* Defining the role of Mentor

In considering the mentoring relationship within HEI ITE provision it is unsurprising that we see varying representations and interpretations of what mentoring is. There are many interpretations of mentor roles, by researchers, teacher educators and mentors, described in the literature. As a consequence, and despite the plethora of models in literature, the concept of mentoring remains elusive (Roberts, 2000). In the mentoring literature reviewed by Mullen &, Klimaitis (2019), they note that many definitions of mentoring exist, and that these definitions, like its practices, are changing as well as expanding. Indeed, “competing definitions of mentoring have been advanced; over a decade ago, it was found that the definitions reflected ill‐defined roles for mentors and mentees, and unclear expectations”. Broad agreement, however, is that mentoring “is relational and developmental,” has career (instrumental) and psychosocial (relational) functions, and “includes phases and transitions,” (Kochan, 2017)

Perhaps the single most significant piece of work in this area was the research of Furlong and Maynard (1993). In their qualitative research Furlong and Maynard considered the stages of development experienced by a student teacher in their journey through learning to teach and played no small part in the development of reciprocal models of mentoring.

The developmental mentoring relationship's phases are initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Initiation involves engaging in sufficient interaction to assess the possibility of a productive mentee–mentor match. Cultivation, the most intensive and sustained phase, is where mentoring functions (career and psychosocial) are performed, and mentor and mentee engagement peaks. During separation, the nature and intensity of the relationship shifts, with significant role alterations; a structural and psychological change occurs such that interactions decrease as the mentee's autonomy increases. In redefinition, the relationship has either run its course or shifted into collegial friendship, characterized by a peer bond, informal contact, and mutual support. Because expectations and circumstances (personal and professional) change, transition is integral to the mentoring cycle.

Towards reaching a definition of mentoring, additional specifics are:

· Guidance is sought or extended for purposes that vary in these interpersonal relationships

· Long term and intense, mentoring is a close, meaningful relationship that is formal or informal and occurs in academic or professional contexts.

· A goal‐oriented, results‐driven intervention at the level of relationships, mentoring assumes one or more configurations between or among individuals (such as dyadic and group peer mentoring).

· It is recognized that trust, values, respect, empathy, and control are all essential to mentoring, in addition to a feeling of belonging and connectedness, and that relationships are unique.

· Relational mentoring processes involve nurturing, advising, befriending, and instructing, with mentors serving as advocates, advisors, and promoters.

(Kram, 1983; Mullen, 2012; Fletcher and Mullen, 2017;

Clutterbuck, Kochan and Lunsford et al, 2017; Mullen &, Klimaitis, 2019

* Mentoring Roles in the Exeter Model

Crow (2012) suggests that there are dangers in constructing forms of mentorship that lack boundaries and confuse what mentoring is (and is not). He suggests that being a practicing mentor can seem boundaryless owing to the multiple support roles assigned to it: guide, advisor, teacher, coach, role model, sponsor, support, counsellor, and even friend. Without role boundaries in mentoring, the mentor–mentee relationship, as conceived, is unmanageable and incoherent. Even within highly fluid relationships, some boundaries should be set, such as around timelines to follow and activities with learning value. Owing to such dynamics, mentoring definitions inherit the confusion in mentor–mentee roles and vague expectations.

In order to alleviate these issues, there are two separate mentoring roles within the Exeter Model with specific boundaries, both focus on developing different areas of practice. These are the Lead Mentor and the Reflective Mentor.

The Lead Mentor

In the classical sense, mentoring pairs a senior and junior colleague (i.e., mentoring dyad) in a support‐based “intense relationship” that guides mentees through “career advancement and psychosocial development” (Kram, 1983). The career‐related function enhances professional performance and improvement, whereas the psychosocial‐related function addresses psychological and social‐environmental issues. This informs our model for instructional coaching and the basis of the mentoring model for our Lead Mentor but with elements of the less classical model that include reverse mentoring. Put simply, this model of ‘instructional coaching’ involves the expert practitioner working with the beginner teacher individually, to help them learn and adopt new teaching practices, and to provide feedback and review performance. The mentees, gains from mentors’ wisdom, knowledge, and experience. Mentors enact psychosocial functions of mentoring as they counsel, actively listen, and encourage development, with benefits to mentees that include enhanced self‐confidence. Reciprocal relationships with a less hierarchical structure that include ‘befriending’ provide opportunities for learning to happen in both directions (though not necessarily of the same ‘size’) (Kram, 1983). For example, the beginner teacher may provide opportunities for the mentor to integrate technology into teaching.

