



**Further Education Initial Teacher Training
in the SW of England:
ILPs, Mentors and Mentor Training**

By

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Carried out for

SWitch

The South West Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training

A report contributing to two projects:

- SW0705** Disseminating model Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)
- SW0708** Disseminate models of good practice in mentor training

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

- 0.1 The use of ILPs has become common practice in programmes in some areas of the FE sector. They are well-established particularly in certain fields of training (including NVQ programmes, Modern Apprenticeship, Train to Gain) and in Skills for Life where usually there are well-documented statements of learning outcomes. Apart from their curricular function, ILPs also fulfil a role as a mechanism of accountability, for tracking learner progress and for allocating funding. However, ILPs have not become established in all areas of work in the sector. There are questions to explore, therefore, concerning the role of ILPs in initial teacher training (ITT) for the FE sector
- 0.2 Until relatively recently responsibility for pastoral and other matters relating to trainees has been a responsibility of the teacher training team and of course tutors rather than mentors or subject coaches. For trainee teachers in colleges, subject mentoring and specific curriculum support tended to be provided in the staffroom by colleagues on an ad hoc and informal basis and was rarely linked formally to the teacher training programme. Government reforms have led to more emphasis being placed upon mentoring as an essential mechanism within teacher training, particularly to support the development of subject specialisms, a model of provision that derives from practices in secondary teacher training. There are questions to explore, therefore, about the affects of mentoring and mentor training in ITT for FE colleges and the lifelong learning sector.
- 0.3 In the Summer of 2007 the SWitch Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training invited its members to submit proposals for a series of projects related to the changing regulations governing professional qualifications. This Report relates to a project that researched issues relating to the use of ILPs and to the training of mentors.

The Research

- 0.4 Background data for the project were collected from journals, research reports and by desk research through the internet. The principal data collection method, however, comprised semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Twenty-eight interviews were undertaken in the early months of 2008. The interviews lasted anywhere between 45 minutes and two hours and enabled the research team to collect rich qualitative data from ten trainees, from nine teacher educators who fulfil roles as tutors and/or mentors in programmes, and also from nine managers, some working in FE colleges and some in the work-based learning adult and community and voluntary sectors. All the interviews were transcribed and were analysed in some detail to draw out important themes and issues.

- 0.5 The project was designed to be ethnographic, qualitative and interpretative in order to enable interviewees to go beyond answering narrowly technical questions about planning or about mentoring practices and to convey something of what such experiences mean for them personally as part of their professional formation. The project methodology was informed by a life history approach to the collection and interpretation of data and by concepts of biographical learning.

Recommendations

- 0.6 We make **three** recommendations in respect of trainees:

- If there is to be a formal requirement for an ILP, then it should serve the needs and be under the control of the trainee. For this to be practicable, the trainees need clarity about the different purposes of the ILP.
- In relation to mentoring, it is important for trainees to feel supported within a community of practice and mentoring has a role to play in achieving that. Trainees should be empowered to work with mentors of their own choosing. They should be in a position to set the agenda for mentoring meetings.
- Trainees need more encouragement to engage in critical evaluation of the structure of their course and of the experiences it enables. In this way, programmes can assert the essential analytic criticality that should be central to the process of teacher training.

- 0.7 We make **two** recommendations in respect of tutors:

- Tutors need to be engaged more conspicuously in managing curriculum change for initial teacher training; they need to be involved in a meaningful exploration of curriculum possibilities and encouraged to make educational judgements rather than required to manage imposed innovations.
- The status of teacher trainers needs to be clarified. The involvement of mentors and others in undertaking assessment of teacher trainees risks undermining the tutor's role, particularly if such assessment becomes summative rather than formative.

- 0.8 We make **two** recommendations in relation to subject pedagogy:

- It should be made explicit that subject expertise is but one facet of the mentoring role and that the idea of specialist subject pedagogies is profoundly problematic. There is value in teacher training in the critical exploration of pedagogical challenges across subject boundaries.
- We favour the adoption of models of mentoring that emphasise the importance of a work-based location for the mentor who is trained and resourced to engage in a formative and developmental relationship led by the trainee.

0.9 Finally we have **five** recommendations that relate to enhancing the learning culture of further education and the lifelong learning sector:

- SWitch should continue to promote the networking of colleges and dialogue among colleagues to explore practices and perceptions in relation to innovations like ILPs and mentoring.
- SWitch should continue to lobby for funds to continue beyond the current period and use the funds creatively to engage in work that is educationally important; not only should there be concern with 'delivery' but a commitment to critical evaluation of established practice and orthodoxy.
- Policy-makers should cease the imposition of innovation and change and leave the sector a period to embed practice and enhance quality.
- Policy-makers should recognise and celebrate the variety of practice and achievement of the different facets of the lifelong learning sector (ACL, WBL, the voluntary sector as well as colleges) and recognise that 'one size fits all' is not appropriate. They should recognise that the secondary sector is not necessarily a useful model for practice in teacher training.
- All stakeholders in the FE sector – colleges, policy-makers and agencies – to recognise and value the work of adult and community learning. Our report has repeatedly noted the disadvantages for ACL in their access to resources and the danger of the lack of accessible training for those who are often at the 'cutting edge' of practice.

0.11 We suggest that it is time emphasis was shifted away from the sterility of arguments about standards and away from the leaden bureaucracy of writing plans, records and policies. Our research is in many ways an antidote to the bland bureaucratic and atheoretical (or anti-theoretical) commentaries about the need to maintain and ensure standards. There are important challenges facing the sector in years to come and we would argue that it is time to restore to the curriculum of FE teacher training a sense of idealism, to encourage the excitement offered by the opportunities for change and transformation that the sector offers. In valuing such features of further education, the curriculum for teacher training would give greater emphasis to imagination, to enjoyment, to a passion for learning. These are remarkable qualities that many people bring in their different ways to further and adult education and they deserve to be nurtured and celebrated.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In the Summer of 2007 the SWitch Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) invited its members to submit proposals for a series of projects exploring the changing regulations governing professional qualifications. The SWitch projects for 2007-2008 were designed to monitor developments in the South West region and to support continuing professional development activity related to them. Two of the projects attracted interest from the authors as members of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning at University of Exeter and proposals were submitted to undertake research that was both empirically grounded and theoretically informed. The proposals were designed to address questions relating to the use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and to the training of mentors who are expected to fulfil a significant role in the reformed training schemes.
- 1.2 Two project proposals were originally outlined, one centred on research into the perceptions of trainees about the use of ILPs as part of their programme and the second to inquire into their experiences of mentoring and, the implications of such experiences for mentor training. The design of each proposal in July 2007 envisaged projects focussed on the experiences of trainee teachers, their tutors and managers in post-compulsory education in the partner colleges of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning (SELL). It became evident that the two projects shared much in common and, after consultation with our SWitch colleagues, there was an agreement that the two proposals could be run 'in tandem'.
- 1.3 This report is the major outcome from the research project. It was envisaged that the principal outcome would be a report on the experiences of project participants that would inform the understanding and practices of teacher educators linked with SWitch. It was further anticipated that the report would inform the presentation of papers to local, regional, national and even international gatherings of researchers and practitioners in the field of teacher training.

2 THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Responding to the brief

- 2.1 Regulations for the reform of the further education (FE¹) workforce in England in 2004 were set out by the government in *Equipping our teachers for the future: reforming initial teacher training for the learning and skills sector* (DfES, 2004). For the first time there was to be a mandatory requirement for staff to have a teaching qualification with the introduction of a licentiate qualification for initial training: Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) Status. It was envisaged that training would include: initial assessment; accreditation of prior learning; skills support; mentoring; blended learning; observation; a progress log; and registration with the Institute for Learning.
- 2.2 The White Paper, *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES 2006) outlined how the new licentiate qualification arrangements would work. This led to the introduction of new qualifications (PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS²) designed to meet the professional training needs of those in different teaching or training situations. All qualifications were required to use the statements of standards produced by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). As a consequence, FE colleges have had to make substantial changes to their teacher training programmes and Higher Education institutions have found it necessary to review how the new awards articulate with their qualifications
- 2.3 At the centre of the reforms is Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) that, as a sector skills council, was tasked with the establishment of a set of standards to replace older sets. The responsibility for quality assurance of the standards was delegated to another body, Standards Verification UK (SVUK). The standards are expected to underpin any programme leading to one of the officially sanctioned awards. The other significant body involved in quality assurance matters is the Office for Standards in Education that produced a series of reports (Ofsted 2003; 2006) drawing attention to the variability in standards of provision for initial teacher training for teachers in the learning and skills sector. Their findings and recommendations have made a powerful impact on those responsible for implementing the changes.

¹ Further education colleges represent the largest and most substantial component of the further education (FE) sector in the UK. This 'learning and skills sector' embraces adult and community learning (ACL), work-based learning (WBL), and the voluntary sector. The sector is also known as the lifelong learning sector. Practitioners who undertake courses leading to teaching qualifications include teachers, in prisons, hospitals, the armed forces and other public services.

²'Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector Award' (PTLLS Award); 'Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector' (CTLLS); 'Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector' (DTLLS).

- 2.4 In the summer of 2007 the SWitch Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training invited its members to submit proposals for a series of projects related to the changing regulations governing professional qualifications. This paper reports on a project that researched issues relating to the use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and to the training of mentors. The two SWitch projects as originally outlined are shown in Table 1
- 2.5 They attracted interest from the authors for several reasons. Firstly, the School of Education in the past has had a substantial commitment to the initial education and continuing professional development of teachers in FE. There are four partner colleges where programmes of training for teachers in the FE sector are provided. It was expected that colleagues in the colleges would be willing and accessible partners with whom there had been good working relationships for many years. The implications of the changing regulations were of significant interest both to the college and to the university staff.

Table 1: Project Tasks

<p>SW0705 Disseminating model Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)</p> <p>(1) To identify model Individual Learning Plan (ILP) formats from existing resources available and good practice across the region</p> <p>(2) To disseminate these to a variety of teacher training providers, offering guidance on their effective use within a range of programmes</p> <p>(3) To support teacher training providers in using the ILP models offered, collecting feedback on their introduction across the range of programmes involved to identify key areas of success and any issues</p> <p>(4) To report on the findings from the above</p> <p>SW0708 Disseminate models of good practice in mentor training</p> <p>(1) To identify and/or develop model(s) of good practice in mentor training for mentors supporting trainees on teacher training programmes, identifying clearly the target audience for the training with regard to its appropriateness for mentors working across a range of programmes/mentor roles</p> <p>(2) To offer and deliver the training to mentors and prospective mentors from several appropriate teacher training programmes</p> <p>(3) To evaluate the success of the training, identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• key features which contributed in particular to its success• main implications/considerations for programmes training mentors through this model• the extent to which mentors trained are actively involved in mentoring teacher trainees• key feedback from working mentors which will inform future development of the training <p>(4) To report on the findings from the above and disseminate information about the training through <i>SWitch</i> networks. To disseminate training materials and offer support to <i>SWitch</i> members and other providers wishing to adopt the training programme</p>

- 2.6 Secondly, the School has been a significant organisation in further education research for many years (see, for example, Bloomer 1997; Bloomer and Hodkinson 1999; James and Biesta 2007; Quinn, Lawy and Diment 2008). This area of research has tended to stress the importance of empirical investigation, of the need to engage with teachers and students, if we are to construct a valid understanding of learning and the meaning of learning in people's lives. At the same time, there has been an emphasis on the need for such research to be theoretically grounded and critically informed. The SWitch projects afforded a valuable opportunity for empirical research that would help us achieve a better understanding of professional practice among SWitch partners in the current period of transition. Our experience led us to think that we could make a significant contribution to the overall project.
- 2.7 It is, in part, the critical stance that we adopt to many aspects of current developments in further education and lifelong learning that has led us to regret the displacement of the phrase 'teacher education' by 'teacher training' and other similar changes to the lexicon, such as replacing 'students' with 'trainees' or 'students in the classroom' as 'learners'. It is our view that, while you may be able to 'train' teachers to perform particular functions, in professional formation and development it is appropriate that one should aspire to 'educate' teachers and not simply train them. However, such changes in terminology have become ubiquitous and this report adopts the practice of using the phrase 'teacher training' and refers to those undertaking the training as 'trainees'.
- 2.8 Two project proposals were originally outlined, one centred on research into the perceptions of trainees about the process of producing ILPs and the second to inquire into their experiences of mentoring and, by implication, the implications of such experiences for mentor training. The proposals were planned to take advantage of the relationship with partner colleges of the SELL. The approach envisaged was practicable and achievable because there was a track record of working together successfully.
- 2.9 After consultation with our SWitch colleagues, there was an agreement that the two proposals could be run 'in tandem'. Our research team was extended with the addition of colleagues who had experience of adult and community learning and had contacts in the private and voluntary sectors. This was agreed to be a necessary enhancement of the data resources available for the project.
- 2.10 A series of research questions was formulated for the project (see Table 2) that served the purpose of integrating our concerns in both proposals into a practicable research scheme. A schedule was agreed with the research team and with staff from the partner colleges.

Table 2: Research Questions

Research Questions	
1.	What systems are in place within colleges and other organisations across the region for the support of new members of staff? In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 What models of good process and practice are there in the use of different Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)?1.2 What models of good process and practice are there in mentor training?1.3 What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available?
2.	How do the models of ILPs and mentor training function in the context of different training providers (work-based learning, college-based teacher education, voluntary sector, adult and community learning)?
3.	What are the strengths and limitations of the different ILP models? How might teacher training providers use effectively the ILP models offered?
4.	What are the strengths and limitations of the different models of mentoring? How might teacher training providers use effectively the mentoring models offered?
5.	What are the perceptions of trainees, mentors and managers with respect to the value of ILPs and mentoring to the development of professional competence? What are their perceptions of the value of ILPs and mentoring to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector? What are their respective perceptions of the way national standards are integrated within the professional practice of trainees?
6.	What are the implications or considerations for programmes training mentors through different models of mentoring? How far are trained mentors actively involved in mentoring their colleagues or trainees?
7.	How far are the models of ILPs and mentor training fit for the purpose of achieving national standards in the learning and skills sector?

Conceptualising the problem - methodology

2.11 The particular features of the project methodology are that it was intended to be ethnographic, qualitative and interpretative. It was ethnographic in that we wanted to collect data that would enable us to secure the respective perceptions of trainees, of tutors and mentors, and of managers of further education and lifelong learning providers. It was qualitative in that our preferred method of data collection were semi-structured interviews that would afford us insights into people's experiences of the systems and structures that are being used in the sector. We wanted these perspectives in order to be able to compare and contrast different kinds of experience while developing a rich portrayal - what Geertz (1973), famously termed 'thick description' - of current practices. We were interested in building on recent work in life history research to find out what such an approach might offer when considering the

significance of ILPs, of mentors and mentor training as part of people's professional lives.

- 2.12 This approach to data collection was considered appropriate because it enabled our interviewees to go beyond answering narrowly technical questions, about planning or about mentoring practices, to convey a sense of what their experiences meant for them personally and their professional development. We wanted to collect stories about experiences both within and outside of formal education that would be detailed and richly textured. As Stenhouse stated many years ago

To make refined judgements about what educational action to take in particular cases lodged in particular contexts, we need much more information than can at present be reduced to indices and we need to present our conclusions in a way that feeds the judgement of the actors in the situation, a way that educates them rather than briefs them. (Stenhouse 1980, p 3)

We were committed to an approach that would 'feed the judgement' of those with responsibilities for ILPs or for mentoring. We were more interested in encouraging colleagues to think rather than briefing them about 'what works'.

- 2.13 The project methodology was informed by a life history approach to the interpretation of data (Alheit and Dausien 2002; Goodson 2001; Tedder 2007; West et al., 2007). This encouraged us to construct stories of practice that would also offer insights into the personal and social lives of our interviewees. Peter Alheit (2005) is an established practitioner in life history research and has taken particular interest in the forms of biographical learning that it enables. He defines biographical learning as:

a self-willed, 'autopoietic' accomplishment on the part of active subjects, in which they reflexively 'organise' their experience in such a way that they also generate personal coherence, identity, a meaning to their life history and a communicable, socially viable lifeworld perspective for guiding their actions. (Alheit, 2005, p 209)

The significance of this statement lies in its aspiration to bridge the personal and the social. On the one hand it acknowledges the social situatedness of personal practices but it emphasises for each individual the relationship between reflection, identity and personal agency.

- 2.14 We were interested in looking at processes of professional development in post-compulsory education within their social context. Lave and Wenger (1991) drew attention to the importance of communities of practice to learning and the education and training of new teachers in colleges can be considered as an induction into a new community of practice that has consequences for everyone involved:

Learning – whatever form it takes – changes who we are by changing our ability to participate, to belong, to negotiate meaning. And this ability is configured socially with respect to practices, communities, and

economies of meaning where it shows our identities. (Lave and Wenger 1991, p 226)

- 2.15 The importance of understanding the teaching staff in FE as communities of practice has been extensively discussed by UK researchers (see, for example, James and Biesta 2007; Avis 2005).
- 2.16 It is apparent from even a cursory reading of literature around 'mentoring' that it is a contested concept. We were aware from the outset of the project that there were differing understandings of 'mentoring' and varied uses of documentation (including ILPs) to support the process. In undertaking analyses and interpretation of our data, therefore, we thought it important to use an approach that would enable us to develop theory rather than to construct data around theory; in other words, we came close to using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998).
- 2.17 Within the project we expected to develop individual life stories, narratives based on data collected through interviews (Clandinin and Connelly 2000; Elliott 2005). In collecting life history data there is always the dilemma that we seek to work at a level of detail that ensures the narratives we construct are authentic and convincing; however, the more detail we provide, the more likely it is that anonymity is compromised and assurances of confidentiality become unreliable. There are more than the usual ethical challenges in undertaking research based on collecting life stories (Goodson 2001).
- 2.18 Ethical protocols provide some degree of protection for interviewees that they will be treated fairly and considerately. At one level, ethical concerns are technical and procedural: the ethical codes of universities and of organizations like the British Educational Research Association (BERA) expect the observation of procedures so that, for example, participants are suitably briefed about the purposes of the research and about the use of the material they provide and have given their consent voluntarily for its subsequent use (BERA 1992, 2004). At another level, more important are the values and dispositions of the researchers and the quality of relationship they can establish with the participants. A code may provide a researcher with rules to follow but the real challenge is to have the sensitivity and skill to ensure such guidance is made operational through practice and not through reference to sets of rules.
- 2.19 The essential principle guiding the relationship between the researcher and the researched is of securing informed consent from the participants. In this project the purposes of the research were made clear to the participants at the start of each interview and in a briefing document. In all cases the participants signed consent forms confirming agreement to their views being represented in findings reported to SWitch. (See Appendix 1.)
- 2.20 The identity of the participants has been protected by the use of pseudonyms in written accounts of the project using interview data and the confidentiality of what they said has been respected.

Methods

- 2.21 In November and December 2007, team members undertook the drafting and refining of interview schedules for the two projects (see Appendix 2) and produced the consent form. Initial contacts were made with participating organisations and visits carried out with the purpose of identifying respondents who would be willing to be interviewed.
- 2.22 The principal data collection method comprised semi-structured interviews. Twenty-eight interviews were undertaken in the early months of 2008. The interviews lasted anywhere between 45 minutes and two hours and enabled the research team to collect rich qualitative data from ten trainees, from nine teacher educators who fulfil roles as tutors and/or mentors in programmes and also from nine managers, some working in FE colleges and in other types of organisation (See Table 3).

Table 3: Respondents' institutions

	Managers	Tutors	Trainees
FE Colleges	5	7	7
LEA Adult Education	2	2	
Voluntary	1		1
Private sector	1		2
TOTAL	9	9	10

- 2.23 We managed to secure interviews with trainees from a wide range of programmes in our project (See Table 4). It is important to emphasise that the selection was not statistically significant: other research teams have been working with quantitative data (see Pye et al. 2008) and our purpose was to secure 'depth' of information within different contexts rather than statistically representative data.

Table 4: Trainees' programmes

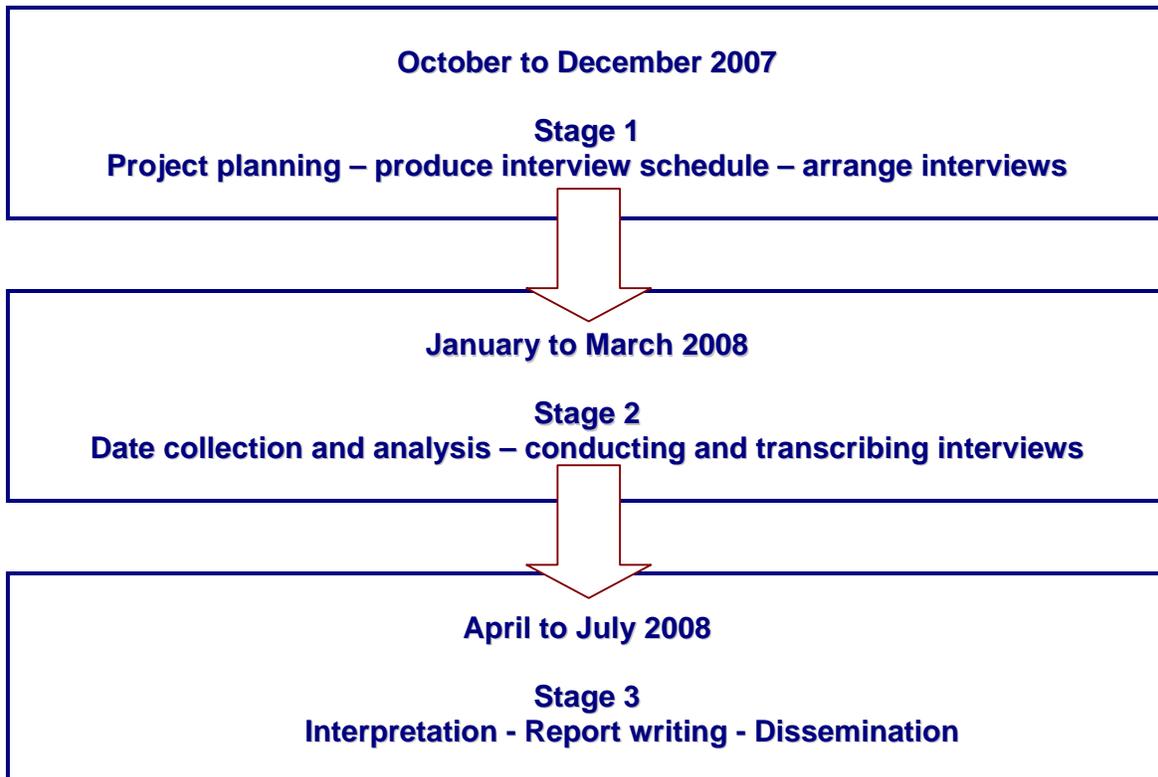
	Trainees
PTLLS	3
CTLLS	2
DTLLS	1
Cert Ed (non-Exeter)	1
PGCE (PCE) part-time (Exeter)	1
PGCE (PCE) full-time (Exeter)	2
TOTAL	10

- 2.23 All the interviews were transcribed and subjected to different analytical approaches: summaries of each interview were written by the interviewer and shared with colleagues. Team meetings identified the themes and issues that were emerging from the research. Transcripts and summaries were incorporated with other data into an NVivo project that enabled other forms of analytical interrogation.
- 2.24 Other data collection methods used during the project were agreed with PGCE (PCE) course directors and course managers in the colleges. Each college undertook a research activity – usually some form of focus group discussion -

related to the project purposes that enabled a process of engagement with colleges for validation. The resulting insights enabled us to triangulate the research team's findings at meetings arranged to discuss project progress.

