Lived experiences of teacher mentors; the importance of context and partnership in mentoring arrangements in the English school system

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Declaration

I, Tessa Willy, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Teacher mentoring is a crucial component of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and has grown in importance with its reconfiguration towards school-centred Initial Teacher Training. However, schools, whose primary focus is educating pupils, may lack the capacity, and in some cases the capability, to support increased mentoring expectations, resulting in varied and inconsistent mentoring practice. What then are the conditions that enable or constrain mentor practice?

Using a social constructivist paradigm with an interpretivist stance, the research examines what enables and constrains mentors' practice through an initial mentor survey, followed by detailed interviews. Data were thematically analysed, facilitated through an activity theory framework, employing the theory of practice architecture and concept of ecology of practices, to ascertain those factors impacting mentors' practice.

Analysis of the data reveals the importance of the context in which mentors work, and that the role of both the school and the provider is critical in creating a quality mentoring environment. The findings suggest there are four 'capacities' (organisational, staff, mentor, and partnership) operating within the school and provider context that influence teachers' experiences of mentoring.

School and provider capacities may enable and/or constrain mentoring practice along a continuum from strongly enabling to strongly constraining. Amalgamating the continuums, I created a four-quadrant framework illustrating how school and provider contexts interact. Each quadrant represents a mentoring ecology characterising different circumstances of mentor practice with varying levels of efficacy.

The findings suggest it is both the provider and the school working in partnership that influences mentors' experience. In particular, the role of the school is underestimated in a policy landscape currently focussed on managing and assessing the provider. This has wider ramifications for mentor driven policy areas such as the Early Career Framework and ITT Market Reform and suggests a greater need for future focus on partnership.

Impact Statement

Pursuing a professional doctorate, closely aligned to my role, has deepened my personal understanding as a teacher educator as well as supported my work on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes in conjunction with partnership schools. Benefitting the individual student, as well as the wider community of practice is a recognised attribute of the professional doctorate (Kumar and Dawson, 2013).

The findings from this research have supported understanding of the contexts within which mentors work and how future endeavours may be targeted to accommodate and capitalise on change. In addition, conducting the research has provided opportunities to contribute to my field of interest, the lived experiences of teacher mentors, and what facilitates their practice. I intend to share the outcomes through journal articles, conference participation and working with schools and providers.

Reaching beyond my own professional benefit, participating teacher mentors have been afforded a voice to articulate contemporary perceptions of their practice, expressing benefits gained from engaging in ITE alongside concern at perceived challenges. Conducting the interviews facilitated a dialogue and provided opportunities for teacher mentors to reflect on their professional practice. From such reflections it became clear that the context within which the mentor works has significant impact on their experiences of ITE. In addition, it was evident that it was the combination of both the mentors' school and provider working effectively together in partnership that proved critical in creating the optimal environment for mentors to support beginning teachers.

Understanding the impact that situational context has on the mentor is important for all those involved and engaged in ITE programme development; it may support them in conceptualising and developing the most appropriate methods of partnership and collaboration. Employment of similar analytical tools and theory to those used in this research may encourage others to explore complex contexts and understand them better. The school and provider 'capacities' I conceptualised alongside the matrix I designed to explore the mentor's unique context, may be used to determine what it is that enables and/or constrains mentor practice and identify the outcomes of collaborative

partnership working. This could help demonstrate the impact of change on the complex ITE context and suggest subsequent steps that may be taken, potentially incurring positive intervention.

The outcomes of the findings in highlighting the importance of effective collaborative work between school and provider, demonstrate the necessity for effective partnership between them. How well the mentor's school and their provider work together is highly significant when creating the most conducive environment for mentors to work and beginning teachers to learn in. For this to happen, it is vital that schools and providers work constructively together, with schools committing to contribute to ITE and providers recognising the need for effective, collaborative development. At a time when the efficacy of the mentor in school education takes on even greater importance, providing the tools to investigate and understand the complex system within which the mentor operates, holds much relevance and value.

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Acknowledgments

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Reflective statement

My experience as a primary school teacher has served me well throughout my long engagement on the EdD programme. The smorgasbord approach redolent of the primary classroom has been in evidence throughout my studies and associated research. It has provided opportunities to engage with a wide range of different subjects and foci, following varied paths of interest and professional curiosity. Having such diverse experiences has encouraged the exploration and investigation of the various roles within my professional practice, through developing my reflexivity and openness to intellectual experimentation. Underpinning this approach has been a deep commitment to my underlying curiosity about education, and the education of educators, giving purpose to the research that I have undertaken and an overarching compass.

I have developed my understanding of ITE, through both my job and my studies, and in doing so have been able to embed aspects of my learning into my daily work. This has served to improve my practice from a more informed and reasoned place and approach my work in different ways, helping me to be both more reflective and reflexive (Schön, 1984) and ever more curious. This has been due in part to the nature of the programme and the incremental learning approach, building successive layers of knowledge and understanding; always coming back to initial questions better informed and with greater insight.

The structure of the programme and its implicit pedagogy has scaffolded my learning, building my confidence and criticality. This has helped me in the professional aspects of my role and been implemented in my practice; for example, having improved insight into the specific needs of partner schools from my research findings has supported in the organisation and development of our programme's partnership Virtual Learning Environment. In consequence I have developed not just as a learner but also as a teacher and practitioner, as well as a researcher. This has ensured that the doctorate has been significant as a process rather than a means to an end.

Working on a professional doctorate has provided opportunities for initiating and sustaining dialogue with colleagues, exposing me to perspectives from a range of different experiences and value systems. In this way I have been able to

perceive my own professional identity through the lens of others leading to well-reasoned understanding and improving conversations with those I work with. Attending thesis workshops has helped facilitate this and the need to work virtually during the pandemic, far from curtailing conversations, has in some cases enabled them, communicating online and with colleagues who would otherwise have been inaccessible.

I have maintained, during my time on the programme, both a diary and a calendar, serving to record events and subsequently reflect on them as well as consider and plan next steps. This has proved an invaluable resource in both looking back and forward, so augmenting the spiral, incremental learning process that I have adopted during the programme. My work on the thesis, begun over four years ago, has drawn extensively on the first four years of my EdD studies as detailed below.

The foundations of the doctorate

I started the programme in 2014, a significant time in ITE when the first noteworthy implications of sweeping policy change instigated by the Coalition Government (2010-2015) were beginning to be felt. As will be addressed in this thesis, these changes had a powerful impact on all aspects of education, teaching and teacher education. The reconfiguration of ITE, with the balance of responsibility for beginning teachers changing, had implications for school and provider partnership and, of particular professional interest to me, for teacher mentors.

Foundations of professionalism

The first assignment that I completed, the foundations of professionalism was both topical and timely. The purpose of the assignment was intricately bound up with my own practice and charted the impact of multiple changes on both the nature and practice of my profession, as the title of the assignment suggested, *Buffeted by the winds of political change – what impact have changing political policies had on teacher and student teacher professionalism in state maintained English schools?*

Engaging with the assignment required an examination of the context within which I was working, revealing it to be one of profound change. This is

something that has not abated and arguably increased since. With a blurring of boundaries between different roles and responsibilities in partnership and shifting notions of identity, researching, and writing the assignment made me consider and analyse my own identity and role as a teacher educator and the diverse facets of my job. This proved the start of an ongoing interest and focus for me professionally and one which has been carried through my studies and into my practice.

Methods Of Enquiry (MOE)1and 2

The second assignment, MOE1 saw the progression from a generic consideration of my role to a more focussed view on a specific aspect of my job as an early researcher. It reacquainted me with, and introduced me to, a wide range of research techniques as well as challenged my methodological and epistemological stance, so encouraging an exploration of my values and belief systems.

The assignment considered how I might approach a small-scale study into the teaching of a particular discrete subject, geography, in primary schools and how that had been impacted by the changes within the ITE context. The assignment; *Getting lost; what impact is the changing nature of ITE routes into primary school education having on primary geography education?* focused on the implications of the government's school centralisation policy considering in particular, their flagship School Direct initiative. This went on to inform both my IFS and thesis with its focus on the impact of change in ITE, in particular, the consequences of diversifying the routes into teaching and encouraging greater school-centred ITE.

MOE2, the third assignment, built on the previous one and with a continuing focus on primary geography, was a more specific project; *An exploration into the factors influencing the time newly qualified teachers spend teaching geography in primary schools.* This had proved a topical issue with recently qualified teachers concerned about their perceived constraint in teaching foundation subjects such as geography. This helped me design a more supportive programme for their PGCE course and benefit from understanding the situation in schools better.

The assignment challenged my research and analytical skills being effectively a small pilot for an identified area of possible future study. This was not something that I was recently practised in having completed my MA 15 years previously and having had little opportunity to pursue my own research in an overwhelmingly teaching role. I ensured that I participated in specific training sessions and workshops, such as those for NVivo and SPSS. This, together with refamiliarisation and further exploration of research methodology and design, helped to alleviate some initial confusion. I developed the confidence to include such techniques and strategies within my professional repertoire, something that also supported my teaching of students conducting their own research projects.

Discussions and collaboration with peers and colleagues offered different perspectives from diverse experiences and encouraged me to adopt a more objective, questioning stance. I became familiar with effective research techniques and was encouraged to take risks and inevitably make mistakes, informing further research. Although a small project, the planning and execution was complex, helping me appreciate that research always involves more time than anticipated. I came to recognise what can be done and what is unrealistic, proving invaluable with both my Institution Focussed Study (IFS) and thesis.

The Interim stage - IFS

Despite my previous two assignments focussing on a specific subject area, I chose to concentrate next on an issue directly related to my role. Taking on greater responsibility for partnership, I wanted to consider the impact of the rise of different routes into teaching and focus on a growing area of our partnership work, the School Direct Tuition Fee (SDTF) programme focussed on preparing primary school teachers. Through the IFS I examined the differential outcomes of this route to the more 'core' ITE programme, evaluating its advantages and shortcomings. Using a case study approach, I investigated a particular teaching school alliance to exemplify the characteristics of the SDTF route and the experiences beginning teachers had who participated.

Conducting the research proved significant to my work and enabled a better understanding of my practice, of which partnership was key. This led to my improved understanding of the complex relationships between provider and

partner schools and the critical role that teacher mentors play within partnership. Through following an SDTF approach, participating schools had become more involved in the whole process of ITE. This helped to confirm my appreciation of the importance of partnership and that a simple binary, school versus university does not account for determining successful ITE outcomes as discussed by Orchard and Winch (2015) and UCET (2016). Wanting to further explore the nature of partnership and the role that the school played led me to the thesis theme.

The thesis

My thesis, focusing on the impact of the reconfiguration of ITE drew on my findings from the IFS as well as earlier assignments. Examining the impact of changing policy on teachers, as well as exploring notions of professional identity proved particularly pertinent when considering the blurring of boundaries and shifting identities of those responsible for ITE.

I was struck by what one participant from my IFS said about their school mentor:

> *Having someone like xxxx in xxxx is crucial. I think that she has been a key, pivotal figure in making the group really strong…. she kept the continuity going and her interest was very very genuine and personal, and she really took time to mentor each student. I personally found her really encouraging. She very carefully managed what the schools were expecting to get out of SD and what the students wanted to get out of it.*

This piqued my curiosity into the importance of the teacher mentor and what I knew to be their increasingly important role. I felt this could be best understood through examining mentors' lived experiences and how they had been impacted by policy change, as the thesis goes on to address.

Summary

It would be impossible to quantify what I have learnt through doing my EdD, because it has been about so much more than explicit outcomes. It has been more about a fundamental change, both professionally and personally. Through my reflective diary, I have been able to record some of that, including

my constant curiosity about what is happening around me. The outcome of the process of completing the EdD has been not so much an amalgam of disconnected ideas and concepts but has encouraged my thinking in a more reflective way, while building my resilience and perseverance.

I have benefitted professionally from developing greater awareness and insight into the current state of ITE. I have come to understand the impact of change, however high up in government will, eventually, affect what happens further down the line and may ultimately be very different to what had been originally intended. This is often because blanket policy change, fails to account for the individual and how they will be able to adapt. Bringing a sense of the specific to a landscape of uniformity has in consequence, become an increasingly important part of my role, often challenged by the scale at which I work.

The structure of the programme in its stepped, incremental approach has illuminated the process of weaving different strands of learning together. In doing so, it has revealed, as might be expected in a professional doctorate, the crucial interrelationship between theory and practice. My progression over the course has enabled my development as a thinker, a researcher and as a learner and much of this has come through the support of my tutors and peers, what I have learnt from them, and how these lessons have been internalised and employed in my practice.

List of abbreviations

AT	Activity Theory
ATF	Activity Theory Framework
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CCF	Core Content Framework
DfE	Department for Education
ECF	Early Career Framework
ECT	Early Career Teacher
HE	Higher Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SDS	School Direct Salaried
SDTF	School Direct Tuition Fee
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCET	Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

Please note; text underlined has a link to a related section, figure, table or appendix.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research explores schoolteachers' perceptions of working as mentors with beginning teachers in the complex and dynamic context of the English school system. Teacher mentors play a critical role in supporting and shaping the professional learning of beginning teachers in schools. This role has become increasingly important since the publication of the government's White Paper, the Importance of Teaching in 2010 (DfE, 2010) and the sustained government initiative to move Initial Teacher Education (ITE) into schools.

ITE in England has experienced multiple government interventions including and particularly, the move to make schools more significant stakeholders in all aspects of the process and 'centring legitimation on the 'practical' knowledge of teaching' (Vanassche *et al.*, 2019, p.481). The sustained government policy of moving ITE into schools, has changed the nature of the work mentors do by increasing their responsibilities for the development and progression of beginning teachers. The move has also resulted in foregrounding mentoring as a key aspect of teacher education and the role of the mentor as pivotal for its success. My experience, anecdotal and through this research, suggests however that prioritising mentoring to the exclusion of other aspects of ITE can be problematic. Due to differences within mentors' schools and in their relationships with their providers of ITE support, I found inconsistencies in how mentors have perceived to be enabled and/or constrained in their mentoring. This has impacted their experiences and arguably those of the beginning teacher. In conducting the research for this thesis, I explored those perceptions and, considering the advantages as well as tensions that can arise from engaging with ITE, investigated the reasons for inconsistency and its impact on mentors.

Although there has been extensive research conducted into the area of teacher preparation, much has been focused on the experiences and outcomes of the beginning teacher and what makes for effective ITE (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999; Kervin and Turbill, 2003; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005; Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Alexander *et al.*, 2010; Cuddapah and Clayton, 2011; Hobson, 2012; Langdon, 2013; 2017; Allen and Sims, 2018;

Lofthouse, 2018; Mayer and Mills, 2020; Brooks, 2021). There has been less research on investigating the perceptions of the mentors themselves, exploring their lived experiences and what it is that motivates them to engage with ITE in changing circumstances. Such research has recently become more pertinent and necessary with the shifting locus of teacher preparation to schools (McIntyre *et al.*, 2019; Peiser *et al.*, 2018; Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019) and subsequently the role of the mentor becoming more significant in the ultimate success of the preparation of future teachers.

I refer in this research to ITE rather than to ITT (Initial Teacher Training), consciously adopting a different terminology to that in government documentation. The choice of term has been a contested area and the subject of opposing opinion (Moore, 2004; Ball, 2013; Furlong, 2014; Lofthouse, 2018; Peiser *et al.*, 2018; McIntyre *et al.*, 2019) for many years. Like the desire for greater school-centred ITE, 'ITT' has been an enduring government preference. The two terms are however different,

> 'Teacher "training", as a form of professional training is distinctively different to teacher education: the role of research is not just to inform about "best practices" or "what works" but to contribute to a body of knowledge that may inform decision making and to support critical situational judgement.' (Brooks, 2021, p.209)

Training implies a linear process to professional development but the preparation of teachers 'cannot be boiled down to instruction, modelling, target setting and monitoring' (Lofthouse, 2018, p.256) and is, rather, an educative process; it is about learning as well as development (Evans, 2019). The work of the mentor in realising that and promoting it in school, is consequently cyclical or spiral and not unidirectional; that is, it builds on the learner's experiences, demanding time and commitment, and increasingly so as they take on more responsibility.

Focusing the importance of ITT over ITE, has been perceived by Peiser *et al.* (2019) as privileging organisational over occupational professionalism, and ultimately, preparing teachers for the organisation in which they are trained rather than for the teaching profession for which they are educated. Mutton *et al.*, recognised this as the difference between making beginning teachers

'profession-ready' rather than just 'school-ready' (Mutton *et al.*, 2018). This has significance for the mentor, and the consideration as to whether they are 'teacher trainers' or 'teacher educators' each requiring different responsibilities and levels of commitment.

Believing the preparation of teachers to be about their holistic education, ready to make 'critical situational judgement(s)' (Brooks, 2021, p.209), through adapting and applying their learning to different situations (Biesta, 2015; Orchard and Winch, 2015), I will be referring to the wider, relational understanding of 'IT*Education*' rather than the more functional training. This aligns to Biesta's concept of the purpose of education that it:

> 'is not designed so that children and young people might learn – which they can do anywhere – but so that they might learn particular things… within particular relationships and for particular reasons.' (Biesta, 2015, p.6)

Similarly, I will use the term 'beginning teachers' (Langdon, 2017; Peiser *et al*, 2018) rather than 'trainees', respecting that the mentees are at the start of their educational journey to become teachers, incorporating a wider dimension than just training.

1.1 Professional context

The research has been inspired by, and drawn on, my professional engagement in ITE Partnership. In that position, I have become increasingly aware of the essential and increasingly demanding role mentors play in the process of ITE (Lofthouse, 2018; Peiser *et al.*, 2019). Responsible for the beginning teacher's progress and development during their school practice, mentors work alongside their mentees, modelling practice and engaging in regular, informed discussion, interrogating what is happening in the classroom. The Department for Education having come to recognise the importance of their role, understand mentors to:

> 'play a central role in encouraging trainees and supporting their development and progress by drawing on a wide range of experiences,

strategies and techniques to support trainees in meeting the Teachers' Standards.' (DfE, 2016, p.7)

This definition adopts the expert/novice approach to mentoring, understanding it to be around 'support' and 'drawing on' mentors' own experiences and knowledge, rather than a more collaborative, shared learning experience which 'promotes professional learning for both the mentor and mentee simultaneously' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.33). Notwithstanding, there is an expectation held by the DfE that the role is to be achieved within the remit of the mentor's wider professional practice, alongside their fundamental job as a schoolteacher.

Mentors' experiences are the outcome of multiple, often unpredictable interactions within the highly complex environment of their school or setting and their relationship with their ITE provider (Murray *et al.*, 2017; Vanassche *et al*, 2019). Working closely with such mentors in a diverse range of settings, inspired me to explore more about their lived experience and develop understanding of their situation, conscious that:

> 'If we are to facilitate the professional development of teachers, we must understand the process by which teachers grow professionally and the conditions that support and promote that growth.' (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p.947)

The practicum component of any ITE programme and the role of mentors in guiding and shaping beginning teachers' development, is key to successful ITE (Greaves *et al.*, 2019). However, working across such a diverse and inconstant educational environment in 'uncertain times' (Vanassche *et al.*, 2019) I have found the quality of mentoring is not always consistent nor predictable. In consequence, I wanted to understand the significant disparities between mentors' experiences over time and space.

1.2   Changes in the ITE context

The data for the research were collected in the summer of 2019, before some of the most recent changes within teacher education, such as the implementation of the Core Content Framework (CCF) (DfE, 2019), the Early Career Framework (ECF) (DfE, 2019a), and the Market Review report (DfE, 2021)

leading to the ITT Reform (DfE, 2022). There had, however, already been several profound changes and government reforms that had taken place, particularly over the past decade (Peiser *et al.*, 2018; Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019; la Velle *et al.*, 2020). These included and many were related to, the move of ITE to become more school-centred (Furlong, 2014; Peiser *et al.*, 2019; Mayer and Mills, 2020).

Change to ITE had taken place in the context of additional, significant modification of the school system affecting mentors as teachers. Such change included; the publication of the Early Years Framework (DfE, 2012) and National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), the ongoing increase in Academisation, reform to assessment and examinations, and changes to the Ofsted framework.

Table 1 overleaf outlines some of the most significant changes from 2010 to the present day for both ITE and generic school education.

Table 1: Significant changes to English school and ITE systems from 2010

Changes to School System	Year	Changes to ITE
School's White Paper – the Importance of Teaching Launch of free schools	2010	Schools' White Paper
Education Act building on White Paper, including: Increased accountability - tightening of Ofsted Raising of standards Legal powers to enforce behaviour policy Extension of academisation programme Abolition of 'quangos' including of GTC; QCDA, TDA.	2011	Education Act Initiatives to roll-out new routes into teaching (appendix 1) including many led by schools Pilot School Direct
Early Years Framework	2012	School Direct launched ushering in greater school involvement in all aspects of ITE
New 'spag' and phonics testing	2013	
Publication and implementation of new National Curriculum	2013/2014	
	2015	'Carter Review' commissioned to assess ITE's quality and effectiveness
Publication of White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere	2016	Publication of White Paper Publication and implementation of new Mentoring Standards in response to Carter Review
Launch of Early Career Framework (ECF)	2019	Launch of Core Curriculum Framework (CCF) '…the minimum entitlement of all trainee teachers'. (DfE, 2019, p.3) Launch of Early Career Framework (ECF) setting out; '…what early career teachers should be entitled to learn about and how to do…'. (DfE, 2019a, p.5)
	2020/1	Initiation of Market Review setting out to ensure: '. all trainees receive high-quality training . the ITT market maintains capacity to deliver enough trainees and is accessible to candidates . the ITT system benefits all schools' (DfE, 2021 online)
	2021/2	Market Review report and ITT Reform to be enacted from 2024

The intensification of school-centred ITE was brought about through the Schools' White Paper (DfE, 2010), the Education Act (2011) and the ensuing roll-out of new routes into teaching as outlined above in Table 1. This led to the 'rapidly evolving and politically sought school-led self-improving system' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.31) and changes to the way in which ITE processes were conducted.

The mentor, the focus of this research has been particularly involved in such change, and with the shifting responsibility of ITE into schools, absorbed increased activity and responsibility. Many mentors as a result have become directly responsible for the teaching and development of beginning teachers (Lofthouse, 2018; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019).

The preparation of teachers in England, similar to pre-service teacher education in other jurisdictions, has been described by Cochran-Smith and Fries as a 'policy problem'. This is not necessarily as 'in the pejorative sense, but in the sense that all developing and developed countries must deal with certain challenges or problems' (Cochran-Smith and Fries, 2005, p.4). Understanding that there will always be issues to contend with may help explain the inevitability of regular government reform in order to address problems. ITE has, like other areas of education, particular challenges including both the quantity and quality of teacher supply. One of the government's solutions to this challenge has been to devolve more responsibility for ITE to schools, (Mutton *et al.*, 2017) and so align itself to what Mayer and Mills (2020) recognise as the 'practice turn' where beginning professionals learn in situ through an apprenticeship model. This shifting of responsibility of ITE away from universities and into schools, is a global phenomenon (Darling-Hammond, 2017; McIntyre *et al.*, 2019; Peiser *et al.*, 2019; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019) and has had an impact on those in school, particularly the teacher mentor.

Moving ITE into schools and the acceleration of change since 2010

The steady movement of ITE into schools has placed greater responsibility for the support of beginning teachers onto mentors. This has provided opportunity for professional development, but also imposed increased demands on their time and workload.

The current situation owes much to what has happened in the past. As long as 40 years ago, Hoyle (1982) perceived that ITE was becoming progressively work-place based and shifting from universities to schools, alongside the change in terminology from teacher education to training (Moore, 2004; Ball, 2013; Furlong, 2014; Whitty *et al.*, 2016). Historically, in England, ITE was conducted by Colleges of Teaching and teacher training colleges, before becoming more commonly situated within and led by university education departments, working in partnership with schools (Fuller and Rosie, 1997; Whitty, 2008; Ball, 2013; Furlong, 2014; Whitty *et al.*, 2016). Universities have since then provided a context for beginning teachers and conducted the 'peculiar problems of preparing teachers' (Labaree, 2004, p.39).

From the late 1980s in England, there was a rise in the importance of the school-university partnership (Peiser *et al.*, 2018) as well as an increase in the statutory time that beginning teachers spent in school to being at least two-thirds of any programme (DfE, 1992; 1993). Their increased time in school was overseen by their school mentor (Peiser *et al.*, 2018), so placing greater responsibility on them for the practice-based component of the beginning teachers' programmes. This was to ensure, 'joint responsibility' for ITE as schools were believed to in the best position to support beginning teachers to learn about and apply practical teaching skills (DfE, 1992).

Successive governments, both Conservative and Labour, sustained the move towards greater school responsibility for ITE increasing the time beginning teachers spent in school on an ITE programme, supported by teacher mentors. It was however the Coalition government from 2010 that really accelerated the move. As the new Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove implemented significant and sweeping policy change throughout the school system. The most significant reform for ITE was instigated through the schools' White Paper, the 'Importance of Teaching' in 2010 (DfE, 2010), which along with other policies led to the Education Act of 2011. The White Paper had a significant impact, (Ball, 2013; Furlong, 2014; Orchard and Winch, 2015; Whitty *et al.*, 2016; McIntyre *et al.*, 2019; Peiser *et al.*, 2019) pledging to 'reform Initial Teacher Training so that it focuses on what is really important' (DfE, 2010, p.22). It was clear that development was to be focussed on school-centred ITE, in order to:

'provide more opportunities for a larger proportion of trainees to learn on the job by improving and expanding the best of the current school-based routes into teaching.' (DfE, 2010, pp.22-23)

Responsibility for the preparation of beginning teachers was placed firmly on schools to 'take the lead' as 'trainees … develop their skills, learning from our best teachers' (DfE, 2010, p.23). Schools with the right criteria were encouraged to become Teaching Schools and work in partnership with other schools through developing their networks. University partnership was not overtly encouraged except to establish University Teaching Colleges and develop undergraduate programmes for Armed Forces personnel leaving the service. Significantly, no specific mention was made in the White Paper of the role of the mentor nor the support that would be needed to take on this more expansive task.

Addressing issues of teacher supply, new routes and providers were to be implemented so offering 'increased opportunities for school-based training' to 'suit career changers, new graduates and existing members of the school workforce wanting to learn on the job and receive a salary as they train' (DfE, 2010, p.23). The newly titled Department for Education acted quickly. School Direct led by Teaching Schools was piloted in 2011 and became mainstream in 2012. This was a mainly employment-based route in which schools recruited graduates, hosted most of the beginning teachers' school placements, and organised a substantial proportion of their professional learning (Vanassche *et al.*, 2019).

From 2012, those schools involved in ITE began playing a far more significant role (McIntyre *et al.*, 2019), changing the balance between school and university-led ITE provision. Peiser *et al.* observed:

'In 2011/12, universities held 80% of the teacher education places (Universities UK 2014). By 2018/19, this figure had dropped to 47%, with 53% of the places held by school-led providers (DfE, 2018).' (Peiser *et al.,* 2019, p.1)

Favouring school-centred ITE aligned with successive government unease at university education departments having too much responsibility for the

preparation of future teachers. Gove famously referred to university teacher educators as a part of the 'blob' alongside teaching unions, local authority officials and other academic experts (McIntyre *et al.*, 2019). He questioned their role in providing too much theory and not enough practice (Gove, 2013) and blamed any inadequacies of teachers on the subsequent gap between the two (Peiser *et al.*, 2019). Universities were accused of making beginning teachers spend too much time cogitating the former and not enough time practising the latter. A better balance was demanded through putting more time and resources into schools, away from the university teacher educator and towards the school-based teacher mentor. This changed the dynamic of ITE for both school and university provider and put 'teachers in charge' (Gove, 2013), building on the White Paper's (DfE, 2010) pledge for them to 'take the lead'. Gove's successor, Nicky Morgan maintained the government impetus to hand over control to schools, when referring to beginning teachers:

> 'These new teachers are getting the right training to prepare them to succeed in the classroom through School Direct, Teach First and school-centred initial teacher training - teachers in our best schools are now in the driving seat to train the next generation of their profession.' (Morgan, 2014 web-based)

Additional support for the sustained increase in school-centred provision came in 2016 with a further White Paper, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (DfE, 2016a). What was now a Conservative government reiterated their commitment 'to support the school-led system to improve the content and delivery of ITT' (DfE 2016a, p.27). This was followed, as alluded to, by further significant reforms through the CCF (DfE, 2019), ECF (DfE, 2019a) and most recently, the Market Review (DfE, 2021) and subsequent ITT Reform (DfE, 2022).

One of the most tangible outcomes of this widescale reconfiguration of ITE over the past decade and affecting all stakeholders, was the initiation and development of 'an almost bewildering number' (la Velle *et al.*, 2020, p.597) of new routes into teaching and new providers to service them. These demonstrated the government's strong commitment to employment based ITE and 'learn(ing) 'on the job' in school' (DfE, nd). There are 10 routes currently offered (UCAS nd) as described in appendix 1. Those routes that are

employment-based such as School Direct Salaried demand significantly more time and input from the mentor.

Such focus on the school was not however entirely new; School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITTs) had been operating for many years, but on a far smaller scale and affecting just a small proportion of beginning teachers and associated mentors. In contrast, the changes since 2010 involved large-scale reconfiguration of ITE and changed the context and environment within which many mentors worked as their role became increasingly significant, providing more of the beginning teacher's input (Peiser *et al.*, 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). Mentors took on a wider remit, with many leading significant parts of the taught programme as well as fulfilling a wide array of administrative tasks such as organising school placements and checking documentation. Where supported, this provided mentors with professional practice opportunities and potential areas for career development. It has however, proved challenging, where there was not the corresponding support (Hilton, 2017).

The associated impact on the teacher mentor

The mentor does not work in isolation but alongside their ITE provider's teacher educator, or 'tutor', who has traditionally been based in a university; termed the 'provider tutor' in this research.   The provider has been responsible for the taught aspects of the programme and helping beginning teachers understand how theory and practice are connected, as well as conducting final assessments and ensuring the quality of provision within schools (Peiser *et al.*, 2019). The provider tutor works with the mentor in partnership between the school and provider.

The implementation of policy change has however caused some fragmentation in ITE (Vanassche *et al.*, 2019) and the plethora of new routes, some confusion (Roberts and Foster, 2017). In some cases, this has affected relationships between schools and their provider 'altering the nature of collaborative and transactional relationships between participating organisations and individuals' (Lofthouse, 2018, p.249). This has impacted the role of the mentor for both school and provider especially on those routes where the schools adopt a greater share of provision, most notably employment-based routes.

One of the outcomes of this changing balance in the relationship between mentor and provider tutor has been that many mentors found they were not only spending longer with the beginning teacher but were also taking on a greater proportion of the 'training' programme. Mentors had become responsible for an expanding range of different aspects of the course and many became what Peiser *et al.*, (2018), when researching the role of the mentor in four different professions, identified as the 'linchpin' in the mentoring process. In doing so they joined the 'occupational' group of teacher educators (Vanassche, *et al.,* 2019), previously associated with university tutors. This also opened up possibilities for mentors' professional development and different career opportunities. Vanassche *et al.*, recognised that:

> 'in addition to traditional mentoring roles, established in the early 1990s for supporting the practicum, there are now those with responsibility for organising all aspects of ITE, including recruitment, design and implementation of programmes, teaching and mentoring and assessment at the end of the training process, all within the school workplace.' (Vanassche *et al.*, 2019, p.481)

In recognition of such change, the DfE commissioned a review in 2015 to assess ITE's quality and effectiveness. One of the many findings of the subsequent Carter Review (DfE, 2015) was that the importance of the role of mentors required greater recognition with their increased responsibilities, along with the need for more consistent support for them.

Amongst other initiatives, including an early incarnation of the CCF (DfE, 2019) (see Table 1), the Carter Review (DfE, 2015) prompted the publication of formal mentoring standards in 2016, the 'National Standards for school-based (ITT) mentors' (DfE, 2016). Reflecting the familiar teachers' standards (DfE, 2011), these were planned to act as a framework and guide for teacher mentors, identified as 'appropriately experienced classroom teachers' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.31), and outlined the basic role and responsibilities of the mentor (DfE, 2016).

However, the non-statutory standards appeared to have limited impact, with some mentors remaining unaware of the document for years after; in a study focussed on mentors' perceptions of the Standards, Murtagh and Dawes (2020)

identified just 58% of the school-based mentors surveyed as being cognisant of them. This was despite Ofsted having 'regard' for them in their ITE inspections (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020). With just four non-statutory and non-binding recommendations focused on; 'personal qualities, teaching, professionalism and self-development, and working in partnership' (DfE, 2016, pp.8-9), criticism was levelled at the initiative for oversimplifying the mentor role and failing to account for its complexities (Peiser *et al.,* 2018). In addition, the new standards were criticised for not taking account of the more nuanced and implicit learning of both mentor and mentee through dialogic mentoring (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020). Finally, there was a perception that the standards were insufficient to tackle the mentor's wider remit (O'Kelly, 2019) and provide sufficient support to meet their growing needs, tasked with a more expansive role. As Peiser *et al.* (2019) argued, greater support for the mentors' professional development 'in the workplace environment' was needed as 'assuming such an extended role is no mean feat' (Peiser *et al.*, 2019, p.2). The National Mentoring Standards did not appear to fully satisfy that, providing a 'good starting point… but in their present form they are certainly not the silver bullet of mentoring' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.43).

At the same time as such significant change happening within ITE, mentors were also having to grapple with multiple other initiatives taking place in schools as outlined in Table 1. Witnessing at first hand the impact of such complex change on the experiences of mentors and recognising the need to research this important area of ITE, encouraged me to investigate the underlying causes to develop a more informed and objective understanding of the situation.

1.3   The nature of the research and research questions

Considering government policy and commentary, research from other relevant studies as well as my own observations, I surmised that as ITE had become more school-centred, many mentors had taken on greater responsibility. Those mentors who were well supported and effectively prepared to embrace this change, seemed able to take advantage of greater autonomy. They appeared empowered to seize the opportunities of professional learning, develop new skills and understandings, and so advance mentoring and wider aspects of their teaching and leadership roles. Other mentors seemed less able to

accommodate such change and there appeared a corresponding gap in the developmental, andragogical provision to support them. Having received insufficient preparation to adapt to such different requirements and expectations, they appeared less equipped to take advantage of change, and so less able to develop either their mentoring or teaching role. This seemed to have raised issues for the mentor in terms of both capacity, with greater demands being made on them, as well as capability, missing the necessary training and development to accommodate change. It appeared that the context within which the mentor worked determined whether they were able to benefit from change and develop their wider professional practice, or whether they were adversely hindered.

Relying on the apparent lottery of where mentoring takes place and consequently where beginning teachers learn to become teachers, seems highly risky for something as crucial as ITE. The increasing dependence on effective mentoring to prepare teachers for future classrooms called for greater understanding of the mentors' lived experiences in the actual context within which they worked and were impacted by such change; an area I identified but found fewer specific research studies were focussed on. To achieve such understanding, I determined to explore, in a structured and robust way, the patterns I was seeing in my interactions with partner schools and hearing about anecdotally. This would help provide a better understanding of the impact of refocussing ITE in schools, and the significance of where ITE was done (Langdon, 2013; Lofthouse *et al.*, 2020) and by whom.

To facilitate this, I set out to conduct research reflecting the perceptions of a diverse range of mentors working in all three age phases of the English school system (Early Years Settings, Primary and Secondary Schools) across the country. Through subsequent exploration of the perceptual experiences of mentor engagement in ITE I intended to address the following research questions;

- What impact has engaging in ITE had on teachers' mentoring and wider professional practice and how has this changed over time?

- What enables and constrains teacher mentors' practice and how have changes to these influenced mentors' experiences of engaging with ITE?

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In order to explore the available research on the lived experiences of mentors and the impact of engaging in ITE over time, I carried out an extensive literature search informing this chapter and the ongoing research. In this chapter I consider the role of the mentor and what it is that encourages them to engage in ITE, exploring the opportunities and challenges of mentoring. Working within the 'supercomplex' school education system, I go on to consider what it is, within their school and working with their provider, that enables and/or constrains mentors' practice, specifically considering the changes outlined in the preceding chapter.

To focus the investigation, I consider the mentor's context from the perspective of four different focal areas which will be referred to through the research;

- the specific context of the school and provider, their ethos and organisation,

- the impact that engaging in ITE has on the school staff involved,

- the selection and development of the mentor,

- the effectiveness of the partnership between school and provider.

The chapter concludes by considering the importance of the role that both the school and the provider play in creating the mentor's context and the impact of the interaction between the two on their lived experiences.

2.2 The opportunities and challenges of mentoring

To understand the impact of engaging in ITE on mentors' professional practice as outlined in the first research question, I explored what it was that motivated them to participate and what challenges they found in doing so.

By engaging in ITE, teacher mentors open themselves up to opportunities for their own professional development and learning. Much has been written about the potential benefits of being involved with ITE (Hurd *et al.,* 2007; Loughran

and Russell, 2007; Hobson and McIntyre, 2013; Thornton, 2014; Hudson and Hudson, 2018; Lofthouse, 2018; Stanulis *et al.,* 2018; Peiser *et al.,* 2019) and this may be realised through for example, the stimulation of fresh ideas brought by the beginning teacher, the input of expert teacher educators, and access to relevant and topical research. However, such benefits are not always tangible nor accessible and research on mentors' experiences has identified multiple challenges which may face mentors in their role (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Hobson and Malderez, 2013; Hobson and McIntyre, 2013; Thornton, 2014; O'Grady, 2017; Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Brooks, 2021). Such challenges include but are not limited to; issues of a heavy workload, not being recognised, concerns over career progression, blurred boundaries of responsibilities, conflicting priorities and the challenge of pursuing two different roles, the teacher, and the mentor, requiring different understanding and skills sets.

Fletcher and Mullen (2012) posit that many of these difficulties have been caused by longstanding issues of a lack of investment in training, time and funding. In addition, and more recently, has been the introduction of new initiatives, without the resources to support and deliver them adequately (Peiser *et al.*, 2019), putting extra pressure on many of those involved.

The literature is clear that there are both opportunities and challenges when engaging in ITE and that significant changes (Table 1) have taken place in the dynamic context that ITE operates in. I conducted this research to assess the impact of those changes on mentors and investigate whether these have been advantageous or detrimental to their practice.

2.3 Mentoring in the complex and supercomplex business of ITE

ITE has been described as 'messy and complicated' (Dallmer, 2004) and Brooks (2021) refers to the 'complexities of practice,' citing Cochran-Smith (2011) who depicted it as 'unforgivingly complex' (in Brooks, 2021, p.161). Sewell *et al.,* tell us that 'learning to teach (is) a challenging, increasingly complex and changing process' (Sewell *et al.*, 2018, p.321). This process has always involved a variety of stakeholders functioning in different and sometimes conflicting ways. It also takes place within the context of the regular initiation of new policies as discussed previously. Such initiatives add additional layers to

the 'education complex' (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) and, relating to this research, impact on mentors' experiences.