Essentially this is a relationship that necessitates a trusting rapport where mutual affection helps ensure that mentoring of any kind is not tedious. Classic language (e.g., “befriending”) subtly highlights differences between mentors and mentees (e.g., knowledge, experience, and status) as issues that inform adult mentoring relationships and differentiate these from friendships (Mullen and Klimiatis, 2019)

Lead Mentors are specialists in the craft of the classroom (and in the Secondary programme, experts in their main teaching subject). They assist trainees by working as partners in the classroom, demonstrating teaching, jointly planning and carrying out focused observations of their teaching and providing feedback and advice. Each trainee is allocated a Lead Mentor who is responsible for coordinating the trainee's learning.

It is the responsibility of Lead Mentors to:

* be familiar with the National Mentor Standards for ITT
* understand and use the Exeter Model Tools
* provide trainee(s) with copies of planning, class list(s) and timetable (if appropriate)
* be in the classroom with the trainee(s) at all times until they are confident and competent to work independently
* provide regular feedback (written and oral) offering guidance for further development
* ensure that trainees audit and regularly review their subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical understanding relevant to their subject(s)
* help the trainee with planning, and review plans before the lessons are taught
* provide feedback from observations using the Lesson Observation Form each week
* observe trainee teaching, informally on a daily basis, engaging in regular dialogue with the trainee about his/her progress
* provide a Weekly Development Meeting with the trainee for one hour to discuss progress and plan further development opportunities
* ensure a Weekly Development Meeting record is completed during the weekly meeting
* set up teaching demonstrations with good and outstanding teachers, and look for appropriate opportunities for team-teaching in negotiation with the trainee to match individual training needs based on the Teachers’ Standards
* negotiate episodes of focused observation, check that Agendas are annotated and provide regular written and oral feedback as appropriate
* in the DI phase, assist trainees with deciding which Exeter Model tools to select for their Focused Reflections
* regularly check the trainee’s Individual Development Portfolio and Teaching File/s, and assist and advise in all aspects of the programme, including coursework and formal assignments
* ensure all aspects of training is checked and quality assured where required
* ensure absence is recorded
* provide comments on trainee progress where required, including a supportive statement on the Formative Reflection on Achievement and Progress (FRAP) documents
* discuss the progress being made by the trainee with the Reflective Mentor
* discuss the trainee’s progress with the University Visiting Tutor
* support the trainee(s), where appropriate, to facilitate their completion of assignments
* coordinate that part of the programme related specifically to the subject department and to begin the programme of induction into the subject department
* discuss with the trainee the subject curriculum being followed, including how the department decides on curriculum content, and why that content is structured in the way that it is
* prepare and monitor other class teachers working with the trainee
* agree an appropriate timetable with the trainee (12 hours rising to 15 hours in the Developing Independence Phase)
* ensure that the requirements for using ICT in subject teaching are met – is this a secondary thing?

The Reflective Mentor

For the Reflective Mentor the model aligns much more with an informal mentor than the instructional coach role at the heart of our Lead Mentor role. Here we seek conversations that are productive, specifically “purposeful, helpful, [and] insight‐provoking,” (Clutterbuck, D.A., F.K. Kochan, G.A. Lunsford, *et al*. 2017). They should include learning dialogues, issue clarification and summation, and direction. Given a focus, these interactions should end with reflection and/or action, being forward‐looking, and future minded.

Reflective Mentors are more experienced teachers with a good understanding of curricular issues. They conduct a number of Reflective Meetings each term of at least an hour’s duration, with each trainee individually. These develop the trainee's thinking about teaching in ways that can be incorporated into subsequent performance and assist them in detailed challenges to their thinking. The Exeter Model aims to develop practitioners that are capable of critical reflection throughout their career and is designed to create appropriate conditions to develop this in a way that can be sustained after the completion of the course.

During the placement it is the responsibility of the Reflective Mentor to:

* be familiar with the National Mentor Standards for ITT
* ensure they are familiar with the Exeter Model Training Tools
* conduct Reflective Conversations (of at least 1 hour each) during each term as specified in the course diary
* check the trainee's Individual Development Portfolio
* discuss the progress of the trainee regularly with the Lead Mentor
* support the trainee with the Formative Assessment of Achievement and Progress (FRAP) process, supporting them to decide when they are ready to progress to the next phase
* provide critical and constructive guidance for future development including a discussion with the trainee towards the end of the training period to support the completion of their Career Entry Development Profile
* inform the ITE Coordinator of any concerns
* contribute to school-based references