- 2.25 Interpretation of all the data evolved during the spring of 2008 through presentations of initial insights at SWitch meetings as well as at seminars and meetings of the research team. Presentations have been made at national and international conferences during which interim findings were discussed. (See Lawy and Tedder 2008a, 2008b; Tedder and Lawy 2008a, 2008b.)

Figure 1: The original scheduled timeline



3 LITERATURE REVIEW

- 3.1 In this section we present the outcomes of the desk research that framed our empirical work. There are three sections: the first comprises a literature review drawing on research texts in books and journals that have focussed primarily on the development of mentoring in further education while the second and third represent the outcome of some extensive internet searches for exemplars of 'good' or interesting practice. The second section outlines current practice in the area of training where the use of ILPs is most firmly established; that is as part of work-based learning programmes such as Train to Gain (T2G), Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and other National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) awards. The third section outlines various models of mentoring practices in a range of different organisations. There appears to be little published academic research as yet concerning the use of ILPs.
- 3.2 Three reports produced early in the development of the SWitch programme were of relevance to our project. The first was the study of models of mentoring (Ashby et al., 2007). The second was the baseline survey designed to establish on a regional basis the scale and scope of initial teacher training among the SWitch members (Richardson et al., 2008) while the third was a report on a questionnaire study of teacher trainee satisfaction among SWitch partners (Pye et al., 2008).
- 3.3 Data from these sources reveal that that there were approximately 650 trainees based in University courses (HESA data for 2004-2005); 2,100 trainees based in colleges and 160 in Adult and Community Learning (LSC data for 2005-2006) (Richardson et al., 2008). The questionnaire report suggested that there was a high level of satisfaction among trainees with the support they received in their studies (Pye et al. 2008, p 21). However, qualitative findings in that report suggested there was little awareness of Individual Learning Plans with very few trainees volunteering comments about them (Pye et al. 2008, p 38). A substantial number of trainees commented on how much they valued the support of tutors and mentors but there seemed little to distinguish the support tutors gave from what mentors did (Pye et al. 2008, p 38). Our research project was designed to explore these uncertain areas.

Changing patterns of mentoring in initial teacher training in FE

- 3.4 Until relatively recently teacher educators in FE were able to design and devise their own curricula and teaching programmes with minimum interference from government. Course structures and accreditation were provided by awarding bodies such as City and Guilds and EdExcel or by universities at degree and postgraduate level. During the 1990s there were attempts to produce statements of desirable performance for teachers that were consistent in format with National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and the most influential were the Units of Assessment produced by the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB). In 1999, the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) was charged with introducing a new set of

national standards after undertaking consultation with people across the sector. Such standards were required:

- a. To inform the design of accredited awards for FE teachers
- b. To provide standards to inform professional development activity
- c. To assist institution-based activities such as recruitment, appraisal and the identification of training needs. (FENTO 1999, p 1)

- 3.5 According to Nasta (2007) the FENTO standards did not change the practices of all of the universities and awarding bodies involved in the provision of programmes since they were able to resist the increased prescription that the standards were meant to support. This was supported by evidence in an influential survey from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted 2003) which complained that there was huge variability in how the standards had been implemented and was critical particularly of what was seen as a lack of systematic mentoring and support in the workplace.

The current system of FE teacher training does not provide a satisfactory foundation of professional development for FE teachers at the start of their careers.... While the tuition that trainees receive on the taught elements of their courses is generally good, few opportunities are provided for trainees to learn how to teach their specialist subjects, and there is a lack of systematic mentoring and support in the workplace. (Ofsted 2003)

- 3.6 That report led to the recommendation for workplace mentoring of teachers in the report *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DfES 2004):

an essential aim of the training is that teachers should have the skills of teaching in their own specialist or curriculum area ... Subject specific skills must be acquired in the teachers' workplace and from vocational or academic experience. Mentoring, either by line managers, subject experts or experienced teachers in related curriculum areas, is essential. (DfES 2004, paragraph 3.6)

- 3.7 Proposals were made to address perceived weaknesses in initial training in England that had been identified by Ofsted in 2003 and the LLUK was tasked with the construction of another set of revised standards that were tighter and more prescriptive than the FENTO standards and would not allow the same scope for interpretation. The LLUK, as a 'sector skills council', is responsible for setting the standards although the responsibility for quality assurance is delegated to another body, Standards Verification UK (SVUK).

- 3.8 The white paper, *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DfES 2006) specified what the new licentiate qualification arrangements would look like. Subsequently there has been the introduction of a raft of teacher qualifications that are ostensibly designed to meet the various professional needs of those in different teaching or training situations (PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS) throughout further education and lifelong learning. Collectively these awards are now referred to as National Awarding Body (NAB) qualifications and continue to be certificated by City and Guilds and

EdExcel. The relationship between the new regulations and university programmes has proved to be problematic.

- 3.9 With the LLUK standards, programmes of teacher education are now directed towards ensuring that trainees meet a set of requirements specified in terms of standards, and these include demonstration of an appropriate level of achievement of the 'minimum core' of literacy, numeracy and IT. They are directed also to a more specifically targeted subject training or pedagogy and it is here that mentoring has become significant with the expectation that a subject-specific mentor needs to be appointed for every trainee.
- 3.10 Turning to some of the specific literature in further education that relates to mentoring, a key publication was *Mentoring Towards Excellence*. This study was sponsored by the Association of Colleges and the FE National Training Organisation (AoC and FENTO 2001) to undertake a broad survey of practices in mentoring. There was consultation with 700 FE students, 70 teachers and 7 college leaders in 29 colleges and the resulting publication focussed on identifying and sharing good practices and procedures across the sector. Guidelines and activities were published designed to enable college staff to develop policies and processes that would be effective in improving mentoring practice. The FENTO standards were portrayed as central to this process.
- 3.11 The emphasis on improvement meant that there was little time to discuss the actual purposes being served. Instead there was a presumed consensus that mentoring could make a contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning and that all teachers in further education – full and part-time as well as agency and supply teachers – would benefit from a mentoring relationship with a fellow professional. Among the many recommendations that emerged from the study, one that encapsulated the consensus view was the statement that:

Mentoring should be developed and promoted as a supportive and developmental process.

(AoC and FENTO 2001, Introductory Booklet p 8)

- 3.12 More recently, other writers have offered the FE sector practical guidance on mentoring and continue to advance a view of the mentoring process that identifies it as a developmental process within professional practice. Thus Rhodes et al.(2004) relate mentoring on the one hand to coaching but also to peer networks as an inherent feature of professional practice:

In essence, both coaching and mentoring are complex activities closely associated with the support of individual learning. Mentoring implies an extended relationship involving additional behaviour such as counselling and professional friendship... Peer-networking implies the facility to work together productively with other colleagues so as to learn from them or with them. Successful networking relationships are at the heart of coaching and mentoring. (Rhodes et al. 2004, p 12)

- 3.13 Wallace and Gravells (2005) similarly attempted to locate mentoring with other professional practices in teaching, such as the counselling skills and the

development of networking, and they particularly emphasise the importance of a caring, nurturing relationship and of the mentor acting as a role model:

Helping someone with their emotional needs, without any preconceived idea of the desired outcome, most of us would recognise as *counselling* ... A more directive form of psychological and emotional support may involve the helper offering advice or acting as a role model, taking a younger, less experienced colleague under their wing. This *caring* role is what many people might regard as a common form of mentoring. Finally we have a less directive form of developmental help than coaching, here called *facilitating*, but which could equally be called *networking*. (Wallace and Gravells 2005, pp 12-13, emphasis in original.)

- 3.14 Jenny Hankey (2004) draws from 'headline evaluations' of 200 trainees based in Oxford over a period of 5 years and notes a steady improvement in the rating given to mentors. Hankey offers good practical reasons why a mentor should be a subject specialist in the same subject as the trainee teacher:

Knowing how to pitch the subject at the appropriate level for different groups of learners, and having ready questions, examples and anecdotes, are all aspects of professional practice that novice teachers find particularly problematic and this is precisely where a good mentor can provide advice and resources. (Hankey 2004, p 394)

- 3.15 Cullimore (2006) undertook interviews with trainees and mentors in Wales during 2004 and confirmed the Ofsted finding about the variable quality of the mentoring experience..
- 3.16 Cunningham (2007) is a teacher educator based in Kent who argues the necessity for an appropriate framework (or 'architecture') in colleges to support teachers acting as mentors. In his view there is a need to motivate staff, to incentivise the activity; a need for effective induction and support systems for mentors; a need for systems to evaluate the outcomes of mentoring (p 85).
- 3.17 A substantial contribution to the recent research literature on mentoring was made by Helen Colley (Colley 2003). Her particular concern was to explore systems of 'engagement mentoring' with young people but she located her exploration in a wide theoretical frame informed by radical feminism and by Bourdieu. Her work includes a critical deconstruction of the classical myth of 'mentor' and of the appeal it appears to hold in contemporary society. Two aspects of her research are of particular relevance to our work: firstly, in her research Colley was another who found a lack of clarity or consensus about what the term 'mentor' means although she notes that discourses about mentoring tend to concentrate either on the functions of mentors or on the qualities of the relationship between mentors and mentees; secondly, she offers a valuable insight into the changes that occur within a mentoring relationship if it moves from being dyadic (i.e. a simple, two-way partnership between mentor and mentee) to triadic (i.e. where the relationship attempts to serve the needs of a third party). (See also Gay and Stephenson, 1998.)

- 3.18 In some recent publications, there is an interesting shift in tone and emphasis that appears to illustrate the difference between dyadic and triadic mentoring that Colley commented on. Keeley-Browne (2007) in addressing new trainees in the lifelong learning sector adopts a directive stance that:

As part of your training you will be allocated to a mentor, or learning coach, who will advise you on the general skills of training to teach (*sic*). Your mentor will be skilled in what is called the pedagogy of the classroom. You will also be given access to a subject specialist coach (this may be the same person as your mentor/learning coach) who will help you develop the skills that are specific to your areas of the curriculum. (Keeley-Browne 2007, p 9)

- 3.19 The system has become one in which a mentor becomes allocated to a trainee to advise on general skills, on 'the pedagogy of the classroom' and on subject issues. A set of functional responsibilities is identified:

The mentor should:

- help to induct you into the teaching area and institution
- provide a varied and appropriate programme of developmental experiences for you
- observe, evaluate and review your work, providing you with feedback designed to help you improve
- liaise with others involved in your training. (Keeley-Browne 2007, p 50)

Such functions are clearly intended to address deficiencies found in FE teacher training by Ofsted in 2003, particularly what they found to be a lack of systematic mentoring and support in the workplace and the expectation that a subject-specific mentor should be appointed for every trainee.

- 3.20 However, in their evaluation of the tests and trials of the initial PTLLS courses in December 2006, LLUK expressed concern about a lack of consistency in initial needs assessment, in the support available for trainees, in mentoring and information and guidance. They sought a culture change to ensure that trainees receive a minimum level of support, to ensure standards are high and consistent. They noted particularly that mentoring varied considerably across providers, with some providing no mentoring at all, while some provided informal mentoring and some had developed more formal arrangements (LLUK 2006).

- 3.21 Ofsted has continued to express concern about mentoring. In a report on national awarding body courses published in 2006, the weaknesses identified included a lack of clarity in defining roles, leading to differences in interpretation; limited mentor training, with no expectation that all mentors will attend; too little contact between mentors and teacher-trainers; inconsistent implementation of written guidance. Concern was expressed that mentors make little or no contribution to the course planning or self-assessment processes and the point was made that:

Mentors do not share a common understanding of their role and responsibilities and there is considerable inconsistency in their contribution to the overall training programme. (Ofsted 2006, p 9)

- 3.22 The regional study by Ashby (2007) draws attention to the variability of practices among South West providers of ITT (FE), particularly in practices of selecting a mentor (p 11) and to differences in the time and resources made available (p 14).
- 3.23 Cullimore and Simmons (2008) have traced the way that successive Ofsted Reports (2006, 2007, 2008) have expressed a growing expectation that tutors and mentors should be engaged in processes of making judgements against standards in their work with trainees. There are consistent criticisms about 'confusion' of assessment roles, 'failure' by teacher trainers (2007) and mentors (2008) to define pass or fail boundaries and insufficient attention to action planning and setting targets.
- 3.24 Rather than engaging in a professional discourse with trainees in a way that recognises the problematic character of teacher practices, the role of mentors and teacher educators has shifted to one which ensures that trainees are set targets in action plans to meet the LLUK standards. There has thus been a steady movement away from the developmental model that was foregrounded in *Mentoring for Excellence* (AoC and FENTO, 2001) towards a model that is more judgemental and oriented to summative assessment and the change followed the publication of *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DfES, 2004).
- 3.25 A marked contrast has thus developed in the purposes of mentoring following the intervention of Ofsted and the response by the DfES. The AoC-FENTO vision of professional mentoring can be characterised primarily as a developmental model while the purpose of the Ofsted-DfES model, geared to the LLUK standards, is primarily judgemental. Should mentoring have essentially a developmental purpose, is it a process that can be undertaken with openness, honesty and flexibility and, if necessary, in confidence? Or should mentoring have a judgemental purpose, is it a process to be undertaken to ensure public confidence in the performance of professionals in public service?
- 3.26 The role of mentors has become central in the new training topology. However, certain fundamental questions need to be addressed, particularly, what is mentoring supposed to accomplish? What do we know about the strengths and limitations of mentoring as trainees engage with their community of practice? Can the demands of external quality assurance bodies be reconciled with what tutors can accept as good professional practice? Does mentoring help ensure that the training of new teachers in the FE sector is 'fit for the purpose' of developing a workforce that is 'thoroughly professional and highly skilled' (LLUK 2007a)?

Using Individual Learning Plans

- 3.27 In this section we present a brief outline of the use of ILPs in work-based learning programmes (more detail is provided in Appendix 3). The three mainland countries of the United Kingdom - England, Scotland and Wales – have slightly different approaches to the use of ILPs and we compare their use within the three countries. We also summarise some of the data that has appeared in various websites (NIACE and QIA) to provide guidance on the production of ILPs.
- 3.28 In work-based learning it is normally the training provider who manages the initial writing of an ILP with the learner. Usually it is the role of the assessor employed by the training provider to complete the ILP with both the learner and the learner’s line manager. The ILP is written up during and after an initial assessment that, typically, will include:
- Diagnostic tests in literacy, numeracy and ICT to establish the current level of ability of the learner and to identify if there are any learning needs.
 - A ‘skills scan’
 - A diagnostic test for the technical certificate and/or underpinning knowledge of an NVQ
 - Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
 - A record of anything that has been discussed during the initial assessment that clarifies any of the processes above and/or a record of anything that could not be recorded on other documents.
- 3.29 Once the assessor has recorded the outcomes of the initial assessment, she or he will draw up an assessment plan that will include the main outcomes of the whole training programme.
- 3.30 The models used have many similarities but also some subtle differences in different countries within the United Kingdom (see Table 5). The Scots refer to a ‘trainee’ and the ‘training’ rather than to a ‘learner’ and ‘learning’ and they also have more flexibility in their record-keeping about initial assessment.

Table 5: Comparison of ILPs across England, Scotland and Wales

Detail	England	Scotland	Wales
Name of Plan:	Individual Learning Plan	Individual Training Plan	Initial Assessment & Individual Learning Plan
Term for person undertaking the training	Learner	Trainee	Learner
Those involved in the Plan	Learner, employer & training provider if different to employer	Learner, employer & training provider if different to employer	Learner, employer & training provider if different to employer
Main sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner details • Initial assessment (including APL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner details • Initial assessment (including APL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner details • Initial assessment (including APL)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction check list • Any special learning needs • Record of training • Forward plan record • Main outcomes of the framework • Planned progress reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction check list • Additional learning needs recorded with outcome of Initial assessment • Record of training In on/off the job • Main outcomes of the framework • Planned progress reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction check list – not mentioned • Additional learning needs recorded • Mainstream learning activities recorded • Main outcomes of framework • Planned progress reviews
Differences to main sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment is prescriptive with no space to write anything freehand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording of initial assessment is left open for the assessor to write freely what activities they have undertaken to complete the initial assessment. • A mentor is assigned and recorded on the ITP • Dedicated page to record any changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixture of England and Scotland. • Initial assessment covers broad areas such as strengths, attitude, motivation • 'Free' page given to record additional information
Trainee Agreement	Yes	Yes	Not mentioned

3.31 The ILP is used as a framework for funding and auditing purposes and is a contractual obligation of certain funded learning programmes. The training provider uses the planned outcome information on the ILP to inform the relevant funder how many learners will achieve which parts of the framework by what time.

3.32 In searching for guidance on good practice we investigated a number of websites (NIACE, 2003; DfES 2003) that offer information and guidance on the production and use of ILPs. Some relate to materials produced for the Skills for Life Programme and date from 2003. The Department for Education and Skills in its recent guise as the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills hosts the 'Read Write Plus' website and offers materials to support ILP production. [www.dcsf.gov.uk/readwriteplus/]

3.33 The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) suggests a model for a completed ILP that should include:

- results of assessments;
- the learner's long-term goals;
- the goals of the program to be followed, cross-referenced to the national standards or core curriculum;
- any other goals that the learner wishes to achieve, both social and personal;
- targets and dates for meeting them;

- a programme of dated progress reviews;
- space to record achievement of targets and any developments in the ILP
- signatures of learner and teacher;

The NIACE guidance places emphasis on social and personal goals that the learner herself wishes to achieve.

- 3.33 A similar expectation that individual interests and needs should be responded to can be found in the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) website 'Ofsted Good Practice Database' (<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=108289>) which states that:

Individual Learning Plans form a 'route map' of how a learner will get from their starting point on a learning journey to the desired end point. They may be for one course and include the acquisition of qualifications and skills, or may link several courses that give progression to different levels (from level 1 to 3, or from level 2 to Higher Education). They should be individual for each learner to reflect aspirations, aptitude and needs. (QIA 2008)

- 3.34 Ofsted reports (2003, 2006) publish inspection findings about strengths and areas for improvement. The reports refer consistently to an expectation that there should be 'Effective use of individual learning plans'. There are recommendations that emphasise the importance of an ILP being a working document that serves the needs of the learner rather than being a document geared to securing funding. Other recommendations assert the need for specific ILP training so that mentors and tutors understand what the document is intended for and have the necessary negotiating skills to ensure learner involvement in producing the ILP as well as a sense of ownership of it.
- 3.35 A question arises about the degree to which an ILP is used for accountability purposes and how far for training purposes. Certainly there is rhetoric that account needs to be taken of differences between trainees and there needs to be sensitivity to different aspirations and aptitudes. What are the perceptions of trainees, tutors and managers?

Schemes and contexts for mentoring and mentor training

- 3.36 Our desk research investigated a range of websites indicative of the way that mentoring has become widely established in different kinds of organisations in the UK. There has been an emergence of agencies and professional bodies keen to advise or be consulted for their claimed expertise in the field. There is a growing number of training programmes designed to assess competence in mentoring. We provide brief accounts of some of the websites we investigated and case studies of mentor schemes in two particular contexts: from the Birmingham Adult Education Service (BAES) and from the Teacher Development Agency (TDA). Comparison of these various schemes points to some key features of different practices in mentoring and how they might inform FE teacher training.

Private Sector Organisations

- 3.37 **Balfour Beatty:** Balfour Beatty is a multi-national engineering, construction, services and investment group employing 35,000 people. Their projects encompass major infrastructure work worldwide: housing, roads, railways and airports, electricity, gas and water systems, schools and hospitals. They are a leading participant in the UK's privately financed project market. In the UK, all new trainee water and plumbing surveyors employed by the company are allocated to a supervising mentor for the first two or three weeks of their contract. The mentor has responsibilities as supervisor of their work and as assessor of the trainee's competence and is answerable to Human Resources in the company.
- 3.38 **Deutsche Bank UK:** Deutsche Bank AG is an international bank with their headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany that has a broad customer base of private clients. The bank employs more than 81,000 people in 76 countries, and has a large presence in Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific and in emerging markets. Their mentoring programmes last from 12 to 18 months and are intended to ensure development opportunities for employees. Mentors are generally experienced staff and pledge support to help mentees make decisions and accompany the mentee for a while. Particular support is given to ethnic minority undergraduates and to women judged to have high potential.

Public sector organisations: education and training

- 3.39 **Birmingham Adult Education Service:** BAES is one of the largest providers of Adult Learning opportunities in the West Midlands. BAES offers over 4,000 part-time courses each year at main sites and local community venues. Each year over 30,000 learners choose to learn new skills with them. In a recent Ofsted Inspection (May 2007) BAES were graded as "Good" by Inspectors. (See Case Study 1 for more detail of their mentoring scheme.)
- 3.40 **The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA):** The TDA is the national agency and recognised sector body responsible for the training and development of the school workforce answerable to the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). The latter establishes priorities for the TDA and their role in ensuring the quality of the workforce for schools. (See Case Study 2 for more detail of their mentoring scheme.)
- 3.41 **The London Metropolitan University:** LMU is a provider of undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and vocational education and training. Their website <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/mentoring> offers a resource to support discussion of a variety of issues around mentoring, such as the selection of mentors and issues: 'Sometimes it is an up-front, formalised process. Alternatively it can be very ad-hoc, and informal, and not even recognised as 'mentoring' by anyone involved. There are all shades of mentoring provision in between.'

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Birmingham Adult Education Service

BAES ran a mentoring scheme for trainees, new tutors and newly promoted staff. They used the Standards Fund to set up a mentoring scheme in 2001. Their scheme grew from an initial eight mentors to over forty. All providers of post-16 learning could access the scheme. Over 20 of the mentors were specialists in literacy, numeracy, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD).

