well," "it was good," and "important" did not seem to fit anywhere so they were added together under "other." Those students who did not hear the presentation stayed about the same in this category moving from 13% of their responses in the pre-survey to 17% in the post-survey. Responses in this category dropped, however, for the students listening to the presentation. Their pre-survey percentage of "no response/other" was 19%, but by the end of the semester dropped to 11%.

Altogether, results show that students define credibility in an academic setting most often as being trustworthy and having experience. Early in the semester, before students had experience with a UMP mentor, often they did not know what credibility in an academic setting meant, shown by leaving the question blank or responding with comments such as "I don't know." However, students who had heard the presentation were better able to define credibility for a UMP.

Does Credibility Make a Difference?

The second question on the survey asked the students if credibility of a UMP mentor mattered, and why. Responses (pre-survey: n = 309, post-survey: n = 248) showed that credibility, indeed, did matter. The themes reflecting how students viewed credibility making a difference, most, out of all responses, included trust, experience, helping, and acting as an example.

Trust One hundred and sixteen pre-survey responses and 128 post-survey responses reflected the theme of trust. Being able to depend on the UMP mentor, knowing they will follow through with what they say and that what they are saying is true is how students felt they could trust their UMP mentor. Trust received the highest number of responses for this question. This was especially true for students who heard the presentation where they learned about the roles of a UMP. These students responded that trust was important 25% more by the end of the semester for a total of 53% of their responses reflecting trust or a component of trust. The students who did not hear the presentation stayed exactly the same with 43% of their responses indicating that trust was key by the end.

Experience Experience was the second highest mentioned attribute of why credibility of a mentor mattered (pre-survey: n = 61, post-survey: n = 67). Students felt that if the UMP mentor had already completed the course or was ahead of them in university, along with having had training to be a mentor, it gave the UMP mentor credibility in the form of experience. Students felt that if the UMP mentor had experience, then they should listen and follow the advice of the mentor. All students regardless of listening to the presentation or not equated credibility with experience almost equally at the beginning and the end of the semester.

Helping To the student, helping was an important attribute of a UMP mentor in being willing to put in the effort to get to know them, to help them when they struggled, and to show them they cared by the things they said and did for the student. Although this attribute was listed often

by students (pre-survey: $n = 36$, post-survey: $n = 32$), there was not much change in any of the responses how often this attribute was mentioned when comparing pre- to post-surveys.

Example Primarily the attribute of example, meaning how the mentor acted as an example to the mentee, was used by the students in describing how they looked up to the UMP mentor. There were only 14 pre-survey responses and 13 post-survey responses in this theme. However, all of the post-survey responses indicating that example was a component of credibility came from those who did not receive the peer mentor presentation.

No Response/Other Similar to definitions, 46 students (pre-survey) and 32 students (post-survey) gave no response to the prompt asking whether credibility matters. For example, one student said "yes" credibility mattered, but then did not give any other comment. Others gave comments that did not fit any of the other themes identified, such as "leadership," "passionate," "gives feedback," or simply put comments like "she is good" or "because." Students who heard the presentation dropped from 28% (pre-survey) to only 6% of no responses (post-survey). However, students who did not hear about the UMP roles, increased from 3% (pre-survey) having a no response/other comment to 15% by the end of the semester.

Connecting the Five Roles of a Mentor with Credibility

In order to answer the research question *how do the five roles of the mentor play into the issue of credibility*, discussion prompts and reflective papers were coded to understand if students receiving the presentation connected credibility with the five mentor roles and, if so, how. Every student commented about the roles in some way. About 403 discrete codes were analyzed. The roles are presented in the order of the number of responses: trusted friend, peer leader, student advocate, learning coach, and connecting link.

Trusted Friend There were 120 responses focused on a mentor being a trusted friend. Being a trusted friend responses included caring about students, relating to them, being there to help, listen, give advice, and in general being trustworthy. Some of these responses were explicitly about being a trusted friend. One student said, "This semester, John proved his credibility as a mentor simply by living the role of one. He was a constant trusted friend." Another said, "She proved she was really credible because she always helped and never had a bad attitude. She knew how to be a friend to the students."

Others did not specifically use the word trusted friend but said such things as "Mary has been a perfect peer mentor! I loved how she was so willing to put in extra time to have one-on-ones with us, each of us. It really made me feel like she cared." In this way students identified qualities of being a trusted friend and also associated it with being a good or credible mentor.

Peer Leader Peer leadership was identified 106 times as being something that a mentor needed in order to be credible. Peer leader responses focused on mentors being an example, sharing personal stories, leading activities in class, being inspiring, and being an overall leader. One student noted that Sarah was "an example to everyone." Another was more explicit:

> She was a peer leader because she was an exemplary student. She kept good grades, she stayed organized, she was always prepared, and most importantly she not only encouraged us to achieve our wildest dreams through setting goals but she showed us how it was possible … I think it was all those things that really made Naomi a credible person in my book.

In general, being credible as a peer leader was seen as being an example to the students in the peers' own personal life.

Student Advocate Student advocate was identified as important for being credible 69 times. Students identified such things as helping, explaining things, being a go-between, and answering questions as being

a student advocate. Here responses focused on being an intermediary between the students and the instructor. Jacob said, "I loved Erica! She gave everyone her number if we had any questions about anything … She was always in favor of the students in class." Hannah said,

> There have been times where Nora has helped me out when I didn't know which assignments were due for the class. I appreciated this because I knew the due date was that night and I was stressed … She has also helped me with rescheduling appointments when I needed.

Still another student felt the mentor helped them to stand on their own:

> Doug is a credible mentor in many ways, but through all the advice and encouragement the thing that has stuck out the most and has helped me the most to succeed, is the confidence and moral support he has given me through this first semester.

While students identified student advocate as being important, it was also clear that they were not entirely sure about what the role of student advocate actually was. A number of times students said things when identifying the role of a student advocate such as "I knew Jay was a credible mentor from the start. I needed help understanding Canvas [the university learning management system] and he gave me some pointers." While this identifies credibility with a role, the definition fits better with learning coach indicating students are somewhat confused about the role of student advocate.

Learning Coach Learning coach was identified with credibility 64 times. Learning coach comments related to such things as teaching the class, teaching learning techniques and strategies, challenging students, explaining concepts, and relating lessons to students. Students reported times when mentors helped them with learning strategies in class.

> Kaleb played a significant role as a learning coach … On a couple of different occasions, Kaleb shared his own strategies. I really liked this. He was

> able to explain what he does, and why. I found this to be very helpful (Kylie).

Another student noted,

> Brendan is a wonderful learning coach because he knows what he is talking about when we discuss a topic in class. Or how when we talk about a certain topic, he always has a story to go along with it … he also was willing to help me understand any concept that I had confusion on.

A few even connected credibility directly to the role of being a learning coach:

> I can attest to Marianne's credibility by the way she conducted her role as a mentor. Marianne taught the class [note: UMP mentors often present topics to the class under the direction of the instructor] multiple times, things we needed to know, showing that she was credible and knew the subject matter well.

While the vast majority were positive, one student in particular noted that their mentor could have been more credible:

> Sarah I really thought did an amazing job, but I think she would have done so much better if she had taken more time in class to work and teach and then on a deeper level get into the groups.

In general, being credible meant the UMP mentor understanding the class material and being able to relate it to students in a way that was meaningful to them when they facilitated learning in the classroom.

Connecting Link Connecting link was related to credibility 44 times. Comments included such things as connecting students to activities and resources on campus, helping them understand the college environment and campus in general, and making it easier to connect with the instructor.

Mary noted, "Sarah would send out many notification messages on canvas, which was super helpful reminding us about due dates,

announcements and activities going on around campus. You should always keep the mentor program around." Another student said,

> He was my connecting link to events or information that is found here on campus and I really appreciated that. He almost was like the older brother that you wished you always had that went to school here before you to tell you all of the secrets about the school.

While most did not explicitly connect this theme with credibility, this student said, "she helped me so much to find the places I needed … having a credible mentor really made all the difference."

In summary, many interesting findings emerged when the researchers compared the group which listened to the presentation and the group which did not. Regarding how students perceived how the five roles of the mentor played into the issue of credibility, the themes of trusted friend and peer leader were focused on more than any of the other roles.

Discussion

This study sought to determine how credibility is defined by students, whether it matters, and how it might be related to the roles of a mentor. Previous literature indicates that mentees base credibility of a mentor on their experience (Lave & Wenger, 1991), prior knowledge (Collier, 2017; Hovland et al., 1953) or credentials (Billot et al., 2017). In this study, students, early in the semester, defined mentor credibility as things such as "trust" and having "experience." At the same time, many also indicated that they did not know what credibility meant. Other attributes listed as important for the credibility of a mentor on the pre-survey were helping and being an example.

By the end of the semester, comments indicate that having the five roles of a UMP mentor explained and demonstrated early on in the semester can influence student ideas about credibility over the course of the semester. All students, including both those who listened to the presentation and those who did not, by the end of the semester, listed *not* experience but trust as the most important attribute of credibility.

Experience and knowledge (Collier, 2017; Hovland et al., 1953; Lave & Wenger, 1991) matter, but not as much as previous research indicates. Responses included both defining and identifying its importance. Therapy research may shed some light on the importance of trust. Giffin (1969), a psychotherapist, notes that whenever patients are interacting with their therapists, trust is the most important component of their relationship. It may be that students feel a similar need in a mentor/mentee relationship.

These findings also suggest that credentials (Billot et al., 2017) do not mean very much to students. Surprisingly, none of the students viewed credentials as a significant definition of credibility by the end of the semester. In the same vein, however, what can have the greatest impact is building trust in the mentors and belief that they will help the mentees achieve their goals.

When looking at the importance of credibility of a mentor and whether credibility actually matters, there was disparity between those who listened to the presentation and those who did not. At the beginning some students in both groups did not know how to respond to the question asking if credibility matters to the role of a UMP mentor. At the end, more of the students who listened to the presentation were able to articulate the importance of why credibility matters. Interestingly, those who did not hear the presentation increased in the number who answered "I don't know/no response/other" in response to this prompt. This may be because being educated on the roles helped students define and apply the roles to credibility. On the other hand, those who did not learn anything specifically about those roles may have either been more confused or not understood what particular aspects of the role were being applied in the mentor/mentee relationship. This could imply that if students are educated early in the semester on what the five roles of a peer mentor are, much like the students who heard the presentation, students may benefit by viewing their peer mentor as more credible than if they did not learn about the roles.

By the end of the semester, the attribute of helping went down for the nonpresentation group but up in importance for the other group. This could suggest that this attribute complements the roles of a peer mentor. On the other hand, students hearing the presentation did not list example as an attribute that mattered on the post-survey. This may be because

being an example became subsumed in the specific roles that UMP mentor was performing. Students who understood the roles better, felt that credibility mattered and the ways it mattered were by being able to trust their mentor, the amount of help they received, as well as the experience of the mentors.

These findings support the idea that a general understanding of the five roles of a mentor is important to credibility. This became apparent in examining post-surveys, reflections, and discussion posts from students who listened to the presentation early in the semester. These students understood the roles, identified credible behaviors, and were able to articulate them more so than those who did not. Even more importantly, two roles are identified as being key: those of trusted friend and peer leader.

A strength of this study was the ability to both qualitatively and quantitatively analyze student ideas about mentors and credibility. A limitation was that this data was not subjected to inferential statistical analysis and comparisons between the group not listening to the presentation and the one who did cannot be examined for significant differences. Future studies could utilize questionnaires for matched pre/post analysis.

Conclusion

Similar to Collier (2017), this study suggests that trust and experience matter in a peer mentor/mentee relationship. However, we also found that trust is the most important aspect, even more important than experience. That finding is also supported in the ways students talked about the five roles of a mentor—the most important ones were trusted friend and peer leader. The other three roles—student advocate, learning coach, and connecting link—were mentioned but were not a primary focus. Thus, those involved in peer mentoring programs should think about ways that credibility can be enhanced especially through trust.

Future research is needed to understand more about exactly how trust is created if not through credentials of the mentor, nor totally through their previous experience and knowledge, and how complex the role of trust is in a mentor/mentee relationship. Greater insight could also be gained by reviewing psychotherapy research to determine if there are

connections to the peer mentor/mentee relationship that might help explain the importance of trust. Understanding the role of trust in these relationships could contribute to increased retention rates, higher grade point averages, and the overall success of mentor relationships.

Points for Discussion

Questions such as the following need to be considered when developing peer mentor/mentee relationship:

1. Can trust be built without the mentor having previous experience or is it a reciprocal process?
2. Are there intentional exercises that can be created to increase trust in mentor/mentee relationships?
3. Does trust develop differently if students are non-traditional?

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5

Developing Positive Personal Tutor Relationships

Annabel Yale

Overview

This chapter explores one form of mentoring in higher education (HE), namely the mentoring of students by their personal tutor. The role of personal tutor is taken on by members of academic staff and is typically focused on providing both pastoral and academic individualised support (McFarlane, 2016). Despite a multitude of evidence supporting the positive impact of personal tutoring on student outcomes, the system is not thriving in HE (Lochtie, McIntosh, Stork, & Walker, 2018). The relative lack of research specifically on the student–personal tutor relationship, the nature of the interactions and how this relates to the quality of the experience suggests a need for further study into the different types of interactions and the impact these may have on the developing student–personal tutor relationship. Through a series of qualitative studies at a post-92 university, using focus sessions and interviews, conducted as part of my PhD, I explored the relationship first-year students have with their personal tutors and how, in a competitive UK HE context, higher education institutions (HEIs) might seek to develop more positive student–personal tutor relationships.

A. Yale (✉)
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: yalea@edgehill.ac.uk

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Following an overview of some of the key findings and insights from my PhD thesis (published in 2018) on personal tutoring, this chapter considers their implications and questions assumptions underlying student support mechanisms, the implicit messages such assumptions send to students and how this positions them. Constructing notions of students as either autonomous and independent learners or in need and dependent has implications and consequences for students, tutors and the institution. I explore moving towards reconstructing more helpful discourses and provide suggestions on how this mentor role can be better utilised by HEIs to empower both students and personal tutors in the relationship. Further, how HEIs can develop a system which is integrated within the wider learning context, that both students and personal tutors are invested in and can see the benefit of, is explored. The clear articulation of the purpose and benefit of the role within an extended transition period are recommended to alleviate students' uncertainties around starting university.

Introduction

My interest in researching the personal tutor role came from thinking about what the impact might be on student expectations of the increase in student fees from £3000 to £9000 in 2012 by the UK Government. The increase in fees has inarguably contributed to an increased marketisation of higher education (HE) and a move towards seeing students as consumers. Whether or not *consumer* is the preferred term, the reality is that universities are now forced to compete for students, who are themselves encouraged by government and media rhetoric to see a degree as an investment in their future. This is all in the context of a massification of HE in which student choice and student diversity has never been greater. With students paying three times more for their degree than previous years, it was anticipated that these contextual factors would change the nature of student expectations and impact on the student–personal tutor relationship.

In this competitive HE context, there is growing importance being placed on personal tutoring through its links to positive student outcomes (see Yale, 2019, for a summary). At the top of this list, and a high priority for higher education institutions (HEIs), is its positive link to

student retention (Thomas, 2012; Thomas, Hill, O'Mahony, & Yorke, 2017). This intensified focus on retention stems directly from the increasing pressure on universities through measures of institutional success and metrics of accountability, which identify retention as a top priority (e.g., league tables and the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework [TEF]; Department for Education [DfE], 2017).[1] Despite growing recognition of the importance of the personal tutor role, it remains a relatively under-researched area. A review of what research on personal tutoring does exist revealed two key issues affecting both students and personal tutors: firstly, the lack of clarity of the personal tutor role which links to the second issue, that of a lack of consistency of provision (Lochtie et al., 2018).

Approaches to Personal Tutor Practice

Personal tutor practice differs across institutions and even departments within institutions, but typically, personal tutors meet with their personal tutees and offer support for either or both students' academic and pastoral needs (McFarlane, 2016). Earwaker (1992) outlined three broad models of personal tutoring as pastoral, professional and curriculum. The pastoral approach is the most widely adopted by institutions and incorporates the provision of both personal and academic support by an assigned academic within the department. Meetings are usually one-to-one and separate from any teaching. In the curriculum approach, the personal tutor role is embedded within a module (typically one which focuses on personal and academic development) and students see their personal tutor regularly as part of the module/course. The professional approach sees the outsourcing of support from the department to trained professionals whose only role in the institution is student support. What seems to be the case is that institutions are trying out different ways to provide personal tutoring in attempting to meet the needs of a growing

[1] Originally the Teaching Excellence Framework and renamed The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework, it was introduced by the UK Government to assess teaching quality in UK HEIs.

and diverse student body with more complex needs (particularly in relation to mental health). In the HEI where the current research took place, a pastoral model is adopted whereby the policy states that first-year students should have four meetings with their personal tutor across the year.

With the more personal and pastoral approaches, personal tutoring incorporates the skills of a mentor and requires individuals who are both experienced and empathetic to be able to support, enable and empower students towards becoming independent learners (Wisker, Exley, Antoniou, & Ridley, 2013). The next section outlines the method and explores some of the key findings from my thesis before discussing the implications for HEIs and personal tutor practice. (For those wanting to read more detail on the findings, see Yale, 2017, 2019.)

Research Overview

The research was based at a post-92 university in the North West of England and included a series of studies using focus sessions (Yale, 2017) and interviews (Yale, 2019), in which experiences and expectations of personal tutoring were explored with first-year psychology students. The data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis and the findings compared in terms of any differences and similarities. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is a form of thematic analysis which can be used to explore individual experiences and can provide a rich, holistic perspective, with deep and meaningful insights. It can be used to develop theory and also drawn upon in practice to inform thinking (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The findings from the focus sessions were used to inform the interviews which were designed to elicit a more in-depth and idiographic exploration of student expectations and experiences.

Findings

The findings from all of the studies support the importance of students developing a relationship with their personal tutor, yet there are potential barriers to the relationship forming. Some of these concern a perceived

inequality and power imbalance between student and personal tutor, confusion around expectations of the role and conflicting notions of student independence. The next section explores these findings further and then highlights the importance of turning points in the relationship which can have a dramatic and lasting effect on the student–personal tutor relationship. Included here is a number of supporting student participant quotes.

Developing the Relationship Between Personal Tutor and Student

Developing a relationship with the personal tutor provides a strong foundation for learning and was found to have a direct impact on improving student confidence. The relationship between student and personal tutor seems also to form the basis for more satisfying teaching and learning to take place, suggesting it has the potential to positively influence tutors as well as students. The relationship also serves as a mediating factor through some of the challenges of first year and a high value is placed by students on knowing their personal tutor cares about them. Positive interactions in the student–personal tutor relationship were found to promote the development of trust, which contributes to the perception of quality in the relationship and in turn moderates the effects of a gap in expectations. For example, a student who had developed a positive relationship with their personal tutor was more likely to provide positive excuses for a shorter meeting with their personal tutor than expected compared to a student who had not developed a relationship. The latter student was left angry and upset and blamed the personal tutor for not caring. One of the barriers identified to the relationship developing relates to differences in social backgrounds between students and personal tutors, creating perceptions of inequality.

Student "Habitus" and Inequality

The student body can be very diverse and therefore have diverse support needs which institutions need to respond to. Referring to Bourdieu's

(1986) notion of "habitus", students can often lack "institutional habitus" due to differences in social backgrounds and educational experiences. This can create a "gap" in frames of reference between students and their personal tutor and a perceived inequality in the relationship. One of the ways this gap could be narrowed is through effective support and communication. A barrier to this was identified in the research, however, namely that students feel a power imbalance between themselves and their tutors and this was an overarching factor which influenced student expectations and experiences. Also revealed was that perceptions of an imbalance in power in the relationship meant that students were more sensitive to any differences between what was expected and what was experienced:

> Nobody's ever complained about, well that sounds rude saying complained, but nobody's ever said anything … I think someone said that they [personal tutors] are allowed to go through your essay plans with you but I'm not sure and don't want to ask …

This would suggest that this issue needs to be explicitly addressed in the relationship from the first encounter.

Expectations

Problems only arise after students learnt what to expect, usually from their personal tutor or other students, after starting university and then finding that their experiences are inconsistent with this. When the experience falls short of the expectation, this has consequences. This mismatch between expectations and experiences evokes strong emotions, and this can have added psychological consequences when students search for an explanation. For example, one student decided that it was her fault that her personal tutor did not support her in the same way as other students were supported. This suggests consistency of provision should follow the clear articulation of the role from the start of the relationship. Students seem open and flexible to change, providing these changes are explained.

Negotiating Independence

Throughout all the studies, there are different connotations and perceptions of the expectation of independence at university, and this is a source of conflict and confusion for students:

> I don't know whether he [personal tutor] kind of automatically assumed I won't bother doing that and possibly an 18-year-old might do that cause they're used to spoon feeding as such but that's how it is really in school and college so that's possibly how he assumed I was.

For some students, asking for help can be seen as a personal failing, as this seems at odds with what they have been told about expectations of independence at university. Students express that they want to be independent and feel they should be, but in providing a programme which does not include the essential academic support needed by all students places them in the unavoidable position of having to ask for help. This has the effect of reinforcing their feelings of need and deficiency. The impact of students feeling that it is their fault because they do not understand and need help may mean a drop in academic confidence. This goes against one of the main aims of university, which is to develop students' confidence in their academic abilities. Students preferred to seek out their own support and were resistant to the idea of being viewed as "needy", suggesting students are sensitive to these perceptions.

Turning Points

Students all identified specific turning points in their relationship with their personal tutor, and this either meant an end to the relationship or the start of valuing the relationship and it developing further. Both negative and positive turning points were strongly linked to their personal tutor showing any evidence of willingness to help or an interest in them. Such moments are associated with strong emotions and resulted in the extent to which the student liked their tutor. There can be positive outcomes from turning points, so, for example, when a student receives help

in a crisis, this can form a solid foundation for the relationship developing positively. Negative experiences often meant that students still appear to be engaging as they attend the personal tutor meetings but in fact are just going through the motions and seeking help and support from other sources. One student participant stated:

> I think if it was really gone over in a lot of detail and discussed with her to get to know her a bit more I might have said more about how the stress comes … and this might have led on to what the real issue is … I guess if you discuss that kind of thing you get more familiarity … I'd rather go to my module tutor now to be honest if I have any problems as she knows me better.

This presents a challenge therefore of how to measure the success of personal tutoring when attendance at meetings may be no indication of the quality. Added to this is the extra pressure on other tutors of providing this often unseen support.

Discussion

The findings indicate not only shared and related but also unique and divergent student expectations, experiences and consequences emerging from a constantly changing and highly influential student–personal tutor relationship. It also highlights the need for a personal tutor system which is integrated within the wider learning context, that both students and personal tutors are invested in and can see the benefit of. Clear articulation of the purpose and benefit of the role within an extended transition period would go some way to addressing this and alleviating some of the students' uncertainties. Furthermore, the research supports sufficient timetabled student support hours to send a clearer message that the role of personal tutor is valued and that student support is expected.

Being clear and explicit in what students can expect from the personal tutor role in the first meeting is one of the most important building blocks in the development of the relationship. This can then serve as a strong foundation through the transition to university and future

interactions. Students knowing what they can ask from their personal tutor would reduce the anxiety which surrounds the decision to ask for a meeting. The earlier students are given realistic expectations of their personal tutor, the better, although not in "Fresher's Week" (traditionally a one-week induction in UK HEIs for first-year undergraduates at the start of their programme of study, aimed at familiarising new students with the HE environment), as students may not remember what they are told due to the sheer volume of information given that week (referred to as "Fresher's overload" in Yale, 2017). This would support an extended transition phase, which could include one-to-one planned meetings with their personal tutor in the first weeks of teaching. This would provide the ideal opportunity to discuss and negotiate a student's expectations, particularly because students perceive and interpret things differently due to their individual differences. Making these meetings compulsory as part of the course in the early stages seems to alleviate some of the uncertainty experienced by students and means that the university can support students through some of the difficulties of the transition to HE identified in previous research (e.g., Thomas, 2012). Having group tutorials as well as individual tutorials would provide a space to discuss more general expectations.

Constructions of Students

More helpful constructions of students than simply "consumers" are needed. These constructions, moreover, should align with approaches to student support to avoid sending mixed messages and confusing students and personal tutors alike. It should be expected that students will demonstrate some instrumentality in their learning as a lot of thought and deliberation may have gone into the decision to go to university (especially in the current fee-paying climate where students may have to provide more justification for the high cost of going to university, not just to others but to themselves). Institutions should rightly recognise this, but rather than making negative associations about students as "demanding customers" and simply trying to satisfy student expectations, they should take the lead in outlining and guiding expectations, as the current findings

suggest that students know little about what university life will really be like. Students hold only vague notions of what to expect from a personal tutor at university prior to starting the degree. As most of these expectations precede the personal tutor relationship and are based on previous educational experiences, they do in fact acknowledge and expect that their experiences will be different. This suggests that they are open to the realities of the role being different from what was previously experienced, and most importantly, they are open to realigning their expectations at the start of the relationship. Within the context of student–personal tutor meetings, both parties should negotiate a mutual understanding of what the degree process means and the part each party plays in this. The next subsections explore in more detail how the findings from the research might be utilised and built on in a HE context.

Constructions of Student Support

Tait (2004) highlights that social and moral values are inherent in student support systems and change over time. Without making these explicit, it will conceal the ways in which relationships with students are conceived. He suggests that this is an issue that all of us working in this field with our different approaches to student services can reflect on. The implications and messages implied and conveyed in these constructions can be complex and often contradictory, however. Seeing the students as consumers raises questions as to what the student has paid for and is entitled to. This is where qualitative research enquiry has the potential to offer some insights into what students perceive as having been promised and what the university is under obligation to provide. It is easy to see how students can be confused and conflicted through receiving mixed messages. Myers (2013) emphasises that students do not have an entitlement to a degree qualification; rather, they have an entitlement to the opportunity to study for a qualification, the educational process and experience. This can be likened to the purchase of a gym membership not automatically entitling the purchaser to become fitter. The opportunity is there to get fit, the equipment and support are provided, but they still have to engage with the support and do the work themselves to achieve the desired results.

This research identified the need to explore and recognise the assumptions underlying student support mechanisms, the implicit messages such assumptions send to students, and how this positions them. We can construct notions of students as either autonomous and independent learners or in need and dependent, but we need to recognise the implications for both students and practice and move towards reconstructing more helpful discourses. As advocated by Myers (2013), educational models of support should link to the demands of HE and aim to facilitate students' coping strategies, not amplify their perceived deficits. Clegg, Bradley and Smith (2006) argue for a pedagogy of support. The curriculum model, whereby personal tutoring in integrated within a specific module, with a clear structure and solution-focused approach, would normalise student support. In doing so, it reduces the psychological burden and negative impact for students of decision making around having to ask for help.

The reality is that all students are likely to need help negotiating the demands of HE at some point. This would suggest that instead of a deficit approach, student requests for help should be viewed positively and as an expected part of the students' learning journey. It is likely that the need for help will be more in the first semester, so more opportunities to interact and help students should be provided and wherever possible send a clear message to students that it is the "norm" to need and ask for help.

Further support for the curriculum model of personal tutoring comes from its potential to set and meet student expectations in a more consistent learning context. As identified both in this research and in previous studies (e.g., Hagenauer & Volet, 2014), the frequency of interactions matters in developing the relationship as it is difficult to do so when interactions are too infrequent. With regular interactions being facilitated through course interactions, it is more likely that the relationship will develop sooner. For instance, the only requirement in the current personal tutor policy at the institution in which the current research took place is for four meetings in the first year; it is difficult to see how a positive and enduring relationship can be built through only four interactions.

In considering what approaches the institution might take to student support, a starting point might be to consider why students are offered support. This might help to uncover the assumptions made about

student support and students themselves that implicitly arise through its provision. Student support which focuses on student need may actively contradict developmental aims, either by treating students as incapable or vulnerable or by ensuring that they do not experience the consequences of their actions. Reconsidering what underlying messages are implicit in the forms of support offered is essential, but using it to effect change may be challenging for institutions trying to remain competitive. Resisting simply meeting students' needs and instead enabling and challenging may feel risky for personal tutors under the looming threat of student satisfaction measures and the view of the student as a consumer. This approach would, however, be more likely to foster independence and capability and should align with the institutional mission to enable students throughout their degree to develop into independent learners ready for the world of work.

Developing Independence

Providing the right level of support to develop independent students ready to enter the job market without over-supporting and creating dependency is challenging for personal tutors. Essentially, what institutions should consider is what is a personal tutor for and what a student needs and should decide on the best way to provide this. The challenge is to get a balance between developing independence, without fostering dependency, and helping students overcome barriers to asking for help. A key recommendation from the thesis is that explicit articulation of expectations of "independence" is needed for both students and personal tutors. Consideration of how and when independence develops would help to avoid the negative emotions associated with student support. The confusion students feel around independence is compounded further by personal tutors who are confused and conflicted themselves and therefore give out mixed messages (Myers, 2013). More clarity around expectations of independence would therefore be helpful for both parties to the relationship.

Respect for Diversity and Equality

Inequality in the relationship due to differences in social backgrounds and frames of references was a barrier to it developing positively. Thomas (2002) suggests this could be addressed by demonstrating a respect for diversity and creating a system which is responsive to a wide range of students' needs, promotes access, and encourages equality and collaboration. The findings suggest that passing the power to the student in the early stages of the degree may not, however, be wise. At this stage, students may not have enough information or *habitus* to make informed choices. Making informed choices as a consumer relies on the student having access to good quality information and the ability to use that information (Lomas, 2007). Students often have little prior knowledge of university and may not be able to make sense of information supplied by universities.

Towards a Shared Understanding of the Personal Tutor Role

The research provided insights into the nature and consequences of the student–personal tutor relationship and suggests that due to the wide-ranging nature of the personal tutor's role, students may not be clear about it. Added to this is the highly subjective nature of student experiences of personal tutoring so that an individualised approach is essential. It was not surprising then that students had negative experiences of their personal tutor when expectations of the role did not match the experience; however, the degree of conflict and its impact on the student and organisation was reduced by the development of a relationship underpinned with relational quality and depth. Students also seemed to develop a stronger and more positive relationship with their personal tutor with the explicit articulation and a shared understanding of the value and meaning of the personal tutor role in both relational and transactional terms at the start of the relationship. For example, when students felt that the personal tutor cared about their well-being whilst also helping them to negotiate the academic demands of university. Helping students with

the practical and academic demands of the course seems to form the basis for the relationship to develop into something more relational as long as there is also evidence of care.

The findings have practical implications for institutions as the insights from the student experiences can be used to manage and negotiate student perceptions and expectations effectively regarding the personal tutor role. Personal tutors should be encouraged to attend to the nature and formation of the relationship as early as possible and to understand the consequences of any conflict and inconsistencies students experience and how to manage them. They should seek to clarify role expectations and specific responsibilities, giving attention to availability, workload and the purpose of the meetings. This would reduce the chances of any conflict and misunderstandings. Personal tutors should be encouraged to have open, constructive communication and discussion with students, which would serve to provide a more equal relationship and rebalance the power in the relationship from the perceived authority of the personal tutor towards mutual collaboration between parties. Through this, more realistic student expectations and obligations can be managed and negotiated, leading to more positive relationships through a shared understanding.

Implications for Higher Education Institutions

Building the student–personal tutor relationship will come with its own benefits and positive outcomes for all parties: students, personal tutors and the institution. Institutions can also benefit from knowing the sources of student expectations. They must balance the short-term gain of attracting new students by promoting unrealistic expectations against the consequences of unmet and unfulfilled promises. Knowledge of student expectations can help to provide a better alignment, not by simply meeting these expectations but by understanding how these develop and the consequences of not meeting them. This can have reputational benefits to the institutions by generating the sharing of positive experiences rather than waiting for things to go wrong in the relationship to find out.

Institutional goals such as student satisfaction and retention may promote a more customer-serving approach, which may be giving students

what they want rather than what they need. In fact, there is a tension between the two, with Myers (2013) suggesting that student support practices have the potential to render students less capable. Rather than focusing on clarifying the functioning of the personal tutor role, Mynott (2016) suggests clarifying what problem the personal tutor is trying to fix. Specifically, she questions whether it is about monitoring and control or development and independent learning, support or enablement. More broadly, she suggests deciding who the role is there for, to help the student or to achieve institutional goals. There are clear tensions and conflicts between these aspects which need to be resolved so that the student does not get mixed messages and personal tutors have a clear purpose. Moreover, Myers (2013) advocates understanding the links between all of these drivers as it is possible to combine policy which operates at both the macro- and meso-level so that micro-level support practices act in an ethically appropriate way towards students. As more managerialist methods of accountability and metrics (e.g., the TEF; DfE, 2017) are introduced, there is likely to be more of a focus on the personal tutor role with its link to retention and as a measure of teaching quality, thus emphasising its continued importance for institutions (Mynott, 2016).

Institutions should caution against unquestioningly trying to meet student expectations as this resolves nothing. Instead, it conceals the sources of problems amid the rhetoric of satisfying students. By rethinking expectations there can be a move towards deconstructing unhelpful notions of the student as consumer and instead promote student autonomy and independence whilst acknowledging that they do need help in achieving this. Further support comes from this research, as students were conflicted between wanting independence and needing help and were reluctant to ask for fear of being stereotyped as demanding or lazy. A key consideration in terms of outcomes here is for institutions to ask what type of students they want to construct. If the answer is not "passive consumers", then more active and collaborative methods of student support are needed.

It is important for staff to understand the need for a high-quality student experience and how their role contributes, undertaking the necessary and relevant staff development training to support this. At a time when potential students have considerable choice of where to study,

Morgan and Jones (2012) feel that the student experience should be central to everything the university and staff do. They believe that the quality of the student experience will "make or break an institution and hence its reputation and survival" (p. 211). Rather than just words, an excellent student experience must have meaning to everyone in the institution, together with an understanding of how students can contribute positively and take personal responsibility. The personal tutor is a key figure in the student journey and a face of the institution, so more must be done to prioritise and support this role. Moreover, this should be seen by institutions as a positive investment in the student experience and it should therefore be the last area to be reduced in case of financial pressures and constraints.

If student support and satisfaction is a priority for institutions, this should be underpinned by providing appropriate and timely training and support for personal tutors themselves to promote confidence and enable competency in the role. As the personal tutors in McFarlane's (2016) study suggest, rather than any training being solely at the start of their appointment, it should be dynamic and provide individual developmental support for the ongoing emotional demands of being a personal tutor and supporting students.

Characterising and constructing students as a focus of concern has significant consequences. Forms of student support can focus on protection or control rather than on challenging and developing student capabilities. Without an explicit view of the reasons why support is provided, there is a risk that it will result in outcomes in which students become instrumental, disempowered or simply confused by mixed messages about their capabilities (Myers, 2013). The message here is that there is a need to get to know the current student body, avoid assumptions on what they need and resist unhelpful constructions of students, refocusing on the educational purpose of HE. The student being constructed in different ways at the same time, for example, as a vulnerable child, a collaborating partner and a demanding consumer can complicate the issue further as well as having potential consequences for all those involved.

Implications for Personal Tutors in Their Practice

Establishing clear expectations and boundaries has the potential to make both parties feel safer in the relationship. That is not to say that every aspect should be fixed or exactly the same for everyone, however, as both personal tutors and students are individuals. Allowing for individuality enriches the experience and promotes diversity. In fact, due to the subjective nature of the relationship between student and personal tutor, it would be impossible to be explicit in everything. Clarity in expectations is also beneficial for reassuring personal tutors, as this can help with negotiating the boundaries of the relationship and can give the personal tutor more confidence around points of release and referral (McFarlane, 2016).

Whilst acknowledging the explicit factors associated with the institution as the third party to the student–personal tutor relationship, the general personal tutor role expectations should be individualised, flexible and open to change. It is through this process of change, facilitated by open discussion and negotiation, that students can develop their potential and minimise any misunderstandings. It is likely that this will avoid the more severe consequences of not meeting student expectations which are likely to negatively impact students, personal tutors, and the university's reputation and success.

The personal tutor meeting provides a space to listen to student views and whether they are accurate or not; this can have a very empowering effect on the student as they feel valued when they are given a voice. The implications of this are that students would be more likely to voice any issues, knowing they will be listened to and in doing so develop confidence and agency. This in turn will contribute to the primary goals of both student and institution—that of developing independent learners ready for the job market with the likely effect of improving student satisfaction and retention.

The following are specific recommendations from the findings of my PhD which may be useful for both personal tutors and HEIs seeking to enhance the personal tutor experience.

Specific Recommendations to Develop Positive Personal Tutor Relationships in Practice

1. Explicit and realistic articulation of the personal tutor role expectations in the first meeting.
2. Extended transition phase
   (a) Include more one-to-one structured interactions between students and their personal tutor.
   (b) Include group tutorials to foster integration and shared understandings.
   (c) Focus on academic and social integration.
   (d) Provide accurate information.
3. Curriculum model of personal tutoring which would:
   (a) Allow for more interaction.
   (b) Alleviate time pressures on personal tutors.
   (c) Alleviate uncertainty around availability.
   (d) Normalise the need for support.
   (e) Reduce anxiety over independence.
   (f) Reduce anxiety associated with the decision to ask for help.
4. Recognition that the relationship is ongoing and requires continued shaping, negotiating and management in meetings.
5. Personal tutors treat students as individuals.
6. The relationship should contain both relational (e.g., trust, care, respect) and transactional elements (e.g., academic support for assignment preparation), where the meaning and relevance of transactional aspects are explicitly linked to the student's degree.
7. Ongoing training and support for personal tutors to develop confidence and competence which recognises personal tutors' individual training needs and starting points.

Points for Discussion

Applying these ideas to your own personal tutor practice, reflect on the following questions:

1. How can HEIs recognise the value of personal tutoring?
2. How might personal tutors be better supported in their role?
3. How can personal tutoring be integrated into teaching modules?

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6

Mentoring Students on Professional Courses in Higher Education in the Workplace: New Opportunities and Challenges

Gillian Peiser

Overview

This chapter firstly reviews the changing role of the workplace mentor in three professions in England: nursing, social work and teaching. This review reveals the influence of government and professional regulatory bodies on mentors' work and, where policy has been absent, how educationalists have conceptualised the role. Following this review, this chapter considers some of the collective opportunities and challenges faced by mentors across the three professions, especially with regard to professional knowledge development. The second half of the chapter focuses on the role of the school-based mentor in the increasingly school-led policy landscape of initial teacher education. This chapter considers the new and ambiguous demands on the mentor and the implications for university partnership working with schools. Finally, it deliberates the type of future-proof investments required on professional courses in higher education involving both mentors and tutors to achieve optimum professional learning experiences for pre-service students.

