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A Study of Mentoring in the Teach First Programme

by

David Cameron

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Abstract

Policy trends in initial teacher training (ITT) in England have increasingly located training in schools, where trainee teachers are supported by practicing teachers designated as 'mentors'. The nature of the mentoring that trainee teachers experience has been shown to be of critical importance, both to outcomes in the initial training period and also in terms of teachers' professional identity construction and retention within the profession. School-based mentoring has been typically characterised, however, as of variable or inconsistent quality.

Teach First is a teacher training programme with a number of features which set it apart from other routes into teaching. Teach First grows from and sits within the contemporary policy landscape of teacher training; the programme has a distinctive identity and is the focus of significant interest in the education sector in England and beyond. Teach First is an employment-based training programme and Teach First trainees are mentored by teachers as they work and train in schools; trainees also receive periodic support from tutors based in higher education training providers.

This study takes Teach First as a case study and adopts a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative analysis where appropriate. Empirical data is drawn from a multi-layered programme of surveys, focus group discussions and interviews. The study explores how those involved in Teach First mentoring conceptualize the process and how they perceive their role in supporting it. In addition, the study considers the extent to which Teach First mentoring can be considered distinctive.

The thesis presents a framework for understanding the mentoring process which is based on an extension of relevant theories of learning and models of mentoring. Empirical findings from the data lead to two propositions: firstly, that the mentoring process in initial teacher training is based on a triadic relationship, in which the relationship between supporters of mentoring is particularly important to its efficacy; secondly, that there is no programme-wide model for Teach First mentoring and, as a consequence, the distinctiveness of the Teach First programme is attenuated by the school-based mentoring process. This latter point has implications for both the nascent identity construction of Teach First teachers and also for how Teach First is perceived in relation to more mainstream teacher training programmes.

Acknowledgements

For my wife and for my son, with love.

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Abbreviations

AHT – Assistant Head Teacher

ANOVA – Analysis Of Variance

AST – Advanced Skills Teacher

ATS – Articled Teacher Scheme

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education

CATE – Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

CCCU – Canterbury Christ Church University (2005-date)

CCCUC – Canterbury Christ Church University College (1995-2005)

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

CUREE – Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education

DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007-2010)

DES – Department of Education and Science (1964-1992)

DFE – Department for Education (1992-1995)

DfE – Department for Education (2010-date)

DfEE – Department for Education and Employment (1995-2001)

DfES – Department for Education and Skills (2001-2007)

DRB – Designated Recommending Body

EAL – English as an Additional Language

EC – European Commission

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

GTP – Graduate Teacher Programme

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

ICT – Information Communication Technology

IDACI – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

LDO – Leadership Development Officer

LJMU – Liverpool John Moores University

MOSS – Mentors' Online Support System

MSD – Mentor Support and Development

NCSL – National College for School Leadership

NCTL – National College for Teaching and Leadership

NITTP – National Initial Teacher Training Partnership

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

NTU – Nottingham Trent University

PGCE – Postgraduate Certificate of Education

PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment

PTI – The Prince's Teaching Institute

PX – Policy Exchange

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

SAG – Schools Advisory Group

SCITT – School-Centred Initial Teacher Training

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SPLiC – Staff Participant Liaison Committee

TA – Teaching Agency

TDA – Training and Development Agency

TES – Times Educational Supplement

TFA – Teach First Ambassador

TTA – Teacher Training Agency

UCET – Universities Council for the Education of Teachers

UCU – University and College Union

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis is situated in the field of teacher development in England; specifically, it is focused on the process of mentoring trainee teachers within the context of the Teach First programme. Mentoring has been defined in various ways but perhaps most elegantly by Anderson and Shannon: 'a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development' (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). Recent policy trends have seen prospective teachers increasingly being trained in schools and classrooms, supported by more experienced teachers as their mentors. The nature and quality of the mentoring process has been identified as being of high, if not critical, importance to the outcome of a teacher's initial training and ongoing professional development, particularly with regard to the construction of teachers' professional identity (Hobson et al., 2009). Teach First is a teacher training route which trains a relatively small number of teachers in England each year yet holds a disproportionately large, and growing, presence in the policy landscape of the teaching profession. Teach First is a 'distinctly different' training route (Ofsted, 2008a), with a range of ideological, management and operational features which set it apart from mainstream routes into teaching; the programme has been running for just over ten years at the time of writing and is therefore relatively new, but the programme has established a level of maturation and a degree of permanence in the field of teacher training.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was to explore the mentoring process within the Teach First programme. The exact nature and focus of this exploration shifted and underwent a number of reiterations during the course of the research. Initially I sought to identify the factors, systems and tools that influence the development of the skills and knowledge-base that Teach First mentors require and draw upon. As my research progressed and I began to explore the field in more depth, I began to consider the role of other individuals within the mentoring process beyond the mentor and the trainee teacher. I explored how all those involved conceptualize mentoring and how they perceive their own role in supporting the mentoring process. I related these conceptualizations and perceptions back to a framework I developed for understanding mentoring in this context. This framework is an extension of existing theories of adult learning and various models of mentoring and is based on the proposition of a triadic relationship of mentor, trainee teacher and supporter. In this research I also explored the specific case of mentoring within the Teach First programme. Given the differences of Teach First to other teacher training programmes, I sought to understand what was distinctive about mentoring a Teach First trainee. In both cases I explored the relationship between the institutions and individuals involved in this partnership-based model of teacher training. Ultimately my research crystallised around the following questions:

1. What are the essential ingredients of an effective mentoring relationship in initial teacher training?
2. To what extent is mentoring in the Teach First teacher training programme a distinctive process?

<u>The significance of the study</u>

The last twenty years have seen the publication of a very large number of studies relating to mentoring, but not all have been focused on the field of teacher training and teacher development in England. Clutterbuck has explored mentoring extensively, highlighting the importance of mentoring to a wide range of fields and has given very full and rich definitions of what the activity of mentoring entails (Clutterbuck, 2004); however, this is set with the context of human resource development in the United States. Anderson and Shannon, as mentioned, have given a rich definition of mentoring and explored the importance of the relationship between the mentor and the individual being mentored, presenting the 'mentor-as-counsellor' model which has proved extremely valuable for conceptualizing mentoring as more than a process to meet statements of professional competence (Anderson & Shannon, 1988); once again, however, this study is set within the US context. Particularly since the 1990s, when teacher training providers were required to enhance their partnerships with schools and school-based mentoring, there have been a number of publications related to mentoring trainee teachers in the English context (Shaw, 1992; Turner & Bash, 1999; Fletcher, 2000). These are all very useful for understanding the process of mentoring but tend to be functional guides for practicing mentors in schools. For example, Shaw provides a model job description for school-based mentors, and Turner and Bash give very specific advice to mentors on giving feedback to and setting effective targets with trainee teachers. This literature is also focused on the dyadic relationship between mentor and trainee teacher, without explicit exploration of the role and influence of other individuals within the mentoring process (Edwards & Collinson, 1996; Arthur et al., 1997; Harrison, 2002).

The partnership model of teacher training, incorporating schools and more traditional higher education providers of training, has been the subject of a large number of publications over the last twenty years. These have often been produced in response to changes or proposed changes to teacher training policy, and focus on the institutional relationship between the partners (Dunne et al., 1996; Furlong et al., 1996; Taylor, 2008). Fewer have considered explicitly the implications of these partnership arrangements for the mentoring process.

Teach First has attracted a number of publications in the period the programme has been operational. Publications about Teach First usually fall into one of two categories. Some are critiques of the programme and focus on the implications of this model of teacher training for teaching and the teaching profession (Smart et al., 2009; Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010). These publications tend to suffer from a pre-formed ideological position which leads to automatic antagonism with many of the educational principles on which Teach First is based, and/or from a lack of 'insider' knowledge of

the programme (Merton, 1972), which leads to misrepresentation and oversimplification. The second category includes publications focused on the impact of Teach First. These tend to show that the programme has some positive, if limited, impact on pupil learning. However, these studies are either hedged with caveats to such an extent (Allen & Allnut, 2013), or of such questionable objectivity due the source of their commissioning funding (Hutchings et al., 2006a; Muijs et al., 2010), that the usefulness of the presented conclusions is drawn into doubt.

Few studies focused on the process of mentoring teachers take account of the partnership model of teacher training, considering the role of traditional training providers and tutors as well as trainee teachers and mentors within the mentoring process. No studies have been completed of the mentoring process within the Teach First programme specifically. I therefore believe this thesis will make a valid, significant and useful contribution to the field.

Overview of the research process

A review of the literature in the field suggested that the process of mentoring a trainee teacher can be conceptualized largely, although not exclusively, as a cognitivist learning process. Following from this, my research is constructed on cognitivist epistemological foundations. The methodology builds from this, incorporating a mixed-methods approach making use of both qualitative and quantitative data. I have taken Teach First as a case study, selected on the basis of its distinctive features as a teacher training programme and the relative scarcity of previous research focused upon it.

To ensure the internal consistency of the research, I developed a unique framework for conceptualizing the mentoring process against which each stage of analysis could be held. The validity and integrity of the research was supported by the multiple levels of the study: data was collected and analysed at a programme-level; at the group-level of trainee teachers, mentors and tutors; and at an individual level through a series of interviews with Teach First mentors. The emergent findings were considered against the context of the evolving teacher training policy landscape. This allowed a process of reiteration, cross-reference and triangulation to be undertaken at each stage of the research.

I completed this research over a number of years, during which not only my own professional circumstances but the Teach First programme itself underwent significant changes. I formally began the research project in February 2010 whilst employed in a role which supported the Teach First programme. Following a review of the field and an analysis of the Teach First programme documentation I administered a series of structured surveys to the Teach First mentors, trainee teachers and tutors in autumn 2010, the data from which was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This was followed by a series of focus group discussions with representatives from the same three groups in spring 2011. A number of mentors and tutors were engaged in a pilot mentor recognition project and a survey affording more open and detailed responses was administered to these two groups in summer 2011. Following the end of my role working with Teach

First in August 2011 my research underwent a hiatus; in the same period Teach First itself was undergoing a number of organisational changes. During this transition, I was able to reflect on my role as a researcher-practitioner. I completed the data collection in the spring of 2012 with a series of telephone interviews with eleven Teach First mentors. At various points during the research I was able to articulate my thinking through presentations at a number of national and international educational conferences; this process allowed me to revise and fine-tune some of the emergent findings.

<u>Chapter organization</u>

This thesis is organized into eleven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 consists of a review and analysis of policy trends in teacher training in England between 1984 and 2012, with a particular focus on the role of the school in teacher training. I outline the changes as articulated in government acts, circulars and papers, and consider the rationale for the policy trends through an examination of ongoing commentary from policy makers and policy critiques. This chapter also includes an examination of the challenge of achieving consistency in school-based teacher training; and of the use of international comparison as a tool for justifying policy decisions.

Chapter 3 reviews the Teach First programme. First, I outline the origins of the programme within a policy context and highlight the features of the programme which may be considered distinctive from other teacher training programmes. I consider the evidence of the impact of Teach First, and the aspects of the Teach First programme which have been subject to criticism. I also explore the mentoring process within Teach First, primarily with reference to internal programme documentation. This chapter also introduces the pilot Teach First mentor recognition framework, including its background and conceptual basis.

Chapter 4 focuses on the literature relevant to a conceptual understanding of mentoring. Following a consideration of elemental and holistic worldviews, I review behaviourist and cognitivist theories of learning. I use this review, including work-based and situated learning theories and andragogy, to develop a conceptual framework for mentoring which is deployed throughout this research. This framework draws from recent work on the architecture for mentoring, and encompasses and is consistent with the relevant theoretical traditions; I propose the image of a crucible as a possible analogy for the mentoring process.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodological approach taken in this research, including the epistemological foundations, the overall case study approach and the data collection and analysis strategies. I explain my strategy at each level of the research, starting with the analysis of Teach First programme documentation, each stage of the group-level analysis, and finally the interview series with eleven Teach First mentors. This chapter includes a consideration of my changing role as researcher during the research process, and a section on the ethics of the research.

Chapters 6 to 10 contain the analysis of empirical data collected for this research. Chapter 6 explores the articulation of the role of the mentor and the mentoring process within the Teach First programme documentation, and how this relates to the conceptual framework for mentoring. The documentation is compared with that from a similar teacher training route to consider the distinctiveness of the Teach First mentoring process. Chapter 7 reports on the analysis of data collected from the tutors who support the Teach First programme. A wide range of themes are explored, including the tutors' perception of the quality of Teach First mentoring, their role in supporting the mentoring process, and how the different elements of the programme achieve coordination. Chapter 8 provides an insight into the perception of the Teach First trainees, through their responses to a survey and in a focus group discussion. The trainees' conceptualizations of the mentoring process are analysed, and the roles and responsibilities of the mentors and tutors within that process explored. Chapter 9 turns to the Teach First mentors as a group, and analyses their sense of self-efficacy as mentors, and how distinctive they perceive mentoring a Teach First trainee to be.

Chapter 10 contains individual-level analysis, through a series of interviews with Teach First mentors. Following a description of how the interviews were organized, how the sample was selected and how the data was recorded, the chapter explores the mentors' perceptions of Teach First mentoring in depth. The chapter includes discussion of the diversity of approaches that mentors adopt across Teach First schools; how mentors perceive the tutor's role in supporting the mentoring process; the centrality of the school to the training programme; and the mentors' perceptions of Teach First, including the trainees, the programme and its mission to address educational disadvantage.

Chapter 11 draws all these findings together, answers the original research questions and makes explicit the knowledge that has been added to the field. The diverse perceptions of the mentoring process are reviewed and explained and the distinctiveness of Teach First within the mentoring process is evaluated. A number of implications and recommendations for practice for various groups are presented, including mentors, tutors and trainee teachers, programme managers and system leaders, and Teach First itself. This chapter continues the narrative of my role within the research process raised in Chapter 5 and considers the benefits and challenges that I experienced; areas for further study are suggested.

Definitions

Through the introduction I have deliberately tried to avoid the use of unnecessary jargon or acronyms which may be initially confusing. For the rest of the thesis, however, I will need to ensure that the terminology I use is consistent. In this field of study there are a number of words and terms which are used differently in different circumstances.

First, I will use the term 'teacher training' and 'initial teacher training' (or ITT) to describe the process and the period (usually one academic year) when a teacher undertakes the learning, training

or development required to reach qualified teacher status. Others will use the term 'initial teacher education' (ITE) or 'initial teacher development' (ITD), and I am aware that there are strongly-held views on why 'teacher training' can be considered a pejorative term for this process. However, as 'initial teacher training' is the term used in relevant policy statements and in the Teach First programme itself (as in, 'Teach First National Initial Teacher Training Partnership'), I will use this formulation.

Secondly, a teacher undertaking a period of initial training can have a similarly varied designation. Depending on the training programme, the context, the training provider and/or the author's personal preference, they can be a 'student teacher', 'trainee teacher', 'novice teacher' or 'beginning teacher'. Teach First specifically refers to these teachers as 'participants' rather than trainee or student teachers. In this research, I will refer to all teachers in these circumstances, including Teach First teachers, as 'trainee teachers', as this is the most commonly-understood phrasing for teachers engaged in employment-based training programmes, and also because 'participant' may lead to confusion with the participants in the research, which includes tutors and mentors.

Thirdly, the traditional institutions which provider teacher training can have a range of designations. These can be 'teacher training colleges' (although this is quite dated), universities, university colleges and so on. Teach First works with (at the time of the research) fourteen of these institutions, some of which are universities, some are university colleges, and some are designated as institutes within universities. I will use the term 'higher education institute training providers', abbreviated to 'HEI providers' and sometimes just 'HEIs' to encapsulate this group. It follows that the tutors who are employed by these institutions will be 'HEI tutors'.

Chapter 2 – Policy Review and Analysis, 1984-2012

<u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter I will review how government policy relating to teacher training in England developed in the period 1984-2012, with a particular focus on how initial teacher training (ITT) became increasingly located in a school context. I will consider the explicit rationales and justifications for this trend, and the implicit ideological constructions of teacher training and the professional identity of the teacher.

By focusing on documents produced by central government, there is a risk that any analysis would be biased towards a perception of centralization, standardization and compliance in delivery. I will therefore also outline the responses to these changes in teacher training from the education sector, and consider how policy changes may have had limited impact in practice.

The trend to locate ITT in schools continued through Conservative, Labour and Coalition governments. Whilst this continuity suggests a policy which transcends political divisions, it is nevertheless based on a particular construction of teaching and should not be considered ideologically neutral. It has been noted that 'an educational policy text is always underpinned by an ideological framework… [even if] the writer may not be aware of the ideological underpinning of their chosen policy prescriptions' (Scott, 2000, p.19).

Formal legislation such as Acts of Parliament and Circulars provide the detail of policy but do not give much information about the rationale and justifications for this policy; in addition to legislative and regulatory sources, therefore, I will examine the consultation documents, white and green papers, influential think tank reports and speeches by education ministers to unpick the rationales and implicit constructions behind stated policy.

A useful structure for examining these rationales and justifications is the notion of 'commonsense discourse' as a mechanism for positioning policy as obvious and entirely beneficent, to which no reasonable opposition or alternative can be made (Scott, 2000, pp.25,27). Scott provides the example of an Annual Report by the Chief Inspector to show how the construction of a commonsense discourse involves the exclusion of contradictory evidence or data, the marginalization of any opposition in the form of ideas or individuals and the construction, through syntactical and grammatical devices, of authority and certainty in its own argument (ibid., p.28).

Another mechanism for analysing the presentation of policy is that of 'political spectacle', which perceives policy-making as an artifice or display for public consumption for the purpose of political gain (Edelman, 1988). The elements of the spectacle include, firstly, 'symbolic language', including both emotional terms ('high standards', 'accountability', 'quality') and ambiguous data presented as certainties; secondly, 'casting political actors as leaders, allies and enemies' (Smith & Miller-Khan, 2004, pp.12-20).

Government policy towards ITT in England can be set within an historical trend going back at least to the 1970s, a trend towards greater accountability and increasing central government control. This takes place through a process of systemized inspection and allocation regimes and increasing the consistency of criteria for the delivery and assessment of teaching and ITT. The stated rationale for this process is the improvement of teaching quality and the educational outcomes of pupils.

Alongside this, the role of the school as preferred arena for ITT has increased; yet the nature of training delivered in schools (although, not the programmes themselves) has continued to be unsystematic, unregulated and unaccountable; characterized by variability in quality and outcomes. These trends and contradictions continued through the period 1984-2012.

Implicit within the changes in ITT is a wider ideological framework which constructs teaching as a craft, best developed through practical apprenticeship-style experience; a framework which does not regard education as an academic discipline and which envisages the future of the teaching profession through the prism of free-market ideas: specifically, flexibility within the labour force and the monetization of ITT. The 1988 Education Reform Act, whilst not referencing ITT directly, exemplifies this ideological framework. The Act introduced the National Curriculum and grant-maintained schools, gave central government more legal powers and reduced the ability of local authorities to set policy for schools (Great Britain, 1988); it has been defined as a milestone in direct government control of teaching and 'the culmination of a move initiated by the Department towards central direction and statutory control, particularly in curricular and assessment matters' (John, 1990, pp.31-32). In more general terms, the Act has been described as 'kick-starting a "quasi-market" in education' (Machin & Vignoles, 2006, p.3); a central aspect of the Act was to 'turn citizens into consumers' (Biesta, 2004). It has been argued that the consequences for the teaching profession were increased stress, value conflict and lower job satisfaction as the Act '[exerted] pressure for the remodelling, reskilling and change in the culture of teaching' (Webb & Vulliamy, 2006, p.6). This ultimately created a reduction in teacher morale, which leads to reduced retention, increased resignations and teacher shortages generally (Osborn et al., 2000; Constable et al., 2001; Smithers et al., 2012). The practical impact of this cultural change has been examined, showing the financial, reputational and psychological costs to trainee teachers and ITT providers (Griffiths & Jacklin, 1999). The changes rendered to the nature of teacher professionalism by the Education Reform Act were mediated by an enhanced culture of school and ITT inspection introduced with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The creation of Ofsted has been described as 'an unprecedented shift in relations between government and the educational establishment' (Exley & Ball, 2011, p.97).

1984-1992

Policy Narrative, Rationale and Response

In 1984 the Department of Education and Science issued Circular 3/84 (DES, 1984) which required all courses providing ITT to meet criteria administered by a new Council for the Accreditation of

Teacher Education (CATE) which comprised members from various institutions and fields relating to education, appointed by the Secretary of State in an individual rather than a representative capacity.

Circular 3/84 required ITT providers to collaborate with schools in a series of clearly defined areas. The word 'partnership' was not used, but instead 'co-operation between institutions, local authorities and schools'. This requirement included a stipulation that the training institution's staff should have recent and ongoing classroom experience. The consultation paper which preceded 3/84 outlined in more detail the proposed practical application:

> 'This will not be easy to achieve… training institutions should therefore now take steps… to ensure that there is sufficient recent teaching experience among relevant staff through, e.g., secondments, the use of joint teacher/tutor appointments and schemes of teacher/tutor exchange. The establishment of close links between training institutions and suitable schools in their vicinity will facilitate arrangements' (DES, 1983).

By giving preeminence to the value of classroom experience, the theoretical, research-based and academic elements of ITT facilitated by traditional higher-education institution (HEI) providers were ascribed lower value in the training of the teacher. The emphasis was placed on HEI providers to adapt to the requirement for recent and relevant practical experience amongst their staff.

The 1985 White Paper 'Better Schools' reiterated the government's desire to situate ITT in the classroom. The rationale for this was presented in terms of a commonsense discourse: the necessary features of a good teacher were asserted, a problematic situation which cannot be left untreated was described, and a 'self-apparent' solution outlined. Teachers need 'training and practice in classroom skills' and, whilst 'there is much excellent teaching in maintained schools,' it is asserted that 'a significant number of teachers are performing below the standard required to achieve the planned objectives of schools'. The evidence for this statement is authoritative 'HMI reports'. The solution is 'a more rigorous approach to initial teacher training' – the use of 'rigorous' is an example of symbolic language. This solution includes centralized approval (via CATE) of teacher training courses, all of which 'should include a substantial element of school experience and teaching practice'. The importance of the school-based element is such that 'in no case should qualified teacher status be awarded to a student whose practical classroom work is unsatisfactory'. Whilst acknowledging the existence of the HEI-based element, it is recommended that the tutors in these institutions 'should have recent successful experience of schoolteaching' (DES, 1985). Again, there was an implicit diminution of the value of HEI-based elements of ITT courses.

The implementation of policy into practice is a non-linear process which can lead to unintended consequences. Policy initiatives can be adapted to existing structures and accommodated within practices which are not decisively affected; or even contained and marginalized whilst paying lip-service to compliance (Scott, 2000, p.23).

The practical implication of Circular 3/84 has been examined with respect to seven providers of ITT. The study concluded that the level of substantive change was limited, as ITT institutions managed the impression that they presented to CATE inspectors in relation to the requirement to involve schools and teachers in the training: 'course elements and rationales would be re-written or re-named, "creative accountancy" would transform the calculation of hours in particular subjects and activities would be redefined to "count" in respect of important criteria' (Barton et al., 1992).

3/84 was succeeded by Circular 24/89, which solidified and systemized the policies introduced in 1984. CATE was reconstituted with revised criteria for the approval of ITT courses. 24/89 also took into account the National Curriculum introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988. The points in 3/84 relating to the role of schools in ITT were reiterated and moved forward. Schools and teachers were required to be involved in planning ITT courses, in the selection of trainees and in their supervision and assessment. The onus was placed on HEIs to make links with schools; draw up 'policy statements' outlining the roles of tutors, schools and school-based trainers; ensure the quality of school-based trainers; and ensure that, by 1992-93, their own tutors has recent teaching experience – the minimum was specified as 'one term in every five years'. 24/89 also set out a minimum time of 75 days, or 15 weeks, that trainees should spend in schools (the exception was for four-year consecutive courses, where the requirement was 100 days) (DES, 1989).

On 27 January 1989 the Secretary of State for Education announced a new route for ITT, the Articled Teacher Scheme (ATS) (Baker, 1989). The first cohorts began training in 1990 and the scheme ran until 1994. The ATS was a two-year course in which 'articled teachers' spent 80% of their time in schools. The rationale given was based on a conceptualization of teaching as a vocation and the merits of training through an apprenticeship model, including financial benefits to the trainees. Baker argued that the ATS allowed trainee teachers 'to go straight into a school and be trained on the job… I believe that will be very attractive… [they] will receive salaries while they are training' (Hansard, 1989) (my emphasis).

The 1989 Elton Report was focused on pupil behaviour and discipline in schools but made some important recommendations relating to ITT. The importance of school involvement in ITT was emphasized, due to the relevance of the experience gained in managing pupil behaviour. ITT courses should include 'compulsory and clearly identifiable elements dealing in specific and practical terms with group management skills'; 'teaching practice should be systematically used to consolidate these skills'; schools 'have an important part to play in preparing trainee teachers to manage their classes effectively'. The Elton Report also reiterated the requirements of 3/84 that HEI-based tutors must have recent classroom experience. Those who had 'not taught full-time in schools for many years' were considered deficient and it was recommended that these tutors should 'refresh and refine their own classroom skills' (Elton, 1989).

The trend to locate ITT in schools and away from HEI providers now seemed to accelerate; the culture and authority of training providers was attacked and the commonsense rationale of the

'relevance' of classroom-based ITT was reiterated. A speech by the Secretary of State at the North of England Education Conference in January 1992 presented a pejorative spectacle of traditional HEI-based ITT promoting 'dogmas about teaching methods and classroom organization'; he argued that there should be a 'much closer partnership between the school and the teacher training institutions' in which 'schools and its teachers are in the lead in the whole of the training process, from initial design of a course right through to the assessment … of the student', and that teacher training must be 'fully relevant to classroom practice' (Clarke, 1992).

Analysis of education policy in this period often makes a link between policy decisions and politically affiliated think tanks and pressure groups, claiming that 'the government's diagnosis of the problem has been heavily influenced by the criticisms of teacher education expressed by the new right' (Blake, 1993); 'ideological pressure, particularly from the New Right, pushed policy development towards workplace-based training for new teachers' (McBride, 1996, p.10). Indeed, in early 1992 the Department of Education and Science issued a consultation document on further reform to ITT which proposed that '80% of the secondary PGCE [Postgraduate Certificate of Education] will be school-based', and that 'resources for teacher training will move from higher education to schools' (DES, 1992) – a proposal which would have represented a radical change.

However, the full vision of the New Right (O'Hear, 1988; Hillgate Group, 1989; Lawlor, 1990) was not realized; ITT did not become entirely school-based and ITT tutors working in HEI providers were not driven back to classroom teaching. The new regulations introduced in Circular 9/92 required a significant portion of a students' training to take place in school (24 weeks in a PGCE and 32 weeks in a B.Ed.), an increase from the 15 weeks of 24/89, but substantially lower than the 80% envisaged in the consultation document (DFE, 1992).

Crucially, the 1992 General Election fell between the release of the 1992 consultation document and the publication of 9/92; following the election there was a natural period of hiatus as a new Secretary of State for Education was appointed. Perhaps more importantly, there were indications in 1991-1992 of a growing recognition that the wholesale shift of ITT into schools was logistically unrealistic.

In 1991 Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) published a report into school-based ITT. The report stated that the principle of school-based training 'is sound and can be put into practice effectively', yet highlighted a number of issues to be considered before 'there is a general increase in the involvement of schools'. These included: the inappropriate nature of some schools and teachers for working with trainee teachers; the lack of training for school-based trainers; and the lack of direct resourcing for schools for training teachers – 'any significant increase in training responsibilities would require clear definition of the respective functions of the higher education institutions and the schools and appropriate provision of resources.' The report noted that the expertise provided by HEIs is 'crucial' and that there is 'no straightforward and cost-effective way of devolving these

functions successfully to a large number of schools', the prime purpose of which is 'to teach pupils, not train students' (HMI, 1991).

In 1992 Ofsted published a report on the first two years of the ATS. It noted that training was most successful where 'in- and out-of-school training experiences were designed to inform and build on each other'; and where 'mentors were well chosen and suitably trained'. The report stated that the quality of ITT on the ATS was more inconsistent than on the traditional PGCE routes and that weaknesses were apparent from poor school placements, badly designed training and insufficient attention to monitoring and evaluation, particularly in schools (Ofsted, 1992).

A tension therefore existed between the bodies tasked with monitoring the quality of teacher training (HMI/Ofsted) and policy makers; the contradiction of locating ITT in schools in ever-greater numbers, where the capacity for facilitating effective training was variable, was becoming apparent.

Circular 9/92 strengthened the requirements for HEI providers to form partnerships with schools, setting out the duties of both partners in ITT. Schools and HEIs had a 'joint responsibility for the planning and management of courses and the selection, training and assessment of students'. The areas of responsibility were delineated: schools should lead on training and the assessment of trainees, whereas HEIs should oversee course validation, awarding qualifications and arranging placements. 9/92 also established a framework of 27 defined 'competences' for ITT which trainees were required to meet and emphasized the importance of developing the trainees' subject knowledge, in light of the still-recent National Curriculum (DFE, 1992).

The reforms leading up to and including 9/92 were widely criticized in the education sector, particularly by those based in HEIs. The Conservative government was considered to be engaging in an ideologically-driven attack on traditional providers of ITT. The language used was highly charged; Gilroy labelled the reforms a 'political rape', and sees the 1980s as characterized by 'an ill-informed campaign against those involved in initial teacher education' (Gilroy, 1992). Furlong stated that Conservative reforms to ITT in the 1980s and 1990s were: 'based on both neo-liberal and neo-conservative principles'; that government believed teachers were 'wedded to outmoded, left-wing, collectivist ideologies… hostile to market principles'; and that reforms to ITT were required to 'raise a generation of teachers who would support the new Conservative world' (Furlong, 2005). Whitty puts the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s down to 'an intellectual critique of public sector management on the part of neo-liberals and public choice theorists' (Whitty, 2005b). David Blake identified three strands in government policy up to 1992: the 'provision of a market in initial teacher education'; 'central control' and supervision of teacher education; and 'the drive to make training more school-based' (Blake, 1993). Each of these strands was described as 'conceptually flawed'. Hagger and McIntyre conclude that 'the thinking behind the 1992 decision… was in part… an opposition to what were rightly seen as egalitarian, inclusivist, progressive and multicultural emphases in university teacher education courses' (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006).

Overall, the early 1990s has been seen as one of tumultuous change and reform in education policy. Barber called it a 'cultural revolution' and 'the brief but disastrous era of free-market Stalinism' (Barber, 1994). Circular 9/92 is seen as a major turning point in the development of teacher training. Arthur et al., with reference to the competences framework for teacher training, stated that 'an entirely new concept was introduced to ITE in England and Wales' in 1992 (Arthur et al., 1997).

Although the changes introduced in 9/92 were scaled back from those initially proposed, doubts remained about the effective operation of school-HEI partnerships in ITT. The demand for more and longer high-quality school-based training placements (which were the responsibility of the HEI to secure for trainees – schools themselves were under no obligation to offer placements) after 1992 led to pressure on the supply of such placements. In 1993-94, 51% of HEIs reported difficulty in securing placements for their trainees; in 1994-95 this figure had risen to 71% (Whitehead et al., 1996). Similarly, Ofsted reported that 'in some areas of the country, and in some shortage subjects, HEIs experienced difficulty in finding sufficient good-quality departments in which to place students' (Ofsted, 1995).

The financial viability of a policy which shifted the bulk of ITT into schools was also questioned. 9/92 stipulated a transfer of funds for ITT from HEIs to compensate schools for the increased partnership role, without ever stating precisely the form or level of this provision. It was soon apparent that, 'as the complexities and constraints of having to provide such mentoring is becoming recognized, many schools are calculating the costs, and questioning the cost-effectiveness of involvement' (Evans et al., 1996). In an article for the Times Educational Supplement (TES) Furlong discussed what he called the 'diseconomies of scale' implied by school-based ITT (Furlong, 1993). Blake described the funding arrangements as 'muddle and confusion', with some schools 'threatening to withdraw from the scheme altogether unless they receive substantially more money' (Blake, 1993). Whilst 9/92 called for increased funding for schools, in practice 'the sums on offer were seen as derisory' (Arthur et al., 1997).

A 1994 survey of schools involved with the new demands of ITT suggested that insufficient resources (both time and money) were being provided to effectively train teachers in schools. 91.7% of school-based ITT coordinators either agreed or strongly agreed that the new responsibilities placed on schools had led to an increase in both their workload and the pressure they were under (Whitehead et al., 1996). Concerns were raised about how schools would manage the increase in responsibility required by Circular 9/92. Edwards stated that 'there is almost complete agreement that the Government's initial timetable would be unworkable even if schools were not coping simultaneously with unprecedented changes in their funding, organisation and curriculum' (Edwards, 1992).

Between 1992 and 2010 ITT policy in England continued to focus on the accountability and quality assurance of training provision and building 'stronger partnerships' between HEI providers and schools. This was the case with both Conservative (1992-97) and Labour (1997-2010) governments. Following the end of the ATS in 1994 this period saw the establishment and expansion of ITT routes based almost entirely in schools: the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT).

In 1993 a consultation document was issued proposing further reform to ITT. The main proposal was the creation of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and reference was also given to a new 'scheme for encouraging consortia of schools to offer postgraduate courses' in teacher training. The consultation document referred back to the requirements for school-HEI partnerships set out in Circular 9/92 and stated that the government 'believes that the case for training through partnerships is now well accepted' (DFE, 1993). Rather than an explicit rationale or justification, there is the presentation of a steady ideological accretion having taken place and the proposed policy is presented in a way which 'restricts and constrains the reader from understanding the world in any other way'; the author is presented as the 'neutral arbiter… above the fray which he reports, rather than part of it' (Scott, 2000, pp.27, 29).

Policy Narrative, Rationale and Response

The 1994 Education Act introduced the TTA to replace CATE; in addition to the responsibilities which CATE held, including the accreditation of ITT providers' provision, the TTA would have 'statutory responsibility for the central funding of all courses of initial teacher training in England' (DFE, 1993). Three of the statutory objectives of the TTA related to the quality and standards of teaching and the fourth was to 'secure the involvement of schools in all courses and programmes for the initial training of school teachers' (Great Britain, 1994); the use of the terms 'secure' and 'all courses and programmes' makes clear how the role of schools in ITT was considered essential and currently insufficient.

The creation of the TTA separated the funding of ITT from that of traditional higher education and 'the funding of the Higher Education Funding Council for England will be adjusted accordingly' (DFE, 1993). The Education Act 1994 gave statutory power to school governing bodies to provide courses of initial teacher training for graduates; this was to become known as 'School-Centred Initial Teacher Training' (SCITT). The Education Act 2005 (under the Labour government) developed this trend by repealing the requirement that 'courses… so provided shall be open only to persons holding a degree or equivalent…' (Great Britain, 2005). The traditional notion of a one-year postgraduate-level course of ITT, located in and managed by HEIs, was being eroded.

Reforms to ITT were undermining the definition of education as an academic discipline and reshaping the professional profile of teaching as a craft which required practical experience to

achieve expertise. This process places education within a wider, free-market Weltanschauung, where autonomy and competition are considered essential mechanisms for success and teachers are the agents of those mechanisms. The creation of the TTA has been described as representing 'a preoccupation with increasing the competitiveness of United Kingdom plc in the global economy', reflected in an urgent ambition to raise education standards through 'reconstructing the teacher' (Mahoney & Hextall, 1997). This framework can be detected within the educational reforms and policies of both Conservative and Labour governments during the 1980s and 1990s, and features strongly in the Coalition government's ongoing programme to reform school governance systems. Academies and similar autonomous institutions (free schools, university technical college and studio schools) were recently given the 'freedom' to recruit unqualified teachers as they felt necessary, which 'additional flexibility will help schools improve faster' (DfE, 2012c).

There was little change in the direction of ITT policy with the election of the Labour Government in May 1997. 'The transition was seamless and those in higher education who had anticipated that a change of administration would lead to a reduction in government control were disappointed' (Furlong, 2005). The preponderance of continuity over change in education policy shows how 'contemporary educational change is incremental in nature and rarely abrupt or radical (despite change of governments)' (Welch & Mahony, 2000).

In July 1997 new requirements for ITT were published in Circular 10/97. Revised 'Standards' for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) were laid out, replacing the 'competences' set out in 9/92. An ITT curriculum for primary-phase English and Mathematics was included, as well as 'more detailed requirements for partnership and quality assurance arrangements… to facilitate effective working relationships between providers, schools and colleges' (DFEE, 1997b). These partnerships would require schools to be 'fully and actively involved in the planning and delivery of ITT, as well as in the selection and final assessment of trainees'. The delineation of roles in 9/92 was therefore removed. The onus was placed on HEIs to ensure the quality of the partnership, including a requirement to provide 'extra support' where schools fell short of the criteria required for effective training. The amount of time trainees were to spend in schools was unchanged from 9/92.

The Labour government's first education White Paper was also published in July 1997 ('Excellence in Schools') and included a commonsense rationale and justification for Circular 10/97 and other proposed reforms:

> 'Teaching: high status, high standards. Good teaching is the key to high standards… The Government has an obligation to ensure that trainee teachers, new entrants to the profession and those already in teaching have the training and support they need to raise standards' (DFEE, 1997a, p.45).

A simple set of assertions make links between the proposals and the unimpeachable ambition of 'high standards'. The terms 'raising standards' and 'high standards' are common examples of

emotional language which, without clear definition of what these are and how they are to be achieved and measured, are nearly meaningless:

> 'Most countries… are operating on the premise that the challenge is to reform education to do better… to improve… to raise standards. And people say we have to raise standards as if it is a breakthrough. Why would you lower them?' (Robinson, 2008, p.6).

'Excellence in Schools' proposed to 'strengthen existing partnerships between schools and higher education training institutions to ensure that teacher training is firmly rooted in the best classroom practice', thus Labour policy continued the trend to locate ITT in schools with an implicit conception of teaching as a practical craft (DFEE, 1997a, p.47). An addition proposal was for particularly good schools to become 'Laboratory Schools', modelled on the system of teaching hospitals, where ITT and continuing professional development (CPD) would take place through demonstration lessons, and these lessons shared through 'distance learning via video-conference, or other technology' (ibid.). This was the first explicit reference in policy to schools acting as centres for the training of teachers on the basis of their merit in teaching pupils, without any reference to HEIs or other ITT providers. This proposal was implemented in a limited form with the subsequent introduction of Training Schools and can be seen as an ideological precursor to the Teaching Schools network introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 (see below).

'Excellence in Schools' also proposed the new career grade of 'advanced skills teacher' (AST). The intention was for these teachers to 'mentor trainees and newly qualified teachers during a scholarship term' (Baty & Richards, 1997), and government would 'urge higher education institutions that work in partnership with their schools to consider making advanced skills teachers associate fellows or professors to enhance their participation in initial teacher training' (DFEE, 1997a). Thus the AST role was initially conceived as focusing on developing the capacity of schools to lead ITT and to take a more dominant role in the school-HEI partnership. There is an assumption implicit in this proposal that the expertise of a classroom practitioner is comparable with that of a university fellow or professor; and that the teacher training provided by an AST, with their direct experience of the classroom, is preferable to that of a tutor based in a college or university. This proposal was a reflection of those in the 1980s and early-1990s to move teacher training away from the 'dogmas' propagated in teacher training institutions.

Later guidelines, however, state that the 'distinctive function of the AST grade is to provide pedagogic leadership within their own and in other schools driving forward improvements and raising standards in teaching and learning' (DCSF, 2009). In these guidelines, no reference is made to ASTs having a role in ITT or in the mentoring of trainee teachers. The AST career grade has since been discontinued, following the report of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB, 2012, p.46).

Employment-based ITT – where teachers are employed by the schools where they are training – was established in 1998 with the 'Graduate Teacher Programme' (GTP). In many ways this was a revival of the ATS except that, whereas the ATS was a two-year course in which the trainee spent a

significant minority of time (20%) in a HEI, the GTP was a one-year ITT route based entirely in a school. The school employed the trainee, paid them a salary as an unqualified teacher and only a very few days (for example, six across the year) were designated for HEI-led training.

The introduction of this route to QTS was justified as 'a high-quality and cost-effective route into the teaching profession for suitable graduates who do not want to follow a traditional pre-service route, such as the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)'; it was intended to attract 'career-changers' into teaching who would not be able or willing to spend a year without a salary and as such was initially restricted to graduates over 24 years old (although this restriction was soon removed to avoid breaching EU anti-discrimination law) (Foster, 2001). The scheme struggled, at least initially, to engage sufficient numbers of schools. A report published in early 1999 suggested over 9,500 enquiries had been received by the TTA, but only 620 schools had expressed interest in hosting a GTP trainee (TTA, 1999).

The 'Laboratory Schools' proposal was revised into that of the 'Training School' in the 1998 Green Paper 'Teachers: meeting the challenge of change', which proposed 'a network of schools to pioneer innovative practice in school-led teacher training'. The rationale was an assertion that 'standards of training vary widely at institutions… further change is needed to ensure that all new teachers start their careers having mastered the knowledge and skills they need' (DFEE, 1998, pp.45-46). This rationale is based on the assumption that 'mastery' (in a craft rather than academic sense) of knowledge and skills for teaching is always more efficacious in a school-based setting than in a HEI-based course of 'variable quality'.

Training Schools were initially funded £100,000 a year to develop their teaching expertise into school-based ITT provision and disseminate good practice to other schools. Later reviews of the scheme identified many positive results but conceded that wider impact outside the individual school was limited (Ofsted, 2003). Observers noted the 'capacity of an ever-expanding number of Training Schools to alter the dynamics of partnership and disrupt the status quo' (Brooks, 2006); however, government simultaneously reaffirmed the role of HEIs in ITT, stating that the Training Schools scheme aimed to 'strengthen existing partnerships' (DFEE, 1999). By 2010 there were 214 Training Schools (TDA, 2010).

The requirements for ITT courses underwent a series of reiterations in 1998, 2002 and 2008. In 1998 and 2002, providers were required to 'work in partnership with schools and actively involve them in: planning and delivering initial teacher training; selecting trainee teachers; assessing trainee teachers for Qualified Teacher Status' (DFES, 2002). Providers were required to set up partnership agreements making clear each partner's role and responsibility and to ensure the training delivered by each partner was coordinated. The 2008 Requirements do not state categorically that training providers should work with schools but rather with a range of possible providers; as suggested in the 1993 consultation document, the practice and model of partnership had become widely accepted and was now assumed. The 2008 Requirements instead state more simply that 'partners should establish

a partnership agreement' and that these partners should 'work together to contribute to the selection, training and assessment' of trainees' (TDA, 2008). The number of weeks required to be spent training in schools was unchanged from 9/92.

Analysis: the challenge of achieving consistency in school-based ITT

The period 1992-2010 therefore saw the continuation of the trend to increasingly locate ITT in schools and a diversification of routes to QTS. Implicit in the policy statements of governments in this period was the axiom that schools are an essential locale for ITT due to the assumed quality and relevance of the training experience they provide. However, the tension between this trend and the capacity of the schools system to provide consistently high quality ITT on a large scale remained apparent.

The obvious cause of this problem was the sheer number of potential providers should ITT be entirely devolved to the level of individual schools; it was to mitigate against this that the seemingly counter-intuitive situation arose, where all teacher training continued to be linked back to a HEI provider for validation, and in many cases these providers remained accountable to the inspectorate for the quality of the training delivered in schools. For example, schools involved in the GTP were required to make a link with a HEI provider to act as the 'Designated Recommending Body' (DRB) in order to make a recommendation of QTS for each trainee teacher. Another factor in this problem was the lack of engagement from schools to engage wholesale in ITT. A specific project was trialed to attract maths and science graduates into employment-based teacher training. With a target of 600 placements, only 100 were achieved; the project was subsequently scrapped (Mansell, 2000).

Following a comparison of ITT administered by HEIs with ITT led by school consortia, Evans et al. concluded that the 'single most important factor' limiting schools' involvement in ITT was a lack of resources, both time and money. With reference to the measures introduced in Circular 9/92, 'like so many other recent educational reforms, the practicalities of implementing them were not properly thought out'. A clear provision of incremental mentor training leading to recognized qualifications was recommended as a significant component of quality assurance; in addition, that 'common, agreed mentoring payments' should be organised and schools receive funds based on the schools' 'level of mentoring accreditation' as well as other contextual factors (Evans et al., 1996).

With ITT increasingly focused in schools, the role of the school-based mentor became a central element of the ITT experience. The quality of mentoring provision in schools has been identified as a significant factor in ITT outcomes, to the point that a lack of effective support from school mentors in the initial training year is the most commonly cited reason for teacher wastage amongst both trainee and early career teachers (Hobson et al., 2009, p.243). The correlation between the quality of mentoring and the quality of the new teachers has been reiterated by Ofsted: 'Trainee's competence depends very much on their experience in partnership schools... even the best [HEI] providers could not compensate fully for weaker input from schools' (House of Commons, 2010b, p.243).

However, studies of ITT in England in this period show that mentoring is consistently the most variable element in the quality of ITT programmes (Wang & Odell, 2002; Hobson et al., 2005; Hutchings et al., 2006a). A study by a centre-left think tank criticized the inconsistent quality of ITT, and noted that 'not enough policy attention is given to the role of school-based mentors. There is poor retention and recruitment of mentors, which impacts significantly on quality of training of new teachers. This may be partly because the position is often under-funded in schools' (Margo et al., 2008). Recent Ofsted inspections of ITT providers, even those graded as 'Outstanding' overall, nearly all note the need to improve the quality and consistency of mentoring provision[1], and generally that there is 'more outstanding initial teacher education delivered by higher education-led partnerships than by school-centred initial teacher training partnerships and employment-based routes' (Ofsted, 2010).

A recent parliamentary select committee report into ITT confirmed that mentoring generally is of 'variable quality'. The report recommended that Ofsted only grant schools an 'outstanding' grade if the school was participating in an ITT partnership; and that schools should 'receive a more appropriate share of the resources than they do at present'. It also recommended that school mentors should have a minimum level of teaching experience and that mentoring should be embedded into the framework for teachers' career progression. High-quality mentors should have access to a 'clinical practitioner' grade, and be associated with HEIs. This report therefore identified (and attempted to resolve) many of the issues and contradictions of locating ITT increasingly within schools (House of Commons, 2010a, pp.30-33).

<u>2010-2012</u>

The formation of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in May 2010 introduced a period which saw many previous education initiatives abolished, overhauled or de-prioritised and the introduction of a new dynamic in education policy making; however, there was more continuity than change in policy towards ITT and although policy was in some cases more explicitly articulated, the underlying presumptions concerning the teaching profession and how teachers learn to teach remained the same.

Policy Narrative, Rationale and Response

Coalition policy relating to teacher training was comprehensively previewed in a report by the right-wing think tank Policy Exchange (PX), 'More Good Teachers' (Freedman et al., 2008), the lead author of which became a special adviser to the Secretary of State for Education after May 2010. In contrast to the relationship between think tanks and policy makers in the early 1990s, this PX report

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[1] See, for example, the ITT inspections of the University of Warwick (May 2010); Canterbury Christ Church University (May 2010); the Institute of Education, London (May 2010); Kings College, London (March 2010); Birmingham City University (March 2010); Northumbria University (April 2009), all available at ofsted.gov.uk

was a very apparent example of influence over policy making, where the organizations, individuals and 'gateways' developing ideological thought are part of a widespread and interconnected network: 'Ideas in speeches and policy documents are the same ideas flowing through organisations within the network. They are spread and reinforced by the network, feeding into normative shifts in the media and public mind' (Exley & Ball, 2011). The PX report outlines an explicit conceptual framework for teaching:

> 'Over the past 30 years there has been a reluctant acceptance that practical, competence-based training is more valuable than theory. At the beginning of their careers, new teachers need to acquire the craft of managing classrooms so that their pupils learn effectively. This is not achieved through the acquisition of abstract knowledge in a seminar room; it is gained through apprentice-style training in classrooms' (Freedman et al., 2008, p.26).

Teaching is defined as a 'craft'; the process of training which is most appropriate is an 'apprentice-style' model; the model of academic teacher training is denigrated as 'abstract knowledge in a seminar room' with an implication of irrelevance. The trend towards school-based ITT has been achieved in the face of 'reluctant acceptance', modeling opponents to this trend as out-of-touch and marginal to the debate about ITT. This is a central feature of the use of commonsense discourse in policy documents (Scott, 2000, p.32).

'More Good Teachers' closely informed the proposals for ITT in the 2010 Schools White Paper, 'The Importance of Teaching'. The White Paper states that 'too little teacher training takes place on the job', so 'we will reform initial teacher training so that more training is on the job'. The phrase 'on the job' echoes that used by Baker in 1989 to introduce the ATS, and is redolent of teaching as a vocational, rather than professional, career. There is a stated aim to 'raise the quality of new entrants to the profession', by removing government funding for post-graduate ITT for those with a third-class degree. School-based ITT routes are to be expanded and improved, and 'our strongest schools will take the lead and trainees will be able to develop their skills, learning from the best teachers'. A national network of Teaching Schools was proposed, to act as 'outstanding models' for both ITT and CPD (DfE, 2010a, pp.19-20).

Analysis: the use of international comparison in ITT policy

The White Paper was published alongside a companion document, 'The Case for Change', in which the preoccupations of policy makers can be detected. International comparisons, based on pupil achievement in Finland, Singapore, South Korea and Shanghai as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), are cited to support the policy proposals. 'The evidence is clear. It is possible to have an education system in which many more young people achieve highly than in the past or the present' (DfE, 2010b, p.2).

The use of comparisons across different educational systems as a valid tool for policy making has been challenged. It has been argued that the educational outcomes of different systems are a result of

a variety of social, cultural and political factors, many of which are not applicable, relevant or possible within the English context. For example:

> 'Finland's high achievement seems to be attributable to a whole network of interrelated factors, in which students' own areas of interest and leisure activities, the learning opportunities provided by schools, parental support and involvement as well as social and cultural contexts of learning and of the whole education system combine with each other' (Välijärvi et al., 2002, p.46).

It has also been suggested that Finland's high position in PISA had as much to do with historical and sociological factors, looking back as far as the turbulent period of 1917-18, as to decisions of policy.

> 'First, a somehow archaic, authoritarian but also collective culture prevails, secondly there is some social trust and appreciation of teachers, third, there is a tendency towards political and pedagogical conservativeness among teachers, and finally, teachers are relatively satisfied with and committed to their teaching' (Simola, 2005, p.465).

Finnish classrooms are very different places to those in England. A 'well-organised and effective special education system' removes the lowest-ability pupils from the mainstream; alongside 'a certain cultural homogeneity in most Finnish classrooms', this has the effect of 'unifying and harmonizing the groups taught by the classroom teacher' (ibid.). This is quite different to the typical classroom in England where, like in most of the rest of Europe, 'classrooms now contain a more heterogeneous mix of young people from different backgrounds and with different levels of ability and disability' (EC, 2007, p.4).

The high-performing status of Asian school systems are often believed to be a result of the cultural status of teachers, rooted in Confucian tradition (McKinsey & Co., 2007, p.16); this has been cited as a reason for the popularity of teaching as a career, and thus the high academic profile of applicants and entrants to the profession:

> 'Currently in Korea, young people's preference for teaching careers is very high. First, it is because of the social recognition given to teachers in Korea. Korean society, which is traditionally based on Confucianism, still believes... that the king, father and teacher have the same level' (Kwon, 2004, p.158).

McKinsey's perspective of East Asian systems is based on models of opposing Confucian and Socratic traditions of learning (Tweed & Lehman, 2002); however this blanket approach could itself be considered a deficit model.

In his review of the 2010 Schools White Paper, Paul Morris has questioned this practice of 'policy borrowing' as a rationale for policy making; after exploring the attractions of policy borrowing to think tanks and government agencies, and a point-by-point refutation of the assertions in the White Paper and the evidence it draws upon, Morris concludes that the 2010 White Paper 'relies on a report that excluded an analysis of key variables, was selective in the evidence provided, was

methodologically flawed… [and] was based on invalid inferences from the data'; that, ultimately, the authors are 'seeking to find evidence for a predetermined policy' (Morris, 2012, pp.104,102).

The use of PISA data in the preparation of policy is an example of deploying a commonsense discourse through the use of data to suggest authority and objectivity whilst concealing any caveats or subjectivity in that data. The use of big datasets such as PISA to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of different educational approaches has been questioned. The Chair of the UK Statistics Authority queried the validity of data used to demonstrate the declining performance of the English education system relative to other nations in the period before 2009, and castigated policy makers for the manner in which this data has been used since May 2010:

> 'Conclusions should not be based on this resource alone, and other evidence contradicts the findings… therefore it may be difficult to treat an apparent decline in secondary school pupils' performance as "a statistically robust result". I was concerned to review the Department for Education's press release… in which headline results for England from the PISA study, alongside relative international rankings, were not accompanied by detailed advice or caveats' (Dilnot, 2012).

Building on the proposals of the 2010 Schools White Paper, in 2011 the Department for Education released its strategy for ITT, 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers'. This included the proposal that 'schools should take greater responsibility in the system'. The 'School Direct' ITT route was introduced, replacing the GTP. From December 2011 schools were able to bid for the first 500 School Direct places funded for 2012-13. The Teaching Schools network would:

> '…play a central role in further improvement in the quality of training… for example, supporting the development of the highest quality school placements and trainee mentors across their alliance, working with a university to ensure that selection and training meets the needs of local schools, or managing "school direct" places for their alliance of schools' (DfE, 2011b).

Concerns over Coalition proposals to locate more ITT in schools, and the School Direct route specifically, echo those heard in the 1990s. Once again, the operational effectiveness and financial viability of the proposals has been raised. A dean of education suggested, 'If you pass more responsibilities to schools, perhaps you will then get them to pay for the teacher training. Is this a way to make cuts?' In response, a head teacher said, 'there is absolutely no way, in a time when our budgets are falling, that we can subsidise teacher training' (TES, 2010). The chief executive of a representative body of universities felt that 'School Direct has been rushed through. This is not a measured approach, or a sustainable way of ensuring teacher supply', and the executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) saw the introduction of School Direct as representing 'a very real risk of huge disruption and the loss of teacher training courses' (Maddern, 2012). In February 2013 one long-standing HEI provider announced it was considering a recommendation to end its participation in ITT (UCU, 2013). An annual report into the state of ITT in England reported in 2012 that 'it seems to us that the government is taking a risk in stripping the

GTP of its identity and merging it into School Direct, with less financial support to schools' (Smithers et al., 2012).

The requirements for Teaching Schools as centres of excellence in ITT were detailed in a prospectus published by the National College of School Leadership in 2011. Expectations include ensuring all trainee teachers observe outstanding teaching, 'working alongside the best teachers in an apprenticeship role'; ensuring a wide range of CPD activities (including those at Masters level) into which trainee teachers would be fully integrated; having close links with a university, with an expectation that staff from both institutions would play an active role in the respective institutions' ITT and CPD activities; and for staff to deliver high quality school-based coaching by providing appropriate training and ongoing support for coaching and mentoring roles (NCSL, 2011).

Teaching Schools in many ways embody the apotheosis of a thirty-year trend to locate ITT in schools. The eligibility requirements for becoming a Teaching School include an outstanding track record in pupil attainment; although schools must also give evidence of their capacity to 'make significant and high quality contribution to the training of teachers'. The Teaching School sits at the hub of an alliance of other schools and the involvement of HEI providers is possible but not a requirement. Crucially, funding for training activities is held by the Teaching School which chooses the services to buy in from any local HEI provider, thus fundamentally shifting the nature of the relationship between HEI providers and schools in the ITT partnership. The nature of the funding Teaching Schools receive is particularly important. The core grant of £60,000 is reduced each year on the expectation that the Teaching School will market the expertise that the school holds in ITT and CPD to other schools and clients as part of a sustainable business model. Thus the provision of ITT is monetized and the traditional HEI provider is required to market its provision to schools, and to compete in a marketplace against Teaching Schools as 'producer' of training (NCTL, 2013).

A new framework for the inspection of ITT providers came into effect in September 2012 and was far more prescriptive in terms of the partnership requirements than the 2008 iteration. The framework includes assessment of the quality of training provision, including 'subject and phase-specific mentoring'. Specifically, there is a requirement that school-based ITT:

> 'is provided by experienced and expert mentors; responds to trainees' specific training needs, including enhancing their subject and curriculum knowledge and phase expertise; improves trainees' teaching skills; models good practice in teaching; provides high-quality coaching and mentoring to enhance trainees' professional development' (Ofsted, 2012).