More recent and significant change to ITE in England, as outlined in <u>section 1.2</u> has added to its already kaleidoscopic nature and contributed to the blurring of boundaries within and between schools and providers. This has created ambiguity within the complex nature of school mentoring (Aderibigbe *et al.,* 2018) and further exacerbated a lack of clarity and definition in the roles and responsibilities of those involved (Dallmer, 2004). This has proved particularly pertinent with the move towards school-centred ITE and the changing role of the mentor and the provider's tutor, making for a complex situation. Complexity should not necessarily be perceived as negative however, and critically, where it can be supported, it may benefit mentor engagement as Vanassche *et al.* (2019, p.487) claim:

> 'For this, we need to acknowledge and positively value the complexity and messiness of the work of teaching and teaching about teaching: we need to seriously consider the investigation of that complexity as professionally challenging and rewarding.'

Barnett (2000; 2008; 2014; 2017) discussing the complexity of educational settings, has recognised that we also live in an 'era of supercomplexity', declaring:

> 'We live in turbulent times. It is not just that we live amidst change but that our fundamental concepts and frameworks through which we make sense of the world are in dispute. In turn, each person and each group - say in professional life - is having to juggle multiple, proliferating and contending frameworks of understanding. In turn, too, professional identity is unstable and full of immanent conflict.' (Barnett, 2017, p.291)

The state of supercomplexity leads to a situation of fragility and, unlike merely complex situations, the known frameworks within which we operate, understand the world and 'feel secure about acting in the world,' are contested (Barnett, 2000). There are multiple questions as in a complex situation, but multiple answers to those questions, and endless disputes (Barnett, 2014). As a result, there are no simple resolutions and using a manual or tick-box and resorting to

mechanistic, replicable, and short-term solutions does not offer effective, enduring learning. Resolution draws on multiple skills and inputs of all those involved, requiring adequate time, commitment, and support. Where this is not available, due to potentially conflicting interests of the school and provider, difficulties may develop and tensions arise at the intersections of where their priorities meet (Douglas, 2014). As for complex contexts, it is also here however that rewards can be found and, where there is the opportunity and support to work through the challenge, this can lead to effective professional development and learning.

The term, supercomplexity is adopted by Ling (2017) when writing about teacher education in Australia. She described how teacher education has been subjected to multiple changes over a protracted period, due to constant change in government and serial political interventions. There are clear parallels to the unsettled situation in England where we have experienced regular reform within education as outlined previously. This has been due in part to a constant churn within government leadership since 2010 and the implementation of new reforms from a succession of ten different education secretaries of state over the past 12 years, all with their own ideas, initiatives and understandings. This has led to a similar situation to that described by Ling (2017); one of constant change and unpredictability, with different and often competing stakeholders acting simultaneously and within potentially different value frameworks. This has made for a 'supercomplex' environment.

As Vanassche *et al.* (2019) recognised the opportunity for both challenge and reward in the complex context of teacher education, so Ling (2017) recognised that supercomplexity can:

> 'allow(s) us to embrace and even encourage strange and awkward spaces' (and) 'rather than lamenting the fact that the role of teacher education and indeed of the University in a world of supercomplexity is now radically changed, it is perhaps even more exciting to be a part of this era as it has unbounded possibilities, unknown unknowns, space for risk and experimentation, permission to be uncertain and insecure, and contains the awkward spaces in which we can find some of those unknown unknowns.' (Ling, 2017, p.570)

Recognising both the challenge and opportunity of working within a supercomplex context can help to understand the impact of change on mentors' practice as shared understandings have shifted and changed. In the right circumstances the challenge created by change can have positive implications and provide opportunity to those involved. Where those circumstances are not conducive, tensions may arise compromising the mentor as well as the beginning teacher.

Research has explored the influence of working within different supercomplex contexts but has not specifically focused on the English school system, characterised by prolonged and significant upheaval. Recognising this, this research investigates the impact of working within such contexts on mentors' experiences and how that may provide opportunity as well as challenge. In order to do this and make sense of such complex systems I have drawn on Engeström's (2008) activity theory and used the related activity theory framework as a lens as will be detailed in the next chapter.

2.4 The role of the mentor in ITE

Teachers have always played an important role in ITE. Teacher mentors help beginning teachers to understand how to teach and provide opportunities for them to put their learning into practice (Kerry and Shelton Mayes, 1995; Kervin and Turbill, 2003; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005; Langdon, 2017). This is a significant undertaking as the process of learning to teach and importantly learning how to become a teacher, is highly complex and varies markedly over time as well as space. The process also demands specific skills and attributes (Wang and Odell, 2002; Hobson and Malderez, 2013; Sewell *et al.*, 2018) which are different to those of the teacher mentor's primary role, school teaching. Typically, mentors are supported to fulfil their role of inducting nascent teachers into a community of practice by their ITE provider (often a university) as well as their school leadership team, in partnership. This joint endeavour should create a nurturing and conducive environment within which the mentor and the beginning teacher can thrive (Maynard and Furlong 1995; Mutton *et al.,* 2018). The literature describes what it is that makes for a conducive mentoring experience but the outcomes of the recent reconfiguration of ITE on mentors'

experiences have not been explicitly detailed, an important area that this research therefore addresses.

2.4.1 The nature of mentors and mentoring

Finding an agreed definition of mentoring has proved elusive and difficult to circumscribe. Colley claimed that mentoring is 'a practice which is ill defined, poorly conceptualized and weakly theorized' (Colley, 2003, p.13). Before and since then, many different and varied definitions of the role have been offered, including notions of it being developmental, supportive, enabling and empowering.

Kemmis *et al.* (2014a), considering the nature of the mentor role, refer to three distinct types of mentors, 'supervision, support and collaborative self-development,' similar to Peiser *et al.'s* (2018) 'traditional, transitional and transformative' mentors. A 'supervisory' approach perpetuates what already exists through knowledge transfer and effectively a reproduction of the mentor. Such mentoring involves 'doing as I do' and following a blueprint, something Hudson and Hudson (2018) perceive to be hierarchical and based on the transmission of knowledge of the expert. 'Supportive' mentors are individualistic, creative teachers and perceived to be experienced and wise, but the process of mentoring can remain unidirectional and hierarchical. Finally, a 'collaborative self-development' approach involves a two-way process of learning in which both mentor and mentee learn, often within a wider community of practice and learning. Such learning takes place through a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice (Peiser *et al.*, 2018) and tends to be more enduring for both parties. It allows both mentor and beginning teacher to draw on the understandings gained through the mentoring process throughout their careers to develop and improve their practice. There are learning opportunities for both mentor and mentee as they conduct 'a nuanced dance in which mentors and mentees are both learners' (Langdon, 2017, p.541); dialogic mentoring (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020) as earlier alluded to.

Kemmis *et al.* (2014a) consider these three kinds of mentoring in different jurisdictions, Australia, Finland, and Sweden and observe that various types of mentoring are pursued across each country dependent on differing circumstances. Similarly, in England, mentor practice is varied and reflects the

disparate nature of the educational system, with multiple types of schools as well as routes into teaching (Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019), all demanding different requirements of the mentor. As a result, and due to a lack of consensus and collective recognition of what it is to be a mentor, there can be confusion around the specific expectations of mentors, including for the beginning teacher. Although giving independence and freedom to pursue different kinds of mentoring, such blurring of boundaries (Struthers, 2017) can be bewildering for mentors and become even more so when taking on greater responsibility and aspiring to higher expectations, as this research aims to investigate. Murtagh and Dawes' (2020) research into the efficacy of the implementation of the National Mentoring Standards (DfE, 2016), discussed the opportunity that this initiative had to clarify roles and responsibilities and provide consistency and equity of provision; the disappointing response to them (outlined in <u>section 1.2</u>) suggests however, that this has not been overwhelmingly successful.

Taking on greater responsibility requires mentors to play an increasingly significant part not just in the modelling of their practice but also in contributing to the input of the ITE programme and the teaching of teaching. There is no blueprint to follow in order to achieve this, Beutel *et al.* (2017) claim, as it requires a deeper understanding through a developmental approach, as would be expected in a supercomplex context. This calls for the progressive development of learning how to teach rather than serial episodes of the transmission of knowledge (Langdon and Ward, 2015).

Such mentoring therefore demands a shift from knowledge transmission and the giving of advice to knowledge co-creation and co-learning, what has been described as educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Langdon and Ward, 2015; Daly and Milton, 2017). Here, the relationship is two way and both beginning teacher and mentor are learning from and with each other through dialogic mentoring. This would be indicative of supportive or preferably collaborative self-development (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a).

When achieved, educative mentoring may enable a co-constructed approach of knowledge *in* and *for* as well as *of* practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999; Langdon and Ward, 2015), and involve joint enquiry into practice with mentors

being agents of change (van Ginkel *et al.,* 2016). Such educative mentoring is not a core body of knowledge to learn about and from, but rather attitudinal and conceptual learning which can then be adapted.

Lofthouse (2018) would identify outcomes of such learning as phronesis, the development of practical wisdom and knowing the right thing to do in particular circumstances. This equips the mentor with the knowledge needed to adapt to myriad changes, deal with the circumstance they are in and employ effective situational judgement. Peiser *et al.* (2019) and Vanassche *et al.* (2019) explain that such learning is important for the mentor, enabling a deeper understanding of the nature of teacher education and an ability to apply that in varied circumstances.

Such mentoring challenges the common discourse of the expert/novice relationship identified in the Carter Review of ITT (DfE, 2015) and the preferred mentor model consistently referred to in government documentation such as the Mentoring Standards (DfE, 2016), CCF (DfE, 2019) and ECF (DfE, 2019a). In the most recent publication of the ITT Reform, the Provider Guidance on Stage 2, the definition of mentoring is noticeably different to the educative mentoring's concept of co-learning and co-creating as:

> 'Mentoring is defined here as in the CCF: "Receiving structured feedback from expert colleagues on a particular approach – using the best available evidence – to provide a structured process for improving the trainee's practice"' (DfE, 2022a, p.30)

In addition, Hobson and Malderez (2013), soon after the publication of the White Paper of 2010 and at the start of the most significant changes to ITE in England, observed that government intervention tended to promote those processes more concerned with managerial imperatives, for example technical rationality, than with more nuanced theoretical considerations. Initial Teacher 'Training' appeared to have stronger intentions around recruitment, retention, and Quality Assurance (Hobson and Malderez, 2013) than mentors' learning and development. This did not seem to align with educative mentoring, nor to be the most appropriate approach; as mentors took on greater responsibility, they required the skills and understanding more readily associated with educative mentoring, skills that demanded preparation and support. Hobson

and Malderez's (2013) research was however conducted in 2013, six years before the data for this research was collected. I identified a need therefore to investigate whether government intervention had become more appropriate to current requirements as well as accessible for the changing demands being made on schools and mentors. This was despite publications such as the ITT Reform, the Provider Guidance on Stage 2, (DfE, 2022a) cited above suggesting not.

2.4.2 Adapting to change and becoming teacher educators

Centring ITE more in schools may disturb the balance within partnership and impact the relationship between the mentor and provider tutor. With the mentor becoming more involved in all aspects of the beginning teacher's induction into teaching, the role of the provider tutor also changes (McIntyre *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). This has resulted in a perceived reduction in their direct input into ITE practice, becoming in some cases, what McIntyre *et al.* (2019), recognise as, 'silenced voices', not of their own volition, but because of instigated change.

The blurring of roles and increasing responsibility for the teacher mentor has led to their identification as 'teacher educators', (Struthers, 2017; Lofthouse, 2018; Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019) something which had previously been the prerogative of the provider. Lofthouse (2018), perceiving the mentors' role to have become increasingly important explains how this title of school-based teacher educator for mentors is useful to incorporate their multiple responsibilities:

> 'Mentors need to act in many capacities towards their student teachers, and indeed, it helps to view them as school-based teacher educators of student teachers (whatever type of programme they are enrolled on)'. (Lofthouse, 2018, p.256)

Mentors are the medium through which a beginning teacher learns not just the content and 'how to do it', but crucially with their support and guidance, how to become and be a teacher; where effectively supported, this offers the potential to create new opportunities for the mentor. This is not to detract from those traditionally perceived as teacher educators, the provider tutors, but serves to

demonstrate the significant shift in both the purpose and process of being a school mentor.

As outlined previously, significant changes to both the nature and expectations of mentoring, require parallel, simultaneous preparation to develop and familiarise mentors, enabling them as teacher educators. From experience and exploring the literature, this support did not appear to be universally available to mentors. Considering the need for the appropriate development of the 'expert' mentor to fulfil rising expectations of them as teacher educators, this research considered how accessible and available this support was perceived to be.

2.5 Enabling and constraining mentor practice

The facilitation and delivery of successful ITE, what enables and/or constrains mentors' practice is conducted by both school and provider and is the focus of the second research question. Successful ITE can be achieved through optimising the advantages, as well as supporting mentors in minimising the challenges through changing times. The opportunity to do so, however, is dependent on the nature of the school or setting the mentor works in and the relationship that they have with their provider within partnership; that is the mentor's context. This varies significantly from place to place and over time and is impacted by multiple factors, all susceptible to changing circumstances.

To understand different educational contexts, Kemmis *et al.* (2014) employ the theory of practice and practice architecture. This helps to identify and explain what is happening within the highly complex nature of a practice, through a framework of 'practice architectures.' These may take place at or come into a setting, and they interact in multiple ways (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014).

Kemmis *et al.,* (2014a) consider mentoring practice to be 'a form of socially established cooperative human activity' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a, p.155) and identify three elements of practice architectures that can enable and constrain a practice, 'that make the practice possible' (*ibid.* p.155). These are identified as, cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. They are recognised respectively as; 'sayings', involving characteristic understandings, within the semantic space; 'doings' or modes of actions, in the

physical-time space and; 'relatings', how people relate to each other and the world, within the social space Kemmis *et al.*, (2014a).

In their research, Peiser *et al.,* (2019) used the practice architectures' conceptual framework, to determine what enabled and constrained mentors' practice. They found that those practice architectures that seemed to enable effective mentoring were personal to the mentor such as their personal and professional fulfilment. The main constraint was found to be structural, citing workload, time and resourcing issues, common challenges found in many schools and settings where multiple activities take place. Peiser *et al.'s* (2019) study of what enabled and constrained mentors, surveyed 64 teachers. This suggested a need to research other contexts to find out whether there were some practice architectures that proved particularly enabling or constraining in different contexts and changing circumstances.

For the purpose of this research, I will be considering these three practice architectures; the 'sayings', for example the commonly held beliefs about mentoring and what it is understood to be; 'doings', the resources, time and funding available to facilitate mentoring and; 'relatings', the dynamics of relationships between mentors and other staff, mentees and their provider. How these enable and/or constrain mentor practice, especially considering changes to ITE and the shifting balance of responsibility, is examined in the data analysis.

Understanding the interplay of the practice architectures within the mentor's school and with their provider can help to explain what it is that shapes their experiences within the 'mentor context', Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: The mentor context within the school and provider context
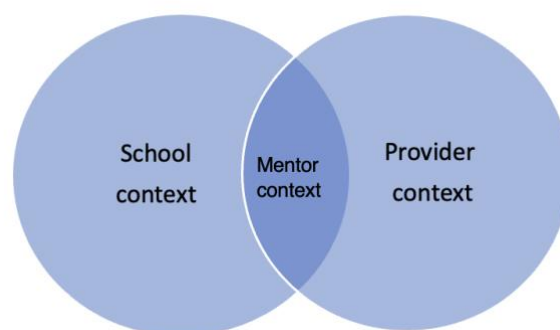
I consider this interplay between the practice architectures, enacted within the mentor context, through four different foci as outlined in the introduction to this chapter. These are related to; the school and provider context; the impact of engaging in ITE on the mentor and wider school staff; the selection and development of the mentor; and the effectiveness of the partnership between school and provider. How these four areas enable and/or constrain mentors' professional practice will be explained in turn in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.5.1 The school and provider context

How the school is led and run

As the processes of ITE become increasingly school-centred, and mentors' responsibilities grow, the need for support from mentors' schools becomes increasingly important (Hobson *et al.*, 2009). Langdon perceived support from senior leadership to be critical in facilitating successful ITE and positive mentor experience in order to 'build knowledge and to inquire, assess and enact new knowledge and learning' (Langdon, 2017, p.541). In addition, Hobson (2012) recognised that however positive the relationship between the mentor and mentee, without operating within a conducive environment it will struggle to optimise its potential.

The ethos and contextual culture that characterise a school are established over time and sustained by senior leadership to create a unique setting and education complex. This ethos influences the nature of the school and consequently its staff as Beutel *et al.* (2017) discuss. With school leaders' support, ITE can be embedded into the culture of the school and incorporated into its pedagogic goals allowing learners to develop into theorising teachers (Edwards *et al.,* 2002). ITE may consequently become an assumed and recognised attribute of the school and in this way, a key part of the 'sayings', or understandings of the school culture. In such a context, ITE may then be perceived as a viable and pertinent means of professional development. Mentors may be supported to take advantage of new policy, encouraged to capitalise on increasing involvement in ITE and take on more responsibility.

Along with the need for a supportive culture to conduct ITE and accommodate change, is the requirement for adequate material-economic arrangements or 'doings'. These comprise the practical implications of running and funding a school and its organisational efficiency (Hobson *et al.,* 2009; Hilton, 2017; Shanks, 2017) and may include considerations such as the availability of release and non-contact time, as well as timetabling to allow for regular mentor meetings. In addition, appropriate recognition of the additional workload and commitment by the mentor can be important in enabling mentor practice. There is however often a lack of recognition and consequent validity for the role, and this 'lack of prestige associated with mentoring and lack of financial recognition, arguably lead(s) to the role being perceived as a "Cinderella" activity' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.35). This has implications for teachers when considering their career trajectory and possible promotion.

Hurd *et al.* (2007) recognised that ITE was often not perceived as a priority nor seen to align directly with pupil outcome, indeed some teachers and senior leaders were concerned that it may detract from pupil success. Hurd *et al.* (2007) were however writing before the time of the significant move of ITE into school and the increased possibilities of whole school staff professional development through engagement in ITE. More recent research from for example, Lofthouse (2018), suggests that teacher education is a significant part of possible whole school improvement. This does though require adequate numbers of teachers to put themselves forward to be mentors and funding to cover their tangential work. Despite advocated government priority for this, it has been found that funding arrangements are not necessarily sufficient to ensure adequate resourcing and, as Winch *et al.* (2015) noted, the support has not always been forthcoming, denying school leaders the chance to invest their school funding and staff time in pursuing and developing ITE.

The need for positive support through an enabling school culture as well as the provision of adequate resourcing is important in supporting mentors and empowering them to optimise the benefits of engaging with ITE. It is also critical in supporting them to take on extra responsibilities. Considering the array of changes and the significant challenges headteachers and their staff were having to deal with (as outlined in in section 1.2), providing additional support for ITE was testing. Through this research, I sought to investigate whether

school leaders were able to provide for their mentors and accommodate this level of support.

Provider's approach to ITE and efficacy of their organisation

Despite the increasingly important role of the school in ITE, the provider still plays a pivotal part in preparing and sustaining beginning teachers on ITE programmes (Hudson and Hudson, 2018; McIntyre *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). To varying degrees, and dependent upon the nature of the route and programme taken, providers are responsible for supporting beginning teachers throughout the programme. They provide personal and professional support as well as programme content, identifying and articulating links between theory and practice. The provider is also responsible for supporting teachers to mentor as effectively as possible (Fletcher and Mullen, 2012) and maintaining efficient and effective communication, an important social-political practice arrangement or 'relating'. This is especially so with beginning teachers spending more time in school and increasing mentor involvement. In addition, it is the provider rather than the school that is accountable to regulatory bodies such as Ofsted.

The ability of the provider to be agile and adaptive has proved necessary in a time of structural as well as attitudinal change (McIntyre *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). Different, often innovative solutions to disparate situations have had to be sought, demanding a flexible approach as will be discussed later when addressing mentor development. Providers can support mentors to develop their own resilience and embed effective strategies to deal with change. This can help them to support beginning teachers as well as maintain their own highly demanding role. Achieving this while working at scale in larger providers can prove challenging (Brooks, 2021) and especially so when working with a wide range of small settings all with diverse contexts and specificities requiring tailored approaches. This requires effective organisation and efficient day to day running of programmes and the staff involved.

In order for providers to accommodate change as well as offer the opportunities it may bring, they need to be adaptive as relationships change and the balance of responsibility shifts. This requires high levels of organisational expertise and efficiency. However, it is not always straightforward and as Douglas (2014) observed, the contested purpose of ITE and increasing disparities between

different institutions' objectives, can complicate issues. Providers may be constrained by multiple demands within their own context especially when working in a large institution where the professional nature of ITE does not always conform to more conventional practices of Higher Education Institutions. Considering the changes taking place within the provider as well as in their relationships with schools, it was important for this research to investigate the outcome of change on the provider and how that might impact mentors' practice and their experiences.

2.5.2 The impact of engaging with ITE on school staff

Opportunity and risk for the teacher mentor

A compelling reason for school involvement in ITE is the opportunity for wider staff professional development and learning. In conducive circumstances, where ITE can be supported by the school, this can be enhanced by the mentor taking on greater responsibility and being more involved.

The subject and pedagogical knowledge gains that engaging with ITE can bring are recognised and well documented. On their programmes, beginning teachers engage with recent research into all aspects of teaching and learning and so can provide valuable input into the schools in which they are placed (Muijs and Harris, 2006; Edwards and Mutton, 2007; Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Stanulis *et al.,* 2018).The input of fresh and innovative ideas providing up to date research with recent initiatives and developments (Brown and Greany, 2017) can benefit mentors and other school staff through reciprocal learning (O'Grady, 2017).

Greaves *et al.* (2019) observe that mentors, given the opportunity to reflect on and interrogate their classroom practice with their mentee, can become more insightful. This in turn may enhance their professional development and learning and help to make it more enduring and transformative (Lofthouse, 2018). Evans (2019) talks of the development of teachers' tacit understanding though opportunities for implicit and informal learning and mentors benefitting from situated learning within their own school and classroom and even establishing small, local communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998) with other colleagues.

This can have the benefits, Greaves *et al.* (2019) claim, of inculcating new and innovative ideas, encouraging teachers to reassess their own practice and keep up to date, by maintaining engagement with policy and research (Shanks, 2017). Mentors may subsequently feel re-energized, promoting well-being and improvements in their own classroom practice. With more time spent in schools, and where mentoring practice is given adequate time and resources, engagement may provide multiple opportunities. Examples include the co-construction of teaching and learning with other members of staff as well as provider tutors. This can make the role effective not just for the individual mentor but for the school as well, as Lofthouse discusses when recognising the benefits to 'professional learning and institutional growth' (Lofthouse, 2018, p.248).

However, just as there are clear benefits for those involved, there may also be challenges which can become exacerbated as mentors take on more responsibility. Perryman and Calvert (2020) found in their research on teacher retention, that teachers identified workload as the single most important driver when deciding to leave a post. Concerns about workload and a lack of time, the material-economic arrangements or 'doings', can appear when working with beginning teachers and prove to be structural constrainers as recognised by Peiser *et al.* (2019). Further, Greaves *et al.* (2019) posit that if mentors are not given adequate time and resource to fulfil the role and ensure it does not detract from their teaching time, it can lead to fatigue. They cite Hurd (2008) referring to the 'resource transfer effect' (in Greaves *et al.,* 2019, p.462), in which teachers are having to put time into their beginning teachers and away from their pupils.

In addition, there is the possibility of conflict for the mentor caught between the needs of the beginning teacher and expectations for their pupils (Wilson, 2004; Jaspers *et al.,* 2014; Aderibigbe *et al.,* 2018). This has become increasingly prevalent with the rise of teachers' accountability not just for their mentees' success but also for their pupils' outcomes. Mentors may as a result be discouraged from taking pedagogical risks (Peiser *et al.,* 2019) with their mentees or even dissuaded from mentoring altogether; this could be described as being 'torn in two'. In this way, mentoring may become a dual or multiple role (Peiser *et al.,* 2019) rather than a complementary one. Jaspers *et al.* (2014)

describe the implications of this in their study of primary school mentors and how teachers fundamentally perceive themselves:

> 'Mentor teachers felt that being the teacher of the pupils was their primary task and being a mentor of the student teacher generally was perceived as an aside and additional task.' (Jaspers *et al.,* 2014, p.106)

Jaspers *et al.* (2014) concluded that mentors considered themselves primarily as teachers of pupils rather than supporters of beginning teachers' learning. With rising demands on mentors, it was important to consider whether such conflicting priorities still challenged mentors and whether they had in fact intensified as mentors took on greater responsibility for beginning teachers.

With the mentoring role becoming increasingly significant, choosing whether to engage may have implications for a teacher's career progression. Beutel *et al.* (2017) recognise teacher education as being a path to career progression for some, offering the prospect of tangible career advancement. Others however do not see it as a desirable career choice (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). There is concern about being held accountable for any short fallings in their pupils' outcomes caused by their beginning teachers. Peiser *et al.* recognise:

> 'the pressures teachers are under for their own pupils to make progress. If the teaching of student teachers is not, 'up to standard', the risk of pupil underachievement is increased … teachers employed in the school must carry responsibility for this.' (Peiser *et al.,* 2019, p.7)

Concerns over career progression become more pronounced with teacher success being subjected to performance related pay, and there are, often unfounded, worries regarding pupil performance when being taught by beginning teachers (Greaves *et al.,* 2019). This may also be manifested through staff concerns related to Ofsted inspections and the fear of lower pupil attainment when responsibility is handed over, especially with those pupils in their exam years (Peiser *et al.,* 2019).

A further impact of engaging with ITE on school staff is manifest through changing recruitment processes. With the promotion of employment-based routes into teaching, schools have had the opportunity to find suitable beginning teachers who can be 'trained' and inducted into their schools (DfE, 2014).

Mentors have been given the responsibility to select, work with and nurture 'home grown' beginning teachers who may stay on and work within the school as ECTs. This is attractive to the school with future teachers having developed effective relationships and become familiar with the particular nature of the school.

There may however be potential issues over the promotion of singular conventions and norms particular to the setting where the beginning teacher is placed, potentially resulting in enculturation (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Moore, 2004). This can be significant when large alliances or MATs are involved and where they 'grow their own' (Peiser *et al.,* 2019). Here beginning teachers may focus on specific approaches and curricula and fail to have opportunities to develop different and innovative ways of learning and teaching, adaptable to diverse settings. From the mentor's perspective, they may miss out on the input of students' recent research informed and evidence led preparatory work, reducing the potential for introducing new and innovative ideas and approaches. McIntyre *et al.* (2019) discussed this concern when considering the shift in focus away from the more diverse approaches often found in universities and resulting in what they saw as university teacher educators' 'silenced voices'.

In summary, schools may capitalise on the potential for whole school professional learning embedded in ITE, as they become increasingly involved in the wider aspects of teacher education. However, with multiple benefits to engaging with ITE, come notable challenges, impacted by changing circumstances. These may be successfully accommodated by a supportive school with an appropriate culture and effective structural organisation. With effective practice architectures, ITE can prove to be beneficial to staff development and enable schools to select and recruit high-quality future staff. However, where this is not the case, engaging with ITE may raise concerns of conflicting priorities between the beginning teacher and school pupil and be perceived to compromise aspirations for career progression. Research has shown how engagement with ITE can benefit staff development but, with changing circumstances on multiple levels, challenging issues may instead prevail. With the onset of a changing context and greater responsibility expected of the mentor, there was a need to investigate how change had

impacted their experiences and whether it had caused greater benefit, or challenge.

Enhanced opportunities through provider contribution

Providers may contribute to mentors' professional development especially when working within a collaborative partnership and becoming more involved in the co-construction of curricula through effective social-political arrangements, or 'relatings'. In addition, a well-run and agile provider can ameliorate difficult situations and provide support if there are particular issues within a mentor's school. With a proactive and efficient provider, benefits to staff can be facilitated through formal training and professional development of subject and pedagogical knowledge (Sewell *et al.,* 2018). This can be facilitated through for example workshops, seminars, action research projects, conferences, and specific focus groups. There are also multiple opportunities for informal professional development and learning through shared reflections and observations as well as collaboration with their provider tutors (Loughran and Russell 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Whitty and Furlong, 2017; Evans, 2019; Goodnough, 2019). Such a diverse range of activities and events can lead to mentors' more individualised support and a greater focus on professional *learning* rather than just professional *development* (Evans, 2019) as alluded to previously.

Increasing involvement in ITE may lead to mentors having more opportunities to develop specific subject and pedagogical knowledge through interactions with provider tutors. This may contribute to knowledge generation through topical and relevant research activity (Tan, 2012; Cordingley *et al.,* 2015). The co-construction of knowledge and the joint preparation of supportive resources (Sewell *et al.,* 2018) in the triad between beginning teacher, mentor and provider tutor can support professional development and learning. It may also contribute to improved classroom practice in specific areas of focus and need. Mentors may benefit from developing knowledge for as well as of practice when engaging with ITE, through learning more about their own practice (Douglas, 2014). They may then be encouraged to incorporate and embed this in their own setting, targeted for their specific needs. This process of situated learning, phronesis, can provide multiple opportunities to create new knowledge and be

adaptable to individual settings (Whitty and Furlong, 2017). With the encouragement of greater collaboration between school and provider, such opportunities can be accessed by mentors and encourage participation in meaningful and effective professional development and learning.

However, such transformative learning is not necessarily common practice. Some mentors may not have such opportunities, making the adoption of greater responsibility problematic if not supported by the provision needed to manage it. Taking on additional responsibility and delivering some of the input previously provided would need to be supported. Additionally, losing provider input may result in mentors and beginning teachers missing out on specialist and research opportunity as McIntyre *et al.* (2019) caution.

The impact of engaging in ITE on teacher mentors' professional practice is diverse and well documented. The contribution of the provider to subject and pedagogical knowledge enhancement through research led input can enable school staff development. This may be mutually beneficial through collaborative research projects and co-construction of curricular and associated resources. With changing provider relationships and increasing responsibility for the school, it was important to consider whether mentors were still able to benefit from professional development and career progression and ascertain the influence that this had on their practice.

2.5.3 The importance of appropriate mentors and their effective development

The selection of and support for mentors

As mentors play an increasingly significant role in the development of beginning teachers, so the relationship between mentor and mentee becomes even more important through effective social-political arrangements. The ability of the school to facilitate such a relationship is important when deciding to engage with ITE and the provision of effective and committed mentors, a key element of successful ITE. In this way, selecting the 'right' mentor can prove critical for the beginning teacher and supporting the relationship, essential for the mentor (Hobson *et al.,* 2009; Hobson, 2016). Not only is it important to find the right teacher to mentor but the correct pairing or 'best fit' between mentor and

beginning teacher is also significant. Hudson (2016) stated that inappropriate pairing can be a source of tension and may result in failing to optimise the potential of the relationship with the possibility of it eventually breaking down.

Finding and appointing the right mentor may be challenging if there are not enough available and appropriate mentors and can be particularly problematic in smaller settings. With an increasing reliance on the quality of the mentor given their greater involvement, Peiser *et al.* (2019) discuss the use of a 'pool' (after Long, 2009) of mentors from which the most appropriate selection can then be made. This may reduce the risk of reliance on just one member of staff and encourage collaborative work amongst mentors, enabling their interaction and learning with and from each other. As a result, a 'flatter' less hierarchical relationship can develop, more reminiscent of supportive or collaborative self-development mentoring (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a) and beneficial to mentee and mentor alike. Such an approach can be effective but is dependent on having adequate staff availability; challenging in smaller, often primary schools and especially when greater numbers of mentors are needed, and more is being asked of them.

There is the belief that an expert in a specific subject makes an excellent teacher and, similarly, being an excellent teacher is synonymous with being an excellent mentor. However, 'we should not assume that good teachers become good teacher educators' (Philpott, 2014, p.15) as not all teachers have the required attributes for, nor are necessarily predisposed for a variety of reasons, to mentoring (Butler *et al.,* 2010). Mentoring requires specific learned skills and knowledge as well as appropriate values (Langdon and Ward, 2015; Buetel *et al.,* 2017; Kupila *et al.,* 2017; Hudson and Hudson, 2018; Stanulis *et al.,* 2018; Murtagh and Dawes, 2020). In addition, there is often an expectation that any experienced teacher will go on to mentor and be able to adapt to the role while continuing to teach at the same capacity. As alluded to however, the roles of teacher and mentor require different skills and adequate preparation and training (Stanulis *et al.,* 2018). In consequence, an 'anyone will do' or 'sink or swim' approach (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020) can prove problematic where there is not an adequate source of either the quantity or quality of mentor required. Rising expectations of mentoring, alongside additional demands being made on teachers in schools may reduce the ability for the effective selection of teacher

mentors. Investigating schools' ability to select and provide support for the most appropriate teachers for the role was an important consideration for this research in determining the impact of changing circumstances on mentors' experiences.

The provision and nature of mentor development

In order to equip mentors to take on greater responsibility and become more involved, training and development, tailored to specific contexts (Hobson and McIntyre, 2013) is needed; as Philpott (2014) argued, not all good teachers make good mentors, nor do they just happen, they are made. Langdon (2017) observed that many mentors can be overly focused on sharing their experiences in a supervisory role and may be uncomfortable confronting the dissonance between themselves and the beginning teacher. Overcoming such reticence to enable critical reflection on practice and develop collaborative learning requires well planned training and development. Beutel *et al.* (2017), also recognise that appropriate support is needed to equip and empower mentors with the necessary skills, understanding and attributes to adopt the linchpin role identified by Peiser *et al.* (2019). Sometimes however, there appears to be a gap between what is needed and what is provided (Vanassche *et al.,* 2019), and the appropriate support has not always been forthcoming despite more being demanded of the mentor. As Vanassche *et al.,* 2019 observe:

> 'Rather than prescribing or replacing their professional judgment by a universal set of 'best' practices, we accept that teacher educators have good reasons to do what they do in practice, and that this important role needs to be met with adequate professional development support.' (Vanassche *et al.,* 2019, p.486)

Although there is much informal and highly effective mentor development and learning within school 'on the job', this often remains tacit and implicit (Winch *et al.,* 2015; Evans, 2019) and as a result, inconsistent. More formal mentor development is usually seen to reside with the provider but, not being currently mandatory in England, there is significant disparity in provision and in some settings, it remains negligible. As a result, the provision for mentor development, both formal and informal often falls between two stools of

responsibility, the school, and the provider, and may not be carried out to any satisfactory extent by either. This is particularly problematic as mentors take on more and carry out a wider range of duties. Initiatives have been implemented in England to provide more consistent and regularised support in recognition of these changes to ITE, most notably, as discussed in section 1.2, the introduction of the Mentoring Standards (DfE, 2016). However, being 'voluntary' (they) 'do not necessarily represent consensus in the field' (Douglas, 2017, p.854). Additionally, in the absence of their universal take up and with their disputed effectiveness (Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Murtagh and Dawes, 2020), there remains a lack of consistency of mentor preparedness and consequently quality experience for the beginning teacher. Investigating the impact of such inconsistency on the experiences of mentors was an important focus of this research.

To accommodate the regular and consistent changes taking place in ITE, mentors need to be agile and adaptable, confident in their practice and adequately experienced to interrogate it. Such attributes also require development which goes beyond addressing generic questions and empowers mentors to take appropriate action in diverse situations, making informed decisions for their context. Familiarisation with guiding principles to develop appropriate understandings facilitated through effective professional development can then foster suitable and effective response. This in turn can develop mentor agility, so reducing the dualistic theory/practice dichotomy (Hobson *et al.,* 2009), instil effective phronesis, and empower mentors to adapt in order to make the right, autonomous decisions in situ (Biesta, 2015; Orchard and Winch, 2015; Winch *et al.,* 2015; Peiser *et al.*, 2019; Brooks, 2021). Such mentoring, recognised as educative, promotes a more transformational learning, but does require appropriate conditions, including adequate time and resource (Langdon, 2017) and skilled mentors who have been prepared. This may also demand focused development over a protracted period of time as recognised in Langdon's (2017) research and demand adequate funding, through effective material-economic arrangements.

Opportunity for such targeted and contextualised support is by no means guaranteed however and Langdon (2011) discusses how situations in some schools may become 'stagnant'. This term may be used to describe a school

context in which there is neither the time nor resource to support ITE adequately, and where this is the case, the status quo may be maintained but the mentor is unable to move forward. Such a situation may lead to dissatisfaction in the role for the mentor, impacting the support that is provided to the beginning teacher and perpetuating pre-existing divisions, and exacerbating polarisations (Brooks, 2021). With rising demands being made on schools and greater expectations of mentors drawing on already stretched time and resource, there is the possibility of mentoring becoming stagnant. This research sought to investigate the likelihood of there being increased cases of stagnant mentoring with changing circumstances, and the possible impact that may have on mentors' experiences.

Understanding the nature of mentor development within different settings can help recognise patterns and disparities but evaluating its quality can be problematic. Attendance at training sessions is not mandatory and the work mentors do, not formally assessed. Those who miss training may be provided with 'catch-up', but this can be functional, and not in sufficient depth to involve transformative kinds of learning as recognised by Ellis and McNicholl (2015). Indicators of the success or otherwise of the mentor often rest with just beginning teachers' evaluations and arguably the outcome of the placement which may be attributable to many other factors apart from just the mentor's input. This makes precise monitoring of effective training and development especially problematic; what is learnt is complex and requires careful unpacking to determine its effectiveness and endurance. Identifying and assessing appropriate training and development approaches, can therefore be challenging and requires better understanding, something this research set out to investigate.

2.5.4   Working in partnership

The character and potential of partnership

The importance of effective partnership between school and provider became more significant with the continued move of ITE into schools as the need for greater shared understanding of the wider programme increased in order to:

'convey the necessity of bringing research-based understandings of teaching and learning into dialogue with the professional understandings of experienced teachers.' (Burn and Mutton, 2015, p.219)

Such understanding can help support the mentor in their increased contribution to beginning teachers' teaching and learning, encourage educative mentoring and support their professional development. Daly and Milton (2017) consider this when talking of the generative benefits of disturbing routinised practices through working collaboratively and considering problems and issues in different ways, moving learning on. Additionally, as previously discussed, where rising demands made on the mentor are not adequately met through the provision of formalised training and time allocation (Vanassche *et al.,* 2019), working in partnership can help support the mentor in adapting to new and different expectations.

The nature of partnership, like many aspects of the education complex is inconsistent and varies from place to place. With the changing balance of ITE focus, there has been and continues to be, debate around the role and responsibilities of the provider within partnership. As discussed in section 1.2 responsibility has traditionally lain mainly with the university (McIntyre *et al.,* 2019) and now extends to more recently established providers, often generated from school alliances and MATs (DfE, 2014).

Bringing mentors together to work collaboratively within their school or wider alliance, as well as with their provider, is a key objective of ITE partnership and influences mentors' experiences. Partnership should enhance mentor practice, drawing on the social-political practice arrangements or 'relatings'. Partnership, on a range of scales, offers mentors the opportunity to work together, and their provider tutors, to integrate the learning environments of school and provider and encourage collaboration around their mutual endeavour. Effective partnership can support professional development for the mentor and provide 'new ways of knowing and learning' (Dallmer, 2004, p.43), important when adapting to change. Investigating partnership seemed particularly pertinent for this research as mentors take on new and different responsibilities and have additional needs.