G. Peiser (✉)
School of Education, Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK
e-mail: g.peiser@ljmu.ac.uk

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Introduction

As other chapters in this volume have demonstrated, there are multiple interpretations about the role of mentors in higher education (HE). As Jones et al. (2005) point out, variation in mentoring practices is influenced by the multiple mentoring purposes, contrasting settings and the views of those involved. The same applies to mentors who support students in the workplace on professional learning courses provided by universities in England. Not only are there different understandings of mentor roles depending on the profession, the role of mentors within individual professions has evolved over time. This chapter will provide an overview of the changing role of mentors on professional learning courses in three professions: nursing, social work and teaching, paying particular attention to the latter, in the English context. It will consider emerging opportunities and challenges for mentoring, the implications for university partnerships with schools to give greater coherence to the professional curriculum and mentor development.

The Changing Mentor Role Across Three Professions

Nursing

The transition of nurse education in the UK from apprentice-style training in hospitals to HE in the 1990s transformed the way in which student nurses were taught, supported and assessed in the practice setting. All student nurses were allocated a mentor who supervised them for a minimum of 40% of the time in clinical practice, which accounts for 50% of the degree course. The very wide responsibilities for nurse mentors were articulated in the Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC], 2008) which included eight domains of competence: establishing effective working relationships, facilitation of learning, assessment and accountability, evaluation of learning, creating an environment for learning, attention to

context of practice, supporting evidence-based practice and leadership (NMC, 2008). In order to take on the mentor role, nurses needed at least 12 months' post-registration experience and to have undergone a formal programme undertaken in a university (NMC, 2008). Whilst some authors stressed the role of the nurse mentor as the central support mechanism for student nurses who sponsors and encourages them (Casey & Clark, 2011; Gopee, 2015; Kinnell & Hughes, 2010), there has been growing attention to the more formal educative dimension, which is also evident in the domains of competence in the Standards listed above. Andrews and Wallace (1999) and Myall, Levett-Jones and Lathlean (2008) underlined that the mentor no longer simply "supervises" practice, but had significant responsibility for linking the theory to practice and the evaluation and utilisation of evidence. Up until December 2018, all nurse mentors had a significant assessor role, deciding if the students met the Standards for pre-registration nursing education (NMC, 2010), thereby acting as "gatekeepers" to the profession.

In 2018, however, the nurse mentor role was overhauled and divided with different people taking on distinct roles. The NMC replaced the Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (NMC, 2008) with the Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (NMC, 2018), which came into effect in January 2019. These new Standards split up the responsibilities of traditional mentorship into "practice supervisors", "practice assessors" and "academic assessors". Practice supervisors are any registered health or social care professionals who are no longer obligated to undertake mandatory training or to have accumulated 12 months of experience in the profession, as long as they are professionally registered and adequately prepared for the role. Practice and academic assessors must prepare or train for their roles to ensure they have developed interpersonal communication skills and are able to carry out evidence-based assessments of students (NMC, 2018). These latest developments have effectively removed assessment responsibilities from those supervising practice on a daily basis and place more responsibility for *testing* student nurses' understanding of the relationship between theory and practice on those with assessor rather than supervisory roles. Nonetheless, practice supervisors must "have understanding of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are supporting students to

achieve" (NMC, 2018) which will also include research-informed practice. The rationale for the overhaul of the mentor role has been to increase the pool of professionals to support and improve the quality of learning, effectively distributing responsibilities rather than placing all of them in the hands of one person (Foster, 2019).

Social Work

In social work education, the term used to describe those responsible for supervising professional learning in the workplace has changed over time and, in fact, does not include the term "mentor". Those practising this role have been called "practice teacher" (Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, 1989), "practice assessor" (General Social Care Council, 2005) and more recently "practice educator" (PE; The College of Social Work [TCSW], 2013). This change of terminology reflects shifting policy, including the introduction of a social work degree in England in 2003–2004, where there is increasing recognition of the nature of professional learning and the complexity of assessing students' practice (Shardlow, 2012; Waterhouse, McLagan, & Murr, 2011).

Today PEs must be qualified and registered social workers who have successfully completed a post-qualifying course at postgraduate level, demonstrating their competence to directly supervise, teach and assess social work degree students (TCSW, 2013). The roles and responsibilities of PEs are detailed in the Practice Educator Professional Standards (TCSW, 2013). These include organisation of learning opportunities for social work students, enabling and supporting the learning and professional development of the student within practice, management of the student's assessment and engagement in continuous professional development in relation to performance as PEs. PEs have gatekeeper roles, taking final responsibility for passing or failing a student. In social work, there is little emphasis on the supporting or nurturing role. The PE has more responsibility for teaching the application of theory to practice (Finch, 2014; Schaub & Dalrymple, 2013).

Teaching

The recognition of the contribution of school-based mentoring in initial teacher education (ITE) began in England in the 1980s. School–university partnerships were established in an attempt to overcome the theory–practice dualism (McIntyre, 1997). In the early 1990s, school-based training became a statutory requirement of all postgraduate courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) with at least two-thirds of the time to be spent on placement in schools (Department for Education [DfE], 1992, 1993). This "on the job" training was to be closely supported by a practising teacher colleague, or "mentor", from the placement school(s).

Unlike in nursing and social work, the role of the mentor was not defined in a formal framework until very recently. Prior to this, the emphasis was on supporting the mentee to meet a particular end: the competences or standards for newly QTS. The national mentoring standards for school-led initial teacher training (ITT; DfE, 2016) make reference to four domains: personal qualities (with a focus on relationships and interpersonal skills for mentoring), teaching (pertaining to the development of the student teacher's skills), professionalism (promoting to the wider roles and responsibilities of the teacher) and self-development and working in partnership (focussing on the mentor's professional development and collaboration with other colleagues). However, as Douglas (2017, p. 854) points out, the Standards are "voluntary and do not necessarily represent consensus in the field". In England, furthermore, there is still no national requirement to obtain a mentor qualification or to undergo nationally recognised training in order to undertake the role. Given that the mentoring standards are only a more recent development, the role of the mentor prior to this has found expression in the academic literature.

Wang and Odell (2002) explain how the original emphasis on a nurturing role to minimise "reality shock" shifted to one that promotes reflective practice through practical reasoning and rational thinking, following the influence of Schön's (1983) "reflection-on-action". The mentor was also to provide practical and contextual support, potentially helping the mentee to connect theoretical learning in the university with

teaching (Wang & Odell, 2002). From the 1990s, some teacher educators promoted a critical constructivist approach. They advocated that mentors and their mentees should act as agents of change, collaboratively taking an "inquiry stance" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) in order to generate new knowledge and change. These educationalists also emphasised the importance of democratic and participant-centred approaches (Earl & Timperley 2008; Feiman-Nemser 1998; Mena, García, Clarke, & Barkatsas, 2016; Timperley & Earl, 2012). Whilst different approaches have found particular favour at different points in time, it has been recognised that each has their benefits and should be considered flexibly and cumulatively (Crutcher & Naseem, 2016; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006). Whilst in some respects this has led to a lack of a common understanding about what mentoring should entail (Hobson & Malderez, 2013), the mentor has always played a key role in assessing the student teacher for QTS.

Opportunities and Challenges for Workplace Mentors Across Professions

As far as opportunities for professional learning are concerned, the mentor, practice supervisor or PE in all three professions is ideally positioned to assist students to apply codified knowledge learnt in the university to particular practical situations (Eraut, 2014). For example, in nurse education, Spouse (2001, p. 515) has explained how mentors can assist students in learning how to recognise and when to use their epistemic knowledge (termed "knowledge-in-waiting") so that it can become "knowledge-in-use" or phronesis. Acting as a linchpin, the mentor can also assist pre-service professionals in reconciling contradictions between the different learning communities (university and workplace domains) in which they are situated (Engeström, 2001).

This "linchpin" role, however, assumes that the mentor not only has the necessary theoretical expertise but also has the pedagogic skills to enable this knowledge transfer. The former involves familiarity with up-to-date and broad research knowledge, whilst the latter assumes coaching

skills that can draw on experiential and contextual knowledge as a premise for stimulating reflection. Mentoring pedagogy also demands interpersonal skills for interaction with adult learners and awareness of the need to rely less on instincts and intuitions (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010).

The existence of policy frameworks in nursing (at least until very recently) and social work, which set out both the mentor's teaching role and the requirement to update professional knowledge, arguably support the "linchpin" role better than they do in teaching. Furthermore, in nursing and social work, the relevance of propositional knowledge to the workplace has always been much more explicit, making knowledge flow between the discipline and the workplace easier and more frequent.

In teaching there is an absence of nationally recognised accredited training, and the national mentoring standards for school-led ITT (DfE, 2016) are only a very recent development. Furthermore, the national mentoring standards are voluntary and do not necessarily represent consensus in the field (Douglas, 2017). Translating theory into practice in teaching is perhaps also more difficult since there have been challenges with ascertaining a knowledge base in the field of education. As Furlong (2013) remarked, education has had difficulties in establishing itself as a discipline directly relevant to teaching due to the diversity of areas with which it is concerned.

Whilst nursing mentors and social work PEs may be better equipped for helping mentees to connect theory with practice, mentors in all three professions face challenges in reconciling the demands on them to look after their patients, clients and pupils while at the same time supporting the professional learning of their pre-service students. Peiser, Ambrose, Burke and Davenport (2018) highlighted how across the professions, mentors have inadequate time resources to carry out both roles. They also found that mentors face tensions in carrying out their assessor and supporter roles, although this may be resolved in nursing with the new separation of responsibilities.

In summary, therefore, the mentor has a crucial role to play in "situated apprentice" models of professional learning, in which pre-service students participate in professional communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The mentor can facilitate high-quality professional learning in helping their mentees to integrate and conceptualise different types of knowledge

(McNamara, Murray, & Jones, 2014). However, in order for this task to be carried out effectively, it requires particular skills and knowledge developed through specialist training and workload relief from regular responsibilities in order to support students. Whilst the latter is dependent on government funding, the former has implications for partnership working between universities and the organisations which host the practicum or clinical experience.

In England, the policy landscape for ITE has changed in recent years, with schools being given greater responsibility than universities for professional preparation. This throws up a host of new issues not only for mentoring but also for university and schools partnership working and how they collaborate to provide the pre-service curriculum. The next section of this chapter will now turn to examine these matters in more detail.

Mentoring Student Teachers in a Changing ITE Policy Landscape

Until fairly recently, university schools of education held most of the responsibility for training pre-service teachers in England, although they have worked in partnership with schools, where student teachers carried out teaching practice placements since 1992. In 2012, the then secretary of state for Education announced plans to give schools greater control over the recruitment and training of teachers on postgraduate routes. Whilst employment-based routes into teaching existed prior to this, a new school-led "School Direct" route was launched in 2012–13. In 2011–12, universities held 80% of the teacher training places (Universities UK, 2014). By 2018–19, this figure had dropped to 47%, with 53% of the places held by school-led providers (DfE, 2018).

On school-led courses, student teachers spend more time in schools with school-led providers taking responsibility for some of the 60 days previously spent in universities on postgraduate courses. This would imply that those who are responsible for their training in the workplace environment need to provide them with more support. The European Commission (2013) has recognised the increased and wide-ranging role

of school-based colleagues in ITE due to the increasing popularity of employment-based/led routes. In so doing, they have used the term "teacher educator" not only for tutors employed by universities but also for colleagues who support student teachers in schools. This would suggest that mentors should now take on additional duties and responsibilities hitherto assigned to colleagues in universities.

So does this mean that there is more onus for mentors to focus on educational research as an evidence base for practice? A variety of policy developments in this regard make the answer to this question complex. On the one hand, the shift of governance of ITE to schools suggests disdain by government of ITE provided by universities. As Cochran-Smith (2016) points out, when looking for reasons for teachers' inadequacies, policy makers have often blamed the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge brought about by university-models for ITE. Shifting ITE to schools was part of a drive to create a "self-improving school-led system", aiming to improve the quality of the workforce by allowing schools to take control of recruitment and training of teachers. Arguably, this transfer of responsibility signalled higher regard for experiential professional learning than professional knowledge development underpinned by research.

School-led ITE has also had new implications for partnership arrangements between university schools of education and schools. University-led ITE typically assigns particular roles to school and university colleagues, whereby each draws on their own area of expertise, but colleagues work closely in partnership with each other. The preference for practical knowledge in school-led models of ITE potentially puts this type of partnership at risk. Mutton, Burn and Menter (2017, p. 26–27) remark how the new ITE landscape represents "a missed opportunity to move beyond administrative conceptions of partnership that focus predominantly on organisational structures to exemplify, or even specify, how the different contributions to trainee teachers' learning through ITT programmes could be brought together".

On the other hand, the national mentoring standards for school-led ITT (DfE, 2016) make reference to the importance of research-informed teaching. Standard 2 states that "The mentor should enable the trainee to access, utilise and interpret robust educational research to inform their

teaching …" (p. 12), and Standard 4 states that "The mentor should continue to develop their own mentoring practice and subject and pedagogical expertise by accessing appropriate professional development and engaging with robust research" (p. 12). As argued by White, Dickerson and Weston (2015, p. 447), however, the expectation of those "with a dual role of teacher and teacher educator to develop an academic identity may be very challenging in terms of time commitment and accessibility to academic studying resources". And as pointed out above, these Standards are not statutory and there is no obligation to undergo training or provide evidence that one has met the Standards before taking on the mentor role.

There are further reasons why teacher mentors may not draw on a research base to support their mentees' learning. As alluded to above, teachers may have difficulty in establishing the relevance of propositional knowledge to the workplace due to the diverse field of education as an academic discipline. This may hinder knowledge flow between the discipline and workplace, leaving the development of professional knowledge susceptible to being structured by "alternative logics" (Hordern, 2016). In English schools, these "logics" involve political policies of accountability, whereby schools and teachers are under continual pressure to ensure pupils meet academic standards. For these reasons, many mentors consider themselves primarily as teachers of pupils rather than supporters of beginning teachers' learning (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014).

Against the policy backdrop of an increasingly school-led ITE policy context, Peiser, Duncalf and Mallaburn (2019) investigated how mentors conceptualised their roles, described their work and the factors that impacted on these. Their study established that in some respects the shift to school-led ITE had a positive impact on mentoring practices which were characterised by collaborative self-development rather than monitoring and supervision. Ownership of ITE (as a school-led provider) seemed to strengthen the "learning community" culture within the school, where mentors and mentees solved problems collegially and democratically for the sake of whole school development. By the same token, mentors supporting student teachers on school-led courses appeared more tolerant of professional learning involving trial and error, collaboratively adopting an "inquiry stance" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009),

rather than expecting them to teach in a particular way and also had designated time to carry out their duties. However, none of the mentors who participated in the study (supporting both school-led and university-led courses) made any reference to the contribution of research knowledge to their roles or how they helped mentees to make connections between theory and practice. They did not appear to be taking on the role of teacher educators in the broader sense (European Commission, 2013), to be meeting the research-related standards in the national mentoring standards for school-led ITT (DfE, 2016), or helping their mentees to apply codified knowledge learnt in the university to the practical situation of the school (Eraut, 2014).

It should also be noted that schools entrusted with school-led provision are those that have been judged favourably by accountability measures through Ofsted[1] inspections. Only schools that meet certain criteria—namely, those that have an "outstanding" or "good" Ofsted judgement—are permitted to be the "lead school" in School Direct consortia (DfE, 2018). Favourable inspection judgements arguably result in decreased teacher anxiety about pupil progress due to "earned autonomy" (Hargreaves, 2003). For this reason, Peiser et al.'s conclusions were somewhat hedged. It was difficult to say whether the favourable school culture for mentoring was the consequence of positive accountability outcomes or ITE ownership, or a combination of both.

Implications for University–School Partnerships and Curriculum Development

Taking the position that high-quality mentoring of student teachers is mentee centred, democratic, involves collaborative inquiry and helps the mentee to make connections between research and practice, what are the implications for university–school partnerships and collaborative curriculum development? Although a significant proportion of ITE provision is now "school led", very few schools have won the rights to grant accreditation for QTS, which has been conferred to university providers.

[1] Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in England that inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Furthermore, teacher training courses typically include an academic qualification in addition to the professional qualification of QTS. For these reasons, schools must continue to work with universities in ITE. In the school-led policy context, however, it is possible that partnerships primarily have, or will have, an administrative focus (Mutton et al., 2017).

However, such a focus would be a great waste of potential of the combined value of expertise in both types of institutions and could mitigate against the high-quality mentoring practices advocated above. Rather, it would be more sensible for school and university colleagues to collaboratively develop mentor training and ITE curriculum design, where colleagues play to their respective strengths. University colleagues could familiarise mentors with theoretical and research knowledge, whilst school colleagues could promote coaching skills that draw on professional craft and contextual knowledge. Enquiry-orientated, collaborative mentor–mentee learning can also be facilitated through close partnership working. Supported by the mentor in their investigations, beginning teachers can test ideas from the university as well as their own preconceptions in practice against real-world criteria in schools (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). This process enables the integration of experiential learning and research-based knowledge, where school and university knowledge are interrogated in the light of each other, based on a model of "research-informed clinical practice" (Burn & Mutton, 2013). Joined up working in this way should also facilitate conversations about a more coherent curriculum experience that joins "conceptuality" and "contextuality" (Müller, 2009).

Peiser et al. (2018) argued that in order for mentors to be able to connect and cohere different types of knowledge, attention must also be paid to mentoring pedagogy. They proposed that Bhabha's (1990) work on the notion of "third space", where issues are interpreted and analysed drawing on multiple discourses, provides a helpful theoretical basis for this. McNamara et al. (2014, p. 18) explain how in third spaces in professional learning, "theoretical and practical knowledge and personal and official discourses and aspirations can enter into productive dialogue and, hopefully, effect an epistemological reconciliation". However, for this to be possible, mentors need to be resourced with adequate time, appropriately trained and be given licence to adopt more neutral roles for the sake of

beginning teacher learning, rather than feeling the pressure to bow to systemic demands from school managers (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). As argued by Helleve and Ulvik (2019, p. 238), whilst

> mentors and tutors have different responsibilities, they have a common task to fulfil and a need to collaborate. Consequently there should be blurred borders between the two fields. What seems to be necessary is for the two professions, mentors and tutors, to discuss and clarify mutual expectations and to find out how their different competences can act together to the best for the student teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that policy regulation of pre-service education and training of nurses, social workers and teachers has had a strong influence on the role of the mentor. In nursing and social work, professional regulatory bodies also hold sway. In nursing and teaching, the broad direction of travel has been for the mentor to move beyond nurturing, supporting and supervising to promoting research-informed practice. In social work, the emphasis has always been more on the educative dimension.

Policy reform, however, has not been unidirectional. As this chapter has highlighted, demands on mentors across the professions continue to be multi-faceted, subject to frequent change, and sometimes contradictory. Mentors have been expected inter alia to be competent assessors and facilitators of learning in the wider workplace context. In spite of calls for evidence-informed practice, policy makers have sent out ambiguous messages about their preference for different types of professional knowledge. In teaching, the promotion of a school-led ITE system would seem to foreground practical over theoretical knowledge, yet mentors are to promote mentees' utilisation and interpretation of educational research. In nursing, the replacement of the term "mentor" with "supervisor" may also connote greater significance to practical knowledge development and a return to the type of nurse education that preceded the contribution and accreditation of universities (albeit with other individuals formally

contributing to a "mentoring team" and a continuing emphasis on evidence-based practice).

In the face of multi-directional policy decisions which create potential uncertainties about the mentor role, there is a need for university tutors and workplace mentors to establish future-proof arrangements to optimise professional learning experiences of their students. To bring this about, the greatest priority for curriculum development should be a focus on learning experiences that cohere the university and workplace domains. Whilst the mentor's role will be distinct in its foci on *situated* professional learning and facilitating access to a community of practice, there is a growing need for blurring the borders between mentors and tutors (Helleve & Ulvik, 2019). Rather than bowing to policy demands that shift responsibilities back and forth between those on campus and in the workplace, there should be an emphasis on action promoting constant knowledge flow. Working in this way will provide opportunities for the reconciliation and re-engineering of theoretical and practical knowledge into new and strengthened epistemologies of professional knowledge (Hordern, 2016; Zeichner, 2010).

However, in order to make this a reality, bold and practical steps must be taken. For example, mentors and tutors require time to collaborate about curriculum design, assignments and assessments that are relevant, fit for purpose and feasible in the field. Whilst curriculum planning is integral to an academic tutor's job, mentors need permission from managers for workload release from daily duties to enable this. To remain cognisant of the daily demands on practitioners that impact on the translation of theory to practice, tutors would benefit from leaving the university to spend some time working in the field. On the flipside, tutors could provide and familiarise mentors with research updates. In turn, mentors would need time to digest and critically assess these. Managers must also be prepared to allocate adequate time resources for mentoring in a "third" space, and mentor development must be appropriately designed to cultivate the necessary skills. As the title of the chapter sign-posted, the mentoring of students on professional courses in HE in the workplace does indeed bring new opportunities and challenges. The author acknowledges that some of her suggestions for addressing challenges are ambitious. She would argue, however, that such measures are needed for investment in high-quality professional learning straddling the university and workplace and maximising the role of the mentor within.

Points for Discussion

1. To what extent are the types of skills required for mentoring in the workplace on professional learning courses different to those in other areas of HE?
2. To what extent are the mentoring skills required in the professions discussed in this chapter similar or different?
3. To what extent are professional frameworks outlining the expectations of mentors supporting students on professional courses helpful?
4. Do you think that it should be statutory to undergo accredited mentor training to mentor students on professional courses? Why (not)?
5. Is the notion of mentoring pedagogy in a third space realistic or idealistic?

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7

Peer Mentoring Relationships for Professional Placements

Claire Ball-Smith

Overview

This chapter considers the types of peer mentoring relationships that operate between higher education institutions (HEIs) and host placement environments, and with the professional students who partake in such professional training. It defines what is meant by the terms "professional placements" and "peer mentoring" within the interactions of pre-service student, mentor and university tutor, and considers the extent to which the successful interdependence of the three players can dictate the professional outcomes for a student. Set specifically within the context of initial teacher training, the exploration is applicable to professional learning in the fields of nursing, midwifery, medicine, law and social work. It will analyse several professional host mentor types and consider the consequent manifold peer mentoring approaches that HEI staff have to develop for effective professional student development.

C. Ball-Smith (✉)
Department of Education, Derwent College, University of York, York, UK
e-mail: claire.e.ball-smith@york.ac.uk

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Introduction

In the UK, placements of a defined length remain the predominant environment in which professional course students (undergraduate/postgraduate) undertake practical on-the-job training, for example, in nursing, midwifery, social work, medicine, law and teaching. In different fields of professional work, whether public or private sector, it is expected that professional students will meet a specified threshold of performance and attainment, before being bestowed professional status. In almost all of the above fields, placement work normally requires some form of mentoring-coaching (Lancer, Clutterbuck, & Megginson, 2016) from a qualified professional in situ. A “professional placement” can therefore be defined as any period of time spent by a student on a professional qualification course in a setting where the appropriate professional standards are assessed by a suitably qualified practitioner and/or a university tutor. This takes a different character in each field, and the recent growth of apprenticeships in the UK contributes an interesting angle on more traditional models of professional placement (Department for Education [DfE], 2019a).

Regardless of profession, route or timings of placements, common features of mentoring are normally at play. Central to all of the aforementioned professions sits a critical relationship between the professional student (pre-service, potentially also in-service), the professional mentor (suitably qualified in the host placement, potentially the assessor) and the university tutor attached to the professional programme. The triangular nature of mentoring interdependence between the three specific parties is often cited as being the critical factor in the professional student’s ultimate success or not (Tomlinson, 2010).

In this chapter, an exploration of the mentoring relationship between student, mentor and university tutor will be discussed, specifically within the context of initial teacher education/training (ITE/T) in England. Similar contexts exist in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and indeed in many other countries (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012); however, the political context for initial teacher training differs across these jurisdictions in terms of the place and purpose of

professional placements and peer mentoring (Mutton, Burn, Hagger, & Thirlwell, 2018; Sahlberg, 2012). Despite the political milieu surrounding the profession of teaching in each country and its associated professional training, very similar tensions and challenges can be identified for the mentor, professional student and university staff involved.

In England, the quality of any ITE/T programme relies heavily on the successful partnership that is cultivated between a provider of ITE (which may be a university, or school if the professional qualified teacher status [QTS] course is based primarily in a school setting, i.e., a school-centred ITT [SCITT] course) and the partner schools it works with (Mutton et al., 2018). Within all school placement settings across England therefore sits an army of school-based mentors, occasionally paid for the work they do with pre-service teachers[1], but more often not; sometimes given time to do the job of mentoring a new pre-service teacher, but commonly not. The immediate responsibility for pre-service teacher development in placement is often squarely placed on the professional mentoring of the school-based mentor. In the tripartite mentoring relationship between school-based mentor, pre-service student and higher education institution (HEI) teacher educator, the development of the host school-based mentor often remains neglected.

In higher education ITE, the pre-service student is also likely to have an allocated HEI teacher educator as a personal supervisor, often age phase specific at primary level or subject specific at secondary level. The teacher educator works alongside the school-based mentor to ensure that their respective pre-service teacher develops understanding in pedagogy, subject knowledge and set skills. In England, this work is ultimately assessed in relation to the national Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011). In HEI programmes, the relationship between the HEI teacher educator

[1] Internationally, there is considerable difference between jurisdictions as to what term best describes a person who is learning to become a teacher (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). In the UK, the predominant terminology revolves around terms such as "*trainee*", "*training*" to teach, and being "*trained*". In other countries (e.g., the USA, Canada), the term pre-service teacher is used more normally. In this chapter, the term *pre-service* is adopted, to emphasise the learning aspect of the process of becoming a teacher, rather than an enforced form of training to become a predefined form of teacher. These terms remain contested in the field of teacher education.

and the school-based mentor in each main placement setting[2] is therefore critical to the pre-service students in their training year.

This chapter will explore the different types of mentoring that exist in HEI settings offering ITE courses and will consider the tripartite relationship between university and partnership school staff, and professional students. This chapter identifies specific mentoring types and explores how each can differently benefit the pre-service teacher in their professional development. It also briefly explores the tension between working for the academic award (that accompanies most HEI routes) and gaining the professional award (QTS) to permit the nascent teacher to start practising. Central to balancing such tension is the very nature of mentoring taking place for any pre-service student. In placement, the specialist mentor has a direct impact on the trainee's induction into the world of schooling. For a secondary pre-service student, the specialist teacher educator in higher education often inducts the pre-service student into their subject or specialist age phase teaching community. Both approaches to mentoring invariably call on a spectrum of coaching-mentoring techniques to best develop their individual pre-service student.

Through their respective mentoring approaches, both significant "mentors" successfully equip a pre-service teacher to navigate across the artificial boundary of school (practice) and higher education (theory), to become an evidence-informed, reflective practitioner from their career start.

Political Context

It is not possible to consider how the mentoring relationships between HEI teacher educators, school mentors and professional students develop without placing a national and local context on their work. In the field of ITE in England, the concept of mentoring a professional student teacher is not new; however, the political forces at work during any one period of placement can enable or disable effective mentoring. Such forces are

[2] At postgraduate level, there are normally two main school placements; at undergraduate level, there is usually one main placement per year of the undergraduate programme.

known to impact in different ways on the abilities and capacity of mentoring staff (Murphy & Neil, 2005).

National Context

In ITE, mentoring is more influenced by statutory legislation and non-statutory guidance than in previous decades. At the centre of such influence sits the accountability of inspections (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills [Ofsted], 2018) governed by a stringent set of compliance criteria (DfE, 2019d) and a framework for inspection (Ofsted, 2019). Compliance criteria change periodically, thus shifting the goal posts for providers through subtle but important variances. Specific guidance on mentoring has become more common (DfE, 2016, 2019c), as well as developments in what we understand by the term "mentoring" from centres of research (British Educational Research Association, 2017). However, one facet of the placement context remains a constant challenge for all ITE providers—no school is statutorily required to host student teachers in England currently; therefore, the stability of the mentor force has become increasingly less certain as demands on the teaching force in general have risen. If a school receives a less favourable set of external examination results, it is not uncommon for a headteacher to consequently decide that no professional students can be hosted, as staff need to focus all their teaching energy on the pupils. A less than favourable Ofsted report can have the same result for ITE in a school as ITE providers cannot work with any school in special measures or with an unsatisfactory (Grade 4) Ofsted rating. They can however work with any school deemed satisfactory (Grade 3) or (providing suitable due diligence checks have been undertaken) who do not hold an Ofsted rating having been taken over by another organisation and renamed (e.g., a multi-academy trust).

Typically, an HEI will require that alongside the university, participating training schools must ensure that opportunities exist in the training programme to allow trainees to demonstrate professional values and practice; develop specialist (subject or age phase) knowledge appropriately; develop classroom management teaching skills; demonstrate

competent planning to develop pupils' learning and be able to monitor such progress regularly and consistently; take account of a diversity of needs, backgrounds or experience that affect the way in which children learn; and constantly adopt a self-evaluative, critical stance as a professional teacher (DfE, 2011; Ofsted, 2018). These sensible principles are constantly challenged by the context of a school's operations: if an examination class does less well with their pre-service teacher despite good mentoring, the urge to take back the class is strong. A mentor may not want to take a class back, knowing that a trainee needs longer to develop skills that take years to hone, but a local authority, a multi-academy trust or a set of parents may have other ideas. Whatever foci the ITE programme chooses, the context tends to dictate the manner in which an ITE programme is designed and the *modus operandi* for all involved. Where this is done well, mentoring enables pre-service teachers to demonstrate the above skills and competencies (Mutton et al., 2018).

Better ITE partnerships also recognise the need to develop learning opportunities for the mentors who influence the training of pre-service teachers through offering opportunities such as contributing to the taught elements of the programme, enabling mentors to become integral members of various committees/groups associated with the programme over time or acting as seconded teachers on the ITE programme. These activities enable a practising mentor to do more than just mentor their pre-service teacher, giving a sense of ownership in the ITE partnership of which they are a member (Chapman, 2015; Clarke, 2016).

Local Contexts

Specific contexts at a local level must also be considered. The position of mentoring in a school's set of roles for staff often reflects the power dynamics at work within any setting. Whereas in previous decades the mentor was often an experienced head of department or a long-standing classroom teacher, in recent years the role of ITE mentor has increasingly been given to relatively inexperienced teachers. Mentoring is now commonly seen as a stepping stone into middle/senior management roles. Experienced and less experienced mentors can each be potentially

excellent. Depending on the nature of the pre-service teacher placed in any one setting, the match between a less or more experienced mentor has a significant impact on the success of the pre-service teacher's development. It is within this context that the HEI teacher educator often has to arbitrate and mediate, especially where a pre-service teacher is inadvertently caught in the context of the host school's politics (Clarke, 2016).

The HEI also has to frame its ITE mentoring activity within the characteristics it attaches to the role of the mentor in the specific ITE programmes it runs. This can range from information giving course-specific training foci, through to a wider, more expansive view of the need to develop mentoring and coaching skills more generally (Tomlinson, 2010). The latter goes beyond the remit of the ITE course itself. Whatever the distinctive characteristics for mentoring that an HEI chooses to espouse, the real continuing professional development of its mentors is commonly dictated by the availability to attend such training. Regardless of the mentoring model that an HEI ascribes to, many schools cannot release their mentors for university-based training events or can only allow them to attend if other staff are not absent from school on the same day. This potentially impacts on the effectiveness of the mentor development model for ITE in any one location. The impact of national and local contexts influences the manner in which the professional relationships between the pre-service teacher, the professional mentor and the HEI teacher educator emerge and develop over the course of any one placement.

Types of Mentoring in the Field

This part of the chapter considers the common types of professional mentor that HEI teacher educators work with within an ITE partnership of schools and considers what this means for both the pre-service teacher experience in the mentor's setting and the ways in which the HEI teacher educator best works with each type of mentor. It is a model formed from 20 years of personal experience working with mentors in ITE. It represents generic mentor categories that are commonly met by ITE educators as they visit trainees on placement.

The Specialist Mentor

A common type of mentor that many pre-service teachers work alongside is that of the specialist mentor. Typically, such a mentor adopts a Janus-facing approach to their professional development, that is to say:

- An *internal-facing* character—being well regarded/respected within their setting as a good practitioner who is more than able to mentor a new recruit.
- An *external-facing* character—embracing a subject or age phase community at local, regional and national levels to enable the mentor to be known outside their immediate teaching community in the school s/he works in, for example, writing, tweeting, blogging in a specialist field and/or presenting at practitioner conferences/events.

For specialist mentors, the purpose of mentoring pre-service teachers is clear: to nurture and develop a new teacher, but to simultaneously bring them into a specialist community of practitioners that extends beyond the school gates (Burn, Hagger, & Mutton, 2015).

For the pre-service teacher, this sort of mentoring approach can be especially valuable. The specialist mentor is able to look above the parapets and potential restrictions of one setting and explore pedagogy in a wider community of specialist action and development. For some pre-service teachers, such a mentor may initially be alarming, not being able to reach the lofty heights of influence that their mentor commands inside and out of school with pupils, staff, parents and other professionals. Nevertheless, for early career development, the specialist mentor normally enables a pre-service teacher to flourish, grow in confidence and seamlessly enter into a professional community that goes beyond the placement, and the training year itself.

At times the HEI teacher educator may have to rein in the specialist mentor's ambition for their pre-service teacher, but is largely able to let the mentor work constructively and productively with the pre-service teacher. A specialist mentor usually has the confidence to understand what the pre-service teacher needs for their next steps of development.

Commonly, the HEI teacher educator can trial more developmental mentoring/coaching approaches with a specialist mentor and his/her pre-service teachers. A good example is where the HEI teacher educator sets specialist common reading for both the pre-service teacher and mentor to study each week, which they then use as a point of discussion and debate together in their weekly mentor meetings. The essence of common reading being specifically considered in the placement context enables both the pre-service teacher and the mentor to further their understanding of how a seminal piece of research/practitioner study influences the teaching of their subject or age phase. For most HEI ITE courses, this more innovative approach encapsulates the research-informed dimension of an HEI ITE programme, precisely enacting a reflective impact on the pre-service teacher's development.

Where this model of mentoring works at its best, a succession of specialist expertise is being passed on to a new generation of teachers. The mentor actively involves the pre-service teachers in their communities of practice (at local, regional or national levels) such that towards the end of the training year, the pre-service teacher is used to attending (or even presenting) at specialist conferences for the specialism they have trained to teach. The pre-service teacher feels "inducted" into a subject- or phase-specific community with their mentor. This initiates a lifelong investment in their professional development, stretching into their longer-term career.

The Investor

As the name suggests, the investor mentor makes huge investments in the development of the pre-service teacher, considering this time and effort as a wider benefit for the school's potential workforce. Typically, the investor mentor is internally focused in the setting and is commonly a well-renowned, settled teacher in the school system they work within. The investor mentor often acts as a champion of a particular school system's approach to teaching, fully subscribing to pedagogic and educational approaches to teaching that the specific system has adopted (Clarke, 2016).

For investor mentors, the purpose of mentoring pre-service teachers is very clear: to nurture a pre-service teacher, but to do so within the innovative expectations of the environment they work within. This set of expectations may sit across a set of schools within a multi-academy trust, for example, or may be within a particular type of school, for example, a nationally recognised Research School (2019).

For the pre-service teacher, this sort of mentoring approach can be very helpful with its adopted structures of teaching and learning, especially in the first placement experience where the hooks of learning expectation give the pre-service teacher something to latch their fledgling teaching onto. Practical in nature, and sometimes fervent in their adherence to the adopted approach, the investor mentor can give the pre-service teacher confidence that they can teach in the setting, as they develop the teaching and learning approach that their mentor emulates. Frequently, pre-service teachers who excel early in such a mentoring environment secure employment in the same setting. However, for some pre-service teachers, such a mentor may present challenge especially if they choose to teach in a slightly different way to their mentor. Breaking free of the bonds of one particular approach is sometimes problematic when the pre-service teacher wishes to experiment with another approach or with a particular class (perhaps one they have learnt about from another setting or in their university training). Sometimes they do not believe in the same pedagogic principles underpinning the investor mentor's approach causing complexities to develop in the mentor–mentee relationship. Nonetheless, for some pre-service teachers, the structure and scaffolding the investor mentor offers in their early teaching gives them a positive, constructive context for learning how to teach.

The HEI teacher educator can find the relationship with the investor mentor quite challenging. Most HEI teacher educators start from a premise that their ITE course exposes their pre-service teachers to *multiple* models of teaching a subject or an age phase. The investor mentor can sometimes be so wedded to a particular pedagogic approach that tensions develop between HEI teacher educator and mentor. In turn, this can present a certain challenge for the pre-service teacher who experiences different approaches to teaching in their specialism from each quarter. However, most HEI teacher educators recognise that there is merit in

developing a structured approach to learning to teach, trusting that during mentor training and development events, investor mentors are able to challenge their own pedagogic approaches whilst meeting with other practitioners and teacher educators from outside their immediate jurisdiction.

A good example of where the investor mentoring approach works well is in relation to learning how to manage behaviour. Many investor mentors work in settings with very clearly defined behaviour management policies and techniques that prove very effective in terms of early classroom management approaches for the pre-service teacher. With the current government focus on ITE preparation for behaviour management, a setting with an investor mentor can therefore provide a very clear induction into strategies and techniques within an effective behaviour management system. Pre-service/early career teachers often cite behaviour management problems as a key source of stress that makes them not enter or leave the profession early (Marsh, 2015), so in this respect the investor mentor's approach within the placement setting engenders confidence in the pre-service teacher.

The Novice

As was alluded to earlier in the chapter, there is a growing trend for mentors of pre-service teachers to be appointed earlier in their teaching careers, *en route* to middle/senior management positions. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the merits of the movement of mentoring down a command chain, but there is now a growing body of mentors who are in the first five years of their careers. This is not necessarily a negative turn. The novice mentor has several attributes that neither the investor nor specialist mentors necessarily possess:

- They are closer to their own training and therefore have the ability to empathise more closely with the challenges that their pre-service teacher faces.

- They are generally more open to new/different models of practice because they accept they are still learning the craft of teaching themselves.
- They often view themselves as co-learners alongside the pre-service teachers they mentor, such that the relationship takes a coaching guise as well as a pure mentoring disposition.
- They see the benefit of mentor training with the HEI ITE provider, taking advantage of mentor events being offered.
- They often like to mentor within the system they trained in, and in this way altruistically return the investment of their HEI. This frequently motivates them to do a good job with their pre-service teachers.

Typically, the novice mentor is still developing their own identity as a teacher (Door, 2014), and though they have moved on as a fully qualified teacher from their newly/recently qualified induction period, they still learn from their mistakes just as pre-service teachers will. Thus, the level of empathy in novice mentors is where their strength lies for the HEI teacher educator.