- Suitable mentors were identified through their knowledge and skills. There was a structured training scheme so that all nominated mentors attend 15 hrs training on BAES values and policies; observation skills; providing one-to-one support and feedback. Tutors could also nominate themselves and this is then endorsed by the line manager. Approved mentors agree a schedule of work with their manager.
- Managers identified suitable mentors through observations of teaching and learning sessions, programme evaluations and individual reviews in terms of knowledge and skills. An action plan for development was agreed by the tutor and the manager with targets set.
- Mentoring took place in a variety of settings depending on the needs of the tutor: in classrooms; by prearranged meetings; by email. Meetings were formally recorded and targets reviewed. Managers were sent a copy. Managers ensured that they provided sufficient time for mentors/ mentees to attend meetings, review progress and review the process.
- The managers ensured that quality assurance provided data to support reviews and there was a regular review of the mentor scheme. The mentoring scheme was evaluated as follows:
 - mentors evaluated their performance as a mentor with their line managers
 - mentees discussed progress against targets set with their line managers
 - mentors attended evaluation sessions to look at outcomes and achievement at least once per year to assess impact; possible improvements; mentor skills required; development.

Case Study 2: Teacher Development Agency (TDA)

The TDA's definition of mentoring is that it is: "a form of professional learning that takes place on a one-to-one basis, a type of individualised continuing professional Development (CPD)". Mentoring is commonly used to help new staff adjust to their new roles, as part of induction. It can be used also to help people perform their job more effectively, as a form of professional development, or to prepare for a new role/promotion. The process may use job plans to outline what has to be achieved, to anticipate key events and plan for these, to identify potential problems and plan how to avoid them i.e. what knowledge and skills and understanding may be required.

Training mentors

In most schools coaching or mentoring begins with training for those carrying out the role. Training includes the skills required for observing the trainee, establishing ground rules, maintaining confidentiality and mutual respect. Coaching and mentoring within a school often starts with a few individuals who attend training and learn the rules and then cascade good practice through out their school.

Induction tutors

All Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are assigned an 'induction tutor' to support and monitor their performance. The role should be taken by an appropriately experienced colleague who has regular contact with the NQT. The induction tutor needs to be aware of the requirements of induction and have the skills to fulfil the role. In particular, the tutors should be able to provide guidance and support, and make rigorous and fair judgments about performance. There is an extensive list of tasks that the tutor must fulfil, including monitoring, support and assessment; coordinating or carrying out observations of the NQT's teaching and organising follow-up discussions; reviewing progress against objectives and the induction standards; making sure that the NQT is fully informed about assessment which includes ensuring that dated records are kept. As well as providing formative assessment, the induction tutor will often be involved in formal, summative assessment at the end of induction.

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/induction/rolesandresponsibilities/inductiontutors.aspx>

The process

An action plan is drawn up in the first mentoring meeting, based on post requirements as well as the individual mentee's requirements. Meetings then take place every 2 weeks to review progress, set targets and monitor the plan.

Mentoring is intended to help improve performance: to enable NQTs to understand an individual's role, to develop skills, to plan ahead. The mentor carried out lesson observations, gives feedback, supports reflection and helps devise improvement plans. Sessions need to happen frequently, typically six one hour sessions per term.

Accreditation

National occupational standards have been specified for supporting teaching and learning in schools – STL68 Support learners by mentoring in the workplace. The unit contains three elements: 68.1 Plan the mentoring process; 68.2 Set up and maintain the mentoring relationship; 68.3 Give mentoring support.

Public sector organisations: public service

- 3.42 **British Army:** All new recruits are allocated a mentor. Mentors are trained and can either be experienced soldiers or line managers. Mentoring is formalised, recorded and time-bound.
- 3.43 **Civil Service Public Sector leader scheme:** This allows fast stream civil servants to pick a mentor to help develop their leadership skills.
- 3.44 **South East Women's Mentoring Programme:** The South East Women's Mentoring Programme was designed and run by Business Link and financed by Southeast England Development Agency (SEEDA) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The purpose of the programme was to try and help women break through barriers in the workplace – and encourage them to start up their own businesses. The programme had 70 volunteer mentors helping 100 women in senior management positions to progress in their careers. All mentors had worked in senior roles in business and Business Link offered access to events, workshops, clinics, e-learning.
- 3.45 **Prince's Trust:** The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) group sponsors a three year £10 million partnership with the Prince's Trust to support a business mentoring scheme. Over 200 volunteers currently offer three to six hours per month to provide advice, guidance and business expertise to new businesses run by young people. Volunteers must be experienced and successful business people who have patience, a non-judgemental approach and an ability to establish a rapport with young people.
- 3.46 **Coaching and mentoring network:** 'The Network' was established in 1999 to provide a predominantly web-based service both for people who perform and / or receive coaching or mentoring, as well as the broader community interested in this area. The primary activity of the Network is to provide a free and independent information resource dedicated to supporting this community. Financially, the business aims to turnover sufficient to cover costs and reinvest in the service without intention to make a profit. Their website [www.coachingnetwork.org.uk] claims to be the 'leading, independent portal site, keeping you informed of the latest developments in coaching and mentoring, connecting you to the people, products and services you need for your business or personal success'. They offer resources and referral services to enable business coaching and mentoring on matters such as organisational development and the management of change.

Professional bodies

- 3.47 **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):** The CIPD is a professional body with 132,000 individual members. Their published mission is to lead in the development and promotion of good practice in the field of the management and development of people. Mentoring is viewed by the CIPD as a long term arrangement for learning, guidance and advice to support personal development. Mentoring describes a relationship in the workplace where an experienced member of staff supports the development of a junior, less experienced employee. It could be seen as a form of apprenticeship. The preferred model of mentoring refers to three stages: of exploration, of new

understanding, of action planning (Alred et al., 1998; Clutterbuck, 2004). Mentoring is viewed as a supportive process that is more informal than coaching and helps individuals to manage their career by improving their skills and addressing personal issues. It enables people to identify and take action to achieve both organisational and individual goals with the agenda set by the mentee. Mentoring is primarily about developing capability and potential rather than performance and skills. The CIPD report positive effects of mentoring for organisations with respect to the retention of new staff and in reducing the loss of young graduates in their first post-training year; in facilitating succession planning; in enabling people adapt to change; in increasing productivity.

- 3.48 **European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC):** This body exists to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe. They are a pan-European Council that consists of representatives from several national EMCC's plus direct members in countries where a local EMCC does not yet exist. They distinguish: *normative* aspects of mentoring as sharing responsibility for ensuring work is professional and ethical; *formative* aspects to provide feedback that enables development and competency; and *restorative* where the mentor is there to listen, support, and confront personal issues with the mentee. There are expectations that mentors should have a theoretical framework for their own practice and for mentoring; understand the context of mentoring; be aware of the impact of their own belief systems on the mentee; respect diversity; demonstrate capacity for self regulation; have a commitment to CPD. They should not hold a dual role.
- 3.49 **Global Mentoring Solutions (GMS):** GMS is an international commercial organization with facilities throughout Canada, the U.S. and Central America, serving subscribers worldwide. Their published mission is “to connect people with the answers that help them get what they expect from technology” and they have a series of training products designed for “the support of digital home and consumer electronics, workforce learning and certification, customer service and support, and business applications software.” They focus on Internet Service Providers and Learning Providers.

Analysis of Mentoring Schemes

- 3.50 Table 6 (p 32) presents an overview of the some of the mentoring schemes we investigated through our desk research. We were interested in what they could tell us about their practices in identifying mentees within organisations; selecting, training and rewarding mentors; conducting a mentor relationship and about accountability to others. It is clear that there is no single template that is followed and that public and private sector organisations and professional bodies have their differences in terms of how they view the mentor relationship and also in how the mentor relationship is practised.
- 3.51 Our sample of schemes is, of course, too small and idiosyncratic to draw reliable conclusions. Nonetheless, it would seem that mentoring outside the education and training sector focuses primarily on ensuring that individuals are supported in adapting to a new work situation within an unfamiliar organisation. In the recruitment of mentors, emphasis is placed on identifying individuals with experience in a specific field. There is a strong voluntaristic

quality to current practice; many experienced staff find the idea of serving as a mentor to a newcomer an attractive one. The impression is that personal support is important and the value of documentation is limited. It is common for arrangements to be led by the mentee.

- 3.52 By comparison, mentoring within education and training schemes (notably within TDA and in ITT (FE) but noticeable also in the BAES provision), adopts a more formal character where new teachers are allocated mentors. Here the role is clearly defined with the mentor required to undertake regular assessments of the trainees. Mentors are all expected to observe certain protocols with regard to confidentiality but there are few or no guidelines as to their use. There is an expectation that trainee teachers will require mentor support in developing their subject specialism.
- 3.53 Most mentoring programmes allow the mentees and mentors to step down from their roles where a relationship has broken down. However there are inevitably informal and unspoken protocols about this, with pressure on the mentees and mentors to continue in those roles.
- 3.54 There are instances where the function of the mentor is purely task orientated where the mentor/mentee relationship is wholly formalised, in the public arena and part of a broader process of training, recorded and time bound, as in the British Army. Here there would be an expectation that the relationship originated by the officer in charge would continue with little opportunity for discussion.
- 3.55 In other organisations two parallel arrangements might develop with a formalised triadic arrangement operating at one level but with an informal and dyadic system operating at another level. The functions can often be developed with the mentor separating the assessment and/or subject/job specific function and the accountabilities associated with that from a broader mentoring and support function that is confidential. In other cases individuals will find their own mentors (or the mentors will find them) and the relationship will develop organically outside of formal systems. Such systems are often not recognised though London Metropolitan University does recognise this.
- 3.56 There are a number of organisations support mentoring arrangements that are confidential and not part of formalised systems and structures. For example the South East Women's Mentoring programme provides such support; the Prince's Trust, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) are such bodies though the CIPD does not provide that function but provides courses and support for the mentoring role.

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Mentoring Schemes

Characteristics of scheme	British Army	Balfour Beatty	Deutsche bank	Princes Trust	SE Women's mentoring programme	BAES	TDA	ITT (FE)
Area covered	British Army	Balfour Beatty employees	International employees	UK	SEEDA area	Post-16 providers in Birmingham	Schools & colleges in the UK	FE
Identification of mentees	New recruits	All new employees	All new employees	New business people selected for support	100 senior female managers self referred	By manager by obs of T&L; trainees & new teachers	All trainees, NQTs, CPD, promoted teachers	All trainee teachers; some NQTs
Selection of mentors	By officers / managers	By manager/ HR	Volunteers pledge support	220 volunteer business mentors	70 volunteers	Self selected & endorsed by managers	By head teacher. Given non-time contact and/or pay increase	By tutors in consultation with mentees; sometimes APs or managers
Mentor timetable	Time-bound	Built into role	Close supervision initially	3-6 hrs per month	Varied	Agree schedule with line manager	Agreed with manager	Varies – reduced contact, pay or neither
Meetings	Not specified but 'regular'	Continuous for 2/3 weeks	Daily	At business premises usually	Varied; provided links to events & workshops	Action plan specifies this; variety of methods used	Every week for trainees; Every 2 wks for NQT; 6 per term for CPD etc	Varies from one per term to every week
Mentor records	Yes – formalised process	Yes – assessment & reports	None specified	None specified	None specified	Yes – formal records copied to manager	Yes – initial action plan & meeting records with targets etc	Varies – required by some awarding bodies
Mentor Training provided	Yes – & must be trained experienced soldiers/ managers	Yes – supervision, assessment and QA	None – experienced employees	Yes - guidance	Basic guidance- all to be experienced business managers	15hrs – values, policies, observation, 1:1 support, feedback	Yes - National College- mutual respect observations, ground rules, confidentiality,	Not consistently & various providers
Quality Assurance	Not specified	Yes – by managers and HR	None specified	None specified	Yes – reviewed and assessed by performance of businesses	Yes – QA and regular review. Formal review every year by mentors & managers	Yes – by school & Ofsted	Varies – required by some awarding bodies

4 FINDINGS

- 4.1 In this chapter we present findings from our empirical research. Having used a 'life history' approach to research we can construct a richly textured account of what trainees, tutors/mentors and managers said about their experiences of ILPs and mentoring.

What did they say about Individual Learning Plans?

Trainees' Perspectives

- 4.2 We found some differences in trainees' perceptions about the purpose and value of ILPs among this small sample of ten. Almost everyone recognised that ILPs had become one of the standard components of teacher training programmes and most simply accepted that completing an ILP was part of what they had to do. We found that there was a range of influential sources of advice and support that people drew upon in their ILP production. We also found that when trainees had any previous experience that they could relate to ILPs, this could have a significant influence on their current attitude. There were two respondents who were overtly critical of the process.
- 4.3 Trainee A was undertaking a transition to a new career as an engineering lecturer by taking a full-time PGCE course in a college. From his substantial experience as a manager for his previous employer he had an understanding of relevant business systems and was able to adapt to the reflection and recording demands of the PGCE programme. He explained that it took him a week to grasp the ILP structure but once understood he was able to work with it: he explained the coding system he used; he produced examples from his ILP of a SWOT analysis, his personal skills mapping, his teaching log and his minimum core records; he spoke of including records of observations and of mentor meetings. He tried to spend some time on his ILP every day, finding evidence from teaching, from working in a resource centre, from tutorial meetings and from educational visits:

Once that penny had dropped then I was off and then it's just, it's just become a big recording evidence exercise... You do learn from it and you can look back and recall it and reflect on it as well and you can also see how your performance is improving or not or how you're developing. (*Interview Feb 08, p 7*)

- 4.4 In contrast, Trainee C, a part-time PGCE trainee in another college, a young woman with experience in the field of arts and textiles, had little commitment to her ILP:

I think ILP's are a funny thing anyway. I think they're ultimately a bit of a waste of time, but I kind of - I know why we have to do them. It's all to do with getting money... we haven't done hardly anything 'cos I think my mentor thinks they're a bit of a waste of time as well. (*Interview Feb 08, p 18*)

In the context of a busy working life in which she struggled to find time for teaching and studying as well as her paid employment, there was an issue around priorities:

I suppose also they seem so irrelevant to doing an assignment... that's the thing. I've got an assignment to do or an ILP and I'm going to do an assignment. You know, I only have so many hours in my day. (*Interview Feb 08, p 18*)

- 4.5 She commented on the sceptical attitude from her mentor that appeared to be part of a wider staffroom culture in the college:

This attitude may have come from other people saying, "Oh load of rubbish." You know, I work in a, I work in a staffroom, I hear people talking about stuff, "Blah, blah, blah, bloody ILPs" whatever. (*Interview Feb 08, p 19*)

- 4.6 Trainee C empathised with her PGCE tutor whom she sees for 2.75 hrs per week for course sessions and who seems to struggle to find time for tutorial sessions that might address ILP matters. There was an indication that resources were insufficient for her to address her ILP adequately.

- 4.7 Trainee D is a man in his 30s also undertaking a part-time PGCE at a third college. He is married with a young son and he shares responsibility for paid part-time employment and child care with his wife. In our interview he confirmed he was aware of the ILP and its structure of checklists, teaching logs, observations, reflections. He has faith that the standards are there for a reason and that they help new teachers:

obviously standards are there for a reason and when you're doing your scheme of work, you know, lesson plans you know, obviously you want to try and implement standards in some of the objectives (*Interview, Feb 08, p 7*)

I think the, the value of [the standards] will perhaps kick in, you know, as everything else becomes more normal. At the moment, you know, I'm thinking all the time of the lesson plans, scheme of work, etcetera, etcetera. I've got to do this and once that becomes done, then you know, perhaps pay more attention and focus to the standards. (*Interview, Feb 08, p 9*)

In the interview he expressed regret that he did not manage to go home everyday and reflect on the standards in his teaching log. He was another for whom there are other priorities and he listed his son and his classroom teaching responsibilities as having priority over the ILP:

I just, like I say, time is a bad excuse, but I know that after this I've got to go and pick my son up, then I've got to go and take him home and then I've got to make sure he's all right, and then I've got to prepare for coaching over the weekend and de-da, de-da, de-da and it just gets pushed, pushed further back and then a week later I've got to do it and

I'm, "Oh hang on a sec, what did I do there and stuff?" (*Interview, Feb 08, p 7*)

Completing an ILP is just one of many course demands:

the way that it's put across we have to have our assignments, we have to have our reflective journal, we have to have ILPs filled in, teaching portfolio, so that is part of the package that needs to be completed. (*Interview, Feb 08, p 9*)

- 4.8 Trainee E is undertaking a part-time DTLLS course in order to move from one well-established career to another. He thought the ILP at his college was 'quite compact' and 'not as daunting as I thought it was going to be'. The tutor was gradually introducing it to the group, stage by stage. While he accepted that the standards were 'necessary' he said 'it's going to be a nightmare when we come to filling it all in.' He was another who spoke of many demands on his time, particularly in continuing to earn a living, but took personal responsibility for completing his ILP:

I think what I need to do is sit down and read it all to be honest. I'll have to go through it, but [the tutor] said he does refer to the ILP often during his classes. I think a lot of it is down to us to actually go home and sit down and read it, but when you're trying to run a business and do teaching and doing a course, time runs out. I must admit (*Interview, Feb 08, p 14*)

- 4.9 Trainee F is a young woman who runs an accountancy firm and is employed part-time by a private training provider. She had completed a PTLLS course and was working towards achievement of the A1 assessor's award when interviewed. She attended both courses at her local college. Her interview brought out the importance of the support she found in the workplace for her progress as a teacher and assessor. However, she was another who was critical of her experience of an ILP:

The [ILP] for the A1 just covers the A1 and there was probably one for the PTLLS butI probably wouldn't even be able to tell you what a learning plan is ... it was just a piece of paper that had to be signed and so I signed it. (*Interview Jan 08, p11-12*)

- 4.10 Trainee G is working for the same training provider and was studying for a Cert Ed qualification and had previously achieved the A1 award. She said that course programme books had been provided for her Cert Ed course but said that these did not contain an ILP. However, she said she used ILPs with her own learners all the time and found it a really useful tool for monitoring trainee progress:

... we can see what submissions they've got ... from their ILP and then we can comment on them and that goes to their manager and a copy goes to them as well. So from that point of view, [the ILPs are] worth doing because then the student can see like what they've got to do and what they've not got to do. So it's like a tracking as well, isn't it? (*Interview Feb 08, p8*)

- 4.11 This ILP arrangement thus involved more people than the tutor and the trainee as information was forwarded to the trainee's manager. She confirmed also that she worked closely in her training with her own line manager:

And [the ILP] lists out action points that we've got to do, who's got to [do] it and things like that. So it's a really, really, good form she fills in, ...I find it quite productive every time I see her ... she's always, yeah, "any time you need to speak to me, just speak to me," kind of thing. *(Interview Feb08, p8)*

- 4.12 Trainees H and J both work in the training section of a public sector organisation and are enrolled on a CTLLS programme at a college. Trainee J spoke of the two different documents she had received during her course; the first was:

more of a journal, so you've got your personal details, your strengths, your weaknesses, your action plans, your tutorial records, any reviews you've had and an end of course review. So that seems to be more of a personal sort of journey. *(Interview Mar 08, p 6)*

The second she described more as an assessment record for the course. She made a comparison between that course document and the appraisal system used in her workplace.

- 4.13 Her colleague, Trainee H, had shared her experiences of using ILPs in the college and explained how her children were using ILPs in their jobs:

I hear my children talking about it, within their jobs, you know, it seems to be more of a modern thing, I don't remember when I was their age, I certainly don't remember having any progression type thing. *(Interview Mar 08, p 7)*

She said her daughter was studying AS Business Administration while her son was studying for an engineering degree and both talked about the reflection they undertook linking their studies with their paid employment.

Summary

- 4.14 Among our small sample of ten trainees, we found there was a spectrum of views of the significance of ILPs and how they might relate to achieving standards within a training programme. Differences in view had little to do with the programme or its level: two of our interviewees (Trainees C and F) were critical, even contemptuous of the process and one was a part-time PGCE trainee and the other was a PTLLS trainee. Most were more accepting of the process: even when they were not aware of any immediate benefits from completing an ILP they had faith that the importance of ILPs would become apparent eventually (Trainee D). Even those who were accepting, however, did not consider ILPs a priority: there were many comments about pressures of time, particularly from those who had full or part-time employment to sustain; and within a training programme, the exigencies of immediate commitments in teaching or assessing students took greater priority than

keeping the ILP. Some of our interviewees had experience of managing ILPs with trainees or students of their own and there was an indication that such experience could inform a critical stance of providers of their own courses (Trainee G). Where people had previous experiences that they could relate to the ILP process and when they could understand the process, they were able to manage very well (Trainee A). It seemed that tutors had differing levels of success in giving trainees confidence that they could cope with ILPs (Trainee E).

Tutors' Perspectives

4.15 All the tutors who were interviewed for the project were invited to take part because they had some form of involvement in teacher training, either within one of a range of college courses or in a comparable programme in adult and community learning or in the private sector. Tutors A to F worked in colleges and have PGCE programmes as part of their responsibility but also work with other programmes. Tutor G was a mentor for trainees in a college PGCE course though had little to say about using ILPs. Tutors H and J worked for a county council, training teachers of adults in community settings for a PTLLS award. Tutors were familiar with broad principles of producing Individual Learning Plans with trainees (such as undertaking initial assessment, SWOT analysis, action planning, target setting etc) although opinion varied in how much importance they attached to these processes. As might be expected, the tutors gave particular insights into some of the practical issues they confront in managing the transition from one established training framework to another.

4.16 Tutor A is a woman with years of experience as a PGCE tutor and is actively involved in developing DTLLS programme in her college. For her the most important aspect of a tutor's contact with students or trainees is the quality of their relationship and she finds documents are no substitute for that personal relationship. While she does not deny the need to keep suitable records she finds that current practices tend to place too much emphasis on initial stages of ILP development:

the other thing I really, really find very hard is that the whole idea about the ILP is it seems to be terribly focused on those first few weeks, strengths and weaknesses and action planning and all of that, and actually in those first few weeks they don't have the faintest idea what their strengths and weaknesses are in teaching. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 15*)

4.17 Tutor B's comments capture some of the ambiguities in understanding an ILP, explaining that there is on the one hand an anticipatory, planning purpose and at the same time a retrospective, recording purpose:

It's a personal sort of - it's, it's multifunctional. It's set as a tracking document, a planning document in terms of where trainees want to go because they set their own - they do an initial needs analysis and try to set themselves targets. It's also then, it then - it sort of tracks how those sort of things are carried out in terms of the tutorial and the mentoring.... There is quite a bit of overlap though between the ILP and the teaching practice portfolio. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 16*)

- 4.18 Tutor C reported that ILPs had been introduced to his current trainees and agreed that they could be a useful tool to collect evidence together and thought an ILP could help learners take responsibility for their learning. He was concerned, in the period of transition between one system and another, that trainees may be issued with differing and confusing paperwork and thus make it difficult for tutors to communicate what trainees need to do. The experience of using an ILP for PGCE trainees has given him a template and forms that can be adapted for other programmes, including DTLLS. However, he acknowledges there are problems in operationalising the forms: he thought trainees were 'filling out' their ILP forms but was not sure they were 'using' them. He questioned whether there was sufficient follow-up to the plans and review of progress.
- 4.19 Tutor E has completed ILPs in DTLLS and also had experience of comparable systems such as a unit in an Access programme entitled Improving Own Learning and Performance. She has clear goals for the ILP in her DTLLS programme: she wants to get trainees thinking about their teaching areas, their strengths and weaknesses, and sees this as essential because they all come from different backgrounds and work for different providers. Like Tutor A, however, it seemed that it was the quality of relationship with trainees that Tutor E thought was important rather than documentation because she confessed:

If I'm honest, I didn't really look at the standards at all, I was looking at the ILP itself and referring it back to the individuals and, you know, where there were parts where people were stuck then having general discussions about it and, you know, kind of prompting thoughts with other people. (*Interview Mar 2008, p 7*)

- 4.20 Tutor F said he was using two models of an ILP, a C&G model and the university PGCE model. He described the university ILP as an 'open entry kind of ILP' in which trainees decide when they have met the criteria. He explained that he found the C&G model to be more structured Commenting on the University model he said::

[I]n every single assignment they've (trainees) got to indicate which part of the standards they have covered by doing that assignment, which I think is good. Therefore when you are feeding back, as a tutor, you simply refer to the criteria along with the standards as how they have performed it. (*Interview April 2008, p 7*)

Clearly unhappy with the current arrangements, Tutor F went on to explain the benefits of using a 'good tutorial record'.