Partnership between school and university can:

'help student teachers to make links between theory taught at the university, and day-to-day practices in classroom settings', bridging the gap, 'between the university 'ivory tower' and the 'chalkface' of the classroom' (Sewell *et al.*, 2018, p.322).

This can go some way to mollifying concerns of universities privileging 'theoretical knowledge over applied and practical knowledge' (*ibid.* p.322) diluting the theory/practice dichotomy and making schools and providers more equal partners. Partnership may also help to support the transition for the mentor as they take on more of the teacher educator role through professional dialogue and development. As the partnership context changed it was important to investigate how mentors perceived their partnership and how it enabled and/or constrained their greater collaboration with other schools as well as with their provider.

There are many and varied forms of partnership facilitating ITE, as Mutton *et al.* (2018) detail. These have varying levels of connection from the highly collaborative emphasising the participatory, to the more hierarchical and unidirectional, operating within a bureaucratic or managerial system. The former model would seem to be currently more appropriate as increasing collaboration and co-construction is demanded through the proposed ITT Reform (DfE, 2022). This may be likened to the 'collaborative model' of partnership discussed by Smith *et al.* (2006) in which schools and providers work closely together on a regular basis, developing programmes collectively and integrating their individual strengths and qualities. Developing such skills and attributes through effective, collaborative partnership can support the mentor in adapting to changing expectations. However, such partnership models are not universally adopted indicating the importance of investigating types of partnerships employed and whether adaptations had to be made to fit new expectations. Such knowledge would support the understanding of what was enabling and/or constraining mentors and impacting their experiences in a time of change.

Participatory partnership can offer mentors the chance to network and collaborate with other colleagues in their own and other schools and provide opportunities for mentors to share information and knowledge. This may be achieved through for example, communities of practice and professional

learning hubs, developed both formally and informally (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Hurd *et al.,* 2007; Brown and Greany, 2017; Lofthouse, 2018). This can prove to be particularly effective in supporting more isolated mentors working in a small school for example.

Already complex, partnership working, has, like the education landscape, been impacted by the changes initiated in ITE and the wider education complex. Additionally, and affecting partnership particularly, has been the introduction of a plethora of new and different routes into teaching as discussed in Chapter 1 a and outlined in <u>appendix 1</u> and the proliferation of new providers, including school federations and academy chains, to service them. This has offered opportunity for some mentors, but for others, confusion over changed expectations and increased responsibilities. Additionally, this has impacted the dynamics of the partnership and changed the nature of relationships, the 'relatings', between school and provider. This important aspect of partnership working is addressed in this research, investigating the impact of the diversification of teaching routes on the experiences of the mentors.

Changing relationships within the partnership

Altering the balance between school and provider has had many implications, including the blurring of boundaries between the expectations of the mentor, and provider tutor as discussed amongst others by Struthers (2017). This has become particularly pronounced where mentors have taken on more responsibility and become more of the teacher educator. Over time, and especially since the accelerated move of ITE into schools, the differences between the mentor and the provider tutor, who had co-existed in different educational realms, became less pronounced and the delineation between their roles less clear. Shifting the balance of responsibility between provider and school has impacted the relationships within the partnership (McIntyre *et al.,* 2019; Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019) and had both positive and negative results as this research sought to investigate.

Where partnership is supportive and functions effectively, mentors and provider tutors can work together through challenges, enhancing the relationship. Both may benefit from mutual support and learning and become more involved in collaborative endeavour with a shared goal. Provider tutors coming into school

to do joint observations and share in subsequent professional discussions as well as being involved in collaborative research projects, can help build relationships and instigate mutual professional development and learning (Sewell *et al.,* 2018).

Where partnerships have not been so strong, O'Grady *et al.,* (2018) researching the Irish context, recognised relationships as potential power struggles. Raised expectations for the mentor and an increase in their workload can be perceived as the provider 'doing less' and the mentor 'doing more'. This is something that is especially pertinent around issues of assessment or 'judgementoring', and can prove conflicting (Hobson and Malderez, 2013). In consequence, mentors taking on more responsibility can be left feeling increasingly accountable where before, the provider tutor had ultimate liability (Peiser *et al.,* 2019). Research indicates that alterations to the balance of the relationships within partnerships can impact mentors' experiences with differing outcomes. Considering this and the increasing part that mentors were playing within those relationships, identified a need to investigate whether mentors had experienced such change and if so, how it had impacted them. Conducting the research, I sought to ascertain the degree to which such changes had been perceived to be positive, encouraging greater collaboration, or detrimental, leaving mentors feeling isolated and accountable with an unbalanced workload.

In summary, when working well in a complementary way, the interaction of the school and provider can enable mentor practice through effective partnership and encourage mutual development. Where the partnership becomes dysfunctional, however, mentors may become increasingly isolated in their practice, and take on responsibilities they do not feel adequately prepared for. The combined interactions between school and provider within partnership are therefore important to consider when investigating the mentors' holistic experience as I sought to do through this research.

2.6 The interaction of school and provider

The combined effect of what is happening within a school and with their provider and the interplay of their practice architectures, may influence mentors' professional practice differently from one setting to another. This is dependent upon the specific circumstances acting within each place to create a unique

context. Kemmis *et al.* (2012) have described such a context as an ecology of practices and, similar to the theoretical construct of the activity theory used in this research, this portrays a system in which different elements or components interact and are interrelated (Barnett and Jackson 2020; Brooks, 2021).

Like any system, this is subject to constant and continual change, and modification to one aspect has implications for others, upsetting the balance and unsettling the synchronisation. Existing within the context of ITE, this is particularly relevant and appropriate, as it experiences regular change and disruption. Through this understanding of ecology of practices, the joint impact of the mentor's school and provider can be identified, and the resulting, unique environment described. Acting as a system, this can, in turn, be used to investigate the impact of increasing school-centralisation of ITE. This will be considered in relation to the data later in the thesis, in Chapter 5.

2.7   Summary

Covering a wide range of different sources, I have in this chapter considered multiple aspects of the lived experiences of mentors. I have explored what it is that motivates a teacher to engage in ITE, detailing opportunities for professional development and subject and area specialism and progression. It has also been clear from the literature that there are several challenges facing the mentor. These arise from both a capacity and capability perspective, with some mentors having neither the time nor the support from their school and/or provider to fully engage in ITE.

Understanding that the mentor works within a supercomplex environment helps to explain that there are changes to the very frameworks through which we make meaning; there are therefore no simple 'quick fixes' that can be made, and informed and appropriate adaptations may be needed to accommodate change, something that is not always possible.

Considering the practice arrangements operating in the four focal areas in both the school and provider context, helped to identify and explain what it is that may enable and/or constrain the mentor in their practice. What was less clear from previous research was the joint impact of the school and provider and the response of their combined practice architectures to change. This had become

more pertinent with the growing involvement of the mentor in ITE and so a focal area of this research.

I identified the combined impact of school and provider making up mentors' own specific context, as ecologies of practices. It was these different contexts, that I sought to investigate through the research in order to understand what it is that affects mentors' experiences when subjected to substantial change. How this understanding has been reached and then utilised is described next within the methodology.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Theoretical and methodological perspective

Having ascertained that the mentor's context is complex and there are particular practice architectures enacted through their school and provider enabling and constraining practice, this chapter considers how that context may be investigated. To achieve this, I adopted a social constructivist approach to construct meaning from what there is around us and make sense of what is a multifarious, complex context (Vygotsky, 1978; Crotty, 1998). I chose an ontological approach underpinned by the understanding that nothing in the education complex happens in a vacuum, and practices are 'enmeshed with particular kinds of arrangements to be found at specific sites' Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a, p.156), the practice architectures discussed.

3.2 Conceptual framework

To support my ongoing understanding, I developed an evolving conceptual framework which I have adapted and augmented throughout the process from proposal to writing up (appendix 2). The graphical representation of the myriad components investigated within the mentor's context, helped me understand how different elements were related and interconnected. This supported organisation and making sense of what was a disparate collection of areas of interest (Burgess *et al.,* 2006; Miles *et al.,* 2014).

My original ideas, related to mentors' experiences, were generated when considering potential areas of interest and evolved as the research developed. Some were pursued and others not, depending on their feasibility and level of relevance and importance. Nascent ideas associated with why mentors engage with ITE and what they found beneficial and challenging, were augmented with findings from the analysis and discussions with my supervisors, colleagues and peers alongside continual research. The early notions developed into more enduring understandings around what appeared to enable and constrain mentors and were further developed as I recognised clear themes emerging. There were, in addition, underlying concepts that informed and underpinned my theoretical view particularly concerned with the influence of systems and the

importance of interrelationships within them. I saw differences as well as patterns in the interactions between what was happening within the mentor's context. Concepts were developed throughout the process enhancing my understanding of how the mentor was influenced by what took place within their school and with their provider. As I came to the end of the process, I was able to understand the impact of the combined interactions of different components within the mentor's context and complete the conceptual framework having followed an inductive process. Understanding was based on the critical evaluation of literature and experiential knowledge from the data collection and analysis (Burgess *et al.,* 2006; Pather and Chetty, 2016).

Data from questionnaires and interviews conducted with a diverse range of mentors were collected and analysed alongside relevant policy and other documentation from multiple sources. I used the concepts not to hypothesise but to underpin and guide the inductive reasoning led by the research questions. The literature I engaged with served to frame my developing understanding and was used in turn to recognise themes which emerged from the data. This was informed by Hennink's observation that:

> 'The deductive conceptual framework guided the research, while the inductive conceptual framework helps to answer the research questions.' (Hennink, 2011, p.45)

Complex situations are addressed in Vygotsky's (1978) work, suggesting we do not interact solely on a biological basis with our environment but our relationship with our world is mediated by others and the cultural and historical context in which we live (Wilson, 2004; Wilson, 2014). In consideration of this, I adopted an interpretivist stance (Crotty, 1998) to explore and examine the values, views and perceptions of the participants and construct knowledge from what I found. This aligns to the understanding that all human practice takes place within a social context and is led by those involved. With a focus on the 'lived' experiences of mentors, I have therefore, through the research tried to 'get inside the person and understand from within' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.252).

3.3 Activity theory

Schools and those working in them, function on multiple levels and within many systems comprising constant, varied interactions (Douglas, 2014). Dallmer (2004) recognised that those involved within the school system, manifest a, 'multiplicity of identities' within the school, with pupils' success as their overriding priority. The support of beginning teachers is in consequence, one part of their multiple responsibilities compounding what is already a highly complex job and working within what I described in Chapter 2, section 2.3, as a supercomplex context.

To understand this supercomplex system, I employed activity theory (Engeström, 2008), with its social constructivist approach operating within a social medium. Activity theory has been identified as a descriptive meta-theory encompassing sub-sets such as cultural-historical, (CHAT) or social-cultural aspects (SAT). It has been used to examine complex social systems and organisations such as schools, colleges, and teacher education (Ellis *et al.,* 2010; Goodnough, 2019). Use of activity theory through for example CHAT where cultural and historical patterns may be identified, can help to 'reveal trends, patterns and influences over teacher education' (Brooks, 2021, p.162). In addition, adopting its dynamic systems approach provides an effective focus to understand the changes that have taken place in ITE; so addressing the first research question considering teachers' experiences of mentoring and the impact of change.

To understand the mentor context, I sought to identify and examine the individual elements of the system within which they worked. These included the dynamic of changing priorities and policies, and the subsequent evolving nature of the mentor role (Peiser *et al.,* 2018). Activity theory facilitated such examination by enabling an exploration and analysis of the individual component parts of mentors' experiences and bringing these together to comprehend the whole. Activity theory could in this way, provide the 'intellectual resources to develop a coherent view of how teachers at different stages in their professional life conceptualise their praxis' (Ellis *et al.,* 2010, p.4), so justifying my choice of theoretical stance.

Role of the activity theory framework (ATF)

To facilitate this investigation from a practical perspective, I employed activity theory as an analytical tool, through its associated framework. I used this, in a structured and systematic way, as a lens to investigate (Engeström, 2008) the impact of the varied constituents of schools and their providers. I examined mentors' perceptions of their different experiences through the framework's facility to identify and organise the interactions of the systems' multiple components. These interactions revealed tensions arising from contradictions existing between the component parts of the system and varied outcomes from them which were in and of themselves, valuable as Engeström explained:

> 'Human activity is endlessly multifaceted, mobile and rich in variations of content and form… the theory of activity should reflect that richness and mobility. Such multi-voiced theory should not regard internal contradictions and debates as signs of weakness; rather they are an essential feature of the theory.' (Engeström, 1999, p.20)

Activity theory has been shown to be an effective approach for researching the ITE context. Wilson (2014, p.20), focusing on the cultural-historical approach (CHAT), advocated the use of the framework for providing 'researchers with both a methodological framework and the practical tools with which to apply it.' 'Tensions' and 'contradictions' stemming from potentially conflicting interactions, typically found within the complex context of ITE can be reflected on, assumptions challenged and opportunities taken to 'stimulate new professional learning'. Wilson's (ibid) paper goes on to provide examples of how the approach and its associated framework has been used as an 'analytical tool' in different aspects of teacher education research, demonstrating its applicability and usefulness. One of the ways discussed was employing the framework to analyse relationships over a period of time, aligning with my research intentions to consider the impact of recent change on the relationships between school and provider and the influence that has had on mentors' experiences.

Edwards and Mutton used the framework to examine the 'system focused on a shared object of activity or problem space' (Edwards and Mutton, 2007, p.507). This was an important consideration in this research when exploring the situation in which two organisations, the school and provider work together on a

shared focus, in this case, the beginning teacher. Here the two institutions may have conflicting priorities and there are subsequent implications for the mentor as 'contradictory perspectives can arise', a further example of using the framework as observed in Wilson's research (2014, p.23). In addition, Goodnough (2019) described using the framework as a lens to investigate the outcomes of working in a highly complex situation and explain the impact of multiple interactions shaping the context; aligned to the complex situations I was investigating.

In summary, when conducting the research, I used the framework to examine both the pragmatic components of the system such as documentation, policies, and practice, as well as the social, cultural, attitudinal, and historic aspects, enabling an holistic understanding of the system. The framework's particular strength as a method for perceptual analysis, enabled my exploration of issues within ITE from the mentor perspective; determining how those issues came about and what the impact of change had been on the mentors. In these ways, the framework with its underlying theoretical understandings, was used as 'a powerful lens for understanding the problem of teacher education' (Ellis *et al.,* 2010, p.9).

3.4 Understanding context: the theory of practice architecture and ecologies of practices

In addition to using the activity theory framework to examine mentors' engagement with ITE in a time of change (addressing the first research question), I also considered the theory of practice architectures and the practice arrangements (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014) comprising mentors' contexts (as discussed in section 2.5). I investigated the school and their relationship with their provider(s) through this theory, to develop understanding of what it was within the mentors' experiences that was enabling and/or constraining their practice. Such understanding helped me address the focus of the second research question.

Peiser *et al.* (2019) in their research on the role of the mentor in an increasingly school-centred ITE context, employed Kemmis *et al.'s* conceptual framework of practice architectures. They used this as an organising device, to understand what enabled and constrained mentor practice, through the cultural-discursive

(sayings); material-economic, (doings); and social-political (relatings) arrangements (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a) within the mentor's context. These understandings were applied to the analysis as further described in Chapter 4.

With this understanding, an holistic picture of the mentors' context could be established and using the metaphor of ecologies of practices (Kemmis *et al.,* 2012; Brooks, 2021) the interactions of the practice architectures choreographed by both their school and provider, investigated. The metaphor was used to depict and explain the outcome of the combined impact of both the mentor's school and their provider and how this shaped their experiences, individualising and contextualising each unique setting as later outlined in Chapter 5.

3.5 Research design and methods employed

I adopted a dynamic and constructivist theoretical stance throughout the research design to make sense of mentors' perceptions of the multiple elements interacting within their context. I achieved this through employing the three theoretical methods explained above, activity theory and its associated framework, the theory of practice architectures and the concept of ecologies of practices. These informed the selection of data collection methods and led me to adopt an essentially qualitative approach. I asked questions that would necessitate descriptive and explanatory answers to elicit a range of perceptions, exploring and interrogating the underlying context and related issues (Tracy, 2013). This resulted in the generation of fundamentally qualitative data but also involved the collection of some quantitative data to provide additional information from which to draw explanation and understanding. The resulting design was, as a result, one of mixed methods with a flexible approach (Taylor, 1984; Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2017).

The research comprised two distinct stages to account for both breadth and depth; a survey questionnaire in Stage 1 generating 84 responses and semi-structured interviews in Stage 2 with seven volunteers identified from the first stage. Stage 1 involved an initial, geographically wide-reaching survey across different school age-phases to capture an array of mentors' perspectives. Analysis of the responses was used to establish themes and identify participants for further in-depth, detailed interviews. I chose this approach to

provide a multi-voiced outcome in distinctive contexts, ensuring a diverse range of contrasting viewpoints and different approaches to conducting ITE. This enabled an exploration of a more representative picture of varied mentor perceptions and avoided incurring the 'dangers of the single story' (Adichie, 2009).

Using the questionnaire first, provided some quantitative as well as qualitative data from which to generate questions for the interview schedule in the next stage. Merriam (1988) advocates using both in conjunction, enabling triangulation and enhancing the research's validity and reliability.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the research process which is expanded on and developed in the subsequent text, all stages underpinned by ethical considerations.

Figure 2: Overview of the research process
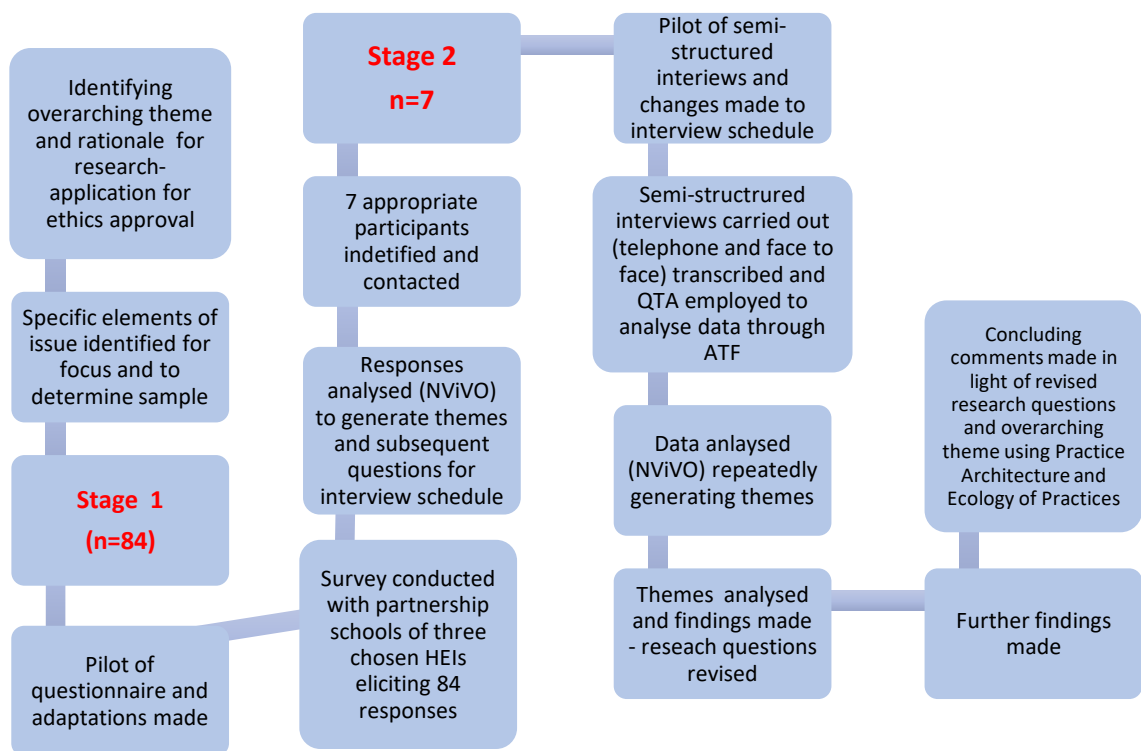
3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Stage 1 The Survey

Survey questionnaire

I designed and disseminated a questionnaire to initiate contact with possible participants and ascertain a baseline understanding of typical mentors' perceptions. This was sent to a wide range of mentors in schools of different age-phases and the questions covered varied aspects of mentor practice. This was intended to generate data covering differential attitudes and perspectives, and so provide an initial understanding of mentors' insights into their engagement with ITE. Included was the consideration of the respondents' role and experience as a mentor, what encouraged them to engage with ITE and some of the challenges they faced in doing so. This would inform the more in-depth subsequent interview schedule to enable a deeper investigation of mentors' experiences.

The design and administration of the online questionnaire took place over a period of three months, approximately six months before Stage 2. This afforded adequate time to collect, analyse and inform the interview schedule for the subsequent semi-structured interviews.

Prior to sending the questionnaire, I carried out a pilot study to increase its 'reliability, validity and practicability' (Cohen, *et al.,* 2011, p.260). This was conducted with six mentors from a range of early years, primary and secondary school settings, not included with the main data collected. The purpose of the pilot was to assess both the clarity and efficacy of the survey and make any necessary adjustments. Analysing the responses to the pilot study alongside comments made by those completing it, revealed an ambiguity and lack of clarity in two of the questions which were subsequently edited. Comments also identified a slight overestimation in the proposed completion time which was adapted as a result. The pilot also performed the role of a pre-test by ensuring all the questions were clear and accessible and the process efficient (Yin, 2014).

Survey design

The self-completion, online questionnaire was constructed on the internet survey software application, Survey Monkey. It was designed to have accessible, succinct questions ensuring it was not onerous or time consuming (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Thomas, 2017). Mentors received an email request to participate with accompanying information sheet (appendix 3 and appendix 4) outlining the study. Participants gave their consent through their participation.

Conducting the survey garnered detailed information about those involved in ITE through both open and closed questions and the responses informed the themes developed in the subsequent interview schedule. The survey was successful in eliciting 84 responses having gone to an estimated 300 schools, as well as ascertaining willingness from respondents to participate in the subsequent interview (see appendix 5 for example completed questionnaire).

The range of the survey facilitated access to a wide array of mentors working on differing ITE routes and age phases and from very different schools and settings. The responses were from mentors working on traditional PGCE and Undergraduate programmes, more contemporary School Direct Tuition Fee programmes as well as employment-based routes such as School Direct Salaried and Teach First (see appendix 1 for detailed information about differing routes). Most of the respondents were working with beginning teachers on a combination of routes, in a range of settings including early years, primary, secondary, sixth form colleges and some through schools from early years to A-level. Including the schools within the catchment area of the university providers, the survey covered a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural settings as well as different socio-economic contexts.   The intention was not to explore the specific attributes of mentoring on different routes or within different age phases but to investigate the perceptions of all mentors in their particular setting. This enabled comment on the generic question of what mentors felt about engaging with ITE within their context and ensure a wide representation. Aligned to the research questions, the questionnaire considered the impact of engaging in ITE on their professional practice as well as what enabled and constrained their practice.

The questionnaire prompts explored several aspects of the mentors' experiences, including generic demographic data such as the length of time they had been working with beginning teachers and which ITE routes their schools followed. More probing questions provided information about their perceptions of the quality of their experiences. Participants were asked at the end of the questionnaire if they would be willing to participate further in an interview to develop understanding of their responses, Stage 2.

Survey sampling and distribution

To identify potential participants for the survey and provide a wide range of different voices and settings, I employed purposive sampling (Thomas, 2017). This was to ensure the questionnaire reached mentors working with beginning teachers in a range of schools in different geographical locations across England, with differing philosophies as well as regional, social, and cultural attributes.

Working in ITE and within a university, had afforded me access to partner schools through professional contacts. As a result, I was able to identify three universities in different geographical locations, with whom I had professional connections and gain access to their partner schools and mentors. Covering a broad area of England and serving a substantial population of teacher mentors, the three universities provided access to a wide range of schools and settings. I sent the electronic questionnaire to ITE leads at the three universities who then disseminated it to over 300 partner schools with very varied socio-economic circumstances. The responding mentors were directly involved in the training of beginning teachers, that is as a class teacher, subject mentor, and/or those mentors leading ITE in their school.

Participation was optional and, as with all voluntary canvassing, came with the caveat that those willing to participate may have held strong views about the subject matter under investigation, whether from a negative or positive perspective (Robson, 2011; Thomas, 2017). As a result, the possibility of bias in respondents' answers has been considered and taken into account when analysing and interpreting the data (Thomas, 2017) in a deliberately reflexive way.

Informing the interviews

I received 84 responses to the questionnaire from a diverse range of age-phases, teaching routes and pupil demographic. The responses were predominantly from primary schools (62%) with 7% from early years settings and 31% secondary. The route taken into teaching was mainly university-led PGCE (69%) with representation from other routes to provide a range of perspectives and experiences of working within various systems.

Mentors can work with beginning teachers following several different routes and of those surveyed, 48% worked on just one route, 21% on two, 19% on three, 10% on four and 2% worked on five different routes. These routes could also be conducted by different providers adding to the complexity of the context, an important observation which was followed up at interview. As there was no intention to comment on the relative merits or efficacy of different routes into teaching, distinction and comparison were not made between them.

Through an initial analysis of the responses using NVivo (qualitative data analysis software) to code and organise the data, I was able to identify themes I wanted to pursue through more detailed investigation in the next stage of the research. Being an exploratory research design, I employed Qualitative Thematic Analysis (QTA) (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Merriam and Tisdell, 2015) to examine the data from the survey in order to generate premises for the interview schedule through a themed coding approach (Robson, 2011). Analysis of the responses enabled identification and categorisation of specific themes to generate more substantive questions for the subsequent semi-structured interviews. The responses were drawn upon to develop understanding of the range of perceptions of mentoring experiences and identify common themes.

Making decisions made about the process of generating codes and identifying emergent themes before beginning analysis, ensured that I adopted a consistent and robust approach as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is outlined later in the chapter. From this I was able to recognise distinct areas of interest that could be further probed through the interview and structure appropriate questions for the interview schedule. This was to provide a deeper,

more detailed insight into the perceptions of mentors' experiences; Stage 2 of the research.

3.6.2 Stage 2: The Interviews

The semi-structured interviews (appendix 6 for interview schedule) examined issues raised in the questionnaire and were conducted to provide more description and explore more complex concepts (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2014). Prior to identifying and scheduling the interviews, and as for the questionnaire, I conducted a pilot study. This involved two mentors who I knew professionally, neither of whom were connected to the universities involved and so did not participate in the main part of the research. As well as identifying any key technical issues and possible misunderstanding or ambiguity, they provided useful feedback on the accessibility of the questions and the need to change any wording. Analysis of the responses necessitated some adaptation to the interview questions to ensure they provided adequate information in order to address the research questions. I made some small modifications to improve access and comprehension, but few issues were raised. Both pilot interviews, one face to face and the other by telephone to reflect the main interviews, lasted just over 50 minutes.

Interview design and process

The intention of the semi-structured interview was to explore the mentors' lived experiences and their perceptions of any change there may have been within their context. As Kvale and Brinkman outline, the interview is useful in that it 'attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world' (Kvale and Brinkman, 2015, p.1).

Wanting to capture mentors' insights in an objective and open way, I used the semi-structured interview approach as 'guided conversations rather than structured queries' (Yin, 2014, p.110). This allowed mentors to articulate their views freely and without the restraint of fixed questions demanding specific responses (Kvale and Brinkman, 2015) something Rubin and Rubin (2005) would recognise as fluid rather than rigid questioning.

Interview sampling

Similar to the survey, the sample for the semi-structured interviews was, purposive, having identified possible participants through the questionnaire. 35 of the 84 mentors surveyed volunteered to answer further questions having been asked: (Q11) 'Would you be willing to talk further about your experiences in an interview or focus group?' Considering the geographical range of the participants and wanting to explore some of the more sensitive issues raised through the questionnaires, I decided not to conduct focus groups but just one to one interviews.

The sample was stratified from the three different geographical areas, different age phases, as well as a range of ITE routes. Out of 35 positive responses to participating in a follow-up discussion, I selected respondents to ensure representation from different;

- age-phases of teaching (early years, primary, secondary)

- geographical areas (at least one from each university provider in each geographical location)

- ITE routes into teaching (school- and university-led)

In addition, I required all those interviewed to have at least three year's mentoring experience, ensuring they were able to discuss their situation and any recent changes with authority.

Having stratified the data, I arranged and subsequently conducted seven interviews (see Table 2 for participant information). The seven participants fulfilled the criteria and being aware of the substantial amount of data the pilot interviews had generated, I was confident that the data from those interviewed would provide sufficient material for analysis. My supervisors affirmed this in a later discussion. The interviews, five face to face and two by telephone (necessitated for logistical reasons), lasted on average an hour, with telephone interviews being slightly shorter, around 50 minutes and the face-to-face interviews just over an hour. The interviews were recorded and then professionally transcribed (see appendix 9 for example interview).

The interviews considered the participants' perceptions of their understanding of their role as mentor and the impact it had on all aspects of their professional life both as an individual teacher and as part of a staff collective. The questions, having been generated from the outcomes of the questionnaire, facilitated prompting, and probing to extract rich data and 'thick description' (Cohen et al., 2011; Thomas, 2017) in which particular attention in the analysis was paid to the context within which the mentor worked. The semi-structured interview approach enabled an effective dialogic space to explore the meaning of areas of interest and to follow specific points without being directed to particular conclusions or outcomes. Conversations started with prompt questions which were used as a guide rather than a script and followed lines of relevance according to mentors' interest and experience. This was perceived to be important in such research when discussing perceptions of mentor experiences (Daly and Milton, 2017).

As I was aware some of the interviews would have to be conducted on the telephone and not wanting to privilege some over others, I chose not to consider those elements of the interview that were not accessible on the telephone, for example, behavioural detail such as visual cues, gesticulation, or expression, (Thomas, 2017). Similarly, I was not able to gather any specific information about the room from which they spoke in the telephone interviews (Robson, 2011), so did not consider this in the analysis for any of the participants.

Participant information

Table 2 below outlines information about each of the seven mentors who were interviewed. I gave them alliterative pseudonyms with an adjective describing a specific, objective feature of their context. This was not a judgemental statement about their personal disposition or character and was used to remind the reader of their particular situation.

Table 2: Interview participant information

Participant pseudonym	Routes	Mentor role	Age-phase	Context	Face to face/ telephone
Hilary Head	University led PGCE BA Ed with QTS Early Years Initial Teacher Training	School Mentor	Early Years and Primary	Experienced mentor, Head Teacher – some teaching when need arose Multiple responsibilities	Face to face
Naomi Networks	School Direct Salaried University led PGCE School Centred Initial Teacher Training	School Mentor	Secondary	Experienced mentor leading large team of mentors working across wider network of schools, both primary and secondary	Face to face
William Workload	School Direct Tuition Fee University led PGCE BA Ed with QTS	School Mentor Class Mentor	Early Years and Primary	Highly experienced mentor and class teacher also on School Leadership Team, involved in multiple aspects of school life	Telephone
Alex Academies	University led PGCE	Class Mentor	Secondary	Experienced mentor working in large academy supported by wider academy community closely connected to extensive university provider	Telephone
Elliott Employment	School Direct Salaried	School Mentor	Primary	Working with employment-based beginning teachers only, with wide ranging responsibilities and challenging relationships with provider	Face to face
Safiya Small School	School Centred Initial Teacher Training	School Mentor Class Mentor	Primary	First year of SM after being CM for three years – leading two mentors in team in small school with low pupil and staff numbers	Face to face
Maryam Multiple	University led PGCE SCITT BA Ed with QTS	School Mentor	Primary	Long-term, experienced mentor working in medium sized primary school on senior management team with multiple providers, numerous responsibilities, and complex school management structure	Face to face

The 'mentor role' in column 4 of Table 2 above, requires clarification. Larger schools, possibly those that are part of a teaching school alliance or multi-academy chain, often have several beginning teachers on placement simultaneously. These beginning teachers are assigned a mentor; in a primary school this is the teacher of the class in which they are gaining most of their experience and in a secondary school, a subject specific teacher. The beginning teachers often also work with a main school mentor who oversees all the teacher education in the school, this is typically someone on the senior leadership team. I interviewed both class and subject specific mentors who are the 'face to face' mentor, and the school mentor who has oversight of all the students in the school. These roles are termed differently and so, for reasons of simplicity in this research, class and subject specific mentors are called class mentors, and those leading ITE in their school are called school mentors. Six of the seven participants were school mentors with two of them being class mentors as well and one a class mentor only. All had at least 3 years mentoring experience at the time of the interviews as the criterion demanded.

3.7 Data Analysis

Using qualitative thematic analysis (QTA)

I used a variety of analytical tools to make meaning from the data, employing QTA alongside the activity theory framework and the theory of practice architectures. The analysis proved to be mostly inductive as meaning was made from it (Hudson and Hudson, 2018) with a degree of deductive analysis emanating from the theoretical underpinnings of both activity theory and practice architectures theory. The analysis of the latent themes was interpretative and validated the constructivist approach I adopted as meaning was generated from the respondents' answers.

Using QTA facilitated a structured and progressive way to analyse the data, providing a framework to manage and explore them. I followed the suggested six-step process (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to provide a rigorous structure for working with initially disparate data to identify and generate themes and make them meaningful. I adapted the process for this particular area of research shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke 2006 p.87)

Phase	Process
1.Familiarisation with the data	Transcription of data, reading and re-reading the data and noting down initial ideas conscious of underlying theoretical concepts.
2.Generation of initial codes	Systematic coding of noteworthy features across the data and collating those data relevant to each of the codes.
3.Looking for themes	Collating codes into potential themes attributable to components of the activity theory framework (ATF) and gathering all data relevant to them. Adapting ATF to make relevant to research
4.Reassessment of the themes	Reviewing initial themes and checking these against the data to start to generate a thematic 'map' with themes and sub-themes relating to adapted component parts of the ATF and early consideration of enabling and constraining practice.
5.Refining the themes and giving them suitable names	Honing the themes through continued analysis and starting to develop an overarching narrative ascribing names and titles to the themes, confirming their definitions and adding to thematic map.
6.Final analysis and compilation of analysis	Using identified themes to explore 'tensions' between the component parts of the framework. Dynamic points around which activity takes place identified and themes considered relating to research questions. Themes further categorised into sections using ATF and practice architectures theory. Final analysis of data and selection of most appropriate and significant extracts, referring to research questions and literature to allow detailed writing up of the analysis.

QTA Phase 1

The interviews were fully transcribed by a professional service (see confidentiality statement appendix 8 and appendix 9 for part of example anonymous transcript). I chose to use a professional service as I was conscious of the time required to transcribe the seven interviews and wanted to be able to begin the analysis while still familiar with them. Transcription also ensured accuracy in the recording of the interview. The transcripts were returned promptly and so I was able to read them alongside listening to the

recordings which I did repeatedly, to become familiar with it and generate early ideas and themes. Being conversant with the data ensured accurate representation of what was discussed (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Throughout the process of data generation and analysis, I kept detailed, reflective notes to record the progress of my thinking and note any early patterns and points of significance. I also engaged in discussions with other doctoral students, my supervisors, and colleagues to work through developing ideas. I was aware throughout these initial stages of the ATF and theory of practice architectures and how they might be relevant.

QTA Phase 2

As I became increasingly familiar with the data through the transcripts and recordings, I began to identify and then assign codes to the relevant data using NVivo. 58 main codes were identified, four of them having sub-codes to account for their varied attributes. I ascribed the data to relevant codes and sub-codes with recordings made of the frequency of occurrences (see appendix 10 for interview codebook and appendix 11 for exemplar of initial coding on extract).

QTA Phase 3

Once I had assigned the initial codes and read the transcripts to the point of saturation, I began to collate them into themes. I also considered their likely attribution to the different component parts of the activity theory framework using it as a heuristic to sort the data into coherent categories. Wilson (2014), identified the specific terms used in the framework (Figure 3) and these are detailed below. Here they refer to the focussed elements of this research and provide themes to which the analysed data could be attributed.

Figure 3: The components of an Activity System (Wilson, 2014 p.22)
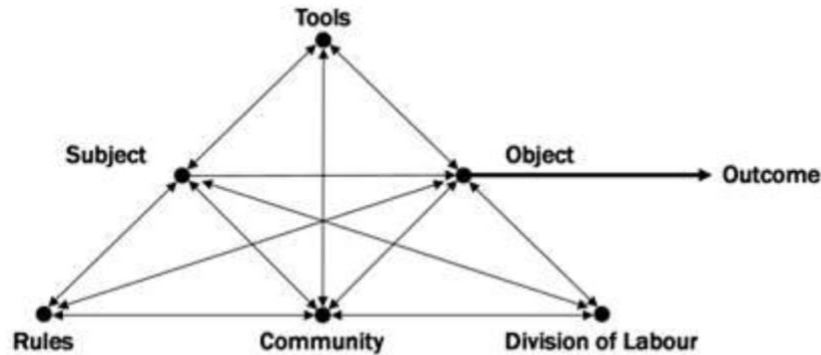
The components comprise the **subject,** the person, or group of people the analysis is focused on, in this case, the mentor; and the **object** who is the purpose or motivation behind the whole activity system, here the beginning teacher.

Within the system, the **object and subject** are influenced by;

- The **community** within which the system exists; the children in the school, the staff, and the wider community, comprising parents, governors, partners and so on.

- The **tools** or devices faciltating the system; the developmental and learning opportunities for the mentor, for example the documentation and guidance from their school and provider.

- The **rules** or regulations to which the system adheres; the wider architecture in place for conduct, supporting the system at varied scales and including for example national and local policies such as the introduction and use of the National Mentoring Standards and the use of local behaviour and planning policies.

- The way in which the work within the system is apportioned, the **division of labour**; the expectations within the system as to who does what and where responsibilities lie. In this case, it may be between the provider tutor and the mentor as well as within the school and the time and workload allocation provided to mentors for their role. Relating to a Marxist philosophy this can refer to both the hierarchical power structures

as well as how responsibilities are attributed within the system (Wilson, 2014).

- The **outcome** or what it is that the system is working towards (McNicholl and Blake, 2013); the lived experiences of the mentor and what it is like to mentor in schools.

Attributing the themes from the analysis to the component parts, I appreciated that the component parts of the model and related data were by no means discrete and there was some overlap and blurred distinctions between them. I also found that the labels of the component parts of the model could be more appropriate for the data that I had. As a result and following Douglas' (2014) research into Student Teachers' School Practice, I considered how the framework could be adapted to make it appropriate to the particular interactions of the data and the themes I was generating. This was to ensure the framework would be specific to this research as shown in Figure 4.