For novice mentors, the purpose of mentoring pre-service students is clear: to support new teachers into the profession they have joined, but in the context of giving something back to the system, if not the institution, that trained them. An honest form of mentor motivation, it gives the novice mentor considerable credibility with the pre-service teachers they work with. Novice mentors may not always know the answer for pre-service teacher challenges, but of all the types of mentors, they are more likely to draw on others to help support them in their mentoring role, for example, through unapologetic contact with the professional tutor/other mentors in the school or through unembarrassed communication with the HEI teacher educators attached to pre-service teachers' development.

For the pre-service teacher, the novice mentor is often a blessing, but also can be a curse. The immediate empathy of being closer to training than other types of mentors makes the novice mentor seemingly more approachable and friendlier. When the pre-service teacher develops across expected stages in placement periods, this mentoring approach therefore works well. However, when a pre-service teacher is struggling, the novice mentor does not always have the strategies to best support the pre-service

teacher, especially if they were very successful in their own training. The novice mentor is normally more receptive to the pre-service teacher trialling ideas in the classroom and is more likely to allow the pre-service teacher to be innovative. As a less experienced teacher, this is largely because they are still trialling approaches and realise that finding one's feet as a teacher comes from the experimentation and experiences with different classes that develop over time.

For the HEI teacher educator, working with a novice mentor offers a particular sense of hope: this mentor is willing to undertake the role now that they have reached a certain level of competence themselves. If the novice mentor is a graduate of the programme the teacher educator runs, there is a tacit understanding of the values and ethics underpinning the programme, and about the type of teacher that is developed. Nonetheless, the teacher educator usually has to work hard with such mentors, especially where the pre-service teacher is facing specific challenges for which the teacher educator does not feel the novice mentor is best equipped to help them overcome. This deficit could take the form of classroom management strategies, subject knowledge or examination experience deficits, having the practical wisdom (phronesis) to know what to do in all situations (Phelan, 2005) or indeed tapping into the wider community of practitioners beyond the department, the school or the region.

The novice mentor approach can work well in the case of career changers. If a provider is able to match up a career-changing pre-service teacher with a mentor who made a career change themselves, the level of understanding about the challenges of becoming a teacher after having a first successful career elsewhere is powerful in the formation of the pre-service teacher identity. Equally, a less-experienced mentor can be well matched with a fresh graduate entering their training year. They understand the pressures that come with taking on another year of fees, and recognise the challenges of learning to teach in the context of life challenges, after graduation, outside school.

The Nurturer

It would be remiss not to include reference to a common mentor type that all ITE partnerships can identify: the nurturer mentor. Typically, the nurturer mentor is a vastly experienced, settled and solid practitioner who has had numerous types of pre-service teachers come into their department over many years. They may not be the head of department (perhaps having had the role at some point), but they remain a safe pair of hands within a host department not just for pre-service teachers as a mentor but with pupils whom others cannot manage/motivate. As a nurturer mentor, their vast experience with pre-service teachers means that the HEI teacher educator knows them well and will often negotiate on where their mentoring skill set can best work with particular pre-service teachers in any one cohort. They appear to always have the key that opens up the pre-service teacher's nascent skills. They are not particularly wedded to a certain approach to mentoring and can skilfully adapt according to the needs of the pre-service teacher in their charge (Burn et al., 2015).

For nurturer mentors, the purpose of mentoring ITE pre-service teachers is perhaps the most varied: many undertake mentoring annually simply because they enjoy doing it; others see that they have a moral purpose to hand on to the next generation of teachers the profession they have so long been a part of; others take on the role recognising that other colleagues are too stretched to do so given other departmental/whole school responsibilities. But whatever their motivation, rarely do they begrudge the role of mentor. Many nurturer mentors continue to mentor precisely because they can see the benefit to their own practice, learning from the innovations of pre-service teachers and rarely adopting a "mini-me" mentoring stance.

For the pre-service teacher, the relationship with the nurturer mentor can be influential, reassuring and comforting. Where a pre-service teacher has suffered a loss of confidence (with a class, in a previous placement, etc.), a nurturer mentor is normally beneficial, making rather than breaking their journey through training. In the safe pair of hands of a nurturer mentor, very rarely does a pre-service teacher find reasons to complain

about their mentoring. They feel secure, yet able to express their challenges openly.

The HEI teacher educator often regards the nurturer mentor as ITE partnership "gold dust". A nurturer mentor can be the one person to turn around a pre-service teacher's training fortunes, usually being able to unlock the pre-service teacher's potential. The nurturer mentor is not the type of professional to change their model of practice dramatically, but the long-standing proven ability to teach, to react rationally to national changes, to stay committed to pupil education/outcomes, plus their general mentoring ability tends to see the teacher educator use the "gilded" nurturer mentor in specific ways with different pre-service teachers.

A good example of where the nurturer mentoring approach works well is with a wobbling pre-service teacher, perhaps on the verge of quitting their training. The unique combination of reassurance and compassion alongside the obvious calm capability and proficiency of a nurturer mentor can often bring an oscillating pre-service teacher back to the core reasons why they wanted to undertake their training as a teacher in the first place, regardless of the immediate challenges they face. Motivated by the brilliance and ease with which their mentor approaches school life in general, as well as how to handle specific pupil situations, enables the pre-service teacher to see that teaching is possible. Quite often the nurturer mentor is the person to challenge and explore the work-life balance of a pre-service teacher, giving them practical realistic aims in this regard, allowing the pre-service teacher to cope. All ITE partnerships need nurturer mentors for pre-service teachers.

Conclusions

Thus far, we have seen how the different types of mentoring approach with a pre-service teacher directly affect the type of support that HEI teacher educators give to both professional student and school-based mentor. Good mentors operate in four main ways. In the mentor types explored in this chapter, two dimensions of mentoring activity are at play (Fig. 7.1). One dimension concerns the degree to which the mentor focuses on practical strategies (practical "*techne*", i.e., practical strategies

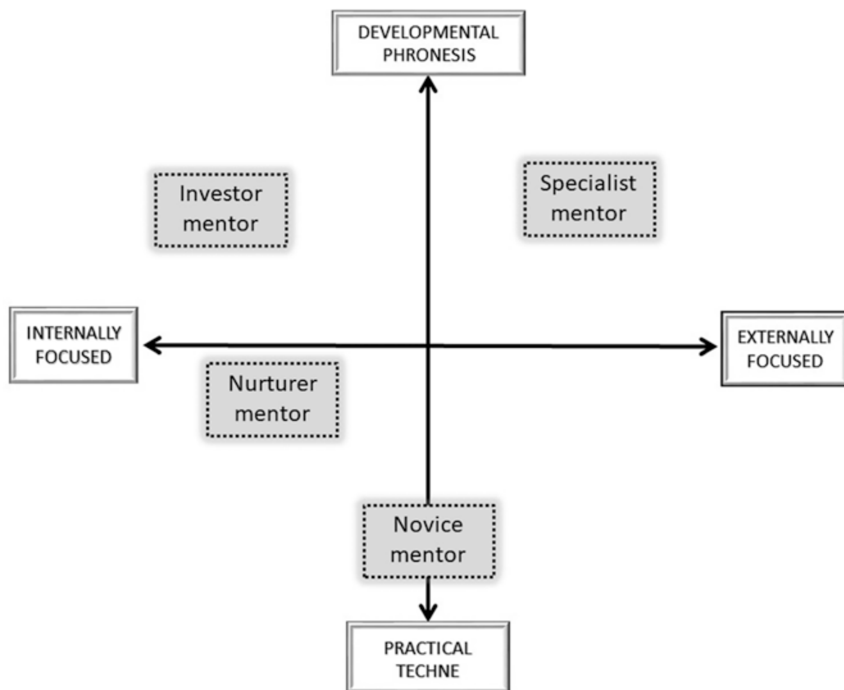

Fig. 7.1 Mentor type mapping

for teaching) with a pre-service teacher, or, focuses his/her mentoring support on the promotion of practical wisdom (developmental "*phronesis*", i.e., wisdom gained from actions undertaken in the classroom, informed by other views; see also Dunne, 1993; Gadamer, 1981, 2003). It is argued here that specialist and investor mentors tend to act more developmentally than nurturer and novice mentors, whose focus relies more on practical strategies because of their ability to focus the trainee beyond the immediate class they are teaching and see teaching in a wider framework of practice across a school or a subject. The other dimension of mentoring activity reflects the degree to which a school-based mentor is focused on internal (school setting) or external (beyond the school) influences whilst mentoring a pre-service teacher. It is argued here that specialist and novice mentors tend to externally approach their mentoring, compared to the investor and nurturer mentors whose focus tends to

be more internal within their mentoring approaches. Specialist and novice mentors allow a trainee to pitch their nascent teaching into the wider realm of a subject and environment that stretches beyond the immediate placement setting. For specialists this comes from their investment in inter/national subject pedagogical developments. For novice teachers this comes from being closer in time to the alternative models they were exposed to during their training away from their current place of employment.

In reality, professional mentors may not identify solely with any of the mentoring types presented here. They will identify characteristics of each type within their own mentoring practice. This may also vary with the type of pre-service teacher they are working with at one time. However, identifying broad types of mentoring at work in the field of ITE is useful in order to explore the effects of types of mentoring on pre-service teachers and on teacher educators respectively. It also begins to open up the complexity of political forces that affect mentoring approaches adopted in any one setting.

A final tension that exists as an ambiguous challenge for the pre-service teacher is the academic work undertaken to gain an academic award alongside professional status. Within the specific field of postgraduate ITE in England, this most commonly takes the format of a Post-graduate Certificate in Education or a Post-graduate Diploma in Education. Much debate exists as to the feasibility of undertaking postgraduate study whilst trying to gain professional status, and to the design of viable, appropriately pitched assessment tasks to gain postgraduate credit. There is no national ITE requirement for mentoring to support pre-service teachers in their academic work, although some HEI courses do enable mentors to do so (e.g., marking assignments, designing assessment tasks, evaluating impact of studies undertaken by pre-service teachers). Given the lack of time and prestige that is allocated to the role of mentoring nationally, there is little scope to embrace a fuller development of mentor and pre-service teacher through academic engagement currently. Therefore, mentors' work with pre-service teachers tends to be restricted to mentoring associated with reaching the QTS standards alone. A golden opportunity is being missed for the continuing subject or age phase development and understanding of ITE mentors, not only in their mentoring skill and

capabilities but also in relation to their reflective understanding of their own specialist teaching area throughout their careers. Peer mentoring could be extensively developed so that groups of suitably experienced teachers work together on the development of materials and approaches to teaching which benefit their *own* growth as well as those of the professional students they work with.

The advent of the Early Career Framework (ECF; DfE, 2019b) with its national roll-out due in 2021 may enable such mentor development activity to be fostered. In this recent policy development, the status of mentoring is again raised although it is currently unclear how this will be met with appropriately matched resources to develop mentoring skills and capabilities. Nevertheless, the ECF provides an opportunity to develop mentors' expertise, alongside newly and recently qualified teachers' early careers. Most HEI ITE providers and teacher educators welcome this opportunity. How the ECF pilot develops across 2019–2021 is therefore of special interest to those working in ITE in the UK.

Points for Discussion

- What are the models for mentoring that underpin your work with students and/or professional mentors: (i) as an HEI professional educator? (ii) as a mentor for a professional student?
- How far do mentors work collectively as an expert group as well as individually with their professional students? To what extent are mentors empowered to develop themselves, as well as their professional students?
- What types of mentoring are prevalent in your field of professional mentoring? How far do these prevent/enable professional development in professional students?
- What internal and external factors impact on your mentoring workforce's ability to mentor: (i) positively? (ii) negatively?
- To what degree are the dimensions of internal-external/phronesis-techne useful in your field of mentor work? How could you apply these to your field?

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8

A Review of Mentorship in Spanish Higher Education: The Case of Writing Tutorials

Sara Rodriguez-Cuadrado
and Juan Antonio Núñez Cortés

Overview

Mentoring and tutoring have been recognised as central in the development of higher education (HE) students, at academic, social and personal levels in the Anglo-Saxon countries for decades (Lobato, Arbizu, & del Castillo, 2005). In Spanish universities, however, the trajectory is rather short and has been determined by a series of cultural and social factors, such as insufficient orientation at university, student massification and Spain's adherence to the European HE Area and Bologna Process in 2010–2011 (see Macías, de Miguel, Jiménez, & Rodríguez, 2004). Because of this change of paradigm, some aspects deserve our attention. Firstly, we describe how mentoring and tutoring are understood in the Spanish HE context and what forms it might take (such as individual or collective delivery, by a tutor or fellow student). Some relevant programmes are described, which also provide insight into the true nature of mentoring and tutoring, as well as on how these have evolved. Because of the implementation of these programmes, several authors (see, for instance, Prieto Vigo, 2015) have been able to identify the main challenges that Spain has had to overcome, and also need to be working on in order to successfully progress in creating a strong mentoring culture. Finally, we discuss the novel case of writing tutorials. This will not only be informative by itself, as it deepens in a specific way of tutoring in a specific scenario, but serves as a reflection of the history, features and challenges of mentoring and tutoring in Spanish HE.

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Introduction

Around 40 definitions have been identified for *mentoring* in the literature since 1980 (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011). In this chapter, we will focus on the concept of mentoring in higher education (HE) in Spain, where mentoring is normally used to talk about peer support and tutoring is based on the student–teacher relationship (García-Nieto, Oliveros, García, Ruíz, & Valverde, 2005). In detail, we will analyse mentoring from various perspectives and offer various examples of successful mentoring programmes, along with those factors that make mentoring challenging. To finalise, we will review the case of writing tutorials. This is a novel initiative at Spanish universities, so we will present their types, benefits, dynamics and training procedures.

The Spanish education system has a decentralised administration, distributing the competences between the state, autonomous communities, local administrations and schools (Núñez Cortés, 2013). In accordance with article 3.2 of the Organic Law on Education 2/2006 (Ley Orgánica de Educación, 2006), the system offers early childhood education (0–6 years), primary education (6–12 years), secondary education (12–16 years), post-16 education, apprenticeships, foreign language teaching, artistic education, sports education, adult education and university education. In order to enter university, candidates should pass a university entrance assessment.

Following the Organic Law on Universities 6/2001 (Ley Orgánica de Universidades, 2001; amended December 2018), the system has recently undergone profound changes, tripling the number of universities and creating university centres in almost every town with more than 50,000 residents, culminating in decentralisation. Spain's full adherence to the European HE Area and Bologna Process in the academic year 2010–2011 introduced several changes that were also noted economically (see Observatorio Sistema Universitario, 2016). As we will see in more detail

S. Rodriguez-Cuadrado (✉) • J. A. N. Cortés
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Autonomous University of Madrid, Ciudad Universitaria de Cantoblanco, Madrid, Spain
e-mail: sara.rodriguezcuadrado@uam.es

over the following sections, the transformation that has occurred over the last 20 years has had a tremendous impact over the evolution and proliferation of mentoring in Spain.

How Mentorship Has Evolved in the Spanish Higher Education System

Peer mentoring in the Anglo-Saxon context dates back to the eighteenth century (Lobato et al., 2005) and has a strong presence inside and out of universities to facilitate adjustment and personal and professional development (Rísquez, 2006). In contrast, mentoring started in Spain in the late 1990s and early 2000s "with the aim of facilitating the transit of students from the secondary school stage to the university in general, guiding them in the academic, administrative and social fields" (Velasco, Domínguez, Quintas, & Blanco, 2009, p. 132).

Between the late 1980s and 1990s, many authors stressed the many needs that university students were having (Macías et al., 2004). These involved insufficient orientation before and during university, difficulties to get into the job market, massification and heterogeneity of students, and the growth and diversification of the curriculum. Another motivator towards creating a mentoring culture was Spain's full adherence to the European HE Area and Bologna Process in the academic year 2010–2011. The Bologna Process aimed to move towards a student-centred approach, which required tutorial support systems (see Sursock, Smidt, & Davies, 2010). These needs regarding orientation are shared by European countries in general, where more attention has been generally paid to educational rather than to vocational or personal guidance (see Vieira Aller Nieto Martín, 2007; Watts & Van Esbroeck, 2000), finding this rapid expansion of mentorship also in southern European countries (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 2000).

Spain's opening to mentorship has not happened overnight. From a legislative standpoint, the Law of General Education of 1970 (Ley General de Educación, 1970) outlined the principles of tutorial action across several articles. Art. 37.3 stated that tutorials should be established so each tutor can attend to a small group of students helping them academically and inviting senior students as aides, and Art. 127 pointed out that tutorials would be used to adapt the syllabus to the students' capacities and

vocation, and to help them with employment. Nonetheless, Sanz de Miera (2001) indicates that despite the "good intentions", the focus remained on academic matters, and tutorial actions linked to personal aspects and professional development were not actually implemented.

The Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21, on universities (Ley Orgánica de Universidades, 2001), on its article 46, declares that students have the right of advice and assistance from teachers and tutors, and of orientation and information by the university on those matters affecting students. However, as pointed out by Vidal, Díez and Vieira (2002), it is unclear how actions are articulated in orientation, where most common actions involving "orientation" are just a means to provide information to students (Martínez, García, & Sánchez, 2013).

The article 14.1 of the Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, expresses that universities will have accessible information systems available along with orientation procedures for newly enrolled students to facilitate their incorporation into the course (Real Decreto 1393/2007, de 29 de octubre, 2007). More recently, the Royal Decree 1791/2012, of December 30, dedicates articles 19, 20, 21 and 22 to establish general tutoring principles and details about tutorials for degrees and specific modules, with an additional article for students with disabilities (Real Decreto 1791/2012, de 30 de diciembre, 2012). These articles claim that having an effective tutorial system is a shared responsibility of tutors, departments, faculties and universities, so students can succeed not only in their degrees but in their transition to employment and professional development.

Characteristics of Mentoring in Spain

Alonso, Sánchez, and Calles (2011) consider mentoring in Spanish HE a formal process requiring planning, systematicity and intentionality. More concretely, the authors identify several features. First, there is a need to establish some objectives and benefits within a timeframe. Also, progress needs to be monitored, and the institution needs to be present in different ways, such as having a coordinator or organising mentors' training and meetings between mentors and mentees, as in evaluating the

mentoring programme. Although this setting would be ideal, we believe that nowadays there is a lack of research looking at how mentees'/tutees' experiences match the features presented by Alonso et al. (2011).

Mentoring can take several configurations, depending on whether it is delivered individually or collectively, in person or online, or by a tutor or a student mentor (SM). In Spain, group mentoring is the most popular option and therefore will be the "default configuration" of most programmes reviewed in this chapter. These usually take the shape of peer mentoring under the supervision of a more experienced mentor. Frequently, a small group of students gather regularly with their mentor, who acts as a facilitator, with the aim of supporting each other, bonding, and setting aims for each member (Alonso et al., 2011; Kaye & Jacobson, 1995). The mentor is normally an experienced, qualified and motivated fellow student (or SM) enrolled in advanced academic years, where mentoring can take place face to face, but also virtually (on e-mail or forums). Usually, mentoring programmes run for around 6 months, starting with the beginning of the first course, developing along the term and finishing after the exams, where it is assumed that socialisation and adaptation has been completed (Alonso et al., 2011).

A good SM is characterised by a series of features. Following Fernández (2009), SMs need to show those traits required in group processes—such as tolerance, respect, cooperation, empathy, high motivation, thinking on behalf of the group, being good listeners, plus searching and sharing information and results—and elaborate working plans for the group. In a similar light, Velasco and Benito (2011) classify SM's features into skills linked to "being", "knowledge", "know how to act" and "know how to behave". Those related to *being* are responsibility, empathy, communication skills, ability to listen, patience, flexibility, self-confidence and leadership skills; *knowledge* skills comprise specific knowledge about the degree, knowledge of the university and study techniques; *know how to act* involves being a good planner and academic, personal and administrative advisor, facilitator, informer, guide and motivator. Finally, *know how to behave* consists of being accessible, committed and creating a good work climate and comradeship.

Although the benefits of mentoring are possibly well known to the reader, we would like to stress those more commonly found in Spanish

Table 8.1 Main benefits of mentoring within Spanish higher education (adapted from Macías et al., 2004)

	Benefits to students
1	Generates a constructive process for new students, encouraging their potential
2	Enhances the student's global development
3	Creates a resource that serves as a "bridge" during transitions
4	Creates a real and close resource for students, especially for those in at-risk groups
5	Helps students to quickly know the institution and its components
6	Helps students to develop their aspirations
	Benefits to mentors and institutions
7	Benefits mentors, by developing competences that can be transferred to their professional and personal life, and ultimately, to their institution
8	Improves relationships and communication across students and faculty
9	Helps to manage the cultural diversity of the institution

HE. Macías et al. (2004) articulate a series of benefits of mentoring (see Table 8.1).

Casado-Muñoz, Lezcano-Barbero and Colomer-Feliu (2015) identify ten key steps when implementing a mentoring programme for new students:

1) Preparation of the mentoring programme. This involves defining the type of mentoring to be implemented, setting objectives and identifying the place (e.g., faculty, department) and person in charge.
2) Introducing the mentoring initiative to the academic community through several channels, and to search for alliances by seeking support from information, guidance and counselling services within the university.
3) Recruitment and selection of SMs. Manzano, Martín, Sánchez, Rísquez, and Suárez (2012) suggest the following criteria: being able to ensure a balance between the SM's workload and other responsibilities; having passed 50–75% of their course credits with good marks; being able to offer life and academic experiences to the mentee/s; having good knowledge of the institution; having passed the training course; and signing a commitment to participate in the programme.

4) Incentives for mentors. Casado-Muñoz et al. (2015) list credit recognition, mentorship training, obtaining a certificate outlining the acquired competences and their transferability to employment, a free sports centre membership or the possibility of attending conferences on topics related, for instance, to student participation.
5) Regarding mentor training, this normally takes place before the academic year starts, and its duration varies depending on the university (2–16 hours). The content covers modules, teaching methodologies, assessments, use of the university's learning technology platform, scholarships and organisation of the university. Training is delivered by experts such as faculty members, librarians or senior mentors.
6) Recruitment of faculty tutors. Those responsible for the programme inform and ask potential tutors, that, amongst others, are lecturers who are effective communicators, active listeners, can deal with conflict, plan and work in teams, and manage time effectively (Castaño-Perea, Fernández, & Castañeda, 2012). The usual incentives that tutors get are a deduction in teaching hours, financial compensation and recognition of teaching merits.
7) Recruitment of mentees. Students can choose to participate in an available mentoring programme. Normally, this takes place at the beginning of their first year or during the last year of high school, there being information displayed around campus and within introductory courses.
8) Assigning mentees to the SM. A few aspects need to be taken into account: mentees and the SM should be enrolled in the same degree and shift (generally, in Spain, lectures can take place in a morning or afternoon shift); the SM can express an interest for a certain type of mentee (e.g., a fellow international student, special educational needs); the SM should attend to students that are from other localities and new to the area; groups of mentees should have at least one mentee who has been living in the area for a long time; there should be a mix of male and female students in each group; and the requests of the SM should be listened to (see also Palma et al., 2009).
9) Conciliation with Tutorial Action Plans (an organised set of tutorial actions covering the needs of the institutions and university students, see Fernández, 2008) or other forms of orientation. Mentorship pro-

grammes need to be coordinated with other orientation programmes; therefore, the mentorship programme could be integrated into the general Tutorial Action Plan.

10) Monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Casado-Muñoz et al. (2015) suggest daily monitoring via e-mails, phone calls or meetings. The evaluation of the programme is made by everyone involved, and the resulting data should serve to identify strong and weak points for improvement.

Examples of Mentoring Programmes in Spain

Although the trajectory is short, and there exist more programmes than the ones outlined here, we would like to mention those that have demonstrated their relevance by their innovative value or impact. Unfortunately, many of the available mentoring programmes in Spain have not been documented by quality research (see Sánchez, Manzano, Rísquez, & Suárez, 2011). Based on the work by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and Tinto (1993), we therefore subscribe to the words of Fernández and Arco (2011, p. 120):

> it is necessary to continue developing research with the highest degree of experimentality possible, since there is no other way to refine the causal hypotheses of intervention and action in the face of extraordinarily complex processes such as academic and social adjustment to the university.

Below, we summarise those programmes that are particularly valuable because of their innovation, impact or effectiveness.

One of the earliest programmes (academic year 1984–1985) was the “peer-tutor programme” by Benavent and Fossati (1990). The aim was to improve learning and education through having a SM with good knowledge and experience. As the authors reported, the programme improved teaching quality and boosted personal relationships between teachers and students. In Spanish mentoring, however, most mentoring projects have focused on academic matters. One representative example is the “peer tutoring project”, which was aimed at preventing low academic

performance. Fernández and Arco (2011) evaluated its effectiveness with 41 SMs and 100 mentees randomly assigned to an experimental (who received the tutoring programme) or control group, finding that the programme positively impacted academic achievement and mentees' perceptions of study habits for the experimental group (see Fernández & Arco, 2011, for details). Another successful example is the "partner programme" (Consejero, Ibáñez, Ortega, & García, 2008). Final-year SMs helped new mentees with university life, study plans, modules, university services or scholarships. For 3 years, the programme recruited 129 SMs and 463 mentees and was very well received (over 80% of SMs and around 72% of mentees were extremely or very satisfied).

In addition, two of the most influential programmes up to date are the "Seville University Students Mentoring Programme" (SIMUS; Valverde, García, & Romero, 2001, 2002) and the "Network of Mentoring Students of the Complutense University of Madrid" (REMUC; Martín-Varés, García, de Miguel, & Macías, 2013). The SIMUS programme commenced in the academic year 2001–2002, involving tutors, SMs and new mentees that worked on academic, professional and socio-personal aspects with the support of a virtual campus which allowed participants to use an instant messaging service, e-mail, forum or news, amongst others, as a means of communication. The programme started for eight degrees, three tutors, 30 SMs and 180 mentees in 2001–2002, being extended to all degrees with 40 SMs and 240 mentees involved in 2003–2004 (Rodríguez-Santero & Valverde Macías, 2003). The REMUC initiative was based on SIMUS (Valverde et al., 2001, 2002) and engaged tutors, SMs and mentees, where e-mentoring was provided via instant messaging, e-mail, forum, chat, diary and news. Both SIMUS and REMUC have been extended to other universities. Also, they have prompted the use of mentoring (Prieto Vigo, 2015) and helped in the development of the "Innovation and Research Network", a support system for university students based on mentoring (Macías et al., 2004).

Some of these programmes have gone beyond purely academic matters and have also used psychological theories or found psychological benefits. For instance, the "University orientation 'Participate' programme" by Castellano and Delgado (1996) was built using psychosocial theories of orientation, cognitive development, maturation models and

person-environment interaction models, aimed at mentoring students not only to acquire academic skills but also to train decision-making and develop self-concept. Also, the "*Brújula*" programme (Velasco-Quintana & Benito-Capa, 2011) worked on the adaptation of new students and aimed to not only improve performance in mathematics but also enhance social relationships and communication, responsibility, commitment and self-confidence. Mentees improved their academic achievement in mathematics and integration into university life, while SMs gained a deeper knowledge of the subject and developed planning, adaptability and leadership abilities. Both SMs and mentees reported psychological benefits like their self-confidence, self-concept and motivation.

There are other programmes that have worked with non-traditional students such as students with disabilities or mature students. The "solidarity scholarship programme" (Vega, 2000) aimed at increasing the participation of students with disabilities. To do so, SMs were awarded a scholarship to help the integration of students with disabilities and improve their performance and university life. As a result, the programme doubled the academic performance of students with disabilities. The "pilot mentoring model" by Sánchez et al. (2011) was implemented by the National Distance Education University (UNED). The UNED is a distance learning university with a majority of mature students, where this programme had the peculiarity not only of engaging mature students, but to do so following an e-mentoring model by mostly using e-mail, an online platform and the telephone. The evaluation of the pilot mentoring model programme showed an increase in general competences and a high general satisfaction with the programme, where more than 75% of mentees felt supported mostly or all the time. The "bMentoring" initiative (Carrillo & Cuadrado, 2019) was also developed by the UNED and mixed face to face with social media communication (such as WhatsApp, which was the most popular, and e-mail, forum, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Skype). The programme involved SMs, mentees (who reported a very high satisfaction with their SM), alumni and professionals in employment.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning the "Mentoring Network", which was started by one university in Spain gathering mentoring initiatives

from different Spanish universities (see Ávila, 2009). The network was created with the intention of providing a space in which tutors, SMs and professionals can share their experiences, aims, methodologies, resources and evaluation techniques, with the goal of joining efforts and aptitudes, finding synergies, and advancing towards a rigorous study, analysis and development of mentorship in Spanish universities.

Challenges Associated with Mentoring in Spanish HE

It is essential to keep in mind that most early references on mentoring in HE came from Anglo-Saxon countries where culture, in general, and university culture, in particular, were very different than in Spain. As suggested by authors such as Vieira Aller Nieto Martín (2007), this responds, amongst others, to a stronger tradition in offering programmes and services to support students which also paid more attention to the personal and emotional aspect of students (see also Watts & Van Esbroek, 2000), rather than to the academic and professional aspects, which is favoured in Spain or France. Therefore, Spanish universities should not perform a "copy and paste" exercise, but rather adapt those learnings to our culture, resources and procedures in a flexible way (see Lobato et al., 2005). Having said that, we would like to outline the main challenges that Spain needs to overcome for successful mentoring:

- Very heavy academic loads (see Pérez-Díaz & Rodríguez, 2001, cited by Macías et al., 2004).
- Lack of tutor training (Prieto Vigo, 2015).
- A vague definition of the profile, role and duties of tutor, SM and mentee (Prieto Vigo, 2015).
- Indecision of universities to implement educational guidance and tutorial action with rigour (Prieto Vigo, 2015).
- Time and space resources, there being a high number of classes to attend (Martín-Varés et al., 2013; Prieto Vigo, 2015), plus a shortness of suitable meeting spaces, which might affect privacy and ultimately mentees' attendance (Prieto Vigo, 2015).

- Other aspects include mentees not being properly informed about what mentoring and tutorials involve (Cusó & Juárez, 2015), an insufficient use of the resources offered or a need for better monitoring from tutors (Macías et al., 2004).

A Case of Mentoring: Writing Tutorials

In this section, we would like to focus on writing tutors as a specific example of mentors. Writing tutorials in HE, in which the tutor aims to accompany the student during the writing process and thus improve their written communicative competence, have been well known in the Anglo-Saxon context for decades. These have been recently adapted in the Ibero-American setting (Latin American and Spanish universities), starting from the concept of "academic literacy". Academic literacy refers to the process of facilitating student access to the different discipline's written cultures (Carlino, 2013). Thus, writing tutorials should be framed within the set of initiatives that seek to develop communicative competences and concretely, written expression. Amongst others, writing tutorials have been used for remedial modules, intensive writing modules or workshops on specific academic discursive genres, such as reviews, research articles and degree or masters' dissertations. All these initiatives have been developed in a continuum that oscillates between a remedial and a transversal approach of teaching to write. The remedial approach assumes that students enter university with deficiencies in their written expression, which should be tackled through a diagnosis in HE. Henceforth, writing is conceived as a product that mostly focuses on linguistic norms aspects, such as orthography and grammar, where their contents are acquired at a particular moment in time. In other words, if these competences have not been acquired in secondary education, university should take care of it.

In contrast to this perspective, the transversal approach accentuates three main aspects. First, it focuses on the writing process and the knowledge of the different strategies employed during this process (planification, textualisation and review). Second, it considers that university has its own habits, rituals and communication methods, which vary even

within degrees and disciplines, so students need to familiarise themselves with their own discursive genres of the concerned disciplines. Finally, it highlights writing's epistemic function, as opposed to the merely registering or reproducing function.

In the process of writing, there is inherent learning as long as the writer needs to take decisions and reflect. This is what Scardamalia and Bereiter (1992) have called the model of *knowledge telling* versus the model of *knowledge transforming*. On these lines, some movements arose decades ago, attending to this transversal approach to writing, such as writing across the curriculum (WAC), writing in disciplines (WID) and writing to learn. These two models (knowledge telling and knowledge transforming) are opposed in how they understand writing and how their didactics have influenced writing tutorials. While some tutorials aim at improving the students' writing compositions (the products), others focus on students evolving to be better writers. These types of tutorials are linked to the classification of traditional versus holistic, respectively. Holistic tutorials, as per the understanding of Ferrer (2003), go beyond academic matters in order to attend to the students' personal and professional development. Evidently, the dynamics of the tutorials and the role of the tutor vary depending on the view. For holistic tutorials, tutors aim at "habilitating the tutee, so s/he feels ownership of his/her work, and can make their own questions and answers, or exploring new ideas" (Alzate & Peña, 2010, p. 125). It is then intended that the student can see his/her production in perspective (Molina, 2017). Thus, tutor and tutee solve problems and take decisions collaboratively (Roldán & Arenas, 2016). On the contrary, in traditional tutorials the tutor focuses on correcting the text.

The proposals that have been put forward to classify writing tutorials are heterogeneous. Carlino (2002, 2004) differentiates between writing tutors who attend to any student, writing partners who review their peers' texts and the tutorials offered by lecturers in intensive writing modules (WAC and WID). Concerning writing tutors in Spanish universities, we find three main types: (a) fellow students from advanced years, (b) lecturers specialised in writing and (c) lecturers from other disciplines. Although the first option (a) is preferred, there is a tendency towards having tutorials with lecturers (b, c; Núñez & García de la Barrera, 2018).

As for the benefits of writing tutorials, these normally coincide with those outlined previously in this chapter. In this particular case, some authors (Chois, Casas, López, Prado, & Cajas, 2017; Molina, 2017, 2019) have highlighted specific benefits as (on top of the improvement of texts) the activation of metacognitive processes that are essential when reviewing texts. Tutors also benefit because they develop pedagogical abilities while having higher awareness of the writing process and the discursive genres, which they usually need to keep on writing.

Concerning writing tutorials, during the tutorials (a) a dialogue between the tutor and the tutee is fostered; (b) a part of the written text—or all of it—is read on the basis of the needs and aims; (c) feedback is given on what should (not) be addressed in the text; (d) specific queries are attended to; (e) an action plan is agreed on; (f) material and exercises about specific aspects are provided; and (g) students attend a second tutorial with questions. Also, initial questions are addressed, and the student reads aloud the text so that s/he becomes aware of it as a writer and plays the role of expert. However, (a) the text is not written, corrected or edited, but clear instructions are provided so that students can do it on their own; (b) grammar- and spelling-based aspects are not corrected, but the main errors are identified and resources are offered; (c) course paper or project is not graded, but a number of guidelines are given provided that other teachers' assessment criteria have been specified; and (d) only academic texts are used.

As per the selection of writing tutors (in addition to prototype initiatives such as sending a motivational letter, holding an informative meeting, providing the training needed to be a tutor and a personal interview) in the case of writing tutorials, the teacher's recommendation of students with writing skills plus the analysis of a written text are sometimes valued (as students with competent writing skills tend to be encouraged to become SMs in the writing centre). With regards to training, some core elements are the explicit training in the dynamics of tutoring, as well as in aspects linked to the teaching of writing, such as the writing process and discursive genres, without neglecting the linguistic norm or issues related to citation norms or mechanisms to avoid plagiarism. This can be organised in courses or seminars of variable length, where sometimes trainee tutors observe expert tutorials and vice versa, and the trainers

observe, and subsequently discuss, their first tutorials with the novice tutors.

To conclude, writing tutorials should be understood as another mentoring initiative that contributes to the search for a quality of education based on equity and educational inclusion (Gimena & Natale, 2016). Guiding students to find their own voice helps them become part of the academic discursive community and, eventually, of the professional community, and thus participate actively and critically in society.

Points for Discussion

Based on what you have read in this chapter and reflecting on how to move forward, consider the following questions:

1. Is there a culture of mentoring that fosters the different initiatives being carried out, as exemplified in the "Examples of mentoring programmes in Spain" section of this chapter?
2. Are universities prepared to assume this paradigm shift?
3. Do university lecturers, within the European Higher Education Area framework, have enough training to carry out successful tutorials?
4. What perceptions do students have about tutorials, and how much of an impact do these have on their academic achievement and development as critical citizens?

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9

Re-thinking the Mentoring Relationship: Gabriel Marcel, Availability and Unavailability

Amanda Fulford

Overview

This chapter opens with a brief discussion of the pressures of time in contemporary society and how our concern with a deficit of time affects many of our daily activities. The chapter then turns to the academic literature in the field of mentoring and coaching, and finds this same problem of time deficit. Positive attitudes to mentoring—from both mentors and mentees—are strongly associated with programmes where more time is spent on mentoring activities (Maisel et al., 2017). A lack of time to perform the mentor role in some settings is found to be due to excessive workload (Hurley & Snowden, 2018). In some professional settings, the approach of "speed mentoring" has been explored to counteract the intractable problem of a lack of time (Britt et al., 2017).

The chapter then turns to consider a different way of thinking about the problematic issue of time in relation to mentoring in higher education. It introduces the work of a French existentialist philosopher, Gabriel Marcel

(*continued*)

A. Fulford (✉)
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: Amanda.fulford@edgehill.ac.uk

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(1889–1973), and seeks to show how some of the central concepts underpinning his work might enable an original perspective on our human relationship to one another, and so on our practices of mentoring. In particular, it reflects on what his ideas of *disponibilité* and *indisponibilité* ("availability" and "unavailability") might offer to our thinking about the mentoring relationship.

The chapter suggests, through Marcel's relational ethics, an original way of thinking not only about how mentoring might move beyond some of its technical aspects towards ideas of communion and *co-esse* ("being with") but also about how mentoring consists in more than the sharing of the mentor's expertise and experiences with a mentee, and how a reciprocal relationship of presence might be realised.

The Problem of Time

Time seems to be the all-dominating factor in our late postmodern world. Metaphors of time permeate our daily discourse. We talk incessantly of meeting deadlines, packed schedules and turnaround times. Our personal and professional lives are so marked by a lack of time (to take a break from our desk for lunch, to cook food from scratch, to go to the gym) that we must "protect time" for activities or "free up time" in our diaries to ensure that we can accommodate appointments efficiently. We talk in personal terms of the battery time we have left on our mobile devices, and across communities, we have come to talk with an increased sense of disquiet about the urgency of the global environmental crisis and the time left to save the planet.

What these examples serve to show is that, for many of the ways in which we think about time, we are actually concerned with a *deficit* of time. We don't do certain things because there is a perceived lack of time to complete them (consulting fully on a new initiative, for example), or we find that we are always wanting more time to do certain things (to prepare for a class that we might teach, for example). Perhaps this is an overly negative picture. Of course, we *do* find opportunities—even in our busy and time-pressured lives—to relax, spend periods with our family and friends, and enjoy leisure activities free from the taskmaster of time. But there is never, it seems, enough time.