A very good tutorial record is far better than this because on a tutorial record you meet up with the learner, you identify some of the problems, which most of the time are individual problems, they're not necessarily generic. You discuss them then you have agreed action points. ... and when you meet [next] you go over the action points as whether that has been done or not. To me, that is an Individual Learning Plan. (*Interview April 2008, p 8*)

Tutor F spoke warmly of a 'PDJ' and the messages that are given by the terms 'professional', 'development' and 'journal'. He finds requirements of current programmes to be repetitive and would prefer there to be a flexible document that plans and logs progression from the earliest stages of professional development through different courses and continues into registration with the Institute for Learning.

- 4.21 Tutor H, one of our adult education tutor trainers, gave an example of using an ILP for a specific case with one provider she worked for where she found that the planning focused on providing language support needed by one student in practice turned out to be needed by all. However, when questioned further, the tutor explained that ILPs were not used generally because of lack of time and resources:

..we're supposed to be using them for these courses, the new courses, yeah. And we haven't because we haven't had tutorial time and we haven't had initial assessment so nowhere along the line have you had any adequate time to do that. (*Interview Feb 2008, p8*)

The tutor was uncomfortable about this as she felt she had not been demonstrating good practice to her trainee teachers:

...they don't see you providing [ILPs] as an element of good practice and it's going back to that thing about it being good teaching, isn't it? ... we've probably been in that ridiculous position of actually saying, "One of the ways that you can support you learners is through the use of ILPs," and we're not using ILPS. (*Interview Feb 2008, p8*)

- 4.22 Her colleague, Tutor J, also commented on the problems created by lack of time and resources. She used ILPs in individual and innovative ways though felt it was not appropriate to use an ILP for all people or all courses/situations. Sometimes the simple use of a form can intimidate adult learners in some contexts:

I will have a piece of paper that I write it on, but they don't necessarily see it. Whereas for other people we'll have literal goals that they have thought about and they come back in and they've worded it in their way, so they might not be 'SMART', but they're what they want, or it might be like a swot analysis, diagram-type thing. Or it might be bubbles that they've said, "this is where I am, these are what I've got going for me, those are the things getting in the way, this is what I've got to do." So it could look like anything and sometimes they're really wordy and academic and sometimes they're bubbles. (*Interview Feb 2008, p9*)

She expressed exasperation at the way some awarding bodies present complex ILP models.

Summary

- 4.23 Our interviewed tutors conveyed some of the practices they were adopting in order to meet the requirement that trainees produce an ILP as part of their ITT course. We encountered scepticism among some (such as Tutor A) yet a willingness to experiment among most (Tutors C and F). Tutors were able to talk about the practical problems of managing the transfer from a scheme where ILPs were essentially optional to another where they had become a requirement. Tutors talked of confusion that can arise while there are trainees working to one set of standards and a new cohort with a different set of standards. They talked of the frustrations caused by having different documents with overlapping functions. For some tutors there was a major issue concerning resources, of having insufficient time to ensure that trainees could complete a meaningful ILP. This was particularly the case among Adult and Community Learning (ACL) tutors
- 4.24 Underpinning the tutors' comments is a theoretical issue concerning the purpose and role of an ILP. Most of the interviewees spoke more of a retrospective function of an ILP, of tracking and recording achievements but said relatively little about a planning function for the ILP. None of the interviewed tutors thought of an ILP as the fundamental driver of their programmes.

Managers Perspectives

- 4.25 Five of the managers who were interviewed for our project worked in colleges (Managers A to E), in roles that included responsibility for quality assurance or for continuing professional development. Sometimes, though not always, their role included tutoring on teacher training courses so we found a variable pattern of whether the manager had personal experience of working with ILPs. All had experience as tutors of teacher training programmes or of continuing professional development in their colleges. Three managers who were interviewed (Managers F, G and H) worked primarily in ACL contexts and their roles also meant some degree of liaison with FE college providers.
- 4.26 Manager A had experience with ILPs, but with a very different trainee group:

my background experiences with ILPs have very much been with youngsters, with sixteen year olds and they've been about keeping them on track and, and helping them to get a sense of achievement ... rather than one that drives their, their – that encourages the individual to drive their own development (*Interview Feb 2008, p 13*)

She said she wanted there to be more emphasis on achievement in the use of ILPs for teacher trainees but found there to be more 'stick' than 'carrot' in the emerging system.

- 4.27 Manager B was involved in teaching on the college ITT programme but was concerned about a lack of coherence in their ILP arrangements:

I think the way we've managed ILPs is a mixture of systems, tutorial records, record cards kept by tutors [pause] assessment and moderation records, action plans as part of courses... it might work very effectively but it's incoherent. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 13*)

There had been a recent team meeting at which two staff had been given responsibility for producing 'an effective ILP'. Manager B expected his colleagues to produce an electronic document to record the outcomes of the course, what happened in mentor meetings and the outcomes of the ILPs, with comments from tutors, observers and the trainee. He envisaged:

a large electronic document stored on a portal in which both students and tutors can access and update, which would include everything you would expect for an ILP, which would include pre-assessment tasks, record of classes completed, personal information, observation records, notes and observations, notes on assignments. It might include absolutely everything. It wouldn't include, it wouldn't include the, the, the learner's journal, because in this college we've always regarded that as confidential, but it could include the summaries of the learning journal and the outcome of the actual person's learning journal. It would also tie up the observations. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 14*)

- 4.28 Manager C was not teaching in her college's programme when interviewed but was actively involved in the management of the team. She described how responsive her college had been to Ofsted inspection:

the Inspector's coming back in April, you know he recognised we had these young processes and had ILPs, the documents were all ready, they're integrated in tutorial, we've developed the paperwork, we've got the trainees working hard and everything, and he said, 'I can see all of that happening' he said, 'but I can't see very much evidence in their ILPs. So when I come back next time, I will expect to see that'. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 22-23*)

Manager C believes in systems and described a vision of a large number of small, efficient micro-systems that together contribute to a smooth operation. The use of ILPs is one such system within teacher training:

I really do think they're fine, they're not burdensome, they're very simple and I think if they're used well, they will ... what we need to do is come through this inspection and get validation from the Inspector that this is a good example of an ILP being used effectively, then back bang next September, 'This is what we want you to have.' (*Interview Feb 2008, p 23*)

- 4.29 Manager E was another with no direct experience of using ILPs in teacher training but she was aware of different models of ILP used with younger students, with prison courses and with basic skills courses, She expressed a clear view of the purpose of ILPs and emphasised the importance of students having a sense of ownership:

[Students] should be setting their own targets and they should be monitored closely, you know, short-term, long-term etcetera and that those, you know, the achievements are noted and also the kind of action plan of how to move forward. But it is owned by the students. There are some people [who] believe it's just a document where you can just note down a few targets at the beginning of the year and then tick them off, you know, once they've achieved them and, and, and that's the tutor's job to do it. ... but it's not - it should, should be a living document, it should be a record of what's, you know, where the student's going, their journey really. (*Interview Mar 2008, p 17*)

- 4.30 Manager F works as a curriculum manager in ACL and supports a number of different providers of adult education classes. She said that all tutors working within the county council are encouraged to use ILPs and that the council provides them with a CD Rom with all the required forms on it, including the ILP. She herself believes ILPs are valuable and their use should be standard practice for adult education tutors. She outlined her role in terms of spreading the good practice of some tutors to others. However, she finds resistance; some tutors complete ILPs with their learners and some don't:

I admit [ILPs] are not easy to do when you've got a class of say twelve, each working on a different item. I'm thinking here in terms of upholstery classes...an upholstery tutor's life tends to be a very [busy] person. They tend to run several classes. They might have twelve or fifteen in each class and a tutor working with upwards of sixty students a week, yes, it's not unusual. To ask that tutor to write sixty individual learning plans and then keep them updated and so on, I'm not altogether sure whether it's reasonable or not, but there are tutors who do it and prove it can be done. But trying to prove it to those who don't do it is a challenge. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 8*)

Manager F described strategies for getting round the expectation of involving students in producing their own ILPs. She described one tutor who keeps ILPs for upwards of 60 students but does it in her own time:

She keeps small notebooks and she, she just jots down – they're very informal, you know, documents...She just has notebooks and she keeps the record and she just writes it up at the end of the lesson. She writes up what people have done, what they're going to do next week and so on. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 8*)

- 4.31 Manager G had a portfolio of training and quality assurance responsibilities within a county adult education service that included moderating teaching observations, mentoring and project management. She has engaged in initiatives relating to Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement [RARPA] and to the development of ICT use in the classroom. She is also employed in a college that has adult education as part of its provision. She has extensive experience with ILPs, from her days as a tutor for courses of English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] and more recently from her work with the county council and with the college. She has attended college training in the use of ILPs. This manager gave some detail on her experiences in using an ILP in ESOL:

And it got very complicated with people who weren't there last week and they hadn't done last week's and to actually get this paperwork filled in was a nightmare, to get it filled in, in class. And I found that the people – you didn't want to trust them to take it away because you'd never see it again. So it meant getting it in the classroom and people were rushing off at the end of the session. in the end it was a bit of a mess and not [pause] didn't seem to be valued, really, you know. It was just, "Oh we've got to get this done and we're under time pressure," and, "oh, can't we leave it?" (*Interview Feb 2008, p 8*)

She questioned the value of working on ILPs if a class lasts for two hours and it takes fifteen minutes to get forms completed. She also expressed strong views about the suitability of the ILP in some contexts:

.....a dance class with thirty people in and the tutor is trying to get out pieces of paper and get people who are standing in an enormous hall and getting them to fill in forms, you know. I've witnessed it and it's not easy. So the college came up with.... a 'class individual learning plan' where in actual fact it's just one sheet of paper ... tutor's names and then the weeks ... and a sort of key to what they should've been achieving in that lesson and then the tutor would tick whether she felt.. these people had achieved what had been planned. But that takes it away from the learner.in reality people who come to a ballroom dancing class don't want to fill in forms. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 20*)

- 4.32 Manager H is responsible for tutors who work for the Women's Institute and was insistent that they should keep records and paperwork in the same way as tutors in other adult education and further education provision.

They are expected to provide schemes of work, lesson plans, full risk assessments and for classes that are more than a couple of sessions duration, they are expected to keep individual plans for the learners. (*Interview Mar 2008, p 3*)

She finds the same resistance to the documentation requirements as Manager G. She accepts that ILPs are scarcely appropriate in a two hour class and agrees that many students find such paperwork to be onerous. She has noticed that some tutors use them to better effect than others:

Tutors, who have used [the ILP] well, essentially are the tutors who have been involved with the colleges, and they do use it. Because they have been used to using it... Our other tutors are quite resistant. And in a sense, because they're only going to do a one-off class or perhaps a class of two, four and half hour classes...there doesn't seem to be the need, to them, or to me for that matter, for going down the learning plan route. (*Interview Mar 2008, p 5*)

Manager H also has experience of RARPA initiatives and has found it a challenge to encourage tutors to find different ways of meeting the expectation of devising appropriate ways of tracking achievement in ACL. She explained

that her County Council, have adopted good ILP practice They share this expertise with tutors and provide them with training and support.

Summary

4.33 The managers that we interviewed emphasised different issues in using ILPs within ITT to those raised by tutors. There was an issue of ownership and who should be fundamentally responsible for an ILP; whether it is a document for trainees themselves to construct, maintain and use or whether it is a document to enable supervision and assessment by tutors (Managers A and E). The managers were more exercised by issues of coherence (Manager B), quality assurance and inspection (Manager C) than the tutors. Some of the managers particularly those in ACL were concerned about the appropriateness of ILPs in all settings. Managers differed in their opinions of whether or how to overcome such problems.

What did they say about mentoring?

Managers' perspectives

4.34 In this section we focus on the comments made by managers about mentoring and mentors. As reported earlier, we recorded five interviews with managers employed in colleges who had responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in their institutions. The extent of their experience and involvement in teacher education varied: some held line manager responsibility for the programme in their college or for a team of teacher trainers but arrangements varied from college to college and, indeed, varied for each individual from year to year. We also recorded and transcribed interviews with three managers working in ACL contexts.

4.35 Two of our interviewees (Managers A and B) were involved in research into good practice in mentoring in further education about ten years ago, when a major research project was funded and a report published by the Association of Colleges and FENTO (AoC-FENTO 2001). That experience appeared to make a significant contribution to the policies and practices pursued by their respective colleges.

4.36 Manager A has more than 25 years experience in further education and emphasised the importance of relationships and facilitation in mentoring. Although mentoring has become closely associated with providing subject-specific support for trainees, she doubted that it was important for a mentor and mentee to have shared subject knowledge:

IT]he first issue [is] whether or not the person who actually mentors you is from the same specialist area. But does that matter? I mean my feelings, my take on mentoring, is very much that a mentor can only be effective ... if there's a healthy communication between the two.
(*Interview Feb 08, p 6*)

She was one of several interviewees who argued there is a difference between mentoring and other kinds of professional support and who took care to make distinctions:

[A] coach is one who says you know maybe, "This is how it, this is how it ought to be done, you know, give it a try and see,"... Whereas a mentor is someone who says, "Well how do you think you will best achieve that?" ... their role isn't, isn't to mark your work or, you know, their role is to prompt your thoughts and to - and therefore to, to get you to come to the right conclusions, to draw that conclusion on your own. (Interview Feb 08, p 7)

Thus a coach would be expected to be definitive or authoritative in her area of expertise while a mentor would explore possibilities and recognise the contested nature of much professional practice. For Manager A, a mentor is not an assessor but someone who facilitates a mentee's learning.

- 4.37 Manager A argued also that it takes time for good teachers to develop their qualities and was critical of the urgency of current policies:

.....we're on such a fast track to get people up to speed and into - up to this kind of model of an 'all-singing, all-dancing' teacher...I would say that I am quite a reasonably good teacher, it's taken me twenty-seven years or thereabouts to, you know, to get to that position. (Interview Feb 08, p 7)

- 4.38 Manager B has many years experience of teaching in a specific subject area and in teacher education with a more recent role in quality management:

the new standards have made absolutely clear that [pause] to reach a professional level of teaching one's own subject and mediating one's own subject for learning is an important strand ...(a process) supported by a proper mentoring system, struck one as both overdue and very necessary. (Interview Feb 08, p 1)

He was therefore sympathetic to the ideas of addressing subject-specific issues through mentoring but that support was part of a broad spectrum of expectations of what a mentor should do that encompassed an advocacy role on behalf of a trainee within the institution where he or she worked:

They [the mentors] had a number of things they had to do including informal classroom observation, being available to the mentee, make sure that they were comfortable in their subjects with the professionalism, make sure they got the development opportunities as they needed and the quid pro quo was the person doing the mentoring would be remitted for twenty, twenty-eight, twenty-five hours of their eventual time. (Interview Feb 08, p 5)

- 4.39 Manager B provided a detailed account of the way mentors were selected in his college. It had become a condition that any candidate accepted onto a teacher education course was required to identify a mentor who agreed to support the mentee in developing subject expertise, to complete informal

observations and to attend training from the institution. This requirement proved to be less onerous than anticipated:

We, we, do have mentors for every, every, every student. Establishing a mentor was, was less difficult than we thought.... outside candidates we thought we'd have problems, we had fewer problems than we thought. Almost all our candidates, external candidates, could identify a person who could mentor them. (*Interview Feb 08, p 2*)

While supportive of the need to address subject-specific issues through mentoring, Manager B questioned whether it is appropriate for all trainees, noting how teachers who had been in post for several years already have considerable experience in dealing with their subject and had extensive opportunities to learn about resources and specific curriculum matters: 'they understand their subject very well... better than actually sometimes they understand teaching and learning.'

- 4.40 Manager C has more than two decades of experience at a third college and she responded to our questions with specific examples of the help she offered to struggling trainees, help in building confidence, in demystifying course demands. Reflecting on her personal experiences of being mentored, she emphasised the importance of a good relationship that she contrasted with a line management role:

going back to the mentoring, yep you need a buddy. You need that colleague; you need somebody who can say, 'Well, that was rubbish wasn't it?' You say, 'Yea it was rubbish!' You also need someone to keep you going if, you know, to jolly you along and say, 'Oh, keep, you know, nearly half-term' sort of thing. Yes you need the professional standards, we need somebody who's going to make a judgement on you and that's my line-manager. (*Interview Feb 08, p 19*)

- 4.41 Manager D trained and practised for many years as a nurse in the National Health Service before becoming a college manager. She talked about the importance of 'standards' for trainees – not as a set of prescribed standards that trainees are expected to achieve but rather as a set of expectations about their work. Asked about mentors in her own experience she recalled:

When I qualified I worked with a ward sister who was probably old fashioned ... if you compare her with today, but actually she was very inspiring because her standards were very high, her expectations were very high, education was seen as part of that role. (*Interview Feb 08, p 1*)

Thus for her high standards from a respected senior colleague were 'inspiring'. She described the combination of formal and informal activities that supported her own transition into college management:

I went in as a programme manager level and I was given a mentor from outside of my department... I think initially we met sort of on a fortnightly basis and then it got less and less as we went through. And we'd often meet up for lunch and sort of have a discussion of about

where we were going, so although we had some informal stuff there were also some formal objectives that we had to meet. (*Interview Feb 08, p 3*)

She subsequently mentored others as part of her managerial responsibilities. Asked to talk further about how she learned to do this, she referred to the systems in place in her first college – that it had been very systems-oriented and with a strong quality team:

I think it was everything really from how teams work, how, what their responsibilities were, what from, as working as a team, working with the students, working with the awarding body – it was everything, it was really from scratch and building it up. (*Interview Feb 08, p 4*)

- 4.42 Manager G worked in adult education and had the most experience of being mentored and of mentoring practice. She started her teaching as a language specialist and, when interviewed, was responsible for training and quality assurance within a county adult education service. She was also employed in a college that had adult education as part of its provision. Her teaching qualification was a PGCE that she achieved with the Open University and she voiced positive personal experience of being mentored:

I struggled at times and, you know, [the mentor] could see that I was struggling at times and helped me through. I think he could see exactly what was needed and, you know, I could go to him...he was always very generous with his time. (*Interview Feb 08, p 3*)

In contrast, Manager G recalled a friend who did not have such a good experience, someone who dropped out of her teacher training because she felt she was being criticised all the time, because nothing was ever good enough and she wasn't fitting into the system of her school placement.

Manager G said that her County Council adult education department makes itself approachable for all tutors interested in professional development. She told us that she takes a close interest in their development needs, observing classes, advising tutors on changing assessment requirements, checking their paperwork in preparation for observations. She sees this role very much as mentoring:

...because it's as much or as little as they want. So it's not a permanent arrangement, it could just be a one off. [*Pause*] Yes, I mean it's not formalised in that way.... Not in great detail [are records kept], it's really more accounting for my time, giving – having a record of what we've done, what types of support we've offered. (*Interview Feb 08, p 8-9*)

- 4.43 The college managers drew attention to the way mentoring fits in with other existing college systems of quality assurance and professional support in that they talked about the functions of advanced teachers (the term 'advanced teacher' has been adopted here to embrace the role called variously 'advanced practitioner' or 'AP' and 'advanced teaching practitioner' or 'ATP' in different colleges). It emerged that advanced teachers have very different expectations of their role and are employed with different conditions of service in different colleges. Their responsibilities vary from college to college and

they relate to teacher training programmes in different ways. Such arrangements inevitably have substantial implications for the resources available for teacher training.

- 4.44 Manager B expressed the expectation that advanced teachers in his college would be significant members of the teacher education team:

[Advanced teachers] are expected, and it's part of the interview process, expected to become teacher educators....We want an [AT] to be able to generalise their own experiences of being expert at their subject, to be able to take it to others in development sessions, in mentoring, in observations across the college and in working with the, with the teacher education team. (*Interview Feb 08, p 8*)

- 4.45 Manager A reported that they had tried the same approach in her college but had been unsuccessful:

"Our best practitioners teaching on our teacher training courses!" and, do you know, they hated it. They absolutely hated it and it, it was, it was a big surprise to me They weren't there to simply demonstrate how good they are at teaching science or hairdressing or history ... their core subjects, they were there to teach this other curriculum. (*Interview Feb 08, p 11*)

- 4.46 Manager C described how advanced teachers and mentors function in her college but went on to express the frustration that she experiences as a manager. She has line management responsibility for the advanced teachers and has respect for their teaching abilities but finds them hard to manage:

We have a model where our [ATs] are purely supportive and they are all my colleagues.... a new member of staff arrives and they will have their mentor's support, ...but they will also be allocated an [advanced teacher] time (to discuss matters like lesson plans and differentiation) ... They are delightful people, very very good teachers, but there is something wrong in the chemistry. I don't know why, I can't pin it down. I wonder if it's because they're not making judgements? (*Interview Feb 08, p 21*)

Summary

- 4.47 Many of the managers that we interviewed were experienced practitioners who had moved into management roles. They brought their experiences with them into their interviews. There was thus a complex set of understandings about what a mentor could be or should do and the role was valued in different ways. Some (such as Manager A) take care to distinguish the functions of a mentor from the functions of a coach or of an assessor. There was a range of views about what 'subject-specific' mentoring might add, if anything, to generic mentoring practices (Manager B). Needless to say, our interviewees are committed to high standards in teaching and learning although the discourse used about 'standards' tended to convey rather the expectations of senior colleagues than the performance criteria of printed documents (Managers C and D).