By comparison, earlier inspection frameworks spoke of 'considering the quality of placements and mentoring support for trainees' (Ofsted, 2008b). With a stated aim to increase entirely school-based ITT provision – 'next year nearly a third of ITT will be delivered by School Direct' (DfE, 2013) – it is possible that the 2012 inspection framework is an attempt to manage the perennial issue of variability in mentoring provision.

How funding is allocated for different teacher training routes gives an indication of policy makers' preferences, priorities and ideological preconceptions. From September 2012, the funding of HEI-based ITT courses changed significantly, alongside wider changes to the funding of higher education. Postgraduate ITT courses (e.g. the PGCE) which had previously attracted £5,220-5,830 per capita from government were now to be funded by the trainee teacher, charged at between £6,000 and £9,000 (TDA, 2011b). Alongside this change and to mitigate the additional costs – in certain areas – the government provided 'bursaries' to those undertaking ITT, the value of which depended on the degree class of the trainee and the subject or phase in which they were training. Bursaries either cover the cost of the training course (e.g. £6,000), rising to £20,000 for those training in shortage subjects who hold a first-class degree. In certain circumstances, notably if the prospective trainee held a third-class degree, no bursary was available and training only possible if self-funded (TA, 2012c). The implication for the construction of the teacher is that academic excellence in the subject or topic to be taught is the most important element in becoming an excellent teacher. This is reflected in the justifications given for giving academies the flexibility to recruit unqualified teachers, to have 'the same advantages as independent schools'. The headmaster of a private school is quoted, 'our History and Politics department has three recent graduates, all with Firsts from Oxford and all excellent teachers' (DfE, 2012c).

Trainees on the GTP in 2010-11 attracted £5,210 as a training grant and £13,500 as a contribution to their salary as a trainee teacher (TDA, 2011a, pp.19,22); these funds were paid to the school where the trainee worked as a supernumerary teacher. These figures were maintained in 2011-12, however as the School Direct route expanded, the number of places allocated to the GTP in 2012-13 was reduced to 4,400 (TA, 2012b, p.3) and the GTP discontinued at the end of academic year 2012-13.

Currently there are two School Direct routes. The standard School Direct programme is funded through tuition fees paid by the trainee, which can be offset with bursaries and scholarships as with the PGCE routes (above); however, there also exists the 'School Direct training programme (salaried)', available to applicants with at least three years' experience of employment, which attracts funds from the Teaching Agency to subsidise salary and training costs. These funds are dependent on the proportion of pupils in the school who are eligible for free school meals and the priority of the subject area of the trainee, and range from £14,000 to £20,900. Guidelines from the TA state that 'schools are free to determine the proportions of funding to be used for salary subsidy and training' (TA, 2012a).

Conclusion: 1984-2012, a continuum of change

Although the nature of the rhetoric has changed and become more direct – 'The idea is a simple one: take the very best schools, and put them in charge of teacher training for the whole system' (Gove, 2012) – government policy since May 2010 is part of a continuing trend to locate ITT in schools: initially around a HEI-school partnership with the HEI provider retaining accountability and responsibility for the training, but latterly in schools alone.

I have highlighted the continuity in policy between the pre-2010 and post-2010 periods, including the manner in which the validity of education as an academic discipline has been downgraded. 'There is a chilling sense of déjà entendu about recent Coalition government pronouncements on teacher education in 2011/12… for two decades successive Conservative and New Labour governments showed no interest at all in epistemology in relation to teacher education' (Davison, 2012).

A contradiction at the heart of the twin moves to increase the accountability of ITT provision and to locate ITT in schools is the lack of attention given to the nature of the training that occurs in school-based ITT. There is an assumption, not always made explicit but always present, that excellent classroom teachers are all that is needed to deliver high-quality ITT in schools. The form and nature of this training, the preferred profile of those teachers working as mentors to trainee teachers, the ideas of teacher education, work-based learning and the skills and knowledge required to train teachers, has been largely absent from policy directives.

There are some signs of development in this area over the last few years. The 2010 select committee report into the training of teachers and the recommendations it made relating to school-based ITT and mentoring came closest of any official publication in identifying and seeking to resolve this contradiction. The 2012 Ofsted inspection framework for ITT makes explicit the features of high-quality mentoring to a level not previously defined. The Teaching Schools network affords the opportunity for a systematic approach to framing and promoting high-quality mentoring provision in school-based ITT. The question remains of how these criteria are interpreted, and by whom, and what role the political pressure to make the Teaching Schools scheme a success will play.

The process of policy making through this period is characterised by the use of a commonsense discourse to justify and explain policy decisions and conceal ideological motivations. Policy is repeatedly presented in a manner which represents 'a technology of ideological closure' (Burton & Carlen, 1979, p.13). This approach has not changed in the thirty-year period of this review. What has changed since May 2010 is the tenor of one aspect of the commonsense discourse – the naturalization of one's argument through the minimization of one's opponents and their arguments. This involves the characterization of opponents as: 'making excuses for their past performance and not being open and honest about mistakes they made in the past… marginal to the real debate about educational standards… old-fashioned and out of date' (Scott, 2000, p.32). This approach is not the preserve of any particular political party, but since 2010 the rhetoric has reached a different level:

> 'Who is responsible for this failure… Who are the modern Enemies Of Promise? They are all academics who have helped run the university departments of education responsible for developing curricula and teacher training courses… they seem more interested in valuing Marxism, revering jargon and fighting excellence' (Gove, 2013).

Whereas in the early 1990s the inspectorate arguably acted as a brake on reform, expressing concerns over the effectiveness of its implementation, in the period since 2010 Ofsted has acted in

an overtly political manner, attacking traditional HEI providers. A recent press release by Ofsted claimed 'school-led partnerships are leading the way in improving the quality of teacher training', whilst stating that 'none of the higher education institutions… inspected so far has been awarded an outstanding judgement for overall effectiveness' (Ofsted, 2013). This statement provoked criticism from UCET as 'misleading, inaccurate and inappropriately political… there must now remain a suspicion that OFSTED ratings are a reflection of bias against university involvement in ITT' (Noble-Rogers, 2013).

The current Secretary of State for Education has recognized the development of teacher training policy as a continuum of change: 'Pushing more teacher training through schools has been an aim of successive Governments since the late eighties. And there have been important initiatives… but previous efforts have always been piecemeal' (Gove, 2012). His claim that the introduction of Teaching Schools as 'a proper network of outstanding schools to deliver training on a serious scale' has brought coherence to ITT policy is certainly possible, but the final outcome remains to be seen.

Chapter 3 – The Teach First Programme: a distinctly different training route

Introduction

In this chapter I will review the Teach First ITT programme which has been described as a 'distinctly different employment-based route for training teachers' (Ofsted, 2008a, p.4). Teach First can be considered a variant of other employment-based ITT routes, such as the GTP or School Direct routes, but incorporating some unique features.

Policy Context

Teach First sits within the policy context outlined above; it had its origins in a McKinsey report for business groups which looked at how business could help resolve an epidemic of deficient teaching and teacher shortages in challenging London schools (McKinsey & Co., 2002). In recalling his initial visits to London schools, the founder and CEO of Teach First described the environment as 'worse than prison' over which hung 'the stench of apathy'; the pupils were described as 'inmates' and the teachers as having 'given up on the kids'; this was a 'failure of school, classroom and societal leadership' (Wigdortz, 2012). From its inception Teach First was conceived with these priorities in mind, as a school-based ITT programme modelled on the 'Teach for America' movement. In order to address the perceived urgent need for change, the programme required its teachers to start working in schools almost immediately. The statutory frameworks for teacher training in England at the time, however, led to the development of an ITT programme distinct from Teach for America which integrated links with HEIs. Teach First trainees are required to successfully complete ITT courses which are validated by HEIs at postgraduate- and Masters-level. It has been argued that the involvement of higher education leads to Teach First trainees being better prepared for the classroom than their equivalent colleagues on the Teach for America programme (Mercer & Blandford, 2011).

Another defining characteristic of the Teach First programme was that it aimed to 'attract the best graduates in the country… this had to be highly selective' (Wigdortz, 2012). Prospective applicants to the programme are required to hold a first- or upper second-class degree, a higher initial bar than any other ITT route at that time. The proposition that a background of academic excellence is a prerequisite for high quality teaching practice derives from and sits within those which inform wider policy trends in education and ITT, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The Teach First programme shares this assumption, that the most effective teachers are high-achieving graduates. McKinsey, the organisation which seeded Teach First, reported that 'the top-performing school systems consistently attract more able people into the teaching profession', where 'ability' is equated to the candidates' track-record of 'academic achievement' (McKinsey & Co., 2007, pp.19-20). The PX report mentioned above makes a similar case: 'there is a close correlation internationally between education systems that recruit only the best graduates and those that achieve the highest scores in comparative tests' (Freedman et al., 2008, p.19). The Schools White Paper in

2010 echoes this: 'While some countries draw their teachers exclusively from the top tier of graduates, only two per cent of graduates obtaining first class honours degrees from Russell Group universities go on to train to become teachers…' (DfE, 2010a, p.19). The Department for Education's 2011 ITT implementation plan, 'Training our next generation of outstanding teachers', outlines how this would be achieved: 'We propose to… raise the bar for entry to initial training: attracting more of the highest achieving graduates… therefore [the government] will only fund trainee teachers who hold a second class degree or higher… doing this will raise the status of the profession and make it more attractive to the most able'. In this report, Teach First is cited frequently as a successful model for raising the quality of teaching through its 'rigorous approach to selection' with a 'very high bar for entry' (DfE, 2011a, pp.3-5).

With its central feature of recruiting only the most high-achieving graduates, Teach First is currently a niche ITT route – in 2007-08 the number of teachers trained via Teach First represented 0.65% of the national cohort (House of Commons, 2010a, pp.13-15); with its continuing expansion, in 2012-13 the allocation of 1,000 still represents just 2.75% of the national cohort (DfE, 2012b).

Distinctive Features

Far more than any other ITT programme, Teach First sets itself apart from other routes to qualified teacher status. Most significantly, Teach First is both a route and a corporate entity (holding charitable status). Despite its relative small size in terms of the number of teachers trained via the programme, Teach First is disproportionately visible and influential in political and media publications. The Teach First programme is frequently cited in the media whenever discussions are raised about the quality of the teaching workforce or issues of educational inequality and disadvantage e.g. (Humphrys, 2010). Before the 2010 General Election, Teach First featured positively and prominently in the election manifestos of all three major political parties (ePolitix.com, 2010). An investigation by the Children, Schools and Families select committee into the training of teachers drew heavily on evidence presented by and about the programme (House of Commons, 2010b, pp.46-50).

Teach First is itself very conscious of the importance of publicity, and maintains a dedicated External Relations department and Press Office, as well as a corporate-style website which celebrates its continuing growth, achievements and positive public profile. The charity releases regular press releases and publications online (Teach First, 2010c), and uses social media for frequent, informal exposure (Facebook, 2010; Twitter, 2010). A key annual publication is 'Policy First', a series of propositions, recommendations and suggestions for policy makers and education leaders, constructed from the views and experiences of Teach First trainees during their training and first years of teaching in the classroom (Teach First, 2009). With a mission requiring a proactive stance and unanimous and uncritical support from all major political parties, the Teach First organisation has great confidence in its own agency within the field of education and ITT, and encourages a similar confidence in Teach First trainees themselves.

The packaging and positioning of Teach First is not the only element which sets it apart from other routes into teaching, and in this section I will outline the six distinctive features of the ITT programme.

A central mission with three elements

Teach First carries a mission statement to 'address educational disadvantage by transforming exceptional graduates into effective, inspirational teachers and leaders in all fields'. Therefore the Teach First programme has three distinctive features at its core: it is focused on effecting change in schools and amongst pupils considered to be at socio-economic disadvantage; it aims to achieve this by recruiting and training particularly high-achieving graduates into teaching; and its mission is achieved not just by training classroom teachers but by developing leadership skills applicable to other fields.

Teach First works with state-maintained schools that meet pre-determined criteria which indicate pupils may be in 'challenging circumstances' or at 'educational disadvantage'. These are (at the time of writing): more than 50% of pupils living in the lowest 30% of postcodes defined by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI); and/or schools where less than 30% of pupils gain five Level 2 qualifications (i.e. A*-C GCSE) including English and Maths (Teach First, 2013).

The entry standard for the Teach First programme requires candidates to hold an upper second or first class degree, along with A-level results equivalent to three B-grades. This reflects the principle of sourcing teacher excellence from the academic elite. However, perhaps because of the imperative to meet annually increasing recruitment targets, Teach First trainees' academic profile is more diverse than this headline criterion. Analysis of the academic background of Teach First trainees in one region of England suggests entry standards are not rigid and some flexibility can be accommodated by the assessment procedure. From a regional cohort of 286 trainee teachers in 2010-11, 18 held a 2:2 or third-class degree; 90 trainees did not hold a degree in the same or a related subject as their teaching specialism; 67 of these held the equivalent of an A-grade at A-level in their teaching subject, but the remaining 23 held an A-level with a lower grade (B or C).

The recruitment process involves more than analysis of academic credentials, however; applicants must also pass the Teach First Assessment Centre day. Assessment days are managed by Teach First and held at the Teach First offices. Through case study exercises, mock lessons and interviews, applicants are judged on a range of personal and professional criteria. These include self-evaluation, leadership, problem-solving, resilience, humility, respect and empathy (Teach First, 2010a). The Teach First programme therefore works on the assumption that the 'close correlation' (Freedman et al., 2008) between the recruitment of high-achieving graduates into teaching and pupil outcomes is not as simple as some commentators have claimed, a point recently reiterated by the Teach First CEO: 'We reject more outstanding people than we accept. I do not believe someone who is outstanding academically will automatically become a great teacher' (Henshaw, 2013).

This process of assessment is unique amongst ITT programmes and has been cited as an example for other training routes: 'we know that highly effective models of teacher training (including...Teach First...) systematically use assessments of aptitude, personality and resilience as part of the candidate selection process. We...plan to make them part of the selection process for teacher training' (DfE, 2010a, p.21).

There are various assumptions behind the Teach First mission and programme: that the graduates recruited to Teach First would not otherwise have considered teaching as a career (House of Commons, 2010b, pp.63,192); that these graduates, by virtue of their high academic abilities, will have a greater impact on the learning of pupils than others; that after the two years of teaching a significant proportion of those recruited may leave the classroom but will continue to support the educational ideals of Teach First in other fields.

The Summer Institute

Before starting the school-based element of the programme, successful applicants undertake a six-week residential Summer Institute in regional and central locations in July and August. Hosted at partner higher education institutions (HEIs), the programme includes sessions on the theory and practice of teaching led by HEI tutors, sessions on leadership run by Teach First employees, and a period of teaching experience in schools. Upon successful completion of the Summer Institute, participants are enrolled as trainee teachers in one of the regional HEIs.

The Teach First Summer Institute represents a unique feature compared to other employment-based ITT routes, not just for the programme of HEI-led training which trainees must complete before working in schools (similar to the HEI-based element of a PGCE programme), but also in its central purpose to develop 'an esprit de corps of Teach First participants outlining the distinctive nature of the Teach First programme' (Teach First, 2010b, p.2).

National and regional management of the training programme

The Teach First ITT programme sits within a two-year leadership development programme for recent university graduates run by the Teach First charity. The Teach First programme is managed by the Teach First National ITT Partnership (NITTP), which consists of the Teach First charity supported by a number of HEIs across England, each of which holds a subcontract to deliver the ITT programme on a regional basis. The one-year Teach First ITT programme incorporates the recommendation of QTS and a PGCE from the partner HEI, which acts as the awarding body.

The ITT programme, therefore, sits within a career development programme and, uniquely amongst ITT routes, holds a nationwide identity and brand which is administered on a regional basis by a variety of ITT providers, each with its own particular history, systems and culture of ITT. Teach First therefore requires multiple institutions to mould their practices to fit a single and distinctive

approach to teacher education, something which has attracted criticism over the implications for these partner HEI providers and the academic freedom of their employees (Savage, 2013a).

School placement process

Schools approach Teach First in the first instance expressing interest in recruiting a Teach First trainee, in a particular subject area or areas. Once applicants have been accepted onto the programme and have completed the Summer Institute, they are matched to a school which has a need for their teaching specialism; this could be in any of the cities or regions in which Teach First operates, although the placement process does try to take account of the applicant's preferences. The school employs the trainee as an unqualified teacher; generally speaking, trainees are not supernumerary, although there have been exceptions to this when placements have needed to be made at short notice, or within other mitigating circumstances (Hutchings et al., 2006b, p.27). The school receives £2,500 from Teach First to cover the costs of mentoring provided in the training year, although the school also pays Teach First £3,200 per trainee as a 'finder's fee', as trainees are recruited by Teach First (House of Commons, 2010b, p.358).

As an employment-based ITT route, therefore, Teach First is unique in the extent to which an organisation which is neither an ITT provider nor the employing school leads the selection, assessment and placement of trainee teachers. This represents a significant divergence from the idea of school-HEI partnership seen in recent ITT policy, and is very different from the partnership requirements which providers of other ITT routes, particularly the mainstream PGCE, have to meet.

Enhanced support for trainees

Each Teach First trainee is supported by two tutors from the regional HEI. A subject tutor delivers a programme of subject knowledge development over six days across the training year; a professional tutor visits the trainee's school approximately once every two weeks to provide support, training and to liaise with the school mentors. By comparison, a GTP trainee might expect a visit three times a year from a partner HEI tutor (NTU, 2011, p.3).

This feature of the Teach First programme, along with the introduction of HEI-led ITT sessions at the Summer Institute, might suggest that Teach First is underpinned by a different conceptual model of teacher education than that of other employment-based routes such as the GTP or School Direct. Alternatively, or additionally, this could represent a recognition of the increased support that Teach First trainees typically need compared to trainees on other routes, due to the challenging nature of the schools in which they are placed and the expectations for impact and achievement placed upon them.

Cost

As a consequence of all the points above, and particularly the Summer Institute, the Teach First ITT programme has historically required higher per capita funding than other ITT routes. In submissions

to a parliamentary select committee in 2010, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) gave the total per capita costs of the Teach First ITT programme as £38,623. This was compared to £24,977 for the cost of training a teacher through the GTP, a similar employment-based training route (House of Commons, 2010b, pp.358-59).

In 2012-13 the GTP was discontinued and employment-based teacher training was delivered through School Direct, the most comparable route to Teach First. For new and recent graduates (i.e. equivalent to the Teach First ITT programme) School Direct places will be funded by the trainees themselves, up to £9,000, as part of wider changes to the funding of higher education and postgraduate ITT. The exception to this is the School Direct (salaried) programme which is restricted to applicants with three or more years' career experience. These places attract government funding from £14,000 per trainee[2] to support salary and training costs (TA, 2013).

The current cost of Teach First can be extrapolated from figures recently released by the Teaching Agency for the funding of the Teach First ITT programme. These are summarised below – the fourth column is my addition (DfE, 2012a). This shows that, even as funding for both higher education and initial teacher training is going through a period of retrenchment, Teach First continues to attract substantial financial support from central government. This represents an expression of confidence in the programme and a recognition that its objectives, conceptualisations and approaches align with policy trends in teacher training.

Figure 1: Summary of government funding for the Teach First ITT programme, 2010-13

Financial year	Government funding	Training places	Per capita
2010-11	£16.5m	500	33,000
2011-12	£17.5m	772	22,668
2012-13	£26.8m	1,000	26,800
2013-14	£33.4m	1,250	26,720

Impact of Teach First

Between 2003 and 2005 the Institute for Policy Studies in Education conducted an evaluation of the innovative practices of the Teach First ITT programme. This was commissioned by the TTA and looked at the first two years of the programme's operation (Hutchings et al., 2006b).

Teach First trainees were found to be making a positive contribution to schools and to pupils' learning, particularly through being 'creative, energetic and hard-working', and simply by 'providing continuity of teaching' (ibid., p.68). However, schools also reported concern over the level of

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[2] Supplementary funding is available for schools with over 35% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, and also for priority subjects.

investment, both financially and in teachers' time, in taking on Teach First trainees, a high proportion of whom are anticipated to leave the school after two years (ibid., p.69).

In 2010 a further evaluation of the impact of Teach First teachers was commissioned by Teach First and undertaken by the University of Manchester. This looked particularly at the impact on pupil achievement (Muijs et al., 2010). Quantitative analysis of performance data suggested that Teach First teachers had a positive impact on pupil outcomes compared to other schools; and that a larger number of Teach First teachers in a school had a larger impact on pupil outcomes (ibid., p.3).

A recent study sought to quantify the impact of a Teach First trainee teacher on pupil outcomes; this study estimated that there was a very small positive impact on pupils' GCSE grades (Allen & Allnut, 2013). The impact reported was a fraction of that suggested by the Muijs report, representing only 5% of a standard deviation from the outcomes of pupils without Teach First teachers and therefore lacks any statistical significance; in addition, the findings were so heavily circumscribed with caveats and limitations that the value of the report for drawing conclusions about the relative merit of the Teach First ITT programme is questionable, at best.

Teach First was inspected by Ofsted in 2011 and the final report was very positive, with the ITT programme graded 'Outstanding' in all 44 areas which were inspected. The effectiveness of Teach First trainees as teachers in the classroom was highlighted: 'The extremely thorough and rigorous process of self-evaluation and improvement planning leads to continuous improvement in all of the outcomes for participants… The attainment of participants is outstanding and has improved each year for the last three years. The proportion of participants whose attainment is outstanding has improved significantly' (Ofsted, 2011, pp.8-9).

Critiques of Teach First

As a result of the distinctive features outlined above, the Teach First programme has attracted comment, critiques and controversy since its inception and this commentary has continued as the programme has expanded and become more prominent in the field of ITT. Critiques come in the form of reports, academic journal articles and blogs and have addressed issues including the cost of the programme, the retention of Teach First trainees within the profession, the impact of Teach First trainees on other teachers in the schools where they are training, and the conceptual and ideological implications of the programme.

A recent article examined conceptions of teacher professionalism and how new career paths, including that of the Teach First ITT programme, influenced these conceptions. The role of Teach First trainee (along with ASTs and Higher Level Teaching Assistants) is placed within a New Labour policy context as articulated within the 2002 Education Act (Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010). It is argued that 'although the total number of teachers involved in these roles is small relative to the overall workforce, these categories [including the Teach First trainee] are important because they represent fundamental shifts in... interrelated aspects of teacher professionalism' (ibid., p.8). The

implications of Teach First are regarded within Bourdieu's conception of professional identity, or 'habitus'; with respect to Teach First trainees, the central aspect is the 'question of teacher knowledge', and it is argued that Teach First 'downplays the importance of specialist professional preparation' (ibid., p.12). However, the article's description of the Teach First programme as 'a short introduction to teaching, and some ongoing professional development and mentoring in leadership by the business community', with 'limited time given to professional studies' and 'a greater emphasis on generic management and leadership skills' is not an accurate summary – not least, in the lack of reference to the significant role of traditional HEI providers and tutors in supporting the programme.

Teach First has also been challenged that rather than tackling 'the fundamental inequalities in social, cultural and economic capital between classes, the invisibility of middle-class privilege and the discourses of working-class deficit', the nature of the programme limits the long-term impact of the project to address educational disadvantage by 'reproducing middle-class privilege and values' (Smart et al., 2009, p.51). This article argues that Teach First trainees identify themselves as middle-class, that they use the social and cultural capital gained from their position of class privilege to access the Teach First programme, that engagement with the programme allows the accumulation of further social and cultural capital, and that Teach First reproduces middle-class values and perceptions of the working class 'other'. Evidence from trainees highlights their own perception of their working environment as 'totally different to me', a 'different environment to my own upbringing' (ibid., p.39). These comments demonstrate a difference in experience, cultural background and Weltanschauung. This can be seen if those elements which define a worldview (for example: futurology, 'where are we heading'; values, 'what should we do'; theory of action, 'how should we attain our goals') are considered against the trainees' observations: '[My pupils] can't see any way out of the cycle that their parents don't have decent jobs, their parents are on benefits or whatever and they don't see any need to get out of the cycle or indeed any way to get out of the cycle' (ibid., p.40).

However, the trainees' perceptions of 'difference' between themselves and the social context within which they are working could be seen as the process of teacher socialisation into the culture of the school (Cherubini, 2009) – a phenomenon not restricted to Teach First but related to the concept of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation, to which I will return. Teach First have released figures in response to concerns that trainees predominantly represent privileged social and ethnic groups, showing that a quarter of trainees were eligible for free schools meals when they were at school, and 20% represent ethnic minorities (Henshaw, 2013).

At the operational level, the Teach First programme has attracted criticism for the scale and nature of the government funding it receives, and the value for money this represents, particularly with regard to the long-term retention rate of Teach First teachers within the profession. The current retention rate after five years is 40% (Savage, 2013b); it is argued that the Teach First training route is 'the

largest single factor by which teachers leave teaching early', and that this represents poor value for money given the scale of government funding for the programme (Savage, 2013a).

It has been suggested that the emphasis within the programme on teaching for two years before (perhaps) moving on to another profession undermines professional teachers' identity and leads to the recruitment of teachers who have a 'profane' motivation, choosing teacher training 'on the basis of enhanced career advancement opportunities' and perceiving teaching itself as 'a temporary lifestyle choice' leading to an 'inner emptiness'. As a consequence of this, Teach First trainees have been described as 'self-serving… consumers of training' and the Teach First programme itself as 'a moral out-sourcing of professionalism' (Leaton Gray & Whitty, 2010, p.13).

In these terms, the programme can be presented as an example of 'Gesellschaft', within the conceptions of social organisation developed by Tönnies. By this, Teach First is defined as 'a kind of self-interested civil association', since some of the trainees will be 'sufficiently disinterested to look outside education' for future career decisions (ibid., p.14). However, from another perspective Teach First represents a model of what Tönnies presents as the direct opposite of Gesellschaft; that is, the conception of a community or 'Gemeinschaft', characterised by a group with shared mores, beliefs and a 'unity of will' (Tönnies, 1887). This can be seen in the common mission which all participants subscribe to upon entry to the programme (House of Commons, 2010b, p.56), and which is reinforced through the Summer Institute, the development of esprit de corps in each year's cohort (Hutchings et al., 2006b, p.20), through to the placement strategy of grouping small numbers of trainees in each school (ibid., p.22).

When challenged about the retention rate of Teach First teachers within the profession, Teach First and its representatives highlight the stated aim of the programme to identify and bring into teaching individuals who would not otherwise consider becoming a teacher (House of Commons, 2010b, p.63). Teach First was originally conceived as a way to address chronic problems of staff shortage and retention in challenging secondary schools in London; trainees are placed in schools where they are fulfilling vacancies where staffing issues remain a constant issue for the schools (Hutchings et al., 2006b, pp.25,27-28); gaining a teacher who is demonstrating a commitment to the school for a minimum of two years represents a positive staffing result, in comparison with the alternative (Muijs et al., 2009, p.7).

Finally, there is some evidence that, at least in the earlier years of the programme, the nature of the programme and the element of 'mission' which it attempts to imbue in Teach First trainees can lead to antipathy between Teach First trainees and other teachers in the schools where they are training. The Teach First ethos 'potentially belittles normal teachers' (Hutchings et al., 2006a, p.80). The Teach First programme has attempted to address this issue with the development of the selection and assessment process, which now includes more emphasis on personal criteria. The Teach First CEO acknowledges the importance of trainees having a respectful and professional approach: 'Teach First

teachers must have respect and humility. If they are going in and annoying people then we have picked (the wrong people)' (Henshaw, 2013).

<u>Mentoring within Teach First</u>

Historically, Teach First has encountered the same issues relating to the quality and consistency of mentoring provision as other ITT routes. In 2005, a report to the Teacher Training Agency stated that 'the main issue that the [Teach First] project needs to address is the lack of consistency between the provisions made in individual schools… subject mentoring remains the most variable aspect of the training programme' (Fitzgerald, 2005, pp.2-3). The external moderator's report into the training programme in 2005 identified a similar concern: 'the least satisfactory of the trainees were those whose mentoring process had been lax, or in some cases, almost non-existent, or those who had not taken a pro-active stance... Where [classroom practice] was not supported sufficiently by mentors and others, development was hindered, and in some cases, led to withdrawal from the programme' (CCCUC, 2005, p.2).

In 2006 an evaluation of Teach First noted that 'participants... have received very variable support from staff in their placement schools. The greatest variability related to subject mentors.' A survey of Teach First trainees found that 15% considered their subject mentor to be 'not effective' and a further 16% considered their mentor only 'slightly effective' (Hutchings et al., 2006a, p.46). This result reflects a higher proportion of negative responses than in other, more general studies of trainee teachers' perceptions of their subject mentors (Hobson et al., 2005, p.122), suggesting that the challenging schools in which Teach First trainees were placed were finding it more difficult to provide adequate mentoring provision; for example, the report found that 'sometimes lack of support occurred because the person allocated as subject mentor did not want to do the job, or had not received a timetable allocation to do it, or was simply too busy' (ibid.). This echoes the findings of other explorations of how mentors are selected for the role, where in the majority of cases teachers report that the role is 'thrust upon them' (Cunningham, 2004).

The variability of mentoring quality has been a persistent issue in the Teach First programme. The external moderator's report into the programme in 2006 identified trainees 'who had not reached their full potential due to poor or almost non-existent subject mentoring. This issue has been identified before and still exists' (CCCU, 2006, p.2); in 2007 the report considered some trainees to have been 'let down by the school's mentoring system', and that some mentors had been 'given the role of mentor without any training and with no time allowance' (CCCU, 2007, pp.1,3); by 2010 the situation was not completely resolved: 'In-school support and assessment, although good in many cases, continues to be the most variable part of the programme… Secondary tutors are now very well skilled in supporting schools where mentoring is weaker' (CCCU, 2010, p.7). This final comment suggests that the support provided by the HEI provider included elements intended to address known deficiencies in the support provided by the schools; the reports make it clear how effective partnership can be in providing complementary support: 'Good quality mentoring is paramount, and

was at its best when school mentors and college tutors were seen to have shared discourse throughout the training year' (CCCUC, 2005, p.4). An initial Ofsted review of the programme found that:

> 'The employment-based nature of the scheme relies heavily on the quality of training provided by schools… There were wide variations between and within schools in the quality of subject training. Not all the subject mentors had the understanding or skills to fulfil their training role to a high standard; others lacked the time they needed to carry out their role effectively. This meant that some trainees did not reach the level of competence of which they were capable' (Ofsted, 2008a, p.5).

Similarly, an independent study found that 'mentoring arrangements… were not in all cases strong, and appear inconsistent across Teach First schools, hindering the possible impact Teach First participants can make' (Muijs et al., 2010, p.6). This same study made clear the significance of the quality of mentoring provision on the effectiveness of the trainees' teaching:

> 'The strongest predictor of effective teaching was lack of support (a negative correlation indicating that lower levels of perceived support are related to less effective teaching). The second most significant predictor was positive support, meaning that where the school supported Teach First teachers strongly they were likely to be more effective... School factors thus had a significant indirect relationship with effective teaching by Teach First teachers' (Muijs et al., 2010, pp.35-36).

The Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework

There were, therefore, issues identified with variability in quality of mentoring provision within the Teach First programme; whilst not unique to this training programme they were particularly apparent given the typical context of the schools in which the programme operated. As a result, a series of resources and interventions were deployed in an attempt to address these issues. In 2008-09 a website of resources to supporting mentors and mentoring practice was developed and deployed, designated the 'Mentors' Online Support System', or 'MOSS' (CCCU, 2008). An attempt was made to develop an online professional community of Teach First mentors, called 'the Mentors' Blackboard', but this failed to attract any active participation and was soon discontinued. In 2009-10 a recognition framework was developed to support the practice of Teach First mentors. This framework features within the main focus of my research and I will refer to this resource in later chapters with reference to both the data collection strategies and the analysis of data. I will therefore describe this framework in more detail, including its background and conceptual basis.

Background and conceptual basis

The overall aim of the recognition framework was to improve the quality and consistency of mentoring across the Teach First ITT programme. The key mechanism to achieve this was the introduction of a 'learning journal' for mentors which allowed mentors to provide evidence of mentoring skills and activities against a set of performance criteria. The framework 'recognised'

mentoring practice at one of three levels: Developing, Effective and Advanced. The performance criteria for each level are included in Appendix 1.

The objectives of the Recognition Framework included: to give Teach First mentors a clear understanding of their role; to encourage the recognition by schools of the value of the mentor's role; and to develop greater support for school mentors from HEI-based tutors. The principles which underpinned the Recognition Framework were: to set out the criteria for 'quality mentoring'; to engage mentors in a process of 'reflection-on-practice', directed towards each mentor's individual professional learning needs; to be based on clearly identifiable evidence highlighting the impact of mentoring on Teach First trainees' teaching and their pupils' learning; and to allow this evidence of mentoring practice to support other measures of competence, for example the 'Threshold' standards for professional progression.

The Recognition Framework therefore represented a similar conceptual approach to supporting mentoring practice as that which supports the training of teachers: the principles and objectives which underlay the Recognition Framework, as with the Standards for QTS, can be said to derive from cognitivist theories of adult learning with the emphasis on reflective practice and self-directed learning; the mechanism by which this is enacted adopts a more technical-functionalist approach, with the deployment of evidence from observable actions and behaviours.

The idea of a structured recognition framework for mentoring practice is not a new one. In the mid-2000s the state-supported National Partnership Project led to the development of several different frameworks for mentoring trainee teachers, each with its own number and set of performance criteria, each developed by individual HEI providers. The Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework itself was built on the model of a pre-existing framework for mentoring practice that was being used by a HEI provider in the North West region; the Teach First framework is unique in that it was developed for a specific training programme and piloted on a national scale.

Chapter 4 – Literature Review

<u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter I will review the literature surrounding the fields of ITT and mentoring, adult learning and education generally. By drawing on this literature I will develop a new conceptual framework for mentoring within a partnership ITT programme, such as Teach First, to which I will refer in the analysis of data from Teach First trainees, mentors, tutors and the programme documentation.

I will start with a consideration of theories of learning in their most general sense and outline what can be considered the two 'worldviews' on which the majority of twentieth-century learning theories are based – the elemental and the holistic. From these philosophical standpoints the traditions of behaviourist and cognitivist learning theories can be derived, and I will consider each of these traditions in turn. I will show how cognitivist theories form the basis for recent theoretical work on adult learning, work-based learning and situated learning, and how these theories are relevant to conceptualisations of the role of the mentor and models of mentoring and mentor development. Within this, I will explore some problems of terminology, how different roles and responsibilities can be encapsulated in the title of 'mentor' and the activity of mentoring, and how this can lead to uncertainty and divergence in perceptions and conceptualizations.

I will consider how the mentoring process can be defined as more than just the one-to-one interactions between a mentor and a trainee teacher and review work which emphasises the importance of the surrounding 'architectural support' for the mentoring process, a feature which is particularly relevant in a partnership ITT programme like Teach First which involves multiple institutions. This leads to a consideration of notions of power and control in the mentoring process and how these notions are perceived by the different participants within that process.

Finally I will outline my own framework for understanding of mentoring, which pulls together various strands from the literature to propose a view of the mentoring process which is based on a triadic relationship between trainee, mentor and one or more 'supporters' (e.g. professional mentor, HEI tutor), each of whom have distinct roles and responsibilities, different levels of influence within the mentoring process and diverse perceptions of that process. Through the mechanism of the mentoring process this group, or triad, are moving within the dimensions of professional socialisation and communities of practice and share a common idea about their purpose, or 'project'; however, they experience varying levels of coherence in their perceptions of the mentoring process.

<u>Theoretical background: the dichotomy of elemental and holistic worldviews.</u>

The notion of learning is one which can be defined as representing 'learning as change' (rather than, for example, as 'memorising'). These changes, which include reinforcement of existing knowledge and behaviour, can take place in various fields: Lewin defined these as skills, knowledge and understanding, motivation and interest, or beliefs and ideology (Lewin, 1935). Gagné identified five

domains of learning: motor skills; verbal information, including facts and principles; intellectual skills, involving how to use knowledge in a discriminating way; cognitive skills, including how one learns, thinks and solves problems; and attitudes (Gagné, 1972). The process by which change takes place in these fields or domains can be considered learning theory.

Theories of learning have proliferated since the beginning of the 20th century; to a large extent these theories have derived from the work of experimental psychology[3]. Knowles identifies no fewer than 64 distinct propositions for a theory of learning between 1885 and 1986, and a further 33 refinements of these theories (Knowles et al., 2005, pp.19-20). It would not be practicable to critically examine each of these in depth, but it is necessary to bring some level of categorisation to the various theories of learning in order to analyse their role within school-based mentoring.

Different views of learning have been characterised by the notion of input or of action; the learner taking either a passive or an active role in the learning process; learning as responding to stimuli or initiated by an inner drive; learning which fills a deficit, or which is a search for satisfaction (Rogers, 2003, p.278). Reese and Overton show how all theories of learning are derived from two distinct 'worldviews' which they label the 'elemental' and the 'holistic'. Approaching from a psychologist's perspective they show that these are 'different ways of looking at the world and, as such, are incompatible in their implications' (Reese & Overton, 1970, p.116). In this section I will briefly summarise these two 'models', as Reese and Overton refer to them, which will inform the subsequent examination of theories of learning; in doing so, I will show that these two fields of thought are not necessarily as dichotomous as Reese and Overton suggest.

Reese and Overton begin with the premise that psychological models originate in metaphor as a means to comprehension; the basic metaphor for the 'elemental' model is the machine and for the 'holistic' model the organism. An elemental worldview holds that what is perceived exists and operates as a machine, in that everything is composed of discrete, elementary particles which interact to produce outcomes. Upon the application of force, a sequence of results can be observed and measured. It follows that the outcomes to given stimuli can be predicted if enough information about the composite particles is known. When employed within fields such as history, epistemology or psychology, the elemental model conceives of humans as passive, reactive and, initially at least, 'empty vessels'. When related to developmental psychology, this view holds that a change in the behaviour of a person – in other words, the visible outcome from some episode of learning – is not resulting in a change in structure, or a qualitative shift, but rather a quantifiable response to defined inputs or causes (Reese & Overton, 1970, pp.131-32). This is the common theme underlying behaviourist theories of learning.

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[3] Although this is not always the case; more recent theories such as 'connectivism' and 'multimedia learning theory' derive from perceptions of how technology affects the human experience.

The holistic worldview derives from the assertion that the essence of a substance, organism or person is to be found within its activity; that change is constant; and from the repudiation of the view that reality can be discovered through an analysis of constituent, static elements. Within psychology this leads to the 'active organism model of man', the individual as the source of action rather than a machine reactive to external force. Related to developmental psychology, a change in behaviour cannot be explained through distinct, measureable causes, since change is the given state of existence; the nature of change can be qualitative as well as quantifiable (Reese & Overton, 1970, pp.133-34). From this position, a thread can be drawn to cognitivist theories of learning.

These worldviews represent different methods of perception. There are similarities between these psychological perspectives and groups of scientific theories. Elemental views are closely aligned with notions of classical Newtonian mechanics, where the observable universe operates efficiently and in measureable and predictable manners at certain scales, and up to certain levels of complexity. Critics of elemental approaches in theories of learning would argue that human action and development cannot be defined as the action and reaction of 'a row of steel balls on a string'. Reese and Overton take this position, and label elemental approaches to psychology as 'naive realism' (Reese & Overton, 1970, p.132); others have described theories of learning which are based on these assumptions as 'atomistic', or 'mechanistic' (Jones, et al., 2005).

During the 20th century, scientists realised the limits of classical scientific laws and a new way for perceiving reality was developed – quantum field theory. The emphasis shifted to notions of energy change, virtual particles and probability density fields rather than observable causal chains acting upon 'little billiard balls'. This scientific worldview is analogous with the perception of reality adopted by the holistic model of psychological development.

Just as classical and quantum scientific theories can co-exist, there is a valid place for both elemental and holistic worldviews in theories of learning. Mezirow is clear on this: 'One must not dichotomise these two domains. It is important to emphasise that most learning involves elements of both the instrumental and the communicative' (Mezirow, 1997, p.10).

Behaviourist theories of learning

As with the elemental philosophical model from which it derived, a behaviourist theory of learning generally holds that the learning or development of an individual can be overtly and externally observed, measured and to a certain extent predicted under experimental conditions.

The tradition of behaviourist psychology was first systemised by the work of Thorndike in the late 19th century; his theory of 'bond psychology' was the original stimulus-response theory of learning. In its simplest form, this stated that learning occurs when the response to a stimulus or input is met with reward or benefit for the learner. The learner in Thorndike's view begins as an empty organism, which responds to stimuli automatically and randomly, until learning is reinforced by reward. Thorndike's theory derived from the learning displayed by animals, a dataset which was also to

feature in the work of subsequent development psychologists (Thorndike, 2000). Similar theories of development form the basis of Pavlov's work, whose famous experiments developed the concept of 'conditioned reflexes' through deliberate stimuli and reinforcement. These reflexes could be observed, measured and analysed. Although not directly related to learning, Pavlov's concepts and techniques were incorporated into subsequent behaviourist theories (Hilgard & Bower, 1966). For example, it has been suggested that the development of emotional responses to particular situations is the result, at least in part, of classical conditioning (Woolfolk & Nicolich, 1980).

An early theory of learning was that of 'contiguity', expressed by Edwin Guthrie in the early 20th century. Guthrie defined the principle of the 'contiguity of cue and response' as 'a combination of stimuli which has accompanied a movement on its reoccurrence tends to be followed by that movement' (Hilgard & Bower, 1966, p.77). To Guthrie, this was a law 'from which all else about learning is made comprehensible'.

B. F. Skinner developed a philosophy which he called 'radical behaviourism', which developed the Pavlovian notion of psychological development through classical conditioning into one of development through 'operant conditioning'; unlike earlier behaviourists, Skinner held that organisms are not simple tabulae rasa, and that one's genetic or physiological endowment, private emotions and the environment which actions 'operate' within all influence the development process (Chiesa, 1994). The example of self-directed learning via computer-based study has been given as an example of operant conditioning: when students answer questions correctly, they are informed, so reinforcing that behaviour, and allowed to move on; when they answer incorrectly they are given an explanation and offered the chance to answer again until the right answer is found (McKenna, 2003, p.296). Although a refinement of earlier theories, and despite Skinner's statement 'I am not an S-R [stimulus-response] psychologist' (Skinner, 1974), operant conditioning remains firmly within the behaviourist tradition.

Behaviourism, or neo-behaviourism, has also formed the basis of social learning theory, or 'vicarious conditioning'. The process of a teacher modelling behaviour has been argued to represent a form of learning in which the learner observes the behaviour and the consequences they generate – depending on whether these consequences are desirable or undesirable, the learner may or may not adopt them (Bandura, 1977). Behaviourist ideas have an emphasis on observable, measurable outcomes to learning – 'a behaviourist asks, what are the signs that learning has taken place?' (Owens, 1997, p.71). This emphasis continues as a trend in the fields of assessment and impact in education policy. The Department for Education recently commissioned an epidemiologist to promote the use of randomised controlled trials in education, using quantifiable data on pupil learning outcomes to determine the efficacy of specific educational interventions (Goldacre, 2013). The requirement for trainee teachers to meet pre-defined Standards in ITT, for which evidence must be presented to show that professional learning has taken place, follows this behaviourist tradition.

The aspiration that learning can be an entirely quantifiable and thus predictable phenomenon was most clearly expressed in the work of Clark L. Hull. Hull developed an elaborate 'mathematico-deductive' formula for learning, based on up to sixteen variables which he believed could be quantified, including 'excitatory potential', 'stimulus intensity', 'reactive inhibition' and 'momentary behaviour oscillation' (Hull, 1940). Hull's approach to understanding learning has been assessed as 'the most conscientious effort to be quantitative throughout', 'the ideal… for a genuinely systematic psychological system', although 'not necessarily the one nearest to psychological reality', or 'whose generalisations were the most likely to endure' (Hilgard & Bower, 1966, p.187).

However, it is apparent that behaviourist theories of learning have a relevance to the development of teachers' professional identity. Not only in relation to the formal assessment structures which surround the process but also in the field of personal attitudes, beliefs and through the modelling of behaviour, there is a relevance and resonance with the field of ITT. I will return to this below, when considering models of professional socialisation and theories of situated learning.

Cognitivist theories of learning

Cognitivist theories of learning derive from the holistic worldview and build from the educational philosophy of Dewey, Piaget and Lewin, with an emphasis placed on the 'whole child' (or learner) and the learner's motivation to solve its own problems. Dewey's notion of the school teacher as 'the intellectual leader of a social group' (Dewey, 1997) was first published in 1910 and prefigures the 'facilitative learning' outlined by Brookfield in the 1980s. Piaget conceptualized the process of cognitive development within evolutionary stages. Kurt Lewin, of the German school of 'gestalt' theorists in the early 20th century, proposed a 'field theory of learning', where individuals exist within a 'life space' of external and internal forces which include (but are not limited to) the physical environment, personal history, genetic inheritance and momentary situation. As with Dewey's focus on internal motivation, Lewin speaks of internal aspiration as the key product of cognitive development and the realignment of vectors within the life space; in other words, learning. In his habilitation thesis, Lewin outlined his philosophical concept of 'genidentity', in which objects (and individuals) consist of multiple phases of the same object at different times, changing from moment to moment into distinct but genidentical objects (Lewin, 1922). This is a holistic view of reality and development: 'unity is found in multiplicity, being is found in becoming, and constancy is found in change' (Reese & Overton, 1970, p.133). It is interesting to note that German philosophers of science in the 1920s adopted Lewin's notion of genidentity, using the same principle to articulate their metaphors for Einsteinian theories of space-time and relativity (Reichenbach, 1957).

The link from genidentity to cognitivist theories of learning can be seen in the work of the 'phenomenologists' Combs and Snygg, who focused on the learning of children and the role of their educators. Their findings are summarised here by Pittenger and Gooding, and the connection to gestalt, holistic thinking is apparent:

'Learning is a process of discovering one's personal relationship to and with people things and ideas. Learning results in and from a differentiation of the phenomenal field of the individual… Further differentiation of the phenomenological field occurs as an individual recognises some inadequacy of a present organisation. When a change is needed to maintain or enhance the phenomenal self, it is made by the individual as the right and proper thing to do. The role of the teacher is to facilitate this process… Given a healthy organism, positive environmental influences, and a non-restrictive set of percepts of self, there appears to be no foreseeable end to the perceptions possible for the individual' (Pittenger & Gooding, 1971, pp.136,144,150-151).

These theories had a major influence upon the development of a 'child-centred' or 'progressive' approach to education in schools in the mid-late 20th century, especially in the USA and to a lesser extent in Europe. The progressive approach towards children's learning remains a key element of contemporary pedagogical thinking, but has not been within controversy and criticism. This thesis, however, is focused on the role that cognitivist theories have played within the training, preparation and development of prospective teachers, and I will therefore concentrate on the implications of these theories to models for mentoring and adult learning that have been articulated in the literature, beginning with Schön and Kolb.

The Reflective Tradition (Schön)

Dewey included the notion of 'reflection' within a theory of learning and development based on self-actualisation. Reflection was defined as 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Dewey, 1997, p.9).

Schön built on this proposition in the 1980s with his exploration of the learning undertaken by adult professional practitioners, including teachers. Schön stated that a professional operates through a process of 'knowing-in-action', drawing on existing skills and experience to address a given situation; however, professional development, learning and the acquisition of further skills occurs mainly through the reflection. This could be either 'reflection-on-action' – a retrospective process – or 'reflection-in-action', which is contemporaneous to the events being reflected upon and undertaken when confronted by an unfamiliar situation which one's 'knowing-in-action' cannot fully address (Schön, 1983). The link to the cognitivist tradition of learning theory is very apparent.

Schön's notion of learning through reflection is particularly suited to adult learning, as an existing body of skills and knowledge is a prerequisite upon which the reflective activity can build. In the case of mentoring trainee teachers, the issue of acquiring this body of knowledge, skills and experience to reflect upon remains; McIntyre believes that the purer, Deweyian reflective approach has a limited application to ITT, as student teachers, at least initially, have very little experience to reflect upon and the process therefore has limited value to them (McIntyre, 1983).

Experiential learning (Kolb)

Kolb draws directly from Lewin's work in putting together his 'cycle of adult learning' model which is based on 'concrete experience'. In Lewin's original use of the term 'action research', in the context of group dynamics and conflict resolution, a spiral of steps is described, 'each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action' (Lewin, 1946). Kolb extrapolates from this to create the theory of experiential learning applicable to all adult learning, based on the four-step cycle of concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualisation; and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). As with Schön, the emphasis in this process is within the learner and their cognitive processes.

As will be seen, Kolb's model of learning has been influential in the design of subsequent models for adult learning and mentoring, although extrapolating from the context Lewin worked within has not escaped criticism:

> 'Kolb and Fry detour by adapting Lewin's theory of experiential learning in groups to learning qua learning… Whereas experiential learning techniques and action-research methods may facilitate change and even learning in adults in groups, they do not represent an epistemological explanation for how humans know or come to learn' (Webb, 1980, p.16).

More significantly, the model of a 'cycle' (or 'spiral of development') has been criticised, given that 'the idea of stages or steps does not sit well with the reality of thinking' (Smith, 2001, p.6). In reviewing the model generally, it can be said that 'whilst Kolb may have identified many valid aspects of learning in his model it may well be too simplistic to reflect the full complexity of the learning process' (Rice, 2008, p.103).

Facilitative learning (Brookfield)

Brookfield's notion of 'facilitative learning' also draws heavily from the theoretical inheritance of Schön and Lewin. Brookfield works exclusively within the field of adult learners, who he defines as 'proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances rather than as reactive individuals, buffeted by uncontrollable forces of circumstance' (Brookfield, 1986, p.11).

As with Combs and Syngg, 'the role of the teacher is to facilitate this process'; in the context of teaching adults, this involves 'assisting in the development of a group culture in which adults can feel free to challenge one another and feel comfortable with being challenged'. The notion of adults learning through a 'group culture' closely follows the work of Kolb, and learning through challenge that of Daloz (see below). Like McIntyre, Brookfield refines the purer self-reflective approach of Dewey, and sees the 'facilitating educator' having a key role in the process, through 'presenting alternate ways of interpreting the world', including 'alternatives on their personal, political, work and social lives' which they might not want to consider (Brookfield, 1986, pp.14, 286).

Brookfield explains that his concept of facilitation is grounded in 'humanistic psychology – a respect for participants in the teaching-learning transaction, a commitment to collaborative modes of programme development, and an acknowledgement of the educational value of life experiences' (Brookfield, 1986, p.285). Brookfield works towards the implications for practice, including the design and structuring of programmes for learning. The association with cognitivist traditions is clear, with his exploration of adults' 'motives for learning' which lead to 'six principles of facilitation': voluntary participation; mutual respect; collaborative spirit; action and reflection; critical reflection; and self-direction (ibid., pp.9-20).

Transformative learning (Mezirow)

Mezirow develops the notion that an individual's circumstances and past experience are an important element in the learning process; Mezirow considers learning itself to be a transformative process: 'learning involves assessment or re-assessment of assumptions... reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic or otherwise invalid' (Mezirow, 1991, p.6).

Mezirow's approach can be seen as a cognitivist or even constructivist theory of education, although the teacher continues to have a key role in creating a community of adult learners 'united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience' (Cranton, 1994). At the core of the theory is the process of 'perspective transformation', which leads to 'the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of self' (Elias, 1997, p.3).

Transformative learning theory is in some ways more than just a theory of learning, as it 'rescues the belaboured concepts of freedom, justice, democratic participation and equality from attack… it holds these values, along with tolerance, education, openness and caring are necessary to the ideal of undistorted communication'; the implications for practice here requires 'a conscious effort by the educator to establish and enforce norms in the learning situation that neutralise or significantly reduce the influence of power and prestige, the win/lose dialogue and the hegemony of instrumental rationality found elsewhere in society' (Mezirow, 1997, pp.12-13). This will be relevant in the discussions that follow later in this chapter, regarding notions of power and control in the mentoring process.

Cognitive dissonance theory (Daloz – Festinger)

With a particular focus on teaching and mentoring, Daloz states that learning is best facilitated if adult learners are 'both supported and challenged' by their educational environment. In terms of the underlying theory of how learning operates, this is very close to what is proposed by Mezirow and Brookfield, and qualitatively similar to Schön's tradition of reflective learning.

To some extent, though, Daloz draws from a distinct psychological theoretical tradition, that of cognitive dissonance. This is related, in terms of the emphasis on the cognitive process. Cognitive

dissonance theory was developed in the 1950s by Leon Festinger to explain how individuals resolve two incompatible and contradictory notions (dissonance). Festinger focuses particularly on negative situations; individuals justify their behaviour in the face of conflicting information by adjusting their cognitive process rather than adapting their behaviour. Festingerian cognitive dissonance is exemplified by adults who continue to smoke in the face of evidence that it risks their health, and in how cult members respond to a predicted doomsday passing without incident (Festinger, et al., 1956)

By contrast, Daloz sees dissonance as a positive force, generated by the educator challenging the preconceptions and assumptions of the adult learner. As dissonance creates an uncomfortable cognitive state, the learner is forced to adapt or transform their perspective (the similarity to Mezirow, above, is clear) – in other words, to learn. Daloz also emphasises the functional need for challenge to be balanced by 'support'; taking this forward, models have been developed for the context of ITT proposing the positive outcome when support and challenge are appropriately balanced – 'confident, reflective practitioner progressing up the organisation' – and also the effects of too little support – 'attempts initiatives without reflection' – or too little challenge – 'remains entrenched in existing practices' (Elliott & Calderhead, 1994).

Andragogy (Knowles)

Knowles adopted the term 'andragogy', with its associations of adult-focused learning, to define his theories. There have been different explanations of what andragogy actually is: 'an empirical descriptor of adult learning styles; a conceptual anchor from which adult teaching behaviours can be derived...' (Brookfield, 1986); Knowles has progressively refined his definition to represent a set of 'assumptions about [adult] learners and learning' (Knowles et al., 1998, p.64).

Knowles' theories of adult learning are based on six principles: the need to know; the learner's self-concept; the role of experience; readiness to learn; orientation to learning; and motivation (Knowles et al., 2005, pp.62-63). For example, Knowles contends that an adult is defined as such when, psychologically, they 'have arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for one's own life, of being self-directing'; and yet, when adult learners enter a learning environment they are conditioned to respond in the child-teacher relational context from their own school-days. If the teacher succumbs to this expectation and adopts a traditional pedagogical approach, this creates 'conflict with their psychological need to be self-directing, and their energy is diverted away from learning to dealing with this internal conflict' (Knowles, 1984, p.9).

Knowles' andragogical model insists on a dual role for the teacher of adults: primarily they are a facilitator, gateway and signpost to other resources for learning that the adult learner can exploit, and only secondarily as a content resource themselves. A good andragogical process consists of several discrete elements, which can be summarised as the setting of an appropriate climate for learning, and involving the learner in all elements of the learning process (Knowles, 1984, pp.14-18). There are strong similarities with the application of facilitative learning theory suggested by Brookfield.

Summary: Schön to Knowles

This represents only a very brief survey of cognitivist theories of learning; however, it is not necessary to explore each in depth to demonstrate the shared heritage of these theories, and their relevance to the context of adult learning represented by ITT. The central point is that 'the act of learning is... largely initiated by the learner, exploring and extending their own understanding' (Rogers, 2002), which could be taken as a reasonable general summary of cognitivist theories of learning.

Situated and Work-based Learning Theories

The notion of situated learning makes the assertion that 'there is no such thing as "learning" sui generis... [rather], participation in everyday life may be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice, that is, as learning' (Lave, 2009, p.201). Situated learning theory builds on the principles of cognitivist learning theory and develops earlier theories of adult learning to argue that learning is a social process involving co-construction of knowledge which cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place: the 'community of practice' – a group of individuals with (to a certain extent) a shared purpose, knowledge and skills and sense of identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The notion of situated learning has resonance with the mentoring of trainee teachers as it implicitly considers the context in which the learning is taking place; as Lave says, 'decontextualized learning activity is a contradiction in terms' (Lave, 2009, p.202).