Time for Mentoring

The issue of time is one that has received much attention in the increasing body of research and scholarship in the field of mentoring and coaching. Much of this is concerned with the amount of time that mentors are allocated—or in actuality, spend—with their mentees. It is perhaps not surprising that there tends to be a correlation between the time spent on mentoring activities and the perceived effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, mentoring processes. This is clear across a broad spectrum of professions and disciplines including medicine and health, law and education. A study of mentorship programmes that contributed to the development of early career health services researchers found that positive attitudes to mentoring—from both mentors and mentees—was strongly associated with programmes when more time could be spent on mentoring activities (Maisel et al., 2017). Conversely, where there was a lack of time to undertake mentoring roles, these were perceived less favourably. This was particularly noted in a 2018 study which reported a lack of time to perform the mentor role in healthcare settings because of patient care workload (Hurley & Snowden, 2018). While mentees describe the benefits of mentoring in terms of having access to the provision of information and support from mentors, and to the value of having someone to go to during stressful periods, one of the most commonly reported challenges is the issue of the lack of time for such work (Falzarano & Zipp, 2012). Where mentoring is conducted in scheduled time periods (during, e.g., a weekly one-hour meeting between mentor and mentee), there are significant risks that such time is not protected and that other commitments can often lead to a re-scheduling—or even cancellation—of the mentoring slot. To mitigate such risks, some contexts have introduced the idea of "speed mentoring" in an attempt to meet the needs of novice professionals. A study by Britt et al. (2017) explored the effectiveness of speed mentoring in establishing mentoring relationships for the development of young surgeons. Results from the study showed that there were high satisfaction levels with the activity—especially from the mentees—though mentors would have liked more time to develop the mentoring relationship outside of the organised session.

Where mentoring is not restricted to scheduled formal sessions, but is seen rather as part of an ongoing process comprising meaningful and ongoing learning conversations based on everyday dialogue, there is less pressure on time in terms of attending a regular mentoring meeting. Research on the use of such nurturing, collaborative approaches between mentors and associate teachers in initial teacher education was found to have a greater positive effect in providing access to the professional community than did the approach of scheduling a weekly lesson observation with the mentor who provides feedback. This immersive process afforded mentees the opportunity to explore aspects of pedagogy in depth and to engage in shared learning with their mentors (Jones, Tones, & Foulkes, 2019). The Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training in the UK—published in 2015—also recognised the importance of extended mentoring processes with trainee teachers. The review advocated approaches that go beyond merely the provision of information and briefing on professional requirements, to ones that see mentors as role models capable of regularly deconstructing and explaining their practice as part of a professional relationship (Department for Education [DfE], 2015). The training of mentors for initial teacher training/education (ITT/ITE) is recognised as vital for supporting particular outcomes: ensuring that mentors support mentees in accessing specialist resources from subject associations; supporting mentees in achieving beyond the minimum requirements of the Teachers' Standards; sharing skills with mentees for managing pupil behaviour effectively and for modelling the use of research with mentees.

The publication in 2016 of National Standards for mentors in ITT (DfE, 2016) laid out specific outcomes for the trainee teacher that could be expected as a result of successful mentoring; these were based on four standards relating to personal qualities, teaching, professionalism, and self-development and partnership working. Central to these Standards is, again, the issue of time. The DfE requires that mentors "should be given sufficient time as part of their timetable to observe trainees, provide constructive feedback and to have meetings and discussions outside of the classroom to monitor progress" (DfE, 2016, p. 7). As part of Standard 1 (Personal Qualities)-and to demonstrate how the mentor should work towards "establishing trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and understanding how to support a trainee through initial

teacher training"- the mentor must "be approachable, make time for the trainee, and prioritise meetings and discussions with them" (DfE, 2016, p. 11). While these might be regarded as laudable aims, criticism has been levelled at the Standards for prescribing the expectations placed on the mentor as an individual, at the expense of giving attention to how to resolve some of the difficult issues—such as time—associated with mentoring as a practice (Lofthouse, 2018), and also the performative characteristics of some schools resulting in mentoring being put significantly at risk by "a system driven by targets, standards and assessment regimes" (Lofthouse & Thomas, 2014, p. 216).

What this albeit brief overview suggests is that while mentoring—as a practice developed by experienced professionals and as a process experienced by novice colleagues in the profession—is hugely valuable to both individuals concerned, there are significant pressures that put such practice at risk. These pressures can come not only from external agencies and the way in which mentoring standards have been articulated, but also, paradoxically, from the institutions themselves who benefit from mentoring. These pressures tend, as is evidenced in the burgeoning literature on mentoring and coaching across different disciplines and professions, to relate to issues of time: the time to train and subsequently to develop mentors; the time to undertake and experience mentoring in professionally meaningful ways, and the time to reflect on, and refine, the processes of mentoring themselves. Mentoring in higher education (HE) is not exempt from any of these pressures, whether they arise from mentoring doctoral students (Li, Malina, & Hackman, 2018), mentoring within a disciplinary subject (Jackson & Price, 2019), or mentoring under-represented groups (Freeman & Kochan, 2019). Academic contracts, already full of teaching, research and scholarship, student tutoring and support, in addition to increasing loads of academic administration, often leave little time for engaging with mentoring processes.

In what follows, this chapter develops a different way of thinking about the problematic issue of time in relation to mentoring in HE. It turns, perhaps somewhat unusually, to the work of a French existentialist philosopher, and to how one of the central concepts underpinning his work might enable an original perspective on our human relationship to one another, and so on our practices of mentoring.

Gabriel Marcel

Gabriel Marcel was born in Paris in 1889 and died there in 1973. Marcel was an only child, raised mainly by his mother's sister following the death of his mother in 1893 when Marcel was only four years old. He had an excellent formal education, but his intellectual interests only developed more fully when he entered the Sorbonne, graduating from there in 1910. During the First World War, Marcel kept a journal reflecting on death and the horrors of war. It was during this period that many of the roots of his later philosophical thinking were established, and his notes formed the basis of his first volume, *Journal Métaphysique* (1927). After the war, Marcel married and began teaching at a secondary school in Paris, and held, over a number of years, intermittent teaching positions in different schools. While he was teaching, Marcel also began work as a playwright, philosopher and literary critic. It was during this period that he regularly met with some of the most influential thinkers of the day, hosting social events to which many of the prominent philosophers of the time were invited: Paul Ricoeur, Jean Wahl, Emmanuel Levinas and Simone de Beauvoir. Among this group of highly celebrated writers, philosophers and thinkers was Jean-Paul Sartre, with whose work Marcel profoundly disagreed—particularly on the issue of autonomy.

Marcel was something of a polymath. He was a composer and music critic (Marcel, 2005), dramatist and philosopher, whose work was strongly influenced by theology and politics. His philosophical writings are found in his most celebrated works: *Être y Avoir* [*Being and Having*] (1935/1965), *The Mystery of Being, Volumes I and II* (1951) and *Creative Fidelity* (1964/2002), and his philosophical work led to invites to give the prestigious Gifford at Aberdeen in 1949–1950 and the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1961. But Marcel also published more literary works, notably more than 30 plays. It was for these works, rather than for his philosophy, for which he became most celebrated, a source of often keen disappointment for Marcel. However, his two bodies of work are not entirely dichotomous; his existential philosophy is richly illustrated in profound dramatic moments and in the complex lives and relationships of the characters in his plays (Hanley, 2010).

Marcel's work is commonly understood within the philosophical tradition of existentialism—a loosely bound group of ideas that are characterised by a concern with matters such as the human condition, existence, freedom, authenticity and situatedness. While some existentialist philosophy maintains that life must just be tolerated and that in its meaningless we live with dread and despair, Marcel emerges as an original voice, rejecting the atheistic existentialism of his contemporary, Sartre. Perhaps the most profound point of disagreement between Marcel and Sartre was related to the issue of autonomy. While for Sartre, the human being expresses autonomy through exerting power, for Marcel, autonomy is ineluctably linked to a commitment to participate with others—through being receptive to others. Marcel's work, while often difficult to categorise because of its non-systematic approach and its broad-ranging interests, is marked by a number of central themes: creative fidelity, exigence, presence and participation. It is his understanding of participation, with its connoted themes of communion and availability, that speak most strongly to ideas of what it means to be in relation to another and to participate in the life of another through one's availability. The remainder of this chapter will explore these ideas in Marcel's oeuvre and show how they might provide original insights into mentoring practices in HE.

Relation to the Other: Participation and Availability

In his introduction to Gabriel Marcel's (1964/2002) work, *Creative Fidelity*, Merold Westphal writes in his preface to the volume:

> My love of this text focuses around what I take to be its central theme: intersubjectivity. It doesn't seem to matter what Marcel chooses to talk about; the next thing you know he is reflecting on some dimension of my relation to the Other [the self, the person, the thou with whom I find myself engaged] (p. ix).

Indeed, Marcel's work might be summed up in the epigraph with which he chooses to open the preface—a quotation from later in Marcel's work

that reads: "I must somehow make room for the other in myself" (pp. ix; 88). For Marcel, this relation to the Other is fundamental; our lives are bound up with what it means to be together—to *co-esse*. This way of being is demanding; it implies an exposure, or making oneself vulnerable, that Marcel repeatedly refers to in terms of porosity or permeability; this is part of the human condition and our love for the Other. Westphal summarises these ideas when he writes, "The loveliness of this love is further enhanced when Marcel insists that the fidelity that sustains it over time necessarily involves a creativity of presencing that goes beyond anything merely habitual or dutiful" (p. xii).

These ideas stem from Marcel's grappling with the relationship between the self and the body (he devotes chapter one of *Creative Fidelity* to this discussion). In concluding that we cannot think of the body *except* as a distinct entity identified with the self (p. 23), he rejects any idea of the self (and others) in terms of object or functionality. He argues that if he is forced to think of himself (and others) "in terms of object, as exhibiting the fundamental properties of objectivity … as an object of scientific knowledge, it becomes problematic" (p. 20). He continues: "I can really think about the object only if I acknowledge that I do not count for it, that it does not take me into account" (p. 20).

This resistance to seeing the self, and the Other, in terms of object is also seen strongly in the work of the Jewish philosopher and contemporary of Marcel's, Martin Buber. In Buber's most celebrated and influential philosophical work, *Ich und Du*—later translated as I and Thou (1923/1958)—Buber writes about how our human relationships are played out by way of our encounters with each other in a life of dialogue. He contrasts two modes of existence: dialogic intersubjectivity, characterised by an I-Thou relationship to the Other, and what he calls the "monological" I-It mode, in which the other is an object that exists only functionally as part of one's own experience. Put succinctly, Annette Holba writes: "I-It moments are functional encounters that can help one to negotiate from point A to point B" (2008, p. 491). To illustrate the two different relationships, Buber provides this example:

> I consider a tree.
>
> I can look on it as a picture: stiff column in a shock of light, or splash of green shot with the delicate blue and silver of the background. I can perceive it as movement: flowing veins on clinging, pressing pith, suck of the roots, breathing of the leaves, ceaseless commerce with earth and air – and the obscure growth itself.
>
> I can classify it in a species and study it as a type in its structure and mode of life.
>
> I can subdue its actual presence and form so sternly that I recognize it only as an expression of law … I can dissipate it and perpetuate it in number, in pure numerical relation. In all this the tree remains my object, occupies space and time, and has its nature and constitution (1923/1958, p. 14).

The influence of Buber's thinking on Marcel is clear. In his (1935/1965) work, *Être y Avoir* (*Being and Having*), Marcel writes:

> The other as other exists for me only insofar as I am open to him (insofar as he is a thou), but I am only open to him insofar as I cease to form a circle with myself within which I somehow place the other, or rather, the idea of the other; for in so doing, the other becomes the idea of the other, and the idea of the other is no longer the other as such, but the other *qua* related to me, as fragmented, as parcelled out or in the process of being parceled out (p. 13).

What for Buber is the possibility of a rich encounter with the Other through an I-Thou relationship is, for Marcel, the possibility of being a participative subject who interacts with others in the world. Such participation is possible through what Marcel terms "secondary reflection" (1964/2002, p. 68) whose focus is not mere contemplation, but rather reflection on the individual self and her participation as a being as among other beings.

Marcel outlines a way of being in relation to another—through participation—that is marked by an approach of what he terms fidelity to another person through sincerity. In advocating this, he turns away from

an ethics of relation based on obligation—with the attendant risks of coercion—and towards a fidelity to the Other which is marked by spontaneity, a concept that he addresses in his play *Le Chemin de Crête* (or *Ariadne*; see Marcel, 1965b). Fidelity in Marcel's work is understood in the sense of a certain tenacity in the pursuit of participation in the life of another. This has very practical implications for how we live and work with others; as Marcel notes: "To encounter someone is not merely to cross his path, but to be, for the moment at least, near to him or with him. To use a term I have often used before, it means being a *co-presence*" (1964/2002, p. 12).

Marcel uses a rich and complex vocabulary to express different aspects of our human relationships with each other: presence, participation, *co-esse*, creative fidelity, sincerity, openness, reciprocity, hospitality and communion. These themselves are all aspects of the central Marcelian notion of *disponibilité*—or availability. Marcel outlines this concept in his 1965a work, *Homo Viator*, where it is understood as an openness to, and a yielding to, the Other, and to being present to another through pledging oneself to them. These ideas entirely run counter to any idea of the Other as object (as in Buber's I-It relationship in which there is always a sense in which the Other is "possessed" for some other purpose). This attitude of availability is not one that should be reserved only for those who are closest to us (our family and dearest friends), but to *all* those whom we encounter. This is no utopian ideal, however. Marcel is all too aware of the realities of living in what he terms a "broken world" (1960, p. 27) and how this impacts on our ability to live participative lives with each other in communion—in short, to be available to each other. In his writings, he gives as much attention to the concept of *disponibilité* as he does to its opposite—*indisponibilité*—or unavailability. For Marcel, our unavailability to each other comes not only from external constraints and the realities of living in a broken world, but also from forms of self-preoccupation which suppress the possibilities for our engaging with others.

These dual concepts of availability and unavailability are beautifully illustrated in Marcel's plays. As Katharine Rose Hanley—a key interpreter of Marcel—writes, "There is great psychological depth to Marcel's plays. The dramas trace, in given concrete situations, a growing conflict in interpersonal relations where the lead characters reveal their growing

consciousness of the tragic in their situations" (2003, p. 243). This is clearly illustrated in Marcel's play, *The Funeral Pyre*. Two of the main characters, Octave and Aline are a married couple who tragically lost their son in the war and are both struggling to come to terms with their loss. Octave has thrown himself into working to collect memorabilia from his son's regiment as a way of keeping the memory of his son alive. His wife, Aline, finds Octave's dedication to his cause, and the presence of Mireille in the house—their was-to-be daughter-in-law—to be a constant reminder of her loss, and we see husband and wife becoming increasingly estranged from each other. Octave and Aline's mutual unavailability is marked throughout the play, as is Aline's to Mireille, who cannot bring herself to allow the young woman to call her "mother". What Aline cannot give is the gift of herself to another. She cannot receive Mireille (or her husband, Octave). As Marcel writes: "It must be maintained that to receive is to introduce the other person, the stranger … to admit him in to participate" (1964/2002, p. 28). She cannot offer to Mireille, in an act of hospitality, the gift of herself, for, "If we devote ourselves to the act of hospitality, we will see at once that to receive is not to fill up a void with an alien presence, but to make the other person participate in a certain plenitude … for hospitality is a gift of what is one's own, i.e. of oneself" (1964/2002, p. 28).

Re-thinking Mentoring in Higher Education

It may seem as if the discussion of Marcel's work has strayed a significant distance from consideration of the practices of mentoring in HE. Indeed, Marcel himself—while not unfamiliar with the context of the university and of lecturing—does not engage with ideas of HE in the way that other philosophers such as Karl Jaspers, Alasdair MacIntyre and others have done (see Jaspers, 1960; MacIntyre, 2009). Marcel is concerned even less with the formal practices of mentoring that are common in contemporary universities. But his ideas, particularly the richly evocative ones that coalesce around notions of presence, belonging and availability, are ones that have very practical import in the context of mentoring. In particular, they offer a very different perspective on one of the issues that is discussed

across many iterations of the literature on mentoring and coaching in education: the issue of time to undertake this work well. The remainder of this chapter will consider how Marcel's philosophy—especially his relational ethics—can offer an original perspective on the practices of mentoring. This will focus on two areas: first, moving the discussion beyond the technical aspects of mentoring, and second, thinking beyond mentoring as practices that consist in the sharing of the mentor's expertise and experiences with a mentee.

Beyond the Technical Aspects of Mentoring

An individual often encounters mentoring in the early phases of a new post—or role—within an organisation. Here, mentoring tends to take the form of an induction into practices, policies and procedures, the knowledge of which is essential to the effective performance of a role. Where mentoring takes place over extended periods of time, as part of a structured programme, the principal motivation is the need for mentees to achieve particular standards, or to perform according to certain criteria. This is the case across many professions—such as law and health services—where the demonstration of professional standards is contingent on high-quality mentoring processes. In HE, for example, the role of the mentor for the student undergoing initial teacher education is central in supporting the student to demonstrate that they have met the standards required to qualify as a teacher. The emphasis here is on ensuring that the mentee has sufficient evidence of their performance at a particular level to assure the mentee—and the regulatory body whose requirements govern the mentee's activity—that they have achieved the required standards. But there is a risk with such approaches that mentoring comes to be seen solely in terms of a set of practices that are directed at the demonstration of competence. And there is a consequent further risk that mentoring is reduced to ensuring the *technical* aspects of compliance such that this leaves little room for the *relationa*l aspects of mentoring.

Where mentoring is seen primarily in terms of technical activity, the mentee becomes merely the object of the mentor's assessment. Marcel

writes about those contexts in which our relation to another is one of absence—where we objectify the Other—even though we may be physically present together:

> When I consider another individual as *him*,[1] I treat him as essentially absent; it is his absence which allows me to objectify him, to reason about him as though he were a nature or given essence … there is a presence which is yet a mode of absence. I can act towards somebody as though he were absent. (1964/2002, pp. 32–33).

To be absent to another is to be unavailable to them. By keeping the focus on the technical aspects of the mentee's performance of standards, the relational aspects of the mentor–mentee relationship are suppressed. What becomes a priority is trying to find the time to meet to "check off" competencies or to give feedback on performance following, say, a teaching observation. But an attitude of *disponibilité*—of being available to the other—is a *general* way in which we are in relation to others; it allows us to make available to others a range of different kinds of resources—material, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. Availability—or unavailability—is the measure to which I am open to another person. If a person is external to me—unavailable—then I only encounter them, as Marcel terms it, in fragments (1964/2002, p. 33).

When we talk of availability in HE, we tend to do so with the everyday understanding of the term: we have office hours for students when we will be available for them to drop in for a chat, ask a question, discuss their work or make us aware of a problem. We are available if our electronic diaries do not show prior teaching, administrative or research commitments. But these are time-limited opportunities for us to be with others. It is not that Marcelian *disponibilité* demands that we are always "on call" for the Other; that would be to misunderstand how he conceives of our availability. For Marcel, to be available to another means that we are in relationship with the Other in more than functional terms; the mentee is not merely another "case" as Marcel puts it—another

[1] Here Marcel is clearly signalling Buber's work and referring to his (1923/1958) distinction between the "you" and the "thou". For Marcel, to relate to an individual as a "you" is to deny the "thou".

individual whom we encounter through our role as designated mentor—but is rather with[2] us as a unique individual. We are available insofar as we remain open to the Other; a relationship of *disponibilité* between mentor and mentee is characterised by presence and communication where the freedom of each is realised in communion together. In this kind of relationship:

> [A] bond of feeling is created between me and the other person, if for example, I discover an experience we have both shared (we have both been to a certain place, have run the same risks, have criticized a certain individual, or read and loved the same book); hence a unity is established which the other person and myself become *we*, and this means that he ceases to be *him*, and becomes *thou* (1964/2002, p. 33).

Towards Mentoring as a Relationship of Reciprocity

Mentors are usually selected because of the particular expertise they bring to the role or the experience that they would be able to share with those less experienced in, or new to, a particular role. In the case of the trainee teacher in HE, mentors tend to be those who have significant—or recent—experience as classroom teachers and who are in the position to be able to support the trainee with the demands of their new role. Inherent to this idea of the mentor are expectations that expertise will be shared *by* the mentor *with* the trainee; the trainee, on her part, will seek the views of her experienced colleague to aid her reflections on her own emerging teaching practices and to gain help from her mentor when she is unsure as to how to proceed. Thinking in this way of the mentor prioritises the idea of a transmissive role (Baaden, 2009) which suggests a

[2] "With" (in the French, *avec*) is an important term for Marcel, as illustrated in the following quotation [italics mine]: "When I put the table beside the chair I do not make any difference to the table or the chair, and I can take one or the other away without making any difference; but my relationship *with* you makes a difference to both of us, and so does any interruption of the relationship make a difference" (Marcel, 1951, p. 181).

unidirectional flow of information from mentor to mentee. Of course, this would be over-simplistic, and not representative of some richly conceived examples of mentoring relationships in which the mentor herself can learn from the practices of the mentee (see, e.g., Shanks, 2017), though these are increasingly rare given the pressures of time and cost.

Marcel's relational ethics emphasise the idea of reciprocity in our relationships with each other which he sees this working both in a positive and also in a negative sense. To illustrate the negative sense, he reflects on an encounter which he reported in his *Journal Métaphysique*. He recalls an entry where he met a stranger on a train, and they began to talk about the weather and the war. What he noted about this particular encounter was that while they were in each other's presence, the meeting was marked also by a kind of absence. He reflects that "the more my questioner is external to me, the more I am by the same token external to myself" (1964/2002, p. 33). This is a theme that is woven iteratively throughout Marcel's work, and he later emphasises this point when he writes: "It should be stressed that insofar as I accept being treated as a thing, I make a thing of myself" (1964/2002, p. 41). The reciprocity that Marcel highlights is based on his paradoxical views on freedom. For Marcel—unlike for Sartre—my freedom can never be fully understood or experienced, if it is only about me; my freedom is always about the possibilities for myself, *but understood entirely within my relationship with the Other*. My self is only fully free when it is entwined with the possibilities of the self and the needs of others. In articulating a positive account of our relationship to another—one in which both parties experience freedom—Marcel writes: "What is relevant … is the act by which I expose myself to the other person instead of protecting myself from him, which makes him penetrable for me at the same time as I become penetrable for him" (1964/2002, p. 36). In the context of the mentoring relationship, what this suggests is that the lives of both parties are inextricably bound with each other to the extent that they are open and available to each other. This allows us to see mentoring not predominantly as a practice of the dissemination of expertise to a less experienced colleague (in which there is also the possibility of serendipitous moments of learning for the

mentor), but rather as the expression of truly reciprocal practices of learning and development in which the fate of both mentor and mentee are worked out through their radical availability to each other.

Marcel's philosophy does not provide us with anything like a set of guiding principles with which to think about mentoring in HE, nor does it suggest practical solutions for improving the training of mentors or the everyday practices of mentoring. This does not mean that his work is unimportant, or that reflecting on the central tenets of his philosophical thinking is not of benefit to how we might envision the possibilities for mentoring. His work is not an academic flight of fancy; he was deeply concerned with the realities of how we live together. His philosophy is a working out of his commitment to *co-esse*; it demands that we also work out how to maintain an openness to the Other—to the giving of ourselves as a gift—over time and in full recognition of the pressures that such a commitment will bring. Marcel finds a way forward here in terms of his notion of creative fidelity—the active maintaining of ourselves in a state of openness and permeability to the Other, and a willingness to remain open ourselves to the presence of the Other in a mode of hospitality.

Mentoring is often a tricky, difficult and messy business. Hard conversations must, at times, be had; there will be moments of joy, but also ones of frustration and even despair. That is why fidelity is needed, and at times, to maintain fidelity, we must, in Marcel's words, be creative. Good mentoring relationships—as all relationships—are grounded in this. As Marcel so beautifully puts it:

> What brings me closer to another being and really binds me to him is not the knowledge that he can check and confirm an addition or subtraction that I had to do for my business account; it is rather the thought that he has passed through the same difficulties as I have, that he has undergone the same dangers, that he has had a childhood, been loved, that others have been attracted to him and have had hope in him; and it also means that he is called upon to suffer, to decline and to die. It seems clear that it is only in these terms that a meaningful content can be ascribed to the term fraternity (1964/2002, p. 8).

Points for Discussion

Considering the concepts from Marcel's philosophy that were introduced in this chapter, reflect on the following questions:

1. What would it mean for you to be available in a mentoring relationship?
2. What are the threats to this kind of mentoring relationship in contemporary HE?
3. What are some of the ways that you could maintain a mentoring relationship over time (how could you ensure creative fidelity)?

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Section II

Academic Mentoring in Higher Education Contexts

10

"The Shoes Should No Longer Fit": Creating a Space for Caring and Challenge Through the Dissertation Process

Whitney M. Stewart, Terra Greenwell, Sandra L. Hogue, Carla Kent, Dawn Roseberry, Amanda Santos-Colon, and Mary Brydon-Miller

Overview

Completing a doctoral program is a grueling experience under the best of conditions, but trying to do it while working full-time in an urban school district as a classroom teacher or administrator is especially challenging. In this chapter, we describe the experiences of six experienced educators who recently completed their Doctorate in Education at the University of Louisville, in the USA, and examine the ways in which the cohort model, peer mentoring, and supportive advising contributed to their success in the doctoral program.

W. M. Stewart
WM Stewart Consulting, Louisville, KY, USA

T. Greenwell • S. L. Hogue • C. Kent • D. Roseberry • A. Santos-Colon
Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), Louisville, KY, USA

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In today's world, there is a push for educational professionals to support individual career development by seeking advanced degrees, yet many individuals fail to complete these programs. In their literature review of peer mentoring for Doctorate in Education (EdD) programs, Lowery, Geesa, and McConnell (2018) discuss a student attrition rate for education doctoral students of 50–70%. They attributed these low rates of completion to (1) the challenge of balancing a doctoral-level program and full-time practitioner work within schools and (2) gaps that may exist between program curriculum and problem-based inquiries for students. Lowery et al. (2018) suggest that universities may encourage more promising completion rates by investing efforts in providing support for their intrinsically motivated students, such as cohort/peer mentoring. Part of the reason the cohort model works, is that each person brings individual passions and needs to the table in the company of other motivated practitioners. The doctoral journey is thus both an individual and a shared journey that leads to personal and collective success that can serve to validate the structure of the cohort model. The individual stories described here represent the lived experiences of professional educators as they sought to achieve their personal goals for degree attainment while being part of a supportive and caring community of learners. These experiences and the learning that has grown out of being a part of this program provide valuable insights for those leading professional doctoral programs and for potential students seeking guidance as they begin their own doctoral journeys.

M. Brydon-Miller (✉)
Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development, College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, USA

North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
e-mail: mary.brydon-miller@louisville.edu

Starting the Doctoral Journey

My name is Dr. Dawn Roseberry. I am a counselor for Jefferson County Public Schools at Fern Creek High School. This marks my 25th year in education. Previously, I worked as a career planner for eight years. In this role, I was responsible for a caseload of students, taught pre-employment skills, and developed community partnerships to hire students. Following that role, I wrote a grant to fund a Youth Services Centre in the school. For the next 15 years, I was the Youth Services Centre Coordinator. I went back to school to get a second master's degree in school counseling. The principal then hired me as a school counselor, and I began my doctoral journey shortly after that. The cohort model empowered me each day to stay motivated and engaged in my quest to become Dr. Dawn Roseberry!

My name is Dr. Carlisha (Carla) Kent, and I am a first-year high school assistant principal at one of the largest high schools in the state. I moved to Louisville at the age of three where I would obtain my K-12 education, entered the military at 17, and worked as an accountant and human resources director. While climbing the corporate ladder, I was asked to teach college courses and found my passion for teaching. I made the bold, and terrifying, move to leave my position as a human resource director to become a public school teacher. After teaching for several years and through my infatuation and enthusiasm for learning, I jumped at the opportunity to apply for the educational leadership doctoral program. This is where my doctoral journey began.

My name is Dr. Sandra Hogue, and I am African-American educator with 25 years of experience with Jefferson County Public Schools. My current position is with central office as English/Language Arts instructional lead for Accelerated Improvement Schools where I am charged with advancing literacy instructional practices and student learning with the district's 35 elementary, middle, and high schools that are performing in the bottom 5% in the state. I was initially inspired to pursue this degree because I am a lifelong learner who is always seeking to hone my craft. However, immediately after beginning the journey in 2009, I discovered I was going to become a first-time mother. This life-changer

encouraged me to postpone the journey. Six years later, I began again, driven by the desire to ensure a safe and viable future for my two children. The realities of raising them in the USA are sometimes frightening. I feel compelled to ensure national and international employability for my family. The doctorate degree supports that employability.

I am Dr. Terra Greenwell and I am in my 11th year with Jefferson County Public Schools where I have served as teacher, department chair, instructional coach, assistant principal, and middle school principal. Principals need to continually refresh their pedagogical knowledge in order to lead, which is why pursuing a doctorate was the right challenge. Although this path was tedious, the most important aspect of the journey is realizing you cannot do it on your own, especially as a working mom. To finish in three years takes dedication while still balancing an often-challenging work and home life. The cohort model proved to be a lifesaver and helped me meet deadlines and see it through to the end. The professor's willingness to devote time and the positive attitudes of the group are critical factors to success. Without this model, it is fair to say I may not be here today as Dr. Terra Greenwell.

I am Dr. Whitney M. Stewart and I had the distinction of being the youngest member of my cohort. Although I am not a Kentucky native, I attended Jefferson County Public Schools from kindergarten to 12th grade. Over the last 11 years, I have served as a substitute and classroom teacher and am currently employed as a college access resource teacher. I was motivated to enter the doctoral program for several reasons. First, I love learning and sought to challenge myself by researching and addressing disparities I observed in schools. Secondly, my father, and other colleagues, encouraged me to advance my skills as a practitioner. Lastly, I was often approached to lend my expertise and leadership in service to tasks beyond my scope of experience.

My name is Dr. Amanda Santos and I am in my tenth year as an educator and currently serving as academic instructional coach. During my first year, I was placed with a mentor teacher who supported and invested time in molding me into an effective teacher. From that point forward she was not only my mentor, but she became a dear friend and ultimately my principal. One day she approached me and said, "You need to complete your doctoral degree … you would do awesome!" She saw my desire

to change the educational field for new teachers and believed in my ability to do so. By her mentoring me beyond my first year, along with my desire to continue learning, she helped me see that I was capable of greater accomplishments and pushed me to achieve more. From that point forward, my passion for mentorship fueled my desire to complete my doctoral work successfully in December 2018 and continue my work and leadership in mentoring within the district.

I'm Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller, a professor in the Educational Administration and Leadership program at the University of Louisville. I came to the University of Louisville three years ago, just one semester into the doctoral program for my co-authors. I teach our required Qualitative Research sequence, which affords me an opportunity to get to know all of the students in our program. I also commonly serve as dissertation advisor for those who decide to focus on qualitative research for their dissertations, which includes my co-authors, all of whom completed their doctoral degrees during the 2018–2019 academic year. When I received the call for proposals to contribute to this book on mentoring, I decided that this story really belongs to these incredible educators who continue to make such a profound, positive impact on the lives of children and families in our community and invited them to join me in this discussion of doctoral mentoring.

Development of the Cohort Model from the University Faculty Perspective

The EdD program at the University of Louisville is designed to support professionals from the Jefferson County Public School District in completing their doctoral degrees by offering them reduced tuition and a course schedule that accommodates their school district's work day. The program is set up on a cohort model in which students are enrolled together in classes over the first two years of the program. Once they complete their classes and pass their comprehensive exams, however, there is no formal system that requires them to meet on a regular basis as they work on developing their dissertation proposals and moving forward

to conduct their research and complete their dissertations. Speaking as a faculty member, although I have only been at the university for three years, I have worked with doctoral students for over 20 years and have found that this is the period in which most students struggle to keep on track to completion, so I decided to create a regular time for my advisees to continue to meet while they are completing their degrees. These meetings, which are held off campus at a local coffee shop, include students at different stages of the dissertation process from those just starting to develop their proposals to soon-to-be graduates of the program. This enhances our already existing cohort model by providing opportunities for peer mentoring and mutual support.

Development of the Cohort Model from the Student Perspective

In recent years, there have been several research studies that have examined the ways in which the cohort model benefits learners and facilitates peer mentoring amongst students. According to Seifert and Mandzuk (2006), the cohort-based education model develops mutual intellectual stimulation, forms social ties, and enables institutions to organize the programs in effective ways. Nimer (2009) mentions that the cohort-based doctoral program offers its members both personal and professional support for academic interaction and degree completion. As doctoral graduates from a cohort model degree program, we believe that a cohort-based doctoral education facilitates peer mentoring amongst doctoral students. A cohort-based education program necessitates peer mentoring because students regularly interact and collaborate with one another throughout the pre-dissertation coursework. Cohort mentoring is "the most studied mentoring strategy in educational leadership doctoral programs and has been found to be particularly effective for scholar-practitioners" (Welton, Mansfield, Lee, & Young, 2015, p. 57). Welton et al. (2015) also state that the model "unceasingly supports educational processes and goals for doctoral students primarily, but can benefit academic mentors as well" (p. 57). All throughout the cohort model

coursework sequencing, doctoral students work together, check for understanding, share resources, collaborate, celebrate, and complain with classmates in one-on-one paired conversations, as well as in small and whole group discussions. Therefore, over the course of the pre-dissertation coursework, which typically lasts anywhere from one–three years, doctoral students in a cohort-based education program form strong social ties with peers that oftentimes extend into personal and professional support. Due to the design of the cohort model at the university, this personal and professional support happens so easily because all of the doctoral students work for the same school district, have similar roles, and may have worked together previously.

In a study conducted in South Africa focusing on doctoral learning (De Lange, Pillay, & Chikoko, 2011), there were three themes that emerged from participants in a cohort-based weekend model over three years. The findings indicate that the cohort model has great value in developing scholarship and reflective practice in candidates, in providing support and supervision, and in sustaining students toward the completion of their doctorates. In this study, data from the evaluation at the end of each seminar resulted in the emergence of the following three themes concerning doctoral support and supervision through the cohort model: supportive practice, reflective practice, and community of practice. Access to ongoing advising throughout the cohort model degree program for doctoral students is monumental in supporting doctoral students to successfully complete the dissertation process and persist to graduation.

When we started our doctoral program in the fall of 2015, we immediately knew we would need a method of communication to keep up with our assignments and class meeting sites. As working educational practitioners and full-time doctoral students, we took the initiative and created a contact list with each member's first and last name, email address, and cell phone number. We shared this information with everyone via email after the first night of class. Quickly, we found that our simple email exchanges between 16 people made managing our email inbox quite difficult.

By the end of the first semester, one cohort member suggested we switch to the "GroupMe" application as a method of communication. In the GroupMe application, users are able to set up a group text message in

which they can text, add pictures and documents, respond to other users, create calendar events with reminders, and pose simple voting polls for group members. The GroupMe app is also accessible via desktop and iPad, which was especially convenient for our cohort members in their administrative work roles in which they might not have their cell phones on their person. The GroupMe app and email proved to be the most effective method of communication for our cohort as we matriculated through the doctoral program.

In the University of Louisville's EdD program, newly admitted doctoral students begin their academic programs in fall semester and matriculate through classes with peers admitted at the same time. Each cohort of doctoral students is named according to the year of their proposed graduation year. For example, our cohort, which began in the fall of 2015, was named Block 18, because our intended graduation year was 2018. The naming of each incoming doctoral class of students is truly significant. Just as K-12 educators name grade-level school teams and graduating classes, providing a unique identity for each incoming doctoral class of students creates a sense of belonging in your cohort family. Yes, you might enter the doctoral program as complete strangers working in a very large, urban school district. But once you are in the doctoral program, you are automatically adopted into a family through the cohort model. Doctoral students take the same classes at the same time with their cohort members. This cohort model provides doctoral students with an instant support system with other cohort members who also eventually become "accountability buddies" of a sort.

Naming each incoming doctoral class of students according to their anticipated graduation year is not only inspiring, but it is also prophetic. It is a constant reminder of each student's "why" and purpose for pursuing the doctorate. Every time we receive an email or are addressed formally by our professors, we are referred to as Block 18. The idea that we would be graduating in 2018 was never questioned or doubted. We knew we were on a time schedule that had a hard deadline of 2018. During our first semester, we were also treated with university "swag" gear. As part of our doctoral students' induction into the program, each cohort member received a pen, a coffee cup, and a sweater pullover from the university. Receiving swag gear was an outward manifestation to the world that we

were doctoral students at the university. This seemingly small gesture of gifting doctoral students with swag gear physically and psychologically unified our cohort.

During the first semester of our doctoral program, one of our professors intentionally and strategically introduced our cohort to another cohort. Our professor believed that one of the key ingredients to being a change agent was collaboration and allyship with other change agents and colleagues doing “the hard work” in K-12 education. Our professor often preached how “one cannot implement long-lasting, hard changes in culture and climate alone”. Instead, change happens in fellowship with others, both like-minded and those in opposition, incrementally.

Therefore, during one of our class sessions, our professor led our cohort, Block 18, into another classroom where we interrupted the lecture to introduce ourselves. As we stood there in front of the classroom like troubled students who had been called up to the board to solve the problem, we were center stage like a deer in headlights. There we were, us first-year, first-semester doctoral students in Block 18 face-to-face with the second-year, fourth-semester doctoral students of Block 17. These students had survived their first year of the doctoral program. They seemed confident in their interests and with the direction in which their research was heading. Block 17 seemed that much closer to their graduation date. In our eyes, their reality was a goal we hoped we would one day achieve.

That day in their class, we stood in the front and introduced ourselves, one by one, sharing our current job roles and our research interests, and then Block 17 did the same. As Block 17 shared, we listened intently, trying to hear possible references to our own research interests and panning the room for friendly faces to professionally network with within our school district. This introduction of Block 18 to Block 17 added a new extension to our doctoral family—elders with wisdom. In part, Block 17 was likened to older siblings in that they were “ahead” of Block 18, but unlike our professors, not so far removed from the doctoral experience. This introduction, which at first seemed like only as a casual meeting, proved to be so much more afterward. This introduction grew into what would later be friendly faces passing through the hallways of the university, to small talk conversations at district meetings and events.

Eventually, unbeknownst to us, this introduction would blossom into a combined summer course with both Block 17 and Block 18 students enrolled concurrently.

During our third semester as doctoral students, our first summer course consisted of two professors, one for Block 17 and one for Block 18, and three classroom spaces, one for each Block, as well as a shared, larger room for both Blocks combined. In our individual classrooms, our professors worked independently and taught separate content with different texts. When we, Block 18 and Block 17, met together during designated times in the shared space, magic happened. In the shared space, Block 17 and Block 18 students were gathered together and highly encouraged (read: forced) to mix and mingle with colleagues according to differences in Blocks and similarities in research, grade level, school type, and job roles. The blending of these two courses really added to our doctoral experience in that it provided peer-mentoring opportunities. In our new multi-Block groupings, we were able to discuss job roles, changes within the district, research sources, helpful tips, and tricks for successfully navigating the doctoral process. Research on the impact of peer mentors conducted by Geesa, Lowery, and McConnell (2018) concluded that mentees found it especially valuable to have mentors who had experienced the same doctoral program, taken the same classes, come from similar careers and family situations, and known firsthand the issues and stressors which the mentees were encountering. This summer course offered us these opportunities.