- 4.48 Those with positive experiences of mentoring emphasised the importance of flexibility on the part of mentors in being available and responsive to the needs of the mentee. There were different views about what 'subject specific' mentoring might add, if anything to generic mentoring.
- 4.49 Another important issue that emerged from the managers concerned the way that mentoring within organisations is situated within many other systems that fulfil similar or complimentary functions. We found that in some colleges, the 'advanced practitioners/teachers' contribute significantly to teacher training mentor roles. We found that these roles are mediated by the learning culture of the organisation itself and that there is not always a close synergy between the assessment-inclined teacher training role and their broader organisational role to provide support for new and existing staff.

Tutors' perspectives

- 4.50 Seven of the tutors interviewed were college-based and were involved in the PGCE and other initial teacher training programmes. Tutors A to F had a range of responsibilities in other programmes, not solely ITT courses. Tutor G was a programme manager in another field and mentored trainees on placement in her section. Tutors H and J worked for a county council, training teachers of adults in community settings for a PTLLS award.
- 4.51 Tutor A is a woman with science qualifications and many years experience in teacher education. She recalled her experience of support she had received from a respected head of science:

I had a really good manager at [my previous college]. I mean a really superb manager who managed me as a teacher in the very best possible way you could ever do. He challenged me, he set me targets, constantly monitored what I was doing, gave me huge amounts of feedback, very detailed feedback about what I was doing and how I could improve, allowed me to use him as a sounding board. (*Interview Feb 08, p 3-4*)

In her view, the mentor's role in current training schemes is to provide a similar challenge and to create high expectations:

It is about challenging. It's not about being a friend. It's not about placating people and saying, "Yes you're wonderful and you know, how can I help?" It's about challenging....if I tutor people, it's my job to give them the solutions... whereas mentoring is very about equality and about being critical and being, you know, "Have you thought about, what do you mean by that" or those sort of things. Opening doors but not pushing people through them [laughs] (*Interview Feb 08, p 5*)

- 4.52 Tutor B is a woman of a similar age to Tutor A though much less experienced in supporting trainees and she commented that the mentor is 'a subject person in education to support people within their actual teaching' but wondered whether the mentor is a mentor 'in the subject as such'. It seemed to be her view that the subject mentor's role was to make a summative judgement about

subject competence and that such expertise would then qualify them to contribute more formatively to the teacher training.

- 4.53 Tutor C has recently become involved in teacher education, after many years of experience of teaching in a university as well as in colleges, and he was one of our respondents who talked of the importance of 'being passionate' when he recalled that:

My tutor for the 7407 said to me, you know, "you are obviously quite passionate about education, you're quite passionate about the subject," she said, "have you ever thought of going into teacher training?"
(*Interview Feb 08, p 3*)

He was asked how mentoring differed from tutoring trainees or other forms of teaching and commented:

well it's different in as much as I suppose it's not about course, it's not about the academic work, it's about their job, it's about their role, it's about what's working and what isn't working with their role. (*Interview Feb 08, p 14*)

Thus he emphasised mentoring as induction into the workplace, a generic mentoring role rather than a subject-specific undertaking.

- 4.54 Tutor F was a college tutor working almost in isolation trying to secure support from various parts of the college for his teacher training programme. He had little success engaging with the advanced tutors in his college but mentioned the possibility of making use of subject learning coaches who had been trained to support others improve their subject-specific teaching skills. He realised that not all subject specialist areas have trained subject learning coaches.

- 4.55 Tutor G was a programme leader who mentored trainee teachers but did not teach on teacher training courses. She spent many years in training and curriculum development in a public sector training organisation before studying for a Cert Ed qualification and finding employment in a college. She was another who described how other people had been inspirational in her field and crucial to making her the practitioner she is today. At a practical level, she recalled a friendly relationship with a man who took the Cert Ed at the same time and became her 'course buddy':

I mean we did collect handouts for each other and we did E-mail each other about, about things but it was also – I mean it was pure luck but it worked, really worked 'cos he is incredibly grounded and sensible and focused and you can see what I'm like! And, and I was able to sort of, I don't know, I was able to bring a bit a life to the partnership. (*Interview April 08, p 17*)

By way of comparison, she spoke of the deficiency of a more formal mentoring procedure when she was recruited to her college:

So although on paper you know, I had this mentor, I never went once to her and she never approached me... I don't think that mentoring is a, is something that just happens, you know, I think it has it, there has to be something there... They gave me somebody whom I thought "I'm not going to her anyway" you know ... she may know a bit more than me, but I wouldn't want to be seen to be asking her! (*Interview April 08, p 8*)

- 4.56 Tutor G pointed out that a significant amount of mentor-like work occurs through her role as course manager which may or may not get recorded in course files – and almost certainly does not find its way to her trainee's record of mentoring:

... if we're talking about the actual subjects, the, the, you know, the course that we're teaching, that is something that I consider as part of my role as course manager... I do that with all the lecturers, so I don't even think about it as being mentoring. ... so we are always talking about, you know, how they're getting with the unit and what this bit of paper, what this bit of writing means, you know, what they're expected to do here. What's the difference between this level and that level. (*Interview April 08, p 11*)

- 4.57 Tutor H has a degree in the history of art and has been in community education for 16 years. When interviewed she was a freelance tutor and had been involved in teacher training for 6 years. She was working for two providers but was in the process of transferring from one to the other and she indicated in her interview that one reason for this was the prospect of better resources for meeting training needs so that she could undertake initial assessments and ensure there was proper mentoring support. She was confident that there are people around who can support her to do this:

I can see the mentoring happening here as well because [adult education] have people within the observation team who obviously they have curriculum areas that they are responsible for. So the mentoring could easily kick in just by using their curriculum team. (*Interview Feb 2008 p9*)

She expressed concern that she could only be sure of funding for one year

But I'm also aware that there is money this year for initial teacher training, which (the line manager) has, which is partly why I'm sure she's very interested in getting it started. Now the slight concern is that what happens after this year, but I think that - I mean the major costs are going to be to set it up. (*Interview Feb 2008 p 14*)

- 4.58 Tutor H also works as a support assistant in her local primary school and said she has been the mentor for a student enrolled on a childcare course who was on work placement in the school one day a week from the local college. She described her role as one where she did more than support the student in her work as she contributed to the assessment of the student's assignments as placement supervisor.

- 4.59 Tutor J is a calligrapher and book binder with many years experience of teaching her subject for different providers and also with extensive experience of providing personal development courses for women and of facilitating support networks for the relatives of people with mental health problems. Her community experience led to her to teacher training for ACL. When interviewed she had not received any training herself in mentoring. Although she held a Cert Ed qualification, she did not recall any experience of being mentored. However, as a holder of a Cert Ed qualification, she had been contacted by people within her organisation asking for her support in their own training as tutors.

Tutor J was in the process of establishing new training provision with Tutor H. She considered that formal mentoring was still very much at the planning stage in their course and was committed to building on the systems that already existed within the adult education system. She stressed the importance of a trainee having confidence in a mentor:

What I would be suggesting to all the learners is if you have somebody within your own organisation or in your sort of world and you're comfortable with them, to go with them. But if not, there are plenty of other people that we can put you in touch with ...we haven't thought through how we're going to check up on that or, you know, where that will come in in terms of tracking, let's say and monitoring. (*Interview Feb 2008 p 7*)

She was committed to ensuring that being mentored was a positive experience for trainees but expressed concern that a trainee might choose someone who was easily available rather than someone who would be effective in the role.

- 4.60 We were interested in finding out what mentor training our tutors had taken part in or had provided themselves. The seven college tutors had access to a university provided training session that briefed them on the university's expectations of mentoring. The half day programme covered administrative and paperwork concerns; the conduct of mentor meetings and establishing relationships; dealing with colleagues; subject specialist requirements. At the time of the interviews not all the tutors had actually attended one of the university sessions.
- 4.61 Tutor A worked in a college with well-established mentoring practices and she provided regular training sessions for colleagues based on the college's policies and practices. Tutor B had attended training provided by the university. She commented that many of her college mentors were advanced teachers, section heads and experienced staff so she considered they were qualified to carry out a mentoring role. 'They're used to some sort of paperwork it's just a different bit of paperwork really.' Tutor C had a responsibility to co-ordinate mentors in his institution and said there were some problems securing subject-specific mentors for some trainees. However, they were making arrangements for co-mentoring and he thought this would address the problem. Tutor D indicated that the university trainer was due to visit her college in the near future and provide their training. She had already used the university-provided PowerPoint to train colleagues acting as mentors

in her college and mentioned undertaking some 'indirect' mentor training, via the trainee, by sending relevant documentation to an off-site mentor.

- 4.62 Tutor H received some training from the FE college where she worked and some support from the County Council. Although Tutor J had not attended any training she was consistently being asked by colleagues to act as a mentor. We found from Tutors H and J that those working in ACL have limited resources, an insecure future and difficulty accessing any appropriate training.

Summary

- 4.63 Tutors tended to assert the quality of relationship between mentor and mentee as the crucial factor in teacher training. They reported a range of ways in which mentoring types of support can occur very successfully informally (for example, in 'buddy' arrangements) and also occurs informally within formal systems and structures. We found there was support among tutors for providing 'subject-specific' mentors for some trainees but heard of difficulties in trying to make such provision for all. For ACL colleagues it was clear that there are particular difficulties in accessing resources sufficient to establish and maintain systems of mentoring and mentor training.
- 4.64 Tutors agreed that communicating about high standards was an important aspect of mentoring. References were made to the need for a mentor to be prepared to 'challenge' a mentee and the importance of maintaining 'high expectations'. Tutors suggested that externally-defined standards in documents mattered rather less than the high expectations of performance conveyed by colleagues in the same community of practice.
- 4.65 There was evidence of a diverse experience of mentor training. Colleges with established policy and practice in mentoring made in-service provision of professional development opportunities for mentors and also supported access of more specialised courses, such as training for subject learning coaches. The university partnership offered a standard package that addressed general concerns, such as the need to address LLUK standards and also more specific requirements such as the need to keep appropriate documentation

Trainees' perspectives

- 4.66 We interviewed ten trainees on a range of ITT courses (see Tables 2 and 3); eight had experiences of being mentored while two had recently undertaken courses without mentor support.
- 4.67 Trainee A had led a successful career in engineering and management before joining a full-time PGCE course to become a teacher. He recalled his experiences of mentoring as a senior manager:

Whenever I've coached or mentored people I've always gone deep, let them get to point where they don't know something, they're not sure of something, a contradiction or, you know, ignorance, 'I don't know what you're talking about ... Stop, make a note, that's your objective for the

next one. I want to know what that means and you're going to explain it to me and you have a week to do so. Okay? Right, do you want to carry on or do you want to stop?' (*Interview Feb 2008, p 18*)

Clearly he was a trainee with a developed sense of what mentoring could and should be and the skills required to be an effective mentor. He was not particularly impressed by the subject mentor he had been allocated for the ITT programme. Trainee A makes a distinctive contribution to his department as he has recent industrial experience at a high level in the company where he worked. In certain respects, therefore, his subject expertise was substantially greater than his colleagues in college.

4.68 Trainee A had been observed in his teaching both by his mentor and by a tutor. He found that the mentor gave attention to the start and end of the lesson but made no substantial comments about the 'subject'. He suggested this may have been because the mentor assessed whether the lesson was 'good enough' while the tutor was concerned with his professional development. There was little indication from this trainee that subject-specific mentoring had proved beneficial.

4.69 A favourable impression of mentoring provision was gained from Trainee B, a much younger trainee who was just starting a DTLLS course. Trainee B was a man with extensive experience of the catering industry overseas and locally. He had decided that he could best make use of his passion for teaching about food by training to be a tutor. When asked what he thought were the qualities of a good mentor he reflected on his own experience of being mentored. He did not refer to subject expertise:

Well, they've got to be accessible. If you've got a mentor that you can't get hold of it's a very difficult thing. So I'm guessing to be nice but to be honest and straight down the line so you know what you're expected, obviously they can't be a scary person because you wouldn't feel comfortable... I guess that the biggest thing that I'd have to say from [tutor name] is that she's really, really passionate about teaching and I'm guessing that a mentor has to be passionate about what they do. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 13*)

4.70 Two young teachers were taking the first year of a PGCE course on a part-time basis at different colleges and gave their opinions and experiences of being mentored. Trainee C is a young woman with a creative arts background who talked of the need for a mentor to have 'passion and enthusiasm, I mean that's the main thing'. She had asked for a particular staff member to be her mentor because she found his work and teaching inspirational but he was not available because of too many other responsibilities. Her appointed mentor was a member of staff in the same college department but he had a different subject specialism, in media rather than in design. She found him to be an approachable and nice person but not really a help in the development of her teaching abilities.

4.71 Trainee D who was enrolled on the part-time PGCE programme was a teacher of outdoor education and, like Trainee C, had someone in the same college department as a mentor. Trainee D's mentor taught on a 'sports injuries'

course, and for that reason appeared to be a good subject match. Trainee D's mentor also had experience of outdoor education. They taught together and had the opportunity both to plan and evaluate the sessions they taught. This was probably the most successful mentor-mentee relationship we encountered in our study although the success perhaps was attributable to their shared teaching commitment:

he gets really, really good grades from OFSTED and I love his teaching style and I've – the personality behind it, the passion that he's got. It's, it's really good and he's been great with regards to information that he's given me, the feedback that he gives me. We see each other, you know, at least once a week, anyway because I'm in his lecture, we do lectures together and we get five, ten minutes after, five, ten minutes before. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 11*)

- 4.72 Trainee E, a DTLLS trainee, had recently been allocated a mentor, within the same subject specialism who had high expectations. He spoke eloquently of being mentored during his original training:

[T]here was one in particular that stood out... she saw that I was capable of doing things and she took me under her wing a lot more, so I had a lot more personal contact with her ...I think she gave me a lot of confidence and through her, I think, and her mentoring me and you know, she was there at every step of the way for me...(she) and I just clicked from day one ... through me going on the courses, she saw what I was capable of, because as she put it, I stood out from the rest. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 2-3*)

- 4.73 Trainee F is a young woman employed part-time by a private training provider. She had completed a PTLLS course and was working towards achievement of the A1 award when interviewed. She attended both courses at her local college. When asked about mentoring arrangements she commented on the support provided by her PTLLS tutor .but emphasised the support she received in her workplace..

- 4.74 Trainee G working for the same training provider, was studying for a Cert Ed qualification and had previously achieved the A1 award. The trainee explained that mentoring had recently been introduced by the college:

...only recently we've heard that you must have this mentor that provides support to you at work and they have to be subject specialists, and then there was this whole argument at work, at college, that they couldn't – they couldn't get somebody...It was a bit of a nightmare, really, but it was quite easy at [my workplace] because I had [a colleague] and she'd qualified at AAT, she's a teacher and everything. (*Interview Feb 2008, p 9*)

The trainee went on to say that she was receiving one-to-one sessions focussing on her ILP with her line manager on a monthly basis and found them beneficial. She suggested that the college staff were impressed she had been able to make these arrangements and include her manager in teaching observations. However, she was critical that there had been little contact

between the college and her employer and suggested the college was only interested in 'ticking boxes'. She found the arrangement with her line manager to be preferable to the termly tutorials she had with her college tutor which she characterised as:

a chat through how things are going and what we've learned so far and what we haven't and then that goes into our professional development folder...You went out the room and there was no more done, so. *(Interview Feb 2008, p 10)*

- 4.75 Trainees H and J work in the training section of a public sector organisation and were enrolled on a CTLLS programme at a college. A work-place mentor had been arranged for the two trainees and he had attended a college training session on the role of the mentor. This person was also their line manager.

Yeah, because he knows us, and he wouldn't be frightened to say, 'no, that wasn't very good' or 'that was good'. It wouldn't worry him and it wouldn't worry me, I like the feedback. *(Trainee J, Interview, Mar 2008 p 7-8)*

Although he was based geographically some distance from their workplace, the trainees felt positive around the arrangement. It emerged they had other sources of support such as peer support from one another as they worked closely together and had shadowed each other's training sessions. There were also others they could talk to working in their office:

we have somebody in the office who's actually a college, ex-college lecturer tutor, in fact there's two people, and so they're very good. So if it's to do with college, and we're a bit sort of unclear about something, we usually talk to them... when it comes to like sort of Harvard Referencing and bits and pieces like that, you know. *(Trainee H, Interview, Mar 2008 p 7)*

- 4.76 The course tutors offered tutorials by telephone which again was a positive experience for the trainees:

we had a phone tutorial, which worked really well! I was amazed actually, I must admit, because I, you know, sort of picked up the phone and I thought it was just going to be a couple of questions, but it was all planned out and you know, it was definitely: 'Have you done this? Do you know you need to do that? Don't forget you've got to do this and have you got any questions?' So equally as good as face to face, not a problem at all. *(Trainee H, Interview, Mar 2008 p 13)*

- 4.77 Trainee K had recently completed a PTLLS course and reported that there was not any structured, official mentoring during the course:

We had a buddy but it was more, it wasn't a mentoring mentor, it was more of a buddy to make sure that if you were running late for example or if you couldn't come to a session and couldn't get hold of Barbara for example, who would you phone to tell them that you're not going to be there... *(Interview, April 2008 p 5)*

Outside of the PTLLS course, the trainee had peer support at work, rather than mentoring and the quality of this peer support was dependent upon the goodwill of those providing it:

....no mentor per se, but peer support I would say. Again very supportive people so I found that quite useful just to be able to go to them and say, 'hey what did you do with them last week?' or 'what do they particularly like?' or 'what really freaks them out?' (*Interview, April 2008 p 6*)

The trainee recognised the peer support from colleagues and from other members of her course group but wondered whether this would be sufficient when she progressed to a more advanced and more demanding level.

Summary

- 4.78 Within our group of ten ITT trainees, four had mentors with whom they had established a good personal relationship and the mentor made a valued contribution to a trainee's personal and professional development. Three trainees (A,C and G) did not value their mentor's contribution, though for differing reasons For one trainee it was too soon to tell whether the mentor would be useful, while two trainees said they did not have mentors. Seven of the trainees expressed their appreciation of others in the workplace – colleagues or line-managers - who were supportive of their professional development.
- 4.79 College-based trainees appear usually to be well provided for: they have mentors even if they don't find much value in the arrangement. They seemed to have tutors they could trust to try various approaches to make suitable mentoring and tutoring provision. However, one work-based trainer, someone with extensive experience of working with ILPs, compared her college experience as a trainee unfavourably with the support she got from her line-manager.
- 4.80 Although we found a level of support for subject-specific mentoring among tutors, it did not appear to be a pressing concern for many of the trainees we spoke to. Some less-experienced trainees thought that people with the same subject expertise were more likely to be able to support their professional development. We found varying levels of understanding of what a mentor is for or what mentoring means and little comment about what a 'subject-specific' mentor might offer.

5 DISCUSSION

Introduction

5.1 In this section we draw together some of the constituent parts of the research we have undertaken and attempt to communicate our understanding of the significance and use of different models of mentoring and ILPs in different areas of the FE sector. The project gave us the opportunity to study ILPs, mentors and mentor training at a particular time, between February and April 2008. We recorded a 'snapshot' of the perceptions of a selection of trainees, tutors and managers in colleges and in other areas of the sector. From our analysis of the data collected, we want to discuss:

5.1.1 issues of practice related to the use of ILPs and mentoring in ITT in the FE sector;

5.1.2 two key themes that emerged that enable us to explore and unravel some of the underlying issues related to the use of ILPs and mentoring.

5.2 In the final section of this section we address questions of theory and practice that have been raised by the project. This approach has enabled a deeper engagement in the data, allowing us to address the research questions that were agreed with the SWitch board at the outset of the project. These are reproduced below:

Table 7: Research Questions (reminder)

Research Questions

1. What systems are in place within colleges and other organisations across the region for the support of new members of staff? In particular:

1.4 What models of good process and practice are there in the use of different Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)?

1.5 What models of good process and practice are there in mentor training?

1.6 What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available?

8. How do the models of ILPs and mentor training function in the context of different training providers (work-based learning, college-based teacher education, voluntary sector, adult and community learning)?

9. What are the strengths and limitations of the different ILP models? How might teacher training providers use effectively the ILP models offered?

10. What are the strengths and limitations of the different models of mentoring? How might teacher training providers use effectively the mentoring models offered?

11. What are the perceptions of trainees, mentors and managers with respect to the value of ILPs and mentoring to the development of professional competence? What are their perceptions of the value of ILPs and mentoring to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector? What are their respective perceptions of the way national standards are integrated within the professional practice of trainees?

12. What are the implications or considerations for programmes training mentors through different models of mentoring? How far are trained mentors actively involved in mentoring their colleagues or trainees?

13. How far are the models of ILPs and mentor training fit for the purpose of achieving national standards in the learning and skills sector?

Issues of Practice: Individual Learning Plans

- 5.3 The use of Individual Learning Plans has become a common practice in programmes in some areas of the sector. ILPs have become well-established particularly in certain fields of training (including NVQ programmes, Modern Apprenticeship, Train to Gain) and in Skills for Life. However, they have not become established in all areas or work in the lifelong learning sector. While ILPs have been developed and are now used in a variety of ways, they originate in a training context where, typically, there are well-documented statements of learning outcomes. Apart from their curricular function, they usually fulfil a role as a mechanism of accountability, for tracking learner progress and for allocating funding on the basis of that progress. The origins of ILPs in a training model give them their strengths and their limitations and the accountability function they fulfil in that model influences the way they are perceived in teacher training.
- 5.4 The Survey of Teacher Trainee Satisfaction (Pye et al., 2008) found ILPs did not figure prominently in the comments of respondents undertaking teacher training programmes. However, our interview questions revealed that, among trainee teachers, completion of an ILP is becoming established as one of the standard components of the training. Nonetheless, the practice remains a work in progress and the comments of trainees, tutors and managers gave us insights into the issues they present to practitioners as they strive to embed this innovation into their programmes.
- 5.5 Among our small sample of trainees, we found there was a spectrum of views of the significance of ILPs and how they might relate to achieving standards within a training programme. Differences in view had little to do with the programme or its level: two of our interviewees were overtly critical, even contemptuous of the process and one was a part-time PGCE trainee and the other was a PTLLS trainee. Most were accepting of the process: trainees new to the profession were inclined to accept the documentation and systems surrounding them with little questioning. They may not have been able to explain any immediate benefits from completing an ILP but they had faith that the importance would become apparent eventually. Even those who were accepting, however, did not consider ILPs a priority. There were many comments from trainees about pressures of time, particularly from those who had full or part-time employment to sustain; and within a training programme, the exigencies of immediate commitments in teaching or assessing students took greater priority than keeping the ILP.
- 5.6 It seemed that tutors had differing levels of success in giving trainees confidence that they could cope with ILPs. Where trainees had relevant

previous experience – or had friends or relatives with such experience – they were more likely to have a justificatory rationale for the process and were more likely to manage competently, even though they lacked enthusiasm.