In terms of the development of teachers, the mentoring process has been described as a co-construction of professional identity within the community of practice represented by the school, with the trainee taking an increasingly central role in the profession through a process of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. Further development of Lave and Wenger's ideas of situated learning have emphasised the importance of practical problem-solving approaches in a social context for higher-level learning (Hung, 2002), a nuance which is suggestive of recent policy trends in ITT which emphasise the importance of school-based experiences and 'real-life' situations for developing expertise in teaching. Wenger developed the idea of the community of practice to propose that the construction of role-identity is based upon various 'modes of belonging' (or, conversely, marginalization) within a community of practice (Wenger, 2002). Whilst the majority of attention in this conceptual framework has focused on the construction of the trainee teacher's professional identity, a 'Wengerian matrix framework' has also been developed to understand the construction of the teacher's identity as mentor within the mentoring process (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010). Whilst the trainee teacher constructs their identity through a process of belonging and participation within the community of practice of school-teachers, a mentor might be said to construct an identity for themselves as a 'teacher-mentor' through modes of belonging within an overlapping community of practice for mentoring. As the identity of the trainee teacher develops, it influences the interactions within the mentoring process, the interactions in turn influence identity formation, and the same reciprocal process is underway with the mentor. Jones has applied Lave and Wenger's notions of

legitimate peripheral participation to the field of mentoring trainee and early career teachers specifically, articulating the process as 'learning by socialization': 'becoming a member of a community of practice is concomitant with participating in social practice, which in turn facilitates learning' (Jones, 2006, p.60). Jones considers socialization and integration into the school's community as crucial for the development of trainee teachers, as the sense of affiliation and security which comes with 'fitting in' are prerequisite to engaging in effective critical reflection and collaboration (ibid., p.79).

The work of Michael Eraut on work-based learning is part of the cognitivist tradition and has relevance here, with its emphasis on the learning of adult professionals in various fields, including teaching. Eraut uses the term 'informal learning' to describe the process by which professional knowledge and competence are acquired; this term 'provides a simple contrast to formal learning or training that suggests greater flexibility or freedom for learners. It recognises the social significance of learning from other people, but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization' (Eraut, 2004, p.247).

Informal, work-based learning which is centred on professional competence can be largely invisible, because the process of learning, the resultant knowledge and the discourse and terminology of such learning can be implicit, tacit and distinct from traditional propositions of learning and knowledge. This knowledge of what constitutes effective professional practice may not be explicitly defined and codified – Eraut refers to 'uncodified cultural knowledge' – in general terms, this may be common across a professional field, however each individual brings their own knowledge and capability to this process and, most significantly for an ITT programme based in a large number of schools:

> 'The theory of situated learning postulates that the personal meaning of a concept, principle or value is significantly influenced by the situations in which it was encountered and the situations in which it was used. Hence the personal meaning of a concept or theory is shaped by the series of contexts in which it has been used. …The sequence of such contexts is [therefore] probably unique to each individual practitioner' (Eraut, 2010, p.2).

Eraut distinguishes between 'implicit learning', which leads to unconscious expectations, 'reactive learning' and 'deliberative learning'; the latter two may also be considered elements of work-based learning based on spontaneous reflection on events and planned discussions and reviews, respectively (Eraut, 2004, p.250). In the case of both implicit and reactive learning, the learning may or may not involve the agency of another individual. Eraut would therefore conceptualise the process of mentoring a trainee teacher within a school setting as one which not only goes beyond the boundaries of any defined learning events or episodes, such as a regular meeting between trainee and mentor, but also beyond the interactions between trainee and the other professionals in that work-based setting: those features which Jones identifies as an important part of the socialization of the new professional within the community of practice. Eraut highlights the trainee's development of professional knowledge and competence as an individual process of construction, based upon their

immersion in the work-based setting: 'This phenomenon is much broader in scope than the implicit learning normally associated with the concept of socialisation' (Eraut, 2010, p.2).

It has been argued that formal models of teacher development, such as induction programmes for newly qualified teachers, place particular emphasis on deliberative learning models, with specific learning 'sessions', regular reviews and targets set to meet pre-defined standards of competence. This risks overlooking the significance of reactive learning, which is based on the 'unpredictability of life in the classroom'; it is suggested that for many early career teachers learning is 'implicit or reactive, collaborative [rather than individual] and horizontal [rather than vertical (Guile & Griffiths, 2001)]' (Williams, 2003, p.216).

There is a risk in following this conceptual pathway too far, in that consideration of the influence of the social context and the trainee's individual agency reaches the point where the role of the mentor becomes excessively diminished. The importance of the 'expert' in facilitating the situated learning of the novice has been developed through the concept of 'cognitive apprenticeship', which outlines strategies to facilitate the development of professional competence via 'modelling, coaching, scaffolding, fading, articulation, reflection and exploration'. This process puts into practice the principles of andragogy and situated learning, increasingly transferring the responsibility for the learning to the learner, whilst retaining the importance of the expert making explicit their own situational knowledge to the learner and drawing attention to the key features of successful and effective professional practice (Cope et al., 2003, p.353).

Setting mentoring within theories of learning

Definitions of the mentor

Fitting the role of the mentor and the practice of mentoring neatly within theories of learning remains a challenge due to the variety of meanings and definitions which can be given to the word 'mentor' and the wide range of contexts in which it can be applied. The etymology of the word, from Ancient Greek legend via 17th-century French literature (Fénelon, 1699), has an emotional resonance which speaks of protection, caring, support and guidance; the passing of wisdom and experience from one generation to the next. The action of mentoring is traditionally based on a dyadic relationship between a novice or inexperienced individual, typically younger than the expert mentor. In its modern context, however, the word has been applied to a variety of roles and activities in a range of fields which all vary, to a greater or lesser extent, from the original meaning. Mentoring can take place in the context of youth mentoring, social rehabilitation, business leadership, human resource development, vocational training and induction, counselling, coaching, co-coaching; and across a range of cultural and social traditions.

For example, Clutterbuck defines mentoring as 'off-line help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking' (Clutterbuck, 2004, p.12). 'Off-line' refers to a mentor not being a line-manager; 'help' covers a variety of activities and resources and could

include giving advice or listening; 'significant transitions' refers to the need for a clear objective and benefit for the participants in the mentoring relationship. Clutterbuck uses the following terms to define the activity of mentoring:

> 'A partnership between two people built on trust… its primary focus tends to be the acquisition of people skills which enable people to operate effectively at high levels of management… the aim is to build the capability of the mentees to the point of self-reliance… the mentoring relationship is confidential… [the mentor] is there to help the learner manage his or her own learning' (Clutterbuck, 2004, pp.12-13).

However, Clutterbuck discusses mentoring in the context of human resource development, social entrepreneurism and 'peer mentoring' (Clutterbuck, 2004, pp.4-5). There is no reference to mentoring in the context of professional learning, such as in the training of teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses or police. There is no element within this mentoring which involves assessment; instead, mentoring is more about sponsorship, networking and the 'acquisition of people skills'.

As well as the divergence in meaning between mentoring in a business context and as a part of induction into a profession, there is a disparity between what is understood by mentoring in the field of teacher training in different countries. In literature focused on the US context, the role of the mentor is defined in distinctly psychosocial terms, and the mentor is far more of a pastoral figure than a developer of skills and knowledge. Discussions of mentoring trainee teachers in the US tend to focus on issues which enhance career advancement, such as sponsorship, exposure and coaching; whereas the British tradition of mentoring is more likely to focus on learning (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2003, p.146). Literature relating to the mentoring in the US also tends to refer to the trainee as the 'protégé', implying a more protective role for the mentor than in England, where the role is also associated with assessment and acting as gatekeeper to the profession. For example, Anderson and Shannon (based at the University of Minnesota) reviewed the concept of the mentor and concluded that mentoring is:

> 'A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé' (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p.29).

Casey and Claunch, coordinators of induction programmes at the University of New Mexico, define the role of mentor as 'role model, counsellor, teacher, supporter and friend. The protégé receives reinforcement, affirmation, acceptance, and confirmation from the mentor' (Casey & Claunch, 2005, p.96). Alleman defines the mentor as a person of greater rank or expertise who teaches, counsels, guides and develops a novice in an organisation or profession. There are nine stated functions of mentoring: giving information; providing political information; challenging assignments; counselling; helping with career moves; developing trust; show-casing protégés' achievements;

protecting; and developing a personal relationship (Alleman, 1986). It is notable that this definition pre-dates the introduction of a more formalised role for schools and school-based mentors in initial teacher training in England, as defined and required Circular 9/92.

More recent definitions of mentoring trainee teachers in England integrate both cognitivist traditions of self-directed adult learning with the requirements to meet pre-defined standards against which behaviour can be measured. Fletcher defines mentoring as:

> 'A dynamic process whereby a teacher new to the profession not only learns the necessary skills… with a more experienced colleague but also develops the attitudes, practice and knowledge that are conducive to bringing about pupils' learning in class… Ensuring that trainee teachers can demonstrate their ability to meet the burgeoning number of standards for qualified teacher status is only part of the picture' (Fletcher, 2000, p.4).

Shaw provides the following as a model job description for a school-based mentor, which also combines both cognitivist and behaviourist elements, with more emphasis on the assessment of observable behaviour:

> 'To provide professional support to students or new teachers... with particular reference to classroom teaching skills; to coach, guide, counsel, advise and assist students and new teachers; to be a source of information about subject content, teaching methods, training issues, school procedures; to assess the needs of the trainee and from that assessment plan jointly a training programme; to facilitate the trainee's access to information; to remove any constraints which hinder the trainee in following the training programme and/or developing their teaching skills, this may involve negotiation with others; to be involved in the formative and summative assessment of the trainee's teaching performance and to enable him/her to evaluate and reflect upon their own performance' (Shaw, 1992, p.138).

Handbooks for mentoring, focused on an audience seeking to successfully negotiate the competency-based framework of ITT, tend to adopt a more functional approach. Turner and Bash define the role of the mentor as 'listening to the mentee's concerns and answering their questions; demonstrating and explaining; observing performance and giving feedback; discussing problems and dilemmas; giving advice and setting targets for further development' (Turner & Bash, 1999, p.68).

The competency-based system of ITT has been criticised as conceptually behaviourist, 'with its implications that the significance of theoretical knowledge in training is a purely technical or instrumental one' (Elliott, 1993, p.17); as discussed above this trend has been criticised, with these systems containing the potential to 'reduce teachers to little more than technicians… this has deprofessionalised both teachers and teacher educators' (Arthur et al., 1997, p.27).

Within the frameworks for teacher competency there are elements suggestive of cognitivist approaches to professional learning and references to reflective practice and self-directed adult

learning principles. For example, the 2007 iteration of the Teacher Standards include the requirement that trainee teachers should:

> 'Reflect on and improve their practice, and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their developing professional needs' (Q7a)
>
> 'Have a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation…' (Q8)
>
> '…Be open to coaching and mentoring' (Q9) (TDA, 2007).

However, Schön postulated that learning cannot take place 'in the nexus of official policies at the centre'; instead, the role of the 'centre' is, or should be, 'as the facilitator of society's learning, rather than as society's trainer' (Schön, 1973, p.166).

The CUREE National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching draws together a range of literature and conceptualizations to define mentoring as: 'a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions'. Activities to achieve this include:

> 'Identifying learning goals; supporting progression; developing learners' control over their learning; active listening; modelling, observing, articulating and discussing practice to raise awareness; shared learning experiences; providing feedback, guidance and, when necessary, direction; review and action planning; assessing, appraising and accrediting practice; brokering a range of support' (CUREE, 2005).

What is most apparent is how the majority of literature relating to mentoring in ITT does not make explicit any theoretical framework on which the work is based. Hansford et al. conducted a recent review in this area. From a pool of 159 studies into mentoring of a theoretical or descriptive nature, only 22 could be identified as being underpinned by a conceptual framework (Hansford, et al., 2003). There is also a marked variation in how mentoring and the mentor are defined. In short, 'there is no one model of mentoring… [because] the role of the mentor carries a variety of definitions within different contexts' (Yau, 1995, p.48). The result is a lack of conceptual clarity for those undertaking the role and significant diversity in the experience of those within the mentoring process. Jacobi highlighted the 'troubling issue' of this 'continued lack of clarity about the antecedents, outcomes, characteristics, and mediators of mentoring relationships' (Jacobi, 1991, p.505).

Mentoring in relation to models of teacher development

The diversity of approaches to mentoring has been explored in relation to both different contexts and different stages in the development of trainee teachers. Brooks and Sikes identified six 'models of mentoring': the apprenticeship model; the competency model; the reflective practitioner model; the reflective coach model; the critical friend model; the co-enquirer model (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

The apprenticeship model involves a relationship based on a clear hierarchy and involves the modelling of behaviour and the transmission of knowledge from expert to novice. This model

derives from 19th century traditions of teacher preparation. It might be supposed that this is a model which has limited currency in contemporary approaches to mentoring trainee teachers, however, as shown above, the conceptualisation of teaching as a 'craft' and the process of teacher training 'based on apprentice-style training in classrooms' in policy statements leaves open the possibility that, in certain contexts, an apprentice model of mentoring is exercised in schools (Freedman, et al., 2008). The notion of hierarchy (and concomitant issues of control) in the practice of mentoring is certainly apparent and will be explored below.

The competency model is defined by Brooks and Sikes as mentoring which is directed towards specified competencies; this is a process of training in behavioural outcomes. This can be considered a necessary approach in the context of systems required to control the quality of teacher preparation and teacher workforce supply. A model of mentoring which is 'programme-oriented' (as opposed to 'development-oriented') is 'a logical one to adopt in the formulation of frameworks of competent performance which must apply to large groups of teachers, for example, national proficiency requirements' (Roelefs & Sanders, 2007, p.125). Testing cognitive skills on a similar scale carries not only systematic but conceptual challenges: 'learning objectives for cognitive skills are usually described in operational (behavioural) terms. Clearly, this linkage creates confusion' (Westera, 2001). Although a competency model may be a necessary element of the mentoring process, recent research focused on the experience of trainee teachers has shown that the competency framework is not the key influence upon the design of ITT programmes. The indication given by training providers were that 'developing a reflective practitioner' is more central (Hobson et al., 2006, pp.244-51), suggestive of Brooks and Sikes' reflective practitioner model.

Each of the remaining four models of mentoring identified by Brooks and Sikes follow the traditions from Schön to Knowles, Eraut and Wenger, with an explicit reference to reflective practice, non-hierarchical relationships, self-directed learning and the mentor as facilitator of learning (Brooks & Sikes, 1997). Elliott summarises the notion of a reflective practitioner as:

> 'Learning to reflect about one's experience of complex human situations holistically. It is always a form of experiential learning. The outcome of such learning is not knowledge stored in memory in prepositional form, but 'holistic understandings' of particular situations which are stored in memory as case repertoires' (Elliott, 1991) (my emphases).

It is possible that each of the six models of mentoring outlined by Brooks and Sikes could be drawn upon in different contexts, depending on the conceptualization of teaching and teacher training by the school and mentor involved, and also on the requirements and assessment structures of the ITT programme.

Fuller and Brown outlined distinct stages in the development of trainee and early-career teachers based on a model of 'categories of concern'. In this model, it was proposed that the trainee is sequentially 'concerned' with a number of factors such as self, survival, teaching tasks, pupil learning, materials and curriculum. Initially the trainee is concerned with those more immediate to

them – self, 'survival' in the classroom (i.e. behaviour management) and their delivery of 'teaching'; over time, the concerns will shift to the consequences of their actions (e.g. pupil learning) and the context within which their actions take place (e.g. curriculum) (Fuller & Brown, 1975).

Maynard and Furlong applied this model to their conceptualization of mentoring which encompasses similar 'phases' to meet the changing needs or concerns of the trainee teacher at different points in a training programme. The stages of development are given as 'early idealism'; 'survival'; 'recognizing difficulties'; 'hitting the plateau'; and 'moving on' (Maynard & Furlong, 1995, p.12). Maynard and Furlong suggest that mentors should be aware of this process of development and adjust their practice accordingly. Reference is made to the models of mentoring identified by Brooks and Sikes – apprenticeship, competency and reflective – and it is suggested that the practice of mentoring should move through these models as the development of the trainee teacher progresses and their knowledge base grows:

> 'In the early stages… when trainees are still 'learning to see', mentors need to act as collaborative teachers, acting as interpreters and models. Once trainees have… started to take increased responsibility for the teaching process itself, mentors need to extend their role… to develop a more systematic approach to training, acting as instructors... Finally, once trainees have achieved basic competence, the role of the mentor needs to develop further… as co-enquirers with the aim of promoting critical reflection… by the trainee' (Maynard & Furlong, 1995, p.22).

These models of the trainee teacher's professional development passing through predictable and discrete 'stages' have been questioned:

> 'At a very broad level it is certainly possible to see the student-teachers' progress in terms of a gradual shift from consideration of their own classroom performance to more detailed consideration of the learning processes and achievements of the pupils they are teaching… However, there are… important qualifications that need to be acknowledged… The evidence suggests that this kind of sequential view is too simplistic' (Burn et al., 2003).

Ertmer and Newby attempted to assimilate these models in a graphical representation of different mentoring strategies to be adopted at different stages. With one axis representing the level of the learner's 'task knowledge', which rises as development occurs, and the other the level of cognitive processing required by the task, they demonstrate how different points of intersection between these factors require behavioural, cognitive and constructivist strategies:

> 'A behavioural approach can effectively facilitate mastery of the content of a profession (knowing what); cognitive strategies are useful in teaching problem-solving tactics where defined facts and rules are applied in different situations (knowing how); and constructivist strategies are especially suited to dealing with ill-defined problems through reflection-in-action' (Ertmer & Newby, 1993, p.68).

The difference in this proposal is that the strategies adopted do not follow a predictable pattern from beginning to end of the training period, but are responsive to the nature of the training task to be completed.

Theoretical implications of mentor selection and training

The process behind the selection of teachers to work as mentors in an ITT programme can be implicitly indicative of the regard given to mentoring activities by both school and programme managers and may be suggestive of the quality of mentoring provision. The mentor selection process within ITT programmes can be categorised as either 'ad-hoc' or 'systematic' (Kajs, 2002).

A small-scale study of mentors in the post-compulsory sector found that 63% of respondents had not actively sought out the role of mentor, but were designated as a mentor by others (Cunningham, 2004, p.276). It is claimed that in the US, 'the prevailing practice is that campus principals, on their own, select teachers to serve as mentors for novice teachers' (Kajs, 2002, p.60). More systematic approaches to mentor selection have been proposed, where school leaders or selection committees made up of school managers and HEI tutors draw up a set of defined criteria against which selections are made (ibid.). An example of a systematic approach to mentor selection is the guide developed by one state's Education Department: 'mentor teachers are selected based on defined selection criteria… potential mentors complete an application… [and] an induction committee selects mentors with input from the [school] principal' (Maine Dept of Education, 2007, pp.31,41).

Once mentors are in place they require induction, training and development; in the English partnership model of ITT, the HEI provider is typically responsible for this. The value of this training in ensuring the quality of mentoring has been made and reiterated by successive select committee investigations into the quality of teacher training (House of Commons, 2010a, p.4; House of Commons, 2012, p.33). There are, however, no statutory or prescribed pedagogies or curricula for mentor training; rather, each HEI provider develops its own models and approaches to prepare teachers to act as mentors. Wang and Odell have reviewed and analysed three 'basic models of mentor preparation': the knowledge transmission model; the theory-and-practice connection model; and the collaborative inquiry model (Wang & Odell, 2002, pp.525-30). Evidence of the respective impact of these three models on trainee teachers' professional development is scarce. However, it is apparent that both the theory-and-practice connection and collaborative inquiry models of mentor preparation are built upon Knowles' six principles of andragogy, and that these models work from the assumption that both the process of mentoring and the preparation and development of mentors should be based upon adult learning theories. It has been suggested that 'if mentoring planners take seriously the fact that they are working with adults who bring a great deal of experience to the learning situation, then they need to involve mentors and mentees from the outset' (English, 1999, p.196). In a Hong Kong study it has been shown that the professional benefits which mentors accrue from their practice are based upon their collaboration with trainee teachers, other mentors and HEI tutors, as well as on a process of self-reflection. (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). This shows that the

development of a 'learning community of shared visions and teaching goals' can benefit the professional development, and thus the quality, of the mentor.

Systematic mentor preparation programmes based on these principles have been developed, implemented and evaluated. As part of a strategic priority to develop a quality teaching force, the Hong Kong Institute of Education developed a series of 'Mentor Support and Development' (MSD) programmes based explicitly upon theory-and-practice connection principles (Tang & Choi, 2005). The stated focus of these programmes was to 'prepare mentor trainees as effective change agents in reform in teaching and learning'. Two MSD programmes were developed, designed for 30-hours and 60-hours of instruction; the intended constituency for these programmes was analogous to the English designation of 'subject mentors' and 'professional mentors' respectively (ibid., p.389).

In terms of content, it has been suggested that mentor training programmes focus either upon the practice of mentoring or on the knowledge base of mentoring (Garvey & Alred, 2000). This echoes earlier propositions that professional knowledge can be classified as either theoretical or craft-practical knowledge (Eraut, 1994) – a dichotomy which goes to the heart of assumptions about the nature of professionalism, in teaching or more generally. In discussing the professional development of mentors, Kajs claims that the 'prevailing practice' is for mentor training to focus more on programme logistics than training in coaching techniques; defined as 'instructional' rather than 'educational'.

> 'A presumption is that teachers' competence as classroom instructors is sufficient for the mentoring role… [however] mentors need to be familiar with adult education principles to appropriately guide novice teachers in a learning process. While they may have sufficient understanding of pedagogical principles appropriate for classroom youth, they may lack techniques in working with adults' (Kajs, 2002, pp.62-63).

In their assessment of a mentor training programme for a PGCE programme, Youens and Bailey exemplify the instructional emphasis within the typical ITT mentor training curriculum (Youens & Bailey, 2004). A curriculum for mentor training which places more emphasis on educational content has been recommended by Capel and Blair. Working from the basis that 'consideration needs to be given to whether, and how, trainee teachers can be supported in developing and using deep approaches to learning', and that 'trainee teachers accept the established views of their mentors and copy their mentor', it follows that 'one area for development is the role of the mentor and hence the focus of mentor training'. This would mean that training might include reference to models of mentoring, discussions of the role of the mentor, and theories of teacher education such as 'zones of proximal development'; training should 'focus on the mentor adopting the role of significant other who supports the trainee teacher to a position of increased capability in terms of their knowledge, skill and understanding' (Capel & Blair, 2007, pp.16-17).

Drawing from the principles of adult education, English suggests 'the opening educational sessions should focus on what the mentors and mentees need to know about mentorship… recall clearly their

own experiences of mentoring… and think thoroughly through their beliefs and assumptions about mentoring, teaching, and learning' (English, 1999, p.198). In this, HEI partners have a clear role to play, drawing upon their strengths and particular areas of expertise: 'What is needed for mentors is much more support from higher education institutions, clearly pointing them in the direction of appropriate research, from which practical implications may be drawn and used as a basis for mentoring students' (Evans & Abbott, 1997, p.145).

Summary

It is apparent that there are not only diverse models of mentoring and definitions of the role of the mentor, even within the limited field of ITT, but that these models derive from both behaviourist and cognitivist theories of learning, depending on the purpose of different elements within the process of mentoring and/or conceptions of the development of trainee teachers as adult learners. In some cases discussions of mentoring acknowledge the educational philosophies of Kolb and Knowles, emphasising the role of the trainee as a self-directing learner, and the relationship between mentor and trainee being characterised by enabling, empowerment and collaboration (Morton-Cooper & Palmer, 2003, pp.101,103). In others, there is a recognition of the aspect of the role which involves summative assessment, acting as a gatekeeper to the profession and validating trainees' learning through observable behaviour and actions (Smith, 2001); because of this supervisory aspect the mentoring relationship, for all the overt expressions of collegiality, inevitably falls under the 'shadow of control' (Cullingford, 2006, p.xiv).

Given this diversity, it is not surprising that assessments of the concepts, theories and knowledge bases that mentors and trainees draw from during the mentoring process are so varied and incoherent. These studies commonly suggest that those involved in the mentoring process draw from their own personal 'hinterland' of experiences, ahead of explicit principles of adult or work-based learning. This is the case for both mentors (Jones & Straker, 2006; Rice, 2008) and trainees (Drever & Cope, 1999). It is apparent that to gain a fuller and richer understanding of the mentoring process we need to consider interpretive models of mentoring which attempt to bridge the gap between the assessment of actions and cognitive development and also which take account of the factors beyond the one-to-one relationship between mentor and trainee: the architecture of the mentoring process.

<u>Interpretive models of mentoring and architecture for mentoring</u>

Attempts have been made to bridge the gap between the focus on observable practice and cognitivist theories. This begins with a re-evaluation of what is meant by 'teacher competence'. An initial distinction to make is between 'competence', which is a comprehensive and general concept reflecting the ability of a person to perform effectively in a role, and 'competencies', which are narrower, atomistic descriptions of particular abilities, skills or attributes required for a role (McConnell, 2001; Mulder, 2001, p.76). Considering competence in more holistic terms, it is suggested that teacher competence cannot be wholly encapsulated in observable behaviour; rather,

competence is manifested in a variety of ways (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Competence in teaching has, at various times and in various settings, been attributed to one or more of the following factors: personality traits and attributes (Getzels & Jackson, 1963); level of subject knowledge, including both content and pedagogical techniques (Tom & Valli, 1990); particular actions and teacher behaviour which contribute to pupil learning (Brophy & Good, 1986); teachers' cognitive abilities and the decision-making processes undertaking before, during and after teaching (Verloop, 1988; Kagan, 1990); and the practical knowledge for managing specific situations which arise in the classroom (Beijaard & Verloop, 1996).

Each of these different dimensions of competence require different assessment techniques, whether standardised knowledge tests, questionnaires, psychological tests, observational instruments, stimulated recall interviews or assessments of pupil learning. Roelofs and Sanders have developed an interpretive model for assessing teacher competence which takes account of this multi-dimensional conceptualisation of teacher competence and which also takes account of pupil learning, classroom climate, teachers' actions and decision-making, and the knowledge, skill and attitudes which act as a base for the teachers' actions and decisions (Roelofs & Sanders, 2003). It follows that approaches to the development of trainee teachers should similarly take account of these different elements of teacher competence, incorporating behaviourist approaches and observable actions as well as support for cognitive development.

Considerations of mentoring in the literature, particularly those which are presented as practical guides or handbooks for mentors in schools, tend to focus on the interactions between mentor and trainee (Edwards & Collinson, 1996; Harrison, 2002). Particular attention has been given to the nature of the dialogue between mentor and trainee in 'mentoring meetings', which may make reference to the field of educational and academic subject discourses (Arthur et al., 1997, p.117) or to the development of mentor feedback to a more reciprocal 'dialogic review' (Stopp, 2008). Within this section of the literature are more general explorations of how mentors can encourage and promote reflective practice and thinking in trainees (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Burchell & Westmoreland, 1999; Husu et al., 2006).

The mentoring process, however, is more than a dyadic relationship in a contextual vacuum; the notion of situated learning and the role of professional communities of practice would suggest that the context of the school in which the mentoring process takes place has a significant influence on the nature and effectiveness of that process. Cunningham has considered this issue and proposed that the institutional context can be considered as a kind of 'architecture' for the mentoring process. He contends that 'effective mentoring needs solid institutional backing'. The term architecture is used not only because this backing acts as support and buttress to the actions of mentor and trainee, but also because, just as well- and poorly-designed buildings can influence the morale, efficacy and experience of those who inhabit them, so too can 'an organisation lacking the appropriate

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architecture be prone to ineffective, under-resourced and under-valued mentoring' (Cunningham, 2012, p.17).

Cunningham identifies seven distinct factors within an 'architecture for mentoring', each of which by its strength or deficiency would influence the effectiveness of the mentoring provision. The first is 'an institutional commitment to mentoring', which includes provision of sufficient time for teachers acting as mentors to undertake the role effectively, and generally ensuring mentors have a sense that the school recognises and rewards their efforts. The second is 'an appropriate institutional ethos', based on a sense of collegiality between school leadership and mentors, which in turn supports the reciprocity of the relationship between mentor and trainee. Cunningham makes explicit reference to Lave and Wenger's models of communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation. The third factor are the resources available for mentoring, which might include physical spaces set aside for mentoring meetings, access to relevant texts and journals and investment in electronic systems and networks which support mentoring within and beyond the school. The fourth and fifth involve the process of mentor selection, induction, training and ongoing support, and whether this is based on an explicit rationale for how mentoring sits within the institution's mission and strategic plans, rather than mentoring being a role which staff are 'landed with'. The sixth factor involves issues of clarity and consistency based on a principle of shared ownership, including the provision of a contract between school and mentors, which is consistent across the school. The final measure of an institution's architecture for mentoring is the nature of (or lack of) any systematic research to measure the impact of mentoring on the professional development of trainees, mentors and on pupil learning (Cunningham, 2012, pp.18-23).

The factors which Cunningham sets out are all dependent on the school and its leadership making explicit a commitment to support and value the role of the mentor, the work the mentors undertake, and the mentoring relationship. This commitment may be the responsibility of different individuals in different schools – a professional mentor, an ITT or CPD coordinator, or the headteacher – but would be perceived in the general culture of the school. This extends the notion of a novice teacher as a peripheral participant or 'bottom of the pecking order', and defines the success or otherwise of their mentoring experience by the extent to which they successfully integrate into the school's community of practice (Jones, 2006; Hobson, 2009). It suggests that the success of the mentoring is dependent on the culture of the school and the degree to which it is aligned with effective approaches to mentoring; and also on the degree to which the school's leadership is committed to promoting this culture through its workforce. It is worth noting that this 'architectural support' for mentoring is a feature which has previously not featured significantly in quality frameworks for teaching, teacher training or school leadership, or in policy discourses about ITT.

Cunningham's notion of architecture therefore provides a useful additional dimension to understanding the mentoring process in schools, one which is based on the principles of effective adult and work-based learning theory. However, the majority of ITT programmes in England are not

basely entirely in schools and the notion of architectural support for mentoring should therefore also take account of other sources of support which are present in ITT programmes, most significantly, the HEI providers and tutors who support trainees and schools to varying degrees.

The respective roles of HEI provider and school in partnership-based ITT programmes continue to shift and develop, and the nature of the support that the HEI provider could or should provide to the mentoring process, either at the institutional or personal level, is difficult to pin down. In its simplest terms the role of the HEI provider in ITT can be articulated as providing the more theoretical or contextual elements of the programme, whilst the school provides the setting for practical training in the classroom. However, the configuration of HEI-school partnership in ITT as a simple dichotomy between theory and practice risks creating a fragmented experience with trainees' learning taking place in a 'twilight zone between university and schools' (Taylor, 2008, p.65), the development of a kind of conceptual schizophrenia, and the impulse for those involved in the programme to make value judgments about one aspect over the other (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999); judgments similar to those seen in some policy statements about ITT.

The more complete portrait of what the HEI provider contributes to the partnership model is more complex; indeed, with the trend in ITT policy over the last twenty years, the role of HEI providers in ITT at all is no longer assumed: 'are universities needed or is the workplace of the school all that students need to learn to teach?' (Taylor, 2008, p.66). The 'Modes of Teacher Education' project of the early 1990s identified three different types of partnership between HEIs and schools that were evolving across England, depending on a number of local factors ranging from ideological convictions to financial constraints (Furlong, et al., 1996). The changing, complex and inconsistent nature of partnership between HEIs and schools has led to perceptions of uncertainty in relation to issues of roles, responsibilities and control (Dunne, et al., 1996).

In terms of the architecture of the mentoring process, the HEI provider can be said to enhance and support the process by providing additional resources to those derived from the school. This may include: training for mentors, both in terms of effective practice in mentoring and coaching and as an induction to the formal requirements of ITT programmes; quality assurance and accreditation of the mentoring process; and additional training sessions and support for trainee teachers.

A triadic relationship: a framework for understanding the mentoring process in ITT

Drawing this together, a conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process can be presented. At one level, the mentoring process is a complex interaction between trainee teacher and mentor with both involved in a reflective cycle of learning which is constantly moving between action, knowledge, experience, cognition and decision-making. It is a process involving the principles of adult learning and situated learning and relies on both the trainee teacher's orientation to learning and the mentor's greater knowledge and experience to facilitate the process. The actions of the mentor may involve challenging the trainee's preconceptions of teaching and what it is to be a

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teacher; it is work-based learning, unstructured and not limited to formal or scheduled events or meetings but occurring throughout the school-based experience. The role of the mentor encompasses both supporter and assessor, and trainee and mentor must both navigate this delicate distinction; as a consequence, mentoring can involve both behaviourist and cognitivist elements. The mentoring process is not just the relationship between mentor and trainee, but occurs around and between the competing pressures and priorities of the school in which it is set, and held within a substantial structure of 'architectural support' which includes support provided by a partner HEI and its tutors.

The mentoring process is not a specific event, action or approach, but something more abstract which comes out of a triadic relationship between trainee, mentor and 'supporters' within a community of practice with 'a shared vision or project' (Wenger, et al., 2002). Each participant in this relationship has a different role within and a different perception of the mentoring process, based on their responsibilities, preconceptions, perspective and experience. I define supporters as those formally responsible for different elements of architectural support for mentoring; either based in the school, a HEI, or any other agency or institution involved in the mentoring process. Supporters therefore include school-based professional mentors, HEI-based tutors and programme managers. These supporters cannot be considered as a single entity as they also comprise diverse and changing relationships (for example, between the professional mentor and the HEI tutor) which may influence the nature and coherence of the support provided to a particular mentoring experience.

This is not to diminish the importance of informal support mechanisms and networks that trainees will develop and draw from during the period of initial training. The nature and quality of the relationships between a trainee and what might be called their 'personal allies' – other trainee teachers and peer networks, friends and family, and other colleagues within the school – are critical to trainees' experience, psychological well-being and socialization into the professional community (Jones, 2006). These relationships, focused on the single point of the trainee, are not integrated into the formal systems of the mentoring process and therefore I consider them supplementary (but not marginal) to the triadic mentoring relationship.

Above all, the period of initial training is a transformative experience for all teachers. It can be an extreme experience; it can seem to be chaotic, fluid, unique, intense and challenging; and yet it is ultimately a formative and creative process. The exigencies and tribulations of becoming a qualified teacher change individuals, both professionally and personally; often taken to the limits of mental, emotional and physical capabilities – and sometimes beyond – trainees will be 'fired' into something new. In this analogy, mentoring can be represented as a crucible. The role of mentoring is to manage, mediate and direct this experience into a successful outcome; like a crucible, effective mentoring safely contains and provides substantial support for intense processes involving great heat and pressure. Like a crucible, mentoring brings shape and certainty to an alchemic transmutation; it controls a process which is intangible, transient, unsystematic, occurring in the non-linear and

unstructured space between words and actions: the creation of a construct which is qualitatively different from the original reagents; a new teacher.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

<u>Introduction</u>

Epistemological foundations

I have shown how the process of mentoring is based on cognitivist learning theory and how mentoring for ITT can be viewed through the prism of related epistemological foundations. Framing the mentoring process as a triadic relationship has implications for the methodological choices which underpin this thesis. The prominence of cognitivist and transformative theory leads to a position which is more naturalistic-interpretive than normative-scientific although, as has been observed, 'whilst there are social theories which adhere to each of these extremes, the assumptions of many social scientists are pitched somewhere in between' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.2). Generally, however, naturalistic approaches have been seen to be more appropriate in the study of human beings, on the assumption that 'the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated' (Cohen et al., 2000, p.19), and that 'the purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality' (Beck, 1979).

Previous methodological approaches to the study of mentoring

Previous studies of mentors and mentoring practice have adopted various forms of naturalistic methodology. One example adopted an interpretive approach, which placed the mentor at the centre of the research process and sought to understand not only the mentor as an individual, but their interpretations of the world. From the individual mentor's experience and understanding, a 'grounded theory' was derived. In this study, focused on the role of learning theory in mentors' practice, Rice stated that 'I have chosen to… use an interpretive approach… to assist in the understanding of mentors' personal interpretations of the surrounding world' (Rice, 2008, p.130).

Another recent study which examined 'personal models of mentoring' in the context of teacher preparation adopted a symbolic interactionist framework. Symbolic interactionism is a naturalistic approach based on the proposition that humans act from the basis of the meanings they generate, inhabiting both a natural world within which they are subject to external forces, and a social world where 'symbols', or language, allow individuals to create their own meaning (Cohen et al., 2000, p.25). The researchers sought data that 'would allow us to gain access to how the mentors made sense of their work as mentors' (Young et al., 2005, p.171).

Investigating mentors' professional knowledge base, Jones and Straker adopted a 'phenomenological, social contructivist approach' (Jones & Straker, 2006, p.168). Phenomenology, in relation to the study of social behaviour, states that the behaviour of others is given meaning by a process of typification, based on the observer's experience and biography. Adopting this

methodology, the study aimed to 'provide insights into mentors' thinking and how it influences their selection and justification of strategies employed' (Jones & Straker, 2006, p.169).

<u>Overall approach: a case study</u>

The focus of this research is the distinctiveness of the mentoring process within the Teach First ITT programme, as perceived by the different participants within that process. The research strategy will be based on a case study with Teach First as a single case, selected on the basis of its distinctive features as an ITT programme and the relative scarcity of previous research focused on Teach First. This renders the case of particular interest, and the research likely to generate new knowledge in the field.

Case study has been described as 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence.' (Robson, 1993, p.52). The case is necessarily set within a bounded context, which might be an individual, role, group or (as in this case) an organisation or programme; cases may also be bounded spatially or temporally (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.26). These bounds may occur naturally, as with the limits of an organisation, or framed by the researcher, such as in setting a start- and end-point in time for the study (Schostak, 2002).

The validity of the approach

A case study approach is therefore an appropriate strategy for this research, as Teach First represents a particular and unique example of an ITT programme, an organization with clear identity; yet, whilst Teach First has a clear and distinct identity, the operation of the ITT programme which is based in schools – the mentoring process – cannot be easily distinguished from the other activities within the school which are not associated with Teach First. These activities may include the teaching and learning of pupils and other teacher training or staff development programmes which may be operating within the school. The case study has been characterised as 'a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when… the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 1981, p.59).

Focusing on the 'bounded phenomena and systems' of a single case offers the opportunity to 'catch the complexity and situatedness of behaviour' (Cohen et al., 2000, p.79); therefore taking Teach First as a case study will allow a close examination of the fine detail of the mentoring process within this ITT programme and permit the research to 'unravel the complexities' (Denscombe, 1998, p.30) of the Teach First mentoring process.

One benefit of taking this approach is the ability to adopt an 'exploratory' strategy (Yin, 1981, p.59; Robson, 1993, p.53) which allows the generation of a framework for analysing the data which is derived from the data itself; that is, grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This translates into an iterative process which covers each stage of data collection and analysis, where the researcher is

undertaking a constant process of comparison and repeatedly (internally) asking the question, 'what am I learning about [the focus of the research] now? – and how is this different from what I learned before, from previous levels/data?' The exploratory element of the case study allows the modification of data collection strategies and details during the research process. The legitimacy of retaining this flexibility, or 'controlled opportunism', 'allows the researcher to probe emergent themes or to take advantage of special opportunities which may be present in a given situation' (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.16).

It has been shown that case studies can employ an embedded design and have multiple layers of analysis (Yin, 1984). A case study approach allows for a range of data types and methods of data collection and analysis; this research will draw on both quantitative and qualitative data types at different stages. Organisational case studies have previously combined qualitative and quantitative data (Gross et al., 1971). This closely reflects the approach developed for this research. The mentoring process within Teach First will be considered first at an organisational level and the implications which can be drawn from the structure of the training presented in the programme documentation; these will be analysed in terms of existing models of teacher training and how Teach First sits within the evolving context of policy. This top-level analysis will also draw upon my own 'lived experience' as a practitioner-researcher working within Teach First and upon my ability to access naturally-occurring and historical programme data to shape the evaluations. Secondly, the mentoring process will be considered at the level of the groups which are involved in that process – the school-based mentors, the HEI tutors and the Teach First trainees themselves. The data at this level will take the form of survey responses and focus group discussions, and the responses of these three groups will be considered collectively, through quantitative and thematic analysis. Finally, the mentors involved in the Teach First mentoring process will be considered at an individual level, through a series of detailed interviews and the data analysed at a much finer level of detail, through interpretive thematic approaches.

These multiple levels of data collection and analysis ultimately make it possible to triangulate emergent themes and produce more robust outcomes. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data is particularly important in this regard; for example, analysis of quantitative data from the survey responses may highlight features not previously considered which can be explored in greater depth in the subsequent series of interviews with mentors. In other words: 'while systematic data creates the foundation for our theories, it is the anecdotal data that enable us to do the building' (Mintzberg, 1979, p.587).

The progressive data collection strategy across these different levels allowed the case to be studied over a period of time (approximately eighteen months); this allowed the development and shifts in education policy, in the Teach First programme, and in my own circumstances as a researcher to be captured. In addition, the extended period of data collection allowed for careful assimilation and

consideration of the findings at each stage, and a modification of the approach and focus of each subsequent stage.

The process of undertaking a case study based on grounded theory is predominantly an iterative one, involving constant comparison of data collected, redefinition of the research questions at each stage, and the generation and ongoing revision of theoretical frameworks. The resulting hypotheses and frameworks are likely to be both verifiable and valid because they have 'already undergone verification as part of the theory-building process… [and] because the process is so intimately tied with evidence that it is very likely that the resultant theory will be consistent with empirical observation' (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.29).

Within this theory-building process there is a key role for the 'enfolding literature' (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.24) which can be used to generate juxtaposition with emergent theories and hypotheses. This includes both policy documents and academic research which together set the context of the case and the emergent themes. By identifying elements of the case study which are confirmed by or conflict with existing literature, the generalizability of the findings from the single case can be widened, and/or the limits to generalizability sharpened.

Overall, the strength of taking a case study approach to the investigation of mentoring within Teach First is the likelihood for generating novel insights into the mentoring process within this particular ITT programme, through a multi-level study of mentoring within Teach First at increasing levels of detail. By a process of constant comparison between the data generated at each level, and comparison of the findings with the literature, the policy context of ITT, and with how Teach First presents itself publicly, I would expect to find juxtapositions, contradictions and tensions relating to the nature of mentoring within Teach First and the distinctiveness of mentoring in the Teach First programme, as perceived from different perspectives. These contradictions and tensions might then be reconciled and resolved in such a way as to 'reframe perceptions into a new gestalt' (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.29).

The generalizability and integrity of the approach

Generalizability in qualitative research approaches has always been problematic, and reviewing the methodological literature at one level suggests that there 'appears to be a widely shared view that [generalizability] is unimportant, unachievable, or both' (Schofield, 2002, p.172). Generalizability is an aspect of external validity, a fundamental principle of scientific methodology in the natural sciences. External validity emphasizes the importance of being able to generalize to and across populations and of the replicability of results. It has been asserted that 'the goal of science is to be able to generalize findings to diverse populations and times', and 'at the heart of external validity is replicability. Would the results be reproducible in those target instances to which one intends to generalize – the population, situation, time, treatment form or format, measures, study designs and procedures?' (Smith, 1975, p.88; Krathwohl, 1985, p.123).

The nature of qualitative research in the social sciences typically precludes this principle, given both the subject of the research – humans and human interactions – and the context in which the research is conducted – the social environment. In addition, the subject and the context are inextricably interwoven: 'It is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs' (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p.62). Without the predictable variables and controls characteristic of the natural sciences, 'generalizations are impossible, since phenomena are neither time- nor context-free…' (ibid., p.238). This is a relevant point for this research, which explores individuals' perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process and could be said to be developing an idiographic body of knowledge which is specific to those individuals and the contexts (e.g., the school) within which they work.

If the nature of the research precludes positivist objectivity, then other concepts should be used in commenting on the rigour of the research. Rather than external validity, the qualitative researcher aspires to internal validity. The requirements for internal validity have been defined in various ways, including 'causal validity' and 'construct validity' (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Kirk & Miller, 1986), but in essence all reflect a sense that the project as a whole is appropriate in approach and method, and that a sense of theoretical consistency runs through the phenomenon being researched to the methodology adopted to research it. Readers of the research should feel that the findings presented are reasonable in the context of the approaches adopted and the evidence collected, even if 'they do not expect other researchers in a similar or even the same situation [to] replicate their findings' (Schofield, 2002, p.174). In this research, the theoretical consistency is represented by the conceptual framework for the mentoring process as a triadic relationship, which builds from the theoretical foundations and models of adult learning and mentoring, and which informs each stage of data collection, analysis and evaluation.

Internal validity therefore 'attaches to accounts, not to data or methods' (Cohen et al., 2000, p.106). Another interpretation of internal validity relates to the notion of 'quality', defined as something which can be 'described but not measured... discussed, but not defined with precision' (Bassey, 1995, p.119). Another requirement is 'trustworthiness': that the data collected captures the information required to address the research questions (Robson, 1993, p.66); this depends on logical and coherent research designs. Internal validity also depends on the ability to tie the emergent theory to not only the data but also the existing literature (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.26). In this thesis, I will make multiple links between a conceptual framework for mentoring, the data and the emergent themes, the literature and the policy landscape. A final concept to reach for is the notion of 'integrity' in the research project, which is to say the honesty and openness of the approach: 'validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques… Rather, validity is like integrity, character and quality, to be assessed relative to the purpose and circumstances' (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985, p.13).

Altogether, it seems that the characteristics of the field, the epistemological principles on which the research is based and the methodological implications of the research strategies preclude an

objective generalization of the findings across the wider population of ITT. However, I would argue that this research is not entirely idiographic and particular, and does have both a sense and applicability beyond the participants and their circumstances. Rather than generalizability, it may be more appropriate to propose the 'fittingness' of the findings, which has been described as 'analysing the degree to which the situation studied matches other situations in which one is interested' (Schofield, 2002, p.178). Another is the 'comparability' of the findings, in which the level of description in a particular case allows other researchers to use the findings as a basis for comparison in other settings (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p.228). Finally, the concept of 'naturalistic generalization' has been advocated, in which the findings may be applied to a similar situation through both explicit comparison and tacit knowledge of the field (Stake, 1978). In other words, readers with an understanding of (in this case) the field of mentoring and ITT programmes would be able to implicitly translate the findings of this case to other related contexts.

The lack of a clear definition to the boundaries of the case works to the advantage of the wider applicability of the findings. Mentoring within the Teach First ITT programme takes place within the setting of multiple schools where a range of other activities, not least the teaching and learning of the pupils, overlap with the mentoring process; the professional identities of both trainees and mentors incorporate various roles; the mentors engaged in this process work with Teach First trainees alongside a range of other activities; professional mentors have oversight of the school's portfolio of ITT and CPD programmes; HEI-based tutors supporting the Teach First mentoring process may also be engaged with other ITT programmes, partnerships and political priorities. An important aspect of this research will be the exploration of the 'fuzzy boundaries' of Teach First mentoring. The research strategy is a process of delving into deeper and more complex levels of this process.

<u>Data collection and analysis strategies</u>

Introduction

In exploring the Teach First mentoring process, data collection occurred at three levels: programme-wide, through analysis of the programme documentation; group-level, through a series of structured and open surveys and focus group discussions administered to Teach First mentors, trainees and tutors; and at an individual level, via a series of detailed interviews with Teach First mentors. I developed three inter-dependent and cross-fertilising strands of data collection and analysis which sit within a 'mixed-methods' methodological framework (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009) based on an initial research design which evolved deductively during the research process and adapted to practical considerations of access and limitations of time.

It is important to emphasise the iterative nature of the data collection and analysis process. Data was generated from different sources across a substantial period of time. The approaches taken to data collection, including the lines of enquiry and exploration, were developed in response to the data that was emerging around and before it; in addition, an ongoing review of literature and an evolving

policy context, and my own changing professional circumstances, refined the nature and detail of data collection at each stage. A summary is given in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Summary of the research strategy

1. Reviewing the field	Policy review of the role of the school in ITT Review of the Teach First programme Literature review of learning theories and models of mentoring Development of a new framework for conceptualizing mentoring			The iterative process:
2. Programme-level analysis	Analysis of Teach First programme documentation Comparison with similar programme documentation			Ongoing review and revision of emergent themes, research questions and conceptual framework. The influence of changing professional circumstances.
3. Group-level analysis	a. HEI tutors	b. Teach First trainees	c. Teach First mentors	
i. Structured Surveys	Structured tutor survey (November 2010)	Structured trainee survey* (July 2010)	Structured mentor survey (November 2010)	
ii. Focus Groups	Tutor focus groups (January 2011)	Trainee focus groups (March 2011)	Mentor focus groups (May 2011)	
iii. Open Surveys	Open tutor survey (July 2011)		Open mentor survey (July 2011)	
4. Individual-level analysis	Mentor Interviews (March 2012)			
5. Conclusions	Constant comparison of emergent analysis and hypotheses with enfolding literature; integration of findings; consideration of apparent juxtaposition and tensions; reconciliations and resolutions.			

* Naturally-occurring data

Programme-level analysis

Data collection strategy

The first stage of data collection was conducted at the level of the ITT programme as a whole. I drew on documentation relating to the form, objectives, quality and operation of the Teach First programme, with a specific focus on the mentoring element. The sources used are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Summary of sources used in programme-level analysis

Item	Description	Intended Audience
Programme Guide 2011-12	Summary of training programme, requirements for trainees and assessment procedures.	Teach First trainees and mentors
Participant Journal 2011-12	Working document used by trainees throughout the training programme	Teach First trainees, also used by mentors and HEI tutors
Professional Studies & Practice Handbook 2011-12	Overview of the Professional Studies & Practice element of the training programme	Teach First trainees
Subject Studies Handbooks 2011-12	Overview of the Subject Studies element of the training programme (one for each subject area)	Teach First trainees

In examining this documentation I sought to understand how the Teach First programme defined and conceptualised the mentoring process within the ITT programme. The strategy chosen was documentary analysis. I identified any references to the mentoring process, how it is understood to operate and how it is supported. I held my framework for the mentoring process against this data and explored the degree of resonance between this framework and the Teach First mentoring process as described in these documents. I also considered if and how this documentation articulated a theoretical model for teacher training and development, including any recognisable models of teacher identity and any implications for the mentoring process.

To accomplish this I considered the two dimensions of authorship and access which are used to distinguish between different types of document (Scott, 1990, p.14). It is particularly important, in the wider context of ITT, with its institutional and political sensitivities and issues of accountability, to remember that 'documents are not just a simple representation of facts or reality. Someone (or an institution) produces them for some (practical) purpose and for some form of use' (Flick, 2009, p.257). This is particularly the case with the Teach First programme documentation, which reflects the relationships between multiple institutions (HEIs, schools, Teach First, government agencies and departments) and the various power issues within them.

Group-level analysis

Introduction

To understand what was happening within the Teach First mentoring process I sought the perceptions of the three groups most closely involved: the Teach First trainees and their mentors; and the HEI tutors who act in support of the mentoring process, with the perspective that position affords.

In working with these three groups a mixture of closed and open surveys and focus group discussions produced data suitable for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. A mixed-methods approach is particularly suitable for this research project; it not only allows triangulation and expansion of quantitative survey data with the richness of interview data, it gives the opportunity for complementary, contradictory or discrepant data to emerge (Denzin, 1970; Greene et al., 1989). I will outline the collection and analysis strategy on a chronological basis, to reflect the way the research was conceived, deployed and developed; however the analysis and findings will be organised by group (tutors, trainees, mentors) to allow themes to emerge and develop without needless recapitulation.

I initially developed a set of structured surveys for both Teach First tutors and Teach First mentors. Both surveys were administered in November 2010. I did not develop a separate survey for Teach First trainees as the latest programme survey, which Teach First administers to each cohort of trainees annually, provided adequate contribution to my research, and I felt that an additional survey would have added little new data. Therefore I drew on the results of this trainee survey as 'naturally occurring data'.

The structured tutor survey

The objective of this survey was to explore, in general terms, Teach First tutors' perception of the mentoring process. The questions were arranged in three main themes. After a series of questions to provide differentiating data (the tutor's region, level of experience and role), tutors were asked about their perception of the quality of mentoring in the schools they visited. Tutors were asked to give a rating on a Likert scale, from Excellent to Poor for each school they supported. The second theme related to the role of the tutor: from a list of seven different activities that supported the mentoring process, respondents were asked to identify those which they had undertaken. Tutors were then asked to indicate the frequency with which they engaged with each activity although, as will be shown later, this element was later discarded as it was apparent the question had been interpreted in different ways. Finally, tutors were asked about the structures that supported partnership between HEI and school in the ITT programme. Specifically, they were asked about the 'Schools Advisory Group' which is held in each Teach First region as a forum to bring together Teach First mentors and Teach First tutors to discuss the programme, the trainees in general terms, and possibly modifications and developments to Teach First.

The survey was posted online and all tutors were sent an email invitation to participate, which included an explanatory note about the purpose and context of the research. 118 tutors received the invitation and 67 surveys were completed, a response rate of 56.8%.

The structured trainee survey (naturally-occurring data)

The Teach First organisation conducts surveys of all Teach First trainees on a termly basis. These are wide-ranging surveys which cover all aspects of the Teach First programme, including the initial Summer Institute, the Leadership Development programme, the Masters-level work required for the PGCE and the school-based element. Given this pre-existing mechanism of data collection, and following discussion with the Data and Impact team of Teach First which administers these surveys, it was felt that to administer an additional survey to Teach First trainees would place an unnecessary burden on the trainees during their busy training year, particularly as the intended survey would overlap with some of the themes in the Teach First survey.

It was therefore decided that the responses from one of these surveys would be used in lieu of a survey specifically developed for this research project. The responses can be considered 'naturally occurring data', in that they are being collected as part of the structures and systems of the Teach First programme and therefore have the advantage of 'being regularly collected, without burdening participants' (Harvey & Lieberman, 2012). The benefits of using naturally occurring data also include minimal costs to participant and researcher, fewer ethical issues and a high level of consistency (Lister & al., 2009, p.157). The term 'naturally occurring' in this context does not represent the sort of data which 'exists independent of the researcher' (Silverman, 2001, p.159) as the responses, whilst not being generated by this research, have been 'researcher-provoked' by the Teach First evaluation systems. Silverman has considered the potential ambiguity of the term 'naturally occurring': 'we should treat appeals to 'nature' (as in the term 'naturally occurring') with considerable caution' (ibid.); in the fourth edition of this book he adds as parenthesis to this: 'an alternative, with fewer assumptions, would be naturalistic data' (Silverman, 2011, p.275).

The survey in question was administered to the cohort of Teach First trainees who had begun the ITT programme in September 2009 (the '2009 cohort'), and was distributed at the end of the summer term in 2010, i.e. near the end of the trainees' ITT year when they would be in a position to reflect directly and fully on their experience of the mentoring process. I focused on the responses to section 9 of the survey, 'initial teacher training'. The trainees were asked to rate the support they had received in school by responding on a 5-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' to ten statements, such as 'my subject mentor met with me on a weekly basis', and 'professional development opportunities provided were valuable'. Trainees were also asked about the support provided by the HEI provider and tutors, again responding on a Likert scale to a series of statements. On both these questions the trainees were given the opportunity to make further comments using an open text box.

The survey was sent electronically to 447 trainees in July 2010 and 302 responses were received, a response rate of 67%. The responses were analysed by the Teach First Data and Impact team and a report was prepared in October 2010, to which I was given access. This report included an executive summary and detailed commentary on each section of the survey. For each of the statements in the two questions mentioned above, the total number of responses were given and the percentage of responses which fell into each of the Likert categories, presented as a table. A summary of the comments was given under each table. These results are included in Appendix 4. I did not have access to the raw data from this survey, so there was some level of detail which was lost – for example, whilst I could draw some tentative conclusions from the cohort as a whole I could not differentiate and compare the responses from trainees based in different regions, those specialising in different subjects or phases, or review all of the comments provided (I am not aware of the criteria or methodology, if any, that was used to generate the summary of comments which were included in the report).

The structured mentor survey

The objective of this survey was to explore the identity construction and self-efficacy of Teach First mentors within the mentoring process. Questions were grouped within four themes: mentor selection; mentoring as a professional activity; mentoring skills and practice; and mentoring specifically within the Teach First programme. Mentors were asked how they first became an ITT mentor (whether a Teach First mentor or associated with another programme). I sought to explore how they perceived mentoring as a professional activity, asking how much protected time they felt subject mentors should have to fulfil their role, and also how important they felt their mentoring role to be in relation to their role as a classroom teacher (and/or school manager). Mentors were asked about how interested they were in the possibility of achieving recognition or more formal accreditation for their role as a mentor. To explore their perception of mentoring skills and practice, mentors were asked to choose from a list those factors which they felt contributed to the development of the skills and practice they drew upon in mentoring trainee teachers. They were asked to identify the systems or resources they had accessed to support their work as a mentor. Finally, the mentors were asked the extent to which they perceived there to be differences between mentoring Teach First trainees and mentoring trainees on other programmes (if their experience allowed a comparison), and to indicate any areas in which they felt the partner HEIs and Teach First could improve the support they provide to the development of mentoring.