The Face of a New Cohort

In their study of faculty perceptions of the benefits and challenges of cohort models in education leadership programs, Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, and Norris (2000) found that most who were engaged in cohorts felt the advantages of the model outweigh the challenges and that while there are faculty and institutional benefits, the greatest benefactors are students. Two of the benefits to students include the bond of a social network and

the ability to gain and build on knowledge found in multiple perspectives (Barnett et al., 2000). Our cohort offered these social and academic benefits as well, yet as the coursework of our program came to an end, we were facing the unchartered territory of self-pacing. The journey’s sprint to the finish line was ours to pursue or not. So, as we entered the potential wasteland of ABD (All But Dissertation) status, the fear was real.

After moving, sometimes literally, as a cohesive unit through the program to this point, we were suddenly thrust into what is traditionally a self-pacing, self-directing phase. We had heard, and were cautiously optimistic, about this stage. We were torn between beginning to feel that we could actually do it and the fear of falling short of completing the goal. The cohort had sustained us to this point, but it was time to find internal motivation to finish the not yet finished business. It was during this uncertainty that a new cohort emerged. It was one established and nurtured by Dr. Brydon-Miller. She values the shared learning found in reflecting on experiences accumulated by the group and used this belief to respond by structuring a new cohort experience to meet our personalized needs.

Setting the Tone

The cohort began to take shape on Tuesday afternoons at the local bakery where we would meet, debrief, and most importantly, stay on track. The atmosphere of the meetings was crucial. All too often in education, we are met by cold and sterile learning environments. The bakery offered us a place to take off our masks after work, and although we were working, we were able to shed some intensity and be with what soon became our new cohort family. Each family member was tied together by our chair or co-chair, Dr. Brydon-Miller. The format of our cohort meetings was relaxed, yet on track. We each were able to share the status of our work, gain insight from the members, vent if needed, and then move forward with a purpose. The pressure created by Institutional Review Board approvals or signatures required for study consent was lessened with the knowledge that we were all in the same boat.

Familial Support

The cohort model is a necessity for finding a work-life-dissertation balance. The majority of members were parents, spouses, and all were employed full-time in the local school district. Alternative forms of communications including social media, group chats, and text messages became required to keep up with the ever-increasing demands. Accommodation was key. Dr. Brydon-Miller set the tone by being an accessible and responsive mentor. Holmes, Birds, Seay, Smith, and Wilson (2010) discuss the tedious nature of the writing process through the metaphor of a mountain stating, "mountain climbers need a leader who is willing to give of their time and talents and who is able to lead with compassion and encouragement" (p. 6). There are plenty of professors who pride themselves on an austere persona, but when it comes to providing mentor support, the professor must be genial and obliging at times. Signing up to be a mentor may mean that the professor meets at odd times during the day, off campus, or even at the mentee's place of work. The mentee in return must be able to set aside time on the weekends and plan out a timeline for advancing the progress.

Timeline and Tasks

Time is a significant factor in the success of mentee students and cohorts. As the cohort continued to meet and share progress over tea and bagels, it became obvious that some members were going to take off more quickly than others. This can be a potential set back in cohorts that are depending on each other to meet a deadline. The mentor's role becomes crucial at this point, as they must now differentiate the support depending on the needs of the mentee. It is possible to break into even smaller cohorts that naturally form based on completion rates; however, all mentees can benefit from seeing each other work through the dissertation process at any stage. Timelines are not always provided by universities after the course work ends. The university relies on the students and the Dissertation Chair to plan out the trajectory of the defense. While the Chair may set the tone of the work, it is up to the student to design a timeline given the fact that cohort members use varied methodologies.

Embrace the Process

Embracing the spirit of continual learning and improvement is the key to doctoral success. Cohort models embody this spirit and help make the hills and valleys feel less uncertain. The group needs to go in with full knowledge of the all-consuming nature of dissertation work and the motivation to see it through. The cohort model provides a catch at times, but it is not a catch-all. The group provided the knowledge, skills, and out-of-the-box thinking, but "as in mountain climbing, one needed to know, and understand, where to climb, climbing preparation, specific techniques and utilization of the right tools" (Holmes et al., 2010, p. 6). The cohort and the mentor are there, but the mentee must be the one who sets the course. Setting attainable long- and short-term goals aids the process, but in the end, everyone in the group finds themselves on the defense stage on their own.

Leaning into the Finish Line

The reconfigured cohort featured doctoral candidates at varying points on the continuum that culminates with the completion of the program. There was great energy in working with those who have reached the milestones only steps ahead (although those steps were like long and arduous marathons at times) while also standing as a beacon for those who are a step or two behind you. We ranged from refining research questions and completing literature reviews in preparation for proposal defenses to preparing for or celebrating successful dissertation defenses. This range, unlike the lockstep of the cohort, was instrumental in helping us avoid a long-term ABD status. It was through hearing about journeys through an Institutional Review Board audit or feedback requiring yet another revision from others in this new cohort that gave us the insights we needed to face the next hurdle. We had moved from a marathon to a sprint, and in the sprint, we found comfort, certainty, uncertainty, and determination in both gazing upon the success of those ahead of us and reaching back to champion for those nearing the finish line steps behind us. That structure of our informal cohort that was curated and coached by Dr. Brydon-Miller also encouraged the benefits discussed in the research of

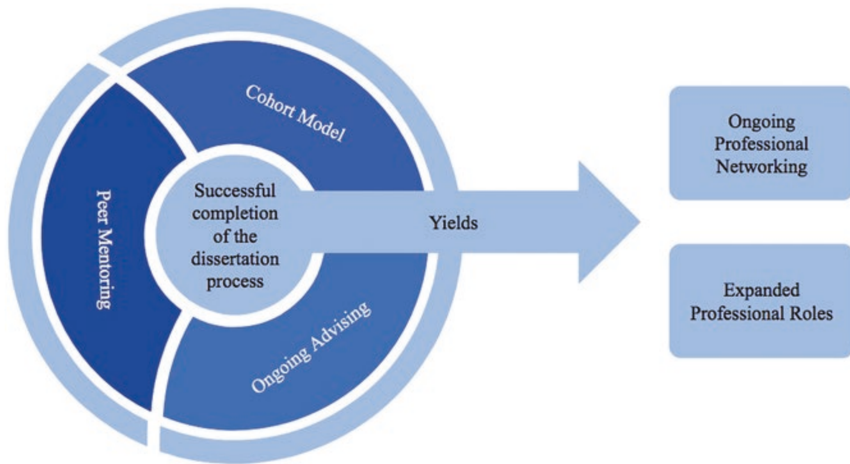

Fig. 10.1 The development of the cohort model

Barnett et al. (2000) as we learned from varied perspectives, not only in our research explorations but also in the perspectives from cohort members at varied point along the journey to the completion of the program.

In sum, the development of the cohort model from the student perspective can be visualized in Fig. 10.1. As explained from the student perspective, the core of successfully completing the dissertation process relies heavily on the development of the cohort model. The cohort model involves a continuous cycle of cohort model learning throughout, partnered with peer mentoring, and ongoing advising. This continuous cycle of the cohort model not only yields the successful completion of the dissertation but also spurs graduates forward into their future by providing ongoing professional networking and expanded professional roles.

The Shoes Should No Longer Fit

This title came to us during one of our initial conversations about this chapter and captures the sense we all felt after completing our degrees that we were ready to take on new professional challenges. Each of us has grown and taken on more advanced professional responsibilities within

the community and our school system. A few examples of our new endeavors are Dr. Stewart has started a new business entitled, "WM Stewart Consulting, LLC". Dr. Greenwell was promoted from an assistant principal at a high school to principal at a middle school and spotlighted in "Louisville Business First 2019 Forty Under Forty Class". Dr. Kent transferred schools and was promoted from a resource teacher to an assistant principal at a high school. Dr. Santos switched schools and was promoted from a teacher to a goal clarity coach and then to an academic instructional coach. Dr. Roseberry is now the freshman academy counselor and adjunct professor at Spalding University. Dr. Hogue was promoted from school coach to the district's Accelerated Improvement Schools English/Language Arts instructional lead. And from my perspective as a mentor, seeing my former students take on critical new leadership roles within our district and continuing to draw upon the relationships forged through their doctoral program gives me a sense of hope for the future of education in our community. And these former students continue to contribute to our new doctoral cohorts by serving as external members on doctoral committees, giving guest lectures to new students, and encouraging students still in the program to continue their research and writing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are many benefits of the cohort model that are illustrated through the journey of these six individuals who successfully completed the dissertation process and who further found the mentoring support from faculty and peers crucial to their completion of the doctoral program. A number of studies have reported on the benefits of cohorts in enriching members' learning experiences (Pemberton & Akkary, 2010). According to Barnett and Muse (1993), cohort students experienced improved academic performance related to enhanced feelings of support and connection, as well as increased exposure to diverse ideas and perspectives. Similarly, Bratlien, Genzer, Hoyle, and Oates (1992) noted that among cohort members, camaraderie lent "the support and motivation needed to strive and reach for higher expectations" (p. 87). Below are

recommendations to all stakeholders on how to support a cohort model, recommendations to faculty mentors, and recommendations to leaders on building stronger relationships between university and urban schools.

The first recommendation on how to support a cohort model starts with the identification and acknowledgment of the level of support needed. In this particular group most of the cohort members were non-traditional students with families, which caused additional barriers in their educational journey. Blackwell (1989) states that it is imperative to create a mentoring model that addresses the barriers to academic and professional success. Educational leaders must create the cohort model with support for both traditional and non-traditional students in mind. At the beginning of the cohort journey, some individuals struggled with the workload and complexities of a doctoral program while others felt more comfortable. Based on our experiences, support for the cohort model should entail looking at the timetable to ensure completion for all students is attainable, providing continuous feedback for all practitioners while in the process, and seeking input or improvements from stakeholders.

Based on the examples from this chapter, support could come in several forms such as meetings with faculty mentors outside of school including more informal check-ins, having a mentor who understands the needs of the mentees, and having mentors who are responsive to practitioners' needs. The faculty mentor is an integral part of the mentoring process as they are the ones with the expertise needed to ensure the practitioner finishes the dissertation race. All of the practitioners noted the bi-weekly meetings with the faculty mentor kept them on track and further allowed for the opportunity to answer questions after the completion of coursework. The practitioners found the connections made outside of the classroom beneficial to the relationship with the mentor and necessary to the completion of the doctoral program.

The last recommendation within higher education includes forging partnerships with local school districts. Developing cohorts of leaders within a single district will create highly effective, sustainable cohorts. Leaders within higher education need to visit the local school district and speak to teachers directly for feedback. The cohort develops amazing

leaders who then take their knowledge back into the same district investing within it. Mentoring within a cohort is a complex task and is ever changing due to the needs of a particular group or era of students. Head, Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) wrote that the "heart and soul" of mentoring grows out of "belief in the value and worth of people and an attitude toward education that focuses upon passing the torch to the next generation of teachers" (p. 5). This is the same for the cohort model: passing the torch from professor to cohort after cohort in order to lead the next generation of teachers and learners.

Points for Discussion

Graduate Students

- The mentor professor must be intentional when organizing the cohort, but the cohort's success also depends on each member supporting the process. What roles are required in a cohort group to promote quality work?
- The dissertation journey can be difficult for full-time career students. How can graduate students make their work more meaningful and relevant?
- Considering a student's aspirations, describe the impact a cohort model can have on students post-dissertation.

Mentor Professors

- In what ways might mentor professors provide support to non-traditional graduate students?
- How can mentor professors become immersed in the community in which their non-traditional graduate students are living and working to better understand their research?
- How might mentor professors help students grow outside of their comfort zone or find new "shoes" pre- and post-graduation?

University Program Directors

- When evaluating the path of coursework of a doctoral program, how can universities build in intentional mentoring and advising supports for students? Which points along the dissertation journey require the most mentoring and advising support?
- How might the university and program accommodate full-time career students?
- How can universities better support the mentor/mentee relationship?

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11

Relational Mentoring and the Centrality of Self-Care

Christiane Boehr, Stefani Carlson, Alice Deters, Victoria L. Dickman-Burnett, Allison JoAnn Lester, Miriam Raider-Roth, Brittany Arthur Mellon, Pamela Theurer, and Susan Tyler

Overview

In this chapter, the authors describe their personal experiences as members of an advising group within the Educational Studies doctoral program at the University of Cincinnati, in the USA. Their personal insights and recollections bring to life the theory and praxis of a relational feminist space, in which emotions represent realities, and engaged listening and feedback practices (Schultz, 2003) support a dynamic ecology of personal and intellectual growth. In such a space, the shared feeling of connectivity and belonging opens pathways of intellectual exploration and wonder (Ahmed, 2004), enabling members to re-see and re-think earlier held constraining beliefs. Specifically, this chapter will illuminate practices of self-care that helped women to address issues of authenticity, work-life balance, the humanization of research and graduate programs, and to build resilience to sustain progress toward individually set goals.

C. Boehr
Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA

S. Carlson
Congregation Emanu El, Houston, TX, USA

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The Praxis of Shared Relational Mentoring: Miriam Raider-Roth and Christiane Boehr

It's Thursday at 1 pm. One by one, each of us pulls open the door to the sixth floor conference room with lunch, water bottles, laptops, and books in hand. The electric teapot heats in the corner, and the smartscreen glows as Miriam logs in to Zoom, a videoconference platform, to bring in Stefani (in Houston, Texas) and Pam (in Oxford, Ohio). We settle in, chatting about classes, family, teaching, weather, parking woes. It's all on the table. With warm mugs of tea, our advising group begins. One by one, we check in. We share what's on our minds in the moment and the progress we've made on the goals we had set two weeks earlier, at our last group meeting. Susan begins. "I sent Miriam my findings chapter, and now I'm waiting for her to read it." I smile apologetically—I have not yet gotten to it. "As for self-care, I am continuing my physical therapy for my knee and journal gratitudes each night." Self-care accountability is part of our ritual, thanks to a fellow doctoral student who had long ago asked if we could add this to our routine. Over the past year, we became more intentional about sharing how we were caring for ourselves and relationships within a university system that requires high focus and productivity.

A. Deters • V. L. Dickman-Burnett • A. J. Lester • M. Raider-Roth (✉)
Educational & Community-Based Action Research, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA
e-mail: raidermm@ucmail.uc.edu

B. A. Mellon
Experience-Based Learning & Career Education, Steger Student Life Center, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA

P. Theurer
Edgewood City Schools, Trenton, OH, USA

S. Tyler
Continuing Medical Education, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA

Most of the students sitting in the room are my (Miriam's) advisees in the Educational Studies graduate programs at the University of Cincinnati, with a concentration in Action Research. A couple of students from related fields have asked me to be on their committee and connected with the women in this group, so they join us as well. Years after implementing this advising model, I now understand that while I originally created the group to meet my needs for staying in touch and remaining well-connected to my growing group of advisees and students, we created a model of peer mentoring that could not have evolved had I continued solely with one-on-one meetings.

This chapter will describe the theory and praxis of our group advising/relational shared mentoring practices. We resonate with Ragin's (2005) definition of relational mentoring as quoted in Fletcher & Ragins (2007), "an interdependent and generative developmental relationship that promotes mutual growth, learning and development within the career context" (p. 374). We share group processes that acknowledge and support the intricate connections between the body, mind, heart, and relationships (Jordan & Schwartz, 2018). We will illustrate practices that shape our capacity to learn and thrive. Our practices hold members accountable to reflect on their individual goals, facilitating a dynamic, relational ecology between all participants to evolve. To bring in the whole person—body, mind, and emotional dimensions—nourishes the connectivity between members and our curiosity to keep on looking, thinking, and making new meanings (Ahmed, 2004).

To write this chapter, we engaged in collective and individual reflective methodologies, such as photo inquiry (Plunkett, Leipert, & Ray, 2013) and structured memo writing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). As a group, we were informed by feminist praxis and mindset. We discovered key themes that emerged in our collective reflection, including human exhaustion inherent in feminist work, the need to recharge as a daily practice, and the stress of going public with our work. We also identified that high stress levels, overloaded task-lists and obligations, complex home-work juggling, and personal responsibilities exert intense pressure on our well-being. After this collective analysis, we each wrote narratives, capturing our individual experiences within the group.

As we read one another's writing, we saw that we constructed a feminist relational space—one whose goal is to humanize our interactions,

our communication, and our well-being. Such a feminist space enacts and expands the principles of Kegan's (1994) "holding environment" (p. 43), "as it propels individual and group evolvement by providing the safety and support as needed by each participant" (Boehr, 2019, p. 225). Kegan defines a holding environment as an "evolutionary bridge [that] provides both welcoming acknowledgement to exactly who the person is right now as he or she is, and [it] fosters the person's psychological evolution" (p. 43). In this spirit, our space invites a sense of safety that cultivates risk-taking, belonging, and support for growth. In our meetings, feminist and relational concepts of inclusion and empowerment merge into a holistic dimension of intellectual curiosity, where diversity serves as a powerful catalyst toward growth (Boehr, 2019; Raider-Roth, 2017). Our need for humanizing processes stands in contrast and resistance to normative cultural forces—both local, in our university, as well as global. These cultural forces, often reflecting patriarchal norms, include pressures toward individualism, competition, and reflect relational images that the successful scholar is a solitary one, needing no colleagues, assistance, or companionship (Way, Ali, Gilligan, & Noguera, 2018). In reading our reflections, we observed how our group provided both psychological support and active resistance to normative culture that can be debilitating and impairing to psychological and physical well-being.

In the narratives that follow, members of our group describe both our ritual practices—checking in, qualitative quandaries, sharing work, and checking out with accountability commitments—as well as ways in which they experienced these practices. This chapter closes with our reflections on key themes that emerge in the essays and implications of this model of peer mentoring.

Check-in Rituals: Listening as Mutual Empowerment—Christiane Boehr

Over the last two years, I had been a member of Miriam's advisee group. Even though I was a PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Composition and not in Educational Studies, our discussions and mindful practices have

been vital to my overall awareness of self and well-being and proved essential to successfully complete my doctoral studies. While I experienced these meetings as an intellectual springboard to present my research ideas, discuss quandaries, and address scholarly questions, it was the social aspect of hearing each other out, mentoring one another, and growing as women who shared the goal and challenges of completing academic work that shaped a trusting network in a feminist relational space.

Each meeting started with an informal check-in practice during which each woman shared aspects from her personal and professional life that were important to her and had an impact—direct or indirect—on her well-being and goal achievement. As a doctoral candidate, I was in the midst of crafting my dissertation and felt the, often oppressive, loneliness of writing and sustaining the discipline to move forward toward the finish line. To me, these check-in moments were a vital part of mental self-care, an anticipated ritual of being listened to and accepted. It was important to see that other women shared similar challenges and anxieties; it was important to create a web of belonging. Androne (2014) suggests that rituals are “repeated, organized, and meaningful behaviors engaged … to accomplish a personal and communal purpose” (p. 318). The collective purpose of our check-in rituals was to allow each group member to settle in, feel welcomed, and initiate the environment and response they needed to remain intellectually productive and psychologically supported.

Being encouraged to share one’s thoughts and feelings in their own messy ways and listening to how other participants engage in this practice constitute a mutually empowering experience. As I listened to others describing their juggling of multiple tasks and responsibilities, I felt this supportive connection and learned about the importance to recharge. Self-care is not a buzzword for egotistical pampering; self-care is a personal and collective endeavor on an intellectual and corporeal plane.

Listening has often been falsely connected with passivity, instead of acknowledging its collaborative, relational (Lunsford & Ede, 2012; Schultz, 2003), and rhetorical force (Ratcliffe, 2005). Ratcliffe suggests to validate diversity through “*rhetorical listening* as … a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture” (p. 1). Schultz (2003) adds that empathic listening is at the core of successful

teaching and how we see ourselves and the world. Our ritualized check-in served all of these purposes: they opened the feminist relational holding space for our words and encouraged us to engage with the self and each other to re-think and re-see the benefits and challenges of academic work. This way, check-ins nourished personal resilience and shaped a collective awareness of self-care as an intellectual and affective endeavor.

Relational Care: Bringing the Humanity Back to the PhD Process—Victoria L. Dickman-Burnett

Over the years, our group has served several functions in my life. It modeled the practical steps of the PhD program in ways a handbook never could; it offered methodological support and writing feedback when I was in the midst of research, but most importantly, it became a space to recharge emotionally and bring humanity back to the PhD process. There is no better example of this than in the fall of 2018.

I am a sexual violence researcher. Normally, I can compartmentalize my work without much difficulty, but sometimes the weight of the subject I study can be difficult. September 16, 2018, was such a day. This was the day Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified before Congress about the alleged attempted rape at the hands of Brett Kavanaugh, who was at the time nominee for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. That day, we had a regularly scheduled group meeting. Emotionally, I was not sure I was in a place to be around people, but I decided to go to our advisee group anyway. Rather than pretending the hearings were not happening, Miriam opened with a discussion of how she was feeling about the hearings with awareness of the emotional weight of these events as we practiced self-care. In doing this, she created a space in which we could feel fear, sadness, or anger without having to pretend it was not happening. This was crucial in my ability to process current events, but it also had scholarly ramifications: I was working on a paper about trigger warnings and compassionate pedagogy at the time, and the conversation enabled me to write about how compassionate pedagogy goes beyond difficult

conversations in the classroom. Our discussion also showed awareness of external events which could affect students' lives outside of the classroom.

I am also aware of the role gender plays in this discussion. Our advisee group, perhaps by chance, is currently a group of only women. It is possible that this is a factor in creating a space in which feminist pedagogy is practiced, but what continues to surprise me is how this space is a deliberate rejection of patriarchal academic norms of competition and self-denying capitalist focus on productivity at the expense of rest. Buzzwords aside, by creating a space in which students can be kind to themselves, we are able to achieve our goals without the usual academic guilt and competitive edge. This is not to say we are completely able to escape these norms, but we have co-created a space in which we can focus on unlearning these patriarchal conventions.

Qualitative Quandary Process: Allison JoAnn Lester

It's April 2018. I'm exhausted, emotionally depleted from a challenging dilemma in my practice as a curriculum designer and feminist researcher. As I walk into our advisee meeting, a Joni Mitchell phrase from *California* (1971) echoes in my mind: *Will you take me as I am?* Unshowered, messy bun, and puffy eyes.

I take my seat.

The months leading up to our advisee meeting, I was developing an eighth-grade "Literacy for Social Action" curriculum. As a doctoral student, I was excited to enact practices from my graduate courses in youth participatory action research, a kind of community development based on social justice principles in which young people conduct research to improve their lives and their community. However, to create the curriculum, I needed a young adult novel that was relevant to the students' lives.

After months of searching, I found the perfect book for the students. I was elated. I could not wait to implement the curriculum and see what youth participatory action research projects might evolve from the students.

And then, the news broke of ten women coming forward with allegations of sexual harassment against the author. Schools and educational programs began pulling the book from library shelves. The news hit me hard during the midst of the #MeToo movement as several friends and colleagues shared stories of their personal experiences with gender-based violence.

With only a few weeks before implementation, I was faced with a dilemma of how to move forward with this knowledge. I was faced with a qualitative quandary.

One of our practices during group advisee meeting is to make space for "qualitative quandaries," dilemmas and challenges in our practices as feminist researchers. Grounded in a commitment of love, care, trust, and empathy to/with each other, we gather as critical friends to untangle, process, understand, and reflect on possible solutions to address our predicaments.

When it was time to share my qualitative quandary, my colleagues listened closely, actively, and without judgment. Then, time was set for us to dive deeper into the ethical considerations, uncovering hidden assumptions and new insights. I felt a relief from the difficult feelings through expression, processing, and shared meaning making with my fellow colleagues. I could feel the energy that came from being seen and heard in this ethical challenge.

By making space for our qualitative quandaries, we supported each other in the uncomfortable journey of understanding our multidimensional positionalities, the complicated relational power between the participant and researcher, and the affective (sometimes exhausting) experiences associated with reflection and reflexivity in our work. In the process, we co-created a container that holds our difficult emotions, conflictions, and anxiety that accompany our learning and development as feminist researchers.

Walking into the room, asking, *Will you take me as I am?*

In our group, I hear back:

You are enough.
You are not alone.
What do you need right now?
How can we help you process your qualitative quandary?

In our space, we are held. We are seen. We are taken as we are. And, we are stronger because of it.

Resisting Isolation: Sharing Our Work—Susan Tyler

The dissertation phase of a doctoral program requires silence and concentration, yet being away from other graduate students and faculty who have become like family can be a lonely time for a doctoral candidate. Our advisee group helped to alleviate the "doctoral blues" and served as an accountability and encouragement system during the several years that I have participated.

One particularly supportive activity was our process for sharing writing with one another. Each meeting, one person volunteered to present work. In an effort to listen carefully to colleagues' comments, the presenter listens and takes notes, but does not respond until the process is completed. There are four distinct rounds in this process. The first focuses on something that we particularly noticed or that struck us about the writing. We describe how a thought or feeling was expressed or a particularly illustrative turn of phrase. This is a non-evaluative step in the process, one that helps us closely see the piece. In the second round, we ask clarifying questions: Were there places where we require additional explanation? Was more information needed to clarify a point? The third round centers on appreciative responses, pointing out descriptions or phrases that particularly resonated with us, that were meaningful, were beautiful, or felt just "right." In the fourth round, we offer scaffolding responses or suggestions for revision to help strengthen the narrative and address issues that are challenging the writer. After these rounds, the presenter has the opportunity to answer specific questions or clarify suggestions, if they choose. The presenter uses her notes not only to remind her of the questions and comments but also to have helpful notes to use for future editing and consideration.

When I shared work, I appreciated the positive comments and the understanding of my intent from the group. It helped to hear others point out something that needs to be clarified or note where to make my sentences shorter and more succinct. I was reassured having my work be given serious consideration and to have colleagues share their thoughts about my work. I left the session with a renewed sense of worth and a clearer picture of how my work could be improved.

Running parallel to my experience in our respectful, affirming, and nurturing co-mentorship, I recall noting a contrast between our group experiences and some comments I heard from participants in my dissertation interviews. In my research about academic physicians' experiences in preparing for professional practice change, some participants spoke of mentorship and indicated that they had longed for a mentoring relationship with a colleague and/or fellow professional, with the premise that such an opportunity of support would have helped them in a time of change and challenge. Many did not have access to such relationships or did not know how to initiate them. I realized how fortunate I was to be in our advisee group that provided an antidote to the isolation through a connected peer mentoring community.

Check-Out: Keeping Us Accountable—Brittany Arthur Mellon

As Christiane described above, our time together began with each of us checking in, telling others how we were doing. Often times this interaction in the advising group was the most genuine and sincere moments I'd had all week. When I am asked, "How are you? What is currently alive for you?" I go to a much deeper place than I typically do when asked, "Hey, how are you?" These moments of reflection not only allowed me to check in with myself but also gave me the opportunity to feel genuinely seen. Time spent together developing deep connection with the other women has made such a tremendous impact on my PhD experience. When we are together, we share our work, share our writing, share our fears, and so much more. It is a reassuring experience to learn that none of what I'm experiencing is out of the "normal," and I feel much more

confident as I progress through my studies, knowing I have the support of these brilliant women behind me.

The practice of setting intention is a part of our "check-out" process at the end of each meeting. We are asked to set a work goal and a self-care goal. This time allows each of us to hold ourselves accountable for achieving our goals, both professionally and personally. Self-care has been a foreign concept to me for most of my life—I've always been an overachiever and someone who lives close to the edge of being overwhelmed. Self-care was never discussed during my upbringing; it was not a concept that was modeled for me. Taking the time to put thought into how I may care for myself and then having a community of women hold me accountable is the reason I've survived in this program. Hearing how others will care for themselves inspires me and pushes me to hold myself accountable and to incorporate self-care more into my everyday life. For example, Alice mentioned that her self-care goal to pre-prepare meals for the week to ensure she was eating healthily. Alice's willingness to be transparent in the group about something she was struggling with, but then to also hold herself accountable by setting a self-care goal, shows the beauty of this community. Hearing others' self-care goals has pushed me to make this a regular practice, and discussing it has made it less taboo. We discuss self-care and its importance but also how we each struggle to incorporate it into our routine. This group makes me feel less alone in my experiences in the PhD program. The ability to be honest and open with each other, while also creating a non-judgmental, yet intentional space, has allowed each of us to grow and flourish in our own unique ways.

Encouraging a Work-Life Balance: Pam Theurer

Although this dissertation journey has taken me many years, I would not be looking forward to my upcoming graduation without the support, advice, and bond I experienced in the advisee group. We held one another accountable for setting writing and self-care goals, establishing the understanding that without self-care both the researcher and the dissertation process suffer. The challenge to balance these different aspects in our lives seemed to permeate the entire group as we discussed the impact of work/

school requirements on our personal lives. Balancing personal and professional obligations is a challenge seen by many women in leadership roles, particularly in the realm of education (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; Wallace, 2014). Robinson (2016, p. 16) considered this lack of balance a "forced isolation" from family. Indeed, I have given up many opportunities to spend time with family or friends in exchange for concentrated writing time. I believe this forced isolation is even more real to those who are participating in the pursuit of a doctoral degree while fulfilling demanding professional leadership roles. When reporting on work-life balance for women in leadership roles, Brue (2019, p. 43) found that women benefit from "emotional and informational support in a non-threatening relational environment." This group served as a catalyst for balance through the commitments we made to one another concerning self-care. My writing was catalyzed through submission deadlines, but my awareness of a need for self-care developed through the framework we had put into practice.

My work with this advisee group has been invaluable as it kept me motivated, encouraged, and committed to taking care of myself in the process. Admittedly, I was one of the members who periodically missed sessions due to the unpredictability of my professional leadership role. When I returned to the group, it was as if I was never gone. I was continually taken into the fold as if I had not missed a beat. When my mother needed personal care due to Alzheimer's, I decided to take a two-and-a-half-year break from my dissertation and re-focused on spending precious time with both my parents. I will never regret that decision, but it was through the reassurance from the learning community that I allowed myself to step back from my writing when life got in the way, forgiving myself for not meeting the original goals, and returning to get back on track toward the completion of my doctorate. It was this process of accountability to one another and the support I received that gave me the push I needed to complete my dissertation. I was reassured by others in the group that challenges hit us all, and we supported one another in understanding that we were there to assist in any way we could, even if just by listening and sharing what was happening in our lives.

Developing My Identities: Alice Deters

As I reflect on my experience in our advisee community, it is the investment in one another—not only as students and researchers but also as whole individuals—that most supported my growth and development as a first-year graduate student. Our advisee group provided a solid foundation of belongingness on which to build my identity as a graduate student, and it also challenged me to bring balance to that identity that supported holistic growth and emphasized self-care.

The beginning of my first semester brought plenty of excitement, as well as a variety of challenges and anxieties. While I could not wait to dive into new classes and research, I was nervous about adjusting not only to a new program but also to a new campus and city. While I had expected the transition between my master's and PhD to be seamless, instead, I experienced feelings of confusion and uneasiness that I hadn't experienced since my freshman year of college. I had expected some challenges in adjusting to my new program of study. However, the toll of finding my way around campus, building new relationships, and learning to balance new responsibilities with my need for self-care were also challenging. I felt the burden of not yet feeling at home.

The other advisees in the group gave me the sense of belonging that I was craving and became a unique support system that allowed me to settle in to my new identity and learn how to create balance between my life at work and school and my life at home. The group did not feel competitive or judgmental like some educational communities are described (Saul, 2017), but instead encouraging and supportive. Our advisee group challenged us to think of each other as classmates and co-learners, as well as whole individuals. Fellow students provided advice on which classes to take and served as a sounding board when I found the courage to share my first writing in the group. They also cheered me on while I trained for my first half-marathon and offered the encouragement I needed to unplug when I was leaving to go out of town for the weekend. "The work will be here when you get back. Enjoy time with your family," the other members of the group advised.

As simple as this advice seems, it was their investment in not only what I was doing *in* the classroom but also how I was doing *outside* of it that made our learning community so impactful. The holistic approach our group takes, with emphasis on our research and writing as well as on our self-care, helped me to think critically about and develop my identity as a graduate student, researcher, teacher, learner, daughter, and friend. The practices that we refer to in this chapter became tangible tools and practices to develop a regular self-care practice, behaviors that are not always supported in the patriarchal, competitive academic world. Instead of trying to figure out a healthy work-life balance in isolation, I was invited into a supportive community where I created meaningful connections that help promote growth.

Presence at a Distance: Stefani Carlson

The first time I stepped onto the University of Cincinnati campus was at graduation. My learning took place in a hybrid program combining off-site seminars, independent study, and online classes. I participated in the advisee group via Zoom, a video-conferencing platform. The research showcase and celebration held by the University of Cincinnati Action Research Center during commencement weekend was the first time I met the other advisees in the group in person. It was an emotional moment, as the support provided by the group was integral to my having reached that milestone.

In 2017, nearly everything in my life changed. I completed one phase of my graduate learning, in which I was supported by a close-knit cohort of colleagues, and began the next stage, in which I knew no one but my advisor. I attended my first academic conference, at which I presented two different works in progress. I began a job search and landed my dream position—a thousand miles away. My family life was undergoing great change. As if all that weren't enough, my new community, Houston, was hit by Hurricane Harvey within a few weeks of my move there. With all these stressors, my score on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale was well into the high-risk zone (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Fortunately, two weeks after the hurricane, despite having dropped all my classes for the semester, I attended my first Zoom meeting of the advisee group. Participating in the sessions provided a source of “relational resilience” that enabled me to continue with my studies (Jordan, 2004, p. 28). Hearing the other participants speak of feelings of isolation accompanying their dissertation work resonated with my own experiences of writing and revising papers for publication and taking courses remotely. Being asked to share my work and comment on the work of others built the “sense that one has something to contribute to others and one is part of a meaningful relationship” that develops relational confidence, while the “commitment to an ethic of mutuality” of the group empowered my full participation, even as a master’s degree student in a (virtual) room full of doctoral candidates (Jordan, 2004, p. 35).

The consistent framework of the sessions themselves, particularly the structured sharing and goal-setting portions, also encouraged the “supported vulnerability” that bolsters resilience (Jordan, 2004, p. 33). The inclusion of self-care goals alongside work goals helped me prioritize my own health during this time of intense stress and avoid the major illness that might have been predicted by my Social Readjustment Rating Scale score. With the support of the group, I found the resilience to see both papers through to publication, as well as to complete my degree program. Since then, I have begun to carry my learning forward by developing a professional learning community, based on a format similar to the advisee group, to bring these resources to the teachers I supervise.

Constructing Presence in Feminist Relational Spaces: Miriam Raider-Roth and Christiane Boehr

When reading the narratives written by Christiane, Victoria, Allison, Susan, Brittany, Pam, Alice, and Stefani, we are struck by three thematic strands that weave through their words: the centrality of collective rituals, structured process, and presence.

Collective Rituals

As the group has evolved over the years, we developed collective rituals—check-in, qualitative quandaries, sharing work protocol, check-out—work and self-care goal setting. As Christiane wrote above, our rituals served both a "personal and communal purpose" (Androne, 2014, p. 318). Being able to trust that there will be space to check in, to raise issues that are pressing on in our lives and program, to share work, and to set concrete goals helps build the "holding environment." Predictable rituals mean that there is a reliable space to bring in our whole selves. It means there are dependable moments to raise research dilemmas without worrying that you take up too much time. The check-out goal setting may be a little unnerving, but even that routine reminds us that part of supporting one another means helping us move forward as emerging scholars and as humans needing care and presence.

Structured Process

A second thematic thread focuses on the structured processes we employ. Each person has time to check in uninterrupted. The floor belongs to whomever is speaking, and we understand that we are making space for each person to speak and be heard. With qualitative quandaries, we check to see who has a "burning issue" and allocate time to make sure each person has an opportunity to be heard. Additionally, we designed a process that helps us to first describe what we see in a piece of work, then we ask clarifying questions, locate the strengths in the work, and finally offer scaffolding suggestions to help strengthen the writing. This process slows down the leap to evaluate the piece and helps us attend to the depth of content. We learn to be present to the work *and* the author (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). Finally, doing check-out, we take turns to set personal commitments. We urge each other to set goals that are attainable and concrete. The ritual of saying aloud, even in a shaky voice, what one hopes to accomplish is an opportunity to be brave, to be committed, and even to give oneself a break, if needed.

I (Miriam), too, set work goals and self-care goals. I continue to be surprised by the impact of saying my goals aloud and knowing I will have to meet the eyes of the students when I return. Did I complete my writing goals? What does it mean as the "advisor" to not meet my own goals? Am I modeling being human (we can't always meet our goals), or am I modeling being lax? Setting goals feels like offering a contract between the self and each individual in the group as I am holding myself responsible and serve as an example, an encouragement to others, at the same time.

Being Present

In reading the narratives above, one bold thematic thread is the importance of being seen, heard, and recognized as a full human being—a person with a history, a life outside of the university, with dreams and aspirations, with baggage that weighs us down. As Alice wrote, "This advisee group challenged us to think of each other as classmates and co-learners, as well as whole individuals." These stories strongly illustrate the notion of presence (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006).

The energy that emerges from connectedness is a force that can help a person move themselves forward. It is "growth in connection" (Miller & Stiver, 1997). As Allison wrote, she "could feel the energy that came from being seen and heard in this ethical challenge." Such connection is the product of seeing others and being seen; its inherent trust offers entry points to wonder and see one's life, work, and context anew. As Brittany recounted, the group "gave me the opportunity to feel genuinely seen – something that I can't say I feel on a regular basis outside of the group." Christiane also identified how important it was to have an "anticipated ritual of being listened to and accepted." In a sense, the hard work of presence, to which each person in the group commits, "bring[s] the humanity back to the PhD process," as Victoria wrote. Even Stefani and Pam, who participated remotely, experienced "presence at a distance." Such presence is profoundly humanizing and, as Susan wrote, offers us "a renewed sense of worth."

High-Stakes Relationships

The relationships formed in the advisee group have high stakes. Each person in the group has invested money, took precious time away from family and friends, as Pam articulated, and poured intellectual energy into their program goals. Receiving their degree may be a goal they have dreamt of, a necessary career move, or an important professional development. The group's peer mentoring, reciprocal accountability, celebration of accomplishments, and shared emotions are crucial scaffolds in the construction of each member's journey to graduation. An antidote to the kind of isolation often mentioned in the narratives, the group offers a sacred space to take, at times, vulnerable steps in the learning process. Our group's account of a peer mentoring alliance illustrates the need for such feminist relational spaces, in which the pursuit of academic goals, mentorship, and self-care can unfold as intertwined elements of growth-in-connection (Miller & Stiver, 1997). The pleasure and accomplishment experienced in such spaces can foster efforts to create future environments to sustain growth, intellectual curiosity, mentorship, and human connection.