- 5.7 Our interviewed tutors conveyed some of the practices they were adopting in order to meet the requirement that trainees utilise an ILP. We encountered scepticism among some yet a willingness to experiment among most. Tutors talked of the problems of managing the transfer from one system of qualifications to a new system, of confusion that can arise while there are trainees working to one set of standards and a new cohort with a different set of standards. They talked of the frustrations caused by having different documents with overlapping functions. They talked with exasperation of the way awarding bodies change their specifications and documents while a course is in progress. One tutor shared his anxiety about making the system operational when he said he thought trainees were ‘filling out’ their ILP forms but not ‘using’ them and he wanted more opportunity for following-up plans and reviewing progress. For most tutors there were issues concerning resources, of having insufficient time to ensure that trainees could complete a meaningful ILP. This was particularly the case among our ACL interviewees who don’t see ILPs in the form set by accrediting organisations as appropriate for their students or for community contexts in which they teach.
- 5.8 Our interviews with FE managers tended to confirm how colleges were in a state of transition with regard to using ILPs within initial teacher training and they alerted us to some specific issues surrounding their use. There was an issue around ownership and whether an ILP is a document for trainees themselves to construct, maintain and use or whether it is a document to facilitate supervision and assessment by tutors. There was an issue around coherence and consistency, in terms of the way that ILPs interface with other course documents, and concern that they did not overlap or duplicate the functions of other documents. One manager illustrated strongly the power of Ofsted inspection to determine the direction of change in her commitment to co-operating with Ofsted recommendations.
- 5.9 We found that different FE colleges were at different stages of ILP development, Colleges were typically in a period of transition and innovation, experimenting with different models and interested in establishing electronic versions of ILPs on course websites. Within the University of Exeter partnership, for example the PGCE (PCE) programme team developed an ILP document that served as a model for other teacher training courses in their colleges. While the Exeter course team were conscious of a wide variety of exemplar ILPs available in the ‘market place’, the main concern of the team at the time of the interviews was to develop an ILP that was ‘fit for purpose’ and would meet the formal requirements of an Ofsted inspection. During this developmental period there was little or no discussion of the merits and demerits of developing the ILP .which was essentially an innovation into the programme. Instead the focus was centred on developing a ‘tracking’ document that would meet a set of external and performative standards; only then were questions pertaining to the education merits of an ILP open to question.

- 5.10 Colleagues in ACL faced considerable problems attempting to integrate ILPs into their practices. The issue was about the use of ILPs on non-vocational programmes where students may not wish to engage in formalised systems. Again the predominant focus has not been centred on questions concerning the value and validity of using ILPs rather the focus was on managing their integration into programmes.
- 5.11 ACL staff encountered significant difficulties in accessing resources sufficient to establish and maintain ILP systems electronically. In comparison with their college-based colleagues, it was apparent that there is an issue for ACL tutors where the ICT equipment in classrooms and routinely available as resources for staff are simply not available in many ACL contexts.
- 5.12 The ACL managers we interviewed agreed that there were substantial problems in using ILPs though there were differing views of whether such problems could be overcome. We heard from the managers about pragmatic tutors who, in order to comply with paperwork requirements, maintained ILPs themselves for their students. There are aspects of such tutor labour that are comparable with the assessor 'Gwen' (James and Diment 2003) who undertook 'underground maintenance of practices' – in other words, considerable unpaid overtime - in order to ensure the continuation of her employment as an assessor.
- 5.13 We heard from ACL interviewees how students in many ACL classes consider learning paperwork to be onerous and irrelevant to the activities they come for and so are unwilling to engage in a process of completing an ILP. This presents a professional challenge to tutors who talked of the burden of 'paperwork', and the way they had to come in early to undertake the work involved or lose class time. We heard of the pedagogical contortions they undergo to fulfil course requirements that they don't see as appropriate for their students or for the community contexts in which they teach.
- 5.14 However, in WBL, ILPs have been established for a number of years as a formal requirement of NVQ provision, and linked closely to funding arrangements and mechanisms.

Issues of Practice: Mentoring

- 5.15 Our literature review has confirmed that mentors and mentoring play a substantive role in many sectors of employment as a means of supporting and inducting new colleagues, in particular, into organisational cultures and systems. However, the practices associated with mentoring vary from organisation to organisation.
- 5.16 Among our interviewees from the WBL sector, mentoring has tended to focus upon the subject-specific role or coaching role where the mentor is the workplace assessor and provider of subject pedagogical advice and support rather than more general personal support and guidance.
- 5.17 Mentoring in FE teacher training, as a function that is separate from the tutor function, is a relatively recent innovation. In the past, responsibility for pastoral and other matters relating to trainees has been a responsibility of the teacher

training team rather than mentors or subject coaches, and particularly a responsibility for the course or subject tutor. For trainee teachers in colleges, subject mentoring and specific curriculum support tended to be provided in the staffroom by colleagues on an ad hoc and informal basis and was rarely linked formally to the teacher training programme.

- 5.18 Over the last 5 years, government reforms have led to more emphasis being placed upon mentoring as an essential mechanism for the delivery of teacher training, particularly to support subject specialism (DfES, 2004). The model of provision draws particularly from practices in the secondary education sector. Our interviews revealed a complex network of different kinds of support for trainee teachers, with some formal mentor arrangements made by course providers and some informal, usually work-based support with arrangements made by the trainee.
- 5.19 From interviews with trainees it emerged that four had mentors with whom they had established a good personal relationship and the mentor was making a valued contribution to a trainee's personal and professional development; three trainees did not value their mentor's contribution, though for differing reasons. For one trainee, it was too soon to tell whether the mentor would be useful. Two interviewed trainees said they did not have mentors in their programmes. Seven of the trainees expressed their appreciation of others in the workplace – colleagues or line-managers - who were supportive of their professional development.
- 5.20 College-based trainees all had course tutors who supported their development and who they felt they could trust. One work-based trainer, with extensive experience of working with ILPs, compared her college experience as a trainee unfavourably with the support she received from her line-manager.
- 5.21 We noted a difference in the way that experienced teachers engaged with mentors and made use of the ILP documentation, and the way that those new to the profession managed the same arrangements. These differences are not formally recognised. Many teachers in the FE sector are part-time and in some cases are experienced teachers with requirements that are different to pre-service teachers who are younger and more inexperienced.
- 5.22 Tutors tended to assert the quality of relationship between mentor and mentee as the crucial factor in teacher training. They reported a range of ways in which mentoring types of support can occur very successfully informally (for example, in 'buddy' arrangements) formally (led by team leaders within course meetings) even though such experiences may not be termed 'mentoring'. There was support among tutors for providing 'subject-specific' mentors for some trainees but heard there were serious difficulties in trying to make such provision for all.
- 5.23 The tutors had different levels of confidence about mentoring practice. They are working with new systems and having to find solutions to the problems they encounter. From ACL colleagues it was clear that there are particular difficulties in accessing resources sufficient to establish and maintain systems of mentoring and mentor training. They agreed that communicating about high standards was an important aspect of mentoring but implied that externally-

defined standards in documents mattered rather less than the high expectations of performance conveyed between colleagues in the same community of practice. Tutors referred to the importance of a mentor being prepared to 'challenge' a mentee and how important 'expectations' were.

- 5.24 Although we found some support for subject-specific mentoring among tutors, it did not appear to be a pressing concern for many of the trainees we spoke to. Less-experienced trainees thought that people with the same subject expertise were more likely to be able to support their professional development but more experienced trainees did not assert the importance of being a subject expert in the same way.
- 5.25 What emerged from managers with positive experience of mentoring was the importance of flexibility on the part of mentors in being available and responsive to the needs of the mentee. They agreed with the interviewed tutors that successful mentoring depended primarily on the quality of relationship established between mentor and mentee and that relationship was more significant than the subject qualification of the mentor or the specification of particular mentor functions.
- 5.26 The other important issue that emerged from the managers concerned the way that mentoring within organisations is situated within many other systems that fulfil similar or complementary functions and there are issues around the ways in which mentors and mentoring relate to such systems. When an organisation gives resources for its staff to act as mentors or if it employs 'advanced teachers' and 'subject learning coaches', these are potentially significant resources for teacher training. We found that, in some colleges, the 'advanced teachers' contribute particular kinds of mentoring but that such a contribution is mediated by the learning culture of the organisation itself. We have observed how informal mentoring occurs regularly in formal systems such as course management meetings.
- 5.27 It is clear that different colleges construct responsibilities differently and that there is no consistency in the availability of resources. Given such differences between organisations, there is a challenge to ensure coherence for individual trainees and ensuring that some trainees are not disadvantaged.
- 5.28 With respect to the training that was available to mentors, we found that colleges with established policy and practice in mentoring were accustomed to making in-service provision of continuing professional development opportunities for mentors. They also supported access to more specialised courses for some functions that mentors might be expected to fulfil, such as training as subject learning coaches. Teacher training programmes associated with a university also offered a standard training package that addressed general concerns, such as the need to address LLUK standards, and also more specific requirements, such as the need to keep appropriate documentation.
- 5.29 Given that there is such a spectrum of understanding about the mentor role and what skills or qualities a mentor should have, there are implications for the training that might be appropriate for mentors in different contexts. If mentors fulfil essentially a bureaucratic role, one geared to completing paperwork and

fulfilling organisation criteria, then a briefing about the required paperwork is probably all that is necessary in a training programme. If mentor training is supposed to address substantive skills and knowledge development in fields like communication, counselling and guidance and observation of teaching practice, and if such knowledge and skills are to be located in a context of professional education for teachers then it seems rather unlikely that a day or half-day of training will make much difference to an individual's practice. There are substantial training needs in the sector, with all that implies in respect of the time and resources required.

We would argue that the sheer variety of ways in which the selection of mentors, occurs should be recognised, celebrated and supported rather than attempts made to constrain such practices within a standard and probably inappropriate model. We would argue further that people value relationships that they can chose and negotiate for themselves and they will use opportunities like mentoring to develop a mentoring relationship in constructive and creative ways.

Key themes

- 5.30 In Chapter 4 we presented some detailed findings from our research. In this section we use some of that data to explore two key themes that emerged from our interrogation of the transcripts and address the implications for practice. One theme concerns the strategies adopted by the people we interviewed to follow official procedures specified for their different roles; in other words, there were issues around compliance and non-compliance with requirements to complete ILPs and provide mentoring. A second theme concerns the contested understandings there are of key concepts: we encountered a range of understanding about the functions and purposes of ILPs and mentoring that underpinned the variety of practices.

Compliance and non compliance

- 5.31 Willingness to comply with the requirement to produce an ILP pre-supposes an understanding of valid reasons for producing such a document and acceptance that there is value in doing so. We were interested, therefore, in what our interview transcripts revealed about understanding of ILPs and what they revealed about the value placed in the processes of producing an ILP. Trainees in a teacher training course may well find themselves producing such documents as part of their professional practice with students and trainees, so it would be reasonable to expect them to undertake some critical evaluation of the procedures involved.
- 5.32 Among trainees we found differences in perception about the purpose and value of ILPs which led to differing levels of engagement with the process. Two young women expressed criticisms from contrasting perspectives. Trainee C, a part-time PGCE trainee in the field of arts and textiles, dismissed her ILP as 'a bit of a waste of time' although one reason for her scepticism was the mistaken idea that her PGCE ILP was driven by a funding requirement. Trainee G, a trainer in work-based learning, said she used ILPs

with her own learners all the time and found it a useful tool for monitoring their progress. She was not impressed by the way her Cert Ed tutors used an ILP and compared their approach unfavourably with her own workplace practice.

- 5.33 Other trainees talked of the strategies they were using to cope with ILPs and indicated that their tutors were helping them get to grips with unfamiliar processes. Trainee A was a man in his late 40s undertaking a transition to a new career as an engineering lecturer by taking a full-time PGCE course in a college. His career in management gave him insight into business systems that enabled him to adapt creatively to the reflection and recording demands of the PGCE ILP. Trainee E was of similar age undertaking a part-time DTLLS to effect a transition from one well-established career to another. He found the ILP at his college was 'quite compact' and 'not as daunting as I thought it was going to be' not least because the tutor was gradually introducing it to the group, stage by stage.
- 5.34 The teams in some colleges appeared to be more adept than others in persuading trainees that compiling an ILP was a worthwhile and manageable task. Some trainees appeared to have gained confidence in their ILP when tutors carefully introduced them to it. However, we also found indications that the learning culture (James and Biesta 2007) at an institutional level was also important in communicating to a trainee a judgement about an ILP; if colleagues in the staffroom or in the same department expressed a negative view of ILPs then such criticism would carry greater weight than the support given by a teacher training tutor. There needs to be a wide acceptance of the value of ILPs if trainee teachers are to feel comfortable producing their own as part of professional development.
- 5.35 For the most part, trainees appeared to be accepting of the expectations made of them, expressing faith that the purpose and value of undertaking an ILP would become clear in time. We did not record any serious critical evaluation of the significance or value of such a practice, even among PGCE trainees. They accepted that completing such a document was part of what they had to do in the programme and made the best of the situation. The disposition towards completing an ILP seemed to relate more to previous knowledge and experience of ILPs rather than to the level of the programme, the award it led to or the course they were attending. Trainees who had previous experiences that they could relate to the ILP process managed the documents they were presented with. We noticed that the work-based learning assessors we interviewed felt confident about using an ILP and believed that it is a good tool to use with their trainees; curiously, though, none of them used an ILP within their own study programmes for awards like the A1 and PTLLS.
- 5.36 Trainees tended to talk about their ILP as a record of their experiences and as a reflective device. Most were aware of the national standards that their programme was related to and tried to make suitable connections between their work and the standards. However, they tended to regard the process as a chore and not a priority in their professional training. There was frustration that the ILP process was essentially bureaucratic and removed from their practical concerns as developing teachers. Those in full or part-time employment in particular expressed concerns about pressures on their time and did not see the ILP as a priority. Even within the context of their training,

immediate commitments in teaching or assessing students or for writing an assignment took priority over maintaining the ILP.

- 5.37 The trainees showed little interest in engaging in a critical dialogue about ILPs and reflecting upon the standards. They were more concerned with 'doing the necessary' to meet the formal requirements.
- 5.38 We encountered scepticism about ILPs from some tutors but a willingness to experiment among most. They were able to talk about the practical problems of managing the transfer from a scheme where ILPs were essentially optional to another where they had become a requirement. Tutors talked of confusion that can arise while there are trainees working to one set of standards and a new cohort with a different set of standards. For some tutors there was a major issue concerning resources, of having insufficient time to ensure that trainees could complete a meaningful ILP. This was particularly the case among Adult and Community Learning (ACL) tutors.
- 5.39 Tutor A is a woman with years of experience as a PGCE tutor and was actively involved in developing DTLLS programme in her college. Her approach was one of reluctant compliance with official procedures in that she was critical of the emphasis placed on self-evaluation and action planning during the initial stages of ILP development when the trainees 'don't have the faintest idea what their strengths and weaknesses are in teaching.' For her there are other priorities to address in the early stages of teacher training. Tutor E is a woman of similar age though less experienced in teacher training and someone with a less critical approach to ILPs. Nevertheless, she shares an approach to her role with Tutor A that values the quality of her relationship with individual trainees. She says that she does not look at national standards in developing an ILP with a trainee; instead she refers back to the individual concerned and works to clarify what she perceives to be their needs and priorities.
- 5.40 Two of our tutor respondents, Tutor B and Tutor F, conveyed the ambiguity of ILPs explaining how, on the one hand there is an anticipatory, planning purpose, and at the same time a retrospective, recording purpose. Tutor F in particular spoke reflectively of the importance of a professional development record in teacher training. We found examples of profiles or records of achievement used within teacher training programmes in different ways by different colleges courses and staff. Some of these profiles comprised learning journals or reflective diaries where trainees would reflect upon their teaching and training programmes while others comprised a record of assessment only. The use of an ILP in such a manner tended to obscure its role as a planning document.
- 5.41 ACL tutor trainers conveyed some of the additional frustrations of their circumstances; they were compelled to implement the use of ILPs among resistant trainee teachers working with reluctant students. Such teachers are often working in community settings, managing to engage with 'non-traditional' learners, yet their efforts can be undermined by the needs of bureaucracy.
- 5.42 Like the tutors, the managers interviewed were favourably disposed to systems of mentoring. The issues of practice that concerned them were how

to support the tutors in making innovations that would keep their college teaching training schemes in line with current requirements and at the same time ensure that they were compatible with college quality assurance procedures. In particular, we heard them reflect on the challenges of reconciling mentoring provision within teacher training programmes with the support role of advanced [teaching] practitioners. The interviewed tutors and managers were in agreement on the importance of personal relationships as the central concern in mentoring and were not inclined to consider subject expertise as a key consideration.

Contested meanings

- 5.43 The official discourse about effective mentoring practice expressed through Ofsted and government reports tends to stress the importance of mentors having subject expertise and that ILPs need to be linked to national standards. Our interviews revealed how such positions relate to the perceptions and practices of our research participants.
- 5.44 We commented earlier about the lack of consistent understanding about the purpose and value of an ILP amongst the tutors and managers we interviewed. Some spoke of the retrospective function of an ILP, of tracking and recording achievements, but said relatively little about a planning function. Tutor F, for example, spoke of his commitment to a professional development record and this seemed to be the primary role of an ILP in his course, a practice based on his experiences in the field. None of the interviewed tutors spoke of producing ILPs according to officially sanctioned models based primarily on setting targets derived from the national standards as the fundamental driver of their programmes.
- 5.45 One of our tutor respondents expressed the struggle to reconcile the anticipatory, planning purpose of an ILP with its retrospective, recording purpose and concludes by recognising an overlap with other documents:
- It's a personal sort of - it's, it's multifunctional. It's set as a tracking document, a planning document in terms of where trainees want to go because they set their own - they do an initial needs analysis and try to set themselves targets. It's also then, it then - it sort of tracks how those sort of things are carried out in terms of the tutorial and the mentoring.... There is quite a bit of overlap though between the ILP and the teaching practice portfolio. (*Tutor B interview Feb 2008, p 16*)
- 5.46 Tutors and managers who were uncomfortable with the shift of emphasis in the new standards towards a compliance model of practice have found ways of working within the new pedagogical frameworks.
- 5.47 An ILP is a physical manifestation of the relationship between a mentor or tutor and a trainee in the official model of teacher training. There are some shades of difference in understanding how it is supposed to function but this was minor in comparison with the variety of understandings we encountered of what mentoring should mean. What quickly emerged from our interviews was that there was no simple understanding of the process, even when our interviewees had undertaken mentor training and development or taken part in

mentoring activities. However, our life history methodology enabled us to trace how personal experiences of valued or inspirational support from significant others who had professional development was a key shaper of expectations of what good mentoring practice might be.

- 5.48 As we have indicated, mentoring support can occur informally within formal structures. Several participants spoke of line manager mentoring by someone who was respected or inspirational and who was in a position to prioritise support for their staff within their job role. The help and guidance that tutors and managers had received themselves from influential or inspirational others were rarely termed 'mentoring' but they were powerful learning experiences which had an enduring importance for structuring ideas about what mentoring could or should offer. Most (though it is important to stress, not all) of our managers and tutors were able to tell stories of people from their past who had been inspirational for their personal development, perhaps for encouraging their interest in a special subject or in a particular profession.
- 5.49 Some of the trainees recalled significant others who had a major influence on their professional. What emerged as important mentor qualities from our interviewees' accounts was the mentors ability to be flexible in being available and responsive to the needs of the mentee. A qualification or experience in the subject, or sharing teaching responsibilities for the same group of students, could be helpful in establishing a good relationship. Several trainees remarked how important it had been for them to work with others who have a 'passion' for teaching or are 'passionate' about their subject. It was this enthusiasm that mattered rather than a technical proficiency. Where a good personal relationship was established, a mentor could make a valued contribution to a trainee's personal and professional development. Trainees expressed appreciation of others in the workplace – colleagues and line-managers - who were supportive of their professional development. Subject expertise was a contributory factor to the success of mentoring relationships but so were availability and flexibility, seniority and experience and most important was a genuine enthusiasm or passion for what the mentor was doing.
- 5.50 Trainees, tutors and managers agreed that communicating about high standards of performance was an important aspect of mentoring but the standards that mattered were the expectations of colleagues in the same community of practice rather than externally-defined standards.
- 5.51 Thus we encountered a wide diversity of ideas about the meaning of mentoring and what it should signify for new recruits in the FE sector. Our interviewees talked about a pastoral function, about a developmental function, about an assessment function. Clearly there are substantial challenges if all these functions are to be managed successfully. There are issues around the extent to which these different functions are compatible and how far tutors and mentors can manage the formality/informality of the process as well as general ethical issues and questions related to the mentor role.

Questions of theory and practice

- 5.52 In this section we discuss some issues of theory and practice that have been raised in our work. The *first* is the matter of whether striving for ‘best practice’ is appropriate in this field. The *second* considers some of the tensions between the ‘formative’ and ‘summative’ functions required of mentors. The *third* questions whether the official purpose of mentoring should be to encourage expertise in subject pedagogy.
- 5.53 **Firstly**, the project has identified a problem with the introduction of national standards and the models of ‘best practice’ that are assumed to exist for achieving them. National Standards have closed down opportunities for a critical engagement with literature or with alternative models of practice. Best practice is by definition incontestable and so encouraging trainees to critique the standards or the models of ‘best practice’ becomes redundant. Instead trainees are encouraged to concentrate on the compliant acquisition of skills.
- 5.54 Some managers and tutors bemoaned the closing off of the curriculum with its new insistence on subject pedagogical concerns and on meeting externally imposed standards. Some were concerned about the loss of critique within the new programmes and were looking for ways to incorporate critical analysis.
- 5.55 **Secondly**, the issues of theory and practice around mentoring. Underpinning some of the problems of mentoring in initial teacher training is the classic tension between, on the one hand, the developmental aspirations of a training scheme and, on the other, the judgemental requirements of quality assurance and inspection regimes. In any programme of learning with a scheme of assessment there is the potential for tension between formative and summative functions. In the context of a teacher training course, the tension is between a trainee’s need for support while learning and the course’s purpose of maintaining standards of performance.
- 5.56 During the progress of a teacher training course, a trainee’s needs are essentially *formative*. S/he is likely to benefit from the support of someone who s/he can rely upon to give helpful information and advice through the transitions to become a teacher. Such transitions are inevitably focused upon the trainee’s personal and professional development within a particular community of practice. If the trainee’s needs and concerns are to be addressed, then it is the trainee who needs to lead the process and set the agenda. If the relationship is to succeed in addressing that agenda, there needs to be trust and the process may need on occasions to be confidential.
- 5.57 At the end of a course of teacher training, the concluding process is essentially *summative*. An assessor must arrive at a final judgement to decide whether an individual trainee has achieved the assessment standards necessary to gain the qualification. That decision is necessarily public. It provides a public affirmation that the student is capable of professional practice at a satisfactory level. The process needs to be led by the assessor.
- 5.58 These tensions find articulation in the FE sector. They are expressed in the differences between the publication *Mentoring towards excellence* (AoC and FENTO 2001) and *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* (DfES 2004). The

former studied practices in colleges and adopts a developmental approach to mentoring; the latter frames Ofsted inspections and is essentially a judgemental model. (Table 8 summarises these tensions.)