The survey was posted online and all mentors were sent an email invitation to participate which included an explanatory note about the purpose and context of the research. 599 mentors received the invitation and 154 surveys were completed, a response rate of 25.7%.

Data analysis strategy – the structured surveys

The analysis strategy of the structured surveys drew on both quantitative and qualitative approaches and built a series of thematic codes following the grounded theory tradition (Strauss, 1987). The emergent themes from this stage of the data collection remained relatively broad and were referenced back to the initial findings from the documentary analysis and also informed the development and focus of later data collection instruments and strategies, as part of the inductive process outlined above.

The surveys differentiated respondents by a range of variables such as role, region, and level of experience. This allowed examination of the significance of any variation in response between these groups, through a series of different statistical tests, particularly heteroscedastic Student's t-tests, binary logistic regression analyses and ANOVA tests. The tests were completed using the IBM SPSS Statistics v20 software package and the analysis includes output tables from SPSS to highlight selected test results.

In addition to this quantitative analysis many of the questions allowed respondents to comment further. This allowed thematic coding to be conducted, drawing out some of the detail behind the

quantitative results. Commentaries were analysed to identify emergent themes and grouped by these themes, along with a frequency count. This data was set alongside the quantitative analysis from the total response to the question, allowing further detail to be given to the headline results.

The Focus Groups

Following administration of the structured surveys, I conducted a series of focus group discussions with Teach First tutors, trainees and mentors. Taking the preliminary themes emerging from the survey data, I developed a series of discussion points and invited these groups to comment further on their perceptions and interpretations of mentoring in Teach First.

The distinguishing feature of a focus group as a data collection mechanism is that 'a discussion is focused on a particular topic and that group dynamics assist in data generation' (Catterall & Maclaren, 1997). The benefits of taking a focus group approach include the probability of widening the range of responses received and releasing inhibitions as a consequence of the interaction of the group (Merton et al., 1956); the data generated is richer in detail than other group-level data collection mechanisms, such as surveys (Asbury, 1995); and the data benefits from the 'synergism, stimulation and spontaneity' of multiple participants responding to each other's words' (Hess, 1968).

Depending on the objectives of the research and its epistemological base, focus groups can be developed from either a social constructivist point of view, with an emphasis on how the discussion and the group collectively constructs a shared meaning, or from a more phenomenological perspective, with an emphasis on the subjective, idiosyncratic perceptions of individuals (Stewart et al., 2007, p.112). This duality influences decisions concerning data collection strategies, the approach taken to data analysis and the generalizability of the findings.

The objective was to gain an understanding of perceptions of the mentoring process within Teach First at the group level, so the approaches taken were more focused on the group as a whole rather than its constituent individuals. Also, the research at this stage is set within an iterative process, looking both forwards and back to the elements of data collection and analysis around it; it is building on emergent themes, it is reviewing and refining those themes, and suggesting new approaches for the next stages of the research. It is therefore neither appropriate nor practical to undertake an in-depth, hermeneutics-led approach to these focus groups which would involve the collection and analysis of non-verbal cues, tone and pacing of responses, and visual representations and gestures.

That said, there are certain sub-textual elements to these discussions which I will be able to comment on and analyse, drawing on my understanding of the unspoken political aspects of the different elements of the Teach First programme, the possible reasons why tutors representing HEI providers may respond in particular ways, or the characteristic approach of the Teach First trainees' representatives as a collective body.

Tutor focus groups

The logistics and organisation of the tutor focus groups was built into the management and operation of the Teach First programme. In each region where the programme operated, Teach First worked in partnership with one or more HEI providers. These providers, who employ the tutors supporting the Teach First trainees and schools, held termly regional business meetings. It was therefore appropriate and practical to make use of this mechanism and run a focus group discussion as an item on the meeting's agenda. The focus groups took place in January-February 2011 in each of the five regions in which Teach First then operated. By setting the focus groups within these meetings I was able to involve all the Teach First tutors.

The focus was developed from the themes and issues that had emerged from a first analysis of the structured surveys, particularly the survey for the HEI tutors. These issues were distilled into four questions, around which the discussions were structured:

1. How do you monitor the quality of the mentoring provision in the schools you work with?
2. How do you support the development of mentors' skills and practice?
3. What is your view of the proposed Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework?
4. How far do you feel the school-based element of the programme is aligned with the requirements and ethos of Teach First?

I sent copies of these questions to the Teach First Programme Directors in each region, who chair the meetings, and gained their consent to attend the meeting and be included in the agenda. When that point in the agenda was reached, I introduced the purpose of the discussion and an overview of the issues to be covered, and moderated the discussion (although it remained under the overall control of the chair). The discussions lasted between 20-25 minutes. All the discussions were recorded using an audio recording device and tutors were made aware of this before the discussion started and given the opportunity to object or withdraw from the discussion (none did).

Trainee focus groups

The trainee focus group was organised through a similar approach. Teach First trainees, or 'participants', are represented within the operation of the Teach First programme through a body called the 'Staff Participant Liaison Committee', or SPLiC. Trainees are nominated and elected by their peers to sit on the regional SPLiCs and representatives from each region meet annually at the national 'SPLiC Summit'. The SPLiC allows Teach First trainees to feedback directly to the Teach First organisation, rather than via school or HEI representatives. It is a forum in which trainees are accustomed to discussing their views and making suggestions for changes to the ITT programme, and therefore was the most appropriate mechanism for hosting the focus group discussion.

It was not practicable to attend all of the regional SPLiC meetings as I had done with the regional tutor meetings; not least because of the logistics of travelling to different meetings taking place on

the same day. However the structure by which information was fed from regional to national level allowed for a compromise. With the agreement and support of the Teach First Participant President (who has overall responsibility for SPLiC and who chairs the SPLiC Summit) I tabled a series of questions for discussion at each of the regional SPLiC meetings in February 2011, without being present. I then attended the national SPLiC Summit, which was attended by representatives from each of the regions, and moderated a focus group discussion which drew out the points they had previously discussed at the regional level. This discussion, as with the tutor focus groups, was part of a longer agenda, and I was allocated 15 minutes – although the discussion actually ran for between 20-25 minutes.

Originally I drew up a long list of questions which the regional discussions could explore, but after reflection I felt that this approach, without my presence, would be unhelpful and could lead to either completely unfocused or a series of short, near-meaningless responses. I therefore asked the trainees at the regional and national meetings to consider the following three questions, which were derived from the issues raised in the tutor, trainee and mentor survey responses:

1. What should Teach First participants expect from their subject and professional mentors during the first (training) year?
2. Are there any areas or issues where you feel Teach First mentors could be more effective?
3. What can the programme do better, or differently, to support and develop good mentoring in Teach First schools?

At the national SPLiC Summit I introduced the discussion, made the purpose and context of the focus group clear, made the trainees aware that I was making an audio recording of the discussion and gave them the opportunity to object or withdraw (none did). During the discussion I made field notes, including identifying which region each trainee was representing as they spoke.

Mentor focus groups

I used a similar programme mechanism to reach groups of Teach First mentors. In each region Teach First invites representatives from the schools they work with (typically, the professional mentor or other senior leader) to sit on a regional 'Schools Advisory Group', or SAG. The purpose of the SAGs is to provide a channel for the schools to feedback their comments on the operation of the ITT programme to Teach First and make recommendations for changes. Once again, it was appropriate to use part of these meetings to hold focus groups with the mentors who attended.

I attended the SAG meetings and, following a short introduction to its purpose and focus, moderated a discussion around the following four questions which had been derived from the themes emerging from early analysis of the surveys:

1. What's your view of the training and support currently offered by partner HEIs and Teach First?
2. How would you compare mentoring a Teach First trainee with mentoring a trainee teacher on another ITT programme?
3. What your view on how Teach First trainees manage the professional relationship with their mentors?
4. How would you assess the role of the school within the Teach First ITT partnership?

Discussions lasted about 20 minutes in each case.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, some technical and some organisational, this data collection strand was less successful than the others. I was not able to make an audio recording of the discussions, and had to rely on field notes. Therefore I did not create a transcription of the discussion but instead had to work from a series of notes covering the main points and themes that came out of the discussions. Also, I was only able to hold a focus group in three regional SAGs: London, the East Midlands and the West Midlands.

Data analysis strategy – the focus groups

'There is no one best or correct approach to the analysis of focus group data. As with other types of data, the nature of the analyses of focus group interview data should be determined by the research question and the purpose for which the data are collected' (Stewart et al., 2007, p.109).

Analysis of focus group data can range from 'a simple descriptive narrative' (ibid.), through to 'micro-interlocutor analyses', a variant of conversation analysis involving not only who responds but how they respond, their non-verbal cues and how the discussion evolves (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

The tutor and trainee focus groups were recorded with complementary notes taken; because I was seeking a thematic, interpretive analysis, I did not feel it would be appropriate to undertake a full transcription of the discussion and subject the text to detailed content analysis. Instead, I listened to the recording whilst reviewing my field notes and made a set of notes highlighting the main issues and points of interest which were relevant to the research questions. This process required repeated listening of the recording to cross-check, re-emphasise and confirm my impressions and thoughts. These notes were linked to timestamps in the audio recording. I was then able to transcribe the selected sections of the audio and group them into the themes and codes I have provisionally identified. The approach taken was therefore a refinement of the thematic coding strategy used for the commentaries of the structured surveys. Here I was moving further from the development of grounded core categories and codes, and generating more selective coding in response to the earlier stages of data collection; in addition, repeated 'sweeps' through the transcripts allowed the thematic coding to be progressively more refined and passages of text analysed for finer levels of interpretation (Flick, 2009, pp.319-20).

The mentor focus groups, as mentioned, produced less rich data and the notes I generated were grouped into themes and compiled in a brief comparison between the three regions. However, this data was useful in the sense that it could be held against data generated from the other focus groups, and also against that generated by the surveys which preceded and followed it.

In analysing the text of the discussions I will draw particularly on the model suggested by Goldman and MacDonald, as appropriate to this particular case (Goldman & MacDonald, 1987, pp.164-66). This includes consideration of the following six areas:

1. Issue Order – when asked a general opening question, how participants respond and what issues surface first;
2. Issue Absence – issues which the researcher may expect to be discussed but which are not, and the possible reasons why;
3. Time Spent – when the discussion on a particular question or issue takes a longer (or shorter) amount of time than expected;
4. Intensity of Expression – the level of emotion attached to particular topics or questions;
5. Reasons and Reactions – considering both how the respondents react, and also the possible reasons behind these reactions;
6. Doubt and Disbelief – responses which don't 'seem right', which challenge previous expectations, or which might be a result of the pressures of social desirability, group conformity, political sensitivities or the dominance of an individual or individuals in the group.

The selection of participants in the focus groups

The participants in the tutor focus groups were all of the HEI tutors working with Teach First. However the participants in the trainee and mentor focus groups were a self-selecting sample, those who had decided (prior to this research project) to volunteer their time as a representative and spokesperson of their group. The implications of this are in the nature and scale of any generalisations that might be made.

However, any group involved in a focus group discussion has been described as one 'in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population...' (Thomas et al., 1995). Therefore, if the nature of how the sample of participants in the focus groups is understood and acknowledged, analysis of the data generated can still be applied to the wider group with those caveats in place.

<u>The Open Surveys</u>

The next phase of data collection was woven into the evaluation of the pilot mentor recognition framework, described above in Chapter 3. The second round of surveys was targeted at those mentors and tutors who had taken part in the pilot. Therefore the process by which schools were selected to participate in this pilot project needs to be made clear.

A number of schools were invited to join the pilot, which ran from January to July 2011. The target was to include about ten schools from each of the five regions in which Teach First was operating, with the exception of the large London region where the target was to recruit twenty schools to engage with the pilot – a total of 60 schools. In the event, 45 schools and 84 mentors participated in the pilot.

Pilot schools were recommended by HEI tutors in each region, and the schools' participation in the pilot was agreed following discussion between the professional mentor in the school and the HEI tutor that was working to support them. The sample of mentors and tutors involved in this second round of surveys was therefore much narrower than in the first round, and its profile was influenced by the self-selecting character of the group of tutors and mentors who were involved in the pilot of this new initiative to support the development of mentoring across the Teach First programme. This is an important feature of this element of the data collection and the implications will need to be considered when analysing responses; however, the self-selecting nature of the group does not, in itself, invalidate the findings, given the interpretative basis on which the data will be analysed.

Although this round of surveys was related to the evaluation of the pilot of the recognition framework, the objective of the surveys continued to be the main research questions: the perception of the role of mentor within the Teach First programme and the perceived links between mentor and HEI tutor in supporting the mentoring process. The specific questions used in the surveys – indeed, the form and content of the recognition framework itself – were derived from and influenced by the issues and themes which had emerged from both the earlier surveys, focus groups and reviews of programme documentation and historical reviews. The overall structure of the surveys was far more open and less structured than the first round of surveys; the surveys included fewer questions and participants were provided with an open text box, inviting responses of any level of detail.

It should be noted that there was no related survey for the Teach First trainees.

The open tutor survey

The tutor survey was administered via an online form. The 29 tutors who had been involved in the pilot of the mentor recognition framework were emailed a link to this form on 4 July 2011 and invited to respond to the questions below, in as much detail as they wished. In total, 9 responses were received, representing a 31% response rate. The questions were closely tied to the evaluation of the pilot project, but also sought to explore the partnership between HEI and school and its role in

supporting the mentoring process; an issue which was particularly apparent in the responses from the tutor focus groups and first round survey. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix 3.

The open mentor survey

The open mentor survey was also administered via an online form. Two surveys were developed, one for subject or classroom mentors and one for professional mentors who, in additional to their own mentoring role, were asked about the wider practice of mentoring within their school. The 84 mentors who had engaged with the mentor recognition pilot were emailed two links on 27 June 2011, with instructions on which link to use depending on their role and invited to respond to the questions in as much detail as they wished. A reminder email was sent on 4 July 2011. In total, 33 responses were received, representing a response rate of 39.3%. 14 responses were from subject mentors and 19 from professional mentors. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix 6.

Data analysis strategy – the open surveys

The purpose of the open surveys was to explore the tutors' and mentors' perceptions of the mentoring process in Teach First, not at a greater level of detail but within the context of a specific intervention to support that process: the pilot mentor recognition framework. Therefore the data analysis strategy built on those of earlier stages of data collection. The strategy was based on thematic coding and this coding was increasingly selective, reflecting the issues that had emerged from the structured surveys and focus groups and particularly on the recognition framework as a factor in the mentoring process.

As with the focus groups, a multi-stage procedure was undertaken for this process of thematic coding, but with the open surveys the analysis was able to consider respondents as single cases. The ability to focus on single cases allows the categories that emerge from thematic coding to be more closely linked to the empirical data (Flick, 2009, p.319); in this case, it provided a mechanism for cross-checking the tentative conclusions from earlier stages of the research.

Given their engagement in the pilot project, various assumptions could be made about each respondent's perception of the mentoring process and the role of the mentor, and of their role within the Teach First programme. These assumptions would act as a useful lens when considering the responses; in addition, the surveys offered an opportunity for falsification, an important element of qualitative research. The structure of this research, with its overall single-case characteristic and progressive stages of data collection allowing the inductive development of theory, is particularly appropriate for the 'black swan' model: 'if just one observation does not fit with the proposition it is considered not valid generally and must therefore be either revised or rejected' (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p.421).

Individual-level analysis

For the final level of analysis, I wanted to explore Teach First mentors' perceptions of the mentoring process at an individual level. The mechanism of interviews was chosen, 'allowing access to what is inside a person's head… [and] what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)' (Tuckman, 1995, p.213). The interview is 'a conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information' (Cannell & Khan, 1968, p.527). The data produced would therefore offer a thick description of the interviewees' perceptions of the mentoring process within the Teach First programme (Geertz, 1973).

The interview schedule and logistics

The overall purpose of the interview was to explore perceptions of the role of the Teach First mentor, particularly in relation to the perceived level of support required and opportunities for the development of mentoring proficiency (self-actualisation); in addition, the interviews sought to explore mentors' perceived degree of association with the Teach First programme and movement.

In preparation for the interview series I developed a schedule of questions with explanatory notes for each question. The purpose of these notes was two-fold: to show how the question linked to the wider research focus and epistemological foundations; and to act as an aide-memoire during the interview, with possible subsidiary and follow-up questions to use depending on how the interviewee responded. A copy of the interview schedule is included in Appendix 7.

An interview schedule has been found useful where 'the topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form', but retaining the flexibility to allow 'the interviewer to decide the sequence and working of the questions in the course of the interview' (Cohen et al., 2000, p.271). The development of this schedule underwent several iterations. An early draft of the interview schedule included a final question which sought to explore the interviewee's own experience of training to be a teacher; however, on reflection it was felt that this moved the research beyond the scope of the study and this final question was removed from the schedule.

The interviews were intended to be semi-structured in form, built around the following themes:

- The role and identity of the mentor
- Building mentoring proficiency (their own and/or colleagues')
- The mentor and Teach First

A series of main questions would be asked to all participants, and a range of subsidiary questions or comments were prepared in anticipation of expected responses or to encourage deeper responses. However, I retained a significant level of flexibility beyond the main questions and responded intuitively to responses in what I felt was the most productive way at the time. The topics of the main questions were organised in a way which tried to ensure the mental and emotional comfort of

the subject – i.e. more personal, 'deeper' questions came later, when some degree of trust between interviewer and subject might have developed.

The degree of structure imposed on an interview will vary depending on the aims and purpose of the interview and the research project as a whole (Kvale, 1996). A semi-structured interview allows the participant to speak about their perceptions and experiences in ways most comfortable to them, whilst maintaining sufficient similarity across the participants' experience of the interview to allow meaningful comparison and ensure the validity of subsequent analysis (Nisbet & Watt, 1984, p.78).

An email invitation was sent via the proxy of programme administrators to all Teach First mentors in two regions: London, and Yorkshire and the Humber. Further details of the invitation, response and selection procedure can be found in the relevant section of the data analysis chapter, and the text of the invitation can be found in Appendix 7. Interviews were conducted by phone and the discussions were recorded on a computer using a software plug-in linked to the telephony system. I also took complementary notes during the interviews. Each interview was fully transcribed.

The interview is a paradigm of social interaction and when attempting to understand a self-selected sample of respondents it may be useful to view the invitation-acceptance process in terms of a cost-benefit analysis. In accepting the invitation, the mentors presumably perceived that the benefits of participating – to themselves, their school, and the teaching profession generally – outweighed this cost. To explore this further, I contacted all participating mentors and asked them to articulate the reason why they accepted the original invitation to be interviewed; the responses I received to this query are incorporated within the relevant section of the findings.

Data analysis strategy – the interviews

The analysis strategy for the interviews was based on iterative thematic coding, taking account of the more empirical questions within the interviews. This involved an iterative process of reviewing the audio recordings and transcriptions of the interviews and identifying the themes in the responses which related to the research questions, either directly or tangentially. After each review these themes became more fine-grained and nuanced. Throughout this process, consideration was given to explicit and implicit expressions by the mentor of their ideological construction of teaching and ITT. Analysis of responses also took account of the differentiating characteristics of the respondents, including the respondent's seniority, the degree of experience they had of Teach First and of acting as a mentor, and whether or not they had been a Teach First trainee themselves. Implicit meaning was sought from the use of language by the mentors, including analogies, cues and euphemisms, and from analysis of the tone, pacing and hesitations in the responses.

A guiding principle for my analysis was the idea of 'interpretive repertoires' (Silverman, 2001, p.179); these can be defined as the broad discourses which participants use to define their identities, built around 'one or more central metaphors' (Potter, 1996, p.131). One example is that of a 'contingent repertoire', in which participants articulate a process through a vocabulary loaded with

issues of political influence and interest, and institutional affiliation (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984). These metaphors have immediate resonance with the ways in which the various institutions involved in the Teach First programme (schools, HEIs and Teach First itself) work together, and are worth considering in an exploration of how mentors articulate their role in relation to the ITT programme in which they are operating.

A central aspect of the interviews was to explore how the mentors construct their identity as mentors and how they locate themselves within the mentoring process, relative to other factors such as the HEI tutors and the Teach First ITT programme. The interviews sought to identify the activities which the mentors undertake in supporting the trainees, and supporting the mentoring process in their school. They also sought to identify the activities HEI tutors engage in to support mentors. These activities as reported were compared with the responses to similar questions and discussions in the focus groups and surveys. It was therefore appropriate to undertake a form of iterative thematic coding, building on the analysis of the surveys and focus groups.

Summary of the data collection and analysis strategy

This methodology allows, as a final stage, the integration of these different strands and types of data in an over-arching analysis of the Teach First mentoring process, and decisions to be made about the relative weight and priority of the individual analyses (Creswell, 2003). Building from the background of grounded theory generation I employed a constant comparative method to integrate the data and analyses as they emerge at each stage (Glaser, 1969). Each set of data, including the programme documentation and the literature, remained active throughout the evaluation process.

The findings were written up within the structure of the three main stages: the programme-level analysis, then the group-level analysis, then the individual-level analysis. Within the group-level analysis I addressed each group in turn, building up a construction of how that group addresses the research questions through the various surveys and focus groups, before turning to the next group. I present the responses from the HEI tutors first, the trainees second, and the mentors last.

The data collection and analysis strategy is therefore complex and involves both multiple groups (tutors, trainees and mentors), different levels of analysis (group and individual), different data collection mechanisms (structured and open surveys, focus groups and interviews) as well as documentary analysis. All this is placed within the context of the literature and policy relating to ITT, mentoring and Teach First. Above all, the research methodology sits within a case study approach of mentoring within Teach First; this approach draws on the epistemological foundations of the topic and informs the research questions. Qualitative research must ensure the methodological approaches are consistent with both the research issue and the forms of data collection (Flick, 2009, pp.374-80); the levels and layers of this research are consistent with the epistemological foundations and with the case study approach. This consistency lends the research internal validity and integrity.

<u>My role as researcher within the research process</u>

In this section I will consider how the challenge of being a researcher within the management of Teach First has transitioned to that of being a researcher external to the organisation and how this change has affected the research process in terms of access, objectivity and ethical and methodological implications.

My initial position within the narrative of this research is related to that of a 'practitioner-researcher', which has been defined as 'someone who holds down a job in some particular area and is, at the same time, involved in carrying out systematic enquiry which is relevant to the job' (Robson, 2002, p.534). Between October 2008 and August 2011 I was employed to work with Teach First, initially as a Research Assistant and later as an Associate Director within the Teach First NITTP. As such I was closely involved in the operational work of the programme that I was researching and benefited from 'insider' status with increased access and understanding of the subject under enquiry; however, my research may have suffered from a lack of objectivity due not only to my proximity to Teach First but also from my professional requirements to achieve outcomes in developing mentoring provision across the Teach First programme. These are 'the distinctive assets and liabilities of insider research' (Merton, 1972).

When I designed the data collection tools for my research in 2010, I benefited from direct experience and knowledge of Teach First. I was drawing on an awareness of the programme's content and form, its history and objectives and the organisation and management structures; I understood the strengths and weaknesses of Teach First. The benefits of working within the organisation I was researching went beyond knowledge of the programme and its structures. My knowledge of the issues, the terminology, the shorthand and the acronyms meant that I was more likely to avoid misconceptions or misrepresentations in my analysis of the data.

Insider research, of course, is a 'double-edged sword' (Mercer, 2009), where familiarity with the subject runs the risk of 'myopia and an inability to make the familiar strange' (Hawkins, 1990, p.417). In this case, this is most explicit in the tension between an ethical imperative to follow the data wherever it leads and the pressure for positive evaluation of the role and the organisation being researched. 'Evaluation', distinct from research, has been described as 'tangled up in the macro-politics of national resource allocation and the micro-politics of organisational preferment. For this reason it may be done in outright bad faith, although the reality may more often be that the evaluator is led to bias the outcome without being fully conscious of what is happening' (Killeen, 1996, p.331).

In August 2011 my contract with Teach First was not renewed and my work with the programme ended, whilst my research continued. With this change in professional circumstances a series of challenges and implications were raised for my research; most significantly issues of access to those involved with Teach First. I lost my knowledge of the ongoing internal operation and management

of the Teach First programme; I did not have access to internal reports and reviews; and I did not know if or how the resources developed to support mentors were subsequently used within the Teach First ITT programme. However, any handicaps need not be debilitating and instead can be seen as drawing a definite line in research narrative. I will return to this issue, and consider further the implications of this professional transition, in my final reflection on the research process in Chapter 11.

Ethics

At both survey and focus group stage of data collection, respondents were informed of the purpose of the research, including how the data would be used in future publications, the anonymity of their responses, and were informed of their right to withdraw their data at any time. This was shown on the online survey title page before respondents began answering questions; after the focus groups, respondents were emailed a transcript of selected comments which may be used, along with a similar notification. In the series of interviews, all responses were anonymised, notes and recordings were kept in secure locations, and all participants were reminded at various times of their right to withdraw from the research process. Pseudonyms were used for the mentors in the interviews. Following the completion of the interviews, all participants were sent copies of transcriptions and early analyses and given the opportunity to comment.

Ethical clearance for all stages of data collection was gained from the Graduate School at Canterbury Christ Church University; copies of the application and approval forms are included in Appendix 8.

Chapter 6 – Programme-level analysis: Teach First ITT programme documentation

<u>Introduction</u>

The first stage of data analysis considers the Teach First programme documentation. This analysis provides an insight into how the Teach First programme presents the role of the mentor, how the HEI tutor's role in supporting the mentoring process is articulated, and the extent to which mentoring Teach First trainees can be considered distinctive. I examined the Teach First Programme Guide, Participant Journal and Subject and Professional Studies Handbooks for the academic year 2011-12. In considering the distinctiveness of Teach First and to allow comparison of Teach First with other programmes, I also examined the 2011-12 Secondary Training Handbook and Secondary Individual Training Plan for a Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) run by a HEI provider in the South of England. The GTP is an employment-based ITT programme and closest in structure to the Teach First ITT programme: like Teach First, GTP trainees are based full-time in schools with two designated school-based mentors and periodic support from a HEI tutor. The GTP documents which share equivalence with the Teach First Programme Guide and Journal are the Training Handbook and Individual Training Plan respectively.

All Teach First programme documentation is produced by the Teach First National ITT Partnership (NITTP), a management group made up of the HEI providers working in partnership with Teach First. Therefore the provenance of the documentation is HEI-based and it should be anticipated that the perspective of the mentoring process will be that of the HEI providers and tutors, and not of schools and mentors.

First, I will introduce the two main documents – the Programme Guide and the Journal – and consider how the role of the mentor is presented in these documents, how the mentoring process is conceived, and how the tutor supports the mentoring process. Secondly, I will examine subsidiary programme documentation, the Professional and Subject Studies Handbooks. Finally, I will evaluate how the model of mentoring presented in the documentation relates to the conceptual framework of the mentoring process as based on a triadic relationship, and the extent to which Teach First mentoring can be considered distinctive.

<u>The Programme Guide and Participant Journal</u>

The Programme Guide is the central operational document of the Teach First ITT programme. It details the principles and values upon which Teach First is based and contains a summary of the different elements and assessment procedures of the ITT programme. The document also contains policy statements, glossaries, guides and exemplars for various actions and tasks.

It is intended to 'provide guidance for participants and mentors about the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme... during their first year of teaching'. The Teach First ITT programme is described

as 'an intensive programme of education and leadership training… a unique opportunity for graduates to commit themselves to teaching for two years…' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.3).

The ITT programme is shown to fit within the wider two year Leadership Development programme which aims to 'develop participants' leadership abilities so that they can have a profound impact on the achievement, access and aspirations of all their pupils'. This programme consists of three strands – Leading Learning, Leading People and Leading Organisations – but during the trainees' initial training year, the focus is on the first of these strands, Leading Learning. This is described as 'core' because 'it facilitates participants' development as leaders in the school and classroom context'. The other two strands of the Leadership Development programme are intended to become a focus in the second year of the Teach First programme when participants are newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.5).

The Participant Journal is the main working document used by Teach First trainees throughout the Summer Institute and the initial training year. It provides a space to organise and record targets for professional development, personal reflection, and references to provide evidence for the Standards for QTS, and periodic action plans for subject knowledge development. It is an integral part of the mentoring process, as it is 'an active document, [providing trainees] with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and also for Mentors to contribute to this reflective practice' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.2).

Articulation of the role of the mentor

The role of the Teach First mentor is described explicitly in both the Programme Guide and Journal. In the Journal, the professional mentor has responsibility for 'providing a pre-planned programme of professional training' and the subject mentor should 'provide an individualised programme of training and support which is updated and modified at weekly meetings' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.5). In the Programme Guide, the role of the subject mentor is described in similar terms, providing 'individualised training and support using the weekly meeting… and other training opportunities… in relation to needs identified in the Journal' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.14).

The Programme Guide details the number of observations that a trainee can expect to have from both mentors and HEI tutors. The need for observations to be linked to the statutory assessment framework for ITT is emphasised: 'it is important that observation addresses, over time, the full range of Standards for QTS which can be assessed by classroom teaching'; however, the observations are also described as part of a formative process: 'offer strategies and ideas to help the participant improve and to identify new targets… it is important that… summative judgments along OFSTED lines are not made. This can inhibit the formative nature of these vital learning episodes…' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, pp.22-24).

Whilst not necessarily representing a contradiction this does reflect a tension in the role of the mentor. The duality of the Teach First mentors' role, encompassing both support and assessment,

reflects the ubiquitous tension in models of mentoring which incorporate the role of advocate and facilitator of adult learning, whilst acting as a gatekeeper to the profession. In some ways the Teach First ITT programme militates against this through the professional mentor's role, which complements that of the subject mentor and can be considered a supporting figure to the mentoring process, similar to the HEI tutor. The professional mentor therefore represents an agent of internal architecture. However the professional mentor also occupies the role of 'mentor' to the trainee in their own right. The professional mentor is typically a more senior and more experienced member of the school staff, such as the deputy head teacher. The professional mentor has less frequent and more formalised contact with the trainee. The programme documentation makes it clear that the professional mentor carries greater responsibility for the formal and summative assessment of the trainees' competence as a teacher. Whilst the subject mentor contributes to the termly reviews of progress and the final judgment on a trainee's competence, 'it is the responsibility of the Professional Mentor to ensure that judgments and grades are internally moderated so that participants are treated consistently…' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.29). Even so, the subject mentor has a significant advisory role in the formal assessment of the Teach First trainee.

Therefore with both subject mentor and professional mentor, the relationship between mentor and trainee falls under the 'shadow of control' where implicit or explicit expressions of hierarchy could inhibit the interactions within that relationship (Cullingford, 2006, p.xiv). A recent study of teachers involved in both 'in-line' school-based mentoring programmes and 'off-line' support provided by external mentors discovered examples in the former of a phenomenon called 'teacher fabrication as strategic silence', defined as:

> 'Teachers' reluctance or inability to raise or discuss freely with school-based mentors, line-managers or colleagues specific difficulties they were encountering in their practice, or other matters which they feared might draw attention to their perceived shortcomings as teachers' (Hobson & McIntyre, 2013).

This tension is not explicitly recognised in the Teach First Programme Guide and the documentation does not include any explicit suggestions for how to manage this duality in the role of the mentor.

Articulation of the role of the tutor within the mentoring process

The Programme Guide includes a summary of the Teach First initial training year, outlining the programmes of subject and professional training to which both school mentors and HEI tutors contribute (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.8). The summary suggests that HEI- and school-based elements of the ITT programme are coordinated and that the mentors and tutors together form a coherent programme of support with regular visits from tutors to the school setting. The expectations for these visits and the respective roles of mentors and tutors and the implicit relationship between them are outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Excerpt from Teach First Programme Guide: subject and professional visits

	Role of Subject Tutor and Professional Tutor	Subject Visits specifically	Professional Visits specifically
…			
Engagement with Mentors	Quality assurance of mentoring. Joint observations. Acting as reference point for Teach First activities. Support for M level reflections.	Empowering Subject Mentor to engage in subject knowledge development conversations. Engaging with ICT and Subject Knowledge Audits. Joint formative observation.	Timetables. Discussion of progress of participant. Quality assurance with requirements of programme.

This suggests that the HEI tutor has a role supporting the mentoring process, through specific activities such as joint observations of the trainees' teaching and encouraging a particular level of discussion with the trainee. The tutor also has a 'quality assurance' role within the mentoring process; in common with other partnership-model ITT programmes, the HEI provider has overall responsibility for all aspects of programme quality including the quality of mentoring provision experienced by trainees. The school is not formally accountable for the quality of mentoring, however a tripartite partnership agreement between Teach First, HEI providers and schools makes it clear that the HEI provider can insist that schools and mentors which are felt to be providing inadequate training can be removed from the partnership arrangements and alternative provision for trainees be made (Teach First NITTP, 2011b).

There is an expression in the programme documentation that the HEI- and school-led elements of the programme should cohere, although the terms of these expressions are more aspirational than categorical, and there is an indication that the trainee themselves should be the agent for 'making sense' of how the two elements complement each other. The Journal suggests that the 'school-based development programme' should include activities which 'participants request… to supplement university-led subject training sessions' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.4); the subject mentor's training programme should 'enhance' the Subject Studies programme provided by the Summer Institute and the six subject studies days led by the subject tutor. It is suggested that the subject training led by the mentor should be shared with the HEI tutors, and that as the training year progresses the programme should be modified 'in response to the development needs of the participant'. Later in the training year, the trainees should be encouraged to 'take increasing responsibility for requesting tasks and activities' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.5).

Articulation of the mentoring process

The Programme Guide provides extensive guidance for mentors on the activities they should be undertaking and how these activities should be completed, including formative lesson observations, weekly progress meetings, supporting lesson planning and evaluation, formal termly reviews of progress, assessing and making recommendations on trainees' competence, and how to use the

Journal – the main mechanism for the school-based element of the ITT programme (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, pp.22-29).

Targets set by the subject mentor should 'go beyond preparations for the following week and should be tailored to the overall progress of the participant'. Recommendations for the weekly meetings between mentor and trainee include discussion of 'what has been learned' at earlier training events, such as the Summer Institute or subject training days led by the HEI tutor, and 'discussion of individual targets and training needs and how these may be met' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.14). The mentoring process, therefore, is perceived in the documentation as a learner-led cognitivist process.

The Programme Guide makes clear the importance of the weekly progress meeting between mentor and trainee, and encourages schools to ensure that these meetings are timetabled and allocated a full hour to avoid being diminished by competing priorities on the mentor's or trainee's time. The purpose given for these meetings include reviewing progress against previously agreed targets for development, but also to 'identify how the participant can access the people, resources and professional development experiences needed to make further progress' and 'to enable the Subject Mentor to access and engage with the participant's developing reflections on his or her own practice' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.24). The implication is that the Teach First mentoring process encompasses the 'advocate' or 'sponsorship' element typical in US models of mentoring (Anderson & Shannon, 1988).

In the introduction to the Journal, the suggested 'school-based development programme' is loosely defined and open to the interpretation of each school, mentor and the professional learning needs of each trainee. For example, several elements focus on the trainees' induction into the practice and processes specific to each school: 'activities and tasks organised by the school specifically to support participant development, e.g. meetings with the SENCO [Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator]…; activities organised by the department to support departmental development, e.g. training… on a new specification…; activities which participants participate in which are part of whole school INSET [In-Service Training]…' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.4).

However, the appendices to the Journal contain two sets of specific guidelines for the school-based training programme: a 'record of school-based professional training' and a 'record of school-based subject training'. Each record is a two column table; one column contains statements of topics to be covered, and the second is to be completed with a brief description of the training or provision from the school which meets this statement. The intention is that the trainee will complete these forms to reflect the training delivered by the school with respect to their professional and subject training respectively, and they will be verified by the school mentors.

The professional training form includes 25 statements and the subject training form contains 34 statements. All the statements are linked to one or more of the Standards for QTS, affording the

opportunity for the completed forms to be used as evidence that the Standards have been met. The statements relate to induction into the school's systems and operations ('communication with parents and other stakeholders'); discussion of the school's values and ethos ('how the school pastoral system and culture supports the setting of high expectations…'); and to the trainee's own professional development, both in practical terms ('managing time effectively') and their pedagogical approach ('catering for differentiation, SEN, EAL, diversity…') (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, app.4-5).

The introduction to the Journal suggests that 'mentors may focus on issues which arise from the participants' development targets, but a suggested focus for each week's evidence check has also been included in the Journal' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.6). The weekly review forms in the Journal prompt reflection or discussion on a predefined topic, statement or question. The inclusion of a pre-defined list of 'suggested training meeting foci and weekly key reflections', and the themes addressed in these suggestions, are an important feature for understanding the intended nature and objectives of the school-based element of the Teach First programme – as defined by the HEI-authored programme documentation (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, app.1).

For example, on the week beginning 16 April 2012 all Teach First trainees and mentors were encouraged by the Journal to reflect on the following issue: 'how can you demonstrate that you have developed outstanding subject knowledge and applied outstanding pedagogical knowledge and understanding in your work with different pupils?' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.104). The Journal offers both trainee and mentor a space to record their response to this prompt.

Analysis: the Programme Guide and Journal

The Journal and the Programme Guide present a model of mentoring which is based on cognitivist traditions and theories of adult learning, with the role of the professional learner – the trainee – central to the progression of the programme, taking increasing responsibility for their own learning. The structure of the programme and the central mechanism of the Participant Journal places emphasis on the principle of 'reflection-on-action' being central to professional learning (Schön, 1983). The repeated reference in the documentation to 'individualised training and support' and 'individual targets and training needs' presents a learning approach built around the experience of each trainee as an unique learner, following the model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The encouragement in the documentation for the trainee to increasingly direct the mentoring process and facilitate their own progression strongly echoes the andragogical model of the 'self-directing learner' (Knowles et al., 1998).

However, the content of the mentoring process is heavily prescribed, with pre-defined targets, weekly foci for reflection, and statements of training to be completed. The implication in both documents is that the form and nature of the school-based element of the training programme should be prepared by the school mentors, within parameters set by the HEI provider which are both

abstract and tightly focused on the need to produce evidence to meet the Standards for QTS and the quality assurance requirements of the ITT programme.

This is a result of the system of ITT in England which rests on the twin pillars of Standards for teacher competence and accountability measures for ITT providers, requiring verifiable evidence to be generated against specific statements of competence. There is a sense that Teach First schools and mentors are given the opportunity to develop bespoke and individualised programmes of mentoring; however, the HEI providers also make available to the schools prepared programmes which can be taken 'off-the-shelf' to use if they do not have the time or capacity to developing bespoke mentoring programmes. This reflects both the HEI providers' responsibility for the delivery of the ITT programme and an expression of risk management; without it, school-based provision could be inadequately delivered resulting in a heavily deficient experience for trainees. One consequence of this 'risk management' approach is that mentors and schools may be less inclined to take ownership of the mentoring process when there is an off-the-shelf product available which meets all the technical requirements of the training programme.

In essence, the model of mentoring presented in the Teach First documentation closely follows those models presented in recent literature relating to mentoring trainee teachers in England, with the need to incorporate both cognitivist and behaviourist strategies, and the implicit tension between the dual 'support-and-assess' feature of the mentor's role (Shaw, 1992; Turner & Bash, 1999; Fletcher, 2000).

The programme of suggested meeting foci in the Journal can be categorised into several themes which show the intended progression of the Teach First trainees' focus from the start to the end of the training year. This provides some insight into the Teach First programme conception of how teachers learn to become teachers:

- Establishing good classroom management, incl. use of teaching assistants
- Effective lesson planning
- Developing a range of planning and teaching strategies
- Assessment strategies; formative, summative & 'Assessment for Learning'
- Whole-school strategies and procedures
- Developing subject knowledge and pedagogy
- Wider professional role
- Issues of diversity and inclusion
- Setting high expectations for pupils

There is a sense that Teach First anticipates trainee teachers moving through distinct 'categories of concern', as proposed by some models of mentoring, with an initial focus on classroom management, lesson planning and effective teaching strategies before moving on to the consequences of their actions (pupil learning) and more complex or wider issues (Fuller & Brown,

1975). Close analysis of the individual weekly reflections suggests, contrary to Fuller and Brown, the programme expects an early engagement with issues of pupil learning. When considering lesson planning, for example, trainees are encouraged to reflect on how they might 'ensure that these processes work together to take student learning forward' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.54). This echoes the critiques of teachers' development passing through discrete phases, discussed above: 'even [within three months of the start of the course], student-teachers were thinking a great deal about pupils' learning, and were very aware of some of the complexities of teaching' (Burn et al., 2003).

In terms of the partnership between school and HEI provider and the architectural support provided to the mentoring process, the nature of co-ordination between the two institutions is expressed in aspirational terms. How this should operate in practice is unclear and in places contradictory. In places, the documentation suggests that the school-based programme is intended to take account of, or supplement, the HEI-led elements. When discussing the weekly progress meeting and the suggested foci for reflection and discussion between trainee and mentor, the Journal includes the following statement circumscribing the role of the mentor: 'Subject Mentors should discuss the material purely within the context of the practice and school documentation' (Teach First NITTP, 2011c, p.5). This suggests that Teach First delineates the mentor's role to issues immediate and specific to the context of the school, with the HEI tutor responsible for facilitating the trainees' understanding of wider educational contexts and theories. However, the HEI-based provenance of the documents should be considered in relation to this issue; how the HEI and school-based elements cohere in reality may be different and will be explored in later stages of data analysis.

Other Programme Handbooks

The other main operational documents of the Teach First ITT programme are the 'Professional Studies and Practice Handbook' and the 'Subject Studies Handbook'. These two programmes are delivered mainly through the six-week Summer Institute, although some elements continue through the training year when trainees are based in schools. Schools and school-based mentors are not involved in the Summer Institute and, perhaps as a consequence of this, there is limited reference to the role of the mentor and the mentoring process within these handbooks. In the Professional Studies and Practice handbook there are several references to the school mentors, but only in the simplest terms: '…your subject mentor (the subject expert who will supervise and support you on subject teaching); your professional mentor (the person with overall responsibility for your work in school)…' (Teach First NITTP, 2011d, p.19).

The Subject Studies handbooks are more varied, as there is a different document for each secondary subject – English, Mathematics, Science, Business Studies, Citizenship, Design & Technology, Geography, History, ICT, Modern Languages, Music and Religious Education – and another for primary school trainees. The role of the mentor in supporting the trainees' subject knowledge and pedagogical practice is presented differently in the documents. In most of the handbooks (Music,

History, Geography, Religious Education, Design & Technology, Mathematics and Science), the role of the mentor is not mentioned at all. Several handbooks, including ICT and the Primary handbook, make generic statements about the role of the mentor in relation to the summative assessment process: 'You will be assessed throughout the year through classroom observations conducted by your subject tutor, and by your subject mentor in school, against the QTS standards' (Teach First NITTP, 2011e, p.2).

The Modern Languages handbook makes it clear that the Subject Studies programme is intended to be complemented by the school-based mentor, but does not include any suggestion for how the two elements should be integrated. The role of the mentor is defined here in terms of support, rather than assessment against Standards or in terms of subject knowledge development, which is the main focus of the Subject Studies programme. 'The programme relies heavily upon your subject mentors' input offering you support, guidance and acting as a critical friend, as you develop your competences and confidence throughout this first year' (Teach First NITTP, 2011f, p.35). The English handbook uses the same form of words and the Business Studies handbook a slight variation:

> 'The course relies heavily upon your subject mentors' input. We shall provide subject-based mentor guidance so that your mentors and departments can address some key issues to help you meet the standards that integrate with the subject days. The aim therefore is for you to draw together the Summer School Institute, the six subject days, your school experience and your mentor input so that you have some coherence during your training year' (Teach First NITTP, 2011g, p.29).

The mentor has a role in 'addressing the key issues' which is more active than that implied in the Modern Languages handbook; it is for the trainee to bring coherence to the different elements of the Teach First programme. The Citizenship handbook makes a similar but not identical point; the role of the mentor themselves is not clear:

> 'It is important that you follow up our work during the Subject Development Days with your subject mentors within your schools. This will help you to work towards the QTS Standards, and will also help you to relate the material to your school and classroom practice. Our aim, therefore, is for you to draw together the Summer Institute, the six subject days, your school experience and your mentor input so that you have coherence throughout your training year' (Teach First NITTP, 2011h, p.33).

It is apparent that the school-based element of the Teach First programme is at least partially dislocated from the HEI-led elements of the ITT programme, as articulated in both the main and subsidiary programme documentation. This is particularly the case with the initial six-week Summer Institute. There is a stated aim that the various elements of the programme should achieve coherence but the only expression of how this should be achieved is to make it the responsibility of individual trainees. It is paradoxical that the Teach First programme is prescriptive in its conception of the mentoring process on one level, down to what the focus for the weekly conversations between

mentors and trainees should be, and yet adopts a laissez-faire approach to managing the coherence of the programme, relying on the social cognition of each Teach First trainee to make sense of the whole in ways which will inevitably lead to variance in understanding, cognitive shortcuts and misrepresentations (Lefton et al., 2000, p.457).

The presentation of the mentor's role and the conception of the mentoring process are not consistent across the programme documentation. This is particularly apparent in the various editions of the Subject Studies handbooks but also across other documents. In considering this, it is important to note the authorship of the programme documentation both as individual documents and as a whole. There are not only different editions of the Subject Studies handbook relating to each subject area (and another for primary phase trainees) but also different editions for each Teach First region, which are part-authored by staff in different HEI providers. All of these documents have multiple authors and have been produced through an iterative process involving the creation of templates followed by drafting, proofing and an eventual drawing together of content and style. As seen above, similar terminology can be detected, representing textual templates which have been modified, and different emphases placed on a range of themes. This includes the role of the mentor and the mentoring process. As has been observed, 'administrative documents produced by government and private agencies… are shaped by the structure and activities of the State and other organisations' (Scott, 1990, p.82). The divergence in how the mentoring process is presented in Teach First programme documentation is therefore a result of the regional and national management structures of the programme, one of the distinctive features of this ITT programme.

Relating the programme documentation to a conceptual framework of mentoring

The model of mentoring as articulated in the Teach First programme documentation shares some of the features of the conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process, outlined above.

Most significantly, it is apparent that the model of mentoring and teacher development as presented in the Teach First programme documentation builds on cognitivist traditions of learning and established theories of adult learning as proposed by Knowles and Brookfield. There are repeated references to trainees as a 'reflective practitioner', and to the role of the mentor as facilitator of reflective learning. The trainee is placed at the centre of the learning process, taking responsibility for setting and evaluating targets for professional development. On the matter of how the school- and HEI-based elements of the programme should be brought together, it is for the trainee themselves to bring a sense of coherence to their experience.

There is little explicit reference in the documentation to approaches that could be derived from situated or work-based learning theory. The focus of the mentoring activity is the weekly meeting and discussion between mentor and trainee. These meetings are structured and controlled, with a focus for discussion suggested every week through the programme. The wider role of the school, and of other individuals who may be considered to contribute to the professional socialization of the

trainee or the process of identity construction through immersion in the work-based environment, is not acknowledged. The role of other individuals in developing trainee teachers' professional skills and identity, besides the designated mentors – technicians, trainee teachers, pupils, parents and other figures in the school's wider community – is not explicitly mentioned.

It is likely that the structure of the suggested weekly reflections is based on the requirement to meet the prescribed Standards for QTS; however, not all of the weekly reflections are mapped to specific Standards and the flexibility that this affords allows the Teach First institutional notion of teacher development to be detected. The emphasis that is placed on the trainee effecting change within the school and influencing the practice of their colleagues is a reflection of the unique feature of the programme to develop professional confidence and educational leadership within Teach First teachers.

The documentation acknowledges that the mentor's role encompasses both supporting and assessing the trainee, but does not take account of how this delicate dual role is best negotiated.

External architectural support for the mentoring process – the HEI tutor – is strongly emphasised; indeed, the tutor in some senses acts as the arbiter of the mentoring process, holding a quality assurance role and in extremis acting to remove deficient schools or mentors from the mentoring process. There are issues of power and hierarchy apparent in the relationship between tutor and mentor, as delineated in the documentation. This relationship is based on the partnership agreement between Teach First, the HEI providers and the schools (Teach First NITTP, 2011b). In this tripartite agreement, it is clear that there is an institutional hierarchy running from Teach First down to the school, based on the structure of contracts and subcontracts to deliver ITT, and the nature of accountability for the quality of the training. The subtle power issues inherent in the relationship between HEI tutors and mentors are a reflection of this.

Whilst the architectural role of the HEI in supporting the mentoring process is explicit within the documentation, the importance of internal architecture is downplayed and the role of the school in providing support for the mentoring process is less apparent. There is a recognition that each school should provide the functional minimum to allow the weekly meetings to take place – at least one hour each week designated in the mentor's timetable – but no mention is made of the importance of the school and its leadership engendering a culture which values the activity of mentoring, and which validates and recognises the importance of the role of mentor.

This imbalance may not reflect a conceptual rejection of the school's role in supporting the mentoring process but rather the nature of the documentation's authorship, which is based to a large extent on the input of the HEI providers. There is no evidence that trainees or mentors have a role in the authorship of the programme documentation. The tutors represent the role of supporter within the triadic relationship of trainee, mentor and supporter. It is anticipated that each group will have a different perception of the mentoring process and hold different priorities and concerns. HEI

providers are held accountable for the quality of the mentoring provision within schools. It is therefore possible that the particular perspective of the HEI tutors leads to an emphasis in the documentation of a mentoring process which is focused on meeting the functional requirements of the ITT programme.

Given the nature of the source material, the functional presentation of the mentor's role is perhaps to be expected. The purpose of programme documentation is to set out minimum expectations, requirements and standards which must be met by all parties. In this sense the programme documentation can be considered a form of contractual document, what has been called a 'technical instrument' (Scott, 1990, p.85), and should not be expected to include an exploration of the conceptual foundations on which the processes are based. A richer, deeper exploration of the mentoring process may be found in the 'softer' data collected from focus-group discussions and interviews with tutors, mentors and trainees.

The distinctive nature of mentoring within the Teach First programme

The programme documentation makes reference to several aspects of the Teach First programme which can be considered to be distinctive from other ITT programmes. There is extensive reference to the Summer Institute, for example, and to the enhanced support for trainees from the HEI providers. I have shown that the activities of the tutors and the mentors are not explicitly coherent. However, there is no indication in the programme documentation that a distinctive approach is required for mentoring a Teach First trainee. The suggested pattern of activities, focused on weekly progress meetings, and the exemplars given for activities are generic to mentoring in ITT and can be related to functional handbooks of mentoring practice, e.g. (Fletcher, 2000). Indeed, there is an acknowledgement in the Programme Guide that Teach First trainees require no different an approach in the school-based element of their training than trainees on other routes: 'They [professional mentors] may include participants in the training programmes they offer to trainees following other training routes' (Teach First NITTP, 2011a, p.14).

Perhaps the closest analogue to the Teach First programme is the employment-based GTP; analysis of the documentation from a GTP programme allows comparison with the definition of the role of the mentor and conceptualisation of the mentoring process (CCCU, 2011a).

The structure of support for the mentoring process is very similar, with a HEI tutor supplementing the training provided by two mentors at the trainee's school. The roles of both mentors and tutors are defined in the GTP programme documentation and, as with the Teach First model, the mentors encompass both supportive and assessment elements; their role defined as both ensuring evidence is generated to meet the Standards for QTS and facilitating the professional and learner-centred development of trainee teachers (CCCU, 2011a, pp.80-81). The role of the HEI tutor on the GTP programme is also similar to that of the tutor on the Teach First programme, to 'support the… subject mentor, and to monitor the school's delivery of training' (CCCU, 2011a, p.20). As with the

Teach First programme, the HEI provider is responsible for the quality of the programme and therefore the HEI tutor acts as the agent of this responsibility. One significant difference is that the Teach First trainee will expect to be visited by a HEI tutor about once a fortnight, whereas the GTP tutor will visit trainees about six times across the training year (ibid.). The HEI-based architectural support for the mentoring process is therefore a stronger feature of the Teach First mentoring process than that in the GTP.

Trainees engaged with the GTP are required to complete an 'Individual Training Plan' throughout their training year, a document analogous to the Teach First Participant Journal. This is structured in a very similar form to the Journal and requires the same basic actions from trainee and mentor during a weekly meeting. Each week, targets or 'learning objectives' are set for the trainee's professional development along with 'learning opportunities' which allow them to be met, and a space for 'reflective evaluation' is given against each (CCCU, 2011b). The processes and principles of reflective learning which underpin them are similar to those behind the Teach First Journal.

The GTP Training Plan differs from the Teach First Journal in one regard: GTP trainees and mentors are not directed to pre-defined statements or questions for each of the weekly meetings. The mentoring process through the GTP therefore seems to have a more discursive, cognitivist character than the tightly prescribed structure of the Teach First mentoring process. The difference in the level of prescription for the weekly meetings, alongside the enhanced HEI-based support, suggest that Teach First anticipates greater or more frequent examples of deficiency in the school-based element of the ITT programme. This could be represented as a distinctive feature of Teach First mentoring; that the characteristically 'challenging' profile of Teach First schools results in greater obstacles to effective school-based mentoring.

Therefore there is little in the programme documentation which suggests that, despite the distinctive nature of the Teach First programme in various regards, the mentoring process itself is considered to be or aims to be distinctive from generic mentoring in ITT.

Chapter 7 – Group-level analysis: the HEI tutors

Introduction

In this chapter I will consider the data collected from Teach First HEI tutors. I will analyse this data against the conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process, where the tutors represent the 'supporter' within the triadic relationship. In particular, I will explore the tutors' perception and conceptualisation of the mentoring process and the extent to which the Teach First mentoring process is distinctive from other ITT programmes. I begin with an analysis of a structured survey which was administered to Teach First tutors in November 2010 and consider the themes which emerge from this data; I will develop these themes through evaluation of the subsequent focus group discussions and open survey results which were collected in 2011.

The Structured Survey

Three main themes emerged from the responses to this survey. The first was the perception by tutors of the quality of mentoring that took place in Teach First schools. The second was the significance of the architectural support required for effective mentoring provision; this theme had two strands, one relating to the support provided by the school and the second to that provided by the partner HEI and the tutor themselves. The third theme was the nature and degree of co-ordination and coherence between the school-based and HEI-based elements of the Teach First programme. A copy of the structured tutor survey can be found in Appendix 2.

Perceptions of Quality and Variability

Tutors were asked for their perception of the quality of mentoring in each of the schools they supported, and how they felt the quality of mentoring had changed over their period of involvement with Teach First. Tutors could choose one of the following measures of quality: 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Satisfactory', 'Inconsistent', or 'Poor'. For the purpose of analysis, each of these statements was coded on a nominal scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing 'Excellent'. Responses were received in relation to 259 Teach First schools from 118 tutors. Overall figures show that 59.8% of Teach First schools were perceived as providing 'Good' or 'Excellent' mentoring for Teach First trainees. The mean response (2.40) falls between 'Good' and 'Satisfactory'; this was the case for all of the Teach First regions with the exception of the North West where the average falls between Excellent and Good (1.81). A summary of the results is given in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Cross-tabulation of HEI tutor region against perceived mentoring quality.

Count: Number of schools								
		Quality					Total	Mean
		Excellent (1)	Good (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Inconsistent (4)	Poor (5)		
Region	EM	3	24	11	6	0	44	2.45
	LON	19	44	32	10	2	107	2.36
	NW	12	9	5	1	0	27	1.81
	WM	6	25	14	10	4	59	2.68
	YH	3	10	6	2	1	22	2.45
Total		43	112	68	29	7	259	2.40

The data was tested to seek any association between the two variables. A chi-squared test was not appropriate as 40% of the cells had an expected value of less than 5 (Yates et al., 1999, p.734). Because there are more than two independent variables (the five regions), the most appropriate approach was a one-way ANOVA test. This compares the variances of different groups to the variance of all the groups combined; based on this comparison and the degrees of freedom from the number of groups and the number of cases in each group, the extent of association between the independent variable (the region of the tutor) and the dependent variable (their perception of mentoring quality) can be tested (Antonius, 2013, p.258). The results are given in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Results of ANOVA test – tutor region and mentoring quality.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Quality * Region	Btwn Groups (Combined)	14.135	4	3.534	3.834	**0.005**
	Within Groups	234.104	254	.922		
	Total	248.239	258			

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Quality * Region	.239	.057

The p-value of 0.005 is less than 0.05 and therefore we can be confident that there is some degree of association between the variables; the eta-squared value of 0.057 indicates a moderate association (Antonius, 2013, p.260). To locate the difference between the regional responses, a post-hoc series of difference-of-mean t-tests was conducted, comparing results from each region against all other regions. The p-values from these tests are given in Figure 7. Results suggesting significant differences in sample means are highlighted; these show that the mean response of the North West sample is significantly different to all other regions (at the 95% confidence interval) and that no other region is significantly different from any other. This is confirmed when the East Midlands, London, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber samples are aggregated and compared to the North West sample; this produces a p-value of 0.001.