Points for Discussion

Applying these ideas to your own life and experiences, reflect on the following questions:

1. In what ways can relational mentoring and self-care be applied in your setting?
2. What are your responsibilities as a participant in a relational mentoring community?
3. What relational self-care practices are most important in your day-to-day life?

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12

East Meets West: Exploring the Challenges of Cross-Cultural Collaboration in Pedagogical Development

David Allan, Pham Hoai Anh, and Le Nu Cam Le

Overview

This chapter presents findings from an international project of capacity building between Europe and South-East Asia, where mentoring is used as a tool for the pedagogical development of tutors in higher education. Higher education institutions from five European countries partnered with eight universities from Vietnam and Laos to devise a bespoke curriculum for developing vocational teaching. The curriculum combined teaching methodologies of the West with cultural considerations of the East. The European partners were asked to deliver pedagogical training, to provide advice on module development, and to oversee the development of the Asian partners; thus, an international mentor–mentee relationship was established.

D. Allan (✉)
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: david.allan@edgehill.ac.uk

P. H. Anh • L. N. C. Le
School of Foreign Languages, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Hanoi, Vietnam

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Building on the traditional definition of mentors as "people who use their knowledge, power and status to assist others to develop their careers" (Tonna, Bjerkholt, & Holland, 2017, p. 211), we explore the relationships between tutors in the so-called "developed" countries in the West and those identified as "developing" countries in the East. We outline a mentoring model that is complex and multi-layered, one which comprises "traditional", "group" (Huizing, 2012; Mitchell, 1999) and "cross-cultural" (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Kim & Egan, 2011) forms. The model utilises multiple approaches to supporting the development of tutors' pedagogical knowledge and explores the difficulties of mentoring across conflicting cultural contexts. Within the hierarchical structure, roles are seen to shift, whereupon the mentor–mentee relationship grows hazy and cultural experience becomes a prominent force. Pedagogical development is thus a process of mentoring and being mentored, wherein existing practices are challenged, and knowledge is shared and co-constructed through collaborative inter-workings. This chapter, then, explores the subsequent cross-cultural tensions experienced in international mentoring and the resultant paradigmatic shift in pedagogical thinking.

Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the mentor–mentee relationships of higher education (HE) lecturers working on an international project of pedagogical knowledge development and capacity building. Colleagues from institutions in Europe and South East Asia (SEA) took part in CATALYST (*Communicative Approaches in University Vocational Teaching Methodology focusing on Improving Educational Yield*), a project aimed at developing teaching methodologies in vocational learning. We address the mentoring practices of professionals working across a wide geographical divide and explore the synthesised experiences of varying, and sometimes conflicting, cultural practices.

In moving away from traditional mentoring that focuses on the "one-to-one relationship between an experienced and a less experienced person" (Tonna et al., 2017, p. 211), we explore a wider interpretation of mentoring that draws on the capacity to include multiple input, such as through group mentoring (Huizing, 2012), and takes into account cultural context (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Weiston-Serdan & Sanchez, 2017). We concur with the belief that mentoring is

"an important source of development for individuals at every career stage" (Kram & Bragar, 1992, p. 221) and an "important component of lifelong learning" (Gay, 1994, p. 5), and illustrate this through our model of mentoring experienced HE professionals whose working relationships traverse cultural variance. The model builds in both the use of multiple interactive experiences, and the necessity of drawing on reflection as a powerful tool for collaborative intellectual growth and the co-construction of knowledge. Mentoring in this way is an active process of learning and an equitable approach to power dynamics as it challenges and realigns relationship status. Drawing on pedagogical knowledge sharing opportunities, and a mentor–mentee relationship that moves beyond that of the provision of a "critical friend" (Costa & Kallick, 1993), we present a complex model that illustrates role fluidity and acknowledges "group" and "cross-cultural" aspects.

Overview of the Project

The CATALYST project was funded by the European Commission and was a capacity-building programme of pedagogical knowledge exchange in HE. Its purpose was to develop vocational teaching and learning in institutions in Vietnam and Laos. Altogether, there were 13 partnering institutions from six countries and we loosely divide these into eight SEA partners and five European ones. Although this dichotomy does not represent the intercultural differences between the individual countries of each continent, it provides an overarching framework to ease understanding and is useful for two reasons:

1. It enables an exploration between two culturally varied approaches to teaching and learning – that of the West and the East.
2. It reflects the mentor-mentee relationships that arose as a by-product of the collaborative working arrangement between the two cultures.

CATALYST was led by the European partners who formed a steering group, with one partner acting as the project coordinator to oversee the progress. It was focused on supporting the SEA institutions to generate

bespoke curricula, in the form of a series of modules, that would promote the concept of a communicative approach. The modules would also develop the pedagogical knowledge of the HE staff and be offered as units of study for the students. The main aim of CATALYST was to challenge lecturers' existing practices and assumptions about teaching approaches.

The initial meeting was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where representatives of all the 13 institutions involved planned for the forthcoming three years. After establishing a quality assurance process to monitor progress, the steering group scheduled four weeks of pedagogical training. The training was undertaken in two European institutions, wherein a range of communicative strategies were proposed, and the SEA partners were given guidance on designing modules using the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System framework. Communicative strategies were used throughout the training to model "good practice" and the modules focused on aspects such as technology-enhanced learning, inclusion, equality and diversity, quality assurance, professional development and English language usage. In total, thirteen modules were designed by the SEA partners and in addition to employing a communicative approach in their own teaching, the SEA partners were required to disseminate knowledge and strategies to colleagues beyond the project. The modules were piloted on three occasions during years two and three of the project, with each undergoing an evaluation from the steering group. Thus, from the outset, it was key to establish a suitable mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentoring for All

Whilst the literature is replete with studies on mentoring trainee teachers and/or novices early in their career (Daly & Milton, 2017; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Godden, 2017), the attention to mentoring more experienced teachers is less pronounced, with much focus on continuing professional development and knowledge sharing rather than on actual mentoring. However, it is a commonly held belief in teaching that there is always room for improvement as "every teacher fails on a daily basis" (Wiliam, 2014). In this sense, mentoring is a

potentially invaluable development tool for everyone as it "can encourage meaningful interactions to navigate questions or uncertainties that challenge even the most capable teachers" (Bressman, Winter, & Efron, 2018, p. 165).

Mentoring has been defined in various ways: as the use of "knowledge, power and status to assist others to develop their careers" (Tonna et al., 2017, p. 211), or as "practice where a more experienced educator (the mentor) offers support, guidance, advice and encouragement to someone who is a beginner or less experienced educator (the mentee)" (Bressman et al., 2018, p. 163). How it is operationalised is often dependent on the level of experience of those involved, and the context in which it occurs (Hobson et al., 2009). In the wider sense, mentoring is referred to in this chapter as the relationship between the East and the West, as evidenced in CATALYST; that is, the European partners function as mentors and the SEA partners are mentored. Notwithstanding this arrangement, however, the roles are reconfigured as the project develops and a complex, multi-dimensional model emerges.

Forms of Mentoring

Mentoring is most usually conceptualised as a hierarchically structured arrangement, where the mentor is seen to monitor and facilitate the mentee's development. There is a degree of mentee autonomy, of course – a critical aspect of individual development (e.g., Feiman Nemser, 2001) – but it is arguably the overall guidance that the mentor provides that suggests such a structure. In our proposed model, however, control is seen to shift at times, thus blurring the distinction between mentor and mentee. As such, the term "mentoring" can be expansive, often nebulous, and certainly problematic for exploring the complexities of the interrelationship workings of the partnering institutions. To conceptualise our model, we draw on the following three categories of mentoring practice:

1. Traditional mentoring
2. Cross-cultural mentoring
3. Group mentoring

Traditional Mentoring

Mentoring has been conceptualised in multiple ways but it is probably fair to say that the term has mostly been used to refer to a relationship where one person utilises their experiences, knowledge and prestige to support the development of another (Muschallik & Pull, 2016). The mentor is often a "wise and wonderful" ally who has been through similar experiences and can thus empathise with the mentee and provide guidance. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995, p. 13) describe mentoring as "help by one person to another in making significant transactions in knowledge, working or thinking." In this way, the support is both personal and professional and the mentor draws on a wealth of experience. For some, "The mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority in the world [who will act as] teacher, adviser or sponsor" (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978, p. 1). Indeed, some of the SEA colleagues perceived the mentor as a much-revered figure and assumed that the European mentors would be "old and wise because they have taught for many years" (Male, Laotian). Whilst this might typify a "traditional" mentor–mentee relationship, it is one which was readily challenged in CATALYST as both the SEA and European colleagues' experiences varied widely.

For the most part, mentoring in CATALYST was a complex process involving several intermingling relationships, where support emanated from various individuals. The colleagues' knowledge and skills were drawn from their highly varied teaching experiences and mentoring crossed a cultural divide. Dyadic mentoring relationships in the project were mostly formed by individuals with a wealth of experience in the same cultural background as the mentee.

Cross-cultural Mentoring

According to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004, p. 7), "Mentoring across cultural boundaries is an especially delicate dance that juxtaposes group norms and societal pressures and expectations with individual personality characteristics." The cultural divide is a particularly interesting

one as it presents its own challenges. Whilst mentoring in a single, overarching cultural context is perhaps a process that adopts expected forms, for the European and SEA partners in CATALYST it was the difference in cultural experiences that added complexity to the mentoring model (Kim & Egan, 2011). Mentoring across the "divide" was heavily fraught with difficulties that were negotiated within cultural parameters that often constrained the relationship: "That's not what we do here" (Female, Vietnamese).

The European mentors were thus faced with cultural challenges that questioned their pedagogical assumptions:

> I thought everything was going well until I was told about some of the cultural differences. The [Laotian] students are not used to challenging so-called expertise so I struggled to get them to question me and to think critically. (Male, European)

This resulted in a fragmented approach to mentoring and it seemed that the only way to reconcile these differences was to embrace the cultural values of the SEA partners. The mentors embarked on a steep learning curve and this impacted on what each believed was the purpose of their role. Cultural attitudes thus presented many challenges for the pedagogical training and the European partners reported significant changes to their planning, with one participant describing the process as a "culture shock." At times, mentoring was difficult because the mentor and the mentee had conflicting attitudes to learning:

> They think that we [Westerners] are always in a rush to do things. I guess we just move quickly because we know it and we think it's obvious. (Female, European)

> In our culture we are more relaxed. (Male, Laotian)

Such barriers were addressed and in this situation the pace of the training was slowed down to accommodate differences in attitude and motivation.

Another concern for the cross-cultural mentoring was language as all interactions were conducted in English and the SEA participants also had

to communicate with each other in English as some spoke Vietnamese and others spoke Lao. Whilst abilities were adequate for the project, they varied widely. In addition, the SEA colleagues often needed to double translate; for example, they interpreted input in the training into their own language, then formed a response, and finally translated this into an appropriate English construction. The materials were therefore revised to accommodate cultural differences and to allow for processing. Building on this, the SEA colleagues drew connections with their own teaching practices and their knowledge of how students learn. This raised discussions on inclusion, the communicative approach and the SEA partners' own necessity to meet the governmental requirements and "educational reforms [that encourage] teachers to adopt 'Western' constructivist pedagogies" (Nguyen & Hall, 2017, p. 244). In relation to an assessment, one male Vietnamese colleague commented, "Maybe they should tell us the answer in their own words."

In a reciprocal manner, the SEA partners identified gaps in the European partners' cultural knowledge and lack of situated experience within SEA and sought to address these by supporting their professional development. A shift in power thus occurred as the SEA colleagues became the mentors and used their cultural experiences to lead the way. (An example of this in practice can be seen with the case study at the end of the chapter.) The European colleagues then reflected on their earlier perceptions of reputedly universal teaching strategies and this broadened their international teaching experiences.

Similarly, the SEA partners encountered many cultural barriers; for example, encouraging their students to engage in self-directed learning was problematic as it was regarded as unfamiliar territory. They particularly identified difficulties in implementing the Western approaches and suggested that attitudinal changes needed to occur for their students. The resultant negotiations of this conflict led to greater fluidity in the roles, with, again, the European mentors becoming mentees as they yielded to the more powerful and relevant cultural experiences. The following extract was taken from a teaching session in Vietnam, delivered by a European partner:

> I was going to ask them to get into groups to do this task. What do you think? (Male, European)

> Group work is not needed. Vietnamese people are hungry for learning and will work well if you guide them. You should show them more. You must keep pushing them and showing them how they can learn better. (Male, Vietnamese)

Many assumptions were challenged on both sides, resulting in the European tutors becoming more in tune with a range of human behaviours, yet simultaneously positioning themselves to acknowledge the importance of cultural context:

> The lecturer isn't being rude, it's just the respect that's shown here. There are rules and expected behaviours that might seem alien to us in the West. (Female European)

The analysis of context is important for mentoring as it adds another dimension to the criticality (Weiston-Serdan & Sanchez, 2017). It is also the further addition of the cross-cultural input, however, that adds complexity to the CATALYST model of mentoring as this can challenge existing power relations.

In acknowledging the significance of cross-cultural mentoring, it also became apparent that the SEA colleagues had widely varying experiences of addressing diversity in their own teaching. Many of the aspects of Western education that have grown in importance in recent years, such as inclusion, social justice, equitable learning opportunities, and equality and diversity were thus discussed with the SEA partners. Whilst some incorporated awareness-raising strategies with their students, and actively sought to implement an equitable approach, for others this was deemed to be a major challenge to their existing cultural practices. For many, the lecture-based approach to teaching had resulted in a lack of consideration of any educational needs and/or disabilities and students were expected to resolve any difficulties in their own way.

Group Mentoring

According to Huizing (2012, p. 27), group mentoring can be categorised in four ways: "peer group, one-to-many, many-to-one, and many-to-many." The open and multiple-input approach of CATALYST meant that the mentor–mentee relationships varied and all four of these categories could be evidenced at some point during the training, in the discussions, or in the bespoke support sessions. One of the significant benefits of engaging in group mentoring, particularly in the sharing of practice, lay in its potential for the mentees to access "a diverse group with a range of resources, experiences, and skills" (Mitchell, 1999, p. 117). Inherent in this, however, was a multitude of concerns. For the SEA partners, incorporating some of the Western values within their teaching was a particular challenge and became a focal point for many discussions. The group mentoring approach was deemed effective as it enabled colleagues from other SEA institutions to contribute and this facilitated cross-cultural input and encouraged synthesis. For some, group mentoring encouraged the two cultures to merge:

> I think we come into these things as arrogant Westerners sometimes, but we can learn a lot from each other. (Male, European)

> It is good that we have both mentors we can go to [European and SEA] because they do things in different ways. (Male, Laotian)

> I like finding things out and this has made me think differently about my teaching. (Female, Vietnamese)

Whilst one person often led the mentoring, the input from others was deemed invaluable and it became clear that the group approach worked well as it addressed the cultural variance. For instance, some of the Vietnamese colleagues had previously worked in the UK and were thus au fait with Western values: "I am familiar with group work as we did it many times in England. But we don't do it here, it's different" (Male, Vietnamese).

These individuals acted as connectors in the overall mentor–mentee relationship and thus bridged the gaps in knowledge. In a similar manner, some European colleagues were experienced in the SEA culture and could therefore find solutions to some of the conflicts:

> You have to sort of tell them [the students] how it should be because they're so polite and won't say anything. And then you try and encourage them to challenge what you say. But you have to remember that it's a huge cultural shift for them and they see it as disrespectful. (Female, European)

As a result, many participants adopted a mentee role at various times throughout the project. To exemplify this point, a split often formed where more experienced mentees took those with less experience under their wings (see Case Study). Notwithstanding the fact that, from an external perspective, the training and the overall interactions often presented as a complex affair, the outcome of these relationships highlighted the beneficial effects of the fluctuating mentor–mentee relationships and thus the multiple operationalising of a mentor model.

Mentoring in the CATALYST model, then, is a development of the inter-workings of the two cultures, where opportunities for pedagogical knowledge exchange between colleagues are broadened. In essence, the relationship develops from one of equal status (pedagogical knowledge sharing) to that of the concept of a critical friend, and finally to one of a mentor–mentee arrangement. This is then seen to develop further as the dynamics of the relationship change, particularly where the mentee draws on their own professional knowledge and where their cultural experiences overshadow those of the mentor. Thus, the mentee becomes the critical friend, and then the mentor, and finally we see the cycle end with a return to equal status and pedagogical knowledge is exchanged or co-constructed. The process is outlined in the model in Fig. 12.1

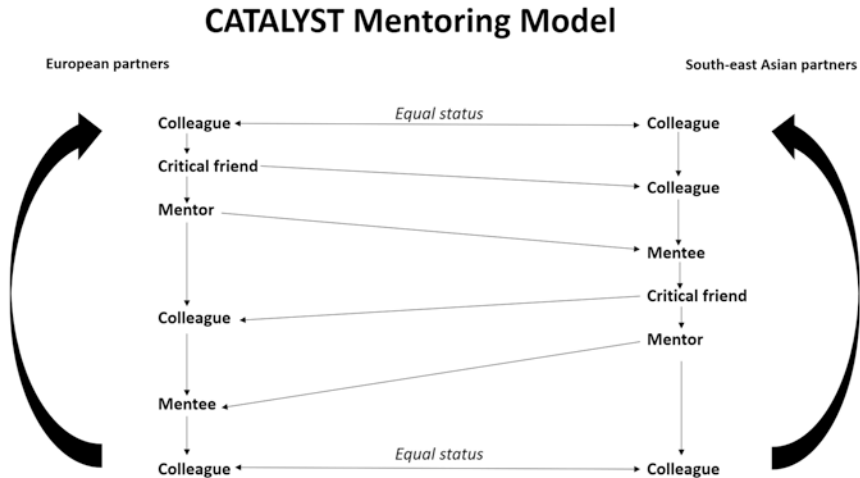

Fig. 12.1 CATALYST mentoring model

Knowledge Sharing

Teaching has long been seen (and operationalised) as a solitary profession (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002), with professional development driven internally (reflecting on one's experiences), externally—such as reading literature or engaging with the knowledge of others through professional and social interactions (Adger, Hoyle, & Dickinson, 2004), or through a combination of both these approaches. But significantly less so as an intensely collaborative venture. Professional development in the West is often a subjective assessment of teaching and learning, where self-reflective practice is juxtaposed with criteria such as professional standards or colleagues' perceptions of how a lesson went. As such, the capacity for constructing pedagogical knowledge is somewhat constrained. Some strategies for professional development move beyond the sharing of practice, however, aiming for a robust model of co-reflection and opportunities for the co-construction of knowledge. Lesson Study (LS), for instance, is a model for developing pedagogical knowledge that involves intense professional collaboration in the planning and delivery.

In a typical LS cycle, three teachers plan a lesson which one will deliver whilst two observe, with those observers being "encouraged to judge the

lesson as a collaborative venture" (Allan, Boorman, O'Doherty, & Smalley, 2018, p. 160). Collaboration is important as individual status must be disregarded to enable equal contributions. The teachers then hold a post-lesson discussion to evaluate the lesson and use the knowledge constructed in this process to revise the content, whereupon one of the observing teachers will deliver this in the ensuing cycle. There may be variance in the actual implementation depending on the cultural context (e.g., some will remain with the group for the second cycle but deliver a different lesson and *case students* may be used), but the key aspect for pedagogical knowledge development is the intense collaborative process. Ownership of the lesson is shared amongst the triad; therefore, the success/failure of each cycle is never attributed to a single teacher.

Although mentoring in CATALYST does not exactly replicate the LS model—for instance, it functions within a hierarchical structure—there are arguably aspects that can be mapped across, such as the interrelationships of the experienced teachers (group mentoring) and the co-reflection and sharing of knowledge as roles shift: *colleague*, *mentor*, *critical friend* and *mentee*. This process facilitates synthesis and thus opportunities to generate new knowledge. Our experience of CATALYST, then, was that constructing knowledge is as equally complex as LS in that it represents input and experience that is multiply layered. CATALYST also crosses international and cultural boundaries and highlights significant changes to how individuals perceive their roles as educators. It involves knowledge exchange (colleague-to-colleague interactions), the creation and co-creation of knowledge (co-reflection and synthesis) and the facilitation of personal growth (mentoring), and it is this complex interrelated arrangement within the project as knowledge is constructed that steers us away from solely conceptualising the process as either *professional knowledge sharing* or *active mentoring*.

It is perhaps also due to the autonomy and level of experience of the individual colleagues (HE lecturers) that these practices are perceived more as sharing than mentoring but, as already argued, mentoring is a tool for professional development for all, regardless of their experience (Bressman et al., 2018; Kram & Bragar, 1992), and it is this key component that CATALYST draws upon. Through discussion, experienced lecturers acknowledge their areas for development and utilise collaboration

as a tool for professional development. As such, many engage in co-reflection and the mentor–mentee roles become fluid, with individuals guiding, and being guided by, their project colleagues (see Case Study). Thus, the model challenges the assumption that experienced teachers always know what they are doing—or are aware of how they can develop—and aligns to the thinking that many experienced professionals "often need even more support and mentoring than beginning teachers" (Bressman et al., 2018, p. 164).

Constructing Knowledge

Moving from mentoring to pedagogical knowledge sharing often resulted in a synthesis of experiences and thus the co-construction of knowledge. This was achieved in three stages. Firstly, all partners collaborated to design the modules that would be piloted by the SEA partners. Secondly, this collaboration led to reflection as the SEA partners analysed and evaluated each round of their piloting and juxtaposed this against the training. Finally, the SEA partners synthesised the shared cultural experiences and used this knowledge to revise the curriculum.

In many ways, this process was far from straightforward as the curriculum modules were designed to incorporate the Western concepts and to complement the existing practices and knowledge of the SEA colleagues piloting them. As such, there were barriers to their implementation and it was felt that the three-tiered approach in the piloting helped to overcome these. During the inter-piloting periods, the participants revised the mentor–mentee relationship and it became clear that the interactions were now constructed on dialogical engagement and mutual understanding. Again, the roles fluctuated with those with the most relevant cultural experience leading the way. This reciprocal arrangement meant that knowledge was co-constructed and outcomes arose as syntheses of the interactive experiences.

Drawing on the earlier work of Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012), Tonna et al. (2017, p. 211) state, "A constructivist approach towards knowledge and learning…recognises that knowledge cannot be transferred between individuals, because each individual builds new

knowledge on her/his own prior knowledge, his understandings, beliefs and experiences." To exemplify this in practice, we argue that the mentors and mentees in our project were constructing knowledge using the foundations of their own cultural experiences and then developing this through their embracing of different (and sometimes conflicting) cultural values. As such, this expands on the "linear way of understanding mentoring, where the mentor is the owner of some knowledge and the mentor's role is then to impart this knowledge to the mentee" (Tonna et al., 2017, p. 211). Through negotiation, critical reflection, cultural consideration, and finally synthesis, new knowledge was formed.

Co-reflection

The formalised pedagogical training in the early stages of the project was designed to stimulate critical thinking skills in relation to practice, and cultural differences were acknowledged, particularly where the training needed to be adapted. Whilst reflection was initially undertaken by the European partners as an aid to improving the training, it was the mentor–mentee engagement, utilising critical reflection, that helped to bridge the cultural divide. The open and inclusive approach employed by all the partners afforded a contract of co-reflection and this in turn informed and shaped both the pedagogical training and the resultant curriculum, thus facilitating opportunities for the SEA partners as mentees to make highly relevant and invaluable contributions. Co-reflection, then, was purported to be a key factor of the collaborative process, seemingly increasing the depth of criticality and enabling the identification of suitable teaching methodologies and support for cross-cultural mentoring. All participants engaged in co-reflective discussions after each training session in order to elucidate how the interactive experience resonated with their practices. This resulted in many of the colleagues challenging their existing assumptions.

According to some of the participants, this critical co-reflection is where meaningful knowledge was constructed. Whilst much of the training involved the introduction and delivery of Western concepts and teaching strategies, the interactive process enabled greater knowledge

sharing between the cultures, with Western and Eastern philosophies explored and juxtaposed for mentors and mentees to synthesise their knowledge and experiences.

Conclusion

Whilst reflection is often an important mechanism for improving classroom teaching in many countries (Poom-Valickis & Mathews, 2013), it can be heavily constrained by the solitary input of a teacher's experiences. In the CATALYST project, attitudes that were culturally bound, and thus resistant to change, have succumbed to the wider influence of multiple experiences, where strategies and ideas are shared and assumptions are challenged. The collaborative process of curriculum development has resulted in changes in thinking and amendments to professional practice for colleagues in the European and SEA cultural contexts. We have emphasised the conceptualisation of mentoring, then, as a two-way process of professional development, where mentors can also develop and be challenged.

Case Study: School of Foreign Languages, Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST)

The mentor–mentee relationship in CATALYST was not always straightforward as the status varied between us, as Vietnamese mentees, and the European colleagues. Sometimes a person acting as mentor would be a critical friend who questioned and challenged our ideas and actions, providing us with prompt and honest feedback on our construction of the modules. They introduced us to fresh ideas and perspectives that we could use to revise and finalise our materials, and this was refreshing as it was delivered quite informally. In other ways, however, *we* became the mentors. For instance, whilst designing Module 5—Recognition and Validation of Language Skills in Line with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)—we included a unit of standardised tests, such as the Vietnamese Standardised Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP), as stipulated by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training. The range of English proficiency for the Vietnamese partners was wide. However, as we in HUST are all lecturers of English who completed our studies in English-speaking countries, we used this as an opportunity to mentor colleagues from other institutions in our own country who were at the lower end of this range.

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The VSTEP is a written test in Vietnam that targets specific levels in CEFR but some of the European mentors were not aware of it. Consequently, we also took on the role of mentor as we demonstrated to the European partners how some of the language difficulties we foresaw could be overcome in the Vietnamese context. In this way, we helped the European partners to understand the level of English of our Vietnamese students, and the reason we made a lot of effort to adapt the materials to make them more appropriate for students who did not have the required English proficiency. We also provided the European partners with information on the administrative and financial procedures in Vietnam that could impact on the project as these procedures are very different from those in European countries. The European partners used this experience to develop their own teaching capabilities and our negotiations enabled us to work together as professionals, thus sharing our cultural knowledge and improving our global perspectives on teaching.

Overall, we all worked well together and adapted our roles in order to overcome the barriers created by differences in culture and context. In particular, we at HUST have made significant changes to our professional practice as a result of CATALYST. We have adopted a more inductive approach to teaching English, where students detect or notice patterns in the language and then attempt to work out a "rule". This approach was promoted by the European partners as "an exploratory form of learning" and even though it differed from our previous style of teaching, we found that it enhanced interaction and communication among our students. In previous years, this would not have been a viable option as we had little confidence in our students acting in this way as it was not how they would normally learn. We have since tried many activities that are student-led, for example, project- and problem-based learning, where the students can control their learning and can understand how they have acquired new knowledge. Our students are now more active in their own learning as a direct consequence.

We have also changed our assessment procedures to incorporate the communicative approach. For example, some previous assessments such as theoretical tests are now conducted as group projects. We see our role in HUST as facilitators of learning, where students are actively communicative in their learning and we interact with them to develop their progress. Consequently, our emphasis is now on communication and engagement and we feel that our classrooms have been transformed into dynamic environments where opportunities are available for interactive learning.

Designing and implementing the CATALYST modules, under the direct mentorship of the European partners, has been a rewarding journey and we now incorporate stimulating interactivity and communicative strategies into our teaching. The cross-cultural collaboration, and the switching of the mentor and mentee roles, has proven challenging yet incredibly beneficial in that it has helped us to significantly develop our pedagogy.

The case study highlights the interrelationship working that CATALYST facilitated and we have argued that mentoring experienced professionals around the globe can be a complex process. The mentoring model we outline identifies "mentor" and "mentee" as shifting concepts and suggests that as we add factors such as experience and cultural variance we open up "mentoring" as a fluid description of what is occurring in these intricate relationships. Importantly, however, is the potential this complex arrangement offers for pedagogical knowledge development in HE. Mentoring across cultural divides is exciting, challenging and highly rewarding but the real benefit is surely in its effect on our previously held beliefs in teaching, many of which are culturally bound. We should challenge prior assumptions where possible if we are to avoid stagnating as facilitators of learning. As noted earlier, improvement in the teaching profession is always on the horizon.

Points for Discussion

The following questions are aimed at helping you to challenge your own practices:

1. What cultural assumptions do you feel have become a part of your teaching?
2. What support do you think would be useful for international students considering teaching in your national context?
3. How does the mentoring model we outlined in this chapter reflect your own experience of pedagogical knowledge sharing and professional development?

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13

Cinderella Academics: Teacher Educators in the Academy

Vini Lander and Laura J. Nicholson

Overview

Teacher educators are a diverse and essential part of the university workforce particularly in post-1992 universities in England. The majority of teacher educators have enjoyed successful careers as teachers and senior leaders in schools. However, their transition from school to university is fraught with difficulties. Inadequate induction to academia, particularly to academic research, coupled with their lack of experience of conducting research, renders them vulnerable within the performative culture of universities (Ellis, McNicholl, Blake, & McNally, 2014). The research landscape within higher education (HE) in England is competitive between and within universities.

Research is a key element of teacher education (e.g., Burn & Mutton, 2013) and so it is vital that teacher educators engage with and become research active to advance knowledge of all aspects of education. However, new teacher educators are insufficiently supported to start their research journeys within HE, leaving them on the margins of academe. This chapter reveals the findings of in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted in one university in North-West England illustrating the dilemma of teacher educators in HE. The participants in the study explicate the ways in which their presence could be legitimated, for example, through the support of a mentor to lift their status to become research active academics and gain recognition and legitimation in academe.

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Introduction

The first half of this chapter examines the role of teacher educators in university-based teacher education in England. University-based teacher education fulfils a vital role in the preparation of future teachers. The erosion of teacher professionalism via successive teacher education policy changes initiated by different governments over the last decade have resulted in decreased time within the university for pre-service teachers. The impetus to improve standards and accountability via the inspection system[1] to demonstrate value for public funding has led to significant changes in teacher education. These changes have imposed a greater burden on university-based teacher educators and affected their role and working lives leading to a bifurcation of teaching and research focussed responsibilities. Researchers (Murray, Campbell et al., 2009; Tanner & Davies, 2009) have argued for research-informed teacher education as the raison d'être of university-based teacher preparation and more importantly to prevent cleavage between research, the initial and continuing professional development of teachers.

The neoliberal marketisation of teacher education has led to greater competition amongst providers of initial teacher training and education (ITT/E). This, alongside the pressure to improve performance in university and teacher education league tables, the pursuit to improve Ofsted ratings of ITT/E provision, the need for greater accountability and increased focus on the care and satisfaction of students has led to increased

V. Lander (✉)
Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University,
Headingley, Leeds, UK
e-mail: vini.lander@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

L. J. Nicholson
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK

[1] The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is the government body responsible for inspecting all education provision in England.

workloads. We contend that these multiple drivers have wrought a toll on the working lives and career progression of teacher educators.

Smith (2003, p. 203) defines teacher educators as, "people who work in institutions of higher education, colleges and universities and whose job it is to educate and train future teachers". They usually are not trained for the role, are required to teach, maintain strong relationships with schools and colleges and expected to undertake research in order to advance and develop knowledge about education. A substantial aspect of the teacher educator's role is to provide guidance and support for student teachers to develop into competent classroom practitioners (Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 2005). As opposed to school-based ITT teacher educators, it is an expectation and requirement for teacher educators based within higher education (HE) institutions to undertake research. Thereby adding another dimension to the role of teacher educators in academia. Research has shown that teacher educators employed in universities are tasked with multiple priorities: to teach and care for student teachers to improve student outcomes and attain high student satisfaction scores within the national student survey (NSS); to meet internal and external quality benchmarks; to maintain high quality working relationships and collaborations with schools and colleges to maintain the ITE Partnership which provides practicum placements; and to undertake educational research to further boost the standing of their education department against local competitors and improve the department position in national league tables (Ellis, McNicholl, & Pendry, 2012; Ellis et al., 2014; Gleeson, Sugrue, & O'Flaherty, 2017).

Bell (2010, p. 21) notes, "social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency" and that oppression can manifest within systemic institutional processes which can serve to disadvantage groups and limit their development and self-determination. In this chapter, we argue that given the pervasive climate of competition within teacher education, the expectation of universities for staff to be research active against the multiple challenges of their role creates an oppressive environment. In the face of this oppression, teacher educators' agency is diminished which can often leave them feeling side-lined within the academy.

In the second half of the chapter, we report on our findings from in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted in one university

in North-West England. This allows us to illustrate the dilemma of teacher educators in HE where their labour is used to teach, care and support student teachers, gain excellent Ofsted results for their institution but due to the lack of doctorate qualifications, research mentoring and support, they can, mistakenly, be considered as "second class" academic citizens. Thereby in terms of the metaphor employed in the title of this chapter, they labour hard in the shadows unable to go to the academic ball to improve their status within the academy. There is a lack of mentoring in HE to facilitate the transition of teacher educators from teachers who enter universities to prepare future teachers, to becoming fully fledged academics who contribute to the advancement of knowledge as active researchers in the field of education. The participants in the study explicate the ways in which their presence could be legitimated through the support of a mentor to lift their status to become research active academics and gain recognition and legitimation in academe.

Teacher Educators in the University Landscape

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) delineates a wide range and variety of educational research on learning in formal settings from early years to adult education to informal education; to including research on themes such as social justice, curriculum, assessment and policy. It asserts that, "educational research makes a vital contribution to the progress of education in the UK" (2013, p. 7). All research in the UK is subject to a centralised, peer-review assessment exercise approximately every six years known as the Research Excellence Framework (REF).[2] The assessments are designed to measure the productivity and quality of each submitting unit, such as education. Institutions compete with each other to gain high REF ratings to maximise quality-related research funding.[3] This further increases the pressure on teacher educators to contribute to research and demonstrate their academic "worth". In REF 2014, 30% of

[2] The publications, research environment and impact of the research within each unit of assessment in a university is assessed as 4* world-leading; 3* internationally excellent; 2* recognised internationally; 1* recognised nationally; and Unclassified below the nationally recognised standard.

[3] Quality-related research funding: https://re.ukri.org/research/how-we-fund-research/

educational research in the UK was assessed as world-leading. Whilst this was comparable with other subjects, the proportion of educational research rated nationally significant (the lowest rating) was 7% which was higher than other subject areas (Pollard, 2014). This outcome, Pollard (2014) argues, indicates a diverging field especially since most academics within education were not entered into REF 2014 due perhaps to teaching only contracts or their lack of engagement in research. Ellis et al. (2014, p. 35) believe all teacher educators are "particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of such audits, and not only those at the start of their careers". However, as BERA (2014) and others (Burn & Mutton, 2013; Sahlberg, Furlong, & Munn, 2012) have indicated, research is a key element in teacher preparation since teachers and teacher educators need to keep abreast of research to develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge and so need to be "research literate" to discern strategies not only to improve student outcomes but also to validate their chosen pedagogical approaches.

Most teacher educators enter HE after successful careers in schools or colleges. On entering academia, they experience culture shock (Davey, 2013; Griffiths, Thompson, & Hryniewicz, 2010; Murray & Male, 2005; Yamin-Ali, 2018) because their expert knowledge about children, teaching and learning whilst useful in their teaching interactions with student-teachers is deemed to only partially meet the requirements of becoming and being a teacher educator in HE. Teacher educators face two main challenges, firstly they need to adjust their pedagogy to teach adults and secondly, they need to become research active (Murray & Male, 2005). The transition from schoolroom to university requires a shift in their professional identity which can take two to three years (Murray & Male, 2005). The transition requires metamorphosis from teacher to researcher (Griffiths et al., 2010). This complex and difficult transition from teacher to academic teacher educator can be stressful and lead to a lack of self-confidence resulting from feeling deskilled (Nicholson & Lander, forthcoming).

Some teacher educators do become research active. They enjoy research but their engagement with it comes at a cost to their teaching and personal lives (Davey, 2013). Teacher educators are required to "simultaneously serve two masters" the "profession and the academy" (Davey, 2013,

p. 72). This leads to stress and feelings of being "second-class academic citizens" (Munn, 2008, p. 421), "silenced and side-lined" (Gleeson et al., 2017, p. 19). Teacher educators are neither inside nor outside the "ivory tower" (Maguire, 2000, p. 163) and there is a "status differential" (p. 163) between them and other academics. They feel confused by the multiplicity of expectations, particularly since there is no allocated time for research within their workloads (Gleeson et al., 2017). Hence teacher educators can feel undervalued which affects their sense of professional self-worth (Griffiths et al., 2010). So high status, successful teachers and headteachers with strong professional habitus and agency enter the academy to become teacher educators. In doing so they feel disorientated, deskilled and positioned at the margins having to negotiate their identities as they transition from teacher to teacher educator and researcher.

The teacher workforce in England is predominantly female (Department for Education, 2017) and since teacher educators are former teachers it can be assumed the teacher educator workforce may well be predominantly female too. Data to substantiate such a claim resides within individual institutions. It is not surprising teacher educators have been likened to academic handmaids. Davey (2013, p. 74) notes that female teacher educators "take greater responsibility for [the] nurturing and housekeeping side of academic life" and labels them "good departmental citizens" who "do not enjoy the same recognition or rewards as their male colleagues". This caring and nurturing aspect is an essential unrecognised positive contribution to the academy since it supports student retention, progression, achievement and employment (Davey, 2013), which are benchmark criteria for national university league tables. This should not be the remit of females only but that of all teacher educators.

The place of teacher educators as academics is perceived as precarious given numerous policy changes (Gleeson et al., 2017). Teacher educators have been denied the opportunity to gain "academic capital" via research engagement and have instead been exposed to a "form of proletarianization" (Ellis et al., 2014, p. 33). They have transformed into workers who can respond to neoliberal market forces without gaining research status as an academic reward for their labour. They are weighed down by burdensome teaching loads leaving insufficient time for research (Gleeson et al., 2017; Tack, Valcke, Rots, Struyven, & Vanderlinde, 2018). Teacher

educators who engage in research, gain funding and produce publications may find their work deemed of insufficiently high quality to be entered into current or subsequent REFs. So, they may serve two masters but labour in vain. This can be disheartening and demoralising given the personal and professional commitment they have made, and the agency exercised to improve their position within the department and university through research engagement. The injustice and inequity evident through such exclusions, whilst the institution extracts dividends, such as high NSS ratings or Ofsted grades, for the labour of these teacher educators is palpable in education departments. Their labour is taken for granted by institutions whose future financial gain from teacher education is guaranteed whilst the careers of research aspirant teacher educators is delimited by oppressive institutional structures. "Teacher educators are not 'a problem'…. the problem is the system" (Ellis et al., 2014, p. 41). As we approach the next REF in 2021 which requires all research active staff to be returned, some institutions have instigated contractual changes which will exclude staff with heavy teaching loads and limited or no research profiles, such as teacher educators. In this way the system has solved a problem by effectively cutting off teacher educators from developing a research profile and limiting their career progression along the teaching only route.