QTA Phase 4

Through reviewing and reassessing the initial themes and checking them against the data, I refined main and sub-themes through which the data could be analysed. I began to map these on the component parts of the adapted framework, exploring them in depth and categorising them as outlined below in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4: ATF elements and adapted elements for this research

ATF element	Adapted element
Subject	Mentor
Rules	Initiatives and policy
Division of labour	Roles and responsibilities
Object	Beginning teacher
Community	School, community and wider society
Tools	Structures

Figure 4: Adapted components of an activity system (after Wilson, 2014 p.22)
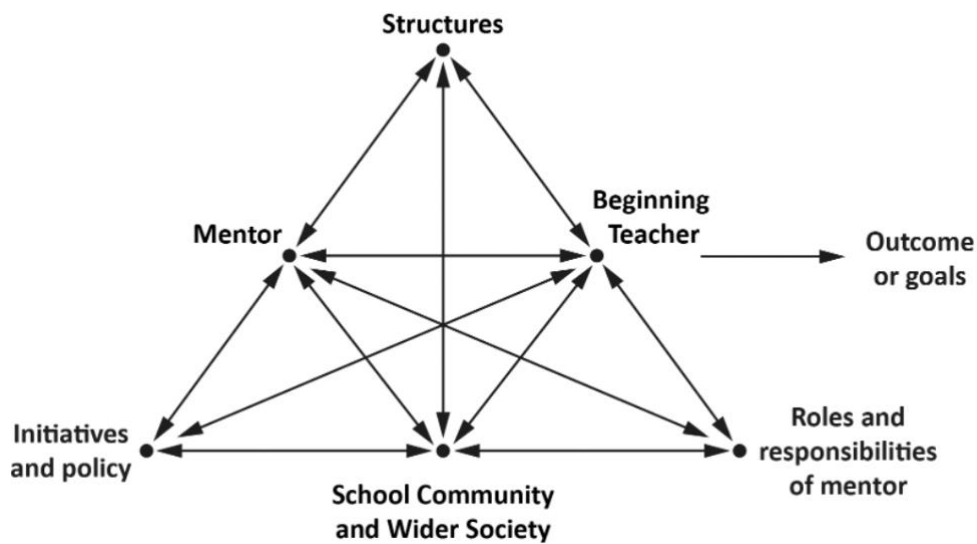
QTA Phase 5

Continuing the analysis, I was able to hone the themes and start to develop an overarching narrative from what I had ascertained from the data. This provided an expanded and contextualised model of the map from QTA Phase 4 to articulate the analysis of the research. This described the characteristics and physiognomies of the component parts of the framework in relation to the mentor's perceived experiences. From this, I could identify detailed characteristics of the participating mentors' experiences, and complete the 'map' of the detailed adapted framework (Figure 5 shows a representation of the completed map of the adapted framework and can be found in lager form in appendix 12),

Figure 5 Detailed adapted components of activity model for this research

Tools or mediation *(Structures)* of the system; the '…different types of shared external representations of a problem.' (Engeström 1995:322) mediating the interaction of the individual with their environment and enabling the action of the subject on the object in activity (Douglas, 2014). In effect, the tools facilitate the mentoring and can support consistent, high-quality learning, for both mentor and beginning teacher. These can also, in their absence, constrain the effectiveness of mentoring by creating a barrier to learning and development. The tools comprise for example the learning opportunities, support and professional development from the school and provider; documentation such as course handbooks, and observation pro-formas; dedicated time given to support mentoring, training materials and possible accreditation. What there is in place to support the process and what Kemmis (2014) describes as the 'material-economic' arrangements. There are substantial differences between both the quality and access in different contexts and settings and this can impact on mentor experience. Their availability, appropriation and effective use emphasizes the importance of context and what is available in particular settings.

Subject *(Mentor)* – the group or person whose perspective is the focus of the analysis that is, the participants in the role of the **mentor** and engaging in ITE.

Rules or norms *(Initiatives and Policies)* – consider the wider architecture in place for conducting and supporting learning at varying scale and relating to the 'sayings' identified by Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). These are dynamic, making the system vulnerable to change, often over short periods of time and significantly at times of political change and the introduction of new regimes and ideologies. They comprise both the pragmatic and the philosophical and include for example, national and regional policies, initiatives such as the introduction of the mentoring standards in 2016, the implementation of the CCF in 2019 and rhetoric around ITE/ITT and increasing competition and choice. Also included are school-wide procedures and regulations such as behaviour and planning policies which both mentor and beginning teacher adhere to. Tensions are often caused by different systems of mentoring (Cochran -Smith 2020) and demands made on teachers through the type of mentoring they are required to conduct; supervision, supportive or collaborative self-development (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014)

The object *(Beginning Teacher)* of the mentor; what it is that is being 'worked on' by the mentor, school, provider and wider community, the motivation of the system. There may be multiple motivations for working on the object and different priorities, but they result in an agreed outcome. 'The object refers to the 'raw material' or 'problem space' at which the activity is directed, and which is moulded or transformed into outcomes with the help of the physical and symbolic.' (Engeström, 1993:p.67) Engeström discussed the complexity of the situation when there are different things taking place within the same space and different, often conflicting objects. The object is perceived differently by participants as they have differing motives, objectives and priorities (Douglas, 2014). Similarly the participants' understanding of the purpose of what they are doing may also vary and have impact (Biesta, 2015); awareness of this was taken into consideration of the analysis of the data. Relational aspects and the importance of establishing a good relationship between mentor and beginning teacher is key, 'relatings' (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014) impacting on the quality of placement for the beginning teacher and fulfilment of professional learning for the mentor.

Outcome or **goal**; what is being worked towards (McNicholl and Blake, 2013) is the developed and enhanced mentor as this is the ultimate motive of the activity system used here. This is not however evaluated in this research as it is not assessing whether this is achieved, focusing on the perception rather than attainment of the participating mentors.

Community *(Schools, Community and Wider Society)* - perceived at diverse scales, with the immediate context of the classroom and school, to the wider school environment and the macro scale of culture and society. Incorporated is not just the school, partnership, and local community but also wider societal and cultural issues such as the use of social media, well-being. The community involves the dialectical relationship between the individual and the wider culture in which they operate, considering it in terms of the system working collaboratively rather than at the individual level, the 'relatings'. It helps to ensure that ITE is not just concerned with *training* individuals to work within the particular placement school but about *educating* teachers for any environment or context, a shared inheritance of teacher education, considering the purpose of education, whether about qualification, socialisation or subjectification (Biesta, 2015). An effective community in which to learn to become a teacher can also reduce the risk of enculturation and learning how to do things in just one very specific way and (Peiser, Duncalf and Mallaburn, 2019).

Division of labour *(Roles and Responsibilities)* – who is expected to do what in the achievement of the object of the activity within the system (Wilson, 2014) and how they work collectively and collaboratively; this accounts for the changing role and responsibilities, expectations and demands of the mentor, and the necessary allocation of time and training needed to fulfil the role, the 'sayings' as well as the 'relatings' in terms of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014). Also considered; how the mentor balances their work with the student and the pupils in their class and the perception of the resources available for them to do so in terms of time and funding. Mentors must also be able to balance their focus on the pupils in their class and the beginning teachers they are responsible for, challenged by the issue of the pupils being their priority rather than the beginning teacher. Their role as teacher educator is consequently different to that of the provider's. Mentors' own perceptions of their role varies alongside their understanding of whether it is an integral part of every teacher's responsibility or whether it is vocational and individually chosen.

(A larger version may be found in appendix 12)

QTA Phase 6

With the identified themes and understandings, I used the activity theory framework to explore 'tensions' or contestations between the component parts of the system, identifying the dynamic points around which activity takes place and interactions occur. This involved considering five different interrelationships where tensions might occur between the component parts as exemplified in Figure 4 above.

The relationships focused upon were:

- Mentor / Structures
- Mentor / Initiatives and policy
- Mentor / Roles and responsibilities of mentor
- Mentor / Beginning teacher
- Mentor / School, community, and wider society / Beginning teacher

Codes were allocated to each of the interrelationships and themes identified and developed. Appendix 13 provides an exemplar of the allocation of codes to the 'mentor/structures' interrelationship. I then selected the data relevant to that

particular theme to elaborate and exemplify the emergent themes as also shown. Here, I considered the interrelationship between 'mentor' and 'structures' with examples of the codes used, alongside their description and relationship to the appropriate theme. A direct quotation was given to exemplify the code.

To clarify and focus the analysis, I related it to the focal points of interest articulated in the research questions; considering what perceptual impact being a mentor has on teachers' professional practice and what enables and/or constrains them in their practice. I categorised the themes into recognisable and manageable sections which were written up in the findings. These were considered through the theory of practice architecture, identifying specific practice architectures that were perceived to enable and constrain mentors' practice (Table 5 and Table 6). These related to the mentors' school and provider and interacted to create the unique context each mentor worked in, understood as the ecology of practices. These findings are depicted and explained in the next two chapters.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process, I adhered to BERA's ethical guidelines for specific educational research (BERA, 2018). I also, as required before commencing data collection, identified and explored with my supervisors any potential ethical issues and gained ethics approval from UCL-IOE (appendix 14). I have, since then continued to robustly monitor ethical considerations to ensure they remain at the forefront of my thinking and conduct, informing all decisions made and underpinning all stages of the research process.

The purpose and scope of the research were made clear to all those participating in the survey through a short initial information sheet (appendix 4) and participants gave their consent through engaging with the questionnaire. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their data at any point, as were those interviewed. The interview participants also received a more detailed information sheet (appendix 7) and were asked to complete and sign an adjoining consent form for their data to be included. After interview, I sent all participants a copy of their transcript and asked them to confirm its accuracy which they did.

Malone's (2003) study of the ethics involved in her research of the education department in her own university revealed many of the potential perils of researching in what she termed her 'backyard', in my case, the ITE environment. There was therefore the predicament of identifying and revealing potentially sensitive outcomes and to protect against this, any findings were presented in such a way as to ensure they were not identifiable and so would not compromise relationships between the schools and universities involved. It was also important to clarify my neutrality and the participants' confidentiality to prevent skewing or invalidating the data collected, making it say things I wanted it to say. Remaining objective and constantly systematic has limited personal and professional bias.

Initial contact with participants was made with those school leaders responsible for ITE within their school by their relevant HE provider by requesting dissemination of the questionnaire to their mentors. Some may have been resistant to providing information and acting as 'gatekeepers' to their staff (Malone, 2003; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Robson, 2011) as well as protective of information that may have been sensitive to them or their school. Similarly, there may have been power dynamics between staff within the school, making some mentors wary of participation. Through careful explanation and justification of the purpose of the research and protection of both staff and school through confidentiality, I gained trust and a willingness to disseminate the invitation with the assurance of discretion and professionalism. In subsequent writing up and dissemination I continue to abide by this.

Mentors may have felt pressured into contributing to promote their partnership or mentoring work. Assurance therefore was always given that all participation was voluntary, and participants asked to provide informed rather than assumed consent (Homan, 2002, Keller and Lee, 2003) ensuring conscious and willing agreement. When carrying out the questionnaire, issues of anonymity and confidentiality were discussed with my supervisors. It was agreed that it would be acceptable to ask the participants to express an interest in volunteering to be interviewed by providing their email address. Although their email address could have identified them, they were assured this would be kept private, as it has been. The questionnaires and interviews were encrypted and kept on my password protected laptop. In addition, wanting to retain anonymity for the

participants I have kept any description of the three universities used deliberately imprecise as ITE programmes exist in a small field and even within a large region may be identifiable.

In addition, I identified the responses to the questionnaire with a number ensuring the participants' anonymity, and gave those participants interviewed a pseudonym. Participants were sent a copy of their interview transcript and asked to confirm its accuracy before it was analysed. None of them requested any changes be made to the transcript and confirmed their final assent that the data could be used for the research through email. Participants were also regularly reminded they were able to withdraw their data from the research process at any time. All data has been held securely in encrypted files and will continue to be so for a maximum of five years.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology I selected to collect, collate and articulate the data. I followed a social constructivist approach and adopted an interpretivist stance to examine mentor's perceptions of their complex context. Participants contributed through the two research methods, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire, disseminated through a survey to mentors in over 300 schools was used to identify themes to structure and explore in the seven subsequent semi-structured interviews. It was in addition, used to identify and select the participants for the interviews.

I justified the approach I took in interpreting the data inductively and using qualitative thematic analysis and the activity theory framework to analyse and find meaning in the disparate data collected. Meaning was developed through a socially constructed approach and, building on what the participants had revealed about their perceptions, considered further through the theory of practice architectures and the metaphor of ecologies of practices. I considered a range of ethical issues to ensure the integrity of the research and reassure and protect the identity of the participants.

Chapter 4 The 'capacities' – mentoring in school and with a provider: presentation and discussion of findings (i)

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in the preceding chapters, the nature of ITE is complicated, with its multidimensionality and interrelatedness where 'practices interweave and intersect' (Brooks, 2021, p.162). Trying to unravel multiple threads is challenging. In consequence, I used the activity theory framework to analyse, sort and categorise the interrelated elements of the data set, and considered the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014) to provide additional structure.

As discussed in section 2.5, Kemmis *et al.* (2014), drawing on the theory of practice architectures, identified three elements of practice arrangements that can enable and/or constrain a practice: the cultural-discursive, 'sayings', material-economic, 'doings' and social-political, 'relatings'. These occur within the school context and/or can be introduced into it by outside circumstances to 'prefigure and shape mentoring practices' (Peiser *et al.*, 2019 p.5). Analysing the data, I recognised the impact of all three elements on mentors' experiences and often happening simultaneously.

Across the data set, there was a variety of factors that appeared to affect mentors' experiences; some were perceived to enable their mentoring practice and others, constrain it. All however were influenced by the school they taught in, and the provider they worked with and the capacity both had for effective engagement with ITE in changing circumstances. Analysing these factors indicated that the influence varied along two trajectories from enabling to constraining practice as will be described in section 4.2 overleaf.

Engaging with ITE has always come with its benefits and challenges as described previously (section 2.2). Analysis of both the questionnaire and interviews concurred with the literature consensus indicating the benefits of mentoring to participating teachers' professional practice. Examples included the generation of new ideas and approaches as well as the development of subject knowledge. I was also able to identify the important potential role of

engaging with ITE, not just in perpetuating the teaching profession, but in developing and improving both the mentor and teacher alongside opportunities for staff development and school improvement. The benefits derived did however vary from one mentor to another, were impacted by change, and appeared to be dependent on the specific setting and partnership within which they worked.

The findings also revealed multiple challenges that mentors experienced in their role, supporting evidence from related literature and research (section 2.2). This included having inadequate time to fulfil the role as it had expanded and a lack of opportunity for professional development. As for the benefits gained from mentoring, the degree of the mentors' challenges varied markedly, as will be discussed.

4.2 The school and provider continuums and matrix

The analysis of the data revealed that the factors affecting whether mentors felt enabled or constrained within their setting appeared along two axes: their school and provider's capacity for mentoring.

The elements or practice architectures enabling or constraining mentors' practice in school, the 'where of learning' (Langdon, 2013), included for example, how their leadership perceived and valued ITE, the time and resources dedicated to pursuing ITE and the opportunities within the school for related staff development. Based on the analysis of the participants' perceptions, I placed each mentor on a continuum (Figure 6, below) dependent upon how enabling or constraining their school was perceived to be at that time. The process for placing the mentors is described in section 4.2.a overleaf.

Figure 6: Continuum depicting schools constraining/enabling mentor practice

School constraining practice   School enabling practice

Similarly, the type of relationship enacted between the provider and the school, at the 'site of pedagogical practice' (Edwards-Groves, 2018, p.130) and their relative practice architectures, influenced the mentors' experiences. Included

was the providers' capacity to work effectively in partnership and the efficacy of the relationships between school and provider. The type of relationship varied from a high functioning SCITT to an academic university led PGCE where the university was the significant provider. The mentors' perceptions of their relationship with and effectiveness of their provider, varied markedly. Reflecting that, I placed each mentor along the provider continuum (Figure 7, below) to indicate the degree to which the provider was perceived to enable or constrain their practice at the time of data collection, again using the process outlined in section 4.2.a below.

Figure 7: Continuum depicting provider constraining/enabling mentor practice

Provider constraining practice   Provider enabling practice

4.2.a Locating the mentor

Drawing on my understanding of the participants' insights into their contextual experiences and cross-referencing to the themes found (section 3.7 QTA Phase 6), I identified characteristics, related to the practice architectures, perceived to have constrained and/or enabled mentoring practice. These characteristics are outlined in Table 5. The characteristics are not exhaustive but represent what was analysed to be the important contributors to mentors' experiential perceptions at the time and were discussed during the semi-structured interview.

Table 5: School and provider; enabling and constraining mentor practice

Element of school/provider	Hilary Head	Naomi Networks	William Workload	Alex Academics	Elliot Employment	Safiya Small School	Maryam Multiple
School/Provider Enabling/Constraining	Moderate SE Moderate PC	Moderate SE Moderate PC	Moderate SE Moderate PE	Strong SE Strong PE	Strong SE Strong PC	Moderate SC Moderate PE	Moderate SC Strong PC
School Enabling (SE)							
Recruitment of new teachers ('doings')		●	●	●	●		●
Supportive culture and ethos for ITE ('sayings')	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Opportunities for professional development within school ('sayings and doings')	●	●	●	●	●		
Collaborative working with other schools ('relatings')		●	●	●	●		
Selection of appropriate mentor ('sayings, doings, and relatings')	●			●	●		
Provider Enabling (PE)							
Ability to adapt – building resilience, effective organisation ('sayings')			●	●			
Access to effective mentor training and development ('sayings and doings')			●	●		●	
Facilitating learning communities ('relatings')			●	●		●	
Working collaboratively with schools ('relatings')		●	●	●	●	●	
Subject and area specialist support ('doings and relatings')	●			●			
School Constraining (SC)							
Conflicting priorities too many other demands on time and resources – dual rather than complementary role ('sayings and doings')	●		●		●	●	●
Insufficient school support for necessary quality and quantity of mentors ('sayings and doings')		●	●			●	●
Perceived impediment to career trajectory ('sayings')		●	●				●
Provider Constraining (PC)							
Inadequate mentor education/preparation/training ('doings and relatings')	●	●			●		●
Few opportunities for collaborative work, networking, and professional development ('relatings')	●						●
Insufficient funding and appropriate resources ('doings')					●	●	●
Poor documentation and overly bureaucratic ('doings')	●	●			●		●
Too complex 'messy' ('sayings and doings')		●	●		●		●
Loss of personalization, weak relationship, and poor communications ('relatings')	●	●			●		●

I noted the mentors' responses to conversations about their mentoring experiences on the grid above (Table 5) and used this information to determine the relative strength of how enabled or constrained they were by their school and provider as shown below in Table 6. I determined whether mentors were

moderately or stongly enabled or constrained by their school and provider according to the number of responses given about their mentoring experiences as shown below (categorising relative enablement and relative constraint)

Table 6: Assessment of the relative strength of enabling/constraining

	School Enables	School Constrains	Provider Enables	Provider Constrains	Context Enables/Constrains	
Hilary Head	3	1	1	4	Moderate SE	Moderate PC
Naomi Networks	4	2	1	4	Moderate SE	Moderate PC
William Workload	4	3	4	1	Moderate SE	Moderate PE
Alex Academies	5	0	5	0	Strong SE	Strong PE
Elliott Employment	5	1	1	5	Strong SE	Strong PC
Safiya Small School	1	2	3	1	Moderate SC	Moderate PE
Mariyam Multiple	2	3	0	6	Moderate SC	Strong PC

Categorising relative empowerment
Strong school empowerment: *4/5 elements empower: 0/1 constraint*
Alex Academies (5:0), Elliott Employment (5:1),
Moderate school empowerment: *3/4 elements empower: 1/2 constrain*
Hilary Head (3:1) Naomi Networks (4:2), William Workload (4:3)
Strong provider empowerment: *4/5 elements empower: 0/1 constrain*
Alex Academies (5:0)
Moderate provider empowerment: *3/4 elements empower: 0/1/2 constrain,*
William Workload (4:1) Safiya Small School (3:1)

Categorising relative constraint
Strong school constraint: *0/1 elements empower: 4 constrain*
Moderate school constraint: *0/1/2 elements empower: 2/3 constrain*
Small School Safiya (1:2), Maryam Multiple (2:3)
Strong provider constraint: *0/1 elements empower: 5/6 constrain*
Maryam Multiple (0:6) Elliott Employment (1:5)
Moderate provider constraint: *0/1/2 elements empower: 4 constrain*
Hilary Head (1:4) Naomi Networks (1:4)

Maryam Multiple for example was more constrained than enabled by her school and strongly constrained by her provider while Alex Academies was strongly enabled by both her school and provider. Based on this assessment, I placed the seven mentors interviewed on each of the continuums to provide an indicative location, Continuum 1 and 2, Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: School and provider continuums depicting enabling/constraining mentor practice
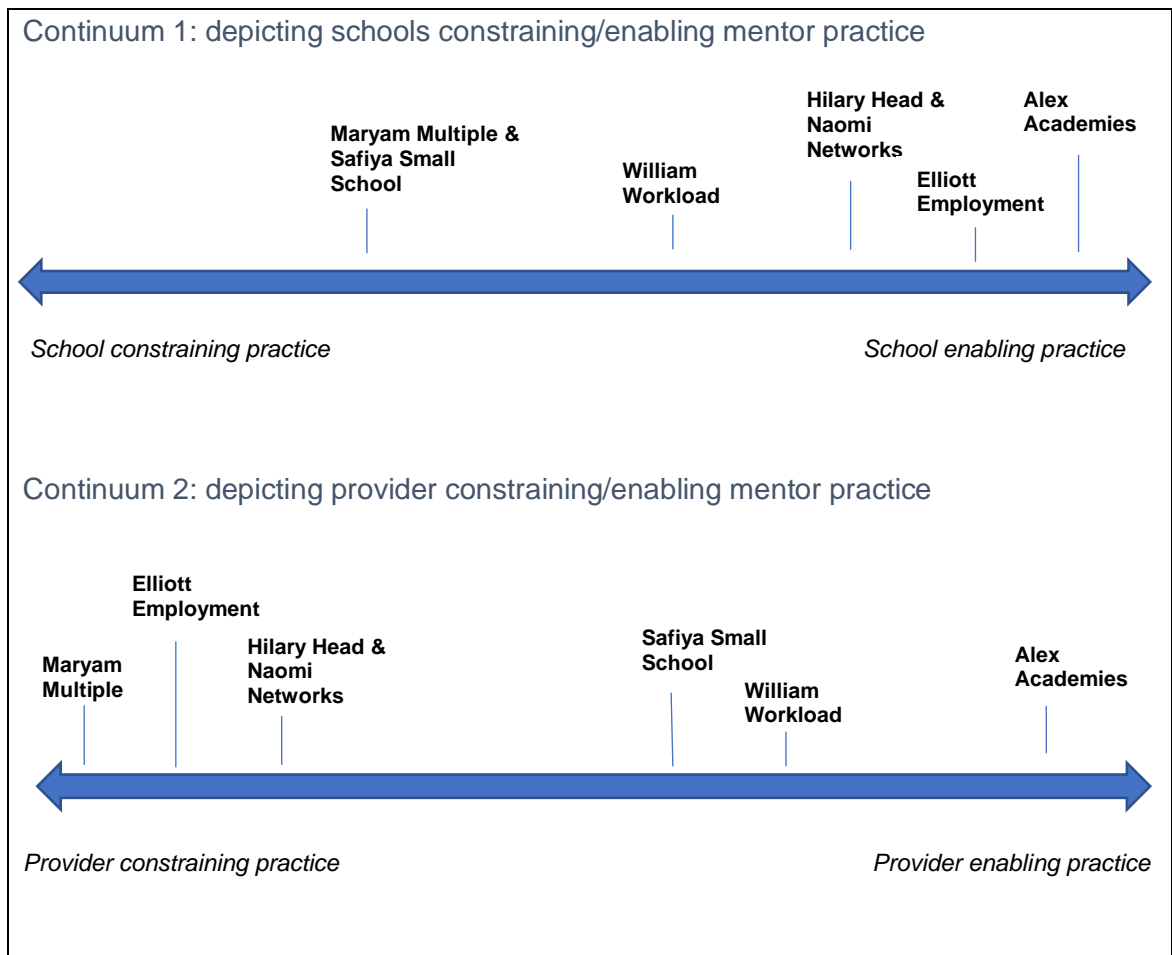
Having used the same approach to locate the mentors for both continuums (Figure 8, above), and in order to gain an overall impression of the impact of the provider and school, I amalgamated the two continuum lines to form an expanded two-dimensional matrix as depicted in Figure 9 below. The mentors were thus placed within one of four different quadrants and in the following chapters, I will outline in more detail their locations and contexts.

Figure 9: Continuums 1 and 2 Combined: Matrix showing school and provider levels of enablement and constraint of practice and relative location of mentors

HH: Hilary Head
NN: Naomi Networks
WW: William Workload
AA: Alex Academies
EE: Elliot Employment
SS: Safiya Small School
MM: Maryam Multiple
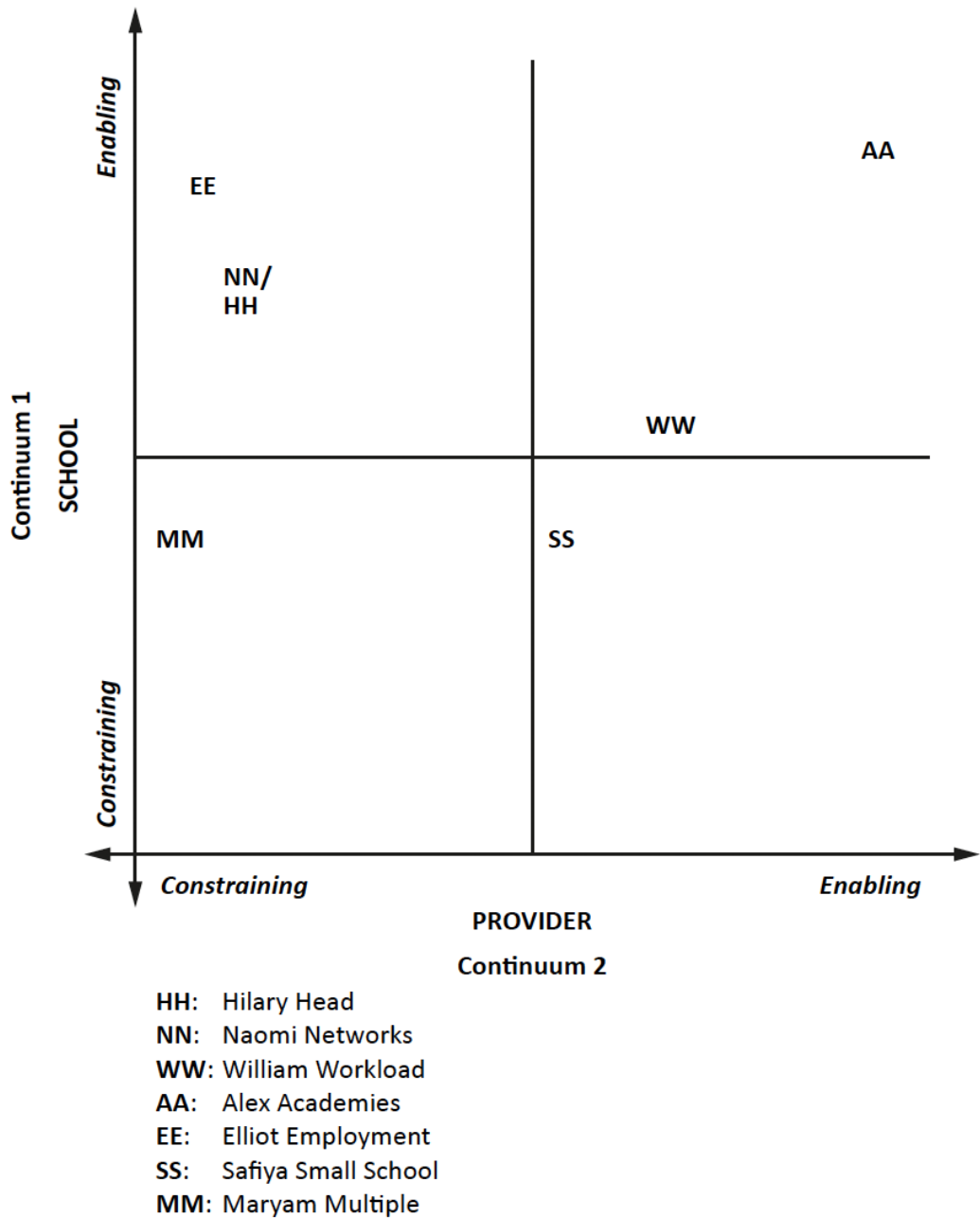
4.3 Overarching themes: four capacities of schools and providers

Through repeated analysis of the data, I identified several common themes running across all the mentors' experiences regarding their schools' and providers' capacity for either enabling or constraining their practice through their respective practice architectures. Four overarching themes were identified and the characteristics of mentors' enablement and/or constraint outlined in Table 5 attributed to each theme as shown in appendix 15. These themes, related to the

four focal areas referred to in Chapter 2, were termed 'capacities'. The term was used to indicate the ability of the school and provider to manage phenomena and their capability to support the mentor in their practice through four specific areas of their institution.

Continued analysis of the data identified finer-grained themes, breaking each capacity into further sub-themes:

1. **Organisational capacity**
   Leadership and culture
   Day to day organisation

2. **Staff capacity**
   Career progression
   Staff professional development

3. **Mentor capacity**
   Selection
   Mentor professional development

4. **Partnership capacity**
   Effective relationships
   Facilitation of training events and networks

In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider each of the four capacities and using evidence from across the data set, portray how mentors were impacted by their schools and providers. Evidence from the data is offered as short vignettes to exemplify aspects of relevant themes and is not exhaustive (Robson, 2011). I selected the vignettes for being the most representative of the theme that they were portraying.

4.3.A Organisational capacity

For this capacity I considered the culture and approach to ITE within the school and the provider and their attitude and propensity to engage with ITE. The efficacy of the daily management of the organisation, alongside the provision of adequate funding and resources were also considered. The school's organisational capacity is related to mentors' perceptions of their ability to accommodate ITE and is not making comment on, nor judgement of, other aspects of the school and its pupil outcomes.

Schools' organisational capacity

The leadership of a school influences its culture and approach, the cultural-discursive arrangements, which in turn affect the decisions that are made in prioritising activity and resourcing, the material-economic arrangements of the school; these impact on the strength of the school's organisational capacity to accommodate ITE.

Alex Academies, a secondary school teacher working in a large academy, part of a wider well-established academy chain, talked of her positive school culture and ethos, which was supportive of ITE. She described her school as *very supportive* appointing a school mentor *who* was *constantly in touch with the other academies* and responsible for *sort*(ing) *all the after school and CPD sessions.* The school's commitment to ITE as well as the effective facilitation of the day to day running of the ITE activities, allowed her to focus her time of *at least one hour a week within the working day,* on engaging with the beginning teacher *going through targets, progress and lesson observations.*

Alex was well supported through her school's positive ethos and commitment to ITE as well as their effective facilitation of her mentoring. Elliot Employment who worked in a larger than average primary school, and like Alex, within a wider close-knit alliance of schools, also experienced effective support from his school and spoke of being *well supported*. He stated that *my headteacher is very supportive of my role as mentor as are the class teachers who support the trainees*. He cited several supportive factors, such as ringfenced time for meetings and the encouragement and facilitation of mentor development. In addition, his appointment as school mentor and support for him in that role, ensured additional time and resource to hold mentor meetings, and run and attend support and training sessions with mentor colleagues.

Both Elliot and Alex worked in larger than average schools, and within even more capacious academy chains. Here, there may have been greater recourse to available staff, expertise and experience, as well as dedicated funding for ITE, that is, well established material-economic arrangements.

The situation in Elliot's case was however complex. Although his school had a positive ethos and promoted teacher education, he simultaneously experienced constraints to his practice especially around day-to-day management and resourcing. The beginning teacher as the shared object within the partnership system, is the priority of the provider but not of the school nor subsequently the mentor, their priority being the pupil. The potential conflict of being both teacher and mentor with differing objectives is explained by Peiser *et al.*:

> 'Schools and teachers are under continual pressure to ensure that their pupils meet academic standards and can therefore be more concerned with pupil progress than supporting beginning teachers' learning.' (Peiser *et al.,* 2018, p.10)

Where resourcing is limited within the school to facilitate mentors to pursue effective ITE, this can result as described earlier (section 2.5.2) in the role becoming dual rather than complementary (Jaspers *et al.,* 2014). This reinforces Aderibigbe *et al.'s* (2018) concerns that:

> 'Mentoring in teaching practice is fraught with difficulty for both student teachers and teachers and even more so due to the overlap between the dual roles of teachers serving as mentors, being both and at one time sharing ideas with the student teacher and taking responsibility for what happens in their own classroom.' (Aderibigbe *et al.*, 2018 p.67)

Elliot was aware of the challenges of conducting his mentoring role, acknowledging conflicting priorities; he described his many roles and sometimes incompatible responsibilities pursuing his role as senior leader as well as school mentor. This was especially so having taken on greater responsibility leading the intensive employment-based School Direct Salaried programme. He was mindful that any focus away from the pupils could discourage teachers from mentoring even within a supportive ITE culture. When asked about this, he responded:

> *Yeah, because you're not just doing the mentor role, are you? You're going to have a class yourself, so of course that will impact, I've got a million hats and so does the class teacher.*

William Workload, a primary school teacher like Elliot, was also juggling multiple roles and was clear with his beginning teachers about where their priorities had to lie:

> *You can't be anything less than the best for these children because it's their only chance. I do put a lot of pressure on students, but I do think they need to understand the level of their responsibility as a student and then a student teacher and then going on to being an NQT, because it is the child's only chance and I think we've got a huge commitment to them…. You've got to prioritise the children and I think so much is being asked of teachers.*

Despite 25 years of teaching, and, like Elliot within a supportive school ethos, William still struggled with his varied and increasing responsibilities. Having been asked just before our interview to take on a new leadership role, he decided not to mentor the subsequent year as there was inadequate provision within his school to support all his increasing responsibilities. He told me:

> *I've just been recently appointed to deputy head in September … so I will be having a break next year…. it's just balancing that, isn't it?*

Summary

Those practice architectures especially the cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements enabling mentor practice and creating strong organisational capacity, included positive and supportive leadership espousing a culture and ethos that promoted ITE. In addition, and related to a supportive ethos, having an effective school mentor leading and overseeing the development of ITE and its facilitation, was perceived positively by the mentors, enabling their practice. Finally, being given time and appropriate resource to pursue their mentoring allowed mentors to focus on their practice and develop their role. Mentors were challenged by constraining practice architectures within school exacerbated by having increased responsibilities without having recourse to adequate support. Here, conflicting priorities, without adequate resourcing caused the role to become a dual rather than complementary one. As a result, mentors such as William Workload had to choose between whether they could pursue their mentoring practice or not, indicating a weak organisational capacity.

Providers' organisational capacity

Providers can enable mentors' practice through their ability to adapt to change and the efficient day to day running of their organisation. Providers with supportive cultural-discursive arrangements enabling mentors to adapt and evolve appropriate to their setting, may help them to accommodate and even capitalise on the impact of change. Orchard and Winch (2015) discuss the importance of such adaptation to changing situations and making judgements that are appropriate to mentors' own, changing context. Similarly, Biesta (2015) talks about the need for, 'situational alertness' in teachers and Lofthouse (2018), of the key role for phronesis, as discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.2). Here the ability to recognise the right thing to do in different circumstances, adapting and flexing to need, enables the mentor to make sound situational judgements, important in times of change.

Recognising the importance of her provider support, Alex Academies felt she was *very well supported* and noted *university support is very good and updates are really helpful via email to keep up with deadlines etc.* She described her provider's agility in making modifications to the programme as she had taken on greater responsibility. The support provided had become more relevant and purposeful, and the provider's systems more streamlined and efficient to accommodate changing practice. She articulated this when discussing the changes that had been made saying:

> *Since they've changed the course, they've obviously adjusted for their targets and it's a lot better.*

Alex also spoke of how her provider had adapted expectations and focused on reducing unnecessary workload for the beginning teachers, aligning it to what is experienced in school by teachers. She stated that:

> *A lot of them in the past two years have complained about the workload of the folder that they have to work on … all the way through. Apparently, they have been told that next year, it's almost going to half workload.*

Safiya Small School, speaking from the perspective of a smaller primary school partnering with a local SCITT, was similarly positive about her provider's proficiency. She appreciated their effective organisation and positive approach stating she felt *well supported by* them, and spoke enthusiastically of many aspects of their provision:

> *I think SCITT are very good with all the support that they offer at the moment.*

Despite Safiya's depiction of her provider enabling her practice through their positive leadership culture, she also articulated corresponding concerns, related to her providers' material-economic arrangements, in particular, funding. With more time in school, greater student interaction, and increased responsibility, she was concerned that not only was there no increase in provider funding to cover mentors' greater engagement, there was, in fact, a reduction. She was concerned that:

> *There used to be more funding available, that SCITT gave to schools to allow us to be able to spend more time with the trainees…. there is still some funding, but it's been reduced like it used to be, for each placement and bearing in mind, each placement was for six weeks, it used to be £600 and now it's only £400 and it's for ten weeks now.*

In response to this, she and her mentor colleagues had to find time to engage with beginning teachers from other areas of their professional and sometimes personal lives, meeting after school or phoning over the weekend for example. There was not enough mentor time to accommodate the increased workload as she explained:

> *And now we sort of have to try and find that time ourselves a little bit more which is quite tricky.*

Safiya had been left with the experience of having her workload increased but receiving less support from her provider, impacting on her well-being and development as both mentor and teacher.

Elliot Employment also articulated concerns with his provider, in his case, the local university. Working on an employment-led programme, he had taken on

greater responsibility, with his beginning teachers receiving less university input. He felt however this had not been met with adequate preparation and ongoing support from his provider and was concerned by the lack of consistency and clarity in his dealings with them. He also felt there was unnecessary bureaucracy, questioning his provider's day-to-day organisation, their material-economic arrangements. He expressed his disquiet that the messaging and resourcing from his provider had become more confusing with the proliferation of different systems within ITE. This had created additional work and caused increased pressure. When asked what further support he would like to have in his role as a mentor, he was unequivocal, speaking of his need for, *consistent and clear messages from the university provider.*

Acknowledging his provider may have been disadvantaged by a wider lack of direction and guidance, he explained:

> *I was asking them but I didn't always get a satisfactory response, but I think they couldn't give me that because the DfE weren't very clear about regulations, process, initiatives…*

Positive and effective response from his provider was important for Elliot in facilitating practice and in its absence, there was a sense of frustration and lack of control.

Maryam Multiple had, like Elliot experienced frustration with her providers. As the number of routes into teaching rose, so new providers were established to accommodate the demand. As a result, Maryam's school began working with different providers in order to meet multiple ITE needs. She was, as a result, working with four of them. Along with diverse routes and providers, came different documentation, processes and practices emanating from a range of programmes. This had resulted in her having to juggle different interpretations of ITE, as she stated:

> *Everything, the amount of time they spend in school, what the expectation is of this placement, that placement, the expectations of how much time they'll be teaching, it's all those little time-tabley things really. But everyone's different, they're all doing it completely differently.*

In addition, the situation was fluid and regularly changing, and as soon as she had come to terms with one system, it changed again, instigating the need for constant adaptation, as she observed:

> *I get my head around one …. and then the goalposts just seem to change continually.*

Maryam had to be agile in her response to different, constantly changing systems and requirements causing distraction and frustration.