Table 8: Comparing developmental and judgemental models

A developmental model (Exemplified in 'Mentoring towards excellence')	A judgemental model (Exemplified in 'Equipping our Teachers for the Future')
Best undertaken in confidence	Necessarily public
Formative purpose - focussed on personal and professional development	Summative purpose - focussed on judgement of performance
Supportive through transitions	Concerned with standards
Profession-centred	Subject - centred
Suitable for all	Mainly for trainees
Emphasis on networks	Emphasis on individuals
Led by mentee	Led by mentor

- 5.59 Our research and the work of others, shows how formative mentoring occurs very successfully and informally among friends and colleagues. Laker et al. (2008) in discussing sources of support for pre-service school teachers noted that the support that was most valuable was 'immediate, relevant, collaborative, contextual and non-threatening'.
- 5.60 Helen Colley (2003) supports this finding in her essential insight about mentoring; that mentees value relationships that they can chose and negotiate for themselves and that they use the opportunities provided to develop such relationships in constructive and creative ways. However, Colley goes on to state that where mentoring focuses on outcomes set by an external institution it can undermine the possibilities of achieving outcomes that the mentee values. She warns that you cannot take for granted that a mentor will be willing, able or competent to fulfil a role that achieves particular outcomes for a mentee as set by an institution or organisation (Colley 2003, p 159).
- 5.61 There is thus a contradiction between the formative and summative purposes of different models of mentoring – whether the emphasis is upon support for the learning and professional development of the trainee teacher, or if the aim is to decide whether a qualification and a licence to practice is to be awarded.
- 5.62 **Thirdly** is the practicality and desirability of subject-specific mentoring. Some of the trainee teachers we interviewed who were recently qualified in their

subject showed a genuine desire to be mentored by someone who is identifiable as an expert with experience close to the subject of the trainee. However, we found that some older and more experienced trainees were experts in their own fields. Their priority for mentoring was to secure support in a community of practice. (There is a comparable finding in the report of a pilot mentoring scheme undertaken in colleges in the North of England, see Robinson 2005). Tutors, mentors and managers did not appear to consider that subject-specialist mentoring was important to professional formation. What they valued more was the quality of the relationship established between mentor and mentee which enabled attention to be given to the challenges of being a good teacher.

- 5.63 A further theoretical tension underlying questions about subject-specific mentoring concerns whether there are practices that can comprise a 'subject pedagogy'. Even among our relatively small number of interviewees there was no agreed view of what role a 'subject specialist' might fulfil as a mentor. One tutor thought that having someone available with a higher qualification in a subject simply meant they would then be competent to undertake a general mentoring role. Another tutor considered that 'subject-specific' requirements comprised the ability to advise on course organisation requirements such as assessment arrangements. Another interpretation was that there are particular practices and traditions that need to be identified within particular disciplines.
- 5.64 Thus there are epistemological questions concerning the nature and practices of different disciplines that underpin the issue of subject expertise and questions of pedagogical practice that follow. That a 'subject' is a problematic concept appears to be unrecognised in much of the literature on mentoring
- 5.65 Finally, there is much debate about the notion of 'good' or 'best' practice that is largely ignored in the mentoring and ILP framework where the emphasis is upon achievement. Is the priority for the trainee to become part of a particular community of practice, to develop an identity as a particular kind of teacher, or is identity related more to being a particular kind of specialist?.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

6.1.1 In the discussion chapter we were able to see that the issues of mentoring and ILPs cannot be divorced from the context in which they operate. The participants in our research talked about mentoring in the context of transition. Three types of transition could be clearly identified:

- mentoring that supports induction into an organisation;
- mentoring that supports someone becoming a member of the teaching profession;
- mentoring that was subject-specific, that supported someone meeting the specific demands of a particular subject area.

6.2 Arguably there is a fourth, or an underpinning type of transition that also needs to be taken into account and which it is possible for the mentoring relationship to support. This is the personal development of the trainee; enabling new teachers to cope with the problems and anxieties that arise and supporting growth in personal qualities like self-confidence.

6.3 A variety of models of mentoring and of ILPs emerged in our research. Formal assessment-led models have value when the requirements are specific and when the mentoring role is job-specific. We conclude however that model of practice within the FE sector is perhaps 'best' served by a more holistic approach that is not simply focused on the development of job-specific skills but is concerned with the development of trainees' capabilities within a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). We have indicated that a large part of mentoring practice occurs informally as well as formally in communities of practice and that only a part of it is tied to specific subject pedagogies,.

6.4 In the final chapter of 'Improving Learning Cultures in Further Education' James and Biesta (2007) identify some research supported principles that they claim would *improve* learning. James and Biesta argue that securing any improvement is rarely achieved by a simple technical prescription but may perhaps be achieved through attending to the social and cultural dimensions of learning. They stress that:

Learning cultures ... are not the environments in which people learn but the social practices through which they learn, which means that they exist through the actions, dispositions and interpretations of the participants. (James and Biesta 2007, p 143)

6.5 What we found in our research is a diversity of understanding in the sector about the meaning and significance of the changes to 'social practices' in FE teacher training brought about by ILPs and mentoring. In the light of this finding we have in this chapter framed conclusions that encapsulate the diversity of understanding and made recommendations under four headings:

- Trainee agency and professional formation
- Tutor professionalism
- Subject Pedagogy
- The learning culture

Trainee agency and professional formation

6.6 As we have indicated, mentoring and the use of ILPs should not be treated as isolated products or outcomes. Rather they should be viewed as part of a broader canvas of agency and professional formation. This raises a number of questions about the precise nature of professionalism:

- What does it mean to be professional? (see for example Avis 2005; Malcolm and Zukas 2002)
- Is professionalism a fixed identity or is it creative and fluid? (Colley 2003)
- Is professionalism about rule-following or about asserting agency? (Lawy and Tedder 2008)
- What does professionalism imply about classroom practice and pedagogy?

This begs the question, what sort of model of professionalism and professional behaviour and practice is implied by the systems of mentoring and ILPs that are currently in place?

6.7 A striking quality about the transcripts of interviews with trainees was the level of commitment they showed to their own students or trainees and also to the programmes of teacher training and professional formation they were undertaking. They were highly motivated trainees, keen to engage with the challenges of their programme and deserving of a high quality experience.

6.8 In previous chapters we explored the spectrum of views about the use of ILPs; and how trainees' previous experience and their own professional practice of working with ILPs with their own students had informed their views.

6.9 We found that, even among trainees who had accepted the need to produce an ILP, the task was not accorded a particular priority. There were many comments about pressures of time, particularly from those who had full or part-time employment to sustain and/or family responsibilities to attend to. We found that, faced with such time pressures, several trainees were more concerned with their commitments to teaching or to assessing their students and those commitments these took priority over the demands of the teacher training programme. Whereas an assignment was considered an experience of learning and was worth undertaking, completing an ILP was seen as a more marginal experience of assessment.

6.10 With respect to mentoring, we found that some trainees had highly successful mentoring arrangements while others did not but there were no simple prescriptions for determining the likely success of any mentoring arrangement. Many of the trainees had worked in a range of occupations such as artist,

engineer, nurse, hairdresser etc. before starting their teacher training and already had a definite professional identity before moving into FE. Within the diversity of previous life experience, people could tell stories of significant others who related to them as 'mentors' even though that term may not have been used. Many of our managers and tutors were similarly able to tell stories of people in their past who had been inspirational for their personal development, perhaps for encouraging their interest in a special subject or in a particular profession. More recent experiences of mentoring within colleges were varied, revealing a variety of formal and informal practices and many different ways in which other people had made a significant influence on professional learning. The consequence was that we encountered a complex set of understandings about what a mentor could be or should do and the role was valued in different ways.

- 6.11 What emerged from those with positive experiences of mentoring was the importance of flexibility on the part of mentors in being available and responsive to the needs of the mentee. It seemed that successful mentoring depended primarily on the quality of the relationship established between mentor and mentee. That relationship was more significant than the subject qualification of the mentor or the specification of particular mentor functions.
- 6.12 Also noticeable was that many of the trainees expressed their appreciation of others in the workplace – colleagues or line-managers - who were supportive of their professional development.
- 6.13 Arguably the trainees were insufficiently critical of some aspects of their programme. They accepted completing ILPs on trust, with faith that their tutors knew what they were doing. They were accepting of the process and expressed confidence that the value and importance of ILPs would become apparent eventually. However, surely a pre-condition for achieving agency as a professional educator is the capacity to engage in a critical discourse about the demands of an education or training programme and such a discourse should figure significantly in a teacher training programme. Perhaps trainees in teacher education need greater encouragement to engage in such critical evaluation of the curricular questions underpinning their course experiences.
- 6.14 We would argue therefore that the ways in which mentoring and ILPs have been incorporated into teacher training programmes is a representation of the trust between trainees and their tutors but also between the government (represented by the DCSF and LLUK) and the body of teacher educators charged with the 'delivery' of the programmes of teacher education.
- 6.15 We make *three* recommendations:
 - If there is to be a formal requirement for an ILP, then it should serve the needs and be under the control of the trainee. For this to be practicable, the trainees need clarity about the different purposes of the ILP
 - .In relation to mentoring, it is important for trainees to feel supported within a community of practice and mentoring has a role to play in achieving that. Trainees should be empowered to work with mentors of their own choosing. They should set the agenda for mentor meetings.

- Trainees need more encouragement to engage in critical evaluation of the structure of their course and of the experiences it enables. In this way programmes can assert the essential analytic criticality that should be central to the process of teacher training.

Tutor professionalism

- 6.16 Tutors, managers and mentors are role models for their trainees and for that reason it is important that they represent a composite set of values and attitudes and engage in practices that they would expect their trainees to follow.
- 6.17 There is clear evidence from our interviews with tutors that they have a high level of commitment to the trainees and to the programmes. They were professional in their orientation and committed to a practice-orientated provision; they were wholeheartedly committed to maintaining the quality of their own professional practice as they understand it and the quality of the programmes of teacher education with which they are associated.
- 6.18 With respect to ILPs, we secured insights into the practices tutors were adopting to meet the requirement that trainees produce an ILP as part of their course. We encountered scepticism about the value of ILPs among some yet a willingness to experiment among most. They talked of the problems of managing the transfer from one system of qualifications to another, of confusion that can arise while there are trainees working to one set of standards and a new cohort with a different set of standards. They talked of the frustrations caused by having different documents with overlapping functions. For some tutors there was a major issue concerning resources, of having insufficient time to ensure that trainees could complete a meaningful ILP. This was particularly the case among ACL interviewees who don't see ILPs in the form set by accrediting organisations as appropriate for their trainees or for the community contexts in which they teach.
- 6.19 Underpinning the tutors' comments was a theoretical issue; a question concerning ambiguity about what precisely an ILP is supposed to do. Most of the interviewees spoke primarily of the retrospective function of an ILP, to track and record achievements. They said relatively little about an ILP having a planning function or how it related to the LLUK standards. None of the interviewed tutors thought of an ILP as the fundamental driver of their programme. Our interviews evoked little discussion of what ILPs were expected to achieve and. A professional approach to such issues would entail exploring the question rather than managing someone else's imposed solution.
- 6.20 With respect to mentoring, the tutors tended to assert the quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee as the crucial factor. They reported a range of ways in which mentoring types of support can occur very successfully informally (for example, in 'buddy' arrangements) and formally (perhaps led by team leaders within course meetings) even though such experiences may not be termed 'mentoring'. Reference was made by some tutors to a mentor being

prepared to 'challenge' a mentee and how important 'expectations' were. It was agreed that communicating about high standards was an important aspect of mentoring but the tutors suggested that externally defined standards in documents mattered rather less than the high expectations of performance conveyed between colleagues in the same community of practice.

- 6.21 It became apparent that there is no single view or straightforward expression of what it means to be a professional teacher trainer in the FE sector. Elsewhere we have written of the contrasting situations of different tutors (Lawy and Tedder, 2008; see also Biesta and Tedder, 2007) and how their 'agentic orientations' vary given their contrasting career experiences. Some experienced tutors who are well-versed in the design and structuring of programmes are marginalised and excluded from processes of change and the present situation is full of frustration for them. For other tutors who are relative newcomers to teacher training we found that involvement had increased opportunities for self-expression, engagement and agency and that the current situation is one brimming full of opportunity. The optimistic view would be that the myriad changes and prescriptions introduced into further education have not closed down the achievement of agency of those involved in teacher education programmes; rather the changes have transformed the ways in which their agency can be articulated.
- 6.22 As we have indicated the issue of professionalism is wide ranging and it is important that as role models, tutors are able to make the kinds of decisions based on trust that they would expect of their trainees. We make **two** recommendations:
- Tutors need to be engaged more conspicuously in managing curriculum change for initial teacher training; they need to be involved in a meaningful exploration of curriculum possibilities and encouraged to make educational judgements rather than required to manage imposed innovations.
 - The status of teacher trainers needs to be clarified. The involvement of mentors and others in undertaking assessment of teacher trainees risks undermining the tutor's role, particularly if such assessment becomes summative rather than formative.

Subject Pedagogy

- 6.23 One of the important changes to the structure of FE teacher training has been the move towards subject specific training with the assumption that the mentor's role is to provide specialist knowledge that is subject specific. Clearly trainees need to be competent in their own subject areas in terms of their knowledge and skills but many teacher educators are uncomfortable with the notion that specific subject pedagogies actually exist. Despite the contested nature of such claims, the government has pressed ahead (Ofsted 2003, 2006; DfES 2004) with asserting the importance of subject specialist pedagogies.
- 6.24 Our interview data gave us the opportunity to examine how far tutors and managers were able to comply with the expectation of subject-specific

mentoring and to examine how far trainees expected or were securing such support. One complication we found was that mentoring practices in FE teacher training programmes often overlap with a wider mentoring commitment that an organisation provides for all new staff.

- 6.25 We found that among young trainees who had recently graduated in their subject, some showed an earnest desire to be mentored by someone identifiable as a subject expert who has experience they could draw upon in their teaching. However, older and more experienced trainees were quite likely to have greater or more recent specialist expertise than their teacher colleagues and were more likely to value the induction facet of mentoring and support to become successful and well-adjusted teachers.
- 6.26 We found that there was support for providing 'subject-specific' mentors for trainees among the tutors and managers but heard also of the serious difficulties they encountered in trying to make such provision for all. In part this is a consequence of the sheer range of subjects taught. Tutors and their managers are working with new systems and having to find solutions to the problems they encounter and respond pragmatically. One emergent solution was to provide a trainee with a mentor who was not necessarily an expert in their curriculum area but was a skilled mentor and to organise a second or co-mentor who was responsible for subject-specific coaching.
- 6.27 For colleagues working in adult and community learning it is clear that there are particular difficulties in accessing resources sufficient to establish and maintain systems of mentoring and mentor training.
- 6.28 We also found that the quality of the relationship established between a mentor and mentee could be far more significant than subject qualifications. Trainees, tutors and managers valued relationships with mentors they admired, people who had a 'passion' for what they do or are 'passionate about teaching'. Our participants spoke of buddies, of team arrangements and peer mentoring and they talked about line managers when recalling such influences. No one suggested that they had become good teachers through the efficacy of SMART target-setting with their mentors and the achievement of targets logged in their ILP.
- 6.29 We found that our trainees welcomed opportunities to engage with work-place colleagues as part of their professional formation and that the requirement to have a mentor gave them a reason to engage with colleagues in this way. The importance of being part of a community of practice was evident. It became clear also in discussing expectations and standards of performance that externally-defined, written standards mattered rather less than the expectations of high standards conveyed between colleagues in the same community of practice.
- 6.30 There are important curricular questions that become obscured when the requirement to provide a subject-specific mentor becomes a fetish. One such question is whether specific subject pedagogies actually exist within discrete disciplinary boundaries or whether it is more important to address general educational principles and values that are shared across subject boundaries. There has been remarkably little engagement with the issue of what precisely

it means to be mentored for a particular subject. Among our interviewed tutors, for example, we found differing ideas about what subject specific mentoring might mean and could give few examples where there were particular practices and traditions identified with particular disciplines that needed particular skills.

- 6.31 However, even if agreement can be reached about what 'subject-specific' mentoring might offer, there are other intractable pedagogic questions that tutors need to address in finding suitable mentors. One such question is whether it is a subject that needs to be addressed or whether it is a student's ability to engage with the subject. For example, is mathematics difficult because of the abstract nature of mathematical ideas and concepts or is it the way the mathematics is presented that creates difficulties for students? Further complications arise if there are contested views of good practice among subject specialists. Most teacher trainers will be familiar with the contested notions of good practice in teaching 'creative' subjects (whether there should be emphasis on developing skills or encouraging expression) or in teaching languages (how much English can be used and how much to use the target language).?
- 6.32 In relation to subject pedagogy, therefore our **two** recommendations seek firstly to re-assert the importance of traditional FE educational principles and practices in teacher training and secondly to support a rational basis for the selection of mentors:
- It should be made explicit that subject expertise is but one facet of the mentoring role and that the idea of specialist subject pedagogies is profoundly problematic. There is value in teacher training in the critical exploration of pedagogical challenges across subject boundaries.
 - We favour the adoption of models of mentoring that emphasise the importance of a work-based location for the mentor who is trained and resourced to engage in a formative and developmental relationship led by the trainee.

The learning culture

- 6.33 The biographical methods of inquiry used in our project revealed something of the differences in life experience of all our interviewees and how those experiences were understood and valued. This was particularly true of the managers, men and women who have responsibility for policy and decision-making in colleges and in other sections of the FE sector.
- 6.34 We were conscious of the learning cultures that characterised different areas of the FE sector. Our participants were comfortable with ILPs when the context for learning and assessment was work-based training (WBL). There was less confidence in the value of ILPs among trainees and some tutors in adult and community learning (ACL) although some managers were attempting to make the practice palatable. There was a variety of perceptions among college-based participants that may have been influenced by the degree to which our interviewees were engaged with WBL models of training or with ACL models.

- 6.35 The varied professional experience of managers affords them differing views of what maintaining an ILP should involve. Managers raised different issues about the use of ILPs within initial teacher training which revealed their differing educational values. One was very concerned with the issue of ownership and who should be fundamentally responsible for an ILP. Should it be a document for trainees themselves to construct, maintain and use or should it be a document to enable supervision and assessment by tutors? Others were more pragmatic in their approach, expressing concern about the coherence of ILPs with other course documents and of presenting opportunities to complete ILPs with computer technology. The ACL managers we interviewed described the major problems their tutors have in using ILPs, not least because of the limited resources available to them.
- 6.36 Managers were usually concerned with issues of quality assurance and inspection and expressed willingness to comply with Ofsted inspectors' comments.
- 6.37 An important issue for managers that emerged with respect to mentoring was the way that mentoring is located in the wider context of a college community and features as part of its learning culture. Within a college organisation, mentoring interconnects with other quality assurance systems for teaching and learning that make use of other staff such as advanced teachers. Different colleges make use of such practitioners in markedly different ways. Their responsibilities and their conditions of service vary from institution to institution and this variability has consequences for the provision of mentoring for teacher training courses.
- 6.38 Our interviews revealed diverse experience of mentor training. Colleges with established policy and practice in mentoring made in-service provision of professional development opportunities for mentors and also supported access to more specialised courses, such as training for subject learning coaches. The university partnership offered a standardised package that addressed some concerns, such as the need for appropriate documentation. The managers in ACL had to be enterprising and imaginative in finding opportunities for their staff to secure training as mentors.
- 6.39 While we have identified some specific issues that can be addressed to make the system work more effectively in its current form, one of our main findings in this research has been that systems, structures and processes need to ensure that the cultural and broad professional practices of tutors are retained. We see the role of the tutor as central to ensuring the quality of teacher training and believe that teacher trainers (or educators as we would prefer to call them) ought to be among the most experienced, most capable and most creative staff working in colleges. There are issues for them to resolve concerning the use of ILPs, whether to emphasise the retrospective functions of tracking and recording achievements or to emphasise the planning functions. An approach that treated teacher training tutors as professionals would entail enabling them to explore such problems rather than expecting them to manage someone else's imposed solution.

6.40 We have **five** recommendations that relate to enhancing the learning culture of the FE sector:

- SWitch should continue to promote the networking of colleges and dialogue among colleagues to explore practices and perceptions in relation to innovations like ILPs and mentoring
- SWitch should continue to lobby for funds to continue beyond the current period and use the funds creatively to engage in work that is educationally important; not only should there be concern with 'delivery' but a commitment to critical evaluation of established practice and orthodoxy
- Policy-makers should cease the imposition of innovation and change and leave the sector a period to embed practice and enhance quality
- Policy-makers should recognise and celebrate the variety of practice and achievement of the different facets of the FE sector (ACL, WBL, the voluntary sector as well as colleges) and recognise that 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate. They should recognise that the secondary sector is not necessarily a useful model for practice in teacher training.
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- All stakeholders in the FE sector– colleges, policy-makers and agencies – need to recognise and value the work of adult and community learning. Our report has repeatedly noted the disadvantages for ACL in their access to resources and the danger of the lack of accessible training for those who are often at the 'cutting edge' of practice.

Endnote

6.41 This project has been possible because of concerns about standards in further education and the need to gauge the impact on initial teacher training of particular innovations. Such features should not be viewed on their own but should be viewed as part of a broader 'performative' framework that has been imposed on the FE sector. The upshot of such a framework on practices like mentoring is that the relationship between the mentor and mentee may become focused on quality assurance and upon meeting prescribed standards which changes the character and shape of the relationship.

6.42 It would of course be irresponsible to suggest that there should be no assessment of the capabilities of teachers within the profession. What we would question is the form that professional accountability has taken and the way that the idea of mentoring has been colonised into a performative function. There is a danger that preoccupation with documentation such as ILPs displaces engagement with more significant educational issues. One example would be the manner through which performative practices have disaggregated once holistic practices into their constituent parts (often for assessment purposes). The challenge for many educationalists has been to retain the commitment to a set of values and a learning culture that, as James and Biesta (2007) note is 'complex, relational, and greater than the sum if its parts' (p 157).

- 6.43 We would conclude by suggesting that it is time emphasis was shifted away from the sterility of arguments about standards and away from the leaden bureaucracy of writing plans, records and policies. Our research is in many ways an antidote to the bland bureaucratic and atheoretical (or anti-theoretical) commentaries about the need to maintain and ensure standards. There are important challenges facing the sector in years to come and we would argue that it is time to restore to the curriculum of FE teacher training a sense of idealism, to encourage the excitement offered by the opportunities for change and transformation that the sector offers. In valuing such features of further education, the curriculum for teacher training would give greater emphasis to imagination, to enjoyment, to a passion for learning. These are remarkable qualities that many people bring in their different ways to further and adult education and they deserve to be nurtured and celebrated.