Despite these limitations the recruitment of new teacher educators still continues via the school pipeline. Therefore, there is an urgent need for education departments to provide structured induction to HE and to develop and support new teacher educators' research skills in the first three years of what is essentially their second career (Griffiths et al., 2010; Murray, 2008; Murray & Male, 2005). The conflicted position of teacher educators as they transition from school to university settings is a global phenomenon (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Cochran-Smith, 2005; Davey, 2013; Gleeson et al., 2017; Yamin-Ali, 2018; Zeichner, 2010). The transition appears to be unsupported or limited in its longevity. A major challenge and cause of tension is the requirement for teacher educators to engage in research. The literature illustrates teacher educators need time for research (Davies & Salisbury, 2009; Ellis et al., 2014; Gleeson et al., 2017; Sinkinson, 1997; Tack et al., 2018). In addition, studies reveal the need to support the transition through the provision of a mentor and the opportunity to work collaboratively on research with

knowledgeable others (Gleeson et al., 2017; Griffiths et al., 2010; Tack et al., 2018). There is overwhelming evidence in favour of comprehensive and structured induction related to androgogy and research which spans the first two or three years in the role (Harrison & McKeon, 2008; Griffiths et al., 2010; Murray, 2008; Sinkinson, 1997; Yamin-Ali, 2018). The successful transition of teachers to become research active academics is dependent on the institution and its systems (Davies & Salisbury, 2009; Ellis et al., 2014; Murray, Jones, McNamara, & Stanley, 2009; Tanner & Davies, 2009).

It seems ironic that teacher educators, who may themselves have acted as mentors for student teachers are unsupported in their new roles, yet research shows the benefit of support from a mentor (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). A mentor can develop confidence and self-esteem, they provide professional and pastoral support which in turn can facilitate professional development and assist transition. All too often new teacher educators are thrown in at the deep end of teaching with insufficient support and left to sink or swim. Griffiths et al. (2010) assert the journey to becoming a researcher is slow, but that the appointment of a research mentor who involves their mentees in collaborative research projects provides a supportive bridge to assist the mentees' journey into research. Harrison and McKeon (2008, p. 164) found "formal and informal opportunities for in-depth, reflective, learning conversations with a designated mentor" facilitated new teacher educators' transition into the academy and their transformation from teacher. Such planned and supportive induction to research allows the adaptation of teacher habitus to teacher educator habitus allowing the development of an agentic academic.

The Study

In this research, we sought to examine the experiences of teacher educators with respect to their transition (or not) into the research culture and activity within one university. Our study was guided by the following research questions: What are the teacher educators' perceptions of their ability to engage in research? What are the perceived barriers or

facilitators to their research engagement? Here we focus on one aspect of the findings, namely the participants' perceptions on the role of mentoring to facilitate research engagement.

This study was conducted in a large education faculty within a new university in the North-West of England. It is one of the leading providers of teacher education and comprises 160 academic staff, not all of whom are teacher educators. Permission was gained from the Dean to undertake this research and full institutional ethical approval was secured in line with the BERA (2011) ethical guidelines for educational research.

The study was focused on teacher educators who were fairly new to research. We excluded teacher educators with doctorates and those in the process of completing one. Our participants were drawn from the remaining pool of 70 teacher educators. These staff were invited to participate in the research. Participants provided informed consent at the start of the study. Through purposive, opportunity and snowball sampling, 16 teacher educators (nine females, seven males, aged 33–57 years, mean age = 46 years, 100% white), were recruited. Their experience of being a teacher educator ranged from two to 20 years. We categorised the teacher educators according to their interview responses: four were categorised as having no research experience (25%), seven had recently begun their research journey but were still novices (44%) and five were research active (31%). All participants lacked formal research qualifications.

One of the research team, a research associate, conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. This was a deliberate decision since the other researcher was in a position of power within the faculty as a senior manager for research. We felt the participants would feel at ease if the research associate conducted the interviews. We wanted the participants to be honest and free to share their perceptions with the interviewer. They may have felt constrained or under scrutiny if interviewed by a senior manager and this may have affected the data. In fact, one participant remarked, "…I could sit here and talk to you and feel quite comfortable, but you know maybe if I met with somebody higher up, I would feel that a judgement was being made…". Some of the participants were known to the research associate which probably facilitated an open and honest exchange. The interviews were conducted in a private office. They were audio-recorded and varied in length from 13 to

83 minutes. The interviewer explained we wanted to ascertain their views about their ability to engage in research over a typical two-month period. We asked them to report barriers and facilitators to their engagement with research. The audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were read several times to identify re-occurring themes.

Findings and Discussion

One of the emerging themes focussed on the need for mentorship which we describe below. We begin by contextualising this theme within another important theme that relates to the role of the teacher educator in the university landscape as discussed above, namely time and workloads.

Time and Workloads

The structure of the university appears to ignore the tensions and challenges associated with the "dual transition" for teacher educators (Griffiths et al., 2010, p. 252) and does not accommodate this transition to facilitate their agency as academics and researchers. This was apparent in the interviews as our participants recounted the two major interlinking factors constraining their engagement in research, namely time and their teaching workloads. Participant 9 acknowledges she would like to be involved in research, but, "I just haven't got time". She explains it is, "because of the way the teaching works…we're not in control of the peaks and troughs they just happen". Here there is a clear indication of her lack of agency within the system. She is shackled to the teaching pattern of the academic year which, for teacher educators, stretches from early September to mid-July.

The exclusion of teacher educators from the "very exclusive club" for researchers (Participant 12) arises from the structure of teacher education programmes and the university at large. This creates a teacher educator hierarchy where one group of second-class citizens (Maguire, 2000; Munn, 2008) bear the burden of teaching and care of students whilst the exclusive group undertake research. The lack of time is a corollary of

heavy teaching and supervisory workloads which non-research active teacher educators are subjected to as the handmaidens (Acker & Dillabough, 2007, p. 312) or good academic citizens (Davey, 2013) within departments who keep the wheels of teacher education oiled. But they are denied the opportunity (Murray, Jones et al., 2009) to accumulate "academic capital" and corralled into a "form of proletarianization" (Ellis et al., 2014, p. 33) attributable to the system which constrains their career progression (Ellis et al., 2014). In particular, their professional agency is curtailed as they attempt the dual transition from school to university, and from teacher to teacher educator-researcher (Griffiths et al., 2010). The resulting inequity and symbolic violence inflicted by structural disadvantage excludes teacher educators from undertaking research and renders them as semi-academics (Murray & Male, 2005) or as we contend "Cinderella academics". Perhaps as a direct response to this, and just as other research has found (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Davey, 2013; Griffiths et al., 2010, Murray & Male, 2005), the teacher educators voiced a desire to feel valued. Participant 2 said, "Just that, feeling, you know the confidence in feeling valued". It is notable that these previous studies were conducted some time ago, yet our participants still seek to gain legitimacy within the academy.

Mentor as a Guide Through the Research Landscape

Despite these difficulties, the participants were positive about research and felt that engagement with research would confer a sense of value to their role. They expressed a desire to be involved in some sort of research as an individual or in a group with colleagues who had the same research interests. They voiced a need to be guided by a knowledgeable other, a mentor, who had research experience, who wanted the role and who would discharge their responsibility with care and without judgement. Eleven of the sixteen (68.8%) participants reported they would like dedicated support to help them get started on, or to develop their research journeys. Participant 9 said,

> …sometimes it's just a little bit of like sort of personal support, I'm not scared of asking people for help, but I sometimes feel that if I had someone who was like a dedicated sort of liaison to sort of say… what are you up to… is there anything we can help you on, and you know, maybe help me with, you know, have you had a look at this journal, or I know someone in the faculty who's doing this… I'll give you the details… or here's their name you can find the details, all that type of thing would help.

Participant 14 acknowledged that new teacher educators would benefit from a research mentor, "I think, as well probably, for again those of us who have mainly come from a sort of school background and a practitioner background, if you like, maybe some kind of mentoring in terms of providing someone with more experience at research". A clear need for guidance within a departmental structure was paramount. Participant 13 asked for a more personalised and needs-led approach noting,

> So, I think that that's important and I think it's how you engineer that really, because it can be very artificial, you know just giving everyone a research mentor and then you know it doesn't work that kind of mentorship does it, there needs to be some kind of flexibility around the way that that scheme works.

Participant 12 felt the existing faculty mentoring structure was insufficient,

> So, I think a closer kind of mentoring scheme, so I've learned more from kind of casual conversations with colleagues in research or colleagues who carry out research than I have from any formal process in the university. So, I think that is the biggest thing the, the coaching the mentoring that goes alongside research needs to be completely redefined.

She went on to outline the support she would find most helpful.

> I'd need somebody to sit with me and say who are you as a researcher, you know what are your interests and have this model that starts from what do I want to get out of it rather than what outputs can you give the university so I think it needs to be a bit more personalised.

It is not surprising that our participants wanted personalised support. As teachers and teacher educators this is how they would structure learning for their students and therefore transfer it to the model of mentoring which would develop their research skills and self-confidence as a researcher, focussing on enhancing their identity and agency as a teacher educator-researcher rather than focus on the needs of the university to gain outputs for future REFs (Griffiths et al., 2010; Murray & Male, 2005).

A Group and Supervisory Approach

Some of the participants felt they would benefit from being part of a group undertaking research with more, and less experienced colleagues, an approach delineated by Griffiths et al. (2010). Participant 10 felt the group mentorship would eventually lead to individual research independence,

> …that research team element where one leading practitioner that's respected brings people on board….you conduct these interviews and we'll do this write up together and the goal is we're all going to produce this together, and somebody who's got the confidence and experience to actually mentor a team through and in turn I know that that turns into more independent research. Yes, I think that's it, that's the thing for me.

Whereas Participant 15 felt that the group approach could start informally to identify colleagues with similar research interests which could subsequently be developed into a research group mentored by a more experienced researcher:

> …to have kind of some informal conversations with colleagues with a like-minded interest and then work with somebody who is research active and experienced, so they can then support you, know how that would go forward and, but having it as I suppose quite a comfortable working group.

Other participants called for a balance between group research and a supervisory model which would provide individualised support and expectations for research. Participant 2 said, "...some kind of supervision for us or mainly me as a novice would be really useful". Participant 4 also wanted a more personalised approach to develop his self-confidence.

> I don't know it's almost like having a tutor isn't it? And it could be, I don't know, part of an induction thing couldn't it? And soon as you have come in you are allocated a tutor within the faculty of education, two people come in, right let's work together. Or you have mixed groups of people, someone who has done a lot of research, you know, I don't know, how you would work it, but I think that's a great idea, because I wouldn't know where to start.

And Participant 5 reinforced the need to have a mentor/supervisor, "I think having that person to be able to send things through to check would be helpful". Again, expressing a need for reassurance as they develop and transition into a research active teacher educator.

Mentor Qualities

The participants agreed the research mentor should not be a senior member of staff. They felt they would be intimidated and inhibited to work with a senior researcher and also did not want to be a burden on them. This is perhaps an expression of their insecurity and lack of confidence. Participant 15 noted, "and as I say you know a group in fact a group of people with similar… with a mentor but it's… people have got to have the right personality". They called for more approachable and supportive individuals who had the communication skills, the knowledge and professional commitment to act as a mentor for novice researchers. These mentor attributes are recognised by Hobson et al. (2009) and reflected in the work of Griffiths et al. (2010).

Through the interviews a graduated model of mentoring emerged for teacher educators at different stages of their research journey. Participant 12 summarises the mentoring relationship within a teaching and learning framework:

> It might be that you need different levels, you know if somebody's coming in at Master's level or above you know they might just need the focus groups and the writing groups and more senior mentorship. But we [the faculty] almost seem to move straight to a PhD model, so I'm going to give you one

> person who's very senior, who really knows what they're doing and they're going to tell you and help you with your research and it's just terrifying. It needs to be more casual, there needs to be more energy about it, it needs to be… I'm going to take you along on this journey, I'm going to make research interesting and come alive for you rather than, ugh you need to do research, so ugh, I've been lumbered with you to tell you what you don't know.

The need for a mentor who is interested in the mentee and their development is central to the relationship. It is this mentor relationship which will engender enthusiasm for, and about research, develop teacher educators' research skills and knowledge and thus their individual agency to transcend the status of semi-academic. The need for a research mentor at the start of a teacher educator's career is vital (Sinkinson, 1997). The research induction process has to be structured, supported and sustained for at least three years (Murray & Male, 2005). The allocation of a mentor and a research group in the induction phase would support new teacher educators and provide opportunities to develop informal as well as formal research relationships beyond their research mentor, thus developing a supportive network. In this way, the new teacher educator can develop self-confidence as they negotiate the dual transition into a new career. A structured mentorship programme beyond induction would develop much needed research capacity in education departments (Munn, 2008), prevent alienation and enhance job satisfaction. Indeed, research mentors should be provided for all staff, even research active staff, through the duration of their careers (Hobson et al., 2009). Research mentors would boost teacher educators' self-confidence in research, develop their academic capital (Ellis et al., 2014) and agency, reduce the status differential (Maguire, 2000) and reduce the proletarianisation of teacher educators (Ellis et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Clearly from our research the contentious issue of teacher educators as second-class citizens in university departments of education is a social justice concern. The situation has persisted for a number of years and is

still evident. University systems and structures which lead to the categorisation of some teacher educators as non-research active have intensified as the next REF approaches in 2021. This proletarianisation (Ellis et al., 2014) of teacher educators has occurred through the allocation of teaching only contracts which appear to lack flexibility in some institutions and thus confine teacher educators only to teaching. Thereby cementing a two-tier teacher education profession. This may well impact on the number of educational researchers returned to the next REF possibly affecting the national and global position of educational research in the UK. The issue of research capacity has not diminished, and it seems apposite for universities to invest in research mentoring for all teacher educators but especially new entrants as they negotiate the dual challenges and tensions of serving two quality assurance benchmark-masters: the teaching excellence framework (TEF[4]) and the REF. Without structural and financial commitment to support teacher educators' research development, the symbolic violence and inequity of exclusion from the exclusive research club will sustain teacher educators as Cinderella academics within the academy.

Points for Discussion

Reflecting on this chapter consider:

1. How can teacher educators be best supported to become research active when they transition to university-based teacher education?
2. How can mentoring be structured to support, enhance and advance teacher educators' beginning and developing careers with respect to research?
3. How can socially just practice be embedded within Education departments to ensure teacher educators who wish to be research active can establish and be successful in their research careers?

[4] The TEF is the Teaching Excellence Framework which is used to assign categories (gold, silver and bronze) for teaching within a university. The TEF category is used as a university marketing strategy.

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14

Practices of Freedom? Seeking the Social Justice Aims of Peer Mentoring Within a Higher Education Professional Development Programme for Teaching Assistants

Clare Woolhouse and Laura J. Nicholson

Overview

The social and economic opportunities offered by education and the role that mentoring can play in this have been documented for a range of professions, including teaching (Furrer, Skinner, & Pitzer, 2014; Gardiner, 2011; Kaunisto, Estola, & Leiman, 2013). Much of the work around the role of peer mentoring within education has centred on how it supports teachers' professional development (Buzbee Little, 2005; Cordingley, 2005; Furrer et al., 2014; Gardiner, 2011; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). What has been less well documented is the extent to which peer mentoring within higher education (HE) programmes of study can be utilised for other professionals working within schools (Nicholson, Rodriguez-Cuadrado, & Woolhouse, 2018). Often those overlooked within the research in this field are those

C. Woolhouse (✉) • L. J. Nicholson
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: woolhouc@edgehill.ac.uk

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who would potentially benefit the most, and this would seem particularly applicable to school teaching assistants, who may belong to a different economic group, have less formal education, and be lower paid than the teachers they work alongside (Chambers, 2015; Dunne, Goddard, & Woolhouse, 2008b; Kerry, 2005; Mansaray, 2006; Sorsby, 2004).

To expand understanding in this area, in this chapter we study the reported experiences of over 300 teaching assistants who were studying at a university in North West England, training to use a mathematics intervention that they would deliver to underachieving primary aged pupils within mainstream schools. We construct a dialogue using the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Freire's philosophy to explore peer mentoring as a "practice of freedom" (2000, p. 41). We study the experiences of the teaching assistants to consider the benefits and challenges of peer mentoring within a HE context when utilised in their professional development. We locate a political approach to education within three key themes: shaping experiences, safe spaces for developing pedagogy, and increasing confidence. Thus, we reflect upon the social justice aims of developing a supportive community of practice for a group of education professionals who are often undervalued and overlooked (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, & Martin, 2007; Chambers, 2015; Dunne et al., 2008b).

Introduction

In the broadest terms, the struggle for social justice via educational opportunities can be viewed as a struggle to gain an equitable and fair distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within society, so that no individual should be advantaged by privilege or economic circumstance. It is important, because individuals can combat sources of disadvantage and marginalisation if they are able to access a full range of lifelong learning and continued professional development, which can enable the development of a stronger sense of self and improved employment position. This in turn can improve opportunities for individuals, such as enabling access to good quality housing or leisure activities, encouraging social integration and preventing individuals from feeling disaffected, all of which can impact upon mental health (National Health Service, 2016). This would seem particularly applicable to teaching assistants (TAs) who will usually belong to a different economic group, have less formal education and be lower paid than the teachers they work alongside (Kerry, 2005; Mansaray, 2006; Sorsby, 2004), even though

they have become an integral part of children's education following the UK Government's "remodelling" of the school workforce (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2003). TAs are employed to support teaching and learning within classrooms, and their role has evolved to encompass providing instruction, managing behavior, designing curriculum, and providing individual support for a child or a small group of children (Blatchford et al., 2007; Chambers, 2015; Lehane, 2016). Indeed, TAs often work with children who need additional support, but they are often the group of educational professionals who receive the least training and whose practices and views continue to be undervalued and overlooked (Chambers, 2015; Dunne, Goddard, & Woolhouse, 2008a, 2008b; Higgins & Gulliford, 2014; Martin & Alborz, 2014; Woolhouse, Dunne, & Goddard, 2009). Yet, like other education professionals, TAs are expected to be capable and enthusiastic individuals, responsible for the achievements and well-being of children and are also subject to regulation by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills[1] and the same oppressive atmosphere of regulation that permeates school environments (Ball, 2003, 2016). In this chapter we hope to explore how the experiences of TAs might be considered in more detail by offering a theoretical reflection on how continued professional learning within a higher education (HE) context that involves peer mentoring can materialise social justice aims and support TAs.

Peer Mentoring with Teaching Assistants

When designing professional development for adults who are employed in educational settings, in roles that involve high levels of knowledge, skills and responsibility, it is important to build in opportunities for individuals to share what they know and support each other's learning. While this is an aspect that is well noted within the literature relating to teacher's professional development (Buzbee Little, 2005; Hramiak, 2010;

[1] The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OfSted) Has been set up by the UK Government to be an independent organisation that is responsible for inspecting all services that provide education or social care for children and young people to ensure a high standard is maintained. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about

Kelly, Gale, Wheeler, & Tucker, 2007; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002), there has been limited research on the effects of professional development for TAs. It is important to redress this imbalance as peer mentoring may be even more beneficial for TAs because those in the UK often work part-time and there may be far fewer opportunities for them to develop peer networks and share experiences.

The research undertaken with TAs has often been focused upon general professional development or foundation degrees (i.e., Graves & Williams, 2017; Higgins & Gulliford, 2014; Martin & Alborz, 2014), with few HE programmes designed specifically for TAs to enable them to deliver interventions with children (i.e., Jago et al., 2015). What has been identified as an important benefit of professional development for TAs is the importance individuals place on developing a network of peer support (Woolhouse et al., 2009) where previous experiences and new ideas could be developed and discussed within a collaborative learning environment (Dunne et al., 2008a, 2008b; Garner, McLean, Waajid, & Pittman, 2015; Reid, 2008). This is particularly important for TAs working in UK schools because they have been part of the drive over the past 20 years to remodel the school workforce (DfES, 2003) intended to reduce teacher workload and professionalise classroom support roles. This offers new opportunities such as increased responsibility and autonomy, and a revaluing of TAs. However, there has also been criticism that "professionalizing the teaching assistant role was simply an economically viable alternative to lowering class sizes or increasing the number of teachers in schools" (Dunne et al., 2008b, p. 241).

With these findings in mind, a key aspect of the Every Child Counts (ECC) training provided to the TAs involved in this research encompassed peer mentoring and so involved the reciprocal sharing of experiences for the collective purpose of communicating knowledge, enhancing personal growth and professional development (Blase, Hekelman, & Rowe, 2000; Kaunisto, Estola, & Niemisto, 2012; Kroll, 2017). This peer mentoring was also determined to be a desirable form of learning because it could offer the TAs a route for developing equitable and professionally supportive relationships (Zeus & Skiffington, 2002). As part of the professional development involved in the ECC programme, the TAs attended face-to-face group sessions at a HE institution which included directed conversations about learning through exploring

experiences and solving issues. These sessions also encompassed elements of reflection and self-evaluation (Schön, 1983) and increasing self-direction, in order to focus on developing strong relationships between the TAs (Cordingley, 2005; Schwellnus & Carnahan, 2014; Williams & Grant, 2012). Fostering these growing relationships was important because the majority of the TAs did not know each other before undertaking the ECC programme. In essence the design of the ECC programme was to offer a route for developing professional support networks amongst TAs, and in this chapter we seek to develop a greater understanding of the benefits of peer support within these individuals and consider the social justice implications.

Theorising with Lave and Wenger and Freire

In order to develop clearer insight into the experiences of TAs, the data discussed in this chapter will be analysed using a social justice lens that brings into dialogue the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) on communities of practice and the ideas around the social justice aims of education proffered by Freire (2000).

Lave and Wenger's (1991) work does not address the professional development of those working within education settings, but they conceptualised a community of practice as a group of individuals who share a geographical location, purpose and/or role and are engaged in a form of learning or professional development. The idea is that different individuals can strengthen their sense of professional identity as they learn together, acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and experience alongside colleagues who are identified as belonging to the same community. These other members may be experienced "master practitioners" or other "apprentice" peers (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 121). The TAs involved in our study would seem to fit with this definition, as individuals who form an educational community of practice due to similarity of role (i.e., TAs training to be intervention specialists).

As previously stated, TAs may have limited opportunities to network with peers and share their experiences, therefore professional development can offer the perfect opportunity to redress this by offering face-to-face sessions, drawing together TAs from across a region to affirm their

professional identity as they develop ways of "talking about and talking within practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 109). This approach has already been cited as beneficial for, and highly regarded by teachers (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002; Torgerson et al., 2011) and given TAs subordinated roles within education, it would seem appropriate to use peer mentoring to provide a platform to redress this inequality.

In order to further theoretically ground an inquiry into how mentoring can address inequality, Freire's seminal text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) provides one route for greater understanding. He argues that educators must challenge the unequal and unjust relationships that exist between the ruling elite, defined as oppressors, and the rest of society, defined as the oppressed. In the foreword it is argued that there is no such thing as a neutral education process; education either upholds the current (unequal) social system or is a "practice of freedom" (Freire, 2000, p. 41). Education can be the means by which individuals can deal critically with reality and (re)discover how to participate in the transformation of our social world. As Freire (1994) pointed out:

> (The) democratic outlook in which I take my position acknowledges the right of the working class to be trained in such a way that they will know how their society functions, know their rights and duties, know the history of the working class and the role of popular movements in remaking society in a more democratic mould. (p. 122)

Freire (2000) championed the idea that education invites individuals to regain a sense of self, feel pride and find ways to work with others to improve their situation, although he also notes that for this to occur the individual must play a role in their liberation. Therefore, the act of teaching and learning can be interpreted as political acts that can enable individuals to critically explore their own situation, understand the social context in which they are embedded and challenge their own position, thus laying the foundation for a critical pedagogy to develop. In addition, professional development, particularly when designed for developing relationships between professional peers who are in less powerful, subordinate positions, can be viewed as having social justice aims as an integral aspect.

In the case of the TAs involved in this study, the aim of including face-to-face sessions within a HE setting was to provide them with opportunities to share their interests and knowledge. They were encouraged to develop a strong disposition towards learning so that an effective peer mentoring environment could be created within which they could share the challenges they face and support each other. The hope was that this would lead to an increased sense of togetherness, improved ability to cope, and develop self-reflection processes that could be empowering (Kaunisto et al., 2012, 2013; Schön, 1983). These would seem to be realistic goals given that in Rhodes and Beneicke's (2002) study of teachers who were engaged in peer mentoring, they found that confidence and self-esteem grew, as did ownership of learning and an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Buzbee Little (2005) concurred with these findings and argued that teachers' peer mentoring could create a non-threatening, comfortable working environment in which individuals felt less isolated and more empowered, and more recently Cox (2012) noted the importance of trust for developing a reciprocal mentoring context. Therefore, in this chapter we seek to position peer mentoring for TAs as ideological; serving to enable the development of and support within, peer networks that will continue beyond the confines of an original training programme and HE site.

Researching Peer Mentoring with Teaching Assistants

To explore these issues in more depth, we draw on data derived from questionnaires responded to by over 300 TAs who were undertaking professional development within a HE setting to enable them to deliver a mathematics intervention to children who were identified as under-achieving. The questionnaires were administered to TAs at the end of their training, during the 2013–14 academic year by the tutors who were involved in delivering the programme of study. At this point, the TAs were informed of the purpose of the questionnaire and the usual ethical issues were explained (e.g., anonymity, voluntary participation,

withdrawal of data), before they completed a consent form and provided details of their gender and role within the school in which they worked. A total of 304 TAs completed the questionnaire, of which 290 identified as female (95.4%), 10 identified as male (3.3%) and four did not provide details of their gender (1.3%). The TAs were working within a range of primary schools located across England working with children from Reception (aged four-five years old) to Year 6 (aged 10–11 years old). In the questionnaire, participants were asked an open-ended question with two parts: "In what way(s) have you found 1. Face-to-face sessions, and 2. Peer support of other school staff on the training program, beneficial for your practice?" (see Nicholson et al., 2018, for further information).

In order to analyse the responses offered by the TAs we followed several strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) including thick description, keeping an audit trail, peer debriefing, and negative case analysis. The authors independently coded the data and agreed upon the emergent themes, one of which was the perceived benefits of peer mentoring (Holt & Dunn, 2004) which we discuss in more depth in the following section in relation to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) around developing a community of practice and the philosophical ideas relating to the social justice aims of education recommended by Freire (1985, 1994, 2000).

Exploring Peer Mentoring as a Practice of Freedom

In order to investigate the ways in which peer mentoring might be viewed by TAs, in this section of this chapter we will focus on the qualitative responses to the open-ended questions: "In what way(s) have you found 1. Face-to-face sessions. and 2. Peer support of other school staff on the training program, beneficial for your practice?" As already stated, 304 TAs responded to the questionnaire, but not all of them responded to all questions; 199 responded to the question regarding face-to-face sessions, and 148 commented on peer support. This reduced response rate may be because of the way the question was worded in two parts on the questionnaire; the TAs may not have felt it necessary to repeat their views for the

second part of the question. For this reason, responses to both open-ended questions were analysed together.

In relation to both face-to-face sessions and peer support, the TAs were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences, offering comments such as: “invaluable”, “extremely beneficial”, and “very informative”. In particular, the TAs identified specific benefits of engaging with their peers and tutors within face-to-face sessions, saying “this makes it easier to ask questions and learn from each other” (TA 245), “brilliant lovely group” (TA 270), “the (face-to-face) sessions have enabled me to understand and apply the lessons” (TA 299) and “helps to make sure I understand all areas before working with pupils” (TA 302).

In order to explore the findings in more detail, we now study the responses offered by the TAs within three key themes: opportunities to discuss and share experiences; a safe space to develop pedagogy; and increased confidence and reassurance. We do this in order to consider the specifics of how supportive peer relationships can facilitate the creation of a community of practice that is materialised as a practice of freedom.

Sharing Experiences

In line with the ideas of Lave and Wenger (1991), the TAs taking part in the intervention training were encouraged to discuss their developing knowledge and their experiences alongside other professionals in order that they could offer peer support to each other. It was hoped that if “apprentices learn mostly in relation to other apprentices” this will have incremental benefits because “the circulation of information amongst peers suggests that engagement (with others) in practice may well be a condition for the effectiveness of learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). This was explicitly recognised by the 214 TAs who noted the advantages of being able to discuss issues and “bounce ideas off each other” with colleagues from different schools. As they stated, they had been enabled to “work collaboratively with colleagues” and received “excellent peer

support from my colleagues, both those on the same course and those who have previously completed it[2]" (TA 114).

The TAs valued the opportunity to discuss issues around their training and its application in the classroom. This aspect of the face-to-face sessions provided a platform for individuals to consider the similarities and differences in their day-to-day roles beyond the challenges of delivering the intervention. Thus, they were invited to identify with each other, and as belonging to a professional learning community within which they shared their skills and knowledge to support each other. They reported:

> Help is there when I need it. (TA 57)
> Good to have support and encouragement. (TA 115)
> (It was) lovely to hear other people's stories and swap useful ideas re(garding) strategies and resources. (TA 224)
> Very supportive, everyone is keen to share their experiences. (TA 233)
> Great opportunities to support each other and share experiences. (TA 243)

While there may be a diverse range of views about peer mentoring roles within HE and how it should be conducted (Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Feriver, Teksöz, Olgan, & Reid, 2016; Jewett & MacPhee, 2012), opportunities to discuss and share experiences seems central. As Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012) note: "Peer-group mentoring is an activity involving teachers sharing and reflecting on their experiences, discussing problems and challenges they meet in their work, listening, encouraging one another, and, above all, learning from each other, and learning together" (p. xv). The comments offered by the TAs undertaking the ECC intervention training support this and highlight how important these opportunities are for providing the foundations of a developing community of practice (Dunne et al., 2008a). To draw this into a dialogue with a Frierian point of view, peer mentoring can be identified as a process of co-creating an interpretation of lived reality which can move people outside of their own (sometimes overlooked or subordinate) positions and enable them to understand how one form of oppression is

[2] In some instances, schools had previously funded TAs and teachers to attend the intervention training, and so some of the TAs involved in this study were able to discuss what they had learnt with colleagues in their own schools who had previously completed the training.

linked to others within an overall structure of oppression. This also provides opportunities for individuals to discuss and collaborate in order to transform their own experiences, and those of their colleagues and the pupils they work with.

A Safe Space to Develop Pedagogy

In order to build on these foundations, a supportive atmosphere needed to be created within which the TAs could start to talk critically about what they were learning in the training and describe the pedagogical approaches adopted when implementing the intervention with their pupils back in school. Since they were "apprentices", this HE setting needed to be a safe space where things that did not go to plan could be shared without fear of judgement or criticism. The TAs reported that they were able to find solutions to problems or difficulties they had encountered or anticipated, became aware of "potential pitfalls when delivering the sessions" and felt able to ask questions about aspects of the training in which they were unsure or concerned about:

> Useful to talk to others regarding common misconceptions. (TA 36)
>
> Able to discuss strategies to maximise potential benefits of programme. (TA 94)
>
> Problems and uncertainties are easily solved. (TA 146)
>
> Good to highlight areas that may be problematic and discuss ways to develop and improve. (TA 159)
>
> To hear examples of what works well, what may go wrong and a guide to what you are delivering. (TA 167)
>
> Good to liaise particularly if you find a certain lesson or topic difficult. (TA 174)
>
> Able to talk about problems and success with other people and to gain knowledge of the practice of others. (TA 195)

The TAs were provided with the opportunity to discuss their developing knowledge and cultivate some of the strategies they could use in their practice with peers within a safe space. This could facilitate a feeling of belonging to a community of practice by creating opportunities for TAs

to critically reflect on the importance of "doing" and "being" a fully engaged member of a particular professional community (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 121). What was essential to this identification of belonging was a sense of safety, where professionals could support rather than judge or criticise. The possibilities offered by a safe space are particularly necessary when considered against the dominant ideology that normalises continued observation and judgement within school settings (Ball, 2003, 2016) that has generated and maintained at atmosphere of oppressive surveillance. This sense of a safe space reiterates Freire's (2000) belief that the practice of education is not neutral, but a space within which ideology is embedded in the way individuals think and live their lives. Therefore, creating a space that encourages trust, invites individuals to reflect and enables them to reconsider how their experiences can lead to a pedagogy that materialises education as a practice of freedom.

In this way, teaching and learning can be viewed as political acts. The TAs and the pupils they teach can become more aware of the policies and "politics" that surround education, and they can rethink not just the pedagogy of teaching pupils who struggle in a classroom, but also the reasons why targeted interventions might enable pupils to change their experiences of education and their future aspirations. The ECC intervention programme appears to be such a space, within which the TAs were able to become critical about their experiences as HE students, as peer mentors and as professional educators when they returned to school. Thus, they were learning to actively participate in education as a transformative process. This recognition of themselves and each other as being "transformed" by the process of learning was furthered when the TAs talked about how their confidence had changed.

Increased Confidence

Encouraging an increased sense of confidence can be a key component in creating a socially just learning environment within which individuals can develop a strong sense of purpose and feel empowered to pursue personal ambitions (Settlage, Southerland, Smith, & Ceglie, 2009). This claim is echoed with the data analysed for this chapter, and 16 TAs

directly noted how the face-to-face sessions and/or peer support aspect of the intervention training had increased their confidence, with four stating:

> Peer support is excellent it really helps to build confidence and helps you realize you are not the only one with the same issues. (TA 8)
>
> (I was able to) discuss and compare practice to affirm I'm doing the intervention correctly. (TA 111)
>
> Helps to build confidence. (TA 195)
>
> By working in group it's good to try the lessons out first and then you're more confident when delivering them in school. (TA 212)

TAs who have often faced difficulties within their own educational careers, continue to be offered fewer professional development opportunities and are often viewed as having a lower status, with many coming from working-class backgrounds (Dunne et al., 2008a, 2008b; Higgins & Gulliford, 2014; Woolhouse et al., 2009). For such reasons, the social justice aims of any programme of study deliberately designed for TAs should address the sense of risk they might feel and provide a safe space within which peer mentoring could be experienced as supportive. They should be invited to reflect on how learning has influenced them as individuals as well as their knowledge and skills as professionals. This need for an alternative safe space to recognise the challenges they face is furthered when it is acknowledged that more traditional forms of mentoring, common within education (Thomas, Bystydzienski, & Desai, 2015), reinforce rather than counter their hierarchical positioning. This offering of a supportive space within a HE establishment and outside their professional school environment can also counter any misrecognition of TAs and their labour as less important to their pupils. It invites them to be confident, have pride in their own development and "take agency in directing their educational journey" (Duckworth & Maxwell, 2015, p. 5).

The TAs developing sense of confidence and agency is finally reiterated by the ways in which they became enthusiastic about passing on their training and knowledge to others through the adoption of the role of peer mentors once they returned to their schools. The TAs also indicated that they were able to cascade their new knowledge to professional colleagues.

This corroborates previous research (Buzbee Little, 2005; Cordingley, Bell, Rundell, & Evans, 2003; Kutaka et al., 2017; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002) and attests to the political possibilities they were involved in, as they co-created safe spaces back in their own settings within which there were opportunities for colleagues to talk critically about pedagogy and education more generally. They stated:

> I have been able to share my knowledge with other members of staff through staff meetings etc. (TA 216)
>
> Advised colleagues on how other schools are delivering (intervention). (TA 96)
>
> Good to pass on and receive ideas from my pupils' other teachers and TAs. (TA 174)

Conclusion: Towards a Reframing of Peer Mentoring as a Practice of Freedom

This chapter has reported on the views of TAs regarding the benefits of face-to-face training sessions and peer mentoring within a HE professional development programme. The 214 TAs who responded to the open-ended questions on the survey indicated that they felt the design of the training encouraged a supportive atmosphere that led to three key benefits, namely; opportunities to discuss and share experiences; a safe space to develop pedagogy; and increased confidence, which we have framed as also having benefits for the wider school communities the TAs belonged to. We have discussed how these three benefits invite the TAs to develop a sense of themselves as professionals and identify themselves as belonging to a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the chapter, we have also brought Freire's work into the dialogue to reflect on how the training could create a sense of empowerment and agency when the TAs returned to their schools, as described in Fig. 14.1.

In redefining the peer mentoring that occurred within face-to-face sessions, we have outlined how this can involve: challenging existing approaches by developing new ways of talking about and thinking about practice; modelling of critical pedagogies; and engaging individuals in

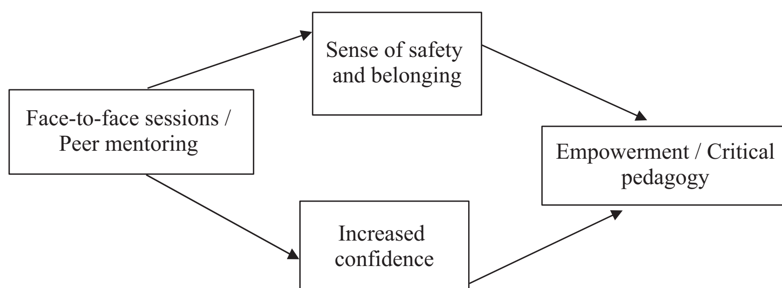

Fig. 14.1 The benefits of peer mentoring amongst teaching assistants undertaking intervention training

safe spaces to build "trusting, collaborative and democratic" relationships (Duckworth & Maxwell, 2015, p. 15). Such practices can have agentic benefits for those involved since they are able to collaboratively interrogate their experiences, create powerful ways of talking about their positionings within education and begin to transform their interpretations and practices in a socially responsible manner (McLaren, 1999). Thus, peer mentoring can be framed as a practice of freedom, which is particularly important given the (often) subordinate position that TAs find assigned to them (Dunne et al., 2008a; Garner et al., 2015; Woolhouse et al., 2009).

Points for Discussion

Applying these ideas to your own life and experiences, reflect on the following questions:

1. How can peer mentoring support you in achieving goals?
2. How can you act as a peer mentor to support others?
3. In what ways can you frame your day to day activities into practices of freedom?

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15

Mentoring as a Model of Resistance in Times of Austerity

Bronwen Maxwell and Vicky Duckworth

Overview

Teacher mentoring training offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) has the potential to expose critical spaces within which mentors can learn to play significant roles as advocates for social justice. Through taking on such roles mentors can empower their students to also become social justice advocates who in turn empower their own communities.

Drawing on a review of literature this chapter explores the empowering flow of transformational models of mentoring for challenging inequity in and out of the learning settings. This affirmative model of mentoring supports individuals and challenges the inter-generational impact of austerities by reaching into and across communities with socially just models based on values of respect, inclusion, healing, equity, care and social justice. We will demonstrate how mentoring can be a powerful sensitising tool that enriches and empowers learners and strengthens communities. We outline the key critical features of training that HEI mentor training programmes need to incorporate to enable such empowerment.