Figure 7: Post-hoc difference of mean t-test results – tutor region and mentoring quality.

Region	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
EM	2.4545	44	.81994
LON	2.3645	107	.94562
NW	1.8148	27	.87868
WM	2.6780	59	1.08978
YH	2.4545	22	1.01076
Total	2.4015	259	.98090

p-values	EM	LON	NW	WM	YH
EM	/	0.582	**0.003**	0.257	1.000
LON	0.582	/	**0.007**	0.055	0.688
NW	**0.003**	**0.007**	/	**0.001**	**0.022**
WM	0.257	0.055	**0.001**	/	0.405
YH	1.000	0.688	**0.022**	0.405	/

There are a number of possible conclusions that can be drawn from this. The first is to suggest that, in common with the findings from other studies of ITT programmes and earlier reports about Teach First, there is a significant degree of variability in the quality of mentoring provision across the programme. However, this result is an expression of tutors' perception of mentoring quality. Therefore, a second possible conclusion is that tutors in the North West region have a significantly different conceptualisation of the mentoring process and therefore respond in a significantly different way to other tutors when asked to evaluate the quality of mentoring in the schools they support. A third possibility is that both these factors are influencing this result; that the tutors in one region have a different conceptualisation of mentoring and, through the consequently different support they provide to the schools and mentors, have influenced the quality of mentoring in this region.

Of the 72 comments expanding on this question, 19 made positive comments about the quality of mentoring, 19 were negative, 17 indicated a mixed picture and 17 were not directly commenting on quality. Those comments which presented an image of mixed quality in mentoring provision suggested that variability in quality occurs both between and within schools; this implies that the variability in responses from tutors is not simply a result of different conceptualisations of mentoring, but rather that the absolute quality of mentoring provision across the programme is variable. Several responses indicated that the quality of mentoring depended on the school and could change over time.

> Again, impossible to generalise; there are great variations between schools and within schools. (London tutor)
>
> It is now taken much more seriously, although there was very weak mentoring in a school I worked in last year. (London tutor)
>
> In some schools yes in others hardly at all. (North West tutor)
>
> Limited and depends on the school setting. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

Tutors reported that there was a disparity between the support provided by the professional mentor and the subject mentors. In some cases the professional mentor facilitated more effective support

than the subject mentors; however in other schools it seemed that the professional mentor was the 'weak link' in the mentoring process.

> The PM [professional mentor] is outstanding and is training up the two new SMs [subject mentors] – this is where the inconsistency lies and is being addressed. (London tutor)
> Professional mentor is providing some helpful sporadic feedback, but very poor from subject mentor. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)
> Subject mentors are diligent - new to TF. Not helped by Professional mentor who is completely ineffectual. (London tutor)
> 4 participants & mentoring variable but prof mentor not overseeing quality as should. (East Midlands tutor)

Tutors also reported that variation could exist between subject mentors, and across different subject departments

> It is impossible to rate a whole school, since there is great variation among STs [subject mentors?]. (London tutor)
> Varies according to subject from excellent for citizenship to poor in English and maths. (West Midlands tutor)

These comments, along with the quantitative data, support the characterization of Teach First mentoring as variable in quality; there is no Teach First model of mentoring; and Teach First trainees' mentoring experience depends heavily on the circumstances in each school. This echoes findings from other ITT programmes where mentoring has been found to be the most variable element in the quality of the programme (Hobson et al., 2005).

Architectural Support for Mentoring

The second theme which emerged from the structured tutor survey was the nature and extent of the support for mentors and trainees, that is, the architectural support for the mentoring process. Responses from the tutors made reference to both internal architectural support – the elements derived from the school – and external architectural support – which includes both systems of support provided by the HEI provider (such as programmes of mentor training) and the role of the HEI tutors.

Internal architecture: the school

Within their comments the tutors identified a number of factors for the provision and development of quality mentoring. One was the nature of the support that schools gave to the mentoring process, particularly the amount of time allocated to mentors.

> PM had little time. (London tutor)
> Motivated, but relatively inexperienced members of staff. HOD [Head of Department] who is subject tutor has little free time to observe participant. (West Midlands tutor)

Experienced subject mentor, but little free time to observe participant. (West Midlands tutor)

Another element of support is the intrinsic value that mentoring is perceived to have in the school, as reflected by the ability of the school to designate a mentor from within the school.

> There was no professional mentor at the start of the programme and the role is treated as a bit of a hot potato as the full time member of staff has passed it to a retired member of staff who attends one day per week. (West Midlands tutor)
> The participant has been given one hour per week with a visiting/consultant subject mentor. (West Midlands tutor)

The data from the tutor survey therefore reinforces the importance of internal architecture for mentoring and the consequences for mentoring quality if this is deficient.

External architecture: the HEI provider

The role of the HEI and the HEI tutor in supporting the mentoring process was explored. Tutors were asked whether, during their visits to schools, they engaged in specific activities relating to the support of mentors and mentoring, and how frequently they did this. Upon considering the results, it was decided to eliminate the frequency variable, as there was a potential for confusion and misrepresentation of the data. Therefore the analysis is based on a binary issue – did tutors engage in a particular activity during the course of the training year, or not. The results are shown in Figure 8 and are indicative of tutors' perceptions of their role in supporting mentors and mentoring. Generally, a strong majority of tutors engaged with activities a, b, c, and f. Fewer tutors engaged with activities d, e, and g.

Figure 8: Tutors' engagement with activities to support mentoring: summary of responses.

	Activity	% Yes
a.	Check the mentor's comments in the participant's Journal as evidence of the quality of training provided	92.5
b.	Conduct a joint observation of the participant's teaching with their mentor	91.0
c.	Discuss the content of the school-based training programme with the professional/lead mentor	82.1
d.	Work with the subject/classroom mentor to develop their mentoring skills and practice	56.7
e.	Discuss how the school-based training programme can support: the SKA [Subject Knowledge Audit]; your subject knowledge development days; the written assignments	65.7
f.	Seek the participant's perception of the quality of the school-based training provision	97.0
g.	Conduct a joint visit with the Teach First Leadership Development Officer (LDO) to co-ordinate the training and support provided by school mentors, HEI tutors and Teach First	56.7

These results indicate that nearly all Teach First tutors define their role, in relation to the mentoring process, as focused on monitoring or quality assurance; in addition, between half and two-thirds of tutors consider that their role also incorporates activities which support the development of mentoring and bringing coherence to the HEI- and school-based elements of the ITT programme. This supports the findings from the programme documentation, where the role of the HEI tutor in the mentoring process is articulated primarily in terms of quality assurance, and the relationship between tutor and mentor based upon an implicit hierarchy. Supplementary comments for this question

indicated that a significant proportion of tutors do not perceive their role to encompass the development of the mentor's practice at all, mainly because they have not been directed to engage in these activities, and the time they spend in schools is taken up with supporting the trainee directly.

> I have assumed that this broadly takes place in University as part of the mentor training scheme. (East Midlands tutor)
>
> Very rarely in the school - more likely to happen at the university training day - but not all SM come to this. (North West tutor)
>
> I have a very tightly defined number of hours for which I will be remunerated. None are allocated for such a role. (West Midlands tutor)

Coordination and Coherence

The final theme which emerged from the structured tutor survey was the degree of coordination and coherence between the school-based mentoring process and the HEI-led element of the programme. Nearly half the tutors (43%) did not perceive their role to include coordination the school- and HEI-led elements of the ITT programme, and supplementary comments gave further details of tutors' views on this, including the lack of time that tutors have available for visiting schools and mentors not recognising the value of the HEI-led elements of the programme.

> This is unrealistic! How much time do you think school staff have to discuss this during our 2 hour visits? Everyone is so busy! (East Midlands tutor)
>
> When I can though this is not always possible as mentors (school based) are not always supportive and do not see the need to meet up with me despite emails regarding this to arrange these. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)
>
> I have to 'champion' the academic work as is often described as 'getting in the way' by the mentors. They would prefer to have [the trainees] in school all the time. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

The final questions of the structured survey focused on the system specifically established to support the coordination of the different elements of the Teach First ITT programme. Responses indicated that despite this system, difficulties in achieving co-ordination persist. A 'Schools Advisory Group' (SAG) operates in each Teach First region, including representatives from HEI providers, schools and Teach First. Tutors were asked to indicate schools' level of engagement with the SAGs, and what they understood the objectives of these groups to be. The results suggest that tutors did not have strong understanding of the SAGs: 41.8% of tutors did not know the level of their schools' engagement with the regional SAG, and 53.7% did not know the stated objectives of their regional SAG. Only three tutors reported that the schools they worked with had a high level of engagement with the regional SAG. This echoes findings from the programme documentation, which highlighted the dislocation of school-based elements of the ITT programme from the HEI-led elements. In the documentation this was particularly apparent in relation to the Summer Institute, but the structured tutor survey suggests this is also a feature of the year-long ITT programme.

Variability by region and experience

The structured survey demonstrated significant variability in the responses from tutors about the support they provided for mentoring and their attempts to achieve co-ordination and coherence across the ITT programme. This variability was apparent between tutors working in different regions, and to a lesser extent, between tutors with varying levels of experience.

Due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variables (whether or not they engaged in a particular activity), the sample sizes, and the difficulty in assuming a Gaussian distribution within the samples, I decided that a difference-of-mean t-test would not be the most appropriate mechanism for examining the extent to which the independent variable (the region of the tutor) influenced responses. Instead, a series of binary logistic regression analyses were conducted (Maroof, 2012, pp.67-75). I conducted a series of analyses by coding each region, in turn, as 1 and all other regions as 0. Where the resultant p-value was lower than 0.05, the test suggested the pattern of responses from that region was significantly different from the others. Tests also generated pseudo-R^2 measures of association; a summary of the results can be found in Appendix 2, with significant p-values highlighted.

The results showed that tutors in London were significantly more likely than tutors in other regions to indicate that they undertook activity d: 'Work with the subject/classroom mentor to develop their mentoring skills and practice'. Tutors in the West Midlands were significantly less likely than tutors in other regions to indicate that they undertook activities c, d and e: 'Discuss the content of the school-based training programme with the professional/lead mentor'; 'Work with the subject/classroom mentor to develop their mentoring skills and practice'; 'Discuss how the school-based training programme can support [the HEI-led elements of the programme]'. Tutors in Yorkshire and the Humber were significantly more likely than tutors in other regions to indicate that they undertook activity g: 'Conduct a joint visit… to co-ordinate the training and support provided by school mentors, university tutors and Teach First'. In all these cases, when compared to the remaining four regions, the binary logistic regression indicated that an awareness of the tutor's region was a significant predictor for how a randomly chosen tutor would respond to the question.

I used the same approach to analyse the variation in responses by other covariate factors. More experienced tutors were significantly more likely to check the mentors' comments in the Journal that those with limited experience (although both groups returned very high results). This was confirmed by a Spearman's rho correlation analysis of tutors' level of engagement against their experience[4]; a correlation coefficient of 0.333 was produced, indicating a correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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[4] Only possible here with ordinal variables; other variables are categorical/nominal and not appropriate for correlation analysis.

Analysis of the results shows that nearly all Teach First tutors understand their role in relation to the mentoring process to incorporate quality assurance, and a proportion of tutors perceive their role as also involving a more developmental or coordinating aspect. This proportion varies by region, and there is no programme-wide model or shared understanding for the nature of external architectural support provided to the Teach First mentoring process. It is apparent that tutors from different regions have a different conceptualization of their role in supporting the mentoring process and bringing coherence to the different elements of the ITT programme. Possible reasons for this include: the different cultures towards ITT within the different HEI providers which employ the tutors; the varying levels of experience that the HEI providers have with the Teach First programme, which has incrementally expanded into different regions of the country over a period of several years; and the varying level of experience that individual tutors have of the Teach First programme and of working in ITT. Testing these hypotheses fully, however, would require further research which goes beyond the scope of this study.

Conclusions: the structured tutor survey

The results from this survey suggests that Teach First HEI tutors perceive their role within the mentoring process as being one which supports the trainee directly and monitors the quality of mentoring facilitated by the school mentors. There is a suggestion of the hierarchical nature of the tutor-mentor relationship implied in the programme documentation, which is a reflection of the responsibility for quality assurance placed on the HEI and the tutors. This, in turn, is a consequence of the policy landscape which places the burden of accountability for the quality of ITT in partnership-based programmes upon HEIs.

The other main feature of the structured tutor survey is the variability between responses. Perceptions of the quality of mentoring in Teach First schools and conceptualizations of the role of the HEI tutor in supporting mentoring vary significantly between regions and between individual tutors. The data shows perceptions of the mentoring process by supporters of that process can be divergent, depending on the different cultures and approaches to school-based ITT in different HEI providers.

This survey suggests there is no programme-wide approach to conceptualizing or supporting the mentoring process in Teach First and, despite its nationwide identity, different HEI providers and different schools develop and deploy different strategies based on their own circumstances and available expertise. This is the situation at the time of data collection; there is a suggestion in the data that variations in conceptualization and approach depends on the level of experience that individual HEI tutors and providers have of the Teach First programme. In two cases the approach taken by tutors to support mentoring was significantly different amongst tutors with over two years' experience of working with Teach First. Regional variations in tutors' approaches to supporting mentors and developing coherence between HEI- and school-based elements were characterised by significantly different outcomes in the London region, the original Teach First region at the

programme's inception. Significantly lower results were seen in regions (e.g. Yorkshire and the Humber) where the HEI providers had only recently started working with Teach First.

This is also the case with schools; analysis of tutors' comments suggests that a school's level of experience with Teach First can be a factor in the perceived quality of the mentoring provision within that school. This can be seen across both long-standing and more recent Teach First regions.

> It has got better as professional mentors become more familiar with the programme. (West Midlands tutor)
> All schools have improved as mentors and the schools realised the demands of the programme… (Yorkshire and the Humber region)

The variability in support for mentoring within schools and HEI providers reinforces the proposition that there is no distinctive programme-wide model of Teach First mentoring; however, the evidence that direct experience of Teach First is a factor in mentoring provision suggests there may be something particular about mentoring Teach First trainees. This was articulated by one tutor:

> ...schools being more focussed on the TF mission and participant needs which are different from those of traditional PGCE & GTP trainees. (East Midlands tutor)

The suggestion here is that these different needs require mentors and tutors to become more familiar with the Teach First programme. Greater familiarity would lead to the development of mentoring quality; tutors' becoming increasingly focused on cognitivist as well as functional responsibilities; and to greater coherence between HEI- and school-based elements of the programme. This is a tentative conclusion to be reviewed at later stages of data analysis.

<u>The Focus Groups</u>

A few months after the completion of the structured survey, a series of focus group discussions were organised with the HEI tutors in each of the five Teach First regions. As mentioned above, these used the mechanism of termly business meetings held at the HEI provider in each region, and included all the Teach First tutors.

After an initial introduction in which I set out the proposed format of the discussion, the method of data collection and the purpose to which this data might be put, I attempted to have as minimal a presence in the discussion as possible and allow the dialogue between the tutors to develop naturally. I set out the four questions as detailed above as prompts for discussion, but made it clear that the tutors could address these in any order, could exclude any or discuss anything else they felt was relevant. Only if and when discussions seemed to have reached a natural conclusion did I intervene and refer the tutors back to the questions.

By leaving the management of the discussion open in this way, I hoped to take account of the priority that the tutors in each region gave to the themes which had emerged from the structured

survey, in terms of which question they chose to discuss first, how much time was spent on each, which themes were absent or discussed in cursory fashion, the reasons and rationale advanced to explain their importance, and the intensity of language and expression that tutors used in discussing them; drawing where relevant on the six areas discussed above (Goldman & MacDonald, 1987). The structure of the data collection process also allowed me to consider which themes were significant in multiple regions, and which were more isolated.

The discussions that resulted were very rich, open and honest and provided invaluable insights into tutors' perceptions of mentoring in the Teach First ITT programme. It is worth mentioning, however, that the context of the discussions were business meetings chaired by the Programme Director for Teach First in each HEI provider; it is possible that this hierarchical structure might have inhibited some comments or individual tutors, due to concerns about jeopardising the professional and political relationship between the HEI provider and Teach First, or with the schools and mentors the HEI tutors worked with. I did not detect any sense of this inhibition but it is necessary to note as a caveat to what follows.

The questions proposed for the focus group discussions were chosen to explore the themes which had emerged from the structured tutor survey; to reinforce, attenuate or modify the provisional conclusions from the survey data through this richer form of expression. The first theme which emerged from the focus group discussions was the extent to which the tutors perceived their role, in relation to the mentoring process, to be one of monitoring and quality assurance. The role of the HEI tutor in supporting the mentoring process through facilitating the development of the mentors' skills and practice was conspicuous by its absence and, when mentioned, it was more as an aspiration rather than a current activity. This echoes the findings from the structured survey, which indicated that this monitoring element of the tutors' role was a priority; indeed, the focus group data goes further as there is no sense of between half and two-thirds of the tutors engaging with more developmental activities in relation to the mentoring process.

The second theme which emerged from the structured survey was the perceived limitation to school-based support for mentoring. In the survey responses, this was linked to the schools' level of experience and familiarity with the Teach First programme, suggesting that Teach First was a distinctive programme which schools and mentors needed time to adapt to. This suggestion was to some extent supported by the focus group discussions. Three of the five focus groups discussed these limitations, with reference to the challenges for mentoring faced by Teach First schools because of their typical profile.

Thirdly, the difficulty of achieving co-ordination and coherence between the school-based element of the programme and the HEI-led elements was acknowledged in all focus groups, to varying levels of detail, and additional reasons were given for this.

Finally, an implicit theme in both the programme documentation and structured tutor survey was the hierarchical nature of the relationship between HEI provider and school, and between tutor and mentor. This theme emerged more starkly in the focus group discussions when discussing both the monitoring aspect of the tutors' role and the challenges faced in co-ordinating the school- and HEI-led elements of the programme. It was particularly interesting to note the nature of the language that tutors used when discussing the character of the tutor-mentor relationship.

The Role of the Tutor

Tutors in all five focus groups discussed how they monitored the quality of mentoring in Teach First schools during their school visits. In the majority of responses, this monitoring took place indirectly and, if required, the tutor spoke to either the mentor concerned or the more senior professional mentor, if they had any concerns about the quality of mentoring provision. Tutors explained how they would check if (and how well) the mentors had completed their required sections of the Participant Journal.

> [The trainee] wasn't having her meetings regularly, and I mean, I picked it up straight away by looking through the handbook, the journal, and then spoke straight away to the professional mentor because I feel it's their turn first of all to put it right, and it has been righted. (East Midlands tutor)
>
> If we look at the Journals, and find that the quality of response in the Journals is poor, we can come back to – obviously – to the programme leaders and ask if that would be followed up… (West Midlands tutor)

Tutors also used informal discussions with the trainees to get a sense of whether mentoring was proceeding as it should, or whether there were any deficiencies.

> I also have on my checklist, for every time I see my participants, "Have you had your weekly meeting? What was it about? Any issues, any concerns you've got?" So that I can then have a discussion either with the subject mentor or professional mentor if I thought there's an issue… (London tutor)
>
> I think what happens at many subject days is that, anecdotally, we talk to the participants about issues in school and that will arise… (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

However tutors also noted that Teach First trainees, because of the position they occupy within the school and in relation to the mentor, are not always able to give a clear and full picture of the quality of mentoring provision; this is another example of the 'strategic silence' that beginning teachers may revert to when considering shortcomings in their support within an in-line management situation (Hobson & McIntyre, 2013, p.352).

> Sometimes the trainees can be quite defensive or protective of their mentors, and they don't want to let the side down, so they will say "Oh yes we had a meeting" when maybe it was quite a short meeting. (London tutor)

You're not always aware of what's gone on in that interim; the participant obviously isn't always willing, they're in a bit of a precarious position to be able to always divulge what's going on. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

The trainees' position within the school is an example of their 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Eraut, 2004) and the difficulty that they experience in reporting concerns or deficiencies with the mentoring provision is a result of the dual role of the school-based mentor as both supporter and assessor to the trainee. This professionally delicate and politically sensitive phenomenon is an important characteristic of the triadic relationship between trainee, tutor and mentor.

The issue of how tutors monitor the quality of mentoring in schools was the first topic that all the focus groups discussed; this may have been a result of the ordering of the suggested discussion points that they were given. Although in my introduction I made it clear that the group could discuss any of the questions (or none) in any order, the tutors may have naturally been drawn to the first in the list. However the length of time that all the groups spent discussing this question – in some cases it dominated more than half of the discussion time – demonstrate that this aspect of the tutors' role was felt to be an important one. The pattern of activity outlined above suggests that tutors at least initially seek examples of concern or deficiencies through an indirect approach, via the trainee and the programme documentation; the implication is that tutors do not systematically work directly with the mentors to develop the mentoring process, which echoes findings from the structured survey.

The second of the four proposed questions focused on this specifically: 'How do you support the development of mentors' skills and practice?' The responses which addressed this question were characterised by numerous references to the obstacles that tutors face in undertaking such a role; most typically, a lack of time during their visits to the schools. There was also, however, a recognition of the value of supporting the mentors' development and a willingness to undertake these activities if the practical obstacles could be overcome.

Now, it's not always possible because of timetables and people getting called over and whatever… And in that hour, when you're feeding back, maybe that would be a good time to bring up the aspects of subject mentoring and how it's going… maybe we could look at that kind of aspect make sure it works a bit better than it does. (London tutor)

As a subject tutor one of the most valuable things for me has been joint observations, because often they're the only times I meet the subject mentor. And I've been in schools for two or three years and I've never managed a joint observation. (West Midlands tutor)

We need to… increase the capacity… to be able to allow time for doing that, because I think the mentor training's great but I think sometimes… there's a more bespoke element that sometimes needs to come into it, in terms of what specific mentors… require. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

The nature, content and tone of the language used suggest that some tutors feel that this is a valid aspect to their role as a HEI tutor, but it is more aspirational than essential. This is supported by

other comments which suggest that that this element of the tutor's role is something 'to aim for', if one had 'plenty of money'.

> One of the things that I think would be quite useful, if one had a blank canvas and plenty of money is to actually develop a shared understanding in… a clear understanding in the partnership of what constitutes effective practice… (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)
>
> If we had an unlimited resource then we could, you know, I can see a great argument for working with whole staffs and then with whole departments, then with an individual mentor, you know, and then with the trainee and the mentor together. (East Midlands tutor)
>
> The idea of self-assessment, or working as a partnership to decide – from both perspectives – what quality support from tutors looks like, as well as what quality support from mentors looks like. That's where to aim for; and that's another point in terms of, how those two roles of mentor and tutor link together. (West Midlands tutor)

Tutors therefore aspire to supporting the mentoring process, but there are obstacles to achieving this. These obstacles are often logistic, in that the school and the mentors are balancing their work with the Teach First programme with the business of the school itself. Here, the tutors are experiencing the 'fuzzy boundaries' of the mentoring process discussed above.

> My ideal would be that the mentors would come to the subject training days with the participants, but it's never going to happen because it's always going to be at least two members of department out of school on the same day and most schools will just say "No" to that, and I can't get past that. (East Midlands tutor)

The data suggests that the external architectural support is dependent not only on the conceptualization of the mentoring process by the HEI provider and tutor and their role in supporting it, but also the identity construction of the mentor and the nature of the internal architectural support provided by the school; if the mentor and/or the school do not place value on the role of mentor then it is more difficult for an external agent to support the development of mentoring. The role of the school in supporting mentoring was the second theme which emerged from the tutor focus group.

The Role of the School

The tutors were clear on the importance of the support provided by the school for the mentoring process; the lack of dedicated time for mentoring was highlighted as a persistent problem and concerns were expressed over the process by which teachers were selected to be mentors. These points were suggestive of an institutional culture in some schools which did not value the role of mentor:

> The big thing for me is time. You get mentors who are trained, but then they aren't allocated any time to be with their participants… very few of them actually have a timetabled meeting during the week. (West Midlands tutor)

The professional mentor [said that the] school didn't recognise the importance of mentoring trainees, and that she wasn't given any time, and she wasn't given any support, she wasn't given any financial encouragement to do a role that she was fundamentally committed to. (East Midlands tutor)

Here I think we're in a different thing where it's very often the school's decided to take the participant, and then this role has been dumped on somebody. (West Midlands tutor)

This data recalls the different approaches to mentor selection discussed above, categorised as either 'ad-hoc' or 'systematic' (Kajs, 2002); the implication here is that Teach First schools adopt the former approach. The comments reflect findings from other ITT programmes, where 'the prevailing practice is that campus principals, on their own, select teachers to serve as mentors for novice teachers' (ibid., p.60).

Coordination and Coherence

Another obstacle tutors identified was the higher than usual turnover of teachers and mentors they saw in Teach First schools. This was attributed to the particular characteristics of the schools which work with Teach First as part of its overall mission to 'address educational disadvantage'. As a consequence, mentors often had limited experience of Teach First specifically and mentoring in general and tutors struggled to achieve coordination between the HEI- and school-led elements of the programme.

And another issue is turnover of mentors, isn't it? We're finding some schools where participants are on their fourth mentor this year. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

In some schools because of their unique nature, let's say… no matter what we seem to be trying to do, there's a turnover of mentors and a problem with mentoring, and just wider issues within the school that we're finding particularly difficult to resolve. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

I think my concern would be that whoever gets trained originally in those institutions is probably not able to pass on the training that they've had to whoever succeeds them, and that… has led to serious lack of support in at least four instances that I'm aware of. (West Midlands tutor)

The impact of staff turnover on the quality of mentoring has been an historical issue in the Teach First programme: 'Subject support was adversely affected... by staffing turbulence in the subject which, because of staff turnover, resulted in a lack of subject leadership...' (Fitzgerald, 2005, pp.13-14).

The particular challenges that exist in Teach First schools can be considered a distinctive feature of the Teach First programme; not just in the sense that the school leaders and mentors in these schools may have additional priorities to balance with those of mentoring trainee teachers, but also that the employment-based structure of the Teach First programme (in comparison to, for example, PGCE trainees on school placements) makes it more difficult for the mentor, trainee and HEI tutor to co-ordinate their activities.

To me the key difference… is that obviously with more traditional routes people have lessons taken from their timetable whilst they have a student or a trainee in, whereas the mentor in a Teach First school is juggling an almost full timetable to go and observe and support someone who's got an almost full timetable, and… even when that's carefully coordinated it doesn't need a very large piece of grit in the mechanism to set that out of sequence really. (Yorkshire and the Humber tutor)

In one of the focus groups, the particular approach that Teach First takes to the placement of trainees in schools and the nature of the relationship between Teach First and the school was highlighted in relatively strong terms. It was felt that, in comparison to other ITT programmes, the Teach First approaches do less to support the interests of the trainees or to ensure the quality of the mentoring provision. There is also a suggestion from tutors that, in other ITT programmes, HEI tutors have more control over the provision of mentoring, whereas the placement process in Teach First – one of the distinctive features of the programme – leaves HEI providers partially disenfranchised.

You hit on another factor there I think, of the subtlety of the placement process as it's carried out on a PGCE or GTP model… we would actually be matching an individual… to an individual mentor… the way that the placement is done [with Teach First] over the course of the year… doesn't in any way support quality training. It just doesn't. (West Midlands tutor)

The focus groups therefore supported the findings from the structured survey in suggesting that co-ordination between the HEI- and school-led elements of the programme was something which was aspired to but that there were significant logistical, cultural and institutional obstacles to achieving this; and that these obstacles were in some cases exacerbated by the particularly challenging circumstances of Teach First schools. Faced with this challenge, one tutor outlined how they encourage Teach First trainees to take responsibility for bringing co-ordination and coherence to their own professional learning experience, echoing the programme documentation.

Somehow we have to empower participants to have that language, so they actually take ownership of those meetings – we're talking about bright young people here – and I don't think we focus enough on that at Summer Institute, and the actual critical nature of the relationship with the mentor. (West Midlands tutor).

The focus groups therefore took forward the theme which emerged in the structured survey, that the relationship between tutor, mentor and trainee can lack coherence and tutors can find it difficult to see deeply into the mentoring process.

There is so little we know about that, what actually happens – for all the literature on mentoring relationships – what actually happens in those meetings, we know virtually nothing. (North West tutor)

Issues of Power and Hierarchy

Another important theme which was developed by the focus groups was the relationship between HEI and school and the implications for the mentoring process. This relationship ultimately derives from the contractual structures underpinning the delivery of the Teach First ITT programme and the pathway of funding for that programme, which flows from the government to Teach First, to the HEI providers and finally to the schools (although not necessarily to the individual mentors, many of whom do not receive additional payments for their role). The corollary of this structure is that responsibility for programme quality flows up from the school, through the HEI providers to Teach First, which ultimately answers to government. This structure sets the HEI tutor within a hierarchical relationship with the mentors and this hierarchy is reflected in the emphasis that the tutors place on monitoring the quality of mentoring in Teach First schools.

The tutors' perception of their position in relation to the mentors is implicit throughout the structured survey and the focus group data; however, it is interesting to note how tentative the responses were when tutors addressed this issue explicitly. There was a clear reluctance to frame the relationship in overtly hierarchal terms and several tutors protested that the relationship should be one of 'partnership' and mutual development rather than one party having oversight of the other.

> Some of the language when discussing this issue is by nature quite loaded, and implies power being held and judgment being made by one of the parties that's in partnership, and actually the strongest models for developing mentor training… is to work in partnership. (West Midlands tutor)
>
> You know, we're talking here about a partnership with the school, so therefore its incumbent on all members of that partnership to actually work towards providing the trainee… the best possible support. I think those [monitoring and assessing] are very precarious terms… I think there are sensitive ways of viewing this as a partnership. (Yorkshire and Humber tutor)

It is worth noting that these comments came from regions which had less experience of Teach First than others; the discussion in the original London region did not make reference to these concerns and the language used by London tutors to describe the monitoring element of their role was far more definitive about the responsibility of the HEI tutor to assure the quality of mentoring provision:

> I find that I read their comments [in the Journal] very carefully… and if there are no comments in the Journal, then I've got no real evidence that the meetings have been going on… So I think the comments in the Journal are very telling and should be monitored frequently. (London tutor)

The Teach First programme was at this time developing a 'recognition framework' for Teach First mentors, and tutors were invited to discuss their view of this proposed mechanism to support the mentoring process. Not all the focus groups referred to the recognition framework, which is understandable as it was in the early stages of a pilot and represented to some a hypothetical issue rather than an example of actual practice. However three of the focus groups segued into a

consideration of how the proposed recognition framework could make a positive contribution to the mentoring process. In one, the framework was mentioned as a potentially useful device for supporting the monitoring of the mentoring process by tutors, and a mechanism for providing more objective data on which judgments can be made.

> I would be looking at that [the Recognition Framework] and I would go to that, maybe, for criteria… if I wanted to judge something, assess something as good or not so good. So, that would be a yardstick. (North West tutor)
>
> It objectifies it, doesn't it? When you got that criterion-based thing, it moves it away from just impressions, because you will get impressions… from the participant of what the mentor's like, in fact that's where we pick up most of our information. (North West tutor)

By contrast, in the London region where the pilot phase of the framework had already been introduced, it was described as a useful device for moving the relationship between HEI tutor and school mentor away from monitoring and quality assurance and towards one where tutor and mentor work together to develop the mentoring process without such an apparent hierarchical aspect.

> Working with the professional mentor that I'm working with as part of the pilot, is that actually, the thing that's been exciting for us is that it actually gives us space and time to work together… it kind of gives us a framework to work together to develop what going on in their school; so it's not, we've not seen it as a hierarchical relationship at all. (London tutor)

Another London tutor suggested that the recognition framework could help to develop internal architectural support for the mentoring process; using the analogy of 'battling for time' with the school leadership, a scenario was presented where tutor and mentor work together against structural obstacles to carve out space and resources to develop more effective mentoring.

> The recognition framework… I think that's actually a really useful tool, in terms of… the battle for time – in terms of… that mentors want in school… if mentors have got something to say to their school, "I have to fulfil this part of my job of mentoring," then they have to be given time for it. (London tutor)

Although not seized on enthusiastically in all the focus group discussions, it is clear that some tutors felt that the idea of a recognition framework might have traction in terms of supporting and developing the mentoring process. However, tutors perceived the framework supporting mentoring in different ways and it was clear that this issue required further exploration.

I therefore began to consider whether systems such as the Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework could represent a significant element in the architectural support required for the mentoring process. In the subsequent series of open surveys to tutors and mentors, the focus became the impact of this framework on the mentoring process.

<u>The Open Survey</u>

As mentioned above, in 2010-11 Teach First introduced a pilot of the Mentor Recognition Framework. In total 84 mentors engaged with the pilot and 29 tutors were involved in supporting these mentors. The survey that was administered to these tutors in June 2011 had a dual purpose: firstly, to generate some data which would allow the initial stages of the pilot to be evaluated; and secondly, to explore the themes that had emerged from the structured survey and focus group discussions. In particular, the suggestion that the recognition framework could act as an effective element of the support for mentoring provided by HEI providers was investigated.

All 29 tutors involved in the pilot, representing all five regions, were sent an invitation to complete the survey. The response rate was low, just 31%, consisting of only 9 responses. Although all responses were anonymous, it was apparent that one response was from a school mentor (Response 7). Because the survey was intended specifically for the tutors and to explore their role in the mentoring process, I decided to exclude this response from my analysis. Of the remaining eight, seven responses came from tutors in the London region and one from the North West. Therefore the data carried a strong regional bias.

The survey consisted of only four questions, but tutors were given the opportunity to respond to each in far more detail than had been possible in the initial structured survey. The first question asked for the tutors' views on the strengths and challenges of the new mentor recognition process; the second asked for any indication of impact on the practice of the mentors they were supporting through the recognition process; the third focused on the impact on the mentor-tutor relationship; and the fourth sought to explore the tutors' thoughts about how the pilot might develop in the future. The detailed responses generated by this survey developed the themes which had emerged previously and introduced some new themes relating to the tutors' perception of the mentoring process.

Several responses referenced the implications for the tutors' role in supporting the mentoring process; two tutors felt that the recognition framework was a potentially useful mechanism for supporting their role in monitoring and quality assuring the provision of mentoring in schools.

> Strengths: QA [quality assurance] mechanism… [it should be] rolled out to all schools to ensure QA. (Response 1: London)
>
> It has been used as a discussion point over the effectiveness of individual mentors… It challenges the school to evaluate the quality of their mentoring. Should be included in the key requirement document schools sign on acceptance into the TF programme. (Response 8: London)

In contrast, others perceived the framework to be a powerful tool for supporting the development of the tutor-mentor relationship, bringing greater coherence to the HEI- and school-led elements of the programme and allowing the tutor to work with the mentor to develop their skills and practice in mentoring.

> Gave us a common language to discuss mentoring… great framework for discussion and to "drill down" into issues. (Response 2: London)
>
> Mentors have engaged more with tutors and understood the importance of the tutor/mentor relationship. (Response 6: London)
>
> The major strength of the pilot has been in working more closely and frequently with the mentors… I have had more positive contact than usual with the Subject Mentors in the pilot group. (Response 9: North West)

The framework was not just seen as a device for enhancing external architectural support for mentoring; it was also noted that internal architectural support would develop as a result of schools and mentors engaging with the framework. Some tutors predicted that the framework may lead to schools undertaking some of the support currently provided by the HEIs, for example leading the training of mentors.

> Legitimising of time for mentors to spend discussing, reflecting, developing. (Response 1: London)
>
> PM [Professional Mentors] has welcomed the opportunity to… work with their SM [Subject Mentors] in schools to develop their skills as a mentor. (Response 4: London)
>
> Two Professional Mentors have expressed a willingness to be involved in training other mentors next year. (Response 9: North West)

Tutors recognised that it would be a challenge to find sufficient time to engage with the framework fully. Engaging with the recognition framework clearly added an additional load to the tutors' working time. Tutors noted that no allowance had been given to support mentors through the framework, echoing comments in both the structured survey and the focus groups.

> Challenges – finding the time to properly support and monitor the programme within school given our loadings for this year did not take into account this additional visit time. (Response 3: London)
>
> The main challenge has been time. Time is needed to support the mentor in addition to the trainees. (Response 5: London)
>
> The challenge has been one of providing sufficient quality time 1 to 1 to make this a meaningful process, particularly the final 'recognition' visit towards the end of the summer term. (Response 9: North West)

As with the structured survey, one tutor made direct and explicit reference to the distinctiveness of Teach First mentoring. This tutor felt that the recognition framework was an important mechanism for developing the unique mentoring practice required in the Teach First programme.

> Sharing good practice across the mentor network within a school has been beneficial and has moved mentors forward as a Teach First team… in particular, training of new mentors into the Teach First model which is essential and specific in nature. (Response 9: North West)

A theme which emerged from the open survey which had not been apparent in earlier phases of data collection was that of mentor self-efficacy – how the mentors perceived their professional role as mentors in relation to their role as a teacher.

It has been stated that a 'better understanding of teachers' self-efficacy as mentors of other teachers holds promise for shedding light on improving teacher preparation through strengthening the quality and effectiveness of mentoring' (Hall et al., 2005, p.188); and that 'mentors need to feel self-confident in their own agency as teacher educators' (Hawkey, 1998, p.668). Orland-Barak showed that mentors in the Israeli school system demonstrated confusion over the boundaries between their role as a teacher and as a mentor, which was 'manifested in the mentors' expressed discomfort with the vague specification of their role' (Orland-Barak, 2002, p.457).

Several tutors reported that the recognition framework allowed mentors to reflect on their practice as a mentor, and develop confidence in their practice.

> [Mentors are] more confident, sense of recognition for work done… (Response 1: London)
> Gave it [mentoring] kudos… mentors are willing to share their good practice now they believe what they do has been recognised. (Response 2: London)
> Mentors have seen the importance of their role and reflected on their OWN strengths and A4D [areas for development]… mentors have increased awareness of the different facets of their role. (Response 5: London)

Conclusion

The findings from the group-level analysis of HEI tutors builds upon, develops and reinforces many of the themes which emerged from the analysis of the programme documentation. In addition, a number of new themes emerged which were specific to the tutors' perspective on the mentoring process.

There is significant variation in how tutors in different regions perceive the mentoring process, their role in supporting that process, and the quality of mentoring provision in the schools that they support. The majority of tutors felt that their role in supporting mentoring was focused on monitoring and oversight, whilst a smaller proportion attempted to develop the skills and practice of Teach First mentors; tutors generally felt that this developmental role was more something to be aspired to due to limitations of time and resources. The emphasis on monitoring schools and mentors was an expression of the hierarchical relationship between HEIs and schools, which the tutors also confirmed as a feature of Teach First mentoring (albeit somewhat reluctantly).

Data from the tutors supports the implication taken from the programme documentation that the characteristically challenging nature of Teach First schools increases the chance of deficiencies in mentoring provision. There was a large minority of Teach First schools (40.2%) where the mentoring was perceived to be less than good; it was felt that the challenges these schools face makes it more difficult to provide school-based architectural support for mentoring, particularly in

terms of time, recognition or value of mentoring as a professional activity. This has been suggested in previous evaluations of Teach First: 'The challenging schools used in the Teach First programme find it more difficult than others to provide adequate mentoring for trainees' (Hutchings et al., 2006b, p.46).

This would imply that HEI-based support for mentoring would need to be enhanced, as suggested by the structure of tutor visits given in the Programme Guide; this is a phenomenon which has been identified by external observers of the Teach First programme: '…arrangements [exist] to provide schools with a high level of support through regular visits by experienced tutors from the university. Tutors helped to compensate for any emerging weaknesses' (Ofsted, 2008a, p.5).

The distinctiveness of mentoring within the Teach First programme was given some support by the suggestion from tutors that schools' and mentors' familiarity with the Teach First programme was a factor in the quality of mentoring provision. The importance of an awareness of the particular requirements of the Teach First programme has been previously noted: 'Subject support was adversely affected when subject mentors were not familiar with Teach First requirements and trainees found that they had to explain requirements to their mentors' (Fitzgerald, 2005, p.13).

The new recognition framework was identified as a potentially useful mechanism for enhancing the support provided for mentoring, but the nature of the support envisaged varied by tutor, HEI provider and region, with some suggesting it would help HEIs monitor the quality of mentoring, others seeing it as a useful tool to support the professional development of the mentors, and others seeing a weapon to use in the 'battle' with schools to carve out more support (in the form of time and value) for mentoring. An interesting theme which emerged from the open survey was the notion that the recognition framework could also be a useful device for developing mentors' self-efficacy as mentors. I will return to this last point, later.

The coordination between the school- and HEI-based elements of the programme was questioned; tutors generally did not perceive this to be part of their role and a significant proportion did not engage in the mechanisms developed to achieve this (the SAGs). As in the programme documentation, there was some recognition from tutors that individual trainees had a responsibility to bring coherence to their experience of the ITT programme.

The group-level analysis of HEI tutors therefore presents a view of Teach First mentoring which is increasingly complex; in general, tutors have a particular perspective on Teach First mentoring and their role in supporting it, but significant variation exists within and between different regions, HEI providers and tutors.

Chapter 8 – Group-level analysis: the Teach First trainees

<u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter I will examine the data collected from Teach First trainees and explore how the trainees perceive the mentoring process. The trainee is the focus of the mentoring process and their professional learning and development is the objective and purpose of all the activities which make up that process. As a result, the trainee holds a unique perspective of mentoring and could be argued to have the clearest view of its effectiveness; however, the trainee also has the narrowest perspective of mentoring as a professional activity. Whereas the tutor and the mentor may have a wide range experience of mentoring across multiple cases, contexts and possibly a range of time, the trainee only has direct experience of his or her own mentoring, and by definition it will be the first time they have experienced mentoring for ITT.

In attempting to explore this unique perspective, I encountered a number of obstacles in the process of data collection. I have outlined these above, but in essence it relates to the position I held at the time of data collection. My position afforded me excellent access to the Teach First tutors, relatively good access to the Teach First mentors, but my direct access to Teach First trainees was far more restricted. There were a number of reasons for this, some of which were simply the result of organisational structures which increased the intermediary layers of administration between my position and the trainees'. There were Data Protection concerns around access to Teach First trainees' personal details; also, there were concerns about adding to Teach First trainees' workload and commitments during their initial training year.

The consequence of this was that the data collected from Teach First trainees consisted of the results of a structured survey administered by the Data and Impact team at Teach First as part of the scheduled programme evaluation strategy, which can be considered 'naturally occurring data' as discussed above, and a focus group discussion with a group of trainee representatives on the Teach First SPLiC. The data is therefore less rich than that collected from the tutors or mentors. In particular, as I did not have access to the raw survey results, the level of quantitative analysis I was able to complete was at a lower level than that undertaken with the data from the tutor and mentor structured survey. However, both the structured trainee survey and trainee focus group yielded some interesting data which complements that from other sources and makes a worthwhile contribution to my research questions.

<u>The structured trainee survey (naturally occurring data)</u>

As part of the regular programme of surveys, Teach First trainees reaching the end of their initial training year were asked to rate and comment on the support and training received from their subject and professional mentors, and from their subject and professional HEI tutors.

For each of these questions the trainees were asked to respond to a series of statements using a five-point Likert scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The full table of results, including all the statements, are included in Appendix 4.

Overall the Teach First trainees had a positive perception of the mentoring process in their schools. Over 50% of responses agreed or strongly agreed with nine out of the ten positive statements relating to the trainees' experience in schools. For example, 66% of trainees felt that their professional mentor was 'readily available for support'; 67% felt that 'professional development opportunities provided were valuable'; and 54% confirmed that 'regular opportunities were provided to observe models of good practice'.

The results for each statement were converted from the agree/disagree Likert scale to a nominal scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing 'Strongly Agree' and 5 representing 'Strongly Disagree'. For nine of the statements, the average of the responses was between 2 and 3, or 'Agree' and 'Neutral'; the exception to this was the statement 'the staff generally are approachable and supportive', where 87% of trainees either agreed or strongly agreed and the average response was calculated as 1.65. Whereas nearly 90% of trainees felt that their colleagues in school were supportive, only between half and two-thirds agreed that the meetings with their mentors were focused and supportive.

This result implies that, for some trainees at least, they felt colleagues who were not designated mentors were more supportive of their professional development than their mentors. This may be a consequence of the duality in the mentors' role. Trainees may feel that a colleague who does not hold a management, assessment or other hierarchical role might be a more effective supportive figure, depending on the nature of the support they feel they need. This possibility was alluded to in a tutor focus group.

> Actually, the formal support structure of tutor and two mentors in the school are used remarkably little. It's the other colleagues in the department for scientists – also technicians are very important – to give them the support. (North West tutor)

The importance of what have been called 'external mentors' who stand apart from traditional hierarchical structures (which both Teach First mentors and tutors occupy) has been reiterated in recent research: 'We have seen that external mentoring has helped produce more informed, more adventurous and more committed teachers… The potential long term impact should not be underestimated' (Hobson, et al., 2012). The importance of the external mentor represents another refinement of the conceptual framework for understanding mentoring.

Teach First trainees were generally positive about the mentoring provision that they experienced, but there was clearly a degree of variance both within the cohort, with about 30% of trainees unable to give positive responses to the statements, and also within each trainee's experience, with the data suggesting variance in experience between different mentors in the school. These findings support those from the structured tutor survey, which showed that whilst the overall assessment of mentoring

quality across Teach First schools was positive, there was significant variability in quality both across and within schools.

The average response when asked about the meetings with the professional mentor was 2.54 and for the meetings with the subject mentor this figure was 2.19. Subjecting this data to a two-tailed heteroscedastic t-test produces a p-value of 0.002, suggesting that the trainees have a significantly different perception of their meetings with their professional mentor and their subject mentor.

Trainees were notably more positive when asked about the support they had received from the HEI tutors. For example, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that their professional tutor 'supported me in being an effective practitioner'; 75% felt that their subject tutor helped to develop their subject knowledge. Converting the responses into a nominal scale shows that the average response for all the statements about support from HEI tutors ranged from 1.45 to 2.3.

Conclusions: the structured trainee survey

Despite the limitations placed on the analysis of the data some useful and interesting conclusions can be drawn. In common with the findings from the structured tutor survey, Teach First trainees presented a perception of mentoring which, whilst effective in many individual cases, exhibited notable variability overall both between and within schools.

On the distinctiveness of mentoring within the Teach First programme, the data presents an uncertain picture. The majority of Teach First trainees (56%) did not agree that their mentors had a good awareness of the programme requirements; however, a majority of trainees felt that generally their mentoring was a positive experience, which speaks against the notion of mentoring Teach First trainees being a distinctive process. Some mentors may not have good awareness of the programme requirements, but through their generic practice as mentors they produce an effective mentoring experience for the trainees.

The trainees' notion of architectural support for the mentoring process, both HEI- and school-based, can be implicitly detected in the survey results. It is apparent that the trainees felt that the support they received from the HEI tutors was highly valued and contributed to an effective mentoring process. Trainees were more likely to identify deficiencies with the school-based elements of the programme; statistical analysis bears out the hypothesis that the trainees have a significantly different perception of the comparable elements of the programme facilitated by tutors and mentors.

Finally, there was a suggestion in that data that the trainees value the group that have been called 'external mentors' – colleagues who support trainees without any formal role in the mentoring process and who stand apart from the hierarchical structures of management and ITT assessment.

In all these cases, due to the nature of the data and its presentation, the conclusions drawn here are tentative; however, they echo and build upon some of the themes which have emerged from earlier

phases of data analysis and can be referred back to in later stages, through a process of triangulation and confirmation.

<u>The Focus Group</u>

As outlined above in Chapter 5, the trainee focus group discussion took place within the mechanism of the Teach First SPLiC. I submitted a list of discussion points to each of the regional SPLiC meetings, and then attended and moderated a plenary discussion at the national SPLiC Summit in March 2011 which included representatives from each of the regional meetings. The trainees were encouraged to consider how they perceived the mentoring process, discuss any areas where mentors could be more effective, and if the programme as a whole could do more to support the mentoring process.

Full details of the discussion points, SPLIC Summit agenda and an introductory message to the trainees outlining the ethical considerations can be found in Appendix 5. In addition to myself and the Participant President who chaired the meeting, there were twelve Teach First trainees in attendance; in the data each trainee was identified by the region in which they worked.

A theme which emerged strongly in the discussion was the variability of mentoring provision from school to school and the lack of control that trainees have in the school placement process. In some cases the trainees attributed this variability to more general deficiencies in the schools and a lack of competency amongst the established staff (including the schools' senior managers). At times, the tone of the comments demonstrated the characteristic self-confidence of Teach First trainees and their willingness to engage in categorical judgements of their colleagues, which has previously attracted criticism (Hutchings et al., 2006a, p.80).

> The key thing that came up …was just the massive discrepancy, and you speak to people whose mentors are highly effective… and the quality of their teaching… is so vastly accelerated compared to people who are just… I mean there are instances of people just not being supported at all. (London trainee)
> …They don't know quite what they're expected to do… and the nature of our schools is that some of the people in senior leadership aren't massively effective, so there are all these mitigating reasons for why they can't be held accountable for… not doing what we'd really like them to do. (West Midlands trainee)
> The thing is, when it's bad it's REALLY bad, so you get a lot which are OK, and they're supportive… they might not be the ultimate mentor, but they're fine… and then when it doesn't work it really falls apart, and I think it's identifying where that's happening and really intervening. (London trainee)
> There is SO much discrepancy and it's not fair on those who don't have a good mentor, yet they would be paid the same amount of money. I'm going to be quite selfish here – it's money that has been ring-fenced for us, as participants, to help us progress. (London trainee)

This last comment introduced the theme of money – as mentioned in Chapter 3, schools receive a 'training grant' of £2,500 which is intended to support the mentoring process and facilitate the release of the school mentors for mentoring and mentor training events. Once this point was raised, several other trainees made reference to this funding, particularly when discussing what they perceived to be deficient mentoring; they proposed using the grant as a lever to enforce minimum standards in mentoring. At this point, the Teach First trainees were conceptualising mentoring as a transactional process which includes quality assurance measures: this is reflected in the language used by the trainees, including 'standards' to be 'hit'; 'qualification', 'rights' and 'accountability'.

> If it's a paid position, which, in essence, the money that's received for taking participants makes it, then there's no reason why there shouldn't be an expectation that there MUST be certain standards that you must hit in order to qualify to be a mentor. (London trainee)
> As a participant, I think we need to be really clear what – for want of a better word – what our rights are. I think so many Teach Firsters just end up going along with whatever cards they've been dealt; we know it's going to be really hard, we get on with it. (London trainee)
> There does need to be – I'm going to say that horrible word – accountability for mentors. (London trainee)

As an extension of this, trainees were very clear that the role of the HEI providers in relation to mentoring should be one of oversight (rather than developmental), and that mandatory systems for mentoring competence should be introduced, similar to the Standards-based model for ITT that they were familiar with.

> If you made mentor training compulsory, where they had to meet certain standards, the quality of mentoring would improve… You could have to re-do it every five years… it wouldn't be hugely difficult… because that would be a nice way of quality assuring it. (London trainee)

The Teach First trainees therefore had a clear conceptualization of the role of the HEI provider in relation to the mentoring process, which was focused on assuring the quality of mentoring. In contrast, the trainees had a different conceptualization of their own professional development; they felt that the mentor's role towards them should be based on support and development rather than just oversight.

> Last year, the mentors thought their roles were a lot more about oversight, and I don't think they understood the responsibilities they had towards our training… I don't think they understood that we were still developing as much, and needed that support rather than the oversight (Yorkshire and the Humber trainee).

This apparent contradiction is a result of the trainees' limited perspective which tends towards a narrow view of their own situation and personal preferences rather than an appreciation of the wider context.

The trainees' comments build on the data from the structured trainee survey, with the suggestion that some mentors lacked a clear understanding of the specific requirements of the Teach First ITT programme. Several developed this further, stating that personal experience of Teach First was a valuable factor in assuring a good mentoring experience.

> In London I'd say it's really good, but I think that is down to, at our school, a lot of the mentors have done Teach First itself, so they have an understanding of the programme... (London trainee)

The 2010 report into the training of teachers by the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee recommended that mentors should 'have at least three years' teaching experience' (House of Commons, 2010a, p. 33). However, in this focus group, it was proposed that Teach First alumni, even those with very little experience of teaching, could in some cases be better mentors to Teach First trainees than experienced mentors who had trained as a teacher through another route.

> I am confident that there are '09s [Teach First teachers trained in 2009-10] in my school who would be a MUCH better mentor to me than my current mentor (London trainee)
> The other chap in my department has an '08 who's outstanding, she's unbelievable, the best mentor since sliced bread… (London trainee)

The idea that former Teach First trainees would make the most effective Teach First mentors is similar to the findings from a recent impact evaluation of the Teach First programme which, looking at the impact on pupil outcomes, concluded that when a school had a 'critical mass' of current and former Teach First trainees in the school, there was a disproportionate positive impact on pupil outcomes (Muijs et al., 2010, p.3). The implication is that there is something distinctive about mentoring a Teach First trainee which requires specific knowledge, experience and empathy to be most effective, which is best achieved if the mentor is a former Teach First trainee. There is an implication that the Teach First programme is particularly demanding in comparison to other routes and that trainees are under unusual levels of pressure; a Teach First mentor who has not directly experienced the Teach First ITT programme may be deficient as a result.

> It would be really nice if we had some kind of contact, an '09, that could come in and mentor me a bit, could have a real understanding of what we're going through, and no-one else has that. (London trainee)

The conceptualisation of the mentoring process and the attributes required for effective mentoring seen here are different from the perceptions of the HEI tutors, and also from the literature in this field. This could be a result of the trainees' lack of professional perspective as discussed above, drawing on a singular experience; however, the view that 'no-one else has that' could also be a result of the deliberate policy of the Teach First programme to instil an esprit de corps into the trainees during the initial Summer Institute (Hutchings et al., 2006b, p.20). The eagerness of Teach First trainees to work with mentors who have been through the programme themselves represents a desire for a 'shared experience' and feeling part of a similar culture – making the process of socialisation

into the profession a smoother experience for the Teach First trainees (Jones, 2006). The trainees made clear that the personal relationship between the trainee and the mentor is of critical importance for the success of the mentoring process.

> If you do have quite a lousy one, sometimes you might think it's actually personal, and then if they carry on mentoring someone and it's not working, it's not effective... It's been brought up at SPLiC that some people are close to dropping out because they just cannot get on with their mentor. (London trainee)

Conclusion

Teach First trainees therefore present a perception of the mentoring process which is in some ways aligned with that of the HEI tutors and the programme documentation but, in others, is specific to the position of the trainee within the triadic relationship of mentoring.

In common with the HEI tutors, Teach First trainees generally perceive their mentoring as good, although a significant minority (30-40% on various criteria) consider their experience to have been less than good. Trainees' responses, both in the structured survey and the focus group discussion, show that there is significant variability in mentoring provision both within and between schools, and that the consequences of this for trainees' professional development can be severe. The importance of mentoring for Teach First trainees' progression has been noted before: 'Where [classroom practice] was not supported sufficiently by mentors and others, development was hindered, and in some cases, led to withdrawal from the programme' (CCCUC, 2005, p.2).

The importance of the support provided by the HEI tutor was reiterated in the data from the trainees. It was clear that the trainees particularly valued HEI-based architectural support for mentoring, with a significantly different response to questions about the tutors compared to the school mentors. This supports the framing of the enhanced HEI-based support as a distinctive feature of this ITT programme.

The trainees also placed particular value on the support they received from colleagues outside of formal mentoring structures, or 'external mentors'. Earlier analyses of the Teach First ITT programme have recognised the importance that non-mentor colleagues and peers can have where deficiencies exist: 'Where school mentoring was weak, inexperienced or inconsistent, it was good to see how some participants had identified other teachers or visiting consultants used by the school who could provide support and help' (CCCU, 2009, p.6).

The most striking finding from the analysis of this data was how the trainees conceptualised the mentoring process. Particularly in the focus group discussion, it was clear that Teach First trainees see mentoring as a transactional process and have a developed sense of what their rights and expectations should be; consequently, there is a strongly-held view that mentors should be held to account. The role of the HEI tutor in relation to the mentoring process is seen to be one of

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administering accountability, and there is an implicit impression that the trainees conceptualise their own role as working with the tutor to assure the quality of the mentoring that they experience.