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CIPD mentoring

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Consent Forms
Appendix 2	Interview Schedules
Appendix 3	Respondent Overview
Appendix 4	More detail about Individual Learning Plans

Appendix 1 Consent Forms



School of Education and Lifelong Learning



SW0705 Disseminating model Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

CONSENT FORM

I understand that this project is designed to research the implementation of national standards in the training of teachers in the Learning and Skills sector in the South West. Specifically, it is intended to investigate the perceptions of trainees, mentors and managers of different models of Individual Learning Plans that are used or could be used in the development of professional competence.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation
• I have the right to read the transcripts of any interviews with me
• I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any personal information about me
• any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this project and that may include publications
• the information which I give may be shared between members of the research team in anonymised form
• all information I give will be treated as confidential
• the researchers will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

(Signature of interviewee)

(Date)

(Printed name of interviewee)

One copy of this form will be kept by interviewee; a second copy will be kept by interviewer.

The contact phone number of the interviewer is _____. If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact Dr Michael Tedder (Tel: 01392 264787; email m.t.tedder@exeter.ac.uk).

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation.



School of Education and Lifelong Learning



SW0708 Disseminate models of good practice in mentor training

CONSENT FORM

I understand that this project is designed to research the implementation of national standards in the training of teachers in the Learning and Skills sector in the South West. Specifically, it is intended to investigate the perceptions of trainees, mentors and managers of different models of mentoring that are used or could be used in the development of professional competence.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation
- I have the right to read the transcripts of any interviews with me
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any personal information about me
- any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this project and that may include publications
- the information which I give may be shared between members of the research team in anonymised form
- all information I give will be treated as confidential
- the researchers will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....
(Signature of interviewee)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed name of interviewee)

One copy of this form will be kept by interviewee; a second copy will be kept by interviewer.

The contact phone number of the interviewer is _____. If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact Dr Michael Tedder (Tel: 01392 264787; email m.t.tedder@exeter.ac.uk).

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation.

Appendix 2 Interview Schedules



SW0705 Disseminating model Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Comments

There are three kinds of inter-related data we are aiming to collect through the interviews:

- Information about how far individuals in different positions within an organisation (trainees, their mentors or supervisors, their managers) perceive the use of ILPs to be helpful to them in carrying out their roles
- Information about the organisation and its practices in respect of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) – whether and how such practices contribute to the effective everyday and long-term functioning of the organisation
- Information about the range of ILP approaches used across different organisations and what the strengths and limitations of different approaches might be in different contexts

In other words, there are stories that we want to collect from three perspectives within an organisation – from the individual trainee, from the partnership of trainee and mentor or supervisor, from the organisation – and with these stories we hope to construct a picture of what is happening in the region with ILPs. The interview questions are intended to prompt an in-depth discussion with each interviewee to explore the research issues in depth. The point of qualitative research is to work for understanding of social phenomena so we are interested in differences of perception and the range of meanings that people see in different situations rather than expecting to arrive at a simple 'truth'. This often means that qualitative researchers work with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty – so-called 'fuzzy' data.

Preparation

- The time set aside for the meeting should be negotiated with the interviewee beforehand and wherever possible a quiet room arranged where interruptions can be avoided.
- Ethically, we work on the principle of asking for participation on the basis of informed consent – there is no obligation or compulsion on anyone to take part. The purpose of the research and of the interviews needs to be explained and a written consent form signed.

- So that the interviewer can be focussed on the interview rather than on recording data the interview is recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviewee is welcome to have a copy of the transcript, should they want it.
- We need to obtain certain data about all interviewees: age, gender, level of educational achievement, subject specialism, years in L&S work, role within the organisation. Where they are taking a programme of professional development we need to know the title and who accredits it. Such biographical information could be obtained in response to the schedule question 'Tell me about yourself' - but we need to ensure we have the data for all the participants.

Conduct

- The role of the interviewer is to ask questions and probe where necessary. Focus on what you want to know but be sensitive to what the interviewee wants to tell you.
- 'Easier' questions tend to be descriptive (i.e. 'Tell me about a typical day in your working life'; 'Tell me something about that particular meeting') and can help put people at ease at the start of an interview. They can be followed by 'harder' questions involving explanation, reflection or judgement.
- Switch between descriptions and examples. When responses are general or theoretical ask 'Can you give me an example of ...?' and if responses tend to be specific and descriptive ask 'What sense do you make of this experience?'
- Be ready to probe learning. Possible approaches include:
 - asking how they learnt to do a particular task or job ('So did you learn by doing it? Or did you watch someone doing it?')
 - asking 'What is the most difficult thing about being a.../doing...'
 An excellent prompt to explore the assumptions of educational professionals is 'What is your model of learning?' and 'How does that model affect your practice?'
- Ask about agency – i.e. find out how far people feel they have control. Possible approaches are:
 - did you want to do that?
 - to what extent was that your decision/under your control?
 - was it simply a case of you being in that situation and you had to get on with it?
- Finish by asking about what the interviewee anticipates and hopes for the future. What do they think will happen next?

Conclusion

- Please thank the interviewee for her/his time and input and ask if she/he would like a copy of the final report. If so, please take details of where it should be sent.
- As soon as possible write up some field notes that can be shared with other members of the team. It is remarkable how a half page of notes can highlight key issues that will be fleshed out in the transcript and can be pursued in other interviews and with colleagues.

Possible Questions: TRAINEES

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.

How Individual Learning Plans [ILPs] are used

- Tell me about your personal experience of using ILPs:
 - How are they written?
 - How do they guide what you do in your teaching/training?
 - How do they guide what you do in your assignments/coursework?
- How well do you think a Learning Plan supports your personal and professional development? What do you like about it? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision? What else needs to be done?
- How far is your experience what you expected when you joined the organization?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available to you within this organisation?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector?
- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to your professional development in this organisation?

Possible Questions: MENTORS / SUPERVISORS

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.
- What have quality assurance systems said about the training programme? What have inspection reports said?

How Individual Learning Plans [ILPs] are used

- Tell me about your personal experience of using ILPs (a) as a trainee (b) as a mentor.
- What training have you received in producing ILPs?
- What continuing support is available to you in this work?
- How well do you think a Learning Plan supports personal and professional development? What do you like about it? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision? What else needs to be done?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available to you within this organisation?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector?
- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to your professional development in this organisation?

Possible Questions: MANAGERS

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.
- What have quality assurance systems said about the training programme? What have inspection reports said?

How Individual Learning Plans [ILPs] are used

- Tell me about your personal experience of using ILPs. [If appropriate - (a) as a trainee (b) as a mentor.]
- What continuing support is available to people engaged in producing ILPs?
- How well do you think a Learning Plan supports personal and professional development? What do you like about it? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision? What else needs to be done?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available to staff within this organisation?
- Have you made use of other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you made use of other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to the professional development of staff in this organisation?
- Based on your experience, how does the use of Learning Plans contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector? How far are ILPs achieving the purpose of raising national standards?

SW0708

Disseminate models of good practice in mentor training

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Comments

There are three kinds of inter-related data we are aiming to collect through the interviews:

- Information about how far individuals in different positions within an organisation (trainees, their mentors or supervisors, their managers) perceive the use of mentoring to be helpful to them in carrying out their roles
- Information about the organisation and its practices in respect of mentor training – whether and how such practices contribute to the effective everyday and long-term functioning of the organisation
- Information about the range of mentor training schemes used across different organisations and what the strengths and limitations of different approaches might be in different contexts

In other words, there are stories that we want to collect from three perspectives within an organisation – from the individual trainee, from the partnership of trainee and mentor or supervisor, from the organisation – and with these stories we hope to construct a picture of what is happening in the region with respect to mentor training. The interview questions are intended to prompt an in-depth discussion with each interviewee to explore the research issues in depth. The point of qualitative research is to work for understanding of social phenomena so we are interested in differences of perception and the range of meanings that people see in different situations rather than expecting to arrive at a simple ‘truth’. This often means that qualitative researchers work with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty – so-called ‘fuzzy’ data.

Preparation

- The time set aside for the meeting should be negotiated with the interviewee beforehand and wherever possible a quiet room arranged where interruptions can be avoided.
- Ethically, we work on the principle of asking for participation on the basis of informed consent – there is no obligation or compulsion on anyone to take part. The purpose of the research and of the interviews needs to be explained and a written consent form signed.
- So that the interviewer can be focussed on the interview rather than on recording data the interview is recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviewee is welcome to have a copy of the transcript, should they want it.

- We need to obtain certain data about all interviewees: age, gender, level of educational achievement, subject specialism, years in L&S work, role within the organisation. Where they are taking a programme of professional development we need to know the title and who accredits it. Such biographical information could be obtained in response to the schedule question 'Tell me about yourself' - but we need to ensure we have the data for all the participants.

Conduct

- The role of the interviewer is to ask questions and probe where necessary. Focus on what you want to know but be sensitive to what the interviewee wants to tell you.
- 'Easier' questions tend to be descriptive (i.e. 'Tell me about a typical day in your working life'; 'Tell me something about that particular meeting') and can help put people at ease at the start of an interview. They can be followed by 'harder' questions involving explanation, reflection or judgement.
- Switch between descriptions and examples. When responses are general or theoretical ask 'Can you give me an example of ...?' and if responses tend to be specific and descriptive ask 'What sense do you make of this experience?'
- Be ready to probe learning. Possible approaches include:
 - asking how they learnt to do a particular task or job ('So did you learn by doing it? Or did you watch someone doing it?')
 - asking 'What is the most difficult thing about being a.../doing...'
 An excellent prompt to explore the assumptions of educational professionals is 'What is your model of learning?' and 'How does that model affect your practice?'
- Ask about agency – i.e. find out how far people feel they have control. Possible approaches are:
 - did you want to do that?
 - to what extent was that your decision/under your control?
 - was it simply a case of you being in that situation and you had to get on with it?
- Finish by asking about what the interviewee anticipates and hopes for the future. What do they think will happen next?

Conclusion

- Please thank the interviewee for her/his time and input and ask if she/he would like a copy of the final report. If so, please take details of where it should be sent.
- As soon as possible write up some field notes that can be shared with other members of the team. It is remarkable how a half page of notes can highlight key issues that will be fleshed out in the transcript and can be pursued in other interviews and with colleagues.

Possible Questions: TRAINEES

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.

How mentoring is used

- Tell me about your personal experience of mentoring: Who is/are you mentor(s)? What is/are the roles fulfilled by the mentor(s)?
- How do mentors support your personal and professional development?
 - How do they guide what you do in your teaching/training?
 - How do they guide what you do in your assignments/coursework?
 - What do you like about the system? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision? What else needs to be done?
- How far is your experience what you expected when you joined the organization?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available to you within this organisation?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of mentoring contribute to your professional development in this organisation?
- Based on your experience, how does the use of mentoring contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector?

Possible Questions: MENTORS / SUPERVISORS

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.
- What have quality assurance systems said about the training programme? What have inspection reports said?

How mentoring is used

- Tell me about your personal experience of mentoring (a) as a mentee (b) as a mentor?
- What training have you received in mentoring?
- What continuing support is available to you in this work?
- How well do you think mentoring supports personal and professional development? What do you like about it? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision of mentoring? What else needs to be done?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision of mentor training? What else needs to be done?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available within this organisation?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you used other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of mentoring contribute to professional development in this organisation?
- Based on your experience, how does the use of mentoring contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector?

Possible Questions: MANAGERS

Not all the following questions need to be used. They should be used flexibly according to the interviewee and the circumstances. Include at some point: 'What is your model of learning? How does that model affect your practice?'

Contextual data

- Can you tell me about this organisation – its size, its role in the community, the perceptions of staff, [students] and the public?
- Tell me about yourself and how you come to be in your current role.
- What have quality assurance systems said about the training programme? What have inspection reports said?

How mentoring is used

- Tell me about your personal experience of mentoring (a) as a mentee (b) as a mentor?
- What training have you received in mentoring?
- What continuing support is available to people engaged in mentoring?
- How well do you think mentoring supports personal and professional development? What do you like about it? What do you dislike?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision of mentoring? What else needs to be done?
- What gaps do you think there are in the provision of mentor training? What else needs to be done?

Familiarity with other models

- What other forms of support for personal and professional development are available to staff within this organisation?
- Have you made use of other systems, formal or informal, in this organization? Would you tell me about your experience?
- Have you made use of other systems, formal or informal, in any other organization? Would you tell me about your experience?

Achieving national standards

- Based on your experience, how does the use of mentoring contribute to your professional development in this organisation?
- Based on your experience, how does mentoring contribute to the achievement of national standards in the learning and skills sector? How far does the practice contribute to achieving the purpose of raising national standards?

Appendix 3 Respondent Overview

Trainees	Award	Brief description
A	Full-time PGCE	Male in 40s – training for college teaching after leaving engineering management
B	DTLLS	Male in 20s – employed as assessor and instructor in college catering department
C	Part-time PGCE	Female in 20s – employed as college art and design technician
D	Part-time PGCE	Male in 30s – training for college sport and leisure teaching
E	DTLLS	Male in 40s – training for college hairdressing after running own business
F	PTLLS and A1	Female in 30s - has accountancy business / employed as trainer and assessor in private training company
G	Part-time Cert Ed	Female in 20s – has accountancy qualifications / employed as trainer and assessor in private training company
H	CTLLS	Female in 40s - employed 17 years full-time as ICT trainer in public service organisation
J	CTLLS	Female in 40s - employed 11 years full-time as ICT trainer in public service organisation
K	PTLLS	Female in 30s – degree in environmental science, employed in Family Learning project

Tutors	Role	Brief description
A	PGCE / DTLLS tutor	Female in 50s - graduate in environmental science / trained for secondary teaching / nearly 30 years experience, including 15 in ITT
B	PGCE / DTLLS tutor	Female in 50s - graduate in chemistry and maths / trained for primary teaching / Skills for Life numeracy specialist / recent engagement with ITT
C	PGCE / DTLLS tutor	Male in 40s - graduate in sociology / taught accountancy in FE and HE / achieved PCET PGCE leading to recent ITT engagement
D	PGCE / DTLLS tutor	Female in 50s – experienced in retail, catering and business studies and trained candidates for assessors units for many years leading to wider ITT role
E	DTLLS tutor and mentor	Female in 40s – wide experience in retail, customer service, craft subjects, ICT, SLDD, ICT, access / recent OU graduate
F	PGCE / DTLLS tutor	Male in 40s (?) – graduate in history and RE / PCET PGCE in 2001 leading to engagement in ITT
G	College programme manager and PGCE mentor	Achieved qualifications (assessor awards, F&AETC, Cert Ed, OU degree) as mature student alongside employment in voluntary sector as worker and manager.
H	ACL: PTLLS tutor	Female in 40s - art history degree and experience in community teaching / PGCE / several years in ITT in ACL
J	ACL: PTLLS tutor	Female in 50s – calligrapher and personal development tutor / Cert Ed / 26 years in adult ed, nearly a decade in ITT

Managers	Role	Brief description
A	College: Staff Development Manager	Female in 50s - degree in economics and stats / PGCE in 1970s / more than 25 yrs in FE /commitment to numeracy in Skills for Life and Functional Skills
B	College: Quality Manager	Male in 60s – specialist in languages and EFL / many years in FE and ITT
C	College: Quality Manager	Female in 50s – trained originally for primary in 1970s / OU degree in 1980s / around 20 yrs in FE
D	College: Continuing Education Manager	Female in 40s – previous career in NHS / PGCE in 1990s
E	College: Quality Manager	Female in 40s - trained for secondary teaching with sports specialism and in FE for 25 years
F	ACL: Curriculum Manager	Female in 50s – trained for middle school science teaching / taught art & craft in adult education / 12 years as curriculum team leader.
G	ACL: Quality & Training Manager	Female in 50s(?) – extensive commercial experience followed by adult education experience in languages and EFL; holds F&AETC, PGCE
H	Voluntary: Tutor Co-ordinator	Female in 60s - Maths & stats graduate with extensive industrial experience; experienced but not formally qualified as adult teacher. Project Manager for e-learning project
J	Training Manager	Male in large engineering company.

Appendix 4 More detail about Individual Learning Plans

The training provider manages the writing of an ILP with the learner. Usually it is the role of the assessor employed by the training provider to complete the ILP with both the learner and the learner's line manager. The ILP is written up during and after an initial assessment of the learner by the assessor. Typically, the initial assessment will include:

- Diagnostic tests in literacy, numeracy and ICT to establish the current level of ability of the learner and to identify if there are any learning needs.
- A 'skills scan'
- A diagnostic test for the technical certificate and/or underpinning knowledge of the NVQ
- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
- A record of anything that has been discussed during the initial assessment that clarifies any of the processes above and/or a record of anything that could not be recorded on other documents.

The skills scan comprises a list of the headline criteria of the NVQ to be undertaken and the learner scores themselves as 'competent', 'practice needed', 'training needed' or not done in the job so 'Not Applicable'. The line manager will then repeat the exercise on the same learner. This gives the assessor an indication of the initial ability of the learner from two viewpoints. It also allows for discussion to be undertaken about gaps in knowledge and skills and how these will be filled.

Once the assessor has recorded the outcomes of the initial assessment, she or he will draw up an assessment plan that will include the main outcomes of the whole training programme, such as

- NVQ
- Key skills
- Technical certificate
- Employee's rights and responsibilities

The plan is used to record everything described above at the beginning of the learner's programme. It records how the outcomes will be achieved and the target dates for achieving them. In all cases, the plans show examples of what is expected for each of the sections and there is an expectation that the plan will be used as an ongoing document, guiding work in progress. If any special arrangements have been agreed, such as provisions to accommodate learning needs, this will also be recorded. The ILP is a document used to record planned reviews that will take place throughout a learner's programme. The plan needs to be updated as the learner achieves parts of the framework, and/or if any changes need to be made either to the programme, or if the learner's circumstances change.

Payments to Providers

The ILP is used as a framework for funding purposes and is a contractual obligation of funded learning programmes. The training provider uses the planned outcome information on the ILP to inform the funder (the Learning and Skills Council in England, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) of the Welsh Assembly, Skills Development Scotland) how many learners

will achieve which parts of the framework by what time. Payments to providers are made by the LSC based on the information the ILP holds.

In Scotland the ILP records 'milestones' which are based on the learner's achievement of the elements that make up the units of the NVQ. The government funding is then paid to the training provider on the learner achieving each of these milestones.

In England and Wales, payments are made on the final achievement of some parts of the framework such as the technical certificate and the key skills. The main qualification aim, usually the NVQ, is given a value and this sum divided by the number of months that the learner has agreed it will take them. These staged payments are known as 'on programme payments' and paid to the provider for as long as the learner continues on the programme. Twenty percent of the full value is retained by the funder and paid to the provider only when the learner achieves the whole award.

Should the learner take longer to achieve the qualification than what was originally agreed on the ILP, the balance is divided by the number of months of time that the learner would need to complete the framework. If all the on programme payments have been paid to the training provider, then the provider is expected to continue to work with the learner until they achieve the award with no further funding.

LSC Auditing

When the LSC audit a training provider, the ILP is central to the process. The LSC seeks to check the accuracy of the ILP against progress by checking the paperwork from the reviews that have taken place and become part of the ILP. They will check that the learner achieves the units by the dates planned in the ILP. They will work methodically through all the details of the ILP, looking for evidence that demonstrates that what has been recorded has taken place.

The LSC will allow up to a 5% error rate within the sample they audit. Should the error rate be above this, the LSC is likely to claw back the percentage of the error rate on all of the funding claimed in the year under audit. The LSC will advise the training provider during the audit and give the provider the opportunity to produce missing evidence so that the error rate can be reduced.

Promoting Good Practice

We investigated a number of websites (NIACE, 2003; DfES 2003) that offer information and guidance on the production and use of ILPs. Some relate to materials produced for the Skills for Life Programme and date from 2003. The Department for Education and Skills in its recent guise as the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills hosts the 'Read Write Plus' website and offers materials to support ILP production.[www.dcsf.gov.uk/readwriteplus/]

The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) states that a completed ILP should include:

- Results of assessments;
- The learner's long-term goals;
- The goals of the program to be followed, cross-referenced to the national standards or core curriculum;

- Any other goals that the learner wishes to achieve, both social and personal;
- Targets and dates for meeting them;
- A programme of dated progress reviews;
- Space to record achievement of targets and any developments in the ILP
- Signatures of learner and teacher;

The NIACE guidance places emphasis on social and personal goals that the learner herself wishes to achieve.

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) hosts the 'Ofsted Good Practice Database' (<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=108289>) which states that:

Individual Learning Plans form a 'route map' of how a learner will get from their starting point on a learning journey to the desired end point. They may be for one course and include the acquisition of qualifications and skills, or may link several courses that give progression to different levels (from level 1 to 3, or from level 2 to Higher Education). They should be individual for each learner to reflect aspirations, aptitude and needs.(QIA 2008)

The website offers a guide entitled 'A seven step approach' which says that, before creating an ILP, you will have carried out initial and diagnostic assessment. There are then seven steps to aid the process:

1. Get to know the learner
2. Use the initial and diagnostic assessments
3. Prioritise the basic skills needs
4. Obtain agreement
5. Break down the objectives
6. Decide the teaching approaches
7. Decide how to record progress

They go on to say that although there may be common learning goals and methods of delivery for all learners on a particular course, it is unlikely that all the learners will have the same learning styles and will have individual needs and circumstances

Ofsted recommends that the ILPs should start from a common format and then 'develop as initial assessment and circumstances impact' (ibid). The website also recommends that ILPs should be 'live documents that are useful to the learner, delivery staff and possibly employers and parents/guardians' (ibid). It was a matter of concern that too many plans inspected were identical within a cohort of learners which would mean some learners would struggle with the ILP set and others would find it too easy and not be sufficiently challenged.

Ofsted (ibid) have published their findings about strengths and areas for improvement from inspection reports. The website records that recent inspection reports had identified the following strengths among inspected provision:

- * Effective use of individual learning plans
- * Good individual learning plans

- * Good development of individual learning plans

At the same time, the following has been identified as areas for improvement:

- * Poor development of individual learning plans
- * Inadequate use of individual learning plans
- * Poor planning of learning

There are recommendations that emphasise the importance of an ILP being a working document that serves the needs of the learner rather than being a document geared to securing funding. Other recommendations assert the need for appropriate training so that those who write the ILP understand what the document is intended to do and have the necessary negotiating skills to ensure that learners are involved in producing the document and have a sense of ownership of it. There are also indications that inspectors were impressed by practices that were responsive to the circumstances of learners in particular training schemes.