Summary

Providers enabled mentor practice through agile, adaptive practice architectures, responding positively to changing requirements and supporting mentors as they took on greater responsibility. As Alex Academies attested, demonstrating an agile culture, and having efficient day to day organisation, gave mentors the confidence to absorb often unpredictable events and where possible, take advantage of them. Providers therefore with strong organisational capacity had effective mechanisms and systems to sustain successful placements and ensure appropriate levels of mentoring. This could instil confidence in mentors such as Alex and Safiya to take advantage of the opportunities change offered. Where providers had less effective practice architectures, they appeared poorly run and their resourcing of ITE ineffectively managed, particularly problematic when mentors had taken on more responsibility and needed greater support. Introducing new providers, offering multiple routes into teaching, and using a variety of different systems seemed to lead to a lack of clarity. Mentors spoke of feelings of disempowerment creating confusion and taking up precious time; all suggesting weak organisational capacity in the provider.

4.3.B Staff capacity

Staff capacity considers the impact engagement with ITE has on mentors' overall professional practice as members of the school staff. Where there are appropriate practice architectures and consequently strong staff capacity, mentors and other staff can benefit from greater involvement in ITE and subsequent professional development through both their school and provider. In addition, they may collaborate with a larger community of colleagues as they

engage with different routes into teaching and take on more responsibility. Involvement can also however prove constraining, where there are weak practice architectures, generating concerns about mentors' career trajectory as well as possible issues of enculturation.

Schools' staff capacity

As well as contributing to teachers' mentor development, as will be considered in the next section, 4.3.C, engagement with ITE can enhance teachers' overall professional practice. Introducing new and innovative approaches to teachers supported by evidence-led research (cultural-discursive arrangements) can enrich teachers' professional development and re-energise classroom teaching. Aderibigbe *et al.* (2018) perceived teacher education to be a collegiate activity and recognised the advantages of collaboration for the benefit of all involved. Additionally, Lofthouse (2018) suggested that committing to teacher education can contribute to and enhance the wider school staff's improvement which may encourage institutional growth. Such social-political arrangements alongside adequate material-economic arrangements can lead to strong staff capacity in school and effective professional development.

Alex Academies discussed such opportunities evolving with her increased involvement and greater responsibility within her school. Working in her subject department with beginning teachers had supported professional development with colleagues and brought them together to reflect on and develop their practice. She explained:

> *For us particularly as a department, when we're standardising and things like that, it's been really helpful for me to run and lead those sessions with the trainees and look at my own practice in my department. It just helps us to bring it all together and look and see what I've learnt in practice rather than just having it in my head.*

Similarly, Elliot Employment had worked with his primary school colleagues to develop a sense of collegiality and create opportunities for staff development. Collaborating through ITE had supported the staff involved through creating a nurturing environment where they felt they could ask for help as they worked together to address issues. He explained:

And we've just built up that trust of openness, that teachers can come and say, I have not got a clue what to do with these kids, I'm really stuck, how do I overcome this?

One of the espoused benefits of moving to greater school-centred ITE, and a compelling reason for increased involvement has been the opportunity to recruit new staff (DfE, 2014). Here candidates are known to mentors and are familiar with the setting. With mentors' increasing involvement, the opportunity to get to know beginning teachers from a wider, more diverse pool of applicants, can enhance staff development and provide valued members of staff familiar with the school.

Such opportunity was something particularly pertinent to Elliot Employment's setting, where he worked with employed beginning teachers. As school mentor, he had taken on the responsibility, alongside their teaching school alliance, for recruiting, selecting, training and in some cases, appointing beginning teachers. As a mentor and senior leader, he was able to develop effective professional relationships with beginning teachers and make informed decisions about possible employment so ensuring the right fit of staff for his school, taking advantage of effective social-political arrangements. William Workload also appreciated the opportunity for employment that ITE brought, stating:

What we love about having the student teachers coming in, and the amount of people that we get applying for jobs.

As engagement with ITE may enhance professional development and learning, so can it be perceived to hinder career opportunities, indicative of weak cultural-discursive arrangements within the school. Despite the increasing importance of the mentor, development of the role is not always a recognised route to promotion as discussed earlier (section 2.5.2). It may even be perceived as detrimental in an increasingly performative educational environment. As previously referred to, Beutel *et al.* (2017) recognised mentoring as a route to furthering teachers' careers, especially when financially rewarded whereas Peiser *et al.* (2018), building on Hobson and Malderez's (2013) conclusions, stated that mentoring often has no formal, delineated career progression within it making it less accessible. Mentoring can be challenging and not an obvious career choice, as it often fails to follow the more conventional leadership

trajectory of staff development as Hobson *et al.* (2009) and Langdon (2017) suggest, proving to disincentivise some teachers.

In Maryam Multiple's school, although there was encouragement for greater involvement in ITE, there was no financial reward nor formal recognition for class mentors. There was only a small allowance for her as school mentor, as she stated:

> *None of us in our school get paid any extra for being a mentor, so it's sort of out of the kindness of your heart or you thinking it's going to be beneficial to yourself.*

With teacher workloads perceived to be high, taking on the additional role of a mentor, with associated responsibilities could prove too much for those when the reward is purely altruistic. The demanding responsibilities of being a mentor, had, in Maryam's school, deterred some teachers. Some, wanting to advance their career were less likely to take on mentoring, so reducing the school's overall capacity for both the selection and development of mentors, as she explained:

> *But in terms of the younger ones who are wanting to go up the scale, they are concerned all the time and I think that's one of the biggest difficulties in trying to get people to be a mentor.*

Peiser *et al.* recognised the conflicting demands made on mentors in all four professions investigated in their research. These included heavy workloads as well as issues around performance related pay impacting the decisions made by staff for their professional development and progression:

> 'Mentors face significant challenges, especially in regard to the conflict between supporting and assessor roles, and the need to attend to heavy contractual workloads, performance targets and mentoring roles in tandem.' (Peiser *et al.*, 2018, p.2)

Maryam described how such tensions had discouraged teachers from mentoring in her school and, worried about the outcomes of their pupils, feared doing so might impact detrimentally on their own performance and subsequent related pay. She explained:

It is the huge pressure now on targets and performance related pay, I think that's the biggest difference. I find with the pressure for us as teachers, younger teachers particularly not wanting to have a trainee because that class is their responsibility and they're worried to death the levels will go down because that's linked to their performance related pay and that's biggest difference over the last few years… it is in the back of your mind all the time.

As Maryam recognised, this was of concern particularly to younger teachers who were worried about their performance, having less experience and often less confidence. In such circumstances and without adequate school support, mentors were reluctant to 'hand over' responsibility to beginning teachers. They were afraid of being held accountable for any dips in pupil performance and worried about the impact pursuing a tangential path may have had on their career aspirations.

The opportunity to select, recruit and appoint future staff has been welcomed by schools, but it can lead to beginning teachers being moulded and enculturated into certain kinds of professional behaviours. Elliot Employment appreciated the potential of what he called *growing your own* and investing in staff development from the earliest stage. He described such beginning teachers as being *'xxxxx xxxxx'ed'* (name of school) where they adopted very particular styles of teaching and could be identified as having trained in a certain school. He spoke of the fact that during the time he had been at the school only two qualified teachers had left the profession, the rest were continuing to teach in his alliance, many at his school, and were valued members of the teaching team.

As Peiser *et al.* (2019) discuss and as alluded to in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.2) 'cultivating' your own teaching staff, can appear beneficial for the school and alliance but may prove less valuable for the wider workforce. It may contribute to 'cultivating a culture of organisational rather than occupational professionalism' (Peiser *et al.,* 2019, p.15). In addition, such 'moulding' or enculturation (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Moore, 2004) can have an impact on the quality of teachers, as they are 'trained' for an individual school. This may reduce the recruitment capacity in other areas and settings and potentially

create a particular kind of culture within the school involved, one which is less open to change and innovation.

Summary

Where there was a strong school staff capacity, effective practice architectures enabled mentors' professional development through providing opportunities for collegiate and collaborative work as their involvement grew. Such growth may also benefit the wider school staff. Advantages may include the recruitment of tried and tested teachers who have been trained in specific ways, enabling school leaders to invest time in nurturing their future staff. Weaker practice architectures were evidenced by concerns that some mentors had regarding their own career progression. A lack of recognition for the additional work done, often without accreditation and acknowledgement caused concern. Mentors were worried about performance related pay and wider consideration of the impact on their career trajectory deterring them from greater involvement. In addition, some beginning teachers may become moulded or enculturated into a very particular way of teaching, not necessarily adaptable to working in diverse contexts and suggestive of a school's weaker staff capacity.

Providers' staff capacity

Enabling practice architectures may support staff development through increased access to research informed subject and pedagogical knowledge. This is especially so where schools are working with universities and directly with subject specialist teacher educators (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Sewell *et al.*, 2018; Shanks, 2017) evidencing effective social-political arrangements. In these cases, contribution from the provider of essential subject and phase input can be adapted with contextual knowledge and contribute to mentors' evidence informed professional development.

The input and development of both beginning teachers' and mentors' subject knowledge and pedagogy is an important component of ITE and its provision is often perceived to reside with the university provider. It is usually enacted through the relationship between the provider's subject specialist tutor and mentor, as an integral part of professional development, an important social-political arrangement. Sewell *et al.*'s (2018) research on school partnerships in

New Zealand, considered this to be particularly effective where it can involve close working relationships between schools and their specialist providers. In these cases, effective collaboration can produce shared resources and supportive materials, especially important in supporting the mentor to take on greater responsibility.

In describing provider visits to her school, Alex Academies explained how she found the input from the provider tutor a significant and positive attribute of being engaged in ITE. Working in a secondary school, she benefitted from having both a subject and professional tutor, a distinction she recognised as particularly valuable in supporting her and her department's professional development. She observed:

> *Yes, I think the best thing I found; you get two visits each placement. So, the subject tutor comes and does an observation with you and then the professional tutor… which is obviously really helpful.*

Hilary Head, working in an early years setting, also spoke of her appreciation of specialist support from her university provider. Despite having several reservations about provider's organisational capacity, she had found their input invaluable in filling the gap left by her Local Education Authority due to funding cuts. She was appreciative of their input in making up for a short-fall in professional specialist support, recognising significant advantages from evidence-led university research. She explained:

> *We think it's essential … and now the county councils have fallen so far off the radar there's no money for training, … we really could become very isolated. So, our links with the university and research dissertations, what students are doing on their courses, in my opinion, are crucial for us keeping in touch because the county council is no longer taking any responsibility for that, which is absolutely disgraceful.*

Summary

Providers' practice architectures, particularly the social-political arrangements, enabled staff development through specialist, research informed subject and pedagogical knowledge and strengthened their staff capacity. For Alex Academies and Hilary Head, their providers were able to contribute to effective

staff development, something appreciated by mentors especially where this was absent from other sources. In terms of the provider constraining staff development, there were no specific, discrete examples of where this had taken place; there was only 'constraint' in terms of its absence, not of its shortfall.

4.3.C Mentor capacity

Mentor capacity relates to schools' effectiveness in being able to select and appoint appropriate mentors; and to providers in enabling their staff to design and run consistently high quality and contextualised mentor training and development.

Schools' mentor capacity

The degree to which a school can enable mentor practice is contingent on the school's prioritisation of ITE (cultural-discursive arrangements) and the available funding to support it (material-economic arrangements). To develop a strong mentor capacity within a school, there needs to be adequate time and resource dedicated to mentor development and a pool of potential mentors from which careful and considered appointments can be made. As discussed in section 2.5.3, prioritising appropriate mentor selection and enabling the 'best fit' between mentor and beginning teacher is recognised as important in developing robust mentor-mentee relationships (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Peiser *et al.,* 2018).

Elliot Employment spoke of the importance of appropriate pairing in ensuring mentor quality when explaining the process of appointing mentors. He explained:

> *So, whenever we have any kind of trainees come in or NQTs come in, I will, we as an SLT will decide where to put them, so we start at that level, and we would always put them with somebody strong … so they would learn from that strong leader.*

With greater demand for both the quantity and quality of mentors, it can be difficult for schools however, to find the most appropriate teacher to mentor. This may be due to insufficient staffing and other demands through changing policy being made on teachers as discussed in Chapter 1 and shown in Table

1. It may also be due to a shortfall in resource to invest in teacher time indicating inadequacies in the school's material-economic arrangements.

Not all teachers have the necessary attributes to be effective mentors, and as discussed section 2.5.3, an excellent teacher does not always make an excellent mentor. In addition, whatever their disposition, they will require appropriate preparation and development (Kupila *et al.,* 2017; Hudson and Hudson, 2018; Stanulis *et al.,* 2018). Safiya was a recently appointed school mentor, in a role she had taken on after three years of being a mentor. Working in a small primary school with a limited number of teachers proved challenging when trying to select appropriate mentors. Peiser *et al.* (2019), in their research on mentoring in different school age phases, recognised variances in practice architectures of primary and secondary schools. In secondary schools, with subject specific departments, mentoring tended to be focussed on departmental staff, and mentees had few interactions with other teachers. In primary schools, however, mentoring tended to be conducted with a mentoring 'team', something akin to the distributed pool of mentors recognised by Long (2009) and Peiser *et al.,* (2019) and discussed in section 2.5.3. This could supply sufficient staffing to share practice and expertise and provide mentees with diverse experiences and interests. Safiya's school however had little recourse to a mentoring 'team' and consequently had a limited pool of teachers. This made the selection of sufficient and appropriate mentors problematic, especially when the mentors were being asked to do more. Additionally, there was an issue with teacher experience and staff development. Schatz-Oppenheimer's research on novice teacher mentors' perceptions notes the importance of teacher experience for effective mentoring where:

> 'The qualities required for mentoring work originate in the mentor's personal world and professional experience.' (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017, p.278)

Schatz-Oppenheimer (2017) cites a minimum of five years teaching experience to qualify to be a mentor in Israel where her research was conducted. In contrast, both class mentors working in Safiya's school were recently qualified teachers in their second year of teaching, and neither had mentored previously. She stated:

The two class teachers this time are both very new class teachers that haven't had a trainee before.

It was perhaps the collective lack of experience amongst all three mentors including herself as a novice school mentor, that was problematic. Due to the low number of school staff and their relative lack of experience and expertise in both teaching and mentoring, successful and effective mentor selection was difficult. Mentor capacity and capability were as a result, compromised.

William Workload, also working in a primary school, spoke of not being able to find and appoint appropriate mentors with an increased demand for them. Like Safiya, he had found that inexperienced teachers in his school and others within his alliance, were being asked by their school leaders to take on beginning teachers when still in their own early, developmental years. They did not, in his view, have the requisite attributes, at that point, to fulfil the role and he observed:

I think if they're struggling for mentors, I think unfortunately it will be that any teacher will do. Actually, for the amount of work that mentoring requires, I don't think a teacher in the second year is really on an appropriate pay scale to be… they're doing something really that they need to be financially recognised for because you're developing the practice of others…They haven't got the skills or experience to have that influence.

Similar to Safiya's experiences, this could be attributed to them both working in small primary schools where there was a smaller pool of potential mentors. In such cases mentors may have been selected out of necessity, rather than being the most appropriate and effective teacher. Naomi Networks' experience as school mentor, in a larger secondary school with a more substantial pool, would suggest that it was not just setting size and capacity however. Naomi also spoke of the challenge of selecting appropriate mentors and identified the problem occurring when mentors are *pushed into it* with the subsequent outcome of the *reluctant mentor* (as being her) *worst nightmare.*

Reluctance to mentor was also raised by Maryam Multiple as the school mentor in a larger three-form entry primary school. In her school, at the Head's

insistence, all senior leaders had to mentor, irrespective of their capacity or willingness. She stated:

He sees it as professional development, he sees it as part of if you're sort of a senior teacher. Whereas I don't, I see it more as you should really be doing it only if you want to cause you don't do a good job unless you want to do it, so we do disagree on that. And I just find if they're forced to be a mentor, it really, it's not brilliant you know.

Maryam did not regard this as best practice, understanding that those coerced into mentoring would not perform as well, especially when working with multiple providers as her school did.

Summary

Schools demonstrated a strong school mentor capacity when there was the opportunity to appoint mentors from a selection of teachers who were experienced, well prepared and enthusiastic. This necessitated the prioritisation of ITE and adequate funding to support teachers to fulfil the role, effective cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements. However, where these were less effective, such support was not always possible, and could result in the selection of inappropriate mentors. This could occur where there was, for example, a small pool of appropriate teachers and having too many beginning teachers on placement for the school's capacity. Problems also arose where mentors had insufficient teaching experience and inadequate training and development; some taking on mentoring very early in their career. In addition, when mentors were appointed against their wishes, the quality of their practice was compromised, limiting the capacity of both staff and mentor development. A weak mentor capacity in school appeared to be a mounting issue as increasing demands were being made on teachers, at the same time as greater responsibility was placed on mentors. Often, this happened without necessary mentor training due to capacity issues elsewhere. Not only were there insufficient numbers of teachers to mentor, but those that were available may have been inappropriate and unwilling.

Providers may enable mentor practice through the provision of accessible, quality training and development, necessitating effective cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements. Effective preparation of beginning teachers at the start of an ITE programme, alongside comprehensive mentor development, can support mentors and help develop positive relationships and a successful practice, strengthening mentor capacity. Hobson recognised mentors were 'more likely to be able to apply effective mentoring strategies where they have undertaken an appropriate programme of mentor preparation' (Hobson *et al.,* 2009, p.212). This is arguably even more important on those immersive routes especially employment-based ones, such as SCITTs, School Direct Salaried and Teach First where beginning teachers experience most of the programme in school.

Alex Academies alluded to the effectiveness of the training her provider offered and how relevant and purposeful it was. She described her training programme concluding:

> *It is really informative and to be honest, when I've been to those things in the past, I've felt a little bit like it didn't need to be so long and there was a lot of stuff I didn't need to be told.*

She articulated how her provider had been successful in ensuring mentors felt confident, equipped, and ready to host beginning teachers. They achieved this through efficient organisation and familiarising mentors with the programme to ensure that they were 'mentoring ready'. Similarly, Safiya Small School, supported by her SCITT and working closely with other mentors, spoke of how she had been supported to collaborate confidently, producing relevant and appropriate guidance for beginning teachers. She explained:

> *Yeah, through SCITT. We, as mentors, have meetings at the start of each year. And we get together and talk about, we sort of put together a SCITT mentor pack.*

As mentors have been expected to take on more responsibility for all aspects of the ITE process and become the 'teacher educator' (section 2.4.2), so has the 'role of the mentor and their contribution to professional knowledge

development become increasingly significant' (Peiser *et al.,* 2018, p.8). As discussed, increased involvement necessitates a corresponding requirement for appropriate mentor training and development (Langdon, 2017; Peiser *et al.,* 2018). This is needed to equip mentors to take on areas of the programme that are new and often unfamiliar to them (Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). Responsibility for the provision of such mentor development was perceived by the mentors to reside mainly with the provider.

The need for increased provision has not however, always been forthcoming as evidenced by Elliot Employment (section 4.3.A - Providers' organisational capacity). As well as being challenged by his provider's organisation and running of the programme, he was also worried he had not received additional mentor training. He recognised he needed this to fulfil new requirements of the School Direct employment-based programme (as outlined in appendix 1), that he now led. He had observed that his training had changed but had become less relevant and useful.

Elliot described how changes to his provider, now covering multiple programmes, had resulted in his training becoming more generic. He spoke of sessions taking place in much larger groups with mentors from different settings and contexts. He was concerned that it was often repetitious, failing to differentiate between experienced and novice mentors, impacting on its quality. At times, he felt he was being used by the provider as an experienced mentor to support other, often novice, mentors. Many of these mentors worked in very different schools and networks and he was covering responsibilities that were not his. This had caused him to question the provision of his own training and development, as he explained:

> *Yeah, but what I'd like them to do now, is to differentiate that training because you've got the likes of me that have been doing it and then you've got the likes of, you know, who's never ever, ever done it. But that's quite controversial because then I've been told, well actually your experience will then help the newer ones. But then where's my development, I'm happy to take part in that training but where's mine?*

Despite voicing his concerns, Elliot still had to attend the training, and reported that his provider was using another teaching school to provide it. This training appeared even further removed from his context and setting, as he described:

> *Yeah, well why have I got to go again? Because you've got to go again, I've been told you've got to go, all mentors have to go again. Okay, so I went again, and that, if I'm brutally honest, was a waste of my time, there were three schools there and there was myself, somebody who had sort of done it, somebody who had never done it. And that session was meant to be training and it was from a different teaching school, a different local authority completely.*

In addition, Elliot was required to use this different teaching school's approach and andragogy due to the provider adopting it as a model. This was problematic as the documentation was unfamiliar, suited to a particular context different to his, and seemingly prescriptive. This had caused him to question his own practice:

> *Yeah, different local authority, you know, how they did things was absolutely different, and then the slides were very much, you know, this is where you have it, meetings and things like that. More sort of day to day running, you have to have your door shut, you have to do this, this is how you record things, and so listening to that, I thought, crikey, I've been doing it all wrong then.*

Elliot had found that although more was being demanded of him in his role as school mentor, the quality of his training to compensate for this had deteriorated rather than improved. He perceived this to be the failing of his provider, leaving him ill-equipped to take on the new responsibilities.

Naomi Networks, also a school mentor and working within a large secondary school and wider alliance, recognised *a sort of shift towards us to having to sort of provide all the training.* Being required to meet higher academic expectations of the taught programme she was, like Elliot, worried about inadequate mentor development. She felt she had not been equipped to teach components of the Masters-level programme, nor received the requisite subject specialist support. She was concerned her provider:

… didn't share their input. And that was a big problem, one of my biggest problems was they would expect us to mentor at a very high level, but not keep us in the loop at all and would occasionally treat us like we were a pain in the neck.

Summary

Providers with effective practice architectures, enabled mentors through targeted and contextualised training, helping them to feel supported and prepared to tackle their growing responsibilities. This gave the mentors confidence and the best possible chance of success with their beginning teacher. However, mentors were constrained when providers were perceived to fail to deliver the appropriate, specific training to address their changing needs. This deterred some mentors from taking on additional aspects of the role and weakened providers' mentor capacity.

4.3.D Partnership Capacity

In this final capacity I consider the importance of partnership and how networks and relationships can enable and/or constrain mentor practice. This is the case both within the school/alliance context and between the school and its provider. Included is the importance and efficacy of relationships between partners and how changes in those can disrupt the balance between stakeholders involved, impacting mentors' experiences.

Mutton *et al.,* recognised partnership's integral importance, stating 'partnership working lies at the heart of teacher education' (Mutton *et al.,* 2018). Its nature is diverse, and it manifests itself in different ways from setting to setting. As rising demands are made on mentors so additional opportunities for effective collaboration through partnership are needed to support the wider and more complex role. Effective practice architectures, especially cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements can enable collaboration within partnership. This can encourage the sharing of ideas to cultivate effective and appropriate strategies to support mentors in overcoming some of the challenges, identified as 'intractable issues', (Mutton *et al.,* 2018) as well as taking advantage of new opportunities. This may in turn strengthen partnership capacity.

Schools' partnership capacity

ITE can be a positive focus for schools with an understanding of local situational needs, to work together on common issues and share best practice. Effective social-political arrangements can help nurture an effective community of practice with a shared purpose and common goals (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Mutton *et al.,* 2018). This may strengthen partnership capacity and enhance the context within which the mentor works.

Naomi Networks as school mentor of several local affiliated schools across different age phases, was proactive in bringing schools together and talked of having established learning centres within her teaching school alliance. Through these centres she initiated and developed communities of practice with an ITE focus and started to develop more collaborative alliances with her varied partnerships supported by her school. She recognised engagement with ITE as an opportunity to work together and prevent potential isolationism, developing local solutions to shared issues. She explained the motivation behind bringing schools together:

> *to try and get people together, to share some ideas and you know, what works and what doesn't work and how do we do this … we're all doing really good things on our little islands.*

Elliot Employment had also found school and alliance partnership helpful, compensating for what he perceived to be poor mentor development provision from his provider. He spoke of how the staff in his alliance schools worked well together and alongside beginning teachers, benefitting from finding solutions together in regular meetings. This created a sense of school collegiality and mutual development. He described how:

> *We always come with an idea of what to look at next so that generally comes from drop-ins and things that the trainees maybe have come up with or more experienced teachers have come up with … so let's look at what's gone well this week, is there anything that you're concerned and worried about and then we look at how to improve practice further.*

Weak school partnership capacity was only mentioned by Maryam Multiple, expressing her disappointment that there were few opportunities for support

and development due to the disparate nature of school interactions through ITE. Due to weaknesses within the organisational capacity of her school, she was often unable to attend collaborative professional development sessions regretting the lack of opportunity. She explained:

> *It would be nice if we had sort of a hub where we had, I could get in contact with other coordinators from other schools, I don't know any at all.*

Summary

Schools with effective social-political arrangements were able to show strong partnership capacity through promoting collaborative work within networks and sharing good practice. Local, situational needs were consequently met and specific, targeted solutions found. Weaker partnership capacity involved mentors missing out on opportunities to collaborate and share good practice. This was often for logistical reasons, and particularly through weak material-economic arrangements and an inability to provide sufficient funding and time.

Providers' partnership capacity

Providers may enable mentors and support their ongoing development through effective networks and positive relationships, that is effective social-political arrangements. Alex Academies spoke of her partnership relationships enabling her to be proactive in dealing with issues as they arose, confident to make situational judgements and take appropriate action. She described her relationship with her provider:

> *You're kept in the loop quite a lot about what they should know and what they're already equipped with, so if you are getting any issues with anything, you've got that good working relationship where you can flag that up … I've literally not really had any issues with the students from Xxxx Xxxx, apart from things that can't really be helped … It's not been anything to do with their practical or professionalism in our subject in any way.*

She spoke of mentor training run by her large, secondary academy chain and teaching school alliance, supported by her provider. Training sessions were led

by individual schools in the alliance and focused on their specific settings. These took place under the umbrella support of the university and were enacted through the partnership. She described the ITE sessions that the beginning teachers, along with their mentors, attended:

> *Yes, as an academy trust, because we've got two in Xxxx Xxxx, they work together. One Thursday evening it will be held with us and then the next time it will be over at our other academy, and different people from within the trust from different schools will come in as guest speakers for them. So, if we haven't necessarily got someone available within school that's a SENCO, it would be someone else within the trust. So, they are very good at making sure they get to experience every side of teaching really.*

Such targeted sessions enabled specific subject and area focus ensuring mentors felt equipped to deal with growing responsibility from an informed perspective. The mentor training drew on the specialisms of certain schools using research informed input from the provider, combining the strengths of both school and provider in effective partnership.

Safiya Small School also alluded to several enabling elements of her work within her SCITT partnership. These included her own professional development through peer collaboration to develop a community of practice and professional identity. With the SCITT being a small provider, local participating schools were involved in all aspects of the provision. This provided accessible and regular support when needed. Safiya appreciated that the provider's *professional tutors,* (were) *always on email, happy to answer any questions or any worries, or any concerns.* Additionally, supported by the SCITT and working closely with other mentors, she had developed a better understanding of her role and responsibilities, as she explained when working with her SCITT colleagues:

> *All the mentors have got together at SCITT and talked about what sort of expectations are on us and what we expect from the trainees, so we've got our own mentor handbook that we sort of collated over a few years which is really very useful.*

Safiya described her involvement in an evolving community of practice positively. She had found, like Alex Academies, that working within a small group of neighbouring schools enabled her to benefit from mentor development that was focussed locally and within smaller hubs. This ensured that the sessions were accessible as well as specific to her school's particular needs, and tailored to their context, as she described:

> *They come and meet after the mentor training, there's training on what the expectations are for the practice and the class teachers are invited to that as well so that they can see what SCITT are expecting of the trainees, when they need to be doing this percentage of teaching and what sort of expectations they have on the class teacher.*

Effective partnership was not however always consistent, and where practice architectures were poor and, as a result, partnership capacity weaker, mentors missed out on opportunities for effective collaboration as well as development. This was characterised by deteriorating relationships, due to poor social-political arrangements, between provider tutor and mentor as the balance between provider and school changed. This impacted mentor development and networking opportunities.

Also impacting provider partnership capacity was the rise in the number of different routes into teaching and increased diversity of provision affecting the social-political arrangements. This had resulted in schools engaging with several different providers for different purposes as discussed previously (section 1.2 – Moving ITE into school). Working with multiple providers, some of which are new, may affect partnership dynamics as new connections have to be established and those existing, may be diluted. This can put pressure on partnership facilitation and limit capacity. As Struthers observed, such change can be positive and innovative but can also result in 'disturbances' and 'troubled perspectives' (Struthers, 2017, p.166). The latter seemed to the case with the apparent distancing between provider and school, and specifically between the mentor and the provider tutor.

Maryam Multiple, working with four different providers, observed that the relationships with them had deteriorated. She described one of them as being not a big relationship with us really and observed there had been less

collaboration and mutual support. She also regretted there being fewer opportunities for informal mentor development and a sense of things being rushed with more to do. There was a feeling the relationship had become distanced and the provider tutors inaccessible, stating:

> *You don't quite know who to go to and then it's like, it's difficult to get hold of them.*

Maryam observed that the tutors were less familiar with the school's specific context depersonalising the process with both mentor and beginning teacher. She explained:

> *No, and also different providers, it used to be that Xxxx Xxxx had a very specific person that was their tutor, that came in and so I developed a relationship with them, and we knew how each other thought really about trainees. Now when its lots of other providers, you get a different tutor … So it'll be some random person comes in and it might be I see one person every four years, it can often be a completely different person.*

> *So they could come in and they've not been even to the school, they don't really know the school or the area even….*

Despite benefitting from input from her provider as earlier described, Hilary Head had also recognised an increasing distancing from her provider regretting that:

> *The university never invites us to partake of the educational progress of the journey … the problem is with some of the university mentors, they are a bit detached.*

Such shifting dynamic between school and provider may also disrupt the 'division of labour' (Engeström, 2008; McNicholl and Blake, 2013) between mentor and provider tutor, resulting in increased responsibility for the mentor as discussed (section 2.5.4 – Changing relationships within the partnership). Maryam Multiple talked of heightened responsibility on herself and her school, placing greater pressure and onus on her to fulfil a growing remit. She described new expectations and additional responsibilities:

I feel like the pressure's definitely linked to that, the pressure's more on us than it is on the provider…I find actually you don't tend to get the support…I feel there is a greater emphasis on us as a school and as mentors to ensure trainees have a varied experience, complete their placements and support those who are struggling.

Maryam felt increasingly responsible for providing more of the actual teaching and content of the programme, having to input a greater proportion of the training than the provider did. She also seemed to feel a greater sense of accountability, having to deal with issues on her own that might arise. She explained that:

We're the ones that are expected to basically provide the teaching as such and … we're doing more of the training sometimes than the providers are…. I know who's teaching the most, I am. I feel more and more like when they're here, it's our problem, very much so…. They're quite happy for us to just get on with it and they want everything to tick along quite nicely and then receive them back.

Opportunities offered through effective collaboration and networking through partnership were not always available and some mentors experienced difficulties accessing them. For Maryam, her training, offering networking opportunities, took place far from her school and at inconvenient times. Although she was keen to participate, she was often unable to, with commitments in school preventing her from being out of class. The situation was exacerbated by her working with her four different providers, all offering their own events. She was concerned that she had to:

… faff about getting the train and then walking there and then you're waiting and getting the train back and for a two-hour afternoon meeting, I'm basically there all day. I'm constantly weighing up is it worth me being out of the class for a day, to go to that two-hour meeting.

By not attending, Maryam recognised that she missed out on the benefits of networking and potential collaboration and explained:

No, but I'm not a very good networker, I just get on, doing my job …. but it would be beneficial to talk about teacher training as a whole group and

> *to have more contact with the providers really to have those but not just in a training, it's that sort of just having a chat and getting to know the people.*

Hilary Head was similarly disappointed with the lack of opportunities from her provider. She recognised the importance of working collaboratively and sharing experiences, and wanted reassurance about her practice from other mentors as well as her provider as she expressed:

> *I would like to meet with other mentors and see how they're getting on with their students because to be totally isolated all the time you've got no idea of the quality of what you're giving is appropriate. If you've got no feedback – you've got no evaluation as a mentor as to how good, you are other than if they don't ask you anymore. And that's been the issue you're totally isolated, you've got no feedback, no acknowledgement, no guidance, training.*

From Maryam's and Hilary's perspectives, changes to the ways in which their providers worked within the partnership seemed to have constrained their opportunities of collaborative working at a time when it was needed most. This appeared to be as a result of alterations to the ways in which the system of ITE was being conducted and was manifest in deteriorating partnership relationships. This proved problematic as collaborative working and co-construction of programmes was becoming increasingly important (Peiser *et al.,* 2019; Vanassche *et al,* 2019; Mayer and Mills, 2020).

Summary

Effective partnership within a professional, practice-based programme dependent on both school and provider, is a fundamental element of successful ITE (Mutton *et al.,* 2018). This has become more important as continual change has taken place and schools and providers have had to constantly adjust to different situations. Learning with and through others in her partnership had helped mentors such as Safiya Small School, in part, to overcome some of the challenges faced by her and her mentor colleagues where there was little local in-depth experience of mentoring. Such experiences were reliant on effective practice architectures particularly those social-political arrangements and

indicative of strong provider partnership capacity. Safiya exemplified the importance of developing and sustaining effective networks and relationships to support meaningful mentor development, especially in the absence of other support. Localised, specific knowledge could be harnessed and the combined strengths of school and provider working in partnership, drawn on to develop the mentor.

Weaker partnership capacity appeared where there was a perceived deterioration in the relationships between school and provider as the balance shifted towards the former and away from the latter. In such cases, mentors talked of feeling isolated and out of touch and having to fall back on the support of their school which might have other weaknesses. The distancing of the provider resulted in reduced localised knowledge of schools and their particular needs and the provision of much more generic programmes. Reducing opportunities for networking and collaboration removed a further support strategy for those mentors in schools experiencing other difficulties. This was especially problematic where mentors had more responsibility for the delivery of the programme, leading to a heightened sense of accountability and consequently, a possible reluctance to get involved.

4.4 Conclusions

The analysis of the data shows that mentors' perceptions of their school and provider's capacity to support their practice varied significantly from one context to another. The variation was dependent on the different practice architectures operating within the mentors' context, enabling and/or constraining their practice. I found the mentors' experiences were attributable to both their school and provider in terms of their organisational, staff, mentoring and partnership capacities. The way in which these capacities enabled and constrained mentors' practice is summarised and presented in Table 7. This information is specific to the data collected for this research but represents general themes that may be seen to impact teacher mentors' practice.

Table 7: School and provider capacities enabling and constraining experiences

Capacities	School		Provider	
	Enable	**Constrain**	**Enable**	**Constrain**
Organisation	**Culture and attitude to ITE**		**Agility and effective organisation**	
	Positive ethos, culture and commitment to ITE embedded in wider school's learning community. Support for appointment of school mentor, leading ITE. Mentors supported with adequate time and resources in well organised environment.	Inadequate support for mentor when taking on more responsibility. Time and resources cannot always be protected as there are other demands on them. Dual rather than complementary role and mentor subjected to conflicting priorities with multiple demands.	Supporting mentors to be agile and adaptive to change in individual context and take advantage of new initiatives. Operationally efficient and streamlined with effective mechanisms to provide support and resource.	Non-responsive to change and reliant on inappropriate processes Bureaucratic and inflexible with poor management and communications. Multiple systems and processes subject to regular change – unpredictable.
Staff	**Career progression and development opportunities**		**Opportunities of specialist support and staff development**	
	Teacher education an integral part of career development with visible opportunities for career progression. Tangible teacher development alongside recruitment opportunities for 'home grown' staff. Collegial and collaborative, with shared purpose	ITE perceived to hinder career progression unable to take advantage of other career opportunities. Lack of recognition and reward. Deterred by concerns of performance related pay - perceived impact on pupil attainment and outcomes. Possible enculturation, prepared for the organisation rather than occupation.	Subject and phase specialist support informing and augmenting staff development and filling gaps where lacking elsewhere. Opportunities for collaborative research projects.	Shortfall may lead to mentors missing out on opportunities.

Capacities	School		Provider	
	Enable	**Constrain**	**Enable**	**Constrain**
Mentor	**Selection of and support for appropriate staff**		**Training, development, and education**	
	Able to select experienced, appropriate mentors from staff. Prioritising and supporting mentor development.	Selection of inappropriate mentors – lacking experience and expertise, *'any teacher will do'*. Appointment of reluctant mentors with conflicted responsibilities. Lack of opportunities for mentor development.	Targeted and contextualised training and development to prepare mentors, tackle growing responsibilities and take advantage of change.	Poor training opportunities lacking specificity and differentiation, generic and repetitive, not developmental. Inadequate support to instil mentor confidence to take on more responsibility.
Partnership	**Facilitating mentor involvement in partnership activities and networking**		**Collaboration, networking, and the importance of relationships**	
	Facilitate school partnership events sharing good practice, developing collegiality and collaboration. Meeting local school needs and targeted solutions. Mentors enabled to take time out of school to pursue partnership activities, sharing best practice.	Insufficient time to attend partnership events and subsequently missing out on developing effective networking opportunities.	Accessible and effective networking and training events targeted and aware of specific needs of schools Positive, supportive relationships playing to strengths of both provider and school. Facilitating collaboration and co-construction of programme and curriculum resources, through positive communications and clarity of roles.	Poor, dysfunctional relationships and inadequate communication. Overly generic, less specialised and targeted networking and collaboration. Change in the balance of the relationship shifting to mentor but without additional support, leaving them isolated and less willing to be involved.

Using Table 7 and building on Peiser *et al.*'s research exploring the role of the mentor (as described in section 2.5), I was able to identify which capacities in the school and provider were most enabling and which were most constraining. Peiser *et al.* surmised that their:

> 'results suggest that enablers for mentoring are personal to the mentor whilst the principal constraint is structural.' (Peiser *et al.,* 2019, p.7)

Considering the four capacities, and using the information from <u>appendix 15</u>, <u>appendix 16</u> and <u>appendix 17</u>) I was able to identify more detailed elements of which capacities enabled and constrained mentors' practice, in both the school and through the provider from the analysis of the data. This is outlined below.

4.4.1 Organisational capacity

The organisational capacity of both schools and providers was more constraining than enabling. Schools, despite having a positive approach and culture towards ITE as evidenced by all seven mentors, still experienced issues. These tended to be in their day to day running and a paucity of time and resources to invest in ITE, resulting in conflicting priorities as exemplified by William Workload. This could be attributed to ITE not being the priority of the school and structural impediments hindering effective engagement. With providers, an adaptable and agile approach to change, enabled mentors such as Alex Academies, and offered the necessary support for their effective practice empowering them to take advantage of opportunities offered by change. However, issues lay in the funding available to fully support mentors such as Safiya Small School in their changing roles and difficulties in absorbing the challenge of constant adjustment.