Teach First trainees conceive the role of the mentor in similar terms to that of the teacher that they are becoming; a role based on defined competences, to which mentors should also be held; mentors should demonstrate evidence of their competence and be accountable for the quality of trainees' mentoring experience. The language used by the trainees clearly draws from the discourse of the current policy landscape and represents an example of 'discursive colonisation' (Mohanty, 1991). The trainees in the focus group placed particular emphasis on the funding which Teach First schools receive for mentoring activities; as discussed above, this funding is not ring-fenced and represents a relatively nominal amount. However, it was clear from the content and tone of the trainees' comments that they felt that if they or their colleagues had a deficient experience of mentoring, they were effectively being defrauded. In essence, Teach First trainees have monetised the mentoring process.

The trainees' position diverged from that of the HEI tutors' in their perception of the distinctiveness of mentoring for Teach First. Whereas the tutors gave only a tentative sense that mentoring in the Teach First programme was distinctive from other ITT programmes, the Teach First trainees were clear that the ideal qualification for being a Teach First mentor was having been a Teach First trainee; that the experience of being a Teach First trainee and therefore the experience of mentoring a Teach First trainee was unique and represented a unique challenge. This was expressed to the point that some trainees would prefer a very recently qualified former Teach First trainee to act as their mentor than a teacher with substantial experience of both teaching and ITT.

The variance in perception of the mentoring process between the HEI tutors and the trainees is a result of the trainees' having an individualised and narrow perspective of teaching and mentoring; their responses are strongly focused on their own individual circumstances and lack the institutional and contextual breadth of the tutors' perceptions. Nevertheless the perspective of the trainees is invaluable in understanding the functioning of the mentoring process and essential for appreciating its nature in its fullest sense, as the trainees represent a fundamental component of the triadic relationship.

Chapter 9 – Group-level analysis: the Teach First mentors

<u>Introduction</u>

In this section I will consider the data collected from the mentors supporting Teach First trainees through their initial training year. As with the data collected from the HEI tutors and the trainees themselves, I will analyse this data through the conceptual framework I have proposed, considering how the Teach First mentor fits into the triadic relationship of the mentoring process. In particular, I will explore the Teach First mentors' sense of self-efficacy, that is, how the mentors perceive and value the role of mentor, and how they articulate the practice of mentoring in relation to theories of adult learning and models of mentoring. I will also explore the extent to which mentoring Teach First trainees is perceived to be distinctive from mentoring other trainee teachers. Teach First mentors, by virtue of their combined role of teacher and mentor, have a wider perspective of teaching and ITT. The mentors have a limited degree of institutional loyalty towards Teach First in comparison to the HEI tutors and Teach First trainees, unless they are also former Teach First trainees. The proximity of the Teach First mentors to the centre of gravity of the mentoring process, combined with this breadth of perspective and relative objectivity, means that the mentors possibly represent the most valuable of the groups for exploring the Teach First mentoring process.

It should be noted that the group 'Teach First mentors' incorporates two discrete roles – the subject mentor and the professional mentor. I have shown above how these roles are delineated in the programme documentation and how both tutors and trainees perceive the two roles as distinctive. On one level, the subject mentor occupies the classical 'mentor' role within the triadic relationship and acts in supportive, facilitative capacity based on a cognitivist approach to adult learning. In contradistinction, the professional mentor may be considered to stand more distant from the mentoring process, with responsibility for assessment, quality control and with less frequent and more formalised contact with the trainee. In this sense, the professional mentor can be conceived as a supporter of the mentoring process. In practice, however, the distinction is less clear-cut and the professional mentor can and will act in the capacity of mentor towards the trainees, whilst the subject mentor also incorporates elements of assessment within their role. This chapter includes data from both professional and subject mentors; however, at each stage I have differentiated between their responses.

I begin with an analysis of the structured survey which was administered to Teach First mentors in November 2010 and consider the themes which emerge from this data; I will develop these themes through evaluation of subsequent focus group discussions and open survey results which were collected in 2011.

<u>The Structured Survey</u>

154 Teach First mentors completed the structured survey; 93 identified themselves as 'subject mentors' (60.4%) and 58 as 'professional mentors' (37.7%), and this data was used to differentiate a number of the responses throughout the survey, due to the different nature of these two roles. There were also three responses from 'primary mentors' – mentors supporting Teach First trainees in primary schools – however due to the size of this sample the primary mentors' responses were excluded from the subsequent analysis. Responses to the survey were grouped into three themes: mentor selection, including how the Teach First mentors first became mentors (whether with Teach First or another route); the self-efficacy of Teach First mentors, including how the mentors perceived their role and how they conceptualised the mentoring process; and the extent to which the mentors considered mentoring Teach First trainees to be distinctive from mentoring other trainee teachers.

Mentor selection

The data from the tutor focus groups suggested that the approach to mentor selection with the Teach First programme can be ad-hoc, with one tutor commenting that the role is often 'dumped on somebody'. In this survey, mentors were asked to select from a number of statements to describe how they first became a mentor (either with Teach First or another ITT route). Because multiple responses were allowed, a total of 184 responses were received; 117 from subject mentors (63.6%) and 64 from professional mentors (34.8%). A summary of the responses is given in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Summary of responses to Question 2, mentor structured survey.

'How did you first become an ITT mentor, either with Teach First or another route?'	Subject Mentor	Professional Mentor	Primary Mentor	TOTAL
Mentoring trainee teachers is a part of my wider role (e.g. as HoD, Assistant Principal)	33 (28.2%)	40 (62.5%)	1	74 (40.2%)
I was asked by a line manager/school manager if I would like to be a mentor	35 (29.9%)	10 (15.6%)	2	47 (25.6%)
I was told by a line manager/school manager that I was going to be a mentor	26 (22.2%)	2 (3.1%)	0	28 (15.2%)
I requested the opportunity to work as a mentor	13 (11.1%)	9 (14.1%)	0	22 (12.0%)
I was persuaded/recommended by a university tutor	1 (0.8%)	0	0	1 (0.5%)
I was a former Teach First participant	9 (7.7%)	3 (4.7%)	0	12 (6.5%)
TOTAL	117	64	3	184

Only 12% of responses indicated that the mentor actively sought out the opportunity to become a mentor. By contrast, over 40% of responses indicate that the role is integrated into teachers' wider role within the school, and over 40% suggest that becoming a mentor is a consequence of either being asked or being told by a line manager. This echoes the findings of a small-scale study of mentors in the post-compulsory sector which found that 63% of mentors had not actively sought out the role, but were designated as a mentor by someone else (Cunningham, 2004, p.276). The

influence of HEI tutors on teachers becoming Teach First mentors is vanishingly small. The spread of responses reinforce the view that there is no programme-wide approach to the selection and appointment of Teach First mentors, but rather that an ad-hoc arrangement takes place depending on the circumstances within each Teach First school. The results suggest that professional mentors (62.5%) are more likely than subject mentors (28.2%) to have the mentor role as part of their wider role in the school; similarly, subject mentors (52.1%) are more likely than professional mentors (18.7%) to become a mentor as a result of either being asked or being told to do so by their line manager.

The most appropriate formal test for association between the variables is a chi-squared test. This identifies statistical association between an independent variable (mentor type) and a dependent variable (mentor origin). However, a chi-squared test of the full table would breach the assumptions required for a valid chi-squared result, i.e. that fewer than 20% of cells should return an expected value less than 5, and the minimum expected value should be more than 1 (Yates et al., 1999, p.734). In this case 3 cells, or 25% of cells return an expected value less than 5 and the minimum expected value is 0.35. Therefore I reorganised the data to aggregate the responses to 'I was asked by a line manager…' and 'I was told by a line manager…', and excluded the responses to 'I was persuaded by a university tutor' (as the responses were negligible) and 'I was a former Teach First participant' (as this is a subsidiary factor and, by itself, not a reason for becoming a mentor; anyone who selected this would have also selected another statement). The revised data is given in Figure 10, along with the chi-squared analysis.

Figure 10: Summary of aggregated responses to Question 2 with chi-squared analysis.

MentorType * MentorOrigin Crosstabulation					
Count					
		MentorOrigin			Total
		AskedTold	Requested	WiderRole	
MentorType	PM	12	9	40	61
	SM	61	13	33	107
Total		73	22	73	168
Chi-Square Tests					
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square		23.452[a]	2	**.000**	
Likelihood Ratio		24.603	2	.000	
N of Valid Cases		168			
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.99.					
Symmetric Measures					
				Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal		Phi		**.374**	.000
		Cramer's V		**.374**	.000
		Contingency Coefficient		**.350**	.000
N of Valid Cases				168	
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					

The p-value is less than 0.001 which confirms the existence of an association between the independent and dependent variables; the measures of association given by phi, Cramer's V and the contingency coefficient are all between 0.3 and 0.4 which suggests a moderately strong association (Antonius, 2013, p.241). These results confirm the suggestion from the headline figures that the reported origins of subject and professional mentors are significantly different.

This is likely to reflect the fact that professional mentors typically hold a more senior position within the school than subject mentors, with a range of responsibilities which may include staff development, performance management and co-ordination of school-based ITT. The difference in the mentors' origins, however, may influence their perception of mentoring.

The self-efficacy of Teach First mentors

A recent Select Committee report into ITT commented that the 'mentoring of trainees is still not seen as a central requirement of all teachers, as it is, for example, for the medical profession.' The report added that 'there is a need to raise the status of school teachers who are involved in delivering initial teacher training in schools (including but not limited to mentoring)' (House of Commons, 2010a, pp.33,35).

Despite this, and in spite of the data which showed that only a minority of Teach First mentors had originally sought the role of mentor, over 90% of respondents to this survey considered the role of mentor to be either 'very important' or 'equally important' to their role as a classroom teacher and/or school manager. There was no significant difference in the profile of responses from subject or professional mentors. Mentors were given the opportunity to make further comment, and these showed that mentors' perception of the importance of the role was related to three issues: pupil learning; the professionalism of teachers; and the wider context of the teaching profession.

> This impacts as much on the experience of school as your own teaching – if you get this right you are in theory helping more pupils to achieve. (Professional Mentor)
> Experienced teachers should recognise mentoring and coaching as part of their role – working as a mentor is as important for the development of the experienced teacher as it is for the trainee. (Professional Mentor)
> It's about developing the next generation of teachers. (Professional Mentor)

To explore these perceptions further, mentors were asked how much protected time a subject mentor should have each week to fulfil their role. It should be noted that the subject mentors were responding in relation to their own role, and the professional mentors responding in their capacity of overseeing the mentoring provision across a school and managing the capacity, time and resources available for this provision. A summary of responses is given in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Summary of responses to Question 3, mentor structured survey

'How much protected time do you think subject mentors need to fulfil their role?'	Subject Mentor	Professional Mentor	Primary Mentor	TOTAL
No protected time	2 (2.2%)	3 (5.2%)	0	5 (3.2%)
1 hour per week	26 (28.0%)	26 (44.8%)	0	52 (33.8%)
1-3 hours a week	60 (64.5%)	22 (37.9%)	1	83 (53.9%)
Over 3 hours a week	5 (5.4%)	7 (12.1%)	2	14 (9.1%)
TOTAL	93	58	3	154

Results to this question suggest that nearly two-thirds of Teach First mentors (53.9+9.1=63%) feel that the role of subject mentor requires more than the one hour of protected time stipulated in the Teach First programme documentation. Subject mentors seem to be more likely to take this view (69.9%) than professional mentors (50%). Grouping the responses into those who feel mentoring requires one hour or less per week (coded as 1) and those who feel it requires more than one hour per week (coded 2) allows a Fisher's exact test to be conducted which produces the following result.

Figure 12: Fisher's exact test analysis of responses to Question 3

MentorType * Response Crosstabulation				
Count				
		Response		Total
		1	2	
MentorType	PM	29	29	58
	SM	28	65	93
Total		57	94	151

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.015[a]	1	.014		
Continuity Correction[b]	5.199	1	.023		
Likelihood Ratio	5.976	1	.014		
Fisher's Exact Test				.016	**.011**
N of Valid Cases	151				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.89.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	**.200**	.014
	Cramer's V	**.200**	.014
	Contingency Coefficient	**.196**	.014
N of Valid Cases		151	
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.			
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.			

The test produces p=0.011 which suggests a statistical association between the variables, which is to say that there is a significant difference in the profile of responses from subject and professional mentors; however the three measures of association (about 0.2) suggest this is a relatively weak association.

Supplementary comments from the mentors who had selected '1-3 hours a week' made repeated reference to the need for additional protected time to allow mentors to conduct observations of trainees' teaching, as well as an hour for weekly review and progress meetings.

> We have an hour to meet but I need time to observe his teaching. (Subject Mentor)
>
> One hour for meetings, another for conducting formal/informal observations per trainee. (Professional Mentor)
>
> Two hours would be better – one for planning/observing and another for meeting and feedback. (Professional Mentor)

Mentors also commented on the need for time for 'informal mentoring'. This is an aspect of the conceptual framework for mentoring presented above; where mentoring goes beyond the structured weekly meeting between mentor and trainee, and incorporates situated and work-based learning interactions involving other colleagues.

> We currently deliver a one hour timetabled slot, but informal mentoring takes a lot more time. There is the subject mentor but also the teacher whose class the trainee is taking and they also give time to the trainee. (Professional Mentor)

The responses therefore indicate that the majority of mentors place significant value on the role of mentor and consider it to form an important aspect of their professional identity as a teacher. The self-selecting nature of the sample represented in this survey should be noted, as this may have placed a positive skew on the results, with the mentors who perceive mentoring to be of limited importance less likely to have participated.

Mentors were asked to select and rank from a list of statements the factors underpinning the development of their skills and practice as a mentor. A summary of the results are given in Figure 13, with the most popular result for each statement highlighted; there was no significant difference in the responses from subject mentors and professional mentors.

Figure 13: Summary of responses to Question 6, mentor structured survey

Which of the following do you consider were most important in the development of your mentoring skills and practice?	Level of importance, 1=most important						
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	Mean
6a. Transferable skills as classroom teacher	**83 (56.1%)**	36	19	5	5	148	1.74
6b. Staff management skills as HoD or school manager	**54 (36.7%)**	46	31	11	5	147	2.10
6c. Cumulative experience of mentoring trainees or NQTs	**61 (41.2%)**	53	27	5	2	148	1.88
6d. Own experience of being mentored as a trainee	31	39	**42 (29.7%)**	16	16	144	2.63
6e. University led mentor training events	5	29	**58 (43.6%)**	28	13	133	3.11
6f. School-led mentor training events	14	31	**42 (32.3%)**	31	12	130	2.97
6g. Further study (e.g. at M-level) into mentoring, staff development or adult learning	8	38	**40 (31.7%)**	21	19	126	3.04
6h. Other	5	2	6	1	9	23	3.30

These results show that Teach First mentors perceive their mentoring skills and practice to derive most significantly from their own practical experience as a teacher, manager and a mentor; to a lesser extent from their experience of being mentored as a trainee teacher; and that formal training or educational input, including HEI-led mentoring training, is at best of moderate importance in developing a mentor's skills and practice. The implication is that, in common with other studies of teacher-mentors' conceptualisation of the role of mentor, these Teach First mentors consider their own practical experience as a mentor and a teacher to be sufficient to fulfil the role, and are reluctant to see the value of more theoretical or academic work, characterised as 'paperwork', for the effectiveness of their activities as a mentor (Jones & Straker, 2006; Rice, 2008).

The distinctiveness of Teach First mentoring

Mentors were asked to indicate the extent to which mentoring Teach First trainees was a different process to mentoring trainee teachers on other ITT routes. A summary of the results to this question is given in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Summary of responses to Question 8, mentor structured survey

How different have you found mentoring Teach First trainees to mentoring trainee teachers on other ITT routes?	Subject Mentor	Professional Mentor	Primary Mentor	TOTAL
I have only mentored Teach First trainees	23	2	0	25
No significant differences, beyond programme administration (code=1)	20	9	2	31
A few differences (code=2)	16	18	0	34
Quite different (code=3)	11	6	0	17
Significant differences (code=4)	11	20	1	32
Teach First trainees require a totally different mentoring approach (code=5)	12	3	0	15
TOTAL	93	58	3	154
Mean (from coded responses)	2.70	2.82	/	2.74

As well as excluding the primary mentors' responses, I also excluded the 25 responses from mentors who had only mentored Teach First trainees, where no comparison with other programmes was possible. Of the remaining 129 mentors, half (50.4%) felt that there were either 'no significant differences…' or only 'a few differences'; whereas 49.6% felt that Teach First trainees required either a 'quite', 'significantly' or 'totally' different mentoring approach to those on other routes. The even split between these two groups makes it difficult at this stage to draw any strong conclusions about the extent to which Teach First mentoring is a distinctive process.

The data suggests that subject and professional mentors hold similar views on this question. To test this assumption more formally, the most appropriate approach is the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test; this is more appropriate than a difference-of-mean t-test as it does not require an assumption that the samples are drawn from Gaussian (normal) distributions. This test requires the dependent variable (the responses chosen by the mentors) to be coded as a nominal variable; in this case, from 1 to 5. The results are given in Figure 15, and show there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Figure 15: Mann-Whitney U test analysis of responses to Question 8

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of TFDiff is the same across categories of MentorType.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	**.529**	Retain the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

This question attracted a very large number of supplementary comments (134, 87% of the sample), which provide a valuable insight into mentors' perception of the Teach First programme, the trainees and the mentors' role in supporting them. Of the mentors who felt that there was no significant difference with Teach First, the reasons given focused on the uniqueness of every mentoring experience and the circumstances of each trainee.

I have mentored two Teach First participants - poles apart, one was intelligent hard working, and would take on advice and develop and adapt ideas into a broader skill base, the other is arrogant, fails to listen to advice, and thinks he knows better. (Subject Mentor)

Every trainee is unique regardless of route into teaching. (Subject Mentor)

Not much difference it all depends on the individuals. (Subject Mentor)

Comments from mentors who felt there was a degree of difference in mentoring Teach First trainees to other trainees mainly fell into two categories: those which highlighted the intensive nature of the Teach First ITT programme, which placed particularly high demands on the trainees and brought unique challenges to the mentoring process; and those which referred to the typically distinctive characteristics of Teach First trainees. I will consider these two themes in turn.

The structure of the Teach First ITT programme requires trainees to teach a full or nearly full timetable of lessons in their initial training year, with limited prior classroom experience. This is similar to the structure of other employment-based ITT routes, such as the GTP or School Direct. However, Teach First trainees are also typically operating in challenging environments with the addition of HEI-based academic assignments to manage. This creates difficulties for the mentoring process as it is more difficult for mentors and trainees to work together and observe each other's teaching.

The timetable is more demanding of the participant and therefore of the mentor. (Subject Mentor)

They need more support due to the fact that they are put into a timetable immediately in comparison to the gradual build-up of PGCE students. (Subject Mentor)

Clearly additional essays/action research as one is training is a strain on the participants when they are attempting to develop their 'classroom skills'. (Professional Mentor)

Mentors also noted that the Teach First ITT programme, and the trainees themselves, had higher expectations of what Teach First trainees could and should achieve.

More intense for them and more expected of them at an earlier stage. (Professional Mentor)

The standard of teaching at which they are expected to be at by end of Term 1 for example is higher. (Subject Mentor)

Although the majority of comments about the particular nature of the Teach First ITT programme emphasised the additional support required from mentors, some mentors felt that the programme afforded uniquely positive opportunities for trainees, leading to a richer and deeper mentoring experience.

Much more freedom with Teach First; enabled participant to be more innovative and less constrained. (Subject Mentor)

PGCE and GTP don't always have good training at their universities. Very outdated methods used. Teach First are at the forefront of creativity. (Professional Mentor)

The second category of responses focused on the typical academic and attitudinal profile of Teach First trainees, a consequence of the Teach First selection process with its emphasis on high-achieving graduates with particular personal characteristics. The comments showed that mentors considered Teach First trainees to be more motivated, resourceful and independent in their professional learning than trainees engaged with other ITT programmes.

> They all start off with the same problems but Teach First students tend to make more rapid progress and are eager to be "the best". (Subject Mentor)
>
> Teach First participant in my experience was much more self-motivated and independent than some ITT students. (Subject Mentor)
>
> Teach First mentees appear more independent, resourceful and the pace of their development is both faster and at a higher level than typical ITT graduate trainees - in my experience. (Subject Mentor)

As a consequence of their personal characteristics, it was suggested that Teach First trainees may initially struggle more than others, but progress faster; and that this requires a different mentoring approach.

> [Teach First trainees] initially need significant help but move forward very quickly. They become used to school systems and procedures far quicker than PGCE. (Professional Mentor)
>
> Very keen, hardworking but very needy at the beginning because of heavy timetables and complete lack of knowledge. The demand on the mentor reduces as time goes by. (Subject Mentor)
>
> Teach First trainees have a completely difference experience from PGCE students. They have a much more difficult first term and need intensive support. However, in my experience they also have a much quicker and steeper learning curve so progress very quickly. (Professional Mentor)

Therefore, despite the relatively even split between mentors who felt that mentoring Teach First trainees was distinctive and not particularly distinctive, there are some clear indications here that mentors feel that there are certain features of the Teach First programme and the trainees which require a different approach from mentors. The suggestion that Teach First trainees face a particularly intensive challenge supports similar comments made by Teach First trainees in their focus group discussion, which gave the impression that only those that had been through the Teach First ITT programme themselves could really understand what a Teach First trainee needed.

Conclusions: the structured mentor survey

The structured mentor survey examined how Teach First mentors perceived the mentoring process; how they conceptualised the role of the mentor and thus their own self-efficacy as a mentor; and the distinctiveness of mentoring Teach First trainees as opposed to trainees engaged with other ITT programmes. The data allowed responses from subject mentors and professional mentors to be differentiated and significantly different patterns of response from these two groups to be identified.

The data revealed that it was rare for teachers to proactively seek the role of mentor and that the typical origin of subject mentors and professional mentors was significantly different, with subject mentors more likely to be asked or told to take on the role of mentor and professional mentors more likely to undertake the role as part of their wider responsibilities in school. It is likely that this difference is a result of professional mentors typically holding more senior positions within schools which incorporate a range of roles and responsibilities, of which professional mentor would be one. The spread of results confirmed the suggestion that there is no programme-wide approach to mentor selection in Teach First, and that each school adopts its own approach.

The subject and professional mentors also had significantly different perceptions of the amount of protected time which subject mentors need to fulfil the role, with subject mentors more likely to feel that the role required more than the one hour per week designated in the programme documentation; although half of professional mentors also held this view. Again, it is possible that the difference in responses is a result of the different roles that subject and professional mentors hold, with more senior professional mentors likely to have a responsibility for managing time and resource allocation and therefore more likely to respond conservatively over the amount of time the role requires.

All Teach First mentors, however, presented a positive perception of the mentor's role and the mentoring process; the role was highly rated relative to their wider role within the school. Teach First mentors conceptualised mentoring as an activity which is based on practical experience, on their experience of teaching and mentoring, and to a lesser extent on external or more theoretical approaches to adult and work-based learning. The role of the HEI provider and tutors in providing external architectural support for mentoring was downplayed.

There was no significant difference between subject and professional mentors in the perception of the distinctiveness of mentoring Teach First trainees. Roughly half the responses suggested there were no, or only minimal, differences between mentoring Teach First trainees and other trainees; of those that did perceive the process as more distinctive, the reasons given mainly fell into one of two (related) categories. Some focused on either the particularly intensive nature of the programme, incorporating an employment-based structure alongside challenging teaching environments and enhanced expectations from both the programme and the trainees themselves. Others identified the typical profile of Teach First trainees as a reason why the mentoring process was distinctive, requiring the mentor to manage these higher expectations and the trainees' typically rapid progression.

The Focus Groups

As with the tutors and the trainees, I conducted a series of focus group discussions with representative groups of Teach First mentors following the completion of the structured mentor survey. These were conducted in three of the five Teach First regions (London, the East Midlands

and the West Midlands) and were organised through the mechanism of the regional Schools Advisory Group (SAG) meetings.

The groups meet four times throughout the year and are chaired by the Teach First regional director; with their permission I was able to use about 20 minutes of the meeting to facilitate a discussion. The mentors attending the meeting were given a briefing sheet outlining the four main points for discussion, given in Chapter 5, and briefed on the proposed format, the methods of data collection and the purpose to which the data might be put.

The questions were developed in response to the themes that had emerged from the responses to the tutor, trainee and mentor structured surveys, and which were emerging from the trainee and tutor focus groups which were running concurrently. The first question sought to explore the mentors' perception of external architectural support for mentoring and specifically their perception of HEI-led mentor training. The second and third questions considered the distinctiveness of mentoring Teach First trainees, with the third focused on the suggestion that Teach First trainees have typical characteristics which require a particular approach to mentoring. The final question focused on the co-ordination between the different partners in the mentoring process and the degree to which mentors considered their schools to be part of the purpose and identity of the Teach First ITT programme.

This stage of data collection experienced a number of technical and logistical challenges and, as a consequence, the data collected was not as rich or extensive as that collected from the tutor or trainee focus group discussions. Only three of the five regions were represented in the data and due to a lack of adequate recording systems my analysis relied on my field notes. For this reason, I do not feel it would be appropriate to give verbatim quotes; instead, I have presented general comments reflecting the points that were made by mentors in the discussions. It should also be noted that, as with all the stages of data collection, there may be a self-selecting bias in the responses; not all Teach First schools were represented in the regional Schools Advisory Groups and those that attended and participated in the discussions may represent schools and mentors which are more engaged with Teach First than the general population of Teach First mentors. Finally, the structure of the focus group, with representatives from both Teach First and partner HEIs in attendance, may have influenced the type and tone of comments that mentors made, due to the hierarchical nature of the relationship between Teach First, the HEIs and the schools.

Findings and Discussion

As with the tutor and trainee focus groups, the purpose of the mentor focus group was to explore the themes which had emerged from the structured survey and analyse the extent to which the mentors' comments reinforced, attenuated or modified those themes. Three topics emerged: the perceived weakness of the HEI-led model of mentor training; the lack of co-ordination between schools, HEI providers and Teach First, leading to mentors not identifying with the ethos and objectives of the

Teach First programme; and the unique profile of Teach First trainees which required an enhanced, but not necessarily different, approach by the Teach First mentors.

Mentors in the East Midlands region felt that the provision of mentor training and support provided by the partner HEI was excellent; however, significant variability of provision was demonstrated by mentors' responses in the other two discussions. Concerns were raised about the structure and model of mentor training, rather than the content. Mentors in both the West Midlands and London regions commented that the scheduling of mentor training events during the working week was unsatisfactory, requiring mentors to leave school and the classes they would otherwise teach to require cover supervision. It was felt that the typical characteristic of Teach First schools, serving areas of socio-economic deprivation, brought particular challenges to the issue of teacher release, as consistency of teaching staff was particularly important in these schools. As a result, some schools looked for opportunities to provide in-house mentor training to avoid a negative impact on pupils' learning experience; however, the schools did not have any funds allocated for mentor training.

These schools would develop their own approaches to mentor training and development based on the expertise and resources in each particular school. As with the process of mentor selection, this approach tends towards an atomisation of the mentor development process across the Teach First ITT programme.

Mentors in the London region expressed a preference for mentor training to be differentiated between those who were new to the Teach First programme, with a focus on induction and the requirements of the ITT programme, and more established and experienced mentors, where the focus would be more on the development of mentoring skills. The London mentors also recommended that training should be bespoke to each Teach First school and should include Teach First trainees in the sessions. These comments represent a conceptualisation of the mentoring process based on a triadic relationship of trainee, mentor and supporter; the most effective mentor training would therefore take account of this characteristic and involve all three elements in the development of the mentoring process.

The second theme which emerged from the mentor focus groups was the lack of co-ordination between the school and HEI provider, and between schools and Teach First. Mentors in all three regions felt that communication with schools could be improved, referencing their lack of awareness of the requirements, deadlines and key dates in the HEI-led element of the ITT programme. Mentors in London and the West Midlands noted that schools are not informed about what happens on the six subject knowledge development days led by HEI tutors. Mentors in London requested more contact with tutors to standardise subject knowledge development, as the onus of subject knowledge development throughout the year falls on the subject mentor. Mentors in the West Midlands mentioned that they relied on the trainees to feedback from these days so the mentors could co-ordinate their own subject knowledge development; however achieving effective feedback was often difficult and particularly so with trainees who were struggling. This echoes the findings from the

programme documentation and the HEI tutors, that responsibility for bringing coherence to the two elements of the programme is devolved to the trainees themselves, and suggests that this strategy is not always effective.

Mentors in London also commented on the lack of information given to schools and mentors about trainees' academic work, for example the written assignments assessed by HEI tutors. In general, mentors reported that a lack of information about the programme both before the trainees arrived in school and during the initial training year made it difficult for schools and mentors to engage with the Teach First mission and the specifics of the programme. Mentors in the West Midlands commented that they didn't feel part of the programme in the same way that HEI tutors do. Therefore mentors do not adopt an approach to mentoring Teach First trainees which is based on the particular aims and mission of Teach First, due to the lack of engagement between schools and the other elements of the programme. One mentor in the West Midlands commented that there are many similarities between the Teach First programme and the GTP; as a consequence, Teach First 'runs itself', fulfilling the same QTS Standards as any other ITT programme. Mentors did not, however, necessarily consider this a deficiency or want more programme-wide structure; one London mentor noted that the Teach First Journal was too prescriptive, and another made it clear that schools needed to 'retain their independence' in the approach they took with Teach First trainees.

When asked specifically about the process of mentoring Teach First trainees, the mentors did identify some distinctive characteristics. Although mentors may not perceive the ITT programme very differently from other employment-based ITT routes, the typical profile of Teach First trainees was mentioned in all three regional discussions. Comments were varied but generally positive about the trainees, focusing on the attitude, professionalism and impact that the trainees had in schools. Mentors in London said that Teach First trainees were particularly proactive in their own professional development, and were routinely innovative and outstanding; in the West Midlands Teach First trainees were also described as proactive and enquiring; in the East Midlands mentors reported that Teach First trainees managed their professional relationships very well, and had taken on responsibilities to such a degree that the mentors sometimes had to be reminded that they were still trainee teachers. As a consequence, the mentors explained that they did not have a distinctly 'Teach First' mentoring process, or tailor their activities to the Teach First mission and objectives, but they did find that the mentoring process was more advanced and they responded to the trainees' demands for additional skills, practice and resources. London mentors reported that in some cases Teach First trainees were grouped together in school-based training sessions, distinct from trainee teachers engaged in other ITT routes. The distinctiveness of mentoring a Teach First trainee was described as providing 'something on top' of normal mentoring provision.

Mentors in all three regions commented that a minority of Teach First trainees found it difficult to listen to feedback and remain resistant to criticism, perceiving it as a personal attack; some mentors hypothesised that Teach First trainees are often not used to failing and become disheartened when

they are not instantly successful in the classroom. Therefore mentors are required to adopt a more sensitive and nuanced approach in managing the mentoring relationship with Teach First trainees.

An interesting point that emerged from the mentor focus groups related to the second year of the programme, when Teach First NQTs are engaged in the Leadership Development programme. Although not directly relevant to this study, there is some tangential relevance to the Teach First mentoring process. As a consequence of the enhanced progression that mentors typically experienced with Teach First trainees, mentors in both the West Midlands and London regions commented that it was difficult to tailor the training and development provision in the induction year for Teach First NQTs. Some felt the statutory induction programme was, for these teachers, a repetition of the previous year which might be considered redundant after they had reached such a high level in their initial training year; one mentor described it as a 'wasted year' for Teach First NQTs. Mentors in both regions noted that schools were not given much information about the Leadership Development programme, or the activities of the Teach First Leadership Development Officers (LDOs) who work with each Teach First NQT. Mentors felt it would be advantageous if the schools and their NQT induction programme could be more closely linked to this programme.

Mentors in London and the West Midlands echoed the suggestion which emerged from the trainee focus group discussion that former Teach First trainees, Teach First Ambassadors, could have a greater role in the mentoring process. Mentors in the West Midlands suggested that trainees could shadow a Teach First NQT to encourage stronger links between the cohorts and support the development of the trainees' expectations of the training year; mentors in London independently made a very similar suggestion, for a 'buddy-mentoring' scheme between Teach First NQTs and trainees to develop the trainees' perspective of working in the school and develop the leadership potential of the NQTs.

The system of Teach First Ambassadors is unique amongst English ITT programmes and, although not directly influencing the school-based mentoring process in a formalised manner, should be recognised as having an influence on the development of Teach First trainees. This is related to the development of a unique identity or esprit de corps which begins during the pre-training Summer Institute. Towards the end of the six week programme, prospective Teach First trainees are introduced to the experience of trainees from the previous year's cohort during a 'Returner's Week'. Explicitly, this supports the development of an extended professional community within Teach First, which is part of the overall mission of the programme; implicitly, this represents a strong influence on the development of trainees' perceptions, preconceptions and attitudes towards teaching, perceptions which are based on the experience of their peers who themselves have very limited direct experience of teaching. In turn, this may diminish the influence of other, more experienced (but non-Teach First) colleagues, tutors and mentors.

Conclusion

Three themes came out of the mentor focus groups which, although not producing as rich data as other stages, produced some useful contributions to the research. Firstly, mentors expressed their concern about the structure of mentor training provision, which they perceived to be undifferentiated and logistically challenging to engage with. Secondly, mentors identified a lack of coordination between schools and HEI providers in the delivery of the Teach First ITT programme; this point had emerged in earlier stages of data collection but the mentors' concerns were particularly focused on the lack of basic information about the structure of the programme, such as the calendar of assessment deadlines, and feedback on the professional development of the trainees. It is important to note that the mentors did not necessarily desire a greater degree of top-down structures within the ITT programme, and wanted to 'retain their independence' in shaping and controlling the ITT programme as it was conducted within each school.

Thirdly, the focus groups highlighted mentors' perception of the typical profile of Teach First trainees. In common with the findings from the structured mentor survey the responses were generally positive and focused on the enhanced abilities and expectations of Teach First trainees in comparison to trainees engaged with other training programmes. As a consequence the trainees required enhanced levels of support which could have implications for the NQT induction year, when it was suggested that Teach First Ambassadors might have a greater role to play.

The Open Survey

In parallel with the open survey administered to Teach First tutors, a survey was sent to those Teach First mentors who had engaged with the pilot of the Teach First mentor recognition framework in June 2011. As with the tutor open survey, this had a dual purpose of seeking to generate data for the evaluation of the pilot project and exploring mentors' perception of the recognition framework. The survey consisted of six questions which mentors were invited to answer. The questions focused on: the reasons the mentors had chosen to engage with this process; the impact that it may have had on their practice and what this implied about their identity construction and self-efficacy as a mentor; and the effectiveness of systems like the recognition framework in supporting the mentoring process. A copy of these questions is included in Appendix 6.

All 84 mentors who participated in the pilot were invited to complete the survey and 33 responses were received, representing a response rate of 39.3%. Figure 16 details how the responses break down by role and region; this shows that the response rate from professional mentors was higher than from subject mentors, that nearly half of professional mentor responses came from the London region, and that over a third of subject mentor responses came from the North West region.

Figure 16: Summary of responses to the mentor open survey

Region	Subject Mentors	Professional Mentors	Total
London (LON)	1	9	10
East Midlands (EM)	3	2	5
West Midlands (WM)	1	3	4
North West (NW)	5	4	9
Yorkshire and the Humber (YH)	4	1	5
Total Response	**14**	**19**	**33**
Total in Pilot	45	39	84
Response Rate	31.1%	48.7%	39.3%

Mentors were asked to identify which region they were based in and which 'phase' of the recognition framework (Developing, Effective or Advanced) they had engaged with. Fifteen of the nineteen professional mentors were engaged with the Advanced Mentor phase and the remaining four with the Effective Mentor phase; eight subject mentors were engaged with the Developing Mentor phase, five with the Effective Mentor phase and one with the Advanced Mentor phase.

In exploring the responses to these questions, I focused on how mentors conceptualised the role of the mentor in relation to the recognition framework, which represents a system of architectural support for mentoring, administered by the HEI provider and mediated by the HEI tutor.

The sample size returned from this survey allowed a process of thematic coding and cross-tabulation analysis to be completed. The first three questions in the survey explored mentors' sense of self-efficacy and how they perceived their role as a mentor. The first question sought the reasons for each mentor's participation in the pilot scheme; the second and third asked the mentor to conduct a process of 'reflection-in-practice' and 'reflection-on-practice' respectively (Schön, 1983), and consider how the recognition framework as a system of support for the mentoring process had influenced their practice. It should be reiterated that the responses formed a self-selecting sample of those that were willing to engage in the pilot of the recognition framework and therefore their identity construction as a mentor may not be typical of the wider population of Teach First mentors.

After examining the responses from the first three questions an iterative process of coding was completed, which produced the categories and codes summarised in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Summary of thematic codes used in analysis of responses to the mentor open survey

	QUESTION 1	Reasons for engaging with recognition framework
code	Reasons given	
1	Gaining recognition/evidence for the work I have done, or skills I already have	
2	I want to improve my mentoring practice	
3	An opportunity to reflect on mentoring practice	
4	I was invited to take part by the HEI tutor	
5	I have never mentored a Teach First trainee before	
6	Quality assurance, to ensure necessary requirements being met by the school	
7	I wanted to support other mentors taking part, and set an example	
	QUESTIONS 2 & 3	Impact of the recognition framework on role/practice as a mentor
code	Area of impact	Examples
1	Identity Construction & Self-Efficacy	Encouraged reflection; re-examined my role as a mentor; re-evaluated my practice; set targets for improvement; provided reassurance, confidence, motivation
2	Knowledge and Skills for Mentoring	Improved specific mentoring practices (e.g. giving feedback); greater knowledge or awareness of the principles and concepts of mentoring
3	Communities of Practice	Encouraged liaison and contact between mentors in different schools
4	Structures for Assuring Quality	Allows the QA of mentoring within the school
5	Negative Responses	No impact; minimal impact yet

Each mentor's response could be coded within this framework; however some mentors made more than one point in their response so the total count exceeds the total number of survey participants. Responses were counted and cross-tabulated; the results of this analysis can be found in Appendix 6.

The results show that the main reason Teach First mentors engaged with the recognition framework was to gain recognition for the work they had done or the skills they currently held as a mentor; a minority were seeking to develop new skills and knowledge as a mentor.

> I thought it was a good opportunity to gain recognition for the work involved as being a Teach First mentor. (Subject Mentor, Yorkshire and the Humber, Developing Mentor)
>
> It was a great opportunity simply to get recognition for the work as a mentor. (Professional Mentor, West Midlands, Advanced Mentor)
>
> Why not have formal recognition for something I would be doing anyway? (Subject Mentor, North West, Developing Mentor)
>
> I thought this is an opportunity to develop my skills in mentoring and coaching and seeing the difference between the two. (Professional Mentor, London, Effective Mentor)

Professional mentors and those engaged with the 'Advanced Mentor' phase (which was largely the same group) returned a more diverse range of motivations, including monitoring the quality of mentoring across their school and setting an example to the subject mentors. This reflects the wider role of the professional mentor relative to that of the subject mentor.

To ensure that I was following a set of guidelines that ensured I was providing adequate support and a level of consistency with the Teach First institutions. (Professional Mentor, West Midlands, Effective Mentor)

To ensure effective mentoring, and to support quality assurance as part of the Teach First programme at [my school]. (Professional Mentor, North West, Effective Mentor)

Whereas responses to question 1 suggested that many mentors perceived the framework as a mechanism for providing retrospective recognition for the role and the skills they held, the responses to questions 2 and 3 suggested that engaging with the framework did have an impact on their role. The largest group of responses fell into the category relating to the mentors' identity construction and self-efficacy. Mentors felt that the process of engaging with the recognition framework had led to renewed reflection on and re-evaluation of their role as a mentor, had given them reassurance and confidence in their role, and had encouraged them to set targets for their own development as a mentor.

Reflecting on my overall strengths and areas for development as a mentor was extremely useful in helping me to set targets for how I can be a better mentor in the future. (Subject Mentor, London, Developing Mentor)

It has supported me by clarifying my role, giving me time to reflect and think about the methods I use to mentor. (Subject Mentor, Yorkshire and the Humber, Effective Mentor)

The second most frequent response related to how the recognition framework had led to the development of specific skills, such as questioning techniques.

I am more aware of how I ask trainees questions instead of telling them 'the answers'. (Subject Mentor, North West, Effective Mentor)

It has made me more aware of the many variables which need to be factored into the provision to effect a successful practice. (Professional Mentor, North West, Advanced Mentor)

Mentors were asked if and how the framework had impacted upon their relationship with the HEI tutors. Responses were more balanced, with nine of the 33 mentors stating that there had been no or minimal impact on the nature of the relationship (however some of these commented that the relationship was already positive and effective). Ten mentors, mostly professional mentors, felt the introduction of the recognition framework had improved the quality of the communication between HEI- and school-based colleagues; several mentioned improved 'professional' or 'academic' dialogue, one reporting these discussions now had 'a sharper focus on the craft of a mentor'. Other changes were mentioned: giving the mentor a greater awareness of the tutor's role, the Teach First programme and the trainee's experience; a sense of reassurance from increased contact with the tutor; and an opportunity to share good practice and standardise tutor- and mentor-led assessments of the trainee's teaching.

Prior to the introduction of the recognition framework an attempt had been made to support the work of the Teach First mentors with the development of a dedicated website, the 'Mentors' Online Support System' and an online professional community for Teach First mentors. This survey afforded an opportunity to explore whether the mentors who had participated in the pilot recognition framework had made any use of these online resources (or any others) to support their work as a mentor and, if so, how useful they had been. 28 of the 33 mentors reported that they had not used any online resources. This may be a result of a lack of awareness of the systems that had been deployed; one mentor commented, 'No but would appreciate knowing of some as I would use them', and another, 'I would definitely be open to using them if they were made readily available by Teach First'. The nature of these systems, which were essentially passive repositories of information about ITT mentoring, can be contrasted against the more interactive process of engaging with the recognition framework, which involved the active support of a designated HEI tutor. The implication is that support systems which lack human agency and mediation are less effective in supporting the mentoring process.

At one level this survey was useful for evaluating the implementation of the pilot recognition framework; however, the responses were also invaluable for exploring mentors' perceptions of their role and how the mentoring process could be supported by external systems. The themes which emerged support the findings from earlier phases of data collection. Mentors perceived skills and knowledge for mentoring to derive largely from their own experience and expertise as a teacher; yet there was acknowledgement that mentoring can be supported by a system which encourages reflection on those skills and knowledge; and that this system is most effective if mediated by human agency rather than presented as a passive system or repository of information.

Conclusions

Findings from the group-level analysis of Teach First mentors confirm and extend many of the themes which emerged from the analysis of the programme documentation and the data from trainees and tutors. Once again it is apparent that there is no programme-wide model of Teach First mentoring. The data showed significant variability in the strategies employed to select and induct mentors; the majority of professional mentors found the role came within a portfolio of other responsibilities, and the majority of subject mentors were asked or told by a line manager to take the role. As schools take different approaches to the selection and induction of mentors, this reflects differing conceptualizations of the role of mentor and therefore variation in the approaches developed to mentoring trainee teachers.

Teach First mentors overwhelmingly perceive the role of mentor to have great intrinsic value. Within this, Teach First mentors feel that the skills and practice for mentoring derive primarily from their practical experience as a teacher in the classroom, rather than from more theoretical or external knowledge bases. The efficacy of external sources of support for mentoring were generally downplayed; although the recognition framework was identified as a useful mechanism by those

who were participating in the pilot, the majority felt that its purpose was to recognise existing and established practice and there was wariness expressed about the recognition process requiring additional work. The mentor focus groups commented on the perceived weaknesses of the HEI-led model for mentor training and the lack of coordination between HEIs and schools in the ITT programme. Teach First mentors perceived their schools to be independent settings for the mentoring process, selecting mentors on their own terms, developing mentoring skills from practical classroom experience, and recognising established practice. The exception to this is their acknowledgment of the value of the HEI tutor. The recognition framework was mediated by the HEI tutors and some of the mentors who had engaged with this process felt it had a positive impact on the relationship between tutor and mentor and strengthened the depth and quality of the mentoring process. It was noted, however, that in volunteering for the pilot phase of the recognition framework, both mentor and tutor found they had to commit more time than they had been formally allocated in order to achieve this.

The Teach First tutors gave minimal indication of the distinctiveness of mentoring within the Teach First programme and the trainees by contrast made a strong case for the distinctiveness of the process of mentoring a Teach First trainee. The mentors themselves presented a response somewhere between these positions, with half of the mentors who completed the structured survey suggesting that mentoring a Teach First trainee was significantly different from that of other ITT programmes. Where it was perceived to be different this was a result of two factors: firstly, the enhanced intensity and expectations of the Teach First ITT programme, given its employment-based structure, the typical profile of Teach First schools and the targets and aspirations that Teach First and the trainees set themselves; secondly, the typical profile of Teach First trainees as high-achieving and aspirational graduates with a strong commitment to effecting educational impact in a short time. These two factors had an impact on the mentoring process as mentors had to manage these enhanced expectations alongside the pressure and intensity of the ITT programme, whilst also facilitating the Teach First trainees' professional development.

Chapter 10 – Individual-level analysis: Teach First mentor interviews

<u>Introduction</u>

Following the completion of the data collection from the three groups involved in the Teach First mentoring process – the mentors, tutors and trainees – my research strategy required a final phase of data collection which would allow analysis at an individual level. The target group for this analysis was the Teach First mentors themselves. After consideration of the research objectives, resources available and relevant literature, it was decided that a series of interviews with about twelve mentors would generate a range of data that was both rich and broad enough to provide a useful addition to the research strategy, whilst remaining a manageable size (Baker & Edwards, 2012).

The original intention was to complete this interview series in the autumn of 2011, following completion of the mentor and tutor open surveys. However, due to a hiatus in my professional circumstances the interviews did not take place until the spring of 2012.

The interview schedule was developed over a period of time and underwent a number of iterations. For example, initially the interview concluded with an invitation for the mentors to sketch a narrative of their own experience of entering the teaching profession and undertaking ITT; it was thought this line of enquiry would give detail of the mentors' social and academic profile, their professional and personal experiences, and their values and philosophy towards education. From this, it would be possible to explore explicit or implicit perceptions of the mentoring role, the teaching profession and Teach First. However, on reflection it was felt that this life history approach (West, et al., 2007), whilst fundamentally valid, would move the analysis into realms beyond the scope of this thesis and draw into question the internal consistency of the methodology, so this final question was removed.

The interview schedule included planned questions with explanatory notes and supplementary questions, but it should be noted that the interviews were semi-structured and developed organically in response to the content, level of detail and tone of the mentors' answers and therefore each dialogue was unique. I ensured that the main themes in the schedule were covered in every interview: the role and identity of the mentor; building mentoring proficiency; the mentor and Teach First. A copy of the final interview schedule can be found in Appendix 7.

An email invitation (also included in Appendix 7) was sent via the proxy of Teach First administrators to all Teach First mentors in two regions: London and Yorkshire and the Humber. I chose two regions to allow some comparison between different areas and schools linked to different HEI providers; London was chosen as the largest and longest-running Teach First region, which therefore may give the greatest range and diversity of responses; Yorkshire and the Humber was also chosen as it was by comparison the most recently initiated Teach First region (at that time). At the time of the interviews I was operating as an independent researcher rather formally working with Teach First and, due to the imperatives of data protection, I was not able to see the full distribution list; I estimate that between 200 and 300 mentors were invited to participate in the interview series. I

received fifteen expressions of interest from the mentors which translated into eleven completed interviews.

The interviews were scheduled to last between 20 and 25 minutes (in practice the shortest was 15 minutes and the longest nearly an hour) and were conducted by phone, at a mutually agreed time either during the working day or in the evening. The conversations were recorded on a computer using a software plug-in linked to the telephony system and subsequently transcribed in full. I also took complementary notes during the interviews. All responses were anonymised and pseudonyms have been used in the analysis. Written notes were kept in secure office environments and held in locked cabinets when not in use. Audio recordings were stored on a corporate network within a permission based directory behind a firewall, or on laptops carrying FIPS 140-2 compliant encryption systems. All raw data will be securely destroyed 12 months after the submission of this thesis. Participants were told the purpose and context of the research in the initial invitations, and again as the interview commenced, and were reminded at each stage of their right to withdraw from the research process at any time.

The Sample

Eight mentors were based in the London region (LON) and three in the Yorkshire and Humber region (YH). Nine mentors identified themselves as professional mentors (PMs) and two as subject mentors (SMs). Seven were female and four were male. Five were based in academies; one was based in a Teaching School and two in former Training Schools. Of the nine professional mentors, all had extensive experience of ITT with the exception of one who was in her third year as a qualified teacher. For four of the experienced professional mentors this was their first year working with Teach First, which allowed a useful comparison of Teach First against other ITT programmes. Finally, two of the mentors were alumni of the Teach First programme, Teach First Ambassadors (TFAs). A summary of the mentors' characteristics is given in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Mentor interviews - summary of respondent characteristics

Mentor (pseudonym)	PM or SM	Gender	Region	School type	School's experience of TF (in years)	Role in school	TFA?
Adam	PM	M	LON	Academy	10	AHT	
Brian	PM	M	LON	Community School	1	HoD and Science AST	
Charlotte	PM	F	LON	Community School	1	AHT	
Daisy	PM	F	LON	Foundation School	7	Deputy Head of Faculty	Yes
Edward	PM	M	YH	Academy	1	Principal	
Frances	SM	F	LON	Academy/ Teaching School		HoD	
Georgia	SM	F	YH	Community School	1	KS3 science co-ordinator	
Helen	PM	F	YH	Academy	1	Induction co-ordinator	
Isabelle	PM	F	LON	Community School/ former Training School	10	Deputy Head	
John	PM	M	LON	Academy	2	Consultant PM	
Kayleigh	PM	F	LON	Community School/ former Training School	10	Director of Professional Development	Yes

Due to the ratio of responses from professional and subject mentors, I chose to focus my analysis on the interviews with the nine professional mentors. This would provide a contrast to the mentor open survey, which focused on the direct mentoring activity with trainees of both subject and professional mentors. The professional mentors have an oversight of the structures, systems and culture of mentoring within the school, and also a central role in shaping those systems and that culture. As discussed above, the professional mentor combines the mentor role within the triadic relationship with a supporter role. Their responses would therefore provide an opportunity to explore the school's overall approach to supporting trainees, teachers and mentors, and the school's engagement with Teach First on a strategic level.

The sample is therefore an 'information-oriented selection' rather than a random sample, based on 'paradigmatic cases' which act as exemplars of the issue in question (Flyvbjerg, 2004, pp.426-27). As well as my decision to focus on the professional mentors, the self-selecting nature of the sample should be considered. An open invitation led to a small number of positive responses within which professional mentors were disproportionately represented. These mentors tend to hold more senior positions than subject mentors, and the mentors in this sample represent a range of management and

leadership positions from assistant head teachers (AHT) and an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) to a school principal.

The interview is a commonly-understood paradigm of social interaction (Neuman, 2012, p.234) and, as mentioned in Chapter 5, it may be useful to view the invitation-acceptance process in cost-benefit analysis terms. In accepting an invitation to participate, the interviewee incurs a cost – mainly, his or her time (but also in giving up or exposing their views and feelings to a varying level of detail and intimacy). Each of these interviews was due to last about 20-25 minutes and was conducted by phone at a time of the interviewee's convenience; however, a cost remained and would have been perceived differently by each interviewee depending on the relative value they placed on 20-25 minutes of their time at a particular moment. These mentors perceived that the benefits of participating outweighed any cost.

After completing this cycle of interviews I contacted the mentors again and asked if they could articulate their reason for accepting the initial invitation. Those mentors who responded cited 'professional courtesy', 'maintaining a good relationship with Teach First', and that it would be helpful for the development of the Teach First ITT programme. Some cited more general motivations: the value of educational research in developing practitioners' knowledge and understanding, a sense that theirs was a perspective was worth sharing, and that individuals' contributions to research lead to increased shared understanding.

> If we are going to progress as a species, we have to work towards excellence. I am not much but doing my best to help us understand. That is really why I accepted. (Brian)

These responses, and the notion of a 'cost-benefit analysis' alongside that of a 'paradigmatic selection', is useful to keep in mind when analysing this small sample of Teach First professional mentors.

> Sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases – not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something. (Eysenck, 1976)
>
> It is all that we have. It is the only route to knowledge – noisy, fallible, and biased though it be. (Campbell, 1975).

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the interview transcripts led to the development of four distinct themes. The first was the diversity in approaches taken in Teach First schools towards supporting the mentoring process, including support for both trainees and subject mentors. These different approaches have implications for how the mentoring process is conceptualised in different schools. A second theme was an extension of the notion of HEI-based architectural support for mentoring; as suggested in the mentor open survey, it was apparent that systems alone were afforded limited value but the relationship with the HEI tutor could be of paramount importance in supporting the mentoring process. As a refinement of the conceptual framework for understanding mentoring, this proposes

that what might be termed 'human architecture' is of particular importance. The third theme which emerged from these interviews, which relates to the first two, was the centrality of the school in the Teach First trainees' mentoring experience. The fourth theme was the mentors' perceptions of Teach First, including of the trainees and the ITT programme, and the extent to which the character and distinctiveness of Teach First becomes attenuated through the school-based mentoring process.

A Diversity of Approaches

Mentors were asked to describe the typical activities that they undertook as a Teach First mentor; professional mentors were also asked if and how they supported subject mentors in their school. Taken together, the professional mentors' responses were indicative of the approaches taken in each school to the provision of school-based ITT and, implicitly, their perception of the role of a professional mentor in overseeing that provision. It was apparent from the responses that Teach First schools adopted a significant range of approaches; the four main approaches which mentors described are examined below, in turn.

Oversight and Trust

Some professional mentors saw their role in relation to both trainees and subject mentors as one of oversight: monitoring, organising, and administering.

> I am very much the overseer of the process… I put on a training programme… I arrange the second placement… I liaise with Teach First. (Adam)

I then asked this mentor about his involvement in the induction of new Teach First subject mentors.

> Ah, well, in terms of the school, yes, clearly I am the first port of call for [pause] that process. But obviously I would expect – and get [pause] quite a lot of input from Teach First themselves on that.
> *[Me]* …So is that something that just involves Teach First training sessions, or is there more to it than that?
> Well, in terms of the school, I think we really have a very solid number of staff who have mentoring experience in other situations… all of the Teach First mentors have mentored PGCE students before… and of course a lot of those skills are transferable, although the intensity with Teach First is greater… the skills are the same. (Adam)

The repeated use of the phrase 'in terms of the school' places the issue of mentoring and mentor preparation within the context of this mentor's school, which draws from the 'very solid number of staff' which the school has as a resource for mentoring. There is a sense in the tone and pacing of the response that the mentor is reluctant to represent mentor training as something entirely left to external agency; the staff's inherent experience and expertise, both from teaching and mentoring through other ITT programmes, and their 'transferable' skills are perceived to be of greater value. The implication is that mentoring Teach First trainees requires skills and practice which are not

particularly different from those required for mentoring any trainee teacher. The approach to mentoring trainee teachers is one which has developed independently within this school.

The emphasis on oversight and administration might suggest a 'managerial' model of mentoring (Brooks & Sikes, 1997); however, the implications of functionality and emotional distance which come with this label do not encompass the complexity of these professional mentors' identity constructions. For example, one mentor described their role in terms which could be considered quite systematic and process-driven:

> There are certain formal things I have to do, I have to complete a termly review… checking their progress against the Standards… (Edward)

The phrase 'things I have to do' is telling as it suggests that these processes are necessary tasks but not perceived to be core elements of the role, and within the same response this mentor elaborates on other elements of the role:

> My second part, I suppose, is to ensure that on a daily basis I'm available if [the trainees] want to see me… I frequently check on their health and well-being. (Edward)

The role for this mentor therefore also encompasses emotional and psychological support, which is suggestive of the 'mentor as counsellor' construction (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). It is clear that simple characterisations are rarely appropriate to describe the complexity of any mentor's perception of their role.

I asked the same mentor about the support that subject mentors in his school received; as with Adam the response emphasised the inherent professional skill of the teachers in the school rather than external training provided by HEI providers. This echoes the findings from the group-level analysis of Teach First mentors. Again it is interesting to note the hesitations and tone within the response, which suggest a reluctance to reveal negative feelings about external training too explicitly.