We argue that the dominant neo-liberal discourse marginalises education for social justice. Symbolic meanings of neoliberalism expose the discriminatory landscape of capitalism, which focuses on individual responsibility and morality and fails to address structural inequalities, for example, gender, class and ethnicity. Against this reductive landscape Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical model offers the means to explore mentors' (and learners') practices in the

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education field and demonstrates how the flow of different forms of capital (described by Bourdieu as economic, social, cultural and symbolic) can lead to social justice. When considering the field of education that teacher mentors cross/inhabit we explore the diverse flow of capitals which include pedagogic, subject, symbolic and cultural capital. We consider what impact this flow/or not has on mentors' possibilities for working with students to develop specialised and inclusive forms of "transformational pedagogical capital" that challenge inequality and work towards social justice.

Introduction

We conceptualise the term "social justice" as both an ideology and a critical tool to expose and challenge inequality in the context of educational practice. Employing social justice does not simply mean exploring difference or diversity. More importantly, it uncovers and addresses systems of power and privilege that give rise to social inequality and encourages educators to critically examine oppression on institutional, cultural and individual levels in search of opportunities for all, regardless of the communities they are born into (Atkins & Duckworth, 2019; Duckworth, 2013). Yet, notions of social justice are absent in policy discourses around the teacher mentoring.

Our focus in this chapter is on the potential of higher education institution (HEI) programmes designed to train mentors of trainee teachers in the further education (FE) and skills sector to foster social justice. Mentoring in this phase of education, as in other phases, tends to focus on the development of subject pedagogy and assessment of trainee teachers' practice (e.g., Office for Standards in Education, Children's

B. Maxwell
Centre for Development and Research, Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

V. Duckworth (✉)
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: Duckworv@edgehill.ac.uk

Services and Skills, 2014). Less attention is given to what may be deemed as the vital role mentors could play in preparing teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners, including the underprivileged and minorities.

The Context of Further Education

The context of FE is an essential site for considering the role of mentoring for social justice because FE educators prepare over 2 million students with valuable employability skills, helping to develop their careers each year (Association of Colleges, 2019), offering opportunities for learners to transform their lives and that of their families (Duckworth & Smith, 2019). There are around 200,000 teachers in the sector (Lingfield, 2012) undertaking roles as tutors, lecturers and trainers, mostly offering vocational education and training, to young people from 16 years of age and adults in settings which include FE colleges, community and work-based learning providers. Many FE and skills teachers undertake initial teacher education (ITE) on a part time in-service basis alongside their first teaching job and as part of this training are allocated a mentor who usually teaches the same subject. While the mentor role is generally perceived to be important by government, employers and staff within the sector, their purpose and function is contested. Judgemental rather than developmental approaches to mentoring have developed since policy reforms from 2004 onwards (Ingleby & Tummons, 2012; Tedder & Lawy, 2009), aligning with Hobson and Malderez's (2013) conceptualisation of "judgementoring" in the school sector.

We argue that both mentors and mentees are captured by the current hegemonic discourses and practices which are oppressive and unjust; they do not work towards challenging the growing inequality in society (Dorling, 2014). In this age of neo-liberalism, "knowledge economy" education and the curriculum are products of market-driven changes and viewed as commodities. The most significant drivers are to provide a flexible, adaptable and skilled workforce and to make countries competitive in the globalised economy. However, this is not all-encompassing, and we further argue that the role of the ITE mentor potentially provides a critical space for offering resistance against the neo-liberal curriculum, and in doing so challenges the

inequality of choices learners face. We suggest that class still matters and is manifested in the choices or lack of choices learners have in their trajectory through education (Duckworth & Smith, 2019). This aligns with Reay, David, and Ball (2005) and more recently Duckworth (2013, 2014), who challenge the trend of academic dismissal of class and labour.

In this chapter we present a proposal for developing a social justice model of mentoring that seeks to empower learners taught by trainee teachers to take agency in directing their educational journey, first set out in Duckworth and Maxwell (2015). This model has been developed through drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of *capital, field and habitus* as a framework to provide sensitising tools for understanding how mentors are positioned, or not, to provide trainee teachers with what we term inclusive and critical "pedagogical capital". It is further informed by a review of international literature that explores "what could be done differently" and particularly how HEIs can open up critical spaces that enable mentors to enact their roles and engage in critical pedagogy that promotes social justice and learner empowerment. We conclude by making recommendations for HEI-led mentor training that can underpin this social justice approach to mentoring.

Theoretical Framework

We argued in the introduction that the neo-liberal discourse marginalises education for social justice. Symbolic meanings of neoliberalism expose the discriminatory landscape of capitalism, which with its focus on individual responsibility and morality fails to address structural inequalities, for example, gender, class and ethnicity in learners' lives. Against this backdrop Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical model provides the means to explore mentors' practices in the field of education and how the flow of different forms of capital (described by Bourdieu as economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital) can lead to social justice. When considering the field of education that mentors cross/inhabit we explore the varied flow of capitals which include pedagogic (framed within the neo-liberal discourse). subject, symbolic, and cultural capital. We consider what impact this has on mentors' possibilities for

working with trainees to develop specialised and inclusive forms of "pedagogical capital" that challenge inequality and work towards social justice.

Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) argues that access to legitimate language is not equal and that linguistic competence is monopolised by some. In relation to the *some*, the concept of habitus is utilised to recognise that people are born into different circumstances (e.g., into wealth and poverty) and the ways in which different types and amounts of capital shape the learners' lives. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that the combination of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital constitutes a habitus. Different classes, he argues, have different habitus and therefore different perceptions, aspirations, dispositions, tastes and concepts of cultural values etc. therefore habitus is about social training and Bourdieu refers to it as "a societal imperative which has become second nature and has been developed into motor schemata and physical automatism" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 239). This is demonstrated in everyday human behaviour, for example, "blowing of the nose", gait and attitudes. On a symbolic level it is visible in the way a person dresses, the haircut they have etc. It is not, however, a matter of everyone being different but having equal footing in the field. In considering the differential, we suggest that access to the discourses and discursive practices of education is differentially distributed and valued. For those learners who enter the classroom with a competence in the dominant discursive practices or forms of capital, access to the formal curriculum is easier. Within this context, language and access is a form of capital that can be converted into a flow of dominant capital, for example academic credentials, that leads to progression to university, professional employment and the economic and symbolic capitals this flow brings. This will operate differently depending on the context, and with its own rules and regulations, the FE and skills sector may be deemed a distinct field of operation. Fields are domains where human action occurs in a struggle for capital, each player hoping to distinguish her/himself from the other, by building up forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1973). It is not only individuals, but institutions and other agents who compete for power in the field and these fields are sites controlled by the dominant class.

To engage with the ideas of Bourdieu and apply them to the FE field, this chapter considers critical spaces where mentors can model inclusive

modes of "pedagogical capital" which flow to the trainee teachers with the aim of subsequently empowering their learners and learners' communities, which include the streets and neighbourhoods where they live and work. Applying Bourdieu's theoretical tools, Fig. 15.1 demonstrates the potential flow of forms of capital between and from teacher educators, mentors, trainee teachers, learners and the local and wider community. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that the combination of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital constitutes a habitus. This offers a valuable tool for highlighting the ways mentoring is understood, enacted and experienced. We have elaborated on Bourdieu's analytical framework, by proposing habitus as a mediating construct, not one which is deterministic (Duckworth, 2013). Adopting a mediating construct enables us to illustrate how the flow (or lack of flow) of capital across the field of education and the community (Fig. 15.1). Capital carried by the mentor: subject, cultural, symbolic and inclusive pedagogical capital can

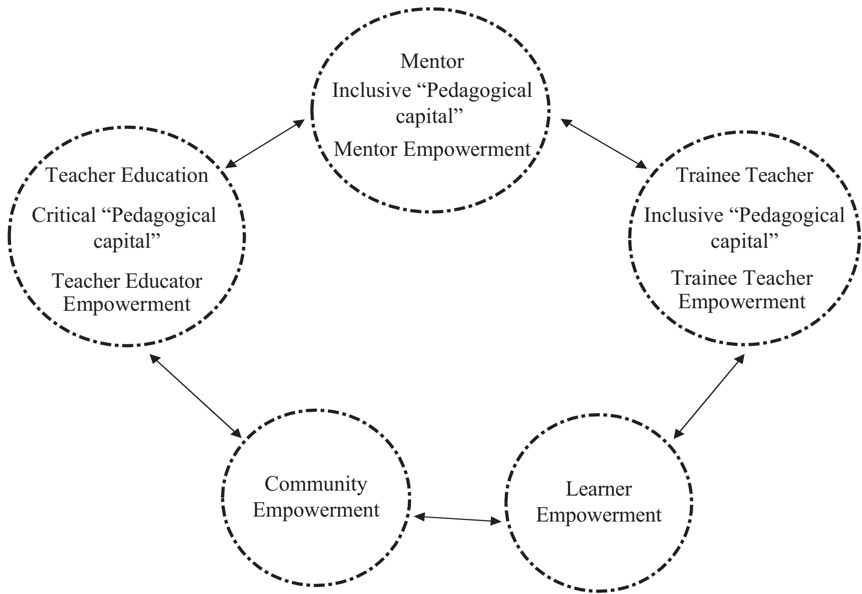

Fig. 15.1 Flows of inclusive pedagogical capitals (Duckworth & Maxwell, 2015)

influence the flow (or lack of flow) of capital carried by the trainee teachers: intellectual, symbolic, administrative, subject and cultural; and their students: cultural, economic, social and symbolic. Within this critical pedagogical cycle, the process of inculcation is not complete and habitus is capable of transformation through the flow of capital between the aforementioned agents.

Methodology of Systematic Review

We will now offer a discussion of findings from a systematic review. The international literature review that informs the model was undertaken through systematic keyword searches of the American Education Index (ERIC), Australian Education Index and the British Education Index from 2000 to 2014. We aimed to explore what could be done differently and how critical spaces could be opened up that enable mentors to enact their roles and engage in critical pedagogy that promotes social justice and learner empowerment. The criteria for inclusion in the review was that the chapter's main or substantial focus was an empirical and/or theoretical account of promoting social justice through mentoring within the context of ITE or during the first year of teaching in any educational phase in any country. Through the review of all abstracts four papers were identified which, we considered, offered important insights into promoting social justice through mentoring in the context of beginner teacher mentoring. Given this, perhaps surprisingly, limited number we undertook two further keyword searches. The first combined mentoring and social justice (43 papers identified) and the second combined social justice with teacher education or teacher training (93 papers identified). The abstracts of all these papers were examined and those that appeared to offer illumination were further considered as we developed our work to provide a richer discussion. The papers retrieved predominately relate to mentoring for social justice in the USA and Australia.

What Can Be Done Differently in Mentoring Practice to Promote Social Justice?

In this section, we focus on the three key themes that emerged from our literature review on the ways in which mentoring practice potentially could be reshaped to promote social justice and enhance the flow of pedagogical capital.

Mentoring Relationships That Offer Critical Spaces

A key theme addressed in all the papers identified engagement in professional mentoring relationships, whether this was explicit or implicit. Gardiner (2011) suggests the mentor/trainee teacher relationship should be driven by a shared vision, engagement in critical dialogue, full access to practice and trust to facilitate the development of a sustainable collaboration. It should also, she argues, foster trainee teacher learning and create a critical space to promote social justice and learner empowerment. Cherian (2007) argues that providing critical spaces, where trainee teachers can develop critically reflective teaching, requires collaborative and democratic mentoring relationships. As Cherian found where mentors used the power vested in their position to create an ethos of subservience they were ineffective in supporting the trainees' development of agency. Power (2008, p. 48) further identifies that "observing, communicating, critical thinking, adapting, mediating, being flexible, being open to other cultures, embodying a sense of understanding and acceptance, being reflective, being a lateral thinker and being creative" is crucial to promoting social justice.

Developing Trainee Teachers' and Mentors' Responsiveness to Diversity and Other Cultures

To allow trainee teachers to become aware of other cultures and so be more responsive to their needs, Catapano (2006) proposes a mentor-supported service-learning model for pre-service teachers. Service-learning integrates community service and academic learning. In the case

of pre-service teachers this involves undertaking work within a classroom setting with the aim of promoting social justice. Whether this model offers deeper insights into other cultures is we suggest contentious as pre-service (or in-service) teaching experience does not always reflect the diversity of society or indeed where employment will be secured in their first year of teaching. Catapano does offer a useful extension by suggesting trainees should gain experience working within cultures that are different from their own. This offers what Mills (2012, p. 276) describes as mismatch between habitus, structure and norms of the institutional field and the opportunity to use this conflict as a means for trainees to "experience rupture to the 'way things are' in new and unfamiliar contexts [and] that effort is required to make sense of themselves anew". This provides a theory of how change may occur, and a conceptual framework for developing pedagogical capital and practice which we argue can inform a social justice model of mentoring. As Power (2008) found, trainee teachers developed empathy for the needs of others through a process of engaging in a journey of discovery with their learners, which helped them understand the impact of cultural identity and diversity. This mirrors the process described by Catapano (2006), whereby teachers gain the confidence to make changes by looking through the lenses of the people involved to understand the source of a problem.

However, we suggest that while working within other cultures can offer the opportunity for consciousness raising and new insights this does not necessarily lead to what Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs, and Dana (2009) describe as a shared vision which includes a passion for social justice. We position this as a form of emotional capital that feeds into the critical flow of pedagogical practice. This, they point out needs to be nurtured; we consider it an important aim for mentoring. While Mills (2012) highlights the importance of a mentor in influencing the dispositions (habitus) of trainees for consciousness raising, Yendol-Hoppey et al. (2009) point out that many mentoring programmes (including those in the UK) do not pay attention to dispositions that nurture social justice. The notion of nurturing social justice is also approached by Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) who identify that some mentors need to engage in their own professional development and self-reflection about social justice before

supporting trainee teachers to develop a social justice stance towards their work. This we would argue aligns to cultural capital by which there is a development of knowledge and skills on which pedagogy are grounded.

Critical Pedagogies

Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) offer a useful frame by proposing a social justice approach to mentoring based on "good and just teaching". Good teaching can be identified as linked to social justice and reflects an essential purpose of teaching in a democratic society in which the teacher acts as an advocate for their students and supports students in undertaking work that supports wider efforts for social change. Their research also highlights social justice as an ambiguous concept that is widespread, but under-theorised and vague. In the next section we aim to contribute to addressing this under-theorisation by proposing a social justice mentoring model. The model is underpinned by the premise that "teaching is a profession with certain inalienable purposes, among them challenging the inequities in access and opportunity that curtail the freedom of some individuals and some groups to obtain a high quality education" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009, pp. 374–5) and should provide learners with choices. The model also rests on the premise that teachers should equip their students to have courage through a brave ideological drive to ensure equity for all, including marginalised groups that are often subordinated student populations, through developing a critical pedagogy which supports the flow of capital, for example, economic and cultural.

Towards a Social Justice Model of Mentoring

In constructing the theoretical framework earlier in the chapter we have argued that inequalities may be challenged by positioning mentors as agents for social change in the flow of capital, as identified in Fig. 15.1, and providing mentors and trainees with a space for critical pedagogies which work towards social justice. In this section, we propose a social

justice model of mentoring designed to empower mentors to enact social justice approaches and to contribute to the flows of pedagogical capital that may lead to trainee teacher, learner and community empowerment.

Mentor Role and Responsibilities

Our social justice model of mentoring positions mentors as advocates for social justice who model critical pedagogies and engage in relationships with trainees that are trusting, collaborative and democratic (Gardiner, 2011) and balance the asymmetrical power relationships in mentors' roles (Cherian, 2007). This can be aligned to notions of social capital as means to establish the flow of positive and democratic relationships. As advocates and role models for social justice, mentors should share their stance with trainees (Yendol-Hoppey et al., 2009) and challenge deficit views of learners held by colleagues in the FE and Skills environment. Adopting the mentor role and responsibilities outlined here is not simply a matter of adding further responsibilities but requires a fundamental reshaping of the role. The FE and skills mentor role as currently enacted, with its strong emphasis on assessment, sits uneasily with the collaborative democratic relationship required to foster social justice. Reconstructing the mentoring role in the way we advocate is necessary to provide the critical space for open dialogue and reflection, that is rarely available elsewhere in the Lifelong Learning sector teachers' working contexts.

Mentoring Support for Dispositional Change and the Development of Critical Pedagogies

Maxwell (2010, 2014) argues that mentors have a central role to play in facilitating a "pedagogy of the workplace" for trainee teachers. We advocate that this should incorporate: surfacing and through dialogic engagement challenging trainees' dispositions; supporting trainees to develop inclusive critical pedagogies; and enabling trainees to undertake roles as advocates and change agents. As Catapano (2006) argues, if trainees start

small, in their own teaching context, they will develop the confidence to become advocates for social justice in wider settings.

Supporting trainees to develop inclusive critical pedagogies, which open up spaces for critical reflection and dialogue, provides the opportunity to move from a competence-based model of curriculum design to a holistic approach based on care (Duckworth, 2013, 2014). Caring has both affective and cognitive dimensions. For example, cognition is necessary to understand the cycle of mentor, trainee, learner and community needs, feelings and circumstances. Caring also involves a range of feelings associated with empathy, sympathy, compassion and love. Trainees need to be equipped with inclusive language which challenges negative stereotypes, so they do not fall into using pedagogical approaches based on a deficit model of learning and teaching (Duckworth & Brzeski, 2015; Duckworth & Cochrane, 2012; Thomas, Bland, & Duckworth, 2012). Developing trainee teachers "pedagogical capital" also includes recognising and valuing learners' histories and biographies, so making diversity and difference a positive contribution to learning, rather than a challenge to be overcome. Pedagogical approaches may include facilitating the sharing of learners' experiences and strengths, for example, how they have overcome diversity issues, and valuing learner and community voice. This pedagogical model also facilitates the creativity which better enables learners to compete in the global economy.

We further argue that the development of a critical pedagogy should engage with global educational principles. As Power (2008, p. 47), drawing on Bleicher and Kirkwood-Tucker (2004), explains this includes "the multiple perspectives peoples and nations hold about the world; prevailing issues confronting the world community; ideas and practices of other cultures; the effects of technologies at local and global levels; and the problems posed by different life-choices that confront individuals and nations". Power's (2008) research demonstrates that an approach based on global educational principles can offer trainees insights into the diversity of learners' journeys into education and the impact of cultural identity and diversity, as well as developing empathy for the needs of others. Any pedagogical models developed should be underpinned by Cochran-Smith et al.'s (2009) notion of "good and just teaching", where teachers challenge inequality and are advocates for learners engaging in social

justice practices. As such there are opportunities to increase the flow of empowering capital, for example, cultural and symbolic, which offers a sharp lever for enriching the habitus and empowering the learner and their family and community.

How Can Higher Education Institution Led Training Enable a Social Justice Model of Teacher Mentoring?

Mentors will only be able to support trainees as advocates for social justice if they understand and are committed to advocating for social justice, know how it may be enacted and deploy critical pedagogies. Mentor training, situated in alternative critical spaces, is therefore crucial. Mentors also require ethical guidelines, for example, to offer clarity when navigating through critical incidences that may result in uncomfortable feelings and suppression of the incident rather than action (Shapira-Lischinsky, 2011). In settings and localities where the population is not diverse, teacher educators can provide both mentors and trainees with case studies to explore issues. We recommend that mentor training programmes consider embedding the following:

1. Developing mentors' understanding of:
    - (a) the role of inclusive pedagogical capital and habitus and the relationship between the mentor and the trainee teacher, learner and community empowerment and social justice—including the unique position of the mentor as a source of pedagogical capital; and
    - (b) how to use critical spaces and reflection tools to enable the mentor to gain a deeper awareness and understanding of pedagogical capital and social justice.
2. Developing mentors' awareness of, and attitudes towards, social justice, including recognising and valuing learners' histories and biographies and making diversity and difference a positive contribution to

learning. Mentor training may be supported by visits to diverse settings to gain deeper knowledge of other cultures and inclusive pedagogical approaches.
3. Supporting mentors to become role models for social justice, adopting "good and just teaching" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009) and confronting deficit views of learners amongst learning and skills sector colleagues.
4. Enabling mentors to actively engage in generating knowledge and social justice practice through action research. This enables mentors to be advocates for social justice, rather than passive recipients of a predetermined mentor training programme.

While HEI training programmes can play an important role in fostering social justice, alone they cannot be sufficient. The architecture for mentoring is a crucial enabling factor in taking forward a social justice model of mentoring. For mentors and trainees to make a difference requires social justice to be embedded within the system rather than an add-on. There needs to be recognition of the role of pedagogical inclusive capital and habitus in relation to social justice and how the flow of inclusive pedagogical capital can empower learners and their communities (see Fig. 15.1). Whereas Christman (2010, p. 114) argues that teacher educators "must go beyond merely teaching about social justice" since social justice has to "permeate their scholarship and mindset", we argue that this should apply to the whole ethos of FE and Skills institutions. Indeed, as Cherian (2007) and others have argued, successful mentorship is shaped by the context.

Conclusion and Wider Implications for Higher Education Institutions

Our modification of Bourdieu's sensitising tools have provided a framework to explore the flow or lack of flow of capital in the fields inhabited by agents of change, including trainee teachers, and how these flows shape their experiences in various aspects including pedagogy, social

justice capital and confidence. Most importantly, the flow of capital, which might mean gaining new capital and shedding old, has the potential to ultimately lead to a rupture in the habitus and, therefore, create the space for transformation in contradiction to a norm-imposed deterministic habitus. How best to achieve this rupture is the essence of transformative practice in the development of mentors and trainee teachers to be agents for social justice in their workplace and wider communities. Our literature suggests that this is currently not being addressed in FE and skills mentoring practice or research, or teacher mentoring practice more widely. Instead there is an overemphasis on a reductive flow of capital based on assessment of teaching, mentors and mentees are uncertain about their role and engage in a restricted dialogue which sidelines challenging inequality and empowering learners. Working conditions and practices offer mentors and trainees minimal space for criticality or the development of critical pedagogies that can facilitate the flow of empowering capital to learners taught by trainees and to the wider community. This lack of space for promoting social justice is particularly concerning as inequality within England is growing (Dorling, 2014).

Our international literature review, although narrowed by the evidence base, indicates that to embrace social justice mentors should: establish mentoring relationships that are collaborative, democratic and create spaces for open critical reflection; facilitate opportunities for trainees to experience different cultures from the perspectives of members of those cultures; act as social justice advocates; foster a passion for social justice; and support trainees in developing inclusive critical pedagogies. With this in mind and drawing upon the work of Bourdieu around the flow of capitals, we have proposed a model for social justice mentoring that is underpinned by a commitment to social justice and requires fundamental changes in mentoring roles. Trainees require support to enable them to recognise and change their dispositions and develop inclusive critical pedagogies. Mentors require training which includes raising their critical consciousnesses and developing their ability to model "good and just" teaching and act as change agents. Within this drive learners at all levels should be facilitated to navigate successful transitions into their (re) imagined futures (Atkins & Duckworth, 2019).

While the proposed model of mentoring and guidance for mentor training has been developed within the context of FE and skills, training and professional development for FE tutors is often undertaken within higher education contexts, and so this model has the potential to be used more widely across education sectors and beyond. This includes mentoring of both staff and students within HEIs.

Points for Discussion

From the perspective of a mentor, mentee or designer of mentor training programmes

- Reflect on your experiences, did you engage in (or design) any conversations or activities that fostered a social justice approach?
- What could have been done differently to foster social justice?
- Going forward, what changes will you make in future mentor/mentee relationships (or course design)?

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16

Conclusion

Clare Woolhouse and Laura J. Nicholson

The intention behind producing a text that covers a range of research addressing mentoring was to draw together key themes that emerge in relation to the pedagogy of mentoring and the potentials of peer learning that speak to the cross-disciplinary fields within higher education (HE). In this text, the authors have sought to offer discussion, often grounded within case studies and empirical research that frame some of the issues around the practice of mentoring within HE.

While the chapters within the text offer a wide variety of contexts, practices and approaches to learning, in one way or another many draw upon the idea of mentoring as forming a learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991), whether this is implicit or explicit. This is not just in terms of mentees, of course; Chap. 3 (Pye, Williams and Dunne) and Yale in Chap. 5 also explore the importance of training for mentors, who themselves can be framed as forming a learning community. Such an approach will be familiar to teacher educators since this has been a feature of education provision in the HE sector for a number of years, although such learning communities are more usually formed to develop peer support between students (Goodsell Love, 2012; Hanson & Heller 2009;

C. Woolhouse (✉) • L. J. Nicholson
Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK
e-mail: woolhouc@edgehill.ac.uk

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Smith & MacGregor, 2009). As demonstrated in Chaps. 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, this concept of a learning community is also relevant and useful for situations involving collegial peer support between professionals within HE settings even though this can be more challenging to enact (see Arthur, 2016). Academics engage not as the amateurs of Lave and Wenger's (1991) work, but as "knowledgeable participants who seek to enhance their already substantial knowledge and skills base" (Woolhouse, Albin-Clark, Shirley, & Webster, 2019, p. 5).

What has been demonstrated by the chapters, and particularly those with a focus upon mentoring for social justice, is that the development of peer learning communities between students or professionals can not only advance knowledge and skills but also create stronger relationships that offer emotional support and an "alternative framework for understanding the nature of contemporary higher education" as advocated by Tight (2004, p. 398). In response, many of the chapters contribute to a growing field of research that calls for ethical approaches to engaging in professional relationships and co-working within academic circles (see Ball, 2015; Duckworth, Lord, Dunne, Atkins, & Watmore, 2016; Tight, 2008). In doing so, the authors (re)conceptualise how research within the field of education can frame effective changes in practice through the lens of social justice.

In drawing out the congruences between the various chapters, a number of themes have emerged that recurred. These include flexible models of mentoring, the importance of time, the need to develop trusting and respectful relationships, and empowerment and giving voice to mentees. They will be discussed in turn below.

Flexible Models of Mentoring

One of the notable points made by the various authors was the need to be flexible and adapt mentoring approaches and pedagogies to fit the shifting contexts. For example, Ball and Hennessy in Chap. 2 propose a continuum of mentoring, while Ball-Smith in Chap. 7 looks at different mentor types. In both cases they highlight a range of different approaches that can be used for mentoring within the context of undergraduate study

in order to frame how mentoring can support effective professional student development. Peiser (Chap. 6) tackles a similar issue by comparing the different forms of mentoring undertaken within the fields of nursing, social work and teaching, arguing that the “linchpin” of the mentoring role is necessary theoretical expertise coupled with relevant pedagogical skills that can be passed on.

This need for flexibility seems particularly important for those working across national boundaries and/or with more rural communities. In Chap. 12, Allan, Anh and Le describe the implementation of the “CATALYST” mentoring model which involves a more changeable interpretation of mentor–mentee relationships as materialised over a three-year period in Vietnam and Laos. In their example, the inter-country facilitation of professional development became the impetus for adopting a fluid model of mentoring that could accommodate shifting roles of mentor/mentee and negotiate cross-cultural tensions that arose. While Chap. 12 describes countries that can be defined as “developing”, the recommendation to adapt mentoring to the needs and situation of the individuals involved is one that resonates with research from rural communities in countries framed as “developed”: for example, Bowen, Kable, and Keatinge’s (2019) work with nurses in rural Australia and Ernst and Erickson’s (2018) study of professional development for teachers in Wisconsin, USA. This alignment of the experiences of individuals in different types of national context offers a window into the social justice potential of mentoring pedagogies to break down barriers between people and is an approach that warrants further study.

Time

The need for adequate time is another recurring theme within the various chapters of this text. For example, Yale (Chap. 5) explores the role of personal tutoring as a form of mentoring and indicates the importance of resolving time pressures and uncertainty about availability. These concerns are more extensively considered in Stewart et al.’s chapter (Chap. 10) in which they study academic peer mentoring with doctoral students. They argue that time is a significant factor in the building of mentor/

mentee relationships and ultimately in the success of their study and therefore advocate the importance of appropriately scheduling time as part of the mentoring process. The need to create time for mentoring is furthered by Boehr et al. (Chap. 11) who emphasise the importance of having time to develop deeper connections with those they work with, time for reflection on how they are achieving their professional goals, and ensuring personal time to decompress and enjoy non-work activities. Finally, Lander and Nicholson's chapter (Chap. 13) demonstrates that a lack of time is problematic for teacher educators working within HE who are attempting to make the transition to academic researcher. Lander and Nicholson particularly note that having sufficient time to work collaboratively and develop their research skills with peers, under the mentorship of an experienced researcher, would significantly enhance their professional development.

In drawing together the chapters, it is clear that time is a theme that intercedes in different forms of mentoring whether it be between student peers, students and academics, or academic peers, and so Fulford's philosophical engagement with Marcel around the ethical implications relating to time and availability has been placed in the centre of this book as Chap. 9. Any academic working within (and against) the current neoliberal trend in HE (Ball, 2015, 2016) will engage with Fulford's treaty for appropriate time to be afforded to mentoring so that it can be entered into as a reciprocal relationship of presence rather than an instrumental exchange of knowledge and skills. Indeed, carving out adequate time within the working week to be present as mentor and/or mentee is an act of self-care and care for those around us (Adams-Hutcheson & Johnston, 2019), which leads us to the third key theme to emerge from the chapters in this text.

Trusting, Respectful Relationships

In comparing the various situated contexts covered in the chapters of the text, there is a demonstration of how personal histories, individual biographies and professional experiences need to be respected and valued as these will inform how individuals interact within the mentoring relationship.

This need to respect others in order to develop meaningful relationships is addressed in various ways in different chapters. In contrast to the philosophical approach taken by Fulford (Chap. 9), others have shared the findings of empirical work. Colvin and Ashman's work in the USA detailed in Chap. 4 explores the different types of relationships that can develop, and they argue that trust and credibility are an essential aspect underpinning effective student peer mentoring. In Chap. 12, Allan, Anh and Le detail their work in the UK, Laos and Vietnam to unpick the difficulties of building relationships across national boundaries and cultural differences, while Woolhouse and Nicholson (Chap. 14) outline the benefits of the relationships that develop between school-based teaching assistants involved in peer mentoring. Developing supportive relationships can be viewed as a central life skill that is not confined to work situations, but the importance of being able to trust others that we engage with in work contexts can be considered essential for educational and social justice aims (Donovan, 2019). Indeed, as noted by Lander and Nicholson in Chap. 13, strong relationships should be a central part of mentoring as this can lead to particular benefits for those who are perhaps perceived as "second class" within the workplace or indeed within society (e.g., marginalised groups such as black and minority ethnic academics; see Hsieh & Nguyen, 2019; Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan, & Wuetherick, 2017).

Empowerment and Foregrounding the Voice of Mentees

A related theme that emerged from the various chapters was the role played by mentors, or peer mentors, in supporting the empowering of mentees as they developed and shared their own voices. This was reflected in one of the explicit peer mentoring roles identified by Colvin and Ashman (Chap. 4), that of student advocate. The importance of this aspect of mentoring and how it helped students to feel confident to succeed independently was clearly acknowledged by the students in their study. In Chap. 11, Boehr et al. illustrate how a peer mentoring model

which had "listening to each other" as a key element was found to be a mutually empowering experience for all members of the group, facilitating personal and intellectual growth and enabling ultimate success in their various endeavours. Rodriguez-Cuadrado and Núñez Cortes, in Chap. 8, focus on writing tutorials as a specific example of mentoring within HE and demonstrate how tutors guide students to find their own voice, which allows successful integration into the academic discursive community. Also, in the discussion of the personal tutor–student relationship (Chap. 5), Yale explains that when students feel that they have been given a voice, they feel valued and empowered. Yale goes on to say that developing independent learners in this way helped to improve student satisfaction and retention, thereby broadening the reach of these benefits to the institution.

What has become apparent from the various discussions offered within this book is that many of those working within HE in different national contexts seek to meet Duckworth et al.'s (2016) call for education to be empowering and transformative, which Maxwell and Duckworth address further in Chap. 15. The authors request that academics maintain authentic voices by actively engaging in critical thinking within supportive learning communities that can challenge the performative culture that has become entrenched within HE (Ball, 2015). This position can be viewed as having particular relevance for those of us working on vocational courses such as teacher, nurse or social work training as these are professional fields where reflection upon practice and mentoring of colleagues is not just an aspect of formal education programmes but also a central tenet of professional development. Accordingly, we invite the reader to consider carefully the questions for discussion offered at the end of each chapter as a starting point for us to each consider our own experiences and practices. To conclude, we offer two final questions that we are reflecting upon:

- What forms of development and support could be offered to mentors/mentees in our own institutions?
- Can we identify spaces that can be opened up for discussion with colleagues within and across institutions to share what we are learning from being involved in mentoring relationships?

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Glossary

Continuing professional development (CPD) That is, of a practicing professional beyond the training period.

Department for Education (DfE) The government department responsible for all education policy in England.

Doctorate The highest postgraduate degree that can be awarded by a higher education institution (minimum duration of three years).

Early Career Framework (ECF) A new programme of continuing professional development for early career teachers in England in their first and second year of teaching, due to roll out nationally as a statutory entitlement from 2021. This follows on from the ITT Core Content Framework (see definition).

Early Career Researcher (ECR) This term is usually used to refer to academic staff within a higher education institution who are either studying for a Doctorate or are recently (within 5 years) completed one. They would be evaluated in a different way when competing for funding with more experienced researchers, and/or they often have access to funding sources specific to ECRs.

Epistemological research The study of what we know and how we know what we know. It adds to and explores academic knowledge.

Epistemology One of the core areas of philosophy. Concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge.

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Ethnography The study of individuals or groups in specific bounded settings. It explores how individuals understand, or make sense of, their social world and how these understandings develop and change.

Evaluative research Investigates the quality, importance, amount or value of something, e.g., research that studies how successfully a government policy such as Every Child Matters has been implemented in a school.

Examinations In England, compulsory school examinations consist of Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in primary education, General Certificates of Education (GCSEs) and Advanced Level qualifications (A-Level) at secondary level.

Further education (FE) Post-secondary education, for students 16 years and over, distinct to higher education. Provided by colleges or through apprentice schemes in the workplace.

HEFC Higher Education Funding Council for England was replaced by UK Research and Innovation and Office for Students. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributed public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges.

HEI teacher educator A university tutor who identifies a professional educator of teachers and training teachers. They are usually the personal supervisor of a group of trainee teachers

Higher education (HE) Education provided by higher education institutions, for students 18 years and over.

Higher education institution (HEI) The provider of tertiary education leading to an award of an academic degree beyond formal/compulsory education.

Initial Teacher Education/Training (ITE/ITT) The programme of learning undertaken by a professional student on a professional training programme for teaching. It is usually attached to gaining Qualified Teacher Status.

In-service Placement activity undertaken whilst being paid to qualify.

Interpretivism An approach that seeks to create theory from the identification of what exists and how things work without using preconceived ideas.

ITE provider An accredited provider of initial teacher education. To be accredited a provider must have been graded at least a Good (Grade 2) in its most recent Ofsted ITE inspection report.

ITT Core Content Framework A core curriculum framework listing the entitlement of training for all training teachers. This precedes the Early Career Framework (see definition).

K – 12 (kindergarten to 12th grade) An American expression that indicates the range of years of supported primary and secondary education found in the

United States, which is similar to publicly supported school grades prior to college in several other countries.

Key Stage These are stages of the state education system in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar setting the educational knowledge expected of students at various ages:Foundation (Up to Reception/Birth-5 year olds) – Pre-school/Nursery/Primary schoolKey Stage 1 (Years 1–2/5–7 year olds) – Primary schoolKey Stage 2 (Years 3–6/7–11 year olds) – Primary schoolKey Stage 3 (Years 7–9/11–14 year olds) – Secondary school (lower)Key Stage 4/GCSE (Years 10–11/14–16 year olds) – Secondary school (upper)After GCSEs, students can opt to enter Key Stage 5 and take A Levels (Years 12–13/16–18 years old).

Local Authority A local political unit that controls education in state funded schools that are not academies, private schools or free schools in England.

Master's degree A postgraduate academic degree usually of one-two years duration.

Mentor-type mapping Mentor-type mapping refers to the identification of the characteristics of different types of mentor, and the plotting of these types against different axes of mentoring influence.

Methodology A system of principles, practices and procedures applied to a specific branch of knowledge. The way in which information is found or something is done. It includes the approach taken to data, the methods, procedures, and techniques used to collect and analyse information and might include the gathering of case study data via tests, interviews or questionnaires. A methodology represents a package of practical ideas and proven practices for a given area of activity, such as the planning, design, development or management of educational research.

Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) A group of schools/academies that work as one unit, independently funded separately from the Local Authority in any one jurisdiction (England).

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) In England, this organisation inspects all nurseries, schools, and initial teacher training providers as well as other relevant courses, e.g., apprenticeships. All such learning organisations receive a quality grade for their provision from Grade 1 (outstanding) to Grade 4 (Unsatisfactory).

Partnership A professional relationship between a higher education institution and an organisation (often a school) involved in training a professional student, usually based upon mutually agreed professional principles relevant to that setting.

Pedagogy The study of the methods and activities of teaching.

Positivism An approach that starts with a theory of how something works and tests whether it is true.

Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE; 60 credits at Master's level) The most common academic award attached to a teacher training course in the UK.

Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE; 120 credits at Master's level) A less common academic award attached to a teacher training course in the UK.

Postgraduate student A student who has already obtained an undergraduate degree and is studying for a more advanced qualification.

Practitioner/action research Research that can be based on one's own teaching and which can help to inform and improve teaching practice.

Pre-service Status before qualification is awarded in a profession.

Primary/Secondary age phase In England, primary education refers to ages 4–11, secondary education refers to ages 11–16.

Professional mentor A qualified professional who undertakes the mentoring of a pre-service professional student in a host placement. The mentor may also assess the professional student in situ.

Professional placement Any period of time spent by a student on a professional qualification course in a setting where the appropriate professional standards are assessed by a suitably qualified practitioner and/or a university tutor.

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Awarded when an individual has successfully completed an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in education. QTS is required to undertake a teaching post within a school in England.

Research A detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding.

Research philosophy The theoretical framework or school of "thought" that research is grounded in, e.g., interpretivism.

Research school A school with the designated status of being a research school, undertaking pedagogical research and disseminating it to other schools within the region.

School Centred Initial Teacher Training course (SCITT) A Qualified Teacher Status training route which is based primarily in a school setting only.

School-based mentors A mentor in initial teacher training based in a school who coaches and mentors a professionally training pre-service student.

The National Student Survey (NSS) An annual survey, launched in 2005, and conducted with all final year undergraduate degree students at institutions in the UK.

Tri-partite mentoring The professional relationship between the professional student, their professional placement mentor and a university tutor whilst on placement.

Undergraduate student A student working towards a bachelor's (undergraduate) degree (in higher education).

University tutor A higher education institution tutor who monitors the progress of a professional student both academically and in professional placement.

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