4.4.2 Staff capacity

I found staff capacity to be more enabling than constraining for both schools and providers. Mentors were enabled through schools facilitating collaborative professional development and successful staff recruitment; they were constrained when their engagement in ITE was seen to impede career progression and jeopardise performance related pay. This reduced teachers' willingness to be involved as Maryam Multiple exemplified. Providers were perceived to enable mentors like Alex Academies through their input of research informed programmes and courses, especially in subject and area specialism and where there were gaps in input from local authorities and other sources of provision as Hilary Head explained. Providers were not perceived to constrain staff development.

4.4.3 Mentor capacity

School and providers' mentor capacities were slightly more constraining than enabling. Inappropriate mentor selection could prove constraining within schools where there was a small 'pool' of mentors as demonstrated by Safiya Small School and William Workload. Teachers' reluctance to engage in ITE, as depicted by Naomi Networks and Maryam Multiple also proved constraining. Mentor capacity in terms of mentor training, development and education was perceived to reside with and be the responsibility of the provider. This could be enabling and lead to transformative learning for the mentor but where absent, was perceived to constrain mentors' effective practice, leading to frustration and concerns of capability, as in Elliot Employment's case.

4.4.4 Partnership capacity

Partnership capacity was slightly more enabling than constraining with the constraint perceived to reside with the provider and not with the school. Where there was strong partnership capacity with dynamic and successful networks functioning within and between schools and their provider, effective training and development could be facilitated and sustained. This was demonstrated by Naomi Networks. Where partnership capacity was weak as it was with Maryam Multiple however, relationships were perceived to have broken down and be less effective. This resulted in mentors failing to receive the support they needed to develop their practice, and opportunities for collaborative development were missed.

In summary

In this chapter, I have considered both of the research questions and outlined mentors' perceptions of their lived experiences. I have explained what mentors perceived to be happening within their ever-changing context and identified what has impacted their professional practice. The findings highlight and locate the individual capacities, where they reside as well as the role they play. They provide a partial picture of the mentor experience and reveal what is strong and/or weak, enabling and/or constraining within schools and their provider relationships. While suggesting the complexity of the environment, the findings do not however capture all the nuanced interrelationships between school and

provider, nor adequately consider causality and outcomes of intersectionality, that is, the impact of one organisation on another.

In order to better understand this supercomplex environment and the implications of the reconfiguration of ITE to a more school-centred process, consideration needs to be given to the analysis of the combination of both the school and provider working together within an 'ecology of practices' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2012 and Brooks, 2021). Here, mentors experience the joint impact of both school and provider working together in response to change. This will be considered next in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 The 'quadrants' – mentoring in partnership: presentation and discussion of findings (ii)

5.1 Introduction

The findings from Chapter 4 focussed on the practice architectures enabling and constraining mentor practice during a time of change, through the four identified capacities of their school and provider. This provided a picture of the mentors' particular context and an interpretation of their lived experiences at a given place and at a particular time. I found however, through successive analyses of the data, using both the activity theory framework and the theory of practice architectures, that mentors' experiences could not be attributed to just their schools nor providers' response to change, but rather to a combination of both happening simultaneously. To gain a better understanding of the mentors' multidimensional experience, I concentrated the analysis next on the intersectionality within and between the schools and their providers and the combined impact of their respective capacities.

To do this, I employed the concept of ecologies of practices (as described in section 2.6) to further examine the impact ITE and its myriad stakeholders, with very different 'sometimes competing agendas' (Brooks, 2021, p.163), has on the mentor. Looking through the lens of ecology of practices helped to examine the interactions taking place between schools and their providers and the impact of their combined capacities on their practice, depicted in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: An ecology of interconnected capacities between school and provider in mentor experience (after Kemmis *et al*., 2012, p.37)

Capacity
Organisational
Staff
Mentor
Partnership
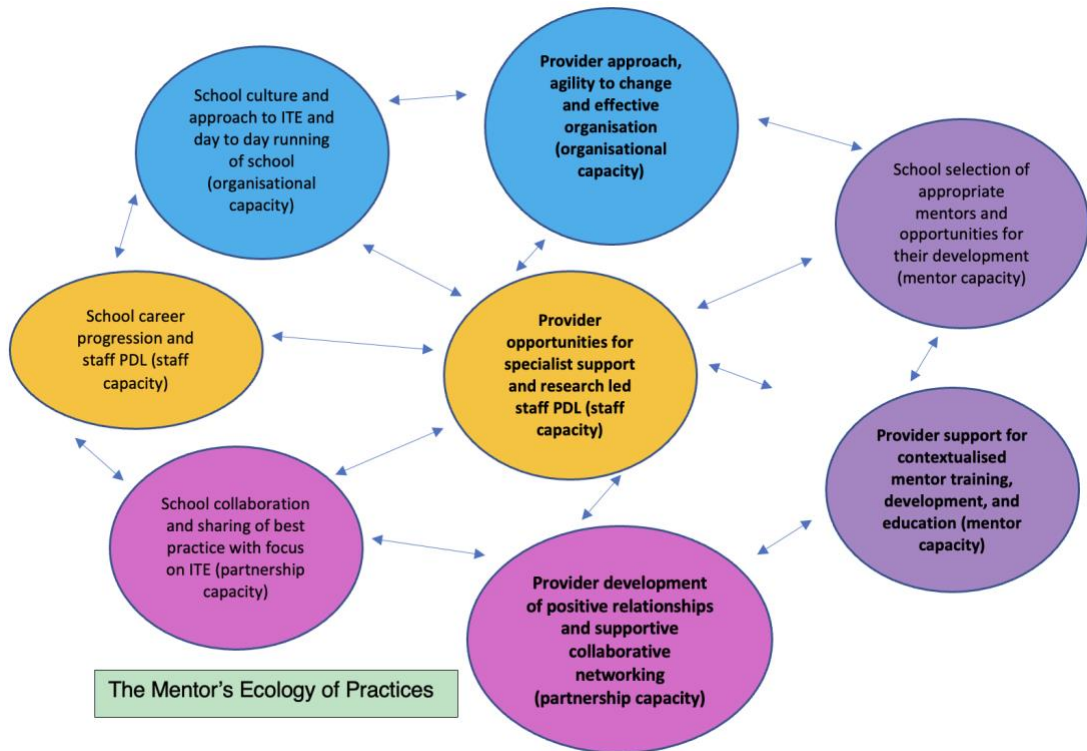
5.2 The 4 quadrants of the matrix

To achieve this, I returned to the continuums of enablement and constraint outlined in section 4.2, (Figure 8) and the matrix created from combining them (Figure 9). From the identification of what enabled and constrained mentors' practice, I was able to recognise characteristics of the quadrants on the matrix from the analysed data. The different characteristics of each quadrant were exemplified by the mentors and depicted the complex contexts explored through the research questions (see appendix 18 for rationale for their quadrant location).

In this chapter, each of the four quadrants on the matrix will be considered. The analysis will draw on the evidence of the seven participants with a particular focus on four of those mentors who most typified each of the quadrants.

I identified these four as being representative of particular environments where:

- School (ITE) strongly enables/provider strongly enables (Alex Academies)
- School (ITE) strongly empowers/provider strongly constrains (Elliot Employment)
- School (ITE) moderately constrains/provider moderately enables (Safiya Small School)
- School (ITE) moderately constrains/provider strongly constrains (Maryam Multiple)

From the analysis, it became clear the quadrants fell into two broad categories as depicted in Figure 11 below; those quadrants that were stable and those that were fragile.

Figure 11: The impact of school and provider on mentor practice: four focus mentors and quadrants

HH:	Hilary Head
NN:	Naomi Networks
WW:	William Workload
AA:	Alex Academies
EE:	Elliot Employment
SS:	Safiya Small School
MM:	Maryam Multiple
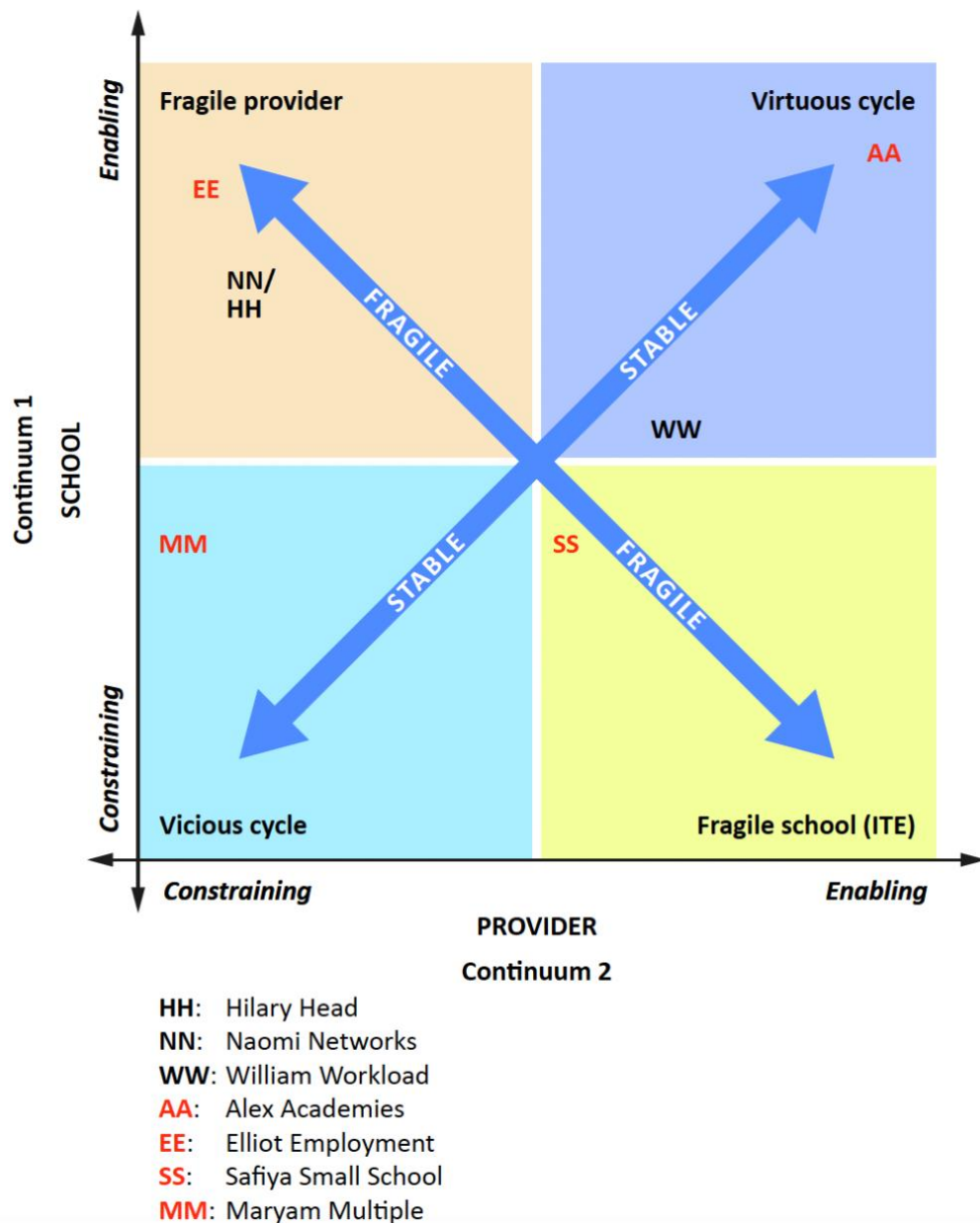
5.2.1 The fragile quadrants

These quadrants have been termed 'fragile', a term used in ecology to denote elements within a system that are inherently weak and susceptible to change when disturbed (Nilsson and Grelsson, 1995). The term is used here to consider a context where there are weaker capacities residing with the school (ITE) and/or provider. Where there are limitations in one institution strength in the other can compensate for disruption and maintain the 'dynamic balance' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2012). This creates a sustainable situation but does however, leave the mentor vulnerable and less prepared for change. Mentors, working in

such contexts or ecologies, may have less opportunity to take advantage of change, preventing their learning from becoming transformative and maintaining what could be recognised as a stagnant context as described previously. In addition, more significant disruption or 'disturbances' of the kind depicted by Struthers (2017) may exacerbate a challenging situation, incurring movement within the quadrant to a position that is even more vulnerable.

Fragile provider quadrant

Mentors located within this quadrant experience an enabling context in which the school (ITE) has well established and generally robust capacities for supporting the mentor; there are however weaknesses within the capacities residing with the provider. The quadrant derived from the data, drew mainly on Elliot Employment's experiences but also those of Hilary Head and Naomi Networks who all manifested elements of school (ITE) enablement and provider constraint.

Elliot spoke of his supportive school, despite as discussed, experiencing problems of conflicting priorities. He also experienced several issues with his provider which appeared to restrict his effective engagement with ITE. In his sixth year of mentoring and responsible for Teacher Education as the school mentor for both beginning teachers and (as termed at the time of data collection), NQTs, Elliot was not at the time a class mentor. He worked with employed beginning teachers in a host school led by his teaching school alliance and used the local university as the provider. He had multiple responsibilities and commitments, but perceived ITE to be an integral part of his job and when asked where it would come on his list of priorities, stated it would be *either number two or number three.* He spoke of how he had found mentoring helpful to his professional practice *because you learn so much as a leader, as a mentor, as a person,* explaining that *part of the mentoring … it puts me where they are, it takes me back to that time when I was an NQT.*

Elliot was passionate about mentoring and worked in a school and alliance where the leadership and culture had encouraged and enabled his effective mentoring practice. He was enabled by his school leadership's positive approach to ITE, with a strong commitment to effective staff recruitment and development. This demonstrated robust organisational as well as staff

capacities in embedding teacher education within the school's professional culture. The processes in place within his school for staff and mentor development had enabled his and colleagues' effective mentor practice. In addition, the opportunity for employing high quality staff from those beginning teachers who had trained with them, had proved to be a rich resource for effective recruitment, as well as providing enthusiastic future mentors to perpetuate the cycle. In addition, Elliot was supported in the wider partnership of his alliance by the *ITT lead,* who he described as *organised and supportive … regularly offer*(ing) *advice and always on hand to support.* Drawing on this strong partnership capacity, he was able to get more involved and take on greater responsibility as his role grew, indicative of the kind of school-based teacher educator Vanassche *et al.* (2019) described.

However, Elliot was aware of the challenges mentoring created, especially for those with multiple responsibilities. He was confronted by the significant complexities of the day to day running of school and its organisational ability to accommodate ITE at scale, and, as discussed, was challenged by conflicting priorities within his school. He experienced as a result, an element in his school's organisational capacity, that proved constraining due to conflicting expectations and competing demands. His school was enabling but not unequivocally.

What was the cause of more significant challenge, however, were the notable struggles he experienced working with his provider in altered, complex circumstances. Here, disruptions to the ecology of practices had endangered the delicate balance and hindered him from taking advantage of possible opportunities brought about through change. He had become frustrated with his provider, as described (section 4.3.A – Providers' organisational capacity), through poor communication, inadequate resources and time-consuming processes and bureaucracy. As his mentoring responsibilities had grown and he had taken on more of the linchpin role described by Peiser *et al.* (2018), so had his need to be sufficiently prepared and informed through effective developmental mentor training (Langdon and Ward, 2015); this required input from his provider and a strong mentor capacity.

His experience however had been very different and comprised few opportunities, with his mentor training becoming overly generic and no longer contextualised, something identified as important for effective mentor practice (Langdon 2017, Peiser *et al.*, 2018; Vanassche *et al.*, 2019). As such, the training had become less beneficial for his own specific development, something he understood to need and was keen to receive. For Elliot therefore, the combination of his enabling school context but constraining provider relationship had frustrated his overall professional development and compromised his mentor practice, particularly through limited mentor and organisational capacity.

Summary

Elliot Employment experienced those elements characteristic of the 'fragile provider' quadrant where there was inadequate support from his provider. This was alongside conflicting priorities within his school that exacerbated his situation's vulnerability, despite their highly encouraging ethos and opportunities for staff recruitment and development. The capacities in his school and provider, meant his situation was sustainable, but not robust enough to operate optimally and take advantage of opportunities. Additionally, it was susceptible to the vagaries of change from within school as well as with his provider. Wider outside influences could upset the delicate balance, something likely in the ever-changing education complex. To enable his mentoring practice, and reduce his vulnerability to further potential disruption, improvements would be needed with Elliot's provider, particularly in relation to their organisational and mentoring capacities.

Fragile school (ITE) quadrant

In this quadrant, the mentor is working with an enabling provider with mostly robust capacities, but within a school which has significant issues related to its engagement with ITE. Here, the provider can compensate for the school's weaker ITE capacities to a degree but there is a ceiling to its effectiveness. The provider is able support through for example, good organisational capacity with an ability to adapt to change. It may also provide effective and contextualised mentor training and positive partnership, alongside opportunities for staff development and institutional growth as described by Lofthouse (2018). There

is however only so much the provider can do to mitigate. Issues residing within the school, particularly weak organisational and staff capacities, are not within the reach of the provider; they are unable to fundamentally change the school culture and the way it is organised and funded, as Lofthouse observed;

> 'It is very difficult for a lead institution to shape PSTs' learning if this is out of line with expectations in the school in which they are gaining their experience' (Lofthouse et al., 2020, p.698).

The provider may offer high quality training for example, but if the school is unable to give the mentor the time to attend, it can have little positive impact.

This quadrant was exemplified by Safiya Small School, who experienced tangible elements of provider enablement but school constraint in several areas. This made her mentoring practice challenging. She was enthusiastic about her provider, for the opportunities it offered through its strong mentoring and partnership capacities, but she had also experienced frustration and challenge impacting her professional practice.

Safiya's school had proved constraining in terms of its organisational and staff capacities but was enabling through its positive and encouraging ethos towards ITE and provision of opportunities for staff recruitment. Her situation within the matrix demonstrated a state of moderate constraint from her school and moderate enablement from her provider. This placed her, like Elliot, in a fragile state and vulnerable to the impact of possible future changes and less able to take advantage of opportunity.

As described in the previous chapter, Safiya led the mentoring in her school, overseeing two mentors both of whom were recently qualified teachers in their second year of teaching and first year of mentoring. She was an early career mentor, having mentored for three years and was a novice school mentor in her first year in the role. The SCITT, the provider of her school's ITE, had a remote university affiliation but with little interaction beyond monitoring and overseeing procedures. Safiya had a positive relationship with her provider SCITT, but it had gone through several significant changes in its organisation and running of placements proving disruptive and unsettling to Safiya's mentor practice.

Safiya spoke of myriad advantages to being a mentor and emphasised the importance of professional development through having the opportunity to share good practice and learn collaboratively with a focus on ITE. This was indicative of an enabling mentor capacity. Such opportunity came mostly from her provider and the effective partnership capacity they had nurtured; there was less from her school, which struggled to fund and resource such opportunities. Alongside her advocation for mentoring, Safiya talked of the challenges, created by the additional work mentoring demanded, issues recognised by Peiser *et al.* (2018) and Vanassche *et al.* (2019). This was particularly related to a paucity of time and funding and resulted in her having less resource for her beginning teachers. In addition, and as alluded to, working in a small rural school with low pupil numbers and a small staff had resulted in a limited pool of teachers to select mentors from, impacting on the school's mentor capacity.

The school's pool of appropriate mentors was further affected by the relative inexperience of all those involved in ITE and their collective lack of sustained mentoring and teaching practice. This was an issue raised previously and identified in Schatz-Oppenheimer's (2017) research. As a result, there was little room for adaptation and response to changing circumstances in ITE; in particular, increasing interaction with beginning teachers and taking on greater responsibility for growing areas of the programme. To compensate for this, Safiya appreciated the work of her provider, actively supporting mentors' development wherever possible. This enabled the mentors in her school and alliance to work together and learn from each other, providing opportunities to increase capacity for both staff and mentor development.

However, because of a reduction in funding from her provider and subsequent changes to the process and organisation of placements, all three mentors in Safiya's school had had to do more for less material reward; this was compounded by cuts within the school funding as well. Not only was Safiya in a fragile quadrant as a result of her school (ITE), she was also challenged by weaknesses residing with her provider, experiencing organisational capacity issues in relation to funding and resourcing.

Safiya's provider was able to support her engagement with ITE to a degree through their strong mentoring and partnership capacities. However, such

support may not prove adequate if there are further threats to the delicate balance of the ecology of practices within which she operated. Her position was therefore precarious. To stabilise her mentoring practice and optimise its effectiveness, she would require further support and capacity from both her school and provider. In particular from her school where some challenging issues prevailed. This was particularly so with her being in such early stages of both her teaching and mentoring career.

Summary

Safiya demonstrated elements of the fragile school (ITE) quadrant through her experience of working within a constraining school context. Despite her school's positive culture and ethos towards ITE, significant organisational capacity issues in terms of funding, resourcing and staffing, were unlikely to change in the short term, and could even deteriorate. Her provider could continue to support and sustain her mentor practice through effective development and a strong partnership capacity, but was itself vulnerable, subject to constant funding and resourcing changes. This impacted on its organisational capacity, limiting its ability to support mentor development and so enable her professional practice. This was illustrated by Safiya's position on the matrix, close to the vicious cycle.

Summary – the fragile quadrants

Mentors working in the contexts or ecologies of practices of the fragile quadrants were able to maintain a level of mentor practice that was satisfactory but not optimal. They experienced weaknesses in a variety of capacities within their school or provider and sometimes both. Practice could be sustained because weaknesses in some capacities could be accommodated and compensated for by strengths in others. Additionally, changes that could be accommodated positively by the school and or provider could also lead to improvements and so augment those areas doing well.

Due to the dynamic nature of the matrix, mentors could move within and into other quadrants, demonstrating their vulnerability to deteriorate or, potential to improve, based on how their provider and/or school accommodate change. Where the restrictions lie within their school (ITE) and in particular their staff

and organisational capacity, this could prove challenging and require substantial adaptation. Where restrictions lie with the provider however, there is more opportunity for tangible improvements to be made and for mentor training and partnership opportunities to develop. It could include action as straightforward as changing the provider.

5.2.2 The stable quadrants

These two quadrants have been termed stable, regarded as the converse of fragile in ecology terms and where the components of the system are less vulnerable to change or disturbances (Nilsson and Grelsson, 1995). Here the context within which the mentor works tends to be self-reinforcing and self-regulating, so being able to return to a steady state after disruption. In this state, significant change needs to happen with most, or all the capacities, for their situation to either markedly improve or deteriorate.

Vicious cycle quadrant

Mentors working within this quadrant experience a range of challenging circumstances and most, if not all their school and provider's capacities are weak, so constraining their practice on multiple fronts. This is something that becomes self-reinforcing in a negative cycle. An unconducive ethos and approach as well as weaknesses related to ITE in the daily running of the school, can make staff and mentoring development difficult. This may expose mentors to competing priorities and demands such as those identified by Jaspers *et al.* (2014) and Peiser *et al.* (2019) and having to prioritise pupils over beginning teachers. The mentor working within this quadrant experiences constraints with their provider as well, such as a lack of agility to adapt to change, weak organisation and poor communications. Additionally, there may be issues relating to weak mentor and partnership capacities compromising the quality of training as well as of relationships and effective collaboration.

Maryam Multiple exemplified this quadrant experiencing multiple issues related to both her school and provider. Weaknesses in many capacities led to the reinforcement of her challenging situation, or vicious cycle.

Working as a primary school teacher in a medium-sized three form entry school, Maryam was experienced, having mentored for *at least 15, 20 years.* Her role

as school mentor was complex as she was responsible for overseeing all the mentors in her school following a range of ITE routes and working with the four different providers discussed previously. In alternate years she was also a class mentor, on the school's leadership team and worked part-time. She valued her engagement with ITE perceiving it to be a *really high priority,* and appreciated benefits of her involvement, including developing effective relationships with beginning teachers, as well as opportunities for the successful recruitment of staff. She also, however, spoke of multiple challenges in her school as well as with her providers. She described how she was, *juggling all the time* and as outlined in the previous chapter, experienced issues with how ITE was managed within her school. Leadership seemed to adopt a more coercive than developmental approach to staff engagement with it. This had become particularly acute with greater involvement in ITE and the necessity for more mentor provision.

Mixed messages from the leadership in her school, while espousing the benefits of ITE, had paradoxically instilled reluctance in teachers to become mentors. Teachers were concerned about the impact mentoring may have had on their career trajectory and performance as discussed by Peiser *et al.,* (2018) and limiting staff development capacity. The combination of; inadequate time to fulfil her and other mentors' roles; a system inculcating reluctance in teachers to adopt and conduct a mentoring commitment; and a pervasive performative environment disincentivising teachers, had all resulted in an overall perception of constraint. This also reduced opportunities to optimise the mentoring role and capacity for ITE development.

Compounding the issues within her school, and complicated by the number of different providers they partnered with, Maryam was confronted by significant changes within those partnerships. These had upset the balance of responsibility, discussed by McNicholl and Blake (2013), and impacted her perceptions of the professional relationships with her provider tutors. She felt them to be distant and depersonalised, so limiting the capacity for effective partnership. Not being given enough time by her school to attend partnership events and benefit from training and networking was exacerbated by the inaccessibility of her providers' training venues. This was not helped by having so many of them to attend, partnering with four different providers. For Maryam

it was the combination of both provider and school contexts, that had made issues particularly challenging, generating perceptions of isolation and constraining her effective mentoring practice.

Summary

Mentors working within a vicious cycle are beset by weak capacities within the school context and in the absence of effective compensatory support of an enabling provider, would find it difficult to shift their position. They would be challenged by weak capacities in both their school and provider and experience a sense of inertia. No discernible capacities would be functioning well enough to substantially improve the others and their context would be neither resilient, nor able to capitalise on further change. Much would have to improve within the school (ITE), including its organisational and staff capacity, and adaptations made to the relationship(s) with the provider(s). This might demand a realigning of the 'division of labour' as discussed by McNicholl and Blake (2013) to enable movement out of the quadrant. Improvements would need to take place within both the school and provider to avoid the problems of weak capacities compounding each other and creating an increasingly dysfunctional environment. In such cases the challenge lay in there being neither an effective school (ITE) nor provider to compensate for disruption. Moving out of the quadrant would prove challenging as the two separate institutions would have to change on multiple fronts and simultaneously if the mentor was not to be left 'stuck'.

Virtuous cycle quadrant

A mentor working within the virtuous cycle would also experience a level of stability or self-reinforcement. However, the school and provider would be enabling and robust capacities prone to strengthen rather than challenge the mentor's practice. Here, the context would be resilient to change, able to accommodate disturbances and take advantage of change in a positive way, working within a self-reinforcing, virtuous cycle. If there were threats to the system, there were two separate institutions to support. These, through their inherent enabling capacities, should be able to resolve and even improve the situation with an ability to capitalise on potential opportunity and optimise the situation.

This quadrant was best demonstrated through the experiences of Alex Academies who articulated numerous examples of the robust capacities of both her school and provider in response to change. Alex, a secondary school teacher and experienced class mentor had worked with beginning teachers for over six years. Her school, as outlined previously, was part of a large established academy chain working in an alliance. The alliance provided professional development to all staff and offered opportunities for career progression within the community of schools. The academy chain's ITE lead, working between schools was responsible for much of the administration and worked closely and collaboratively in partnership with their local university provider. The alliance followed what Alex identified as a university led secondary PGCE programme.

Alex's school and provider empowered her mentor practice through proactive leadership and a supportive culture indicative of strong organisational capacities. Her well run school and wider academy chain with a positive ethos towards ITE, manifested strong staff capacity through teacher recruitment policies, associated professional development opportunities, and close collaboration between school and partnership colleagues. Her provider worked effectively within the partnership, ensuring her sustained involvement and development through adapting to the shifting ITE environment and supporting her to develop agility and the confidence to make appropriate, situational judgements. This was achieved through strong mentor capacity in the provision of effective training and opportunities to work with other schools, as well as subject specific support and development, emphasising the importance of effective staff and partnership capacity.

The school and provider were able to work together to build on and strengthen their capacities in a self-perpetuating way. Their effective interaction had helped create an enabling environment for Alex, equipping her to be resilient to potential threats and take advantage of the opportunities associated with greater involvement with ITE.

Summary

In the virtuous cycle, the combination of the school and the provider collaborating and working effectively together could create a fertile environment

in which the ITE system could thrive. The context or ecology amplified the empowering elements of all capacities in a self-perpetuating way and enabled a positive response to opportunities which may occur or be introduced. The context also proved to be resilient to potential threats. The virtuous cycle demonstrates the importance of the effective functioning of the capacities, working together and evidencing the need for more than just a conducive school or an effective provider; there is a need to have both working in successful partnership with each other. It is the combination that is so important, not only to maintain mentor practice, but to maximise the possibility of ITE being developmental and transformative of the kind envisaged by Ellis and McNicholl (2015) and Lofthouse (2018).

5.3 Summary

This chapter has sought to depict the role played by both the school the mentor works in and the provider they partner with. This was considered in the previous chapter through an investigation of the school and providers' respective practice architectures to sustain and develop mentors, identifying what enabled and constrained their practice through their school and providers' capacities.   A deeper, more holistic understanding of the multidimensionality of their situation has been provided in this chapter through explaining the critical relationship and interactions between the school and provider and their combined impact on shaping mentors' perceptions of their experiences. This takes place within an ecology of practices as described by for example Kemmis *et al.* (2012) and Brooks (2021).

From these findings, I have shown that it is the combination of the school and provider working together that impacts the overall mentor experience. ITE in which mentors perceive the potential for their successful practice and development, does therefore demand both a conducive school as well as a good provider. Having one without the other makes for a challenging, precarious context for the mentor to work in as well as the beginning teacher to learn from. This is especially so where there are significant weaknesses within the school's (ITE) organisational and staff capacities as seen in the fragile school (ITE) and vicious cycle quadrants. Here, issues could endure and prove resistant to change. It is important to remember too that in this research all

mentors referred to their school's positive ethos, where this is not the case, the situation may be even more challenging for the mentor. In such circumstances, however effective the provider, it is very difficult to change the school (ITE), and the provider will be limited by the schools' (ITE) capacity to co-deliver effective mentoring as cautioned by Peiser *et al.* (2019) and Lofthouse *et al.* (2020). Similarly, it is challenging for mentors to be agential, whatever their disposition, to optimise their opportunities and potential (Biesta, 2015; Orchard and Winch, 2015). Any improvements to the school's ability to engage effectively with ITE would require significant change in their approach and in their organisational capacity. This proves challenging as mentoring and general engagement in ITE are not their priority, their priority will always be their pupils' outcomes.

Understanding the mentor context or ecology can help optimise opportunity stemming from change and ensure there is minimal deterioration in the effectiveness of mentors' provision. This is best facilitated by the effective working of the school and provider, working together in partnership. From this holistic picture of individual mentors' experiences further conclusions can be made about the broader situation of ITE, something that will be considered in greater detail in the next, concluding chapter.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

Addressing the two research questions has highlighted the effect of changing circumstances on mentors' experiences. The first question, focused on the impact of mentoring on teachers' professional practice, has led to identifying some of the reasons for mentors' participation in ITE, and recognising some of the significant challenges they face working within a changing context. Through exploring the second research question I have ascertained what, within the mentor's school and provider, has enabled and constrained their practice and how this has been impacted by changes within their context. I will in this final chapter, consider the implications of these findings.

Although change is nothing new to ITE and has been researched widely, the changes that have taken place particularly since 2010 (as outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.2) and the current, enduring shift to an increasingly school-centred ITE, have played a significant part in mentors' experiences. Future initiatives implemented through the Government's ITT Reform (DfE, 2022) will have further impact with multiple stakeholders, not least, as this research has shown, the teacher mentor as they transition to teacher educators and the 'linchpin' of the ITE system.

As the findings have shown, these changes are not however taking place on a level playing field, with significant inconsistences existing between mentors' experiences. The differences confirmed what I had observed from the outset of this research; changes to the ITE system offered opportunity to some mentors, but for others, proved restricting. The findings indicate that as mentors' responsibilities have increased, greater demands have been made on them in terms of capacity and capability. For some, where their school and provider capacities have worked effectively in conjunction, particularly those in the 'virtuous cycle', this has provided opportunities for greater professional development. For others however, due to weaknesses in school and providers' combined capacities, and especially those in or near to the 'vicious cycle', they have not been able to accommodate and benefit from such change. This suggests that context was key and 'the way in which individuals see the world

depends on the context in which they are experiencing it' (Lofthouse *et al.,* 2020, p.686). This context was directly impacted by the interaction of their school and provider, making the effectiveness of the partnership between them paramount. Looking forward, an inconsistent quality of partnership will, in consequence, prove increasingly problematic as further change takes place with implications for all involved.

6.2 Understanding what enables and constrains mentors' practice in times of change

I addressed the research questions using several theoretical, methodological and conceptual constructs. Activity theory (Engerström,1999) and its associated framework was employed to identify and articulate the complex nature of mentors engaging with ITE in school and their lived experiences. Further examination through the theory of practice architectures following Kemmis *et al.* (2014), identified and explained how schools and providers, through their respective practice architectures enabled and constrained mentors' practice. I developed this understanding through conceiving the 'capacities' to articulate which specific areas within schools and providers were enabling and/or constraining mentor's practice and summarised these in Table 7. Considering the context within which mentors worked as an ecology of practices (Kemmis *et al.,* 2012) I explained the importance of the combination of both the school and the provider and the impact of change.

Finally, by devising the matrix tool, I brought the findings together and located mentors within contexts (quadrants) depicting particular characteristics. The characteristics of these four quadrants, two fragile and two stable, are outlined in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: The fragile and stable quadrants
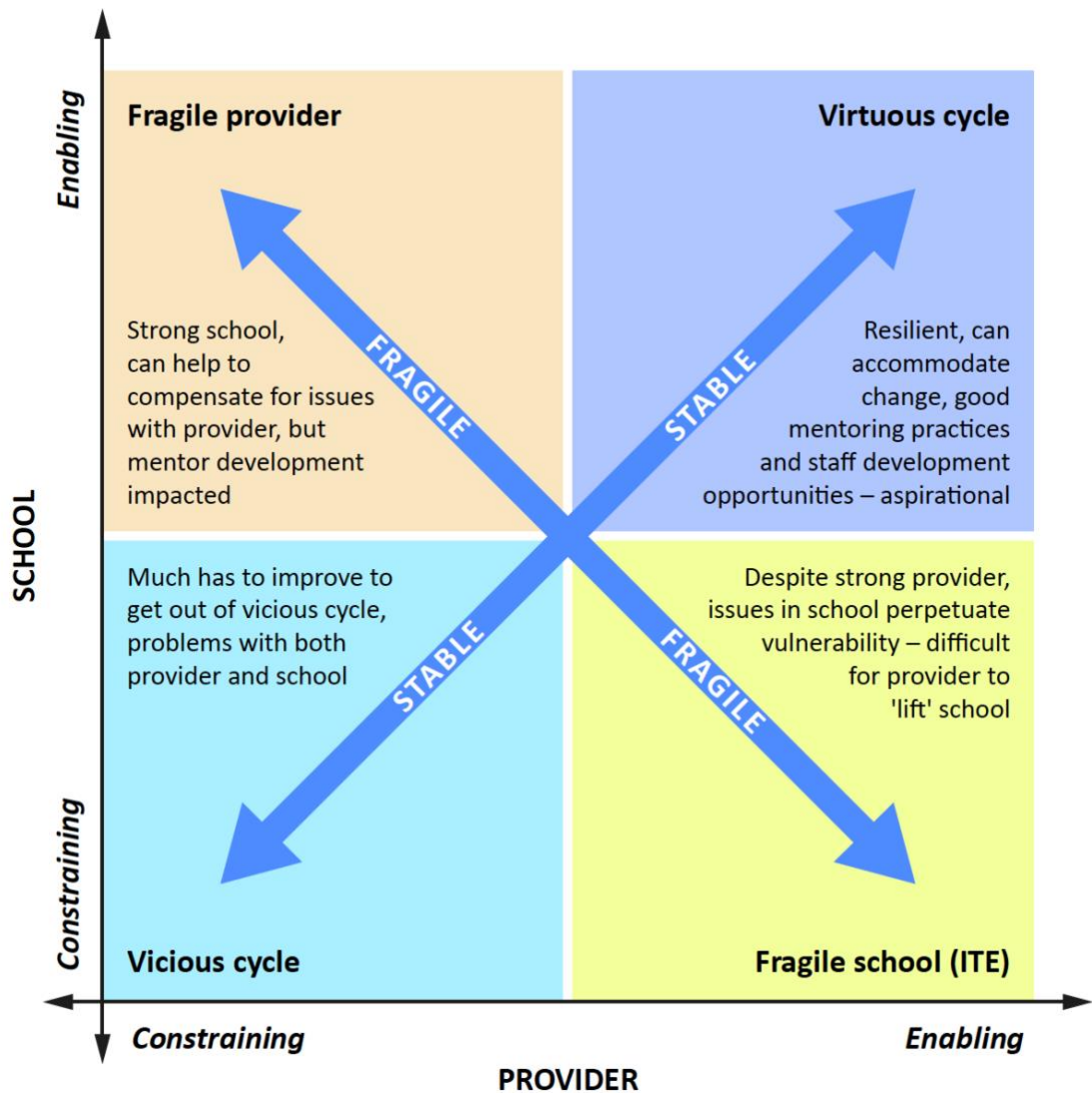
The location of the mentor within each quadrant has implications for both school and provider and can provide insight into the current and possible future situation for the mentor.

6.3 Implications for schools and providers

Implications for schools

As the mentor becomes more involved in ITE, the support of the school is increasingly important and those characteristics enabling mentor practice (Table 7), more significant. This is particularly so where there are perceived issues with the provider and the partnership relationship is weak. Schools, even with the best of intentions, are challenged by multiple factors, not least the question of

prioritisation of teachers' activities and competing demands (Jaspers *et al.,* 2014; Wilson, 2014; Peiser *et al.,* 2018) as both William Workload and Safiya Small School personified.

Successful engagement with ITE will always be difficult when focused on an institution, the school, that has different priorities and where the school leaders are in a constant state of compromise between what they believe in and what they are able to do, a tension between the philosophical, cultural-discursive arrangements and the operational, material-economic arrangements (after Brooks, 2021). Productive and supported engagement with ITE could however offer significant benefit and opportunities for staff development and school improvement.

Considering this, schools, if they are to play an increasingly important part in not just the practice of ITE but in the design and input of programmes and content, must be adequately prepared, resourced and supported to do so. Adequate time needs to be given alongside effective training and development in appropriate mentoring practices to empower mentors to induct their beginning teachers. Incorporating ITE in the ethos and organisation of the school and including it in professional development programmes, could help to embed it within its school improvement culture. Support for doing so comes best from those stakeholders most connected to them, namely through the partnership they have with their provider and associated schools. In addition, greater encouragement and support from Ofsted as a regulatory body and partner in school improvement, could help to both enable and facilitate successful ITE.