> …They're given a time allocation in order to be able to do [mentoring], and they receive training from the university, if they haven't already, in the role of the mentor.
> [Me] Do you think those training resources are effective and useful?
> Yes, I think [pause] I think they are, I think though the most effective [pause] First of all, the mentor has to be an effective classroom practitioner themselves… It's vitally important that that person has credibility in the classroom themselves… I would expect them to be either somebody who's crossed the Threshold… or they're identified through their own practice and our own self-evaluation practices as being at least a good teacher in the classroom (Edward)

In defining their role as one set back from the mentoring process and holding a position of oversight, the professional mentors displayed a sense of trust in the subject mentors. Where the relationship between mentor and trainee is functioning effectively, these professional mentors were content to give the subject mentors space to undertake their role without undue interference.

I don't get too involved with that [overseeing the subject mentors], unless I deem there to be an issue – like, if the weekly meeting isn't taking place, or when I run a check on the Journal, if that's not up to date. What I do with the subject mentors is try to make their lives as easy as possible, by making them aware of notices, reminders… (John)

After a while… I came to trust my subject mentors and reached the conclusion that the key relationship underpinning successful Teach First training in any school is the one between trainee and subject mentor, not the relationship between the professional mentor and trainee, nor the relationship between the mentors themselves (significant though these may be in certain situations). (Adam)

This locates the professional mentor as supporter to the mentoring process; as with the HEI tutor, they are monitoring the interactions between mentor and trainee from a distance and assuring the quality of those interactions.

The approach that professional mentors take towards the mentoring process is an element of their own theoretical and ideological construction of teaching and teacher training. John gave a précis of his views on mentoring and on teaching in general.

I'm as much a teacher to them, the trainees, as I was to my pupils… in the sense of providing them with the necessary knowledge and understanding… If I was asked, I would say I'm a practitioner. My favourite book is a book by Michael Marland called 'The Art of the Classroom'[5], I am not a great philosopher… you know, it is a craft… I would have to say, mine is a very practical approach. (John)

The emphasis on the practical, craft-based elements of teaching and ITT, as opposed to more conceptual approaches to mentoring seen in other professional mentors' responses, may be linked to the mentors' wider role in the school. All the professional mentors who were interviewed had a degree of seniority in their schools, however, the responses which articulated teaching and ITT either implicitly or explicitly in entirely practical terms came from an AHT (Adam), a school principal (Edward) and a mentor with a 'full working life's experience' in teaching and ITT (John). With this seniority might come an inclination to adopt the oversight/trust approach as a result of competing pressures and priorities. Adam articulated this point directly, explaining how his approach as a professional mentor might differ from others.

As an Assistant Head Teacher I have been given more and more jobs as our SLT [Senior Leadership Team] has shrunk... The attitude of the head appears to be, 'you've been doing the… job a while now, it should be running itself: what else can I give you?'   So you evolve a style which enables you to take on new responsibilities, requiring more of your time. (Adam)

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[5] Probably Marland, M. (1975) 'The craft of the classroom: a survival guide to classroom management in the secondary school' Heinemann

<u>Intercession and Induction</u>

A second group of responses presented a variation on how the professional mentor's role is conceptualised, articulating distinct responsibilities towards trainees and subject mentors respectively. These mentors perceived their role to involve more direct support for the Teach First trainees, including being available as an additional contact if and when the need arose and interceding on trainees' behalf if necessary, in a comingling of the mentor and supporter roles. Their role in relation to the subject mentors focused on induction and ensuring that programme and statutory requirements were being met. Beyond an initial induction, these professional mentors adopted a similar approach to those discussed above, leaving the subject mentors to their job and demonstrating trust in them to be effective unless and until deficiencies were apparent. The provision of this induction was derived from the school's own resources; as above, external systems for mentor training were perceived to have a lower value.

Brian and Charlotte described their activities with the trainees in terms related to the 'mentor as counsellor' model (Anderson & Shannon, 1998), drawing from their experience and seniority to intercede on their behalf.

> I listen to their issues. I've got a discreet office where… they can offload to me. I can advise… or deal with colleagues… because I'm… well-established and senior and so I have a bit of leverage with staff, so I can deal with things… which… they couldn't because they were trainees. (Brian)
> It's basically being there as a support… getting that older hat on to say, 'Is everything going OK?' 'Are you getting the help you require, the support you require?'… 'Have we met your requirements?'… 'Are you finding any difficulties?' (Charlotte)

The risk in this approach is that the effectiveness of the support is compromised by the lack of an isolating 'firewall' between this activity and the assessment element of the professional mentor's role; unlike the model of the external mentor the professional mentor is in a hierarchical position in relation to the trainee (Hobson & McIntyre, 2013). The assessment element of the mentor's role, what has been called 'judgementoring', can lead to the failure of mentoring to achieve its full potential (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). When asked about their role in relation to the subject mentors in the school, Brian and Charlotte referenced a systematic process of induction into mentoring within the school.

> What we did at the beginning, I did a training session for the subject mentors and looked at the whole issues around mentoring, what mentoring actually entails, what obligations are involved… (Brian)
> There's a programme at the moment where we're encouraging ten of our younger members of staff to be 'lead teachers', and three of them are going to have gone on to be ASTs, and it's those people who we make subject mentors. (Charlotte)

The support provided to subject mentors is focused on induction and the development of professional capabilities. Brian described how, after the initial induction, his interaction with subject mentors is focused on the programme's assessment structures.

> For example, tomorrow we're all going to sit together and make our second term assessments on our Teach Firsters and make a joint decision… We'll be very factual about it and be very objective about it and we'll have to find the evidence in our lesson observations. (Brian)

It should be noted that the emphasis on the assessment requirements of the Teach First ITT programme may not be a reflection of this mentor's ideological construction of what ITT involves, but instead derive from the policy landscape with its culture of accountability, inspection and quality assurance, a culture which has been described as 'surveillance overkill' (Mahony et al., 2004, p.440).

I asked Brian and Charlotte about any resources they used to support subject mentors on an ongoing basis; I did not specify where these resources may come from, to leave their responses as open as possible. Both mentors interpreted the question as making reference to HEI-led mentor training.

> What I've done is taken the training I did when I became appointed as professional mentor to this programme, we went to the Teach First training… we've got a lot of online documents… we listened to people talk about various issues as mentors. [The deputy head] keeps feeding me with – various documents that I should be reading. So [pause] yeah… (Brian)
>
> All subject mentors are offered a day by Teach First… and we actively encourage all the people who we designate as subject mentors to go [pause] I say 'actively encourage', it all depends when the training comes out [pause] Last year… we couldn't release all five [subject mentors] at one time, so some went and some didn't. [pause] So you've got it from Teach First, there. (Charlotte)

The comment by Charlotte about the difficulty schools sometimes face in releasing teachers to attend HEI-led mentor training echoes those made in the mentor focus group discussions. The reference by Brian to documents 'that I should be reading' suggests these resources hold limited value to him. Both mentors displayed hesitation and reluctance in their responses, similar to the mentors discussing external resources to support mentoring; there is almost a sense of embarrassment, or an unwillingness to express how limited they really feel these resources are. This was particularly apparent when I explored this point further; Brian's response became very hesitant and broken, until he turned to the 'practical realities' of the school, when the tone and pacing of his response changed markedly and became far more confident and fluent.

> I think it's the [pause] the universities are providing us with the [pause] you know, the- the- the, you know, the theoretical, sort of, ideas. [pause] But the school is much more practical and much more, you know, the realities of that theory. We kind of shape… those ideals and those models. But we make them bespoke… It's got to be very bespoke to that school because there will be particular aspects of that school... That will give a different nuance or emphasis on the [pause] theoretical model that they've received. (Brian)

Brian is describing the integration of theory and practice in ITT, which has been articulated elsewhere in various configurations (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). The approach described here is not necessarily devaluing the role of the HEI provider or theoretical approaches within ITT, but is certainly claiming primacy for the role of the school and the school-based mentor in setting the 'realities of that theory' within the particular context of that school.

<u>Mentor Selection and Development</u>

When asked to describe the activities they undertook as a Teach First mentor, nearly all the mentors began with a reference to their role in relation to the trainee teachers. Helen and Isabelle, however, focused their initial response on their support for the subject mentors in their school.

> I oversee the mentors; I make sure the mentoring is happening… (Helen)
> The first thing I do is sort out who [the trainee's] subject mentor's going to be… I sort out a programme that their subject mentors follow, tied to the current Q [qualified teacher] Standards. (Isabelle)

I asked Helen to expand on what was involved in 'making sure the mentoring is happening', and she described her particular school's approach to the induction and development of new subject mentors. This represented a fundamentally different approach to those outlined by some of the other professional mentors.

> Whenever anyone – it doesn't matter if they're PGCE, NQT, GTP or whatever – if anyone becomes a mentor in our school I look at whether they're doing it because there's no-one else in the department to do it, whether they're doing it because they've been hand-picked or chosen because they're a good person to do it… And then I will just make my own personal judgement about their personality, where they are in their career… and if they've not done it before… they have to do three joint observations as part of a quality assurance before we let them – even if they've been teaching for twenty-odd years – before we can let them mentor anyone. (Helen)

This is an approach developed by this particular professional mentor for this particular school and one which is not programme-specific: 'PGCE, NQT, GTP or whatever'. This supports the findings from other interviews and the mentor focus groups that the approach to mentoring is developed by schools independently. Helen explicitly refutes the view that classroom experience alone qualifies one to be a good mentor: 'even if they've been teaching for twenty-odd years'. A possible reason for the difference with other responses is that, unlike the professional mentors who combined their role with senior positions within the school, Helen gave her job title as 'induction co-ordinator', responsible for all induction, ITT and CPD in the school. This specialism may explain the clearly planned induction process and the sense of personal ownership of the process: 'I will just make my own personal judgement…'

I asked Isabelle whether her role included oversight of the quality of subject mentoring. Her response outlined not only an approach to the selection of subject mentors not seen in the other responses, but one which was clearly based on her own conceptualization of ITT.

> Some of that's my knowledge… about teachers and how I perceive… their ability to mentor/coach… The main thing I'm really pulled to, to know whether they'll be good as a mentor, is when they go into a classroom and they observe a young and inexperienced practitioner… when they're giving that feedback and they're talking about target-setting, they're getting it in the right order… And that there's a positive, not tolerance, but an understanding that training a teacher has to be structured, but it has to be needs-led structured, you can't just do one-size-fits-all, because that won't work. (Isabelle)

This articulation of the selection and development of mentors was unique and did not derive from any programme-wide systems or documentation produced by Teach First. I asked Isabelle to expand on the approaches she used in supporting subject mentors once they had been selected. She outlined a system based on the use of questioning, modelling and observation; implicitly, her approach drew on andragogy and work-based learning theory (Eraut, 1994; Knowles et al., 1998).

> I do paired observations with people, so I say, 'this is how I interpret it'… And then we share, you know, what did you see at the end, what did I see at the end? OK, and what does that mean? And if you were feeding back, how would you do it? And I kind of model it with them. And for a very new person, I'll observe the feedback… (Isabelle)

Isabelle recognised she had developed a distinctive approach for her particular school, and the approach taken by the Teach First ITT programme to supporting mentors was quite different and, in her view, deficient.

> The Teach First [mentor] training approach… is not particularly good, in my opinion… The [mentor] training that has gone on with Teach First has been very much – from what I've seen – you have to do this observation, you have to do this, you have to fill in the Journal… And it's all very mechanistic, and I don't think that's terribly helpful... I do believe there's a bit more to being a teacher than filling in a Journal with nice writing. (Isabelle)

The relative seniority of some of the professional mentors may explain their more 'hands-off' oversight approach to the professional mentor role; however, it should be noted that Isabelle was a Deputy Head and presumably combined her professional mentor role with other senior management duties.

<u>The Theory and Practice of Mentoring</u>

Few of the mentors interviewed made reference to theoretical approaches playing a part in the mentoring provision within their schools. Two that did were Daisy and Kayleigh; in both cases, however, the perceived value of this theory to their practice as a mentor seemed to be limited. A possible reason why these mentors made reference to theory is that both were Teach First Ambassadors. It can be supposed, therefore, that Daisy and Kayleigh have a different perspective of the Teach First ITT programme than the other professional mentors. They were also, incidentally, the mentors with the least experience of mentoring.

I asked Daisy whether she drew on any resources in supporting the subject mentors in her school, and she made reference to theoretical approaches to mentoring that she had engaged with as part of a recently-completed master's degree. However, it was clear that this theoretical understanding was not embedded in the practice of mentoring in her school.

> I myself have been through coaching and mentoring training, at [name of HEI provider]… I studied it for my MA thesis… that's something which I disseminated to the whole staff … so we talked a lot about 'what is coaching?', 'what are mentoring skills?' We don't use that day-to-day as perhaps we could, I think it does end up inevitably that the mentoring meetings become a bit about administration and getting paperwork done, rather than perhaps being the best [pause] examples of coaching… (Daisy)

Kayleigh demonstrated a similar understanding of more theoretical approaches to school-based ITT, but also felt that 'day-to-day' mentoring required a more functional approach.

> You know, when I've been to some universities to do some research about this, we can actually have a theoretical debate about the principles of mentoring and coaching for several years I would imagine, if we wanted to… but from a day-to-day teacher's perspective they want strategies that are going to work straight away that they can just use. (Kayleigh)

The tone of the comment 'we can… have a theoretical debate… for several years…' presents a pejorative impression of theoretical approaches to mentoring, or at least to their applicability in schools. This echoes the findings from the group-level analysis of the Teach First mentors, where in both structured and open surveys it was clear that Teach First mentors place greater value on their practical experience in the classroom in mentoring and supporting mentoring, than on any theoretical ideas or principles. The comments from Daisy suggest that even when mentors have a deep understanding of the theoretical underpinnings to mentoring, practical measures and 'strategies that are going to work straight away that they can just use' are considered of greater value.

Practical strategies for teaching and mentoring are themselves grounded in theoretical principles of adult learning (Hardman, 2013); it interesting to note that both Isabelle and Daisy, despite their understanding of these principles, still see a 'disconnect' between the theory and practice of mentoring in schools.

Isabelle described an approach to developing mentoring which was based in the imperatives of career progression. She had established a 'mentor forum' with a local cluster of schools, providing a space for professional discussion about effective mentoring. The motivation for this was not only to 'make sure that [the subject mentoring] was really high quality, and very consistent', but also to help other mentors' careers through the provision of evidence to meet the 'post-threshold' standards for teaching[6].

> [The sessions are] mapped to the post-threshold standards so people understand the professional development side of things from a school performance management perspective, I think that is actually important for staff… I found becoming a mentor for me, when I was in my second year of Teach First [i.e. a newly qualified teacher], at my first school, that basically allowed me to get the head of department role… (Isabelle)

There is an echo here of the monetising of the mentoring process which was seen in the responses from the trainees' focus group; due to her background as a former Teach First trainee and the shared experience there may be an ideological connection between this mentor's approach to mentoring and the Teach First trainees' conceptualization of mentoring.

The Role of the Tutor – *'Human Architecture'*

The interviews refined the model of architectural support for mentoring to emphasise the role of people, and particularly the relationship between the HEI tutor and the professional mentor, which is most significant in shaping the nature of school-based ITT. I call this feature, which sits within the different types of architectural support, 'human architecture'. It follows that mentoring can be supported by external human architecture as represented by the HEI tutor.

Charlotte and Helen were clear on the importance of the HEI tutor in supporting both trainees and the overall provision of mentoring within the school.

> The other thing is we've got a very good relationship with [name of tutor] who is the Teach First [pause]… designated person. And I think, to be honest with you, because of the nature of people who we've got as subject mentors, if they [the Teach First trainees] feel that they're not getting what they should, they go to [name of tutor… who] has actually put that extra level of subject knowledge in. (Charlotte)
> I think [name of tutor] is [pause] amazing. [pause] Absolutely amazing… I don't know how he fits it in with his family… He does all the quality assurance stuff, but he's very very mindful that he needs to be a kind of [pause] shoulder to cry on, mentor, father-figure. He's very very good at that. (Helen)

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[6] New arrangements for teachers to apply for the upper pay range came into effect on 1 September 2013, replacing the previous threshold arrangements.

This is a feature of mentoring which derives not from any particular system or resource but from the personality and commitment of the individual tutor, and from their relationship with the professional mentor. Elsewhere Charlotte refers to the tutor as 'one of the staff', with a 'relationship [that] is bonded straight away'; she mentions that it 'would be nice… if we could keep [name of tutor] next year when we expand… and then, you know, we may as well give him his own office! [laughs] And we'd be more than happy to do that.'

Other mentors made reference to how this human architecture can support not only the trainees but also the mentors and the schools. One of the findings which emerged from the Teach First tutors was that the quality of mentoring depended on a school's level of experience with the Teach First programme. John and Adam noted that personal support provided by the HEI tutor was particularly useful when the school first started working with Teach First.

> The other two [tutors] are incredibly supportive, especially during the first year when… I wasn't, we weren't, totally au fait with Teach First's systems and processes and procedures. (John)
>
> She [the tutor] was here a lot, she emailed all the time, she would ring… and I probably needed that the first year, but now I have had, for the last couple of years, much less involvement from the professional tutors… (Adam)

As the very human relationship between professional mentor and HEI tutor develops, the mentoring process is supported and enhanced over a period of time on the basis of mutual professional respect and trust. In their surveys and focus groups the tutors referenced the turnover of mentors within schools as an obstacle to developing effective support for the mentoring process, and the reciprocal situation was described by the mentors. Isabelle described a situation where the school was now working with a new HEI tutor in different circumstances, which had tempered the effectiveness of the relationship between the different institutions involved in the ITT programme.

> As [the Teach First programme has] got bigger and has changed, the new person I've got – I think he's very very good – but it's not the same kind of relationship, and I think that person has a wider juggling act to try to work with… three different institutions where they all do it slightly differently, and they all come with a slightly different expectation. There is more tension now, definitely. (Isabelle)

The interviews suggest that effective support for mentoring relies on the partnership between school and HEI providers, which is represented specifically in the relationship between HEI tutor and professional mentor. These two figures both occupy a supporter role within the triadic mentoring relationship, acting as a link between internal and external forms of architectural support; by working together they may bring a measure of coherence and coordination to the different elements of the ITT programme.

I asked the professional mentors about the resources they used to support mentoring in their school. It was particularly interesting to note that few mentioned the resources which have been developed

by Teach First specifically to support mentoring (a website and the mentor recognition framework) and of those that did, the tone of the responses suggested that they had limited awareness of them, made little use of them, or didn't consider these resources to be of particular value in supporting mentoring in their school.

> I've just been part of completing a pilot of a mentor recognition framework… For me, it was a bit of a box-ticking exercise, so that I can put it on my CV… It was, like, I just filled it in and it was done. (Daisy)
>
> We went to the Teach First training [for mentors]… we've got a lot of online documents. The [deputy head] keeps feeding me with – various documents that I should be reading. So – yeah. (Brian)
>
> There's the Teach First mentor – accredited – website scheme thing that I've had a quick look at. But generally speaking it's just from my own experience. (Georgia)

The Centrality of the School

All the professional mentors, whatever their perception of the role of the mentor and whatever their approaches to school-based ITT, perceived the school to be central to the process of ITT, and felt that the school should retain its independence over how the ITT programme was delivered in schools. Several made it clear that their approach to mentoring Teach First trainees is no different from that used for trainee teachers engaged in other ITT routes. There was an acknowledgement that Teach First trainees themselves could be different from other trainees (both positively and negatively), and that this may lead to the mentoring taking on a particular emphasis or the mentors having to take account of particular issues; however there was no sense of a specific Teach First approach to mentoring. The overriding impression given was that Teach First was something that the school had engaged with, but it was only one amongst many.

> The school is much more practical and much more, you know, the realities of that theory. We kind of shape that, but… we make them bespoke. It's got to be very bespoke to that school because there will be particular aspects of that school that's going to impact on their teaching and learning. (Brian)
>
> Whenever anyone – it doesn't matter if they're PGCE, NQT, GTP or whatever – becomes a mentor in our school… (Helen)

Some mentors made reference to school-specific initiatives which had been developed to support teaching and mentoring, which gave an insight into their school's culture of CPD. These initiatives were not derived from or specifically for the Teach First ITT programme.

> So that led to thinking about the mentor forum… we just set it up as a forum, and I mentioned it to the headteacher that I wanted to do it, and she put it into the school calendar. (Kayleigh)
>
> One of the things we've done here in the school as well is we've introduced 'learning walks'… we [the school senior leadership team] actually go in every week to every classroom, so that includes Teach First as well… (Charlotte)

And after school we run… what we call DIAL – it's 'Drop In And Learn' – and all my NQTs, GTPs and Teach Firsters, beginning teachers, whatever I've got, and more experienced staff who wish to join, go to sessions which are facilitated by my AST… (Isabelle)

Perception of Teach First

A common feature was the mixed response towards Teach First, in relation to both the trainees and the ITT programme itself. Mentors were asked to outline their view of Teach First, the ITT programme and how far they felt part of the mission to address educational disadvantage. Responses were analysed by the number of mentors who made reference to particular issues and also by the detail, depth and tone of the responses. Mentors generally felt positively towards Teach First, but had concerns about some aspects and were ambivalent towards others.

<u>The Teach First mission</u>

There was a view, expressed strongly, that the Teach First mission was incidental to the mentors' work; the sense given was that the educational ideals of Teach First, including addressing disadvantage, were an inherent part of the mentors' own personal motivation for teaching, although some responded more positively and some more negatively.

We contribute to it [the Teach First mission] in regards of, you know, working in a school where I'm here for the kids, I'm here for them to do better, to aspire and have ambitions. I do that regardless of Teach First. (Georgia)

The can-do culture, and "we can make a difference", it fitted in beautifully with our aspirations and they contributed to it. (Isabelle)

The idea of raising aspirations among families who may be in the second or third generation of unemployment is something that seriously motivates me. And so Teach First's philosophy fits in very much with my own. (Edward)

<u>The Teach First trainees</u>

On the trainees, the mentors were generally positive, admiring their resilience, intellectual capacity, their use of initiative and their ability to 'bounce back' from adversity. It was felt that Teach First trainees, even at the earliest stages of their teaching career, contributed to the schools' aspirations for pupils' learning; that they were genuinely making a difference. This was most apparent in terms of the typical profile of Teach First trainees. Two mentors made direct and positive reference to trainees' academic credentials.

I think Teach First has been very helpful in terms of getting very bright graduates into our school, some of whom are still here and doing a fantastic job in mid-management positions. (Adam)

We could not have recruited people from Oxford and Cambridge with firsts and two-ones in their subject areas… we didn't have that kind of profile. (Isabelle)

The assessment process that Teach First uses, considering both academic achievement and personal qualities, was highlighted as a positive feature of the ITT programme, and two mentors commented on the implications for the mentoring process.

> They go through a rigorous screening process; they're not just looking for somebody with good qualifications, but in terms of their philosophy about education… They're excellent learners. They react very positively to constructive feedback. (Edward)
>
> The tests they do to filter them through, they're clearly working. They identify hard-working people who… bounce back, ask questions, you give them a target and before you blink they've gone away and asked somebody or used their initiative. (Helen)

In speaking about the qualities of the Teach First trainees, three mentors commented on the impact that the trainees have had in their school, both during the initial training year and once qualified.

> You know, they're already having clear impact upon standards in the classroom; they're already having impact on the progress of the learners… (Edward)
>
> It was great for us; it lifted the intellectual capacity of our teaching force phenomenally… (Isabelle)

However one mentor, whilst acknowledging the need to identify personal qualities in prospective teachers, felt the assessment approach taken by Teach First was not necessarily appropriate.

> I think it's good in that they go through a selection process and try to make sure they've got all those qualities of resilience and everything else… I'm not entirely sure that meeting those criteria means you're going to be good at this job. (Georgia)

Generally, though, mentors' responses were in line with those from the structured mentor survey and the mentor focus groups; the typical profile of the Teach First trainee was very good and had positive implications for both the trainees' progression and their impact on pupil learning.

As with the surveys and focus groups, some negative points were raised. It was felt that Teach First trainees (as distinct from trainees engaged with other ITT routes) were particularly naive and could, occasionally, display a lack of professional judgement. This could manifest as arrogance, as defensiveness in the face of perceived criticism, and as a poor management of their work/life balance.

> There is a little bit… the one who's slightly weaker, he's a little bit more… he's the one who's most likely to do the, 'oh, well, I have a first-class degree', ironically. (Helen)
>
> Some of them when they're starting to struggle don't come forward and say that because they're so used to never failing at anything academically, suddenly they're in something quite difficult… if you've got someone who for whatever reason doesn't know how to articulate that to you, then I think that can become quite a vicious cycle. (Georgia)
>
> She's in school until 9 o'clock every night, and then back here at 7 o'clock in the morning, and that's a recipe for career burn-out. No human being can sustain that. (Brian)

All the negative comments came from mentors who had not been Teach First trainees themselves; it is interesting to note that one of the former Teach First trainees, by contrast, felt that other mentors having unrealistic expectations of what Teach First trainees should be able to manage.

> I'm often quite shocked by the other [mentors'] comments, where they say, "my trainee cries all the time" or "she doesn't know how to plan a lesson"; and I think, well you knew you were accepting a trainee when you took on Teach First, but sometimes I think that other people don't perhaps recognise that the participants are trainees, they haven't qualified… (Daisy)

One mentor felt that the profile of Teach First trainees had changed over their period of involvement with the programme, in two ways. Trainees had become 'far needier'; their motivation was less about the Teach First mission and more about using Teach First as a route into teaching: 'they wanted to be teachers anyway, but this was a route where you got paid'. As the numbers recruited by Teach First increased each year, this mentor felt that there had been an inevitable attenuation in the quality of the trainees.

> 'They're not as experimental... they were exceptional people, and now they've very good people, there's a difference' (Isabelle).

The Teach First ITT programme: retention, intensity and the Summer Institute

The Teach First ITT programme itself prompted mixed responses. Some mentors admired the sustained, intensive nature of the ITT programme and thought its school-based nature meant trainees couldn't 'duck and weave', or leave problems behind at the end of a school placement. One mentor made a direct comparison: 'the PGCEs are molly-coddled with a member of staff in the room all the time... Teach First do an older-style of training in the sense that they are on their own'. Another described the balance of theory and practice as giving 'the best of both worlds', and Teach First as having 'the potential to be the best route' into teaching, although immediately qualifying this: 'but it's not for everyone'.

Mentors expressed more concerns about the ITT programme than they did about the trainees. Teach First is a two-year programme providing new graduates with a grounding in teaching and leadership before possibly seeking a career in other fields. The retention of Teach First participants in school beyond the NQT year was described by professional mentors as 'maddening', 'frustrating', and 'annoying'. It was felt that the school had invested most and therefore lost most when Teach First teachers left the profession.

> 'It's about now they tell me in the second year, "oh, I've had a law offer under my hat from the beginning"... the really frustrating ones are the ones who disappear to Teach First and go and work for them' (Adam).

The concern over retention beyond two years, and the implications for the value for money of the ITT programme, is one that has been put to Teach First before, as mentioned in Chapter 3; the

response from Teach First is that comparisons with other ITT routes are difficult, based on the assertion that 'we are bringing a type of person into teaching that had not traditionally been attracted to the profession' (House of Commons, 2011). The attraction of a relatively short-term career commitment to ambitious new graduates, which Teach First represents, has been argued elsewhere (Freedman et al., 2008, pp.10-11).

One mentor commented on the retention of Teach First teachers in more strategic, and disagreed with the wider strategy of Teach First to highlight educational issues amongst the future leaders in a range of fields.

> The view from Teach First is that they want the politicians and whoever of the future to have an idea about schooling, and all that sort of stuff. My concern is that I don't think you should go into teaching unless you want to be a teacher... I personally don't think that's fair on the kids. (Georgia)

There was a clear recognition from the mentors that the Teach First ITT programme is distinctive in terms of the intensity of the demands and expectations that are placed on the trainees.

> Of course, a lot of those [mentoring] skills are transferable, although the intensity with Teach First is greater because it's – you know – they're here and they're fulfilling a timetable – you know… (Adam)
>
> …Particularly if you're looking at the rigorous nature of Teach First, I think that's really important… (Kayleigh)
>
> I think, also, that because there are high expectations around them… it's very intense… it's a steep learning curve. (Brian)

One mentor spoke at some length and with considerable sympathy about the pressures she felt Teach First trainees are under, not just in terms of the requirements of the ITT programme but also because of the placement process which can leave trainees isolated from pre-existing support networks.

> The expectations made upon them are so high that… it's difficult if they're having a bad period. In almost all cases… particularly if you're single, they will just send you anywhere in the country. I do find myself saying to people that they can't have a life or any kind of baggage because life can't get in the way. (Helen)

One mentor made the point that 'as with anybody's first year of teaching, it's tough', but he felt that because of the expectations placed on them at the Summer Institute, Teach First trainees in particular were susceptible to stress, which in this mentor's experience followed a familiar pattern.

> At some point, normally in the second half of the autumn term, there is a crisis of some kind – sometimes nearer Christmas, but normally it's October, November… for at least half of the trainees we've had tears and all the rest at that point. (Adam)

The comments about the intensity of the Teach First ITT programme support those from the group-level analysis of both trainees and mentors which indicated that a particular aspect of the Teach First

mentoring process is not only the enhanced rates of progression and aspiration of the Teach First trainees but also the vulnerability that they face as a consequence of this; the implication is that Teach First mentors need to manage this with particular care.

The most common concern which mentors had about the Teach First ITT programme was the nature and efficacy of the Summer Institute. Mentors are not involved in the planning or delivery of the Summer Institute and so it is perhaps not surprising that the mentors were unclear about what happened at the Summer Institute, and ambivalent about the quality of the preparation it gives to trainees before they arrive in school. Some mentors felt the expectations that are placed on the trainees were too high, that the tone of the event (based on their understanding of it, which often seemed to be second-hand) was distasteful or inappropriate. They discussed the implications for their role as a mentor which included counteracting some of the messages given during the Summer Institute. Professional mentors described the Summer Institute as a 'wind-up', as 'a bit rah-rah', 'Americanised' and a root cause of the naivety and unrealistic expectations of some trainees when they started working in schools. The quality of the training provided at the Summer Institute was questioned.

> I came across people this year who didn't have a clue how to write a lesson plan, and I just thought, you've just spent six weeks together in the summer, what on earth did you do?... What on earth was happening at [name of HEI provider] that they didn't get that? If it was a fair bit of drinking, then OK, but, you know, do your drinking after you've learned how to plan a lesson. (Helen)

The school was presented as a corrective against the perceived excesses of the Summer Institute; mentors emphasised the centrality of the school to the ITT programme, with mentors seeing their role as bringing Teach First trainees back to the norm of the teaching experience.

> They come in very driven and very idealistic, so I'm a bit of a reality check. (Brian)
> They come in all guns blazing, sort of fired up from their [pause] summer camp or whatever it is, and they've been fed a lot of, slightly [pause] interesting ideas about what they're going to do, and then… you can see them melting as they discover that actually, it's not working, and they're actually having to find things out, and do it a different way… (Adam)

The centrality of the school to the mentoring process, the diversity of approaches taken and the ambivalence of school mentors towards certain aspects of the Teach First ITT programme may be at least in part a consequence of the schools' and mentors' exclusion from the recruitment, assessment and placement of Teach First trainees, and from the Summer Institute. As two mentors noted, this is an unusual situation for a mentor, or indeed any employer, to be in.

> We're not involved in the recruitment process at all… the first time I actually met the [Teach First trainees], it was a bit like a blind date, where they came into a room and they had to find me and representatives from my academy. (Edward)

It's quite an unusual situation, where someone's coming into your school, they're a trainee teacher but they're going to take on 80% of a timetable and stay with you for two years, and it's someone you've never met. (Helen)

Given the importance of the school and the mentoring process for shaping the identity of new Teach First teachers, it is curious that the schools should be excluded from so many elements of the Teach First ITT programme. One mentor felt that when the Teach First trainees entered the 'reality' of his school to begin the initial training year, they began to move away from the distinctive identity of Teach First which had been generated by the Summer Institute.

Most of them [the trainees] realise that there's an element of company-speak, Teach First-speak if you like, and they quickly develop quite a healthy scepticism… understanding that it's the way the company is… and they have their own coping mechanisms. (Adam)

There is an interesting subtext here when this mentor describes Teach First as 'the company'; as coming from a different ideological background, a more corporate world; and the implication of something close to 'double-speak' in what Teach First tells the trainee teachers.

<u>Conclusions</u>

The mentors' interviews show that a wide variation in approaches to mentoring exists in Teach First schools. Professional mentors, who shape and lead the approach to mentoring in schools, develop particular approaches based on their own conception of teaching and ITT. Practical factors, such as the capacity of the schools to support trainee teachers and the level of familiarity with the Teach First ITT programme, also shape the mentoring that Teach First trainees experience. By contrast, systems and resources developed by Teach First have limited influence on what takes place in schools. Teach First was seen by these mentors as distinctive in terms of the profile of candidates attracted to the ITT programme, and the form of the programme itself, but not always in a positive way.

When set within the conceptual framework of the mentoring process, the interview data suggests that the identity construction of Teach First trainees will be characterised by significant variability as they move to legitimate participation in the school's community of practice. The responses from the mentors make a strong case for the importance of what happens in the school over any other forms of support or input into the trainees' experience. In terms of their profile upon entering the ITT programme, Teach First trainees can be said to be distinctive, and these mentors spoke about them making a particular impact on pupils' learning. There was also a strong feeling that the school experience was essential to mitigate some of the expectations placed on the trainees by Teach First.

Teach First mentors do not feel any particular common cause with the Teach First mission and, whilst they are generally positive about the programme, its objectives and the impact it can have, retain a number of reservations. These mentors identify their professional community of practice

within the context of their school and not the Teach First community. Teach First, to these mentors, is one of many different ITT routes that they work with.

With the school and the mentoring process taking such an important role in the shaping of the Teach First trainees' professional identity, the distinctiveness of the Teach First ITT programme – particularly the Summer Institute, the messages it delivers, the expectations for effecting change which are placed on trainees and the emphasis on leadership skills as well as teaching practice – is attenuated, as trainee and mentors, supported by HEI tutors and professional mentors, work with different models of ITT; it may even be subverted if mentors are not professionally aligned with the ideals of the programme.

If Teach First is becoming attenuated within schools then this distinctly different ITT programme is becoming more mainstream, less innovative and more like other ITT routes, whilst retaining substantial financial support from government. One mentor felt that, as the programme expanded year after year, not just the profile of the trainees but the character of the programme was changing.

> Gradually, as Teach First has got bigger and bigger, the pool of people they're pulling in is not of the very highest as it once was. Once upon a time they were looking for 500 and now they looking for one thousand, two thousand… you're going to dilute slightly, and I do believe that they have. They were exceptional people and now they're very good people, there's a difference. But still, good. (Isabelle)

There are various implications here for how Teach First should engage with schools and mentors in the future; for the purpose and nature of the Summer Institute in beginning to shape the professional identity of new Teach First teachers; for government, in reviewing how far the current model of ITT in Teach First represents value for money; and for the Teach First trainees and mentors themselves, in encouraging further reflection on how these findings can be used to support mentoring. I will discuss these implications in more detail in Chapter 11.

Chapter 11 – Conclusions

<u>Introduction</u>

This thesis covered three distinct but related areas. First, I developed existing theoretical models of adult learning and mentoring to propose a conceptual framework for understanding the process of mentoring a trainee teacher in a school, based on the analogy of a crucible. Secondly, taking this framework as a structure for analysis, and considering the Teach First ITT programme as a case study, I explored how the mentoring process is perceived by the different parties directly involved in the triadic mentoring relationship: trainee teachers, HEI tutors and mentors. Thirdly, I took the data from this exploration to analyse the notional, perceived and actual distinctiveness of the Teach First ITT programme in the context of the mentoring process.

In covering these areas, I have made two propositions based on the empirical data from this research which may be considered claims to knowledge. First, school-based mentoring in a partnership model of ITT is based on a triadic relationship between trainee, mentor and supporters (rather than the dyadic relationship typically articulated in the literature around ITT mentoring). Each participant in this relationship has a unique perspective on the mentoring process. One implication of this is the importance of the relationship between the HEI tutor and professional mentor for the effectiveness of the mentoring process. Second, whilst there are some aspects of mentoring a Teach First trainee which are distinctive from other ITT routes, there is no Teach First model or programme-wide approach to mentoring. Rather, Teach First trainees' mentoring experience depends on the circumstances of each school and, as a consequence, the distinctiveness of the Teach First programme, including its purpose and objectives, is attenuated by the mentoring process. One implication of this is for the nascent identity construction of Teach First teachers, which may be little different from teachers trained through other ITT routes whilst the Teach First programme continues to attract enhanced levels of funding and political support.

In this chapter I will summarise my findings in each of these three areas; I will consider the implications of these findings for key groups and present some recommendations for practice; I will reflect on the research process, and how the changes to my circumstances affected this process; and I will propose some areas requiring further study.

<u>A conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process</u>

I propose a conceptual framework for understanding the process of mentoring a trainee teacher. I developed this framework from three sources: first, from a review of the policy trends in ITT, which emphasised the importance of the school as the location for ITT within a partnership between schools and HEI providers, whilst identifying various constraints and contradictions within this partnership model; second, from a review of the literature on theories of learning, particularly adult and professional learning theory, models of mentoring and the notion of architectural support for mentoring; and third, from the data which emerged from my research, which led to an adjustment of

my conceptual framework, emphasising the importance of human architecture within the mentoring process.

Policy context

A review of policy trends in ITT in England since the 1970s demonstrated the increasing preference for teacher training to be located in schools on the basis that practice-based training in classrooms is believed to be a more important element in becoming an effective teacher than theoretical, research-based learning delivered through HEI providers. This trend runs through periods of Conservative, Labour and Coalition administration and has been articulated through a 'commonsense discourse' and the language of political spectacle. It can be argued that this trend evolved from an ideological framework which constructs teaching more as a craft than a profession, presenting the future of teaching through a discourse which builds a workforce via free-market ideas and central control of ITT.

It has been apparent since at least 1991, however, that the capacity of the school system to facilitate consistently high quality training was insufficient for a wholesale transfer of ITT into schools. Therefore, policy trends converged around the model of a partnership between school and HEI providers. An important element of this partnership was the requirement that schools should not only be involved as locations for trainee teachers to engage in classroom practice, but also in the planning, management and assessment of the ITT programme.

At each stage of this process, the responsibility for achieving the involvement of schools in ITT and the accountability for the quality of the training provided was placed on HEI providers rather than schools. Other practical concerns with the partnership model have persisted, including the limited funding available for schools, and yet the model of partnership has become embedded in the landscape of ITT through a process of steady ideological accretion.

Most significantly, the increasing role of the school in ITT has been characterised by a variability of quality in mentoring provision. This is a consequence of the lack of centrally-controlled frameworks or systems to allocate, support and hold accountable school-based mentoring – an incongruous phenomenon, given the attempts seen in this period to bring centrally-defined standardization and compliance to the delivery of ITT. Periodically, for example in 1996 and again in 2010, recommendations have been made to improve the consistency of school-based ITT through programmes of mentor development, recognition and accreditation, enhanced funding and by making schools involved in ITT accountable for the quality of the training provision. The issues have persisted throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and only in the 2012 iteration of the inspection framework for ITT is there a detailed attempt to monitor the quality of school-based mentoring.

Literature review

A review of the literature around theories of learning indicated that school-based mentoring can best be conceptualised as a process of adult and work-based learning which is based largely (but not entirely) upon cognitivist traditions of learning theory.

A range of cognitivist theories can be shown to have relevance to the process of mentoring trainee teachers. Schön defines learning as a process of self-actualisation, characterised by sequences of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action; this has relevance to the trainee teacher working within a practice-based classroom environment. Kolb's cycle of experiential learning places emphasis on group-based learning; this reflects the social aspect of learning within the mentoring process, both in the relationship between trainee and mentor and in relation to the trainee's setting within the professional social setting of the school. Brookfield's facilitative learning theory posits the learner as a proactive, initiating individual requiring defined motives for learning; the suggested six 'principles of facilitation', including mutual respect and collaborative spirit, reflect the importance of the relationship between trainee and mentor for an effective mentoring process. Mezirow considered learning as a process of attempting to bring meaning to novel experiences, leading to a transformation of perspective, and the theories of cognitive dissonance articulated by Festinger and Daloz similarly see learning as a process of encountering challenges to one's preconceptions and adapting to those challenges; these propositions echo the experience of trainees learning to be a teacher in a school, an environment they have previously only experienced and made sense of as a pupil. Finally, Knowles' principles of andragogy required for effective adult learning, including self-awareness, motivation, and willingness and orientation to learning, place the emphasis – like Schön and Brookfield – on the trainee teacher as the primary initiator of the learning which takes place in the mentoring process.

In the andragogic model of learning, the mentor acts as gateway and signpost to the self-directing trainee's learning; however, there remains a necessary secondary role as a content resource. As the trainee teacher, particularly at the start of the training process, typically needs an input of content knowledge about teaching from an established 'expert', the mentoring process cannot be considered a purely constructivist process. Brookfield emphasises the need for a 'facilitating educator' in the learning process and Daloz stresses the importance for challenge and dissonance to be balanced by appropriate support. Therefore school-based mentoring can be considered as a cognitivist learning process and the mentor as the 'expert facilitator' in this process.

The mentoring process also has resonance with other theories and models, including some elements of behaviourist theories of learning. The most apparent examples of this are the formal assessment structures for qualified teacher status which the mentoring process sits within; this reflects the behaviourist emphasis on learning having observable, measurable outcomes. Mentoring also incorporates neo-behaviourist ideas of vicarious conditioning through the modelling of attitudes, behaviour and beliefs that the mentor is expected to undertake within the mentoring process. This

modelling can also be shown to draw from the situated and work-based theories of learning developed by Lave and Wenger, and Eraut. Locating ITT in the practical context of the classroom, where trainee teachers take a progressively greater role in the activity of the school, fits closely with the idea of learning taking place within a community of practice through a process of legitimate peripheral participation. Through this process, and the related idea of professional socialization and the reactive-deliberative learning postulated by Eraut, the identity construction of the trainee teacher takes place – and a related process of identity construction of the teacher-mentor has also been proposed. This can be related to Bandura's neo-behaviourist theory of social learning.

Models of mentoring and definitions of the mentor typically articulate a dyadic relationship between a novice and a more expert practitioner, although there is a divergence of meaning depending on the field, purpose and the national context of the mentoring. In the field of mentoring for ITT the majority of models reflect aspects of the cognitivist theoretical tradition, however there remains significant diversity between the details of the various models; for example, the interpretive model proposed by Roelefs and Sanders is based on a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of teacher competence (Roelefs & Sanders, 2007).

The notion of architecture

A significant element within mentoring is Cunningham's notion of architecture for supporting the mentoring process which extends the definition of mentoring beyond the simple dyadic mentor-trainee relationship. This notion builds from ideas of situated learning and communities of practice, recognising that learning does not take place in a vacuum and that a whole range of resources, factors and contexts will influence the learning process. This ultimately rests on the 'field theory of learning' proposed by Kurt Lewin in the 1920s. Cunningham's architecture for mentoring refers to the commitment to mentoring expressed by the institution where mentoring is taking place; in this context, the school hosting the trainee teacher. This commitment may be expressed through resources, time allowances, the processes and systems to support effective mentoring, and/or an explicit ethos demonstrating the value placed on the activity of mentoring.

When the current policy context of school-based mentoring is considered, particularly the importance of the partnership between school and higher education provider, it is apparent that the unit of an individual school cannot be considered as the sole setting of the mentoring process. Therefore I propose that the features identified by Cunningham which relate to the school can be considered as internal architecture – the walls, colonnades and vaults; but of equal importance is the external architecture – the buttresses, trusses and bulwarks – provided through partner HEIs. This support may include frameworks, systems and individuals intended to develop the mentoring process in schools.

Mentoring as a triadic relationship

This notion of internal and external architectural support for mentoring developed from the review of literature and policy; the model was further refined during the collection and analysis of data. It was particularly apparent in the interviews with mentors that the relationship between school-based mentors and HEI tutors is very important in supporting an effective mentoring process; mentors spoke with particular strength and clarity on this point. Therefore I refined my conceptual framework for mentoring, to include the role of human architecture as a feature of both internal and external architectural support for mentoring. The actions and attitude of individuals supporting the mentoring process, and the relationship between these supporters and the mentor, trainee and each other, were not only important but of greater significance to the effectiveness of the mentoring process than any systems, frameworks or other resources deployed by schools or partner institutions. My data for this was drawn particularly from interviews with professional mentors and focused on the relationship between this group and professional tutors, but the same principle can be extrapolated to other individuals involved in the mentoring process.

From this, I propose the mentoring process to be best described as a **triadic** relationship incorporating trainee, mentor and 'supporter' – this third role comprises multiple individuals, such as professional mentors, senior teachers, HEI tutors, external mentors or other colleagues involved with the professional development of the trainee teacher. These supporters all have a role to play and some form of relationship with the trainee teacher and mentor; the roles they take may be complementary or overlapping and they may have a relationship with each other and coordinate their actions, or retain a confidential aspect.

The crucible

My conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process therefore proposes that: mentoring a trainee teacher in a school-based setting within a partnership context is a largely cognitivist process edged with some behaviourist elements; that the mentor acts as an expert facilitator leading the trainee through a process of self-directed learning and reflection, providing the support of their own knowledge and experience where appropriate; that the process involves the trainee's integration within the community of practice of both the individual school and the wider profession, as part of a process of professional socialization and the identity construction of the teacher; that the mentoring process involves a wider field than the interactions between mentor and trainee, incorporating a triadic relationship incorporating a range of supporters; and the actions and relationships between these supporters are of particular importance in providing architectural support for the mentoring process.

An imperfect but possibly useful analogy for the mentoring process is the crucible, to reflect the intensity of the experience of becoming a teacher and the substantial support it requires; within the

support of the crucible a mingling of raw materials takes place in an environment of great heat and pressure, ultimately leading to an outcome which is both creative and transformative.

Perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process

Teach First: case study of a distinctly different ITT programme

I have outlined the origins of the Teach First programme and how it can be considered a 'distinctly different' ITT programme. There are at least six features which can be considered distinctive: that the programme has a central mission statement and recruits trainees with a particular profile to achieve that mission; the six-week Summer Institute, which all recruits complete before they begin school-based training; the management structure of the programme which incorporates the actions and traditions of diverse HEI providers within one programme and brand; the school placement process which is conducted entirely by the Teach First organisation; the enhanced level of support from HEI tutors for Teach First trainees during the training year; and the higher per capita public cost of the programme compared to other ITT routes.

Teach First is therefore conceptually somewhere between the mainstream HEI-led PGCE model of ITT and employment-based routes like the GTP and School Direct, but with significant differences from both. Unlike the GTP and School Direct, Teach First includes significant elements led by HEI providers, both at the Summer Institute and throughout the initial training year. Unlike a PGCE programme, trainees are based in and employed by the schools in which they are training, and the Teach First programme lacks the partnership requirements of a HEI-led PGCE. Schools have very limited involvement in or influence over the programme; schools are not represented at regional or national management levels; mentors are not involved in the planning, delivery or assessment of the Summer Institute training; schools are not involved in the selection or placement of the trainees they will employ as unqualified teachers. The only direct interface between schools and Teach First are regional 'School Advisory Groups' (SAGs), which are of questionable potency.

There is evidence that the Teach First ITT programme has a positive impact on pupil outcomes, and that placing multiple Teach First trainees within a school can have a cumulative effect on this impact. However, not all evidence of impact is compelling and is often either lacking statistical significance or hedged with caveats. The Teach First programme has attracted a number of critiques, and has been accused variously of undermining the professionalism of teachers, perpetuating class divisions, and of being poor value for money given the relatively low retention of those it recruits within teaching beyond two years.

Mentoring within the Teach First programme has encountered the same issues relating to quality and consistency as other ITT routes, and successive external and internal reports have identified the variability in the trainees' experience of mentoring as a persistent weakness of the programme. In 2010-2011 a pilot mentor recognition framework was launched across all Teach First regions, which aimed to improve the quality and consistency of mentoring. The framework drew on earlier

frameworks and projects and was based on a similar model to the Standards-based model of ITT, with mentors taking a reflective approach to their practice and producing evidence to place against a list of pre-defined statements of competency to achieve one of three levels of recognition.

My methodological approach to this research was to treat the Teach First programme as a case study, as it represented a particular teacher training programme within a bounded context, but with resonance across the field of ITT. The methodological openness afforded by a case study approach facilitated an examination of the mentoring process within Teach First at progressively finer levels of detail and the adoption of exploratory strategies, which allowed me to respond flexibly to unexpected data and emergent themes. The data collection strategy involved multiple levels, allowing an examination of the mentoring process at an organisational level via the programme documentation, at a group level through the perspective of trainees, mentors and tutors, and at an individual level via a series of interviews with a group of professional mentors.

Articulation of the mentoring process within Teach First programme documentation

I examined the main and subsidiary documentation associated with the Teach First ITT programme, with a focus on how the role of the mentor and the mentoring process was presented and conceived in these documents and how this related to the proposed conceptual framework for the mentoring process. I also looked at how the documentation outlined the HEI tutors' role in supporting the mentoring process and whether other sources of support for the mentoring process were referenced.

The model of mentoring presented in the Teach First documentation was clearly based on cognitivist theoretical traditions; the role of the mentor was conceived as a facilitator of reflective learning and the trainee was considered to be responsible for their own learning. However, the documentation also presented a heavily prescribed structure for the mentoring process, with week-by-week recommendations for the trainees' learning. I suggested that this prescription was a result of both the need for the programme to fit into the Standards-based model of ITT and also to manage the risk to the programme and the trainees from any deficiencies in the school-based provision.

The role of the mentor incorporated the typical support-assessment duality; however there was no indication in the documentation of how this tension should be resolved. The role of the mentor was not presented consistently in all of the various iterations of the programme documentation, and overall there was a degree of incoherence between the school-led and HEI-led elements of the programme; the trainees were not only responsible for managing and directing their own learning, but also responsible for bringing a coherence to the different elements and 'making sense' of their learning experience. This incoherence may lead to misunderstanding, misrepresentations and what Lefton has called 'cognitive shortcuts' amongst the individuals involved in the mentoring process (Lefton et al., 2000).

As described in these documents, the HEI tutor's role is focused on quality assurance rather than supporting the mentoring process directly; external architectural support is emphasised over internal

(i.e. school-based) architectural support for the mentoring process, and there is limited reference to the influence or role of others (apart from the tutor) that may support the mentoring process. This may be a consequence of the HEI-based provenance of the documentation and the implicit hierarchy in the relationship between HEI providers and schools within the Teach First ITT programme. The documentation does not account for the role of communities of practice or professional socialization within the mentoring process, as derived from situated and work-based theories of learning. The potential of these other agencies for supporting the mentoring process is therefore not exploited.

HEI *tutors' perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process*

I explored the HEI tutors' perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process through a series of surveys and focus group discussions. The data from the tutors indicated that there is no 'Teach First model' of mentoring and that significant variation in the quality of mentoring persists between regions, between schools and within schools. Therefore Teach First trainees' experience of mentoring is heavily dependent on the circumstances of the individual schools in which they are placed. The tutors identified the importance of internal architectural support from the school, noting that both sufficient time but also a sense of value in the activity was required for effective mentoring to take place. The tutors felt that the typically 'challenging' nature of the schools that Teach First works with creates a particular risk of deficiencies in mentoring provision, although some felt the proposed mentor recognition framework might help to develop internal architectural support for mentoring.

There is also no clear Teach First model for supporting mentoring. There was significant variation between the tutors regarding their understanding of their own role in relation to the mentoring process. In common with the support-assessment duality of the mentor's role towards the trainee, there was a split between supporting and developing the mentoring process, and monitoring and having oversight of its quality and outcomes. Only some of the tutors felt that the former was part of their role, and when mentioned in the focus group discussions it was often described in aspirational terms. Nearly all tutors, however, felt that their role involved monitoring the quality of the mentoring provision within a school, typically by speaking to the trainee involved and reviewing the evidence of mentoring activity within the Participant Journal. When discussing the recognition framework, some tutors saw this as a useful mechanism for monitoring the quality of mentoring, and others felt it could be used in a more supportive way to develop the mentoring process.

The strong emphasis on tutors having a monitoring role runs counter to the role of the 'supporter' within the triadic relationship that forms the basis of my conceptual framework for understanding the mentoring process; this would suggest that this feature of the Teach First HEI tutors' role is working against the effectiveness of the mentoring process. This aspect of the tutors' role is an expression of the hierarchical relationship between tutors and mentors and HEI providers and schools within the Teach First ITT programme. In the focus group discussions there was some variation by region in how clearly or reluctantly this issue was recognised by the tutors, but in all cases it was at least

implicitly apparent. This hierarchy is a consequence of the structure of the contracts and sub-contracts (and thus the loci of responsibility) developed for the delivery of the Teach First programme; and ultimately, of the trend in ITT policy for progressively greater centralisation of control and accountability of provision.

The suggestion in the programme documentation of a lack of coherence between the school-led and HEI-led elements of the programme was strengthened by the tutors' responses. A large minority felt that achieving coordination between these elements was not part of their role. In the focus group discussions the tutors explained that coherence was particularly difficult to achieve with the Teach First programme, compared to other ITT routes. This was due to both the disproportionately high turnover of mentors in Teach First schools and the way trainees are placed in schools, which involves limited input from either HEI provider or school. Questions relating to the SAGs indicated that tutors perceived this mechanism to have limited value in bringing coherence to the different elements of the ITT programme.

Analysis of the variations in the responses suggested that the degree of experience of Teach First (both for tutors and for schools) may be a factor in the quality and nature of the mentoring process. The tutors' comments about the quality of mentoring provision often cited the schools' level of experience of Teach First as a factor. Tutors in regions which had greater experience of delivering the Teach First programme seemed more likely to indicate that their role incorporated activities to support or develop mentoring and bring coherence between the different elements of the programme; to have a clearer understanding of the purpose and activity of regional SAGs; and also to express more definitively their hierarchical position in relation to the schools they supported. This would suggest that experience of the Teach First programme is a factor in how the programme is conceptualised; however, this is only a tentative conclusion and further study would be required to explore this fully.

Trainees' perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process

My sources for exploring the Teach First trainees' perceptions of the mentoring process were a programme survey administered and partly analysed through the Teach First Data and Impact department, and a focus group discussion with twelve trainee representatives. It is a cause for regret that I was not able, for various reasons discussed above, to access more detailed data from the Teach First trainees; I would suggest that this could be an area for further study to take forward some of the conclusions presented here.

In common with the HEI tutors, the trainees identified significant variation in the quality of mentoring provision both between and within schools. There was also an indication that external architectural support from the HEI tutors – and particularly the professional tutor – was valued higher than the support provided by the mentors themselves. The trainees also identified the importance of other colleagues within the school for supporting the mentoring process, which

supports the role of the community of practice in the identity construction of the new teacher, and the place of situated learning theory within my conceptual framework for mentoring.

The most significant issue which emerged from the Teach First trainees was the conceptualisation of the mentoring process, which was in many ways different from that of the tutor and mentor groups and in some ways contradictory. For example, trainees felt that the role of the HEI tutor should be entirely focused on monitoring the quality of the mentoring provision; however, the mentors' role in relation to the trainees should not involve significant oversight but focus instead on supporting their professional development. Trainees felt that mentors should be required to meet minimum standards, and when discussing deficiencies in mentoring provision often blamed this on their mentors' lack of competence. Overall, the trainees in the focus group felt that they have a right to a positive mentoring experience and that funding for schools to support mentoring activities (which is largely nominal, cancelled out by the Teach First finder's fee and rarely passed on to individual mentors) should be contingent on their experience of mentoring meeting specific quality measures. With the frequent references to Standards, quality assurance and accountability, it is clear that the Teach First trainees have taken on the symbolic language and commonsense discourse of recent policy trends in teacher training; this can be considered an example of 'discursive colonisation' (Mohanty, 1991). In short, the Teach First trainees seemed to conceptualise the mentoring process in transactional terms; they had monetized mentoring.

Mentors' perceptions of the Teach First mentoring process

As with the HEI tutors and trainees, an exploration of the perception of Teach First mentors was derived from a series of surveys and focus group discussions; in addition, however, I was able to draw from rich data generated by a series of interviews, where I focused my analysis on the responses of the professional mentors. Across these sources I was able to draw out the mentors' perception of the Teach First mentoring process through their apparent self-efficacy as mentors; the approaches taken within the school towards supporting the mentoring process and shaping the trainees' mentoring experience; and the perception of external (i.e. HEI-based) systems of support for the mentoring process.