As Lofthouse *et al.'s* (2020) research found, the contribution that schools make to successful ITE is essential and can prove more significant in beginning teachers' experiences than the route they pursued into teaching. The research found 'it was the nature of their experience within each school that was the critical factor' (Lofthouse *et al.,* 2020, p.697) and the 'nature of school mentoring is hugely important for the way PSTs understand and conduct their learning' (*ibid.* p.698). This strongly supports the importance of the school role in ITE.

Implications for providers

Mentors, familiar with established pedagogical principles are usually less conversant with teaching adults. As their role has developed therefore, so has the need for effective andragogy become more urgent (Peiser *et al.,* 2018; Vanassche *et al.,* 2019). Aderibigbe *et al.* (2018) would add that as well as needing to be of high quality, training should be structured over time to allow it to become embedded and integral. There is a simultaneous need for training to be developmental, that is educative mentoring rather than simply transmissive. Learning, to be a mentor rather than just learning what to do as a mentor is important if teacher mentors are to take on the role of teacher educator. This requires, as Langdon and Ward claim:

> 'a growing understanding of the need to focus on developing adaptive expertise rather than relying on experience alone to build knowledge.' (Langdon and Ward 2015, p.241)

This will require a corresponding growth in the availability and accessibility of appropriate mentor development, targeted and contextualised to the specific needs of the schools within which the mentors work. It is however currently unclear as to where this will come from and how it will be ensured, maintained and quality assured. Traditionally, and aligning with participants' perceptions, the responsibility for its delivery is with the provider. However, with the providers' adoption of an increasingly different role in implementing more of a QA and supportive function, and beginning teachers spending more time in school, this may also change. As Peiser *et al.,* (2018) suggest, support may be increasingly expected from those responsible for the beginning teacher in the workplace, rather than just the provider. It would therefore seem to require increased collaboration between the two, that is through effective and productive partnership.

Bearing this in mind, the provision of contextualised mentor training through multiple sources, supported by the provider and implemented through partnership, will help to ensure that a mentor such as Elliot Employment, unable to achieve his objectives through his current provider will not decide just to move across to the next best one. Instead, he can be supported in an appropriate and productive way for his setting. In this way, he can work

collaboratively with his provider through an effective partnership, understanding the issues and developing the specific capacities within his school and mentoring practice.

These conclusions have led me to making the recommendations outlined in the following section.

6.4 Recommendations

The recommendations shown in Table 8, for schools, providers and policy makers have been made to suggest opportunities in which mentors may be enabled, more than constrained in their practice, empowering them to take advantage of engaging with ITE.

Table 8: Recommendations for schools, providers and policy makers

Capacities	Recommendations		
	School	Provider	Policy Makers
Organisation	**Culture and attitude to ITE**	**Effective organisation and flexibility/adaptive**	**Clarity of ITE organisation and provision of adequate resource**
	Developing school ethos around ITE engagement by; . clarifying the significant benefits of ITE through working in effective and productive partnership . gaining whole school professional development and improvement.	Good organisation and efficient, streamlined processes. The ability to be agile and adaptive, optimising the opportunities of change.	Avoiding blanket change; being more nuanced considering different contexts and conscious of other parallel initiatives and demands on staff. Greater clarity, reducing confusion, streamlining routes and simplifying processes. Provision of adequate time and resource for both the school and the provider to support and develop mentors. Enhancing/replacing and effectively disseminating mentor standards to have greater reach and impact.
Staff	**Career progression and professional development**	**Opportunities of specialist support and staff development and learning, joint research projects**	**Supporting staff development and school improvement**
	Mentoring supported to be a complementary rather than dual role. Mentors derive professional development and satisfaction from involvement, rather than it creating conflict as 'torn in two'. Provision of tangible career opportunities through pursuing ITE as an alternative, complementary pathway.	Formalised staff professional development and learning opportunities through providers' evidence led, informed research, pursuing a range of collaborative projects.	Formally including staff development and progression though ITE opportunities. Processes for mentor accreditation and professional reward.

Capacities	School	Provider	Policy Makers
Mentor	**Mentor selection**	**Training, development, and education**	**Support for school and provider mentor development**
	Availability of quality, experienced staff for mentor selection, enthusiastic and keen to commit and participate.	Provision of continuous, contextualised and developmental andragogy, supporting mentors to become teacher educators receiving and providing educative mentoring. Providing access to a range of learning materials and use of an effective VLE, to give mentors autonomy to learn at own convenience.	Funding to support mentor training, not just its provision but school support to appoint as well as release teachers to adopt and fulfil the role.
Partnership	**Facilitating mentor involvement in partnership activities and networking**	**Collaboration, networking and relationships**	**Support for and evaluation of ITE in both school and provider – working with partnership**
	Facilitating links with other schools and providers, encouraging and developing effective school networks and partnerships through ITE focus.	Clarity over the role of the mentor and provider tutor and their responsibilities within partnership; transparency over expectations and requirements. Encouraging and facilitating effective relationships between schools and providers and creating research and development opportunities within partnership. Ability to work with all sizes of school and at a range of scales.	Providing opportunities for collaboration, networking and optimising the role of the provider through for example related research projects. Assessment of school and provider to ensure quality in both institutions and acknowledging it is the combination of both that determines the mentor experience. Inclusion of effective teacher education in school accountability through for example Ofsted, to ensure quality participation. Acknowledging and appreciating the importance of partnership and facilitating its effective development.

These recommendations, attributed to the capacities, are the outcome of this specific research and so are not exhaustive.

6.5 Limitations

As a result of the study being predominantly qualitative and interpretivist, it is prone to the particular researcher's understanding and so possible bias (Thomas, 2017). I have been conscious of this throughout the research process, and critically reflected on its possible impact, ensuring a reflexive approach and constantly questioning findings and meanings made from them. I have remained aware of my position as a university-based teacher educator and as such representing a part of the education complex significantly impacted by the changes I have referred to. The movement of ITE into schools in particular has implications for university-led ITE and I have been aware of the possibility of being defensive of my own professional domain. As a result, I have constantly reflected on my perspective and retained an objective approach through the use of established theoretical constructs. Researching my own professional context as an insider researcher (Malone, 2003; Mercer, 2007), had the potential to cause conflict between competing providers protective of possibly sensitive information or negative publicity. This could have limited the extent of the findings, but the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity established when considering my ethical stance, ensured that participants and gatekeepers were confident in engaging with the research and sharing their insights.

I worked with a small sample of self-selecting participants identified through purposive sampling to identify appropriate mentors. This made awareness of some degree of selection bias important (Thomas, 2017). The decision to do so was taken consciously to ensure participants met baseline criteria such as having experience of mentoring and providing representation from different age phases; it was not used to canvass and seek particular viewpoints or opinions. This was evidenced through the wide-ranging perspectives expressed by the mentors in the findings.

By volunteering to engage in the research, participants demonstrated their commitment to mentoring, and as such could be perceived as having a 'keen' disposition. I was consequently aware of their possible propensity to allude to positive rather than negative elements when writing the interview schedule and developed questions accordingly. Additionally, in consideration of possible bias

I chose a semi-structured interview approach to allow for open questions and adequate opportunities for mentors to speak of a wide range of different experiences.

The outcomes of the research were tentative and did not seek generalisations as I was focussed on exploring individual contexts within which mentors worked, to understand their unique setting. Additionally, the mentors' responses reflected their thinking at that time and their assessment of what enabled and constrained their practice and so was particular to a specific point in time. Consequently, the capacities created stemmed from the analysis of their specific data and so could have included other aspects which were just not mentioned during the data collection. I ensured therefore the participants covered a wide spectrum and involved diverse contexts and circumstances, with a spread of geographical location, setting type, age phase and teaching route to be as representative as possible. Their settings and unique circumstances could then be applied to the mentoring matrix model and an overarching commentary made from that.

The nature of the research undertaken is topical and so could become dated, especially when considering short term policies and modifications (Barnett, 2008). However, having focussed on a generic and perennial issue, the impact of increasing mentor responsibility, the outcomes remain relevant and applicable to other similar contexts that have arisen and will continue to do so. The outcomes therefore remain contemporary and topical.

I intentionally chose not to make any subjective assessment of the mentors' capability and effectiveness either in their roles as teachers or mentors. This was because the research was focussed upon mentors' perceptions of their experiences within their particular context. The research was not an evaluation of their development by their school and provider but rather an exploration of their own experiences, making it different to other studies such as Langdon's (2017) research examining the impact of training and development on teacher mentoring.

6.6 Contribution to knowledge and professional practice

In conducting this research, I have analysed participating mentors' reflections on a wide range of experiences to provide a picture of what it is like to be mentoring in different schools and settings in England. This has led to making four areas of contribution to knowledge and professional practice in this field comprising; *giving voice* to mentors about their lived experiences of engaging in ITE, *endorsing* existing knowledge about why mentors engage with ITE and what it is that enables and constrains them in their practice, *building on* what is already known through using familiar conceptual approaches and devising two new approaches, and *generating* new knowledge about what it is that defines mentors' experiences.

Giving voice

Through the survey and interviews, the participants were able to articulate perspectives of contemporary mentors alongside common discourses around ITE, in a time of significant change. This provided a particular perspective from those involved in ITE at the interface between different stakeholders, notably the schools and providers. This perspective is different to that of the beginning teacher, the provider tutor, the policy maker and the school leader, as it articulates the direct experiences of those most closely involved and affected by changing context. The research therefore contributes a particular perspective from the central participants to the discussions about what it is that influences mentors' practice, in changing times. This is important when further change has been introduced and the role of the mentor increasingly emphasised; understanding their context is therefore key in planning for future successful ITE.

Endorsing

As explored in the literature review, there are accepted understandings of what it is that attracts mentors to engaging in ITE, ranging from the altruistic aims of contributing to their profession (Biesta, 2015, Lofthouse, 2018) to the more material benefits of acquiring new resources and additional teacher time (Brown and Greany, 2017). As there are benefits, so too are there challenges, including conflicts created through competing demands (Jaspers *et al.,* 2014; Aderibigbe

et al., 2018) especially in light of greater involvement and responsibility. The research confirmed that there are multiple advantages and challenges to mentors working in ITE, and that these have been impacted by a changing context, influencing mentors' experiences of them. It also corroborated research for example from Kemmis *et al.* (2014a) and Peiser *et al.* (2019), that there were particular circumstances or practice architectures, in schools and providers that enabled and constrained mentors' practice and that these were subject to change.

Building on

Through using well-known theoretical and conceptual paradigms, I have been able to build on the understanding of mentors' experiences and identify and categorise elements of schools and providers that impact mentors' practice. I have established these as 'capacities' and used them alongside a matrix with its associated quadrants to ascertain what it is that enables and constrains mentors within their particular context.

I have achieved this through;

- Using the activity theory framework (Engeström,1999; 2008; McNicholl and Blake, 2013; Douglas, 2014) as a lens to consider the interactions of specific attributes of a system and provide a representation of the lived experience of mentors.

- Drawing on the theory of practice architectures to understand how mentors were enabled and/or constrained through various practice architectures (Kemmis *et al.,* 2014a; Peiser *et al.,* 2019) by their school and provider. This led to an identification of their 'capacities'.

- Considering the complex interactions of these capacities within the mentors' settings or 'ecologies of practices' (Kemmis *et al.,* 2012, Brooks, 2021) to enable further understanding of what comprises the mentor's unique context and recognise the importance of both the school and provider in determining their experiences.

The capacities conceived were an original outcome of this research and recognise specific elements occurring and interacting within a school and

provider to create the mentor environment. These enhance the scope to investigate mentors' contexts providing an additional way to recognise and explain mentors' experiences.

In addition, the matrix, with its embedded quadrants (Figure 12) was used to identify and explain the complex interactions of the school and providers' capacities. This created specific environments within which the mentor could be located and provided identifiable characteristics by which to recognise and evaluate their context. The matrix additionally demonstrated how fundamental policy change is experienced by the individuals most closely involved. Thus, the matrix has provided an additional tool to evaluate mentors' contexts, enhancing our understanding of what is happening in teacher education now and into the future. In this way both the generation of the capacities and the matrix have made original contributions to the understanding of ITE practice.

Generating

The research has shown that it is the context within which the mentor works that is critical. Additionally, understanding mentors' experiences is not just about the school or the provider but is the outcome of the unique combination of interactions between the two; that is, their partnership. It is this combination, enacted out through the partnership that creates recognisable contexts with discernible characteristics depicted through the matrix quadrants. In addition, the research identifies what enables and constrains mentors' practice through their school and providers' capacities, highlighting the significance of context on both the mentor's approach to mentoring and the outcomes of it in a time of change.

The research identifies the need for a shift in policy focus with new understanding premised on the importance of context and partnership. Previously, policy has focused on improving and developing mentoring; the findings from this research however, advocate future focus should be on what makes for successful partnerships. Indicative of such a focus on the mentor, the ITT reform document (DfE 2022), mentions the terms, 'mentor', 'mentors' and 'mentoring' 95 times. By comparison, the term 'partnership/s' is mentioned just three times. The three references made, specify accountabilities and determine who is responsible for which procedural aspects. The research identifies an

incongruity as the findings indicate that successful experiences for mentors are premised not upon accountability and compartmentalisation but rather upon effective collaboration and shared values.

What has appeared to be most important through this research, is the need for a shared ethos and approach; the collective endeavour of the mentor's school and provider to create the most conducive context for the mentor to work and the beginning teacher to learn in. Mentor development, crucial of course for successful ITE, may then succeed in an environment where there is, as Murtagh and Dawes recommend, the opportunity for mentor recruitment, development, support and recognition (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020). This can then draw on the strengths of both the school and provider within effective partnership. Providing such contexts can help prevent corrosive situations such as those where the provider is excellent but works within a weak school, or a great school with a strong ethos is linked to a poor provider; both situations will result in a sub-optimal context for the mentor. As this is a detrimental environment for the mentor, so it is for the beginning teacher, impacting the provision of high-quality professional teachers, crucial for the success of schools. This may also prevent the situation of stagnant mentoring where no significant progress is made and mentor satisfaction is underwhelming.

I argue through the findings that the importance of the quality of partnership should not therefore be underestimated. Creating and supporting such partnerships would necessitate future targeted funding and resourcing. This would be best focused not on isolated mentor development programmes where mentors are trained out of context but collaboratively with their school and provider through effective relationships and cognisant of their individual needs.

Additionally, the research highlights the need for regulatory bodies such as Ofsted to consider the efficacy of the school context to be equally as important as that of the provider and the nature of the partnership paramount. Accountability and responsibility should therefore be spread between all partners, school and provider alike ensuring that the school is perceived to have significant responsibility for high quality ITE working with and supported by the partnership. Collaborative development and improvement programmes can then

be targeted on both school and provider through an effective partnership, supporting and developing the mentors involved.

6.7 Professional implications

In planning for provision and conscious of the research findings as a teacher educator, I have looked to develop effective partnership and greater collaborative working. An example of this has been unexpected and in response to the Covid pandemic.

The restrictions enforced during successive lock-downs have, counter-intuitively, encouraged engagement between school and university and engendered new and improved ways of communicating and collaborating through an enhanced, dynamic VLE; so developing partnership. Attending mentor development sessions, previously prohibitive for many because of time demands, became possible as shorter, more regular, and targeted meetings were run online encouraging greater participation. Online opportunities opened new networks and developed local hubs, and establishing drop-in sessions as well as ad hoc focussed workshops, catered for individual schools and settings. Consequent recognition of specific circumstances has helped compensate for weaknesses where necessary and offered opportunity where possible. Learning from this experience has led to developments in the work we do with schools and in future, such remote learning will be blended with enhanced developmental work through face-to-face conferences encouraging effective networking and collaborative partnership. Examples of related work that was done in collaboration with mentors in school include the exemplification of the National Mentoring Standards (as discussed by Murtagh and Dawes, 2020) as well as areas of the Core Curriculum Framework (with colleagues Janet Davies and Maria Hadjisoteris) (see appendix 19 and appendix 20 for examples).

In addition, I have learnt to recognise ITE more as a spatial practice (Schatzki, 2012; Brooks, 2021), taking advantage of the concept of 'place' and the importance of the specific, while simultaneously releasing the confinements of 'location' through being tied to a physical place. In this way, remote learning for mentors can be used in addition to crucial face to face provision. This can support learners in situations far away in terms of geographical distance but not in terms of partnership reach, helping ITE to become more universal as well as

specific, and address some of the problems of context through scale recognised by Brooks (2021).

6.8 Dissemination

The ongoing findings of this research, the use of the matrix and understandings afforded by the capacities of schools and providers, have been shared with colleagues to generate discussion and inform planning within my professional role. Optimising the potential of better communication and wider reach has encouraged the development of our VLE with colleagues in schools. This has been used extensively for our partnership work and resulted in the generation of additional, innovative resources. Similarly, I have engaged in discussions with colleagues from other providers, especially in my role as external examiner and contributed to ideas for developing mentoring guidance and resources within partnership work with schools and other settings.

I have presented my early findings at the TEAN conference in May 2021, at the IOE doctoral conference in the summer of 2021 and to our internal mentor development working group. Working in an active community of practice at the IOE will support me in future writing opportunities, enabling the dissemination of findings through for instance, blogposts, articles and conference presentations such as at BERA and TEAN. Additionally, as a geography specialist in primary education, I plan to share relevant findings through for example the Geographical Association and its related publications such as the Primary Geography Journal and Geography.

I hope to carry out further research into the efficacy of mentoring, considering in particular, the impact of the development of the VLE in light of future changes expected with the ITT Reform (DfE, 2022). Developing partnership through improved communications and access to a wider network and community of practice were mentioned consistently by participants and, where inadequate, perceived to be a significant constraining element in their accessing effective professional development. I would also like to consider refining and adapting the concepts behind the capacities and matrix tool for use with other areas of interest, such as evaluating primary school geography and climate change and sustainability education.

In addition, the mentors who volunteered to participate through interview, expressed their interest in hearing the outcomes of the research and I will be sending them a summary of the findings and conclusions. This may be of use to them and associated colleagues in their own mentoring practice and some of the findings aid a deeper understanding of their context.

6.9 Final remarks

Much has been written about ITE, how it is best achieved and the challenges that are faced (Heilbronn and Yandell, 2010; Brown and Greany, 2017; Winch *et al.,* 2015; Whitty and Furlong, 2015; Mutton *et al.*, 2018). This has tended to focus on the beginning teacher and the nature of teacher education, and less on its impact on the teachers who provide it. As a result, I have conducted this research to fill the gap and generate a better understanding of the mentors I work with and in particular the impact on them of recent change, as intended in the research questions. This is important at a time when 'mentoring is an increasingly high stakes business' (Murtagh and Dawes, 2020, p.42) and has been emphasised by recent initiatives such as the introduction of the CCF (DfE, 2019), ECF (DfE, 2019a), and reform of ITT (DfE, 2022).

The research has confirmed what was posited at the outset of this thesis; being a good mentor is not easy and is dependent not only on who you are but crucially where you are (Langdon, 2013). Brooks states that 'policy assumes conformity' (Brooks, 2021, p.23); clearly however there is anything but conformity as this research has repeatedly shown. As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3), the mentor's context is supercomplex, unique and subject to constant change. As such, and with a diverse range of issues requiring consideration, as well as changing frameworks of understanding, there are no simple blanket solutions, nor technical fixes. This can make the 'what works' agenda, less likely to succeed and demands more nuanced and targeted approaches as Mayer and Mills (2020) suggest.

Understanding the unique mentor context, be it in a 'fragile' or 'stable' state can help plan for the future. It may also optimise the potential of change while working in the supercomplex environment; for, as Ling states, if we are not:

'able to embrace strangeness and create strangeness, be comfortable with insecurity, instability and uncertainty, and accept an unknowable future, we are unable to scaffold and assist our students who are the future teachers, to live and flourish in supercomplexity. Nor will they, as teachers, be able to assist their own students to live meaningfully in that world.' (Ling, 2017, p.569)

We may then be better prepared for the 'unknown unknowns' (Ling, 2017) equipping forthcoming teachers to prepare future pupils for an unpredictable world and take advantage of future potential.

The government is unequivocal in recognising the 'critical role' of the mentor (DfE, 2022, p.8) and is clear about the part they are to play in delivering their future reform. There appears an assumption however that teachers will have both the capacity and capability to accommodate such large-scale reform. To do so will necessitate explicit and planned mentor support and development, something that has been identified through this research, as being best facilitated through effective and productive partnership between school and provider. This is supported by Mutton *et al.'s* (2017) recognition in that in high-quality ITE models, universities and schools play particular roles drawing on their specific areas of expertise and do so by working closely in partnership. Where there is effective partnership, the mentor development needed can be provided.

Ensuring partnership's optimal efficiency and overcoming the 'intractable issues' recognised by Mutton *et al.* (2018) will therefore be essential to provide the right, specific context for the collaborative self-development mentor required for transformative ITE (Kemmis *et al.*, 2014a). Effective partnership will also be needed to fulfil the requirements of multiple government initiatives. Success will however remain elusive without appropriate support for both the school and provider working together in partnership to create the optimal context for the mentor and beginning teacher. If there was ever a time for such commitment it is now.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Different routes into teaching in English schools

Acronym	Name of route/ qualification	Led by	Level	Salaried/fees	Time in school and responsibility of mentor
AO	Assessment only QTS – don't attend ITE programme – no PGCE	Universities/ accredited SCITTS and SD providers	PG	Employed working as unqualified teacher Fees to be paid may be supported by school	All time spent in school – mentor responsible – provider minimal input, final assessment and QA
PGCE or PGDE	Postgraduate certificate of education or Postgraduate diploma in education	Universities QTS and PGCE	PG	Not employed Fees to be paid by beginning teacher – some bursaries available for secondary	Minimum 24 weeks in school – 12 weeks in university – mentor responsible for time in school – provider responsible for all other parts of programme
EYITT	Early Years Initial Teacher Training	University or school	PG	Some employed others not but training grants available - fees to be paid by employer from funding	Mentor responsible for all time in school and school for parts of programme – provider for input, supervision and QA
PTA	Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship	School-led QTS and EPA (end point assessment for apprenticeships)	PG	Employed – grants for fees to provider	All time spent in school – mentor and school responsible – provider QA
RiS	Researchers in Schools	School-led QTS and Research leader in education award	Post-doctoral	Employed and funded	3 years in school and research opportunities – mentor and school responsible – some provider support
RTT	Return to Teaching	School-led Already have QTS	PG	Support prior to teaching – teacher training adviser available – no fees	Advisor available – little responsibility required
SDS	School Direct Salaried	School-led	PG	Employed Salaried	Usually around 10-15 training

		QTS and some programmes PGCE but not all		training (may have to pay for PGCE if offered)	days with provider, rest of academic year in school – mentor responsible for all in school (45 additional training days) and visiting tutor for supervision and QA
SDTF	School Direct (tuition fee)	School-led QTS and usually PGCE	PG	Not employed Fees paid by beginning teacher	Dependent on programme – can be similar to PGCE (12 weeks in university or training with SCITT) mentor responsible for time in school – provider responsible for all other parts of programme
TFLDP	Teach First Leadership Development Programme	School-led QTS and PGDE	PG	Employed – government and charity funded	5-week initial training course – then all in school with some serial days out for training. Mentor responsible in school – Teach First for most input – university contribute and QA.
UG	Undergraduate Degree in Education (Primary or EYFS)	University- led QTS or EYTS and BA or MA Hons	UG	No UG fees usually 3 or 4 year programme	Usually up to 2/3 in school, 1/3 in university – mentor responsible in school – supervision and personal tutors from university provider, responsible for all programme input
SCITTs, led by schools and working with HEIs to different levels, may offer a range of different routes dependent on their schools' circumstances and needs					

Appendix 2: Conceptual Framework

Role and responsibility of mentor/mentor practice

System within school context

Working within a supercomplex system through the lens of ATF and 4 capacities – organisational (OC), staff (SC), mentor (MC) and partnership (PC)

Nature of partnership and relationship with provider

(OC) Organisation and leadership – school ethos and approach to ITE

(SC) Staffing and staff development

(MC) Selection of mentors and their development

(PC) Working in partnership with other schools and provider

(OC) Approach to ITE and day to day organisation

(SC) School staff subject and specialist development

(MC) Mentor training and educative mentoring

(PC) Relationships, networks, and organisation

Benefits and advantages

Challenges

Benefits and advantages

Challenges

Theory of Practice Architecture – enabling/constraining practice arrangements (Kemmis et al.,

'Dance' of Ecology of practices (Kemmis et al., 2014)

What was perceived to enable mentor practice – enhancing empowerment

What was perceived to constrain mentor practice

Virtuous circle of strong school and provider capacities

'Fragile' ecology of practices some strong, some weak capacities in school and provider

Vicious cycle of weak school and provider capacities

Increased autonomy and the potential for transformative learning experiences

Notions of disempowerment and working in performative environment

Mentor experience

Institute of Education

UCL

Dear xxxx

I am carrying out a research project for my Doctorate in Education, looking at the perceptions of mentors in relation to working with trainee teachers, what the perceived opportunities and challenges are and how they may be best supported in their work with trainees. The purpose of this is to help develop ITT programmes for all those involved in teacher training in school, with an aim to continue improving provision in school.

In the first instance, I aim to explore some generic information about mentors' perceptions through a questionnaire. I then plan to carry out some interviews and focus groups with volunteers to develop a more in-depth understanding, once I have analysed the outcomes of the questionnaire. At all stages in the research process, names will be kept confidential and participants may withdraw their responses at any point in the process

As the lead for ITE at xxxx, I would like to ask you if you would be willing to help in the research by sending out the email below containing a link to the questionnaire to your mentor colleagues. You would of course be more than welcome to complete one yourself. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes.

I would really appreciate your support with this and I do think that the findings will be valuable in supporting the crucial work that mentors do in ITT and developing our future generation of teachers.

With all best wishes

Tessa

Tessa Willy

Doctoral Student

UCL-Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way

London WC1H 0AL

Information sheet – Doctoral Research Project (EdD)

An exploration of the perceptions of mentors participating in Initial Teacher Training.

Data collection: June 2018 - February 2020

Purpose of the research

Through this research I aim to explore the impact that working with trainee teachers has on the staff in schools engaged in ITT. I would like to develop a better understanding of their perceptions of working with trainee teachers in the classroom, what the perceived benefits/opportunities and tensions/challenges are and how they may be best supported in doing so. The purpose of this is to help to develop the preparation and development of those involved in ITT in school, including the beginning teacher with an aim to continue to improve and enhance provision in schools.

The research will comprise a questionnaire being sent to mentors involved in ITT in a range of schools. The participants will be informed of all stages of the process and have the right to withdraw at any time. All will be invited to complete the questionnaire. They will be asked if they would volunteer to be involved in a more in-depth interview or focus group at a later date, with questions arising from the responses to the questionnaire and addressing some of the concepts raised in more detail. The results will be confidential, and names not shared with anyone.

Appendix 5: Example Questionnaire

Mentors' experiences of working with trainee teachers

#9

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, November 13, 2018 3:47:09 PM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, November 13, 2018 3:50:24 PM
Time Spent:	00:03:15
IP Address:	5.150.113.232

Page 1

Q1 Please specify the type of school or setting you work in (tick as many boxes as appropriate)

Primary

Q2 Please indicate the ITT teaching route that your trainee teachers follow (tick as many boxes as appropriate)

School Direct salaried ,

University led   ,
PGCE

Undergraduate QTS programme

Q3 Would you describe yourself as:

An intermediate   ,
mentor

Please explain your
choice :
Mentored 6 students at different stages.

Q4 Drawing on your experience in school, do you feel that the role of the mentor in ITT has changed over the past 5 years?

Yes,

Please explain your
answer:
More responsibility on the school mentor rather than the university.

Q5 Mentoring in the future

Please describe any changes that you feel there might be to the role of a mentor in the future

More responsibility on the school mentor

Please indicate those factors that would make you question whether or not you would choose to be a mentor in the future.

workload, experience

1 / 2

Q6 How well do you feel you have been supported in your work with trainees by your school?

Well,
Please explain your response for example through being well prepared, developing specific mentoring skills, helping to deal with challenging issues?:
My head has been very supportive of me mentoring students, I've attended training and I have always got her to check my written feedback before I've given it to the student. Since my last student I've now started observing staff within our school and giving them feedback in my role as maths coordinator.

Q7 How well do you feel you have been supported in your work with trainees by your ITT provider (university, Teaching School Alliance, SCITT etc) ?

Neither well nor ,
poorly
Please explain your response through for example being well prepared, developing specific mentoring skills, helping to deal with challenging issues:
After the initial training morning, I had no other correspondence with the university until someone from the university came to joint observe my student.

Q8 What benefits to your professional practice that you may have experienced from working with your trainee/trainees?

Trainees new to the profession come with enthusiasm, new ideas and strategies learnt in university that we have then trialled or adapted. They instill a buzz in you and you get excited to try new things or they remind you of things you've forgotten. My experience has led to my promotion to teaching and learning lead in my school and I now help mentor and develop teaching staff within our school.

Q9 What challenges to your professional practice that you have experienced from working with your trainee/trainees?

Having to fail a student, despite giving them lots of advice and guidance because you then feel like you've failed them. You also feel that when you get your class back your playing catch up or re teaching elements.

Q10 What further help or support do you think would benefit you in your role as a mentor?

Access to talk to other mentors who have students at that point in time. Especially to share ideas of how to help a student if they're struggling or not listening to the constructive criticism.

Q11 Would you be willing to talk further about your experiences in an interview or focus group?

No

2 / 2

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An exploration of the perceptions of mentors engaging in Initial Teacher Training
A doctoral research project
June 2019
Interview Schedule

Your experience of being a mentor
1. Please tell me about your experience of being a mentor. *(Prompt: how became involved - always involved since then?)*
2. Please could you tell me about the different routes into teaching that you have been involved with? *(Prompt – impact on you as mentor)*
3. Please outline what you see as your responsibilities as a mentor.

Supporting you in being a mentor
4. Please could you tell me about your school's approach to ITE and to trainee teachers?
5. Could you tell me about the ways in which you are supported in your mentoring, by:
   a. your school,
   b. your provider,
   c. and what impact this support has had on you as a mentor?

Impact of mentoring on your professional practice
6. Do you feel that it is important to be engaged in mentoring? *(Prompt - why is that so?)*
7. What do you see as the outcomes of being involved in ITE?
8. Where does mentoring sit in your list of priorities in your main job?
9. Do you feel that this has an impact on you and your job?
10. Is there anything that you feel makes being a mentor challenging?
11. Can you identify any benefits of mentoring to your professional practice?

The role of the mentor
12. How would you describe your role in ITT? *(Prompt - role as coach possibly?)*
13. Could you tell me something about how the role might have changed over the past five years?
14. Why do you feel these changes have come about?
   a. Have there been any other educational and social factors that might have instigated or increased these changes?
15. What has been the impact, if any, of these changes on the way you work?

16. Mentoring in the future

17. Is there further support and professional development that you feel is required for mentoring in the future?
18. Moving forward, how might the role of mentoring be made to be more rewarding for all concerned?
19. Do you feel that the role will continue to change? *(Prompt - future stabilisation?)*
20. Would you choose to continue your mentoring role in the future? Please explain why/why not?

Appendix 7: Interview information and consent form

An exploration of the perceptions of mentors engaging in Initial Teacher Education

A doctoral research project

Data Collection: June 2018 – June 2019

My name is Tessa Willy and I am studying for my Doctorate in Education (EdD). Thank you so much for completing the questionnaire sent out previously and for volunteering to participate in an interview. I hope that this information provides adequate detail about the project and your involvement, but I would be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Why is this research being done?

As you know, school mentors play a key role in the training and development of new teachers. The purpose of conducting this research is to contribute to understanding the role of the mentor and what mentors feel about working with trainee teachers. I intend to use my findings to suggest ways of developing the support offered to mentors working with beginning teachers as well as to improve wider practice around developing future generation of teachers. The project is self-funded and not a part of a wider funded research project.

Who will be involved in the project?

Through the questionnaire that you completed, I have gathered and analysed data from over 80 mentors working on a range of ITT programmes in Early Years, Primary and Secondary schools. From those willing to participate further, in an interview, I have chosen to sample a cross-section of experienced mentors from all three age-phase settings. My sample is therefore not random but opportunistic.

What does the research involve?

Each interview will last for approximately 1 hour at a mutually convenient time and location ideally in person but if not possible, I will suggest a Skype interview or telephone call instead.

The interview will be semi-structured: with some planned questions enabling conversations to develop. During the interview I may ask some further questions to follow up any points raised or clarify any specific points. There is no preparation required beforehand.

Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed, and you will be able to read the interview transcript and confirm that it has accurately documented the interview.

I will analyse the interview transcripts and identify themes. Any examples that might be used to exemplify and illustrate any themes through case study or quotation, will be anonymised and all identities will be confidential.

The report written from research will be fully anonymised and written up for my doctoral thesis. It may be shared with others in the teacher education community and as part of my doctoral studies will also be seen by my supervision tutors, as well as internal and external examiners.

What questions will be asked?

I will ask you a series of questions to explore your perceptions of working with beginning teachers in a mentoring capacity prompting likely discussion. There may be some biographical questions about your experience as a mentor to contextualise the information but as for all data these will be anonymised.

What will the interview involve?

If you are willing to participate in the interview, I will be in touch to organise a time / date for an interview which should last no more than an hour. If you are in agreement, I will record the interview and then it will be transcribed. There are no right or wrong answers, I am only looking for what participants really think.

As outlined above, I will send you a copy of the transcript of the interview to allow you to confirm it is an accurate representation of our discussions.

How will ethical issues be addressed?

It is unlikely that the interview touches on distressing topics but you do not have to answer all the questions.

You might be concerned that judgements may be made or that you will be identified through your responses. No one will be informed of your participation or what has been said. The data will be used solely for the purposes that I have detailed. There will be no judgements made on any individuals based on this research.

I will not be informing anyone that I will be conducting an interview with you personally and it is up to you if you decide to tell colleagues in school and at your provider University.

Recordings and any related documentation will be kept securely in accordance with UCL guidance on data security and all names of people and schools will be changed to ensure that participants cannot be identified.

The project has already been reviewed and approved by the ethics review panel in my department at UCL and successfully been through the ethics approval process.

Will the research be beneficial?

You will not receive payment for taking part in this research, but I hope you will find it interesting and that it may provide you with some further insight into mentoring. Once it is complete, I am hopeful that its dissemination will contribute to the body of knowledge about mentoring in schools and help future mentors as well as the trainees that they work with.

Do you have to take part?

It is your decision to take part and you can withdraw at any time. You can say if there are some questions you do not want to answer and there is no reason you need to give for this. If you do decide to withdraw from the project, all the notes relating to any interview you have given, and any data I have will be destroyed and any information removed from the project.

Will you know about the research results?

Once I have completed my doctorate and it has been submitted and released, I will send you I a short report summarising my findings.

If you are willing to take part, please do complete and sign the attached consent form (p3). I will also bring a copy of to the interview to be signed before we start if necessary.

Thank you for so much for your interest and for reading this information. If there are any questions and if you are willing to participate, please do contact me using the details below

Tessa Willy
Doctoral Student
UCL Institute of Education
University College London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL tessa.willy@ucl.ac.uk

An exploration of the perceptions of mentors engaging in Initial Teacher Training

Doctoral research project

I have read and understood the attached information summary about the research

☐ (please tick)

I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions I have about this project and my involvement in it. I understand that my role in the project is voluntary

☐ (please tick)

I understand that my decision to consent is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without giving a reason

☐ (please tick)

I understand that the data I give during this research may be presented in a report or other form of publication or presentation

☐ (please tick)

I understand that details identifying me and the school at which I work will be anonymised, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality

☐ (please tick)

I agree to be interviewed

☐ (please tick)

I agree that my data may be used in future research arising from this piece of research

☐ (please tick)

Participant Name _____

Signed   _____   date _____

Researcher Name: Tessa Willy

Signed   _____   _____

Appendix 8: Transcription Agreement

Confidentiality Statement for Persons Undertaking Transcription for Tessa Willy

The recordings you are transcribing have been created from services that you provide. Recordings may contain information of a very personal nature, which should be kept confidential and not disclosed to others. Maintaining this confidentiality is of utmost importance. Signing this form means you agree not to disclose any information you may hear on the recording to others, and not to reveal any identifying names, placenames or other information on the recording to any person other than the researcher named above. You agree to keep the recording in a secure place where it cannot be accessed or heard by other people, and to show your transcription only to the relevant individual who is involved in the session, i.e. Tessa Willy.

You will also follow any instructions given to you by Tessa Willy about how to disguise the names of people and places talked about on any recordings as you transcribe them, so that the written transcript will not contain such names of people and places.

Following completion of the transcription work you will not retain any recordings or transcript material, in any form. You will erase any material remaining on your computer hard drive or other electronic medium on which it has been held.

You agree that if you find that anyone speaking on a tape is known to you, you will stop transcription work on that recording immediately and pass it back to Tessa Willy.

Declaration

I agree that:

1. I will discuss the content of the recordings only with Tessa Willy.
2. I will keep all recordings in a secure place where they cannot be found or heard by others.
3. I will treat the transcripts of the recordings as confidential information.
4. I will agree with Tessa Willy how to disguise names of people and places on the recordings.
5. I will not retain any material following completion of transcription.
6. If the person being interviewed on a recording is known to me I will undertake no further transcription work on the recording and will return it to Tessa Willy as soon as is possible.

I agree to act according to the above constraints

Nicky Watts

Signature

Date   27 June 2019

Appendix 9: Exemplar transcript of interview - extract

TRANSCRIPTION PROTOCOL

Header for all transcriptions

Date transcribed	
Date started	
Transcriber Name	
Audio file name	**01 Interview 09.05.2019**
No. minutes taken to transcribe	**41:52**
Date complete	

Transcription specification

1. Helvicta 12 point
2. **Bold for interviewer (I)**
3. Normal for participant (P)
4. Insert time [e.g. 11.37] in red where inaudible
5. Single line spacing
6. Page numbers in footer

I: **Thank you so much for just agreeing to taking part in this research. The first question is about being a mentor.**
Please tell me about your experience of being a mentor.

P: Yes, well I've been teaching for 25 years, and I think for the past eight years, I've had a PGCE partner every year, and then this year, I'm part of the School's Direct, I've had a student all year. Before that, it was bits and bobs for all types of things. It's not just strictly PGCE mentoring I've done. I've done CASH courses and lots of students. So, just on and off dipping in and out. The past seven years has been fairly full on. I thought I might as well give any of my findings of how it works.

I: **Do you find that there has been a difference between those routes you've been involved with?**

P: I think it has. I think it's been different this time, because obviously the teacher standard is the same and the expectation is the same, but the course delivery is often very different and the expectation of the students from the university or the training institute is obviously different. So, it's knowing… this year, I've really had to get to grips with what my expectation is. But on the whole, they're all pretty similar and the points are pretty similar. You're looking at the same kind of points throughout the year. I've never had a BEd student to compare with, it's only post grad.

Appendix 10: Interviews codebook

Name	Files	References
accountability of mentor	7	112
accreditation	2	4
age phase	4	10
arrogance	1	5
awareness of mentoring, what it's like	4	52
being adaptable	6	54
benefits of mentoring	8	74
allowing time for other development	7	25
Another adult	1	2
develop as a leader	6	29
learning from students	7	18
more reflective	8	24
mutual benefit	5	53
network opportunities	4	21
professional development	7	57
recruitment and retention	6	33
sharing good practice	4	23
up to date	8	20
challenge of teaching	6	30
challenges of mentoring	8	102
always being watched and role model	5	11
increasing pressure and demand	3	31
isolating	2	4
lack gratitude recognition	5	30
lack of training	5	48
less than other roles	5	8
not paid maybe cover	4	10
not valued or recognised	5	23
not wanting to be mentor	5	18
not wanting to let children go	4	9
other priorities	8	48
risk	1	5
self-doubt as mentor	7	20
time challenge	8	47
train but not stay in school or teaching or country	2	7
workload	6	33
change in how providers	6	104

Name	Files	References
work		
consistency	2	24
investment and engagement	2	14
change in students and expectations	7	74
changes in education	3	77
changes in society and issues	6	119
changing balance provider and school	3	45
choice of being mentor - volunteering or not	3	18
community	2	22
difference of perception of being mentor	6	57
different experiences on placement	3	21
difficult conversations	5	18
expectation of teachers	6	66
expectation of the mentor by school	6	45
expectation responsibility of students	6	35
expectations of mentoring	7	124
experience of mentoring	8	75
experience of teaching	6	47
future mentoring	8	81
growing your own for specific school setting	2	6
identity of mentor	2	19
impact of changes	7	106
impact of different routes	7	58
impact of mentor	7	53
impact on children and students in class	4	19
importance of engaging in mentoring	8	97
importance of good programme	4	21
importance of good role model	5	40
importance of QA	5	51
importance of relationships	8	116
less time and funding	6	61
link university or provider and school	6	80
morale	5	41
objectivity and not judging	4	12

Name	Files	References
opportunities	2	8
own mentoring in future	7	20
partnership	5	93
professionalism issues	2	19
provider university support	8	115
rationale for mentoring	8	83
recognition of limitations	5	11
responsibility to the profession - teachers and educuation	4	64
reward - intrinsic or extrinsic	3	12
role of co-ordinating mentor - school mentor	7	98
role of mentor	8	113
change (or not) in expectations of being mentor	8	77
change for other reasons	6	40
change in impact of mentor	4	13
change in role mentor over placement	6	19
change in role of mentor (or not)	7	66
coach and mentor	5	29
look after mentor often not	5	20
perception of mentoring	7	52
wellbeing and mental health issues	5	21
what you do with children	2	3
role of mentor causing tension	6	81
school support	8	84
support for mentoring	8	79
tension school and provider or uni	5	82
training next generation of teachers, awareness	4	89
value of mentoring teaching training	2	17

Appendix 11: Initial coding of extract of Interview 5

Codes (left panel):

- challenges of mentoring
  - impact of changes
- expectation of the mentor by school
- self-doubt as mentor
- experience of mentoring
- always being watched and role model
- learning from students
- challenge of teaching
- up to date
- professional development
- more reflective
- not wanting to be mentor
- difference of perception of being mentor
- support for mentoring
- change in role mentor over placement
- perception of mentoring
- rationale for mentoring
- role of mentor causing tension
- allowing time for other development
- other priorities
- impact of mentor
  - less time and funding
- school support
- expectations of mentoring
- time challenge
- importance of engaging in mentoring
- role of co-ordinating mentor ~ school mentor
  - importance of relationships
  - accountability of mentor
  - change in how providers work
  - change (or not) in expectations of being mentor
- role of mentor
- benefits of mentoring
  - provider university support
- Coding Density

Transcript (Excerpt from Interview 5 – Sam):

I: And do they come, they come in through?

P: They do, but they come in for that quick visit and it feels like a rush, everything's like a rush and I think they're under pressure, I think they have so many schools to do, they're in, watch, yeah, they're fine, go. And that's it, and I don't think its anything to do with personalities or individuals, they're lovely, but I think its that whole pressure of like, right, I've so many schools to do, you're today, you're this morning, got to be out by 11, back to my, you know, uni or whatever, or I've got to get three in today and I've got the train here, train there, train there, bosh, go.

I: I mean that changes the whole nature of it, doesn't it?

P: It does really.

I: Because you're not, its not so developmental, I guess.

P: No, and also different providers, it used to be that [ ] had a very specific person that was their tutor, that came in and so I developed a relationship with them, and we knew how each other thought really about trainees and we knew, you know, that developed quite well. Now when its lots of, with other providers, you get a different tutor because they're obviously, the trainees are allocated specific tutors aren't they? So it'll be some random person comes in and it might be I see one person every four years, it can often be a completely different person.

I: So they're not connected to the school?

P: Oh no, no, a lot of them are connected to their tutor group, so it's the specific group. So they could come in and they've not been even to the school, they don't really know the school or the area even.

I: So they've got to start again.

P: But they're just coming in, meeting us, watching us, going, it's not a big relationship with us really.

I: And do they run training, mentor training courses for you to go on?

P: They do, yeah, they do, we have mentor training courses but we're very lazy and we don't tend to go to them but a lot of it is distance because nothing's in [ ] and we have sort of suggested in the past, we've suggested that they try and have like a hub here and do like a [ ] hub so that we can get trained here because with the best will in the world, it takes me ages to get to [ ] I mean I do go on the, I'm sort of involved in a panel at [ ] I'm involved.

I: Okay, to do with teachers.

P: They're discussing teacher training at the moment, but like I have to faff about getting the train and then walking there and then you're waiting and getting the train back and for a two hour afternoon meeting, I'm basically there all day and then I have to, I'm constantly weighing up is it worth me being out of the class for a day, to go to that two hour meeting with me, just because it's me as like, its made me [20:20 – talking together]. So I have a tendency just not to attend things cause I think well what am I actually going to learn, what am I going to gain and yeah for networking and things like that, brilliant, but its distances sometimes and the amount we've got juggling.

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Appendix 12: Detailed components of activity model for this research

Tools or mediation (Structures) of the system; the '...different types of shared external representations of a problem.' (Engeström 1995:322) mediating the interaction of the individual with their environment and enabling the action of the subject on the object in activity (Douglas, 2014). In effect, the tools facilitate the mentoring and can support consistent, high-quality learning, for both mentor and beginning teacher. These can also, in their absence, constrain the effectiveness of mentoring by creating a barrier to learning and development. The tools comprise for example the learning opportunities, support and professional development from the school and provider; documentation such as course handbooks, and observation pro-formas; dedicated time given to support mentoring, training materials and possible accreditation. What there is in place to support the process and what Kemmis (2014) describes as the 'material-economic' arrangements. There are substantial differences between both the quality and access in different contexts and settings and this can impact on mentor experience. Their availability, appropriation and effective use emphasizes the importance of context and what is available in particular settings.

Subject (Mentor) – the group or person whose perspective is the focus of the analysis that is, the participants in the role of the **mentor** and engaging in ITE.

Rules or norms (Initiatives and Policies) – consider the wider architecture in place for conducting and supporting learning at varying scale and relating to the 'sayings' identified by Kemmis et al., 2014). These are dynamic, making the system vulnerable to change, often over short periods of time and significantly at times of political change and the introduction of new regimes and ideologies. They comprise both the pragmatic and the philosophical and include for example, national and regional policies, initiatives such as the introduction of the mentoring standards in 2016, the implementation of the CCF in 2019 and rhetoric around ITE/ITT and increasing competition and choice. Also included are school-wide procedures and regulations such as behaviour and planning policies which both mentor and beginning teacher adhere to. Tensions are often caused by different systems of mentoring (Cochran -Smith 2020) and demands made on teachers through the type of mentoring they are required to conduct; supervision, supportive or collaborative self-development (Kemmis et al., 2014)

The object (Beginning Teacher) of the mentor; what it is that is being 'worked on' by the mentor, school, provider and wider community, the motivation of the system. There may be multiple motivations for working on the object and different priorities, but they result in an agreed outcome.
'The object refers to the 'raw material' or 'problem space' at which the activity is directed, and which is moulded or transformed into outcomes with the help of the physical and symbolic.' (Engeström, 1993:p.67)
Engeström discussed the complexity of the situation when there are different things taking place within the same space and different, often conflicting objects. The object is perceived differently by participants as they have differing motives, objectives and priorities (Douglas, 2014). Similarly the participants' understanding of the purpose of what they are doing may also vary and have impact (Biesta, 2015); awareness of this was taken into consideration of the analysis of the data. Relational aspects and the importance of establishing a good relationship between mentor and beginning teacher is key, 'relatings' (Kemmis et al., 2014) impacting on the quality of placement for the beginning teacher and fulfilment of professional learning for the mentor.

Outcome or **goal**; what is being worked towards (McNicholl and Blake, 2013) is the developed and enhanced mentor as this is the ultimate motive of the activity system used here. This is not however evaluated in this research as it is not assessing whether this is achieved, focusing on the perception rather than attainment of the participating mentors.

Community (Schools, Community and Wider Society) - perceived at diverse scales, with the immediate context of the classroom and school, to the wider school environment and the macro scale of culture and society. Incorporated is not just the school, partnership, and local community but also wider societal and cultural issues such as the use of social media, well-being. The community involves the dialectical relationship between the individual and the wider culture in which they operate, considering it in terms of the system working collaboratively rather than at the individual level, the 'relatings'. It helps to ensure that ITE is not just concerned with *training* individuals to work within the particular placement school but about *educating* teachers for any environment or context, a shared inheritance of teacher education, considering the purpose of education, whether about qualification, socialisation or subjectification (Biesta, 2015). An effective community in which to learn to become a teacher can also reduce the risk of enculturation and learning how to do things in just one very specific way and (Peiser, Duncalf and Mallaburn, 2019).

Division of labour (Roles and Responsibilities) – who is expected to do what in the achievement of the object of the activity within the system (Wilson, 2014) and how they work collectively and collaboratively; this accounts for the changing role and responsibilities, expectations and demands of the mentor, and the necessary allocation of time and training needed to fulfil the role, the 'sayings' as well as the 'relatings' in terms of practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014). Also considered; how the mentor balances their work with the student and the pupils in their class and the perception of the resources available for them to do so in terms of time and funding. Mentors must also be able to balance their focus on the pupils in their class and the beginning teachers they are responsible for, challenged by the issue of the pupils being their priority rather than the beginning teacher. Their role as teacher educator is consequently different to that of the provider's. Mentors' own perceptions of their role varies alongside their understanding of whether it is an integral part of every teacher's responsibility or whether it is vocational and individually chosen.

Appendix 13: Exemplar of coding for interrelationship using ATF and emerging themes

Mentor/Structures

Example of code (no of references to code)	Description	Emerging theme(s)	Exemplifying data and observations
Provider/univ support (115)	Advantage of working with the provider in order to gain additional support	Working with provider	*… but doing the ITT allows me to have a little bit more CPD work without taking as much time away from my own practice and marking and things. Alex Academies* Working with the provider can be beneficial in providing additional CPD that would not otherwise receive
Tension school and provider/uni (82)	Factors causing tensions between school and the provider/university	Working with provider (and change in balance of mentoring responsibilities between provider and school)	*… I have to work out who we can fit in and when, because they all overlap and some of them do it as pairs, some of them do it individually so either. (Maryam Multiple)* Mentors are confused by working with number of providers on different routes causing tension and being time consuming
Lack of training (48)	Not being able to access training and development as a mentor	Investment in mentors and their training	*But then where's my development, I'm happy to take part in that training* (for others) *but where's mine? (Elliot Employment)* Mentors indicating that there is inadequate and inequitable access

			to effective training to support in their development as mentor calling for greater investment in the future and for importance of this to be recognised
Experience of mentoring and teaching (75) (47)	Importance of having experience of being a teacher before taking on the role of mentor – too much responsibility when other things should be taking precedent	Place and prioritisation of ITE in school	*Actually, for the amount of work that mentoring requires, I don't think a teacher in the second year is really on an appropriate pay scale to be… they're doing something really that they need to be financially recognised for because you're developing the practice of others and that doesn't really come on the teachers' pay standard until UPS or the threshold of T1, T2. They haven't got the skills or experience to have that influence.* (William Workload*)* Inappropriate delegation of mentoring to staff who are not prepared nor experienced enough in own role let alone mentoring of nascent teachers.
Lack of gratitude recognition (30)	Mentors not being recognised nor valued for what they can offer	Working with provider and change in relationship	*I thought, actually, at no point is the university bringing us in as mentors and thanking us and perhaps working with us as mentors and giving us guidance because their courses are changing, the demands are changing, the curriculum is changing and yet they're just expecting us to do it remotely without any link with them* (Hilary Head) University not bringing in mentors and providing guidance and expectation that mentors are able to continue providing without adequate input

Institute of Education

UCL

Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

***Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process**

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**.

If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

For further information see Steps 1 and 2 of our Procedures page at:
https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php

Section 1 Project details		
a.	Project title	Just one more plate to spin or two more hands to help? Engaging with initial teacher education; what do teacher mentors really think of having a student

				teacher in their classroom?
b.	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)			Tessa Willy WIL05026380
c.	*UCL Data Protection Registration Number			Z6364106/2018/07/32 (Issued 12.07.2018)
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor			Clare Brooks Jane Perryman
d.	Department			CCP

e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD ☐		EdD ☒
		DEdPsy ☐		

f.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.	N/A
g.	Intended research start date	June 2018
h.	Intended research end date	February 2020
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be **required** before ethical approval can be granted: http://ioe-net.inst.ioe.ac.uk/about/profservices/international/Pages/default.aspx*	UK

j.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:
	No ☒ ☐ *go to Section 2*	Date of Approval:

yes:

- − Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- − Proceed to Section 10 Attachments**.**

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In

> addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

☒ Interviews
☒ Focus groups
☒ Questionnaires
☐ Action research
☐ Observation
☐ Literature review

☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study
☐ Use of personal records
☐ Systematic review ☐*if only method used go to Section 5.*
☐ Secondary data analysis ☐*if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.*
☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups
☐ Other, give details:

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

Purpose, aims and background: Working in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) has revealed to me the nature and extent of significant changes that have been initiated and implemented by successive governments. It is likely that these changes will continue and are likely to become more pronounced and have a greater impact as teacher education is increasingly led by schools rather than HEIs.

Through this research I aim to explore the impact that this is having on the mentors in schools who are becoming increasingly responsible and accountable for the training of future teachers. I would like to consider what school staff working with beginning teachers believe to be the benefits/opportunities and tensions/challenges and how they may be best supported in doing so. This will help to develop preparation and development of both the mentor in school as well as the beginning teacher in order to improve and enhance initial teacher education in schools

Main research questions:

  i.   What role do teacher mentors perceive they have in a beginning teacher 's training: how has this changed and how might this change in the future?
  ii. What are the perceived benefits and tensions of working in this role for the school teacher mentor?
  iii. In what ways do teacher mentors believe they can be supported to optimise the potential of engaging with ITE?

Research design:

The thesis will adopt an explorative, mixed-methods case study approach and use the ATF (Engeström, 1999) and qualitative thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Wilson, 2014)

to explore the data. One primary and one secondary school will be used as case-studies and will be schools known to me through my work in ITE from the three HEI settings in which I have worked. The schools will be situated in different areas of London, and manifest different demographics, pedagogies and value. The schools will not be part of a moderation/assessment or school improvement process and it will be clear that my role will be one of researcher, not assessor nor moderator.

The rationale for choosing a case study approach through which to investigate the research questions is to allow for a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the school's staff perception of engagement in ITE (Merriam, 1988; Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2005). The approach is useful for addressing descriptive and explanatory questions (Yin, 2014) and will help to elicit the perceptions of the staff in the participating schools engaged in ITE. It will as a consequence, be descriptive in nature and ultimately subjective, relying on what the participants choose to share along with observations and subsequent interpretations that can be derived. This will result in data that is fundamentally qualitative in nature but will also involve the collection of quantitative data to provide a context from which to draw explanation and interpretation. The resulting design will therefore be one of mixed methods, qualitative and flexible in its approach (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2013).

Participants: I plan initially to administer a questionnaire with all of those engaged in ITE in the participating schools to investigate their perceptions of working with beginning teachers. I will reiterate my role as researcher and ensure their understanding that they are not in any way being assessed nor judged. The questionnaire will consider the rationale for school staff's involvement in ITE, issues that might be faced when doing so and what encourages their sustained engagement. This can then help to inform the nature of the more detailed questions for those participating in the later interviews and focus groups.

Through the questionnaire, I will ask for further volunteers to conduct an interview with eight participants, some new to mentoring and some experienced, to explore issues raised through the questionnaire. I will also conduct two focus groups, one in each school comprising up to 6 participants who may be a range of different school staff such as teaching assistants as well as those in senior management to ascertain their impact of beginning teachers in the classroom and on the school culture in general.

Sampling: The initial questionnaire will be sent electronically to all academic staff in the two schools. They may be either directly involved in the training of the beginning teacher , that is as a class teacher or subject mentor, or they may be overseeing the teacher training that takes place in their school or they observe the impact of it in the class and staffroom, as a Teaching Assistant for example. The questionnaire will be sent to over 100 members of school staff. Participation will be voluntary and, as with all voluntary sampling, come with the caveat that those willing to participate may have strong views about the subject matter under investigation, whether from a negative or positive perspective (Cohen et al, 2011; Robson, 2011). Encouraging a wide and representative range of school staff to be involved is therefore important, enabling a diverse array of responses. The possibility of bias in respondents' answers would still need to be considered and taken into account when analysing and interpreting the data (Thomas, 2013).

Method of data collection:
The **methods** that will be employed will include an initial survey of all those involved in ITE in the two schools using a concise questionnaire accessed electronically. The questionnaire will focus on obtaining information and data about perceptions of working with beginning teachers. There will be 100 potential participants in total completing the survey and I will test the research instrument through a small pilot

project (10%). As stated above, participants will volunteer to be interviewed through a semi-structured interview or participate in a focus group to explore issues and values raised through the survey in greater depth.

Reporting and disseminating: The data will be analysed and written up in my thesis which it is hoped, will be used to inform further work and research on this area. I will make the outcomes of the project available to the participants and to the schools once the data has been analysed. All the results will be anonymised and the participants will be made aware of the potential future use of the data. I plan to publish some of the findings for a wider audience in ITE including government policy makers.

Section 3 Research Participants (tick all that apply)

☐ Early years/pre-school
☐ Ages 5-11
☐ Ages 12-16
☐ Young people
aged 17-18

☒ Adults *please specify below*
☐ Unknown – specify
below
☐ No
participants

As stated above, mentors in school and members of the school management teams responsible for ITE

NB: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC).

Section 4 Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒
Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒
Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**☐*

Section 5 Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes ☒ *	No ☐
Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes ☐ *	No ☒

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**☐*

*If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 8 Attachments.***

Section 6 Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

a.	Name of dataset/s		
b.	Owner of dataset/s		
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes ☐	No ☐ **If no,** *do you have the owner's permission/license?* Yes ☐ No* ☐
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes ☐	No ☐
		Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes ☐ No* ☐	
		Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☐ No ☐	
		Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* ☐ No ☐	

e.	Are the data sensitive ([DPA 1998 definition](#))?	Yes* ☐	No ☐
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
g.	**If no,** was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
h.	**If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**☐*

*If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to **Section 9 Attachments.***

Section 7 Data Storage and Security
Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	**Data subjects -** Who will the data be collected from? Academic staff employed in the case study schools including teachers, mentors, teaching assistants and senior leaders
b.	**What data will be collected?** Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected Qualitative data about perceptions of working with beginning teachers and engaging in

	ITE.
	This will not involve hypothesis testing around the influence of for example, gender, ethnicity or
	sexuality so this type of data will not be collected.
c.	**Disclosure** – Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?
	After analysing and having ensured anonymity so that individual participants cannot be
	identified, it will be written up in my thesis for and parts of it used for possible further
	publication
d.	**Data storage** – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL
	network, encrypted USB stick*, encrypted laptop* etc.
	Encrypted personal desktop and mobile phone Interview transcripts and focus group notes will be stored in line with Data Protection Act (1998). The data from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups is unlikely to be highly sensitive, but it will be the personal views and perceptions of participants and so will be kept securely. I will record interviews and focus groups on my mobile phone, which is password protected, then export to my personal desktop (also password protected). I will be writing the transcripts and notes myself and will delete the voice recordings once they are written. I will not be using memory sticks.
	*Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS
e.	**Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution)** – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)? Yes ☐ No ☒
f.	How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?
	The data from the questionnaires which will be anonymised, will be analysed using NvIVO to generate themes which will be used to inform the questions for the interviews and focus
	groups. The questionnaires will be kept on my password protected desktop and some
	may be used as supporting evidence in the final thesis as appendices.
	The data from the interviews and focus groups will be kept in the form of written
	transcripts and extensive notes and again some may be used as appendices and short
	quotations, but these will all be anonymised and the participant will not be able to be

identified. They will not be used in any subsequent publications but anonymised quotations

might be.

Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?

(If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance

with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are:

NO

Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.

NO

Section 8 Ethical issues

Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

− Methods − Sampling − Recruitment − Gatekeepers − Informed consent − Potentially vulnerable participants − Safeguarding/child protection − Sensitive topics	− International research − Risks to participants and/or researchers − Confidentiality/Anonymity − Disclosures/limits to confidentiality − Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) − Reporting − Dissemination and use of findings

There may be some issues concerning the following areas.
Sampling
I will be asking all the academic staff in the case study schools and so will not have to choose specific participants for the questionnaire. I will be asking those who have completed the questionnaire if they will be willing to participate in a further, more in-depth, interview or a focus group so again will not have to choose specific participants. If I have more volunteers than is required, I will ensure that they are representative of age and gender. Although voluntary, this will however be opportunity sampling and not random as they are all involved in school education.
Recruitment
It may be that some of the intended participants feed compelled to participate in the questionnaire as they are working for the schools. I will assure them that the schools will not know who has participated nor what they have said as all participants will be anonymous, and their identity will not be revealed either doing the questionnaire, or if they chose to participate in the interview or focus group. I will state clearly my role as researcher, and that I will be neither moderating nor assessing their responses.
Gatekeepers
The leadership teams of the schools may be concerned with the amount of time that this takes to do and may feel concerned about the distraction. If there are such

issues doing the questionnaire, I will remind them that it will only take around 15mins to complete and will be straightforward to access. I will be very clear about the amount of time that they interview will take (approx. 60mins) as well as the focus group (approx. 60mins) and give them the choice as to whether or not they will be therefore willing to do it.

I will be very clear in the information letter about the purpose of the project so that the school leadership team understand the potential value of the outcomes and will be supportive of the project and staff participation. Similarly, I will be clear about my role as researcher.

Informed consent

I will ensure that the nature and purpose of the project is clear to the participants and will outline the project at the start of the questionnaire and ask them to state that they have understood the nature of the project and agree to participate in it voluntarily so giving their informed consent through their participation (see attached). They will be given a consent form to complete before participating in the interview and focus groups (see attached).

Potentially vulnerable participants

I will be asking practising staff working in schools through the questionnaire and in the interview about the quality and the value of their work with beginning teachers. This could prove to be compromising for them as they may be concerned about any potentially sensitive issues relating to their relationship with their leadership team, around the support given in school for engagement in ITE. They may also be concerned about revealing any negativity in their relationship with the beginning teacher or other members of their staff.

I will therefore ensure the participants that they will have anonymity and that the outcomes will be generic and that their responses will not identify them.

Confidentiality/Anonymity Disclosures/limits to confidentiality

Some may be concerned that their responses will not be anonymised and the information fed back to their school.

I will ensure that there are no names mentioned in the analysis of the data nor reporting back of the findings and that all outcomes will be generic and will be neither individualised nor specific. I will also ensure that they are not identifiable from the analysis of the data. Similarly, the schools will be anonymised and generic statements made to reduce participants' concern about identification and subsequent reluctance of disclosure.

There will be no questions asked that might lead to any issues of disclosure nor ones which will limit the degree of confidentially. Participants will be assured that none of the outcomes will be used to assess or judge the school or their work in any way.

Risk to participants/researchers

My role as researcher will need to be emphasised in this research over and above the role that they may associate me with as teacher training provider. There may, as a result of this association be some tension and discomfort as the participants may be concerned that I will be reporting information back to their employer and may even be able to influence their role in school. In order to guard against this, I will emphasise the anonymity of the research and that the data that will be kept will be encrypted and not available to anyone except myself in the role of researcher. I will also ensure that they are not identifiable in the analysis. This would also prevent any skewing of results as it would remove their inclination to answer questions as they might think I, and ultimately the school, would want them to.

Section 9 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or

explain if not attached		
Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research *(List attachments below)*	Yes ☒	No ☐

Appendices (at end of ethics form):

1. Information sheet

2. Email invitation and consent for questionnaire

3. Information sheet and consent form for interview and focus groups

If applicable/appropriate:		
Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	☐	Yes
The proposal ('case for support') for the project	☐	Yes
Full risk assessment	☐	Yes

Section 10 Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor. ☒ Yes ☐No

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.   ☒Yes☐ No

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the   course of this project.

Name	Tessa Willy
Date	May 2018

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics
You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:
British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*
or
British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*
or
British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*
Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks
If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE. Further information can be found at:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/policies/conduct/disclosure-and-barring-service-dbs-applications

All students requiring a DBS check can pay via the following link: http://onlinestore.ucl.ac.uk/product-catalogue/ucl-institute-of-education-b14/registry-b01 *(May need to copy and paste link into browser)*

Cost for DBS is £65 and a further £11 to the Post Office when forms are submitted. Students should contact ioe-studenthelpdesk@ucl.ac.uk with any DBS related queries.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references
The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook.* London: Sage.
This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.
A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, the supervisor **must** refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Coordinator (via ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A departmental research ethics coordinator or representative can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the REC. *Also see 'when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':*
http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42253.html

Student name	Tessa Willy
Student department	CPA
Course	
Project title	
Reviewer 1	
Supervisor/first reviewer name	Clare Brooks
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	We have discussed all the ethical issues and I am confident they have all been given due consideration.

Supervisor/first reviewer signature	███████████████████		
Date	16th July		
Reviewer 2			
Second reviewer name	Jane Perryman		
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	I agree		
Supervisor/second reviewer signature	By email		
Date	16th July		
Decision on behalf of reviews			
Decision	Approved ☒		
	Approved subject to the following additional measures. ☐		
	Not approved for the reasons given below ☐		
	Referred to REC for review ☐		
Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC			
Comments from reviewers for the applicant			
	Once approved by both reviewers students should submit the ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team IOE.CDE@ucl.ac.uk.		

App 1: Information sheet

An exploration of the perceptions of school staff in participating and engaging in Initial Teacher Training.

June 2018 - February 2020

Purpose of the research

Through this research I aim to explore the impact that working with trainee teachers has on the staff in schools engaged in ITT, in particular, the mentors. I

would like to develop a better understanding of their perceptions of working with trainee teachers in the classroom, what the perceived benefits/opportunities and tensions/challenges are and how the mentors may be best supported. The purpose of this is to help to develop the preparation and development of all those involved in ITT in school, including the beginning teacher with an aim to continue to improve and enhance ITT in schools.

The research will comprise a questionnaire being sent to all those involved in ITT in two case study schools. The participants will be informed of all stages of the process and have the right to withdraw at any time. All will be invited to complete the questionnaire. They will be asked if they would volunteer to be involved in a more in-depth interview or focus group at a later date, with questions arising from the responses to the questionnaire and addressing some of the concepts raised in more detail. The results will be anonymous, and the names not shared with anyone. There will be clarity over my role in the project, as researcher and not as assessor nor moderator.

App 2: Email invitation and consent for questionnaire

Dear xxxx

I am carrying out a research project for my Doctorate in Education, looking at the perceptions of school staff in relation to school mentors working with trainee teachers in schools engaged in Initial Teacher Training. I would like to develop a better understanding of staff's perceptions of working with trainee teachers in the classroom, what the perceived opportunities and challenges are of doing so and how mentors may be best supported in doing so. The purpose of this is to help develop ITT programmes for all those involved in teacher training in school, with an aim to continue improving and enhancing ITT in school. The project is not part of any formal assessment or moderation process and my role is one of researcher not assessor.

In the first instance, I aim to explore some generic information about the work that you do with beginning teachers through a questionnaire. I then plan to carry out some interviews and focus groups to develop a more in-depth understanding which there is more information about at the end of the questionnaire.

At all stages in the research process, names will be anonymised and the results will not identify any of the participants. You may withdraw your responses at any point in the process.

Your consent to participate in the survey will be given through your completion of it.

The survey, xxxxxxx, can be found at the following link and will take no longer that 10 minutes: xxxxxxxx

Many thanks for your time.

With kind regards

Tessa Willy
Doctoral Student
UCL-Institute of Education

App 3: Information sheet and consent form for interview and focus groups

Consent form (interview and focus group) – Doctoral Research Project (EdD)

An exploration of the perceptions of school staff in participating and engaging in Initial Teacher Training.

June 2018 - February 2020

Purpose of the research

Through this research I aim to explore the impact that working with trainee teachers has on the staff in schools engaged in ITT. I would like to develop a better understanding of their perceptions of working with trainee teachers in the classroom, what the perceived opportunities and challenges are of doing so and how they may be best supported in doing so. The purpose of this is to help to develop the preparation and development of all those involved in ITT in school, including the beginning teacher with an aim to continue to improve and enhance ITT in schools. The project is not part of any formal assessment or moderation process and my role is one of researcher not assessor.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the previous questionnaire. I am now carrying out more in-depth interviews and focus groups to explore some of the questions arising from the responses to the survey questions and to address some of the concepts raised in more detail. The results will be anonymous, and the names not shared with anyone. The interviews and focus groups should take no more than 60mins at a location most suitable to you.

I would be most grateful if you could confirm your willingness to participate in an interview or focus group and also to complete this consent form:

Consent

I have read the information above about the research. ☐ (please tick)

I have consented to participate in the questionnaire by completing it ☐ (please tick)

Please choose **one** of the following:
        I agree to be interviewed ☐ (please tick)

        I agree to be part of a focus group ☐ (please tick)
Participant's Name: ………………………………

Signed: ……………………………   Date:
……………………….

Researcher's Name: Tessa Willy

Signed: ……………………………...

Appendix 15: Mentors' perceptions of school and provider enabling/constraining according to 4 capacities

Element of school/provider	Hilary Head	Naomi Networks	William Workload	Alex Academics	Elliot Employment	Safiya Small School	Maryam Multiple
School/Provider Enabling/Constraining	Moderate SE Moderate PC	Moderate SE Moderate PC	Moderate SE Moderate PE	Strong SE Strong PE	Strong SE Strong PC	Moderate SC Moderate PE	Moderate SC Strong PC
School enabling							
Recruitment of new teachers ('doings')		●	●	●	●		●
Supportive culture and ethos for ITE ('sayings')	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Opportunities for professional development within school ('sayings and doings')	●	●	●	●	●		
Collaborative working with other schools ('relatings')		●	●	●	●		
Selection of appropriate mentor ('sayings, doings, relatings')	●			●	●		
Provider enabling							
Ability to adapt – building resilience – effective organisation and support ('sayings')			●	●			
Access to effective mentor training and development ('sayings and doings')			●	●		●	
Developing professional and learning communities ('sayings and relatings')			●	●		●	
Leading partnership work with schools ('relatings')		●	●	●	●	●	
Subject and area specialist support ('doings and relatings')	●			●			
School constraining							
Conflicting priorities too many other demands on time and resources – dual rather than complementary role ('sayings and doings')	●		●		●	●	●
Insufficient school support for necessary quality and quantity of mentors ('sayings and doings')		●	●			●	●
Perceived impediment to career trajectory ('sayings')		●	●				●
Provider constraining							
Inadequate mentor education/preparation/training ('doings and relatings')	●	●			●		●
Few opportunities for collaborative work, networking, and professional development ('relatings')	●						●
Insufficient funding and appropriate resources ('doings')					●	●	●
Poor documentation and overly bureaucratic ('doings')	●	●			●		●
Too complex 'messy' ('sayings doings')		●	●		●		●
Loss of personalization, weak relationship, and poor communications ('relatings')	●	●			●		●

Legend:
- Organisational capacity
- Staff capacity
- Mentor capacity
- Partnership capacity

Appendix 16: Mentor references to school/provider enabling/constraining practice

	Organisational capacity	Staff capacity	Mentor capacity	Partnership capacity
School enabling	7	10	3	3
School constraining	9	8	4	0
Provider enabling	2	4	3	5
Provider constraining	11	0	4	6

Appendix 17: Graph illustrating mentor references made to school and provider enabling/constraining practice (from appendix 16)
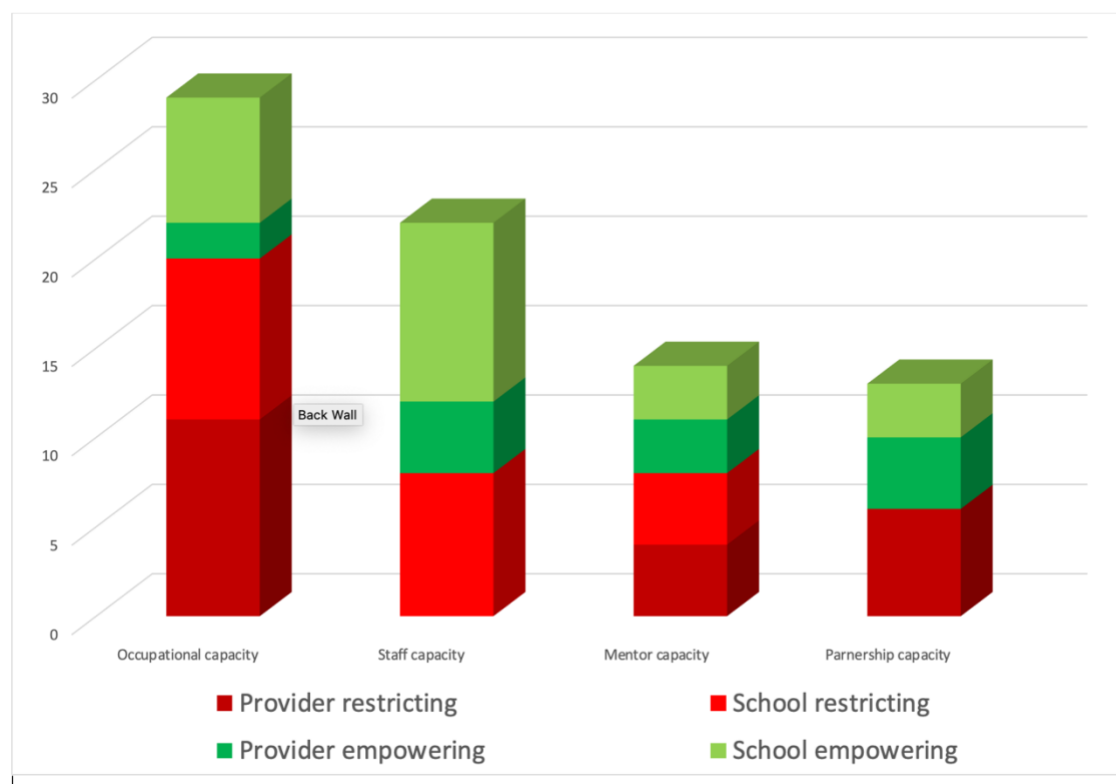
Appendix 18: Assessment of the relative strength of enabling/constraining and quadrant location

	School Enables	School Constrains	Provider Enables	Provider Constrains	Context Enables/Constrains		Quadrant
Hilary Head	3	1	1	4	Moderate SE	Moderate PC	**Fragile Provider**
Naomi Networks	4	2	1	4	Moderate SE	Moderate PC	**Fragile Provider**
William Workload	4	3	3	1	Moderate SE	Moderate PE	**Virtuous Cycle**
Alex Academies	5	0	5	0	Strong SE	Strong PE	**Virtuous Cycle**
Elliott Employment	5	1	1	5	Strong SE	Strong PC	**Fragile Provider**
Safiya Small School	1	2	3	1	Moderate SC	Moderate PE	**Fragile School (ITE)**
Mariyam Multiple	2	3	0	6	Moderate SC	Strong PC	**Vicious Cycle**

Appendix 19: Exemplification of National Mentoring Standards (IOE work in collaboration with lead school mentors)

UCL IOE Primary PGCE Working in Partnership: Advice from IOE Mentors on the Mentoring Standards

The suggestions and features of effective mentoring in this document have been developed by experienced school colleagues across the partnership, working in collaboration with Primary PGCE staff. The Government's proposed Mentor Standards in ITT (DfE 2016) were used as the basis for the discussion and form the structure for the features outlined.

> **Standard 1: Personal qualities**
> *Establish trusting relationships, modelling high standards of practice, and empathising with the challenges a trainee faces (DfE, 2016)*

Practical Ideas
Meet the student teacher on the first day of their placement, introduce them to staff at the earliest staff meeting, ask children to give them a tour of the school and ensure they have the means to find all the information they need, or a point of contact if they can't.

Ensure that all staff, particularly office staff and the class teacher, are expecting the student teacher on his/her first day.

Meet student teachers regularly throughout the placement (at least weekly.) and allocate a protected time for meetings so that the student teacher doesn't feel they are encroaching on staff time.

Provide the Class Teacher with as much time as possible to ensure that the work with the student teacher is not strained by time pressure.

Provide a conduit between the student teacher and class teacher/s, at least initially, so that expectations are shared and are fair to both parties.

Set up observations for the student teacher across all year groups so they can see best practice and so that they can see mistakes being made and rectified. |

Developmental
During the time the student teacher is with the mentor, allow them to be 'the student teacher' rather than the teacher so that in other contexts within the school they can be 'the teacher'.

Help them to limit targets for their development to those that are most relevant at their stage. Help them to view their development as more than a set of tasks that need to be completed.

Trust the student teacher and allow them to try new things.

Be open and honest so that hard messages are viewed as supportive |

Appendix 20: Example of mentor ideas for working with the CCF – Adaptive Teaching

Learn How to ...	School Mentor	Class Teacher Mentor
Learn how to ... Meet individual needs without creating unnecessary workload by ... • Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues how they decide whether intervening within lessons with individuals and small groups would be more efficient and effective than planning different lessons for different groups of pupils.	Meet after or before planning to discuss adaptive teaching.	Discuss with student about how you can alter work for children whilst still keeping the premise of the lesson the same e.g. in maths if adding decimals 10.5+10.5 but some children can't they have different numbers.
	Share reading that might be useful for student and then see how they can apply the theory in practice.	Discuss use of questioning to support and challenge
	Arrange observations of /co-planning with experts in school focusing on manageable, purposeful working e.g. grouping by misconception.	Use of groupings or pair work/independent work.
		Model developing pupil independence and self-assessment so pupils choose the 'level of work' and if they find it too easy/difficult then they choose another activity. Model mini-plenaries/working the room.
		Model soft start to tackle misconceptions.
		Have resources available to support work e.g. maths resources/word banks/question stems/hfw spelling list/phonics/displays e.g. working walls.
		Encourage practise of marking policy to give feedback and model this as CTM.
		During PPA model how to divide workload amongst teachers in the team.
		Model reasoning behind decisions, thinking aloud during planning and reflections.