The majority of mentors placed great value on the role of mentor and many expressed interest in achieving recognition or accreditation for their work, although the self-selecting nature of the samples should be noted. Internal architectural support for mentoring was considered of particular importance; two-thirds of the mentors responding felt that the role of subject mentor required more than the one hour per week recommended in the programme documentation. Mentors cited the additional responsibilities they undertook beyond the weekly meeting with the trainee, including lesson observations, planning and feedback and 'informal mentoring' throughout and beyond the working week in school. This supports the conceptualisation of the mentoring process as a phenomenon which goes beyond the formal mentoring session but encompasses a wider range of interactions.

In common with earlier studies of mentors' conceptualisation of the mentoring process, it was apparent that the mentors considered their experience as a classroom teacher and other practical experience as the most important source of their mentoring skills. Mentors downplayed the significance of external architectural systems in supporting mentoring. HEI-led training was given a particularly low profile, with the structure and model of training – off-site, undifferentiated, information-heavy and based on a knowledge transmission pedagogy – provoking criticism.

Data from the focus group discussions suggested that schools, faced with this deficiency, prefer to deploy in-house approaches to mentor training and development. This leads to the atomisation of the character of the Teach First mentoring process; as with the data from other areas, there were indications that there is no Teach First model of mentoring. The surveys indicated that Teach First mentor selection is ad hoc and based on the individual circumstances of each school. Mentors in the focus groups reported a lack of coordination between the different elements of the programme and a lack of awareness within schools of the operational details of the programme. Data from the interviews with professional mentors made clear that there is a diversity of approaches taken within schools to supporting the mentoring process and trainees' professional learning.

As a consequence, there was a diminished sense of partnership between the schools and Teach First; mentors didn't identify with the Teach First mission or brand, and some regard Teach First as a corporate 'other' inhabiting a different ideological world.

Although many mentors were interested in gaining recognition and accreditation, this came with a caveat that this should be based on their practical skills and their experience to date and not involve further study or 'bureaucracy'. The majority of subject mentors who engaged with the pilot recognition framework indicated that they had done so to gain recognition for the work they had already done or were doing; only a minority were seeking to use it as a mechanism to develop further skills as a mentor. Those who mentioned the recognition framework in the interviews referred to it as a 'box-ticking exercise'.

Almost in spite of this, however, those mentors who did engage with the recognition framework reported that the process did encourage them to reflect on their practice as a mentor and to develop new skills and approaches, which would suggest that effective mentoring is not derived entirely from practical experience of the classroom but involves both trainee and mentor engaging in a cognitivist process of reflection and learning. Data from the tutor open survey also indicated that many tutors felt that engagement with the recognition framework had led to an increase in mentors' self-efficacy.

Although mentors tended to downplay the role of external systems, many emphasised the importance of their relationship with HEI tutors for supporting the mentoring process. On the basis of this evidence, I modified my conceptual framework to incorporate the role of 'human architecture' in the mentoring process. Several mentors who had engaged with the pilot recognition framework indicated that the process had improved and 'sharpened' the discussions they had with the HEI tutor,

and the importance of the personal and empathetic relationship between professional tutors and professional mentors came through very strongly in the interviews. It is clear that systems to support the mentoring process are far more effective when mediated by human agency and relationships than knowledge-transmission models of training or passive repositories of information.

Summary of perceptions and articulations of the Teach First mentoring process

The Teach First case study supports the conceptual framework initially proposed for understanding the mentoring process, with one significant modification: the important role of 'human architecture' in supporting that process. Considering all the data together, there is strong evidence to support the proposition of the mentoring process as a triadic relationship between mentor, trainee and supporter, where the supporter role may involve multiple individuals including colleagues, HEI tutors and external mentors. It is particularly clear that the mentoring process involves more than the interactions between a mentor and a trainee during designated mentoring meetings. Ongoing informal mentoring, the relationships and interactions between trainees and supporters and supporters and mentors, the school's community of practice and the professional socialization of the trainee within that community, are all important elements of the mentoring process.

When the evidence is considered separately, however, it is clear that considerable variation exists in how the mentoring process is perceived, and this variation is greater than would be expected from the different provenance of the data. The role of the mentor and the tensions inherent in that role are not articulated consistently in the Teach First programme documentation; it is therefore unsurprising that each group and each individual display similar inconsistency in their articulation of the mentoring process. Issues of power and hierarchy are apparent, and the peculiar management and organisational structures of the Teach First programme seem to diminish the partnership between schools and HEI providers. Tutors, trainees and mentors all emphasised the importance of different aspects and individuals involved in the mentoring process. There was clear divergence, both between and within the different groups, of what their own and others' role was in supporting the mentoring process. It is apparent that there is not, and no attempt has been made to develop, a Teach First model of mentoring, or for supporting and developing mentoring within the ITT programme.

I would suggest that by bringing my conceptual framework for mentoring together and examining the state of play within the Teach First programme through the lens of that framework, it may be possible for a more unified understanding of the mentoring process to develop amongst the various groups involved in that process, and clarity over how it should be supported, to achieve greater levels of consistency.

The distinctiveness of Teach First within the mentoring process

Teach First is clearly a distinctive ITT programme, not only in its brand identity and explicit purpose to achieve educational and social reform but also in many aspects of its structure, management and operation. However, my research has shown that the nature of Teach First changes significantly when perceived from within the context of the mentoring process; in some ways the distinctiveness of Teach First is attenuated in schools.

There is some reference within the programme documentation to the distinctive elements of the Teach First ITT programme, such as the Summer Institute, but there is limited indication that the mentoring process itself requires a distinctive approach. When compared to the GTP programme documentation the only notable difference in the conception of the mentoring process is that Teach First mentoring is far more prescribed in how it directs the focus of the weekly discussions between mentor and trainee.

HEI tutors indicated that a school's level of familiarity with the Teach First programme was often a factor in the quality of the mentoring provision. This would suggest that there is something distinctive about mentoring Teach First trainees in schools. It is likely that this is more than an awareness of the particular programme structure and requirements, as at least some trainees indicated that their mentoring experience was positive despite their mentor having poor knowledge of the requirements of the Teach First ITT programme. The most direct evidence for what is distinctive about Teach First mentoring came from the trainees in their focus group discussion, where it was strongly argued that direct awareness and experience of the Teach First programme was the best criteria for effectively mentoring a Teach First trainee. Trainees felt that Teach First alumni, even those who were newly-qualified teachers, would make more effective mentors than more experienced teachers without personal experience of the Teach First ITT programme.

To some extent this testimony is weakened by the trainees' lack of experience of mentoring and teaching; there is a possibility that a solipsistic sentiment has coloured the trainees' judgement – that only those that have been through the programme can appreciate the challenges and pressures a Teach First trainee undergoes. This may be a result of the esprit de corps which is deliberately engendered during the initial Summer Institute. This is not an imaginary phenomenon; the importance of the 'shared experience' that the trainees articulated represents an expression of their desire to smooth the process of professional socialization.

More significantly, there is evidence from the mentors themselves that the experience of mentoring Teach First trainees has distinctive elements. In the data from surveys, focus group discussions and interviews, mentors made reference to two aspects of mentoring Teach First trainees which were different from mentoring trainees on other ITT programmes: first, the greater intensity of the programme and higher expectations for success and impact placed upon the trainees (some of which were generated by the trainees themselves); secondly, the typical profile of Teach First trainees. It

was felt that these aspects created additional challenges for mentoring Teach First trainees, for example the need to be sensitive to the pressures trainees face and the need for a more enhanced approach, involving 'something on top' of the approach taken with other trainee teachers. However, whilst the mentors recognised that mentoring Teach First trainees required modifications and allowances to be made to their practice, they did not generally agree with the trainees' view that direct experience of Teach First was the best qualifier for mentoring Teach First trainees; there was a clear indication from mentors that the experience of Teach First trainees themselves was conceptually no different from that of any trainee teacher.

As a consequence of the lack of coordination between the school-based element of the programme and those led by HEI providers and Teach First, schools did not identify strongly with the Teach First brand or its mission; mentors commented that the mission espoused by the programme was something that they do anyway as teachers, 'regardless of Teach First'. Mentors' attitudes towards Teach First can be described as ambivalent in general, with the aspects of the programme that they have less involvement in or control over, such as the Summer Institute, the placement of trainees and their retention subject to particular criticism. It should be noted, however, that the majority of mentors involved made many positive comments about the qualities of the Teach First ITT programme and the impact of the trainees in school.

The diversity of approaches taken in schools towards mentoring Teach First trainees and to supporting the mentoring process was particularly apparent. The structures, resources, ethos, context and circumstances of each school shaped the approaches taken; the centrality of the school to the mentoring process was very clear. There is no Teach First model for mentoring and in some cases mentors felt that their own school-based approach was actually a necessary corrective to the Teach First programme, particularly when trainees first arrived in school after the Summer Institute. Indeed, mentors commented that they would not want to lose this independence of approach when mentoring trainee teachers in their school, as they have a responsibility to the learning of the pupils taught by the trainees.

The weight and nature of the evidence suggests that the community of practice encompassed by the school in which they are placed is more important in the identity construction of Teach First trainees than any Teach First-specific identity or esprit de corps, and the distinctiveness of the Teach First programme becomes increasingly attenuated in the school-based mentoring process. It further suggests that the professional identity of Teach First teachers will be as variable as the circumstances, contexts, ethea and approaches to mentoring they encounter in schools. This is not a qualitatively negative condition; the same outcome would be expected from any ITT programme which was largely school-based. This suggestion resonates with the conceptual framework for mentoring proposed above, which emphasises the importance of the mentoring process in the forging of new teachers' professional character and identity.

<u>Implications and recommendations for practice</u>

The empirical findings from this research present a variety of implications for a range of groups involved in ITT. In this section I will outline these implications and the recommendations for practice that flow from them for each of these groups in turn.

The mentoring triad

One of the central findings has been a framework for understanding the mentoring process which emphasises the importance of a triadic relationship between trainee, mentor and supporters. This framework has direct implications for the practice of those undertaking these roles. In general, all parts of the triad need to have an appreciation of the framework as outlined here and understand their own role and responsibilities in ensuring the effectiveness of the mentoring process. All parties also need to understand the importance of the others' role within the triad, their perspective and responsibilities, and how it varies from their own.

For example, mentors should have an appreciation that their role is an 'expert facilitator', involving the sharing of specialist knowledge and experience as well as encouraging the self-directed learning of the trainee; mentors may also consider how the behaviour and attitude they project supports the trainee's professional development through 'vicarious conditioning'. Trainees need to appreciate the importance of challenge in an effective mentoring process and the need to undergo periods of dissonance which may be cognitively uncomfortable. Trainees should also understand that the effectiveness of mentoring relies in large part upon their orientation to learning and Teach First trainees in particular should be aware that becoming a teacher involves a progressive process of legitimate peripheral participation within a community of practice. In addition to the formal mechanisms of support, trainees should exploit the benefit offered by supporters and personal allies as they undergo the process of socialization into the profession. HEI tutors supporting the mentoring process should acknowledge the importance of the human element in the mentoring process and the primacy of relationships over systems, frameworks and processes intended to assure its quality. Tutors need to be clear, both collectively and individually, of the parameters of their role in supporting and developing the mentoring process alongside the need to act in a monitoring capacity. Both mentors and HEI tutors need to consider how they will manage the support/assessment duality of their roles: for the mentors, with respect to the trainees; and for the tutors, with respect to the mentors. A possible resolution in both cases may be the identification and deployment of an external mentor, isolated from systems of hierarchy, management and assessment, to provide the supportive and guiding elements of the mentoring role.

ITT programme managers

Those involved in overseeing and managing ITT programmes in England, whether based in schools or HEI providers, should be aware of the tendency for ITT to be increasingly located in schools. Policy trends suggest that it is extremely unlikely for this tendency to change in the future, therefore

programme managers need to consider the implications for the teaching profession of a largely or wholly school-based ITT model. In particular, they should consider the kind of teacher professionalism that is aspired to, and how this is to be achieved through school-based ITT. This research shows that a diversity of approaches to both ITT and CPD exists between schools, and that attempts to bring uniformity to these approaches through programme-wide frameworks have not proved effective. Programme managers should acknowledge these trends and this diversity, rather than attempting to control or eliminate them. They should develop approaches which exploit the merits of this diversity. This research has shown that some schools have developed excellent and innovative approaches to supporting, developing and training teachers; the culture within these schools needs to be exploited and shared. In particular, programme managers should enhance the involvement of schools in the selection, induction and training of mentors; this research suggests that school-to-school models of mentor support and development may be preferable to those led by HEI providers. Finally, programme leaders should consider how coherence between HEI-led and school-led elements of ITT programmes should be achieved, and who is responsible for achieving this coherence. This research has shown that, in Teach First, the bridging of the different elements of the programme is often left to individual trainees in a manner which is perhaps not deliberate or altogether satisfactory.

System leaders

There are a number of implications for those overseeing teacher recruitment and development in England at a national level, including the Department for Education, NCTL and Ofsted. These focus on how the transition to school-led ITT and CPD can be managed most effectively. Firstly, this research has shown that not only is there a diversity of approaches to mentoring amongst different schools, but that significant variability in quality is a persistent feature of mentoring provision. System leaders should seek to build and support the capacity of the school system to facilitate high-quality mentoring on a national scale. There are a number of possible approaches to resolving this long-standing challenge. This research has shown that mentors in schools perceive there to be a deficiency of time and resources available for mentoring in schools. Allocating additional funding to schools for mentoring is probably necessary but may not, by itself, represent a complete solution. System leaders should also seek to share and propagate those cultures of excellence in ITT and CPD which already exist in schools; the obvious vehicle for this is the network of Teaching Schools. The shift to a school-led model of ITT creates the tendency for a diversity of approaches to develop, and the devolution of needs and initiatives to the level of individual schools; to counter this tendency, the community of Teaching Schools needs to be made aware of its responsibility to national priorities. When considering the number and specialism of teachers to recruit for school-based ITT, these schools need to look further than their own immediate staffing needs. Concerns about the allocation and supply of teachers with particular subject specialisms through the School Direct route have been already been expressed (Ward, 2013); this is arguably the result of individual schools responding to their own needs rather than having a national view. System leaders should therefore consider how

Teaching Schools could develop this awareness and responsibility, perhaps by devolving the allocation of training places to a 'parliament' of Teaching School leaders mediated by the NCTL, or assigning this role to the recently-proposed College of Teaching (PTI, 2014).

The other important consideration for system leaders is the question of power within Teach First. Whilst school-based mentoring is increasingly important in ITT in England, schools remain relatively distant from the centres of power in the Teach First programme and also from the concomitant responsibility for its quality. This is a result of the structuring of contracts for provision of ITT and the manner in which funding flows from government. Funds are passed to Teach First and then distributed via sub-contracts to a number of HEI providers; the money received by schools is negligible and does not reflect the growing importance of schools' role in the ITT programme. Patterns of accountability follow the same structure; whereas Teach First and the individual HEI providers are subject to Ofsted inspection to assure the quality of ITT provision, schools are not directly responsible for the quality of mentoring experienced by Teach First trainees. Power, in this as in other contexts, is inextricably linked to the patterns of patronage and duty; it is finite in volume, tends to accumulate and moves like an incompressible fluid:

> 'Power [flows] through the system, concentrating at different points… we can speak of a kind of "hydraulics of power", in which the waxing of one node in the system produced the waning of others' (Clark, 2013, p.189).

To redistribute this accumulation of power more appropriately, system leaders could allocate funding directly to schools upon the placement of Teach First trainees; these funds, as with School Direct, would need to be sufficient for both the effective provision of in-school mentoring, and to buy-in support from 'Teach First-accredited' HEI providers. Schools would then have greater power within the ITT process and would be held directly responsible for the quality of school-based mentoring. This would lead to developments in both the quality and consistency of the mentoring provision, improving the equity of Teach First trainees' experience and improving outcomes in the classroom. The abbreviated funding received by Teach First itself would be reserved specifically for management and support of the national programme, removing the need to inefficiently distribute funds down through the programme structure via a series of service contracts carrying successive management fees, overheads and VAT charges.

Teach First

It is apparent that the distinctiveness of the Teach First programme can be attenuated within the context of school-based mentoring. Teach First trainees are imbued with an esprit de corps through the initial Summer Institute and carry an identity into schools at the start of their initial training period. This research suggests that the inherent sense of mission and personal ambition carried within this identity can create and exacerbate undue tensions and pressures when trainees are placed in schools; mentors often do not identify with Teach First in the same way and can consider the expectations that trainees place on themselves to be unrealistic.

Teach First should therefore consider the role of schools within the programme; to bring it in line with other partnership-based ITT programmes, more should be done to involve school representatives in the management and operation of the Teach First ITT programme. Mentors and other school staff should have a greater role in the initial Summer Institute and schools should play a more direct role in the recruitment and placement of Teach First trainees. For example, following each initial Assessment Day for prospective trainee teachers, Teach First could present a pool of potential trainees, for which individual schools would then bid in an auction-style placement process.

In addition, Teach First should consider when it is appropriate to imbue trainees with a distinctive Teach First identity; whether encouraging an ambition achieve high and immediate impact in the classroom in pursuit of the Teach First mission is a necessary or helpful element for the initial training period. This research has demonstrated that a diversity of approaches to mentoring exists in Teach First schools; that mentors are ambivalent to the Teach First programme; and that the Teach First brand becomes attenuated in schools. Rather than compete with, attempt to control or deny the existence of these phenomena, Teach First should exploit them to develop the ITT programme to a new level of maturation whilst retaining its distinctive character and purpose. First, Teach First should work with HEI-based programme managers and system leaders to propagate the best elements of school-based ITT in England, as described above, across the Teach First programme. Secondly, the introduction of Teach First-specific goals and expectations should be delayed until after trainees have overcome the not insignificant challenges of becoming an effective classroom practitioner in a challenging environment. Large and expensive national and regional Summer Institute events should be replaced with short periods of local induction led by schools and mentors, mediated through groups of schools aligned for teacher development (e.g. Teaching School alliances, academy chains, Science Learning Partnerships, SCITTs) and supported by HEI providers. Trainees would gain direct and relevant understanding of the school and local context in which they are to work; trainees would then complete their initial training period, without additional (and arguably unrealistic) expectations to achieve transformative outcomes placed upon them. These expectations would be introduced through a slimmed-down Summer Institute facilitated by Teach First Ambassadors and LDOs at the end of the ITT programme. After achieving qualification Teach First teachers would have a thorough grounding in classroom practice from which to develop further; the NQT year is perhaps a more appropriate period for a distinctive Teach First identity to be inculcated and the mission to address educational disadvantage emphasised.

<u>Reflections on the research process</u>

The liabilities of insider research; the benefits of exclusion

As discussed in Chapter 5, I initially benefitted from 'insider' status in developing and undertaking this research; midway through the research process my professional circumstances changed and I ceased working within the Teach First programme. In this section I will reflect on the implications of this transition for the outcomes of my research.

In both developing and administering the data collection tools for my research, I benefited from the enhanced levels of access and acceptance of the insider; as a part of the management structure I was a familiar face, particularly to the tutors working at the HEI providers associated with Teach First. I was aware of the communication protocols, which administrative teams to contact to request data necessary to distribute my surveys. As an insider I knew 'how far favours can be pressed… what the power structures and the moral mazes and subtexts of the company are… what taboos to avoid, what shibboleths to mumble and bureaucrats to placate' (Hannabus, 2000, p.103).

It is possible that my position within the Teach First organisation engendered greater confidence from the focus groups and from those being interviewed; their perception of my understanding and empathy (which is particularly apparent when reviewing interview transcripts: my almost unconscious interstitial comments show an understanding and acceptance of what was being said) may have helped facilitate the research process and encouraged greater openness, generating richer data than otherwise.

As discussed in Chapter 5, however, the status of insider can lead to myopia and ethical tensions. I felt this tension as I attempted to balance my role supporting Teach First with my ongoing research. The period when I worked with Teach First was bracketed by Ofsted scrutiny of the ITT programme: my role was initially created in response to the recommendations of the 2008 Ofsted review of Teach First, to improve the support for school-based mentors. The role and its objectives were focused on the anticipated Ofsted inspection of Teach First in the summer of 2011. The role itself was very pragmatic, working to develop functional resources (a website, and later a mentor recognition framework) which could be shown to be supporting the practice of Teach First mentors, thus meeting earlier Ofsted recommendations. The website was built around a core of practical activities and advice for mentors supporting trainee teachers; it should be noted that maintenance of the site was discontinued in 2011 and it was taken offline in 2013 (CCCU, 2008). The recognition framework was structured in a very similar way to the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status, with a series of statements of competency against which evidence should be provided (Teach First NITTP & LJMU, 2010).

The initial focus of my research was to consider what impact these interventions were having on the practice and skills of Teach First mentors. To establish a baseline, I reviewed the current state of mentoring provision across the programme and concluded that this variability 'represented a

potential lack of equity in the Teach First participants' experience' (Cameron, 2011, p.2). It became increasingly apparent how little Teach First mentors were engaging with the new supporting resources and how limited their impact was, as shown above. This finding was interesting and suggested that 'the introduction of formal support mechanisms… [are] inimical to notions of support and professional development' (Hobson & Ashby, 2012, pp.178-79). In the research papers I wrote in this period I felt an implicit pressure to present my data in a way which highlighted the positive impact that the functional interventions I had overseen had made to the practice of Teach First mentors.

The change in my professional circumstances in August 2011 was a stressful and negative experience; professional insecurity can affect confidence and leave lasting psychological strains (Stokes & Cochrane, 1984; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995). Leading up to this transition I was aware of the challenge it would present to my ongoing research. I was concerned about whether becoming a Teach First 'outsider' would limit my access to the groups I needed to continue my research. I wondered whether I would be perceived in a different way by these groups. I doubted my ability to find the space to complete my research alongside new and unrelated professional responsibilities.

This last point, the most pragmatic, was perhaps the most significant; it took several months to find my feet again and re-immerse myself in the research process. However, with the challenge of this break came an opportunity to reflect openly and honestly on how my position as practitioner-researcher influenced my work. I feel more awareness of these influences than I did whilst I was working with Teach First; the twin benefits of distance and hindsight brought clarity and helped to overcome the myopia of the insider.

Additionally, I remained in some ways an insider, in a way that is more important than being employed to work with Teach First. I did not felt particularly hampered in setting up and conducting the interviews with the Teach First mentors, despite no longer working with Teach First. I retain a social and cultural alignment with those I interviewed. When they were invited to participate in the research, the mentors were given an outline of my past and current role and my status as a PhD student. I presented myself to the mentors as experienced within the education sector and with a shared frame of reference, shared values and a shared terminology. When considered in these terms it is apparent that, to those mentors who responded to my invitation, I remained an 'insider'. This may be because the schools and mentors associated with Teach First do not identify themselves with the programme or its institutions in the same way that trainees and tutors do. Their institutional loyalty is to their school, and Teach First is one of a number of training routes which they may engage with.

Nearly all of the mentors who responded were professional mentors rather than subject mentors. This may indicate that more senior professional mentors tended to feel more aligned with the notion of my research. Several mentors mentioned that they had themselves undertaken advanced studies in education, at masters or doctoral level. The transcripts of the interviews show that interviewer and

interviewee recognised in each other a common 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986), which established mutual credibility and 'smoothed' the process of 'constructing knowledge relative... to a cultural code, and to a personal biography.' (Eisner, 1992, p.14)

Areas for further study

There are a number of areas which I either did not have the capacity to explore in more depth within the constraints of this research, or which emerged from the findings as possible continuations of this work. It would have been useful to have been able to undertake a closer examination of the trainees, both as a group and at the individual level, and explore their identity construction in relation to the Teach First model of the teacher. It may be useful to expand the research beyond the initial training year and consider the outcomes of the mentoring process for trainees in subsequent years as they undergo the Teach First Leadership Development programme and embark into their early career as teachers or beyond the classroom.

I would also have preferred, with more time and resource, to have had the opportunity to collect more data in relation to the regional variations in perceptions, particularly between the different groups of HEI tutors, and explore the possible reasons behind this variation. With my change in professional circumstances this was not possible; similarly, it was not possible to integrate the latest changes and developments within the Teach First programme, including those relating to programme-wide support for mentoring, since 2012-13.

Finally, if I was to take this research further, I would look primarily to apply the conceptual framework I have developed to perceptions of and approaches to mentoring in the context of other ITT programmes, particularly school-based programmes in England such as the expanding School Direct route, but also in the other constituent nations of the UK, and beyond the UK, to bring an international comparative element to the conceptual framework. Through this wider approach, I would hope to both refine and strengthen the framework that I have developed here.

Final thoughts: fundamental forces

The raw materials may have a distinctive profile, but each Teach First trainee will experience one of a multiplicity of crucibles, therefore producing variation in outcomes and diversity in the trainees' conceptualisation of teaching.

Countering this dispersive force is the convergent pressure of the Teach First Leadership Development programme and the alumni Ambassador programme – neither of which were the subject of this study. Towards the end of the initial training year trainees return to a second (shorter) Summer Institute, intended to develop the common identity and purpose of the Teach First cohort. It would be interesting to explore which of these forces is more prevalent for individual Teach First teachers as they progress through their career, both within and beyond teaching.

An illustrative analogy can be found in particle physics. The nucleus of an atom may contain multiple protons, each of which carries an electrostatic charge which tends to drive the protons apart from each other. Atomic nuclei are generally stable, as a binding 'strong nuclear' force overcomes the effect of electrostatic forces over very small (sub-atomic) ranges. However, if an atomic nucleus becomes particularly large, the cumulative effect of the electrostatic force within the nucleus can overcome the strong nuclear force, leading to atomic instability and disintegration.

As the Teach First programme grows and the sources of diversity (schools, regions, HEI providers and successive cohorts) increase, the risk grows that a coherent Teach First identity will be diminished and the programme's unique purpose begin to disintegrate. The long-term risk to the Teach First programme is that, as a result of its success, it will expand to the point where its distinctive nature is lost and it becomes 'just another route into teaching'; in these circumstances the programme's unique and privileged position in policy discourse, and the value for money it represents to the public purse, may become increasingly difficult to defend.

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Appendices

<u>1. Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework: performance criteria</u>

Developing Mentor

1. Have a working knowledge of the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Standards

2. Know the Key Requirements of the Teach First Initial Teacher Training Programme

3. Complete the appropriate documentation

4. Understand the principles of partnership and liaise effectively with the RTP [Regional Training Provider]

5. Recognise and fulfil the dual aspects of the mentoring role – support and assessment

6. Plan and implement a training programme, with attention to the Subject Knowledge Audit

7. Assess participants [Teach First trainees] by:

    a. Undertaking analytical lesson observations and giving formative feedback;

    b. Using a range of evidence, in relation to the Standards for QTS;

    c. Supporting participants in setting appropriate targets;

    d. Using assessment procedures confidently and consistently to support progression.

8. Understand the needs of adult learners

9. Understand how to facilitate participants' self-evaluation and reflection

10. Engage with and help to resolve sensitive issues with participants

11. Be able to reflect critically on their own and others' practice for professional development

Effective Mentor

1. Have a thorough knowledge of the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Standards

2. Be involved in the management of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) within the department/school

3. Provide an induction programme for participants in school

4. Liaise with other colleagues (including other professionals) to support development of the participants' subject and pedagogical knowledge for teaching

5. Facilitate the value of mentoring in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

6. Ensure that assessment procedures are confidently and consistently carried out to ensure progression and continuity, via observation and scrutiny of participants' documentation

7. Moderate participants within own school

8. Implement effective moderation and Quality Assurance (QA) procedures as required by the partnership

9. Understand the needs of adult learners and managing other adults

10. Be willing to contribute to the development of the school/RTP/Teach First partnership

11. Commitment to ensure a secure environment for the participant to engage in risk taking

12. Understand how to facilitate participants' self-evaluation and reflection

Advanced Mentor

1. Ensure participants are working with good role models in school

2. Demonstrate a willingness to work alongside others to enhance knowledge and skills (Partnership development)

3. Evidence of achievement as Lead Mentor/ITT Coordinator that meets framework standards

4. Contribute to mentoring colleagues within and beyond school. An ability to provide constructive support and guidance

5. Supportive approach towards CPD of colleagues in respect of SIP [School Improvement Plan]

6. Commitment to work beyond the classroom context

7. Ensure the effective Quality Assurance (QA) process

8. Secure knowledge of participant development process, routes and phases of training

9. Be involved as a lead trainer or in training new mentors within their own/other schools

10. Evaluate and confidently implement any necessary changes through liaison with Regional Training Provider (RTP)

11. Commitment to sharing good practice with wider professional bodies

12. Representation on committees and consultative groups and professional bodies i.e. participation in programme development

<u>2. Structured Tutor Survey</u>

Questions

1. Select your Teach First region:
    *   East Midlands (EM)
    *   London (LON)
    *   North West (NW)
    *   West Midlands (WM)
    *   Yorkshire (YH)
2. How long have you been involved with Teach First (in any capacity)?
    *   Less than one year
    *   Between 1-2 years
    *   2-4 years
    *   4-8 years
3. Select your role:
    *   Primary tutor (PRI)
    *   Secondary subject tutor (ST)
    *   Secondary professional tutor (PT)
    *   Secondary subject and professional tutor (SPT)
4. How many schools have you been allocated this academic year?
5. For each school please rate the quality of the school-based training provided by mentors. Comment further if required.
    *   Excellent (1)
    *   Good (2)
    *   Satisfactory (3)
    *   Inconsistent (4)
    *   Poor (5)
6. How has the quality of school-based training changed over the period of your involvement with Teach First?
7. When you visit Teach First schools, how often do you…?
    a. check the mentor's comments in the participant's Journal, as evidence of the quality of training provided
    b. conduct a joint observation of the participant's teaching with their mentor
    c. discuss the content of the school-based training programme with the professional/lead mentor
    d. work with the subject/classroom mentor to develop their mentoring skills and practice
    e. discuss how the school-based training programme can support: the SKA [Subject Knowledge Audit]; your subject knowledge development days; the written assignments
    f. seek the participant's perception of the quality of the school-based training provision
    g. conduct a joint visit with the Teach First Leadership Development Officer (LDO) to co-ordinate the training and support provided by school mentors, HEI tutors and Teach First.
8. How engaged are schools with the regional School Advisory Groups?
    *   Low
    *   Medium
    *   High
    *   Don't Know
    *   Other
9. What do you understand to be the objectives of the regional School Advisory Groups?

Summary of responses to Question 7

Results are differentiated by region, and include p-values from successive binary logistic regression analyses. Significant results are highlighted.

Tutors' engagement with activity:		Region					
		EM	LON	NW	WM	YH	**TOTAL**
a	No	1	0	0	2	2	**5**
	Yes	7	27	6	14	8	**62**
	% +ve	87.5	100	100	87.5	80.0	**92.5**
	p-value	0.570	0.998	0.999	0.390	0.128	
b	No	0	1	1	2	2	**6**
	Yes	8	26	5	14	8	**61**
	% +ve	100	96.3	83.3	87.5	80.0	**91.0**
	p-value	0.999	0.244	0.498	0.573	0.205	
c	No	1	3	1	7	0	**12**
	Yes	7	24	5	9	10	**55**
	% +ve	87.5	88.9	83.3	56.3	100	**82.1**
	p-value	0.673	0.242	0.934	**0.004**	0.999	
d	No	3	7	3	11	5	**29**
	Yes	5	20	3	5	5	**38**
	% +ve	62.5	74.1	50.0	31.2	50.0	**56.7**
	p-value	0.726	**0.021**	0.729	**0.023**	0.643	
e	No	1	6	1	12	3	**23**
	Yes	7	21	5	4	7	**44**
	% +ve	87.5	77.8	83.3	25.0	70.0	**65.7**
	p-value	0.196	0.091	0.358	**0.000**	0.735	
f	No	0	0	1	1	0	**2**
	Yes	8	27	5	15	10	**65**
	% +ve	100	100	83.3	93.8	100	**97.0**
	p-value	0.999	0.998	0.095	0.405	0.999	
g	No	1	10	2	8	8	**29**
	Yes	7	17	4	8	2	**38**
	% +ve	87.5	63.0	66.7	50.0	20.0	**56.7**
	p-value	0.094	0.398	0.609	0.535	**0.021**	

Questions

1. Please select your Teach First region.
   - East Midlands (EM)
   - London (LON)
   - North West (NW)
   - West Midlands (WM)
   - Yorkshire (YH)
2. What in your view have been the strengths and the challenges of implementing the mentor recognition process?
3. What has been the impact of the mentor recognition process on the mentors that have engaged in the programme?
4. What has been the impact of the mentor recognition process on the relationship between the HEI tutor and the professional/subject mentor?
5. How do you see the mentor recognition process being integrated into your regional mentoring strategy?

4. Structured Trainee Survey

Summary of results

Please rate the support you have received in your school from the following: Professional Mentor (PM): This is the colleague in your school who has overall responsibility for Teach First Participants and meets with you periodically. Subject Mentor (SM): This is the colleague in your department who meets with you weekly. Primary participants should respond only to questions relating to their professional mentor.							
Answer Options	**% Strongly Agree/Agree**	**% Strongly Agree**	**% Agree**	**% Neutral**	**% Disagree**	**% Strongly disagree**	**Response Count**
My PM was readily available for support	66	31	35	15	13	6	270
Meetings with my PM were focused and supportive	57	25	32	19	13	11	269
My SM met with me on a weekly basis	66	42	24	9	14	11	261
Meetings with my SM were focused and supportive	68	38	30	14	11	7	263
My SM was well informed about the programme requirements	44	22	23	19	24	12	263
The written feedback and targets from my SM were useful	70	32	38	17	8	5	263
Professional development opportunities provided were regular	69	28	41	19	9	3	268
Professional development opportunities provided were valuable	67	23	45	22	7	3	269
Regular opportunities were provided to observe models of good practice	54	20	34	22	17	7	270
The staff generally are approachable and supportive	87	52	36	8	3	1	270
If you have disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the above, please tell us why:							126
answered question							270
skipped question							32

Summary of qualitative responses – Professional and Subject Mentor

Of the 126 who elaborated on their responses:

32 (12%) found their SM had little or no knowledge of Teach First or what was expected.

18 (7%) found their PM too busy/unavailable or unwell to meet with them.

16 (6%) said their PM was unapproachable/unhelpful or a bully.

11 (4%) reported that their SM was unapproachable/unhelpful or a bully.

10 (4%) participants said their SM was too busy or unavailable to meet with them (3%).

8 (3%) had not had regular meetings with their PM (this figure is in fact higher if combined with the 18 that said their PM was too busy/unavailable or unwell to meet with them).

Please rate the training you received from the following individuals from within your individual initial teacher training provider Professional Tutor (PT): This is the University Tutor responsible for supporting you in school through regular (usually fortnightly) visits, and liaising with school personnel to provide a programme of professional development for Teach First participants. Subject Tutor (ST): This is the University Tutor responsible for providing your six subject training days, subject-specific guidance where needed, and for visiting your classroom to conduct observations periodically throughout the year.							
Answer Options	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Count
My PT is easy to contact	94	62	32	5	1	0	269
My PT supported me in being an effective practitioner	93	61	32	4	2	1	269
The written feedback and targets from my PT are useful	89	52	37	8	2	1	266
The journal is useful for recording my progress	51	14	37	30	13	6	269
My ST helped develop my subject knowledge	75	37	37	15	9	1	267
Subject training days have been focused and useful	78	34	43	14	6	3	268
Subject support documentation/guidance is clear and helpful	67	22	45	19	9	5	265
I received adequate support, guidance, and access to materials and resources to enable me to complete the PGCE and achieve QTS	75	25	50	19	4	1	267
Please give any other comments/suggestions on university training below:							86
answered question							269
skipped question							33

Summary of qualitative responses – University Training

Of the 86 participants who commented or made suggestions on university training:

10 (4%) felt that the reading materials and access to them were disorganised and/or difficult to find.

9 (3%) participants struggled with their essays, either through vague questioning, writing to a Masters level or writing the actual essay.

8 (3%) participants thought they had unclear information about what was expected of them and/or what they had to do with university training.

8 (3%) enjoyed the subject study days and commended them.

7 (3%) felt the subject study days were disappointing or ineffectual.

Questions for discussion

1. What should Teach First participants expect from their subject and professional mentors during the first (training) year?

2. Are there any areas or issues where you feel Teach First mentors could be more effective?

3. What can the programme do better, or differently, to support and develop good mentoring in Teach First schools?

SPLiC Summit - agenda

Location: Teach First West Midlands Office**,** St George House, Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4AN

Date: Saturday 5th March, 2011

Time: 12.00 - 3.30pm

Agenda

1. Attendance and Apologies for absence

2. Action Points from last meeting

3. Leadership Development Programme 2012 Refresh

To consult on a new curriculum thread: Journey Of Leadership
To gain participant input on 4 phases of the leadership journey and how we can better support them to support themselves as leaders

4. Expansion

How attractive did you find the region you were assigned to before relocating? How do you feel about it now?
Do you feel that you get an experience similar to those in other region? If not, in what ways would you like the experience to change?
If you could be in any region in UK, including ones not currently served, which one would it be? Why?

5. Survey Results Feedback

6. Online Portal

What functions should be on the portal?
Content – are the things on ParticipantNet interesting or not? What would you like to see?
How do you want to connect with ambassadors/ what connections do you want to make? (Potential search functions on a directory)
Do you want discussion forums online? If so, what types of things would you discuss and how would you want to discuss it?

7. Mentor Support

Feedback to David Cameron (Associate Director, Mentoring – NITTP) regarding the effectiveness of mentor support and areas for improvement.

8. Communications Plan

What information do participants need to know/ would like to know on a month-to-month basis during the academic year?

9. AOB

10. Summit Moving Forward

Post-focus group communication

From: Cameron, David (david.cameron@canterbury.ac.uk)
Sent: 07 March 2011 10:44
To: undisclosed-recipients
Subject: SPLIC summit transcript

Dear all,

Thanks again for allowing me to poach some of your meeting time. Please find attached a transcript of selected comments. I would like to use some of these extracts in various reports and papers on mentoring in Teach First. Can you let me know if you made a comment which you would prefer **not** to be used? I have numbered them for ease of reference. For ethical reasons, it is important that all those who contribute data to any research retain ownership of their words. Therefore, and thus, the following notification:

- The data in this document may be used for an internal report for Teach First, to be published on March 21 2011.
- The data may also be used subsequently in external conference papers and a PhD study (supervisor, Dr Viv Wilson: viv.wilson@canterbury.ac.uk)
- Any comments used will be reported in an anonymised form, but will identify region and role (e.g. 'North West participant')
- Raw data and transcripts will be kept in a safe and secure location and will be used purely for the purposes of the research project including dissemination of findings. No one outside of the researcher and the researcher's supervisors will have access to any of the raw data.
- Please let me know of any factual inaccuracies (e.g. where a comment from the NW has been assigned to London).
- **You have the right to withdraw any data generated by you (i.e. your comments) at any time without risk or prejudice – however please note the date above for the internal paper.**

Once again, please do send me any further comments or questions on this issue as they occur to you. It was a very useful session for me and many of your comments reinforce and confirm points that are being made elsewhere in the programme's management teams.

Best wishes

David

David Cameron
Associate Director, Mentoring
Teach First National ITT Partnership
Canterbury Christ Church University
01227 767700 ext.3855

Questions

1. Why did you engage in the Teach First mentor recognition pilot?
2. How has the mentor recognition framework supported your role as a Teach First mentor?
3. What impact has the mentor recognition framework had on your mentoring practice?
4. How has engaging in the Teach First mentor recognition process impacted upon your professional relationship with the HEI tutor?
5. What is your view on how the recognition process has been introduced?
6. Have you used any online resources that support mentoring; if so, how useful have they been?
7. Please select your Teach First region.
      a. East Midlands (EM)
      b. London (LON)
      c. North West (NW)
      d. West Midlands (WM)
      e. Yorkshire (YH)
8. Which phase of the Mentor Recognition Framework did you engage with?
      f. Developing
      g. Effective
      h. Advanced
9. Do you have any further comments or feedback about the Recognition Framework, Teach First or your role as a mentor to Teach First participants?

Summary of responses to Questions 1-3

1. Coded response count cross-tabulated with mentor type

	Professional Mentor	Subject Mentor	**Total**
Question 1			
1	10	10	**20**
2	4	4	**8**
3	2	1	**3**
4	4	1	**5**
5	1	2	**3**
6	4		**4**
7	2		**2**
TOTAL	27	18	**45**
Question 2			
1	13	11	**24**
2	7	5	**12**
3	1		**1**
4	1		**1**
5	1	2	**3**
TOTAL	23	18	**41**
Question 3			
1	9	8	**17**
2	10	7	**17**
3	1		**1**
4	3		**3**
5	3	2	**5**
TOTAL	26	17	**43**

2. Coded response count cross-tabulated with region

	EM	LON	NW	WM	YH	**Total**
Question 1						
1	4	6	4	3	3	**20**
2	2	2	3		1	**8**
3		2			1	**3**
4		3	2			**5**
5		1			2	**3**
6		1	1	2		**4**
7			2			**2**
TOTAL	6	15	12	5	7	**45**
Question 2						
1	3	6	9	3	3	**24**
2		4	3	3	2	**12**
3		1				**1**
4		1				**1**
5	2				1	**3**
TOTAL	5	12	12	6	6	**41**
Question 3						
1	4	6	3	2	2	**17**
2		5	5	4	3	**17**
3			1			**1**
4		2		1		**3**
5	2		2		1	**5**
TOTAL	6	13	11	7	6	**43**

3. Coded response count cross-tabulated with phase of recognition framework

	Developing	Effective	Advanced	**Total**
Question 1				
1	7	4	9	**20**
2	2	2	4	**8**
3		1	2	**3**
4		1	4	**5**
5	2		1	**3**
6		3	1	**4**
7			2	**2**
TOTAL	11	11	23	**45**
Question 2				
1	5	7	12	**24**
2	2	6	4	**12**
3			1	**1**
4			1	**1**
5	2		1	**3**
TOTAL	9	13	19	**41**
Question 3				
1	4	4	9	**17**
2	4	6	7	**17**
3		1		**1**
4			3	**3**
5	1	2	2	**5**
TOTAL	9	13	21	**43**

7. Mentor Interviews

Invitation to interview

Message sent on behalf of David Cameron, please respond directly to david.cameron@iop.org

Dear Teach First Mentor,

I would like to invite you to participate in some research about the role of the mentor in the Teach First teacher training programme.

Between 2008 and 2011 I worked with Canterbury Christ Church University and helped develop the 'Mentors Online Support System' (MOSS) website, and the Teach First Mentor Recognition Framework. I am continuing to work on a PhD I started in this period, and I have presented my initial findings at conferences in London and Berlin.

This research is independent from Teach First, and does not form any part of its formal operation or evaluation.

To minimise the inconvenience to you, I would like to conduct a semi-structured interview over the telephone, at a date and time that suits you. I anticipate this would take no more than 30 minutes. If you are agreeable, please can you propose a date, or period of time, which would be convenient and we can finalise arrangements via email. Please contact me at david.cameron@iop.org

These interviews will contribute to an exploration of the role of school-based mentors in teacher training generally, and in Teach First specifically. The direct insight of Teach First mentors themselves will form a central element of the research and therefore these interviews are very important.

In the interviews I would like to ask you about the actions you undertake as a mentor, the skills you draw upon when mentoring trainee teachers, and the extent to which you associate with the Teach First programme and its mission.

All responses will be anonymised so neither individuals nor schools can be identified. The findings may be published in academic journals or at conferences. The interview schedule has been given ethical clearance by the Graduate School at Canterbury Christ Church University. The supervisor for this research is Dr Viv Wilson (viv.wilson@canterbury.ac.uk)

Thank you for your consideration, I hope you can contribute your views on the important issue of mentoring Teach First trainee teachers.

Yours sincerely,

David Cameron

Interview schedule

Subject Group: Teach First Mentors (London and Yorkshire & the Humber regions)

Overall purpose: To explore the subjects' perception of the 'mentor' role, particularly in relation to the perceived level of support and response to opportunities for the development of mentoring proficiency (self-actualisation); in addition, to explore their perceived degree of association with the Teach First programme and movement.

Planned approach: A semi-structured interview built around the headings below. Key questions will be followed by the subsidiary questions or comments which indicate the intended direction; however, the interviewer will remain flexible and respond intuitively to unexpected responses in the most productive way. The topics are organised in a way which tries to ensure the mental and emotional comfort of the subject – i.e. the more personal, 'deeper' questions are later, when some degree of trust between interviewer and subject might have developed.

Subjects will be reminded that they can express their preference not to answer any question, and may terminate the interview at any time.

Opening remarks	Make clear that: I am undertaking a PhD in Education, with a focus on the systems and practices which support school mentors on the TF programme. The interview will explore your practice as a TF mentor. All responses are confidential to protect the identity of individuals and schools. The call may be recorded – are you comfortable with that? You will hear periodic tones on the line. You can express your preference not to answer any question; you may terminate the interview at any time and you have the right to withdraw from this research after the interview.
The role and identity of 'mentor'	
Do you act as a Professional Mentor or Subject Mentor; what is your position in the school?	Differentiating question which may shape questions later.
How long have you been a Teach First mentor?	Also explore their level of experience as a mentor in general (e.g. PGCE) and as a teacher.
What sort of things do you do in your role as a Teach First mentor?	Explore their understanding of the role The balance between formal and informal activities; how do they resolve the dichotomy between supporter/counsellor and appraiser/gatekeeper? Responses might be suggestive of an established model of mentoring; subsidiary questioning would explore this and seek clarification/confirmation. *Do they think 'mentor' is a good label for what they do? Does another word fit better – 'coach'? 'trainer'?*

Can you tell me a little about how you balance your role as a teacher with that of a mentor to a trainee teacher?	They could discuss how they balance the roles in terms of the time they spend on each, or the level of thought they give each during and outside of their working day, or how the two roles involve different activities and therefore assuming different professional identities. Follow their thread and try to get to whether they perceive mentoring as distinct and additional, or an integral and necessary part of being an experienced teacher.
How supported, from within the school, do you feel in fulfilling your role as a mentor?	Seeking an indication of the in-school *'architectural' mechanisms*. Could explore the process by which they became a TF mentor, their understanding of who they refer to in their mentoring role, the resources (incl. time) which they are given to be a *mentor*... Possibly ask about their level of confidence in the role, whether they have periods or moments of self-doubt.
Building mentoring proficiency	
How do you, or have you, developed your skills as a mentor to trainee teachers?	Responses could focus on either, or both, external or internalised processes. This might tend back towards their understanding of the role in relation to that of a teacher
Are there any resources, opportunities or training offers that have been relevant and useful for developing your skills as a mentor?	This might have been at least partially addressed in the previous question (external processes). Have they heard of, or engaged with, the TF Mentor Recognition Framework? Why? (or why not) –what was their motive and what did they get out of it? Was it to have a sense of ownership of their learning? Or a sense of belonging? Did their motivation change over time? Explore the benefits and limitations of other options, esp. HEI-led mentor training. Websites? If not already mentioned, ask explicitly about the HEI tutor linked to the school. Have they had a role in supporting the mentor or facilitating their *learning (might depend on the mentor's level of* experience)? [A tentative hypothesis is that the individual support of another professional experienced in adult learning is of greater benefit than other resources]
The mentor and Teach First	
What's your view of the Teach First training programme?	Open question to gauge their perception and opinion of TF. If previously a TF trainee, may refer to it here. Otherwise ask in next question.
To what extent do you feel part of the Teach First movement?	*If they haven't mentioned it previously they will* mention if they were a TF trainee themselves here.

	Follow-up questions could explore:
	How the school first became involved with TF; the *mentor's involvement in the acceptance of the* trainee;
	Whether they feel included in the programme and community – e.g. through events, news, communication, CPD opportunities;
	Do they know, and share, the values, ethos and mission of the programme?
	What do they think about the unique nature of the programme, the profiles of the trainees, and how do they perceive their role in relation to this?
	Are there any areas, or specific experiences, where they feel/felt the greatest degree of alignment, or alienation, with/from the programme?
	What effect do they think their position re:TF has on their mentoring? (If they have non-TF mentoring experience)-is there any difference in their approach?
	Possibly: ask about their view on the policy position of TF –i.e. the support from govt and proposed expansion. Good for teaching?
Closing remarks:	Thank you very much for your time. Your contribution will be very useful for this research and I will let you know when the findings are written up and published.
	Do you have any comments or questions?

Application for ethics review and approval

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review

Application for full review

MAIN RESEARCHER	David Cameron
E-MAIL	David.cameron@canterbury.ac.uk
POSITION WITHIN CCCU	Associate Director, Mentoring, Teach First National ITT Partnership
POSITION OUTSIDE CCCU	--
COURSE (students only)	--
DEPARTMENT (staff only)	POINTED
PROJECT TITLE	PhD: Influences upon the development of the skills and knowledge base of Teach First mentors
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: NAME	Viv Wilson; Viv Griffiths
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: E-MAIL	viv.wilson@canterbury.ac.uk; viv.griffiths@canterbury.ac.uk
DURATION OF PROJECT	5 years
OTHER RESEARCHERS	None

1. GIVE DETAILS OF THE FUNDING BODY, OF THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING AND OF ANY RELEVANT CONDITIONS IMPOSED.

Funded by CCCU

2. OUTLINE THE ETHICAL ISSUES THAT YOU THINK ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

- Establishment of independence from participants in the research
- Ensuring voluntary informed consent; ensuring the freedom for participants to withdraw at any stage.
- Designing the project to be free of active deception in any form.
- Confidentiality – depersonalising all individual references and quotations; ensuring data is held securely and access is only given to researcher and supervisor; minimising the impact of the research on participants.
- Maintaining accuracy in the creation and use of data; avoiding contrived, implied or fraudulent data, or the omission of data.
- Gaining formal permission for access to participants at an early stage, including the headteachers of schools involved.

3. Is this project aimed mainly at achieving an academic qualification?	Yes - PhD
4. Is this project mainly aimed at improving the practice/performance of people or organizations involved in the research?	Also yes – results will feed into improvement plans of the Teach First National ITT Partnership
5. Will the project results be published in academic journals?	Yes probably
6. Will the project results be published in professional journals?	Possibly
7. Will the project results be published in other ways?	PhD thesis

8. GIVE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE "SCIENTIFIC", PRACTICAL OR POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

In relation to professional practice, this study will contribute to discussions about the professionalism of the teaching workforce, especially early-career teachers (c.f. the

MTL scheme). This can be seen as part of a wider and more general policy debate about the accountability and autonomy of teachers, a central element of government initiatives including the proposed CSF Bill.

This study will also contribute to wider discussions about the role of the Teach First programme within the matrix of teacher education in England, and its role within schools in urban complex contexts; decisions about the continuation, criteria and expansion of the programme are taken at a political level.

This study will re-investigate the academic debate about where the roots of a mentor's/teacher's professional knowledge base lies.

9. Has a similar study been carried out previously?	General studies of mentoring in initial teacher education, but not for Teach First
10. Give details of literature searches conducted.	Literature on mentoring, e.g. Tomlinson, Hagger, Maynard, Furlong, McIntyre.
11. If so, why is it worth repeating the study?	Because this study will explore whether mentoring is different on this alternative route into teaching.
12. Who has peer-reviewed this study? (Attach any relevant comments.)	Viv Wilson & Viv Griffiths

13. GIVE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT. Include, for example, sample selection, recruitment procedures, data collection, data analysis.

- Deploy a pilot questionnaire (see attached) to small group of invited mentors and HEI tutors for evaluation. Modify as appropriate.
- Global population of TF mentors equals approx 570 (subject to annual population shifts) distributed regionally as: London (c.300); East Midlands (c.40); West Midlands (c.90); North West (c. 80); Yorkshire and Humber (c.60)
- Contact this population through a) national and regional mentor events b) school visits and cluster meetings c) email, explaining purpose and aims of project and requesting participants to complete questionnaire. Data thus collected represents main body for quantitative analysis.
- Target a representative sample of subject and professional mentors from each region (e.g. London: 16-32; East Midlands: 3-6; West Midlands: 5-10; North West: 5-10; Yorkshire and Humber: 4-8) and invite to participate in series of interviews. Data will be subject to qualitative analysis.

14. WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE LEARNT AS A RESULT OF THIS STUDY

- How far mentoring on the Teach First ITE programme has unique features compared to mentoring through other ITE routes; how far practice reflects the rhetoric of the Teach First programme
- How Teach First mentors acquire their professional knowledge and the impact distance learning tools can have on developing this knowledge and supporting professional development.
- The influence that the unique 3-way partnerships between school-HEI-Teach First have upon the development and actions of TF mentors, and how the partnership is perceived.

15. Exactly what will happen to participants, their products or records about them that goes beyond usual practice?	In first phase of data collection, participants will be required to complete a questionnaire in their own time; in the second phase, they would attend a short series of interviews in school with the researcher. All data generated by these processes including personal information will be held securely by the researcher and supervisor.

16. Potential risks for participants	Expressing views that are sensitive about the programme or individuals. Mentors may be reluctant to express any critical views in case it appears to reflect badly on themselves and their professionalism.
17. Potential benefits for participants	Increased clarity about and reflection upon professional practice which will develop skills in mentoring Teach First trainees.
18. How will participants be made aware of the results of the study?	A summary of results and analysis can be offered to participants, as well as the final publication.
19. How will participants be selected?	Through invitation, to meet a representative sample of the global population of Teach First mentors operating.
20. How many participants will be recruited?	In the first phase, as many as possible from the total available; in the second phase, approximately 30-65.
21. Explain, as precisely as possible, why this number of participants is necessary and sufficient? Where details of a statistical calculation are not appropriate, an equivalent level of detail should be provided.	In the first phase, in order to create quantitative analysis which is as robust and statistically significant as possible; in the second phase, in order to have a fair representation of the various contexts and partnerships in the different Teach First regions, and still have sufficient responses in each individual region to allow meaningful qualitative analysis to take place.
22. How, when and by whom will participants be approached?	As explained in #13 above
23 Will participants be recruited individually or en bloc?	Individually
24 Are participants likely to feel under pressure to consent / assent to participation?	No
25 Will participants include minors, people with learning difficulties or other vulnerable people?	No
26 How will voluntary informed consent be obtained from individual participants or those with a right to consent for them?	First phase – information letter attached to questionnaire; second phase – consent letter signed by participant and permission letter to school employing participant.
27 How will assent be obtained from competent minors and other vulnerable people?	N/A
28 How will permission be sought from those responsible for institutions / organisations hosting the study?	Letter of permission to all schools within which participating mentors are employed.
29 How will the privacy and confidentiality of participants be safeguarded?	All data will be held electronically on secure CCCU servers and in hard copy in secure locations in CCCU offices.
30 What steps will be taken to comply with the Data Protection Act?	Data will be stored securely and destroyed at the end of the doctorate or after relevant publications are completed.

31 What steps will be taken to allow participants to retain control over audio-visual records of them and over their creative products and items of a personal nature?	Participants will be informed at the time of recruitment and reminded during data collection that they have the right to view or withdraw any data relating to them personally.
32 Give the qualifications and/or experience of the researcher and/or supervisor in this form of research.	The researcher is a tutor on Teach First. The supervisors have relevant experience in mentoring research.
33 If you are NOT a member of CCCU academic staff, what insurance arrangements are in place to meet liability incurred in the conduct of this research.	N/A

Attach any:

    Participant information sheets and letters
    Consent forms
    Data collection instruments

DECLARATION

- The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.

- I undertake to conduct this research in accordance with University's Research Governance procedures.

- If the research is approved, I undertake to adhere to the study protocol without deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter sent by the FREC notifying me of this.

- I undertake to inform the FREC of any changes in the protocol and to seek their agreement and to submit annual progress reports. I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data, including the need to register when appropriate with the appropriate Data Protection Officer.

- I understand that research records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that research records should be kept securely for five years.

- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this application will be held by the FREC and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

Researcher's Name: David Cameron

Date: 9th February 2010

FOR STUDENT APPLICATION ONLY

I have read the research proposal and application form, and support this submission to the FREC.

Supervisor's Name:

Date:

CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO APPROVAL BY THE COURSE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

	NAME	DATE
Approved by Course Committee		
Checked by Faculty Committee		

CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO APPROVAL BY THE EDUCATION FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

	NAME	DATE
Approved by Faculty Committee	Viv Griffiths	24.2.10