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**Learning to lead in the ‘year of the firsts’:  
A study of employer led mentoring for  
new school leaders in Scotland.**

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MSc, BSc (Hons)**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)**

**University of Glasgow  
School of Education**

**December 2010**

This is dedicated to my Dad who left school at 15 and for whom distance learning was the way out, secretly taking correspondence courses to get his 'O' Levels. Because of his belief in education I have been given the chances he didn't and, as Dad died in my final year of the EdD, this is for him.

## Abstract

The study explores the process and outcome of a mentoring programme for newly appointed school leaders in a Scottish Case Study Local Authority (CSLA). This research contributes to professional knowledge and practice in school leadership as it takes an employer perspective and offers a conceptualisation of post-appointment mentoring in Scotland.

This study is contextualised by two conflicting accepted realities which are reflected at a local, national and international level. Firstly, that it is widely accepted that school leadership makes a difference and secondly, due to the reported challenges of the job, the recruitment and retention of school leaders has attained crisis status in some areas. Accepting that it is important to prepare people for school leadership roles, the focus of this thesis turns to supporting teachers in the transition to headship. Mentoring is a frequently used approach in the development of school leaders but there is lack of agreement on the concept of mentoring and empirical evidence demonstrating the benefit of mentoring is inconsistent.

A conceptual framework of socialisation and development is used to explore mentoring in this study. Forty-two interviews were undertaken with newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers and their mentors with the aim to establish whether there was a consistent interpretation or implementation of the mentoring policy and whether the claims about anticipated outcomes were substantiated. Assumptions about the mentoring policy in the CSLA were tested in order to build understanding and make meaning about how mentoring worked in practice.

This research suggests that experiences of formal employer-led mentoring, as operating in the CSLA, were mainly positive and valued by both mentors and mentees. Findings indicated that mentoring supported self-confidence, wellbeing, independence and effectiveness in the novice school leader, particularly in relation to leading and managing people. The policy assumptions that experienced headteachers would agree to mentor others because there were professional gains for them, and that mentoring offered something extra to other forms of leadership and management support, were supported by the findings of this study. However this research also found that there was a lack of shared understanding over the purpose of mentoring with differing views on the importance of psychosocial or career related functions. Data indicated there were differences in how primary and secondary school dyads enacted the mentoring relationship.

This thesis explores the motivations for mentoring, the characteristics that make a good mentor and the place of mentoring compared to other forms of leadership preparation and support. The findings of this study indicate that mentoring in the CSLA is understood both as a form of psychosocial support and as context specific training which prepares the mentee for the role of headteacher as it exists now and socialises them into that view. A conceptualisation of mentoring as a form of initiation which supports the prevailing orthodoxy is challenged in this thesis.

It is proposed that this work progresses knowledge about mentoring as it offers two models: a chronological model to explain how mentoring relationships can evolve and a model to explore the learning that takes place. Each model provides a schematic which can be challenged and adapted to help share understandings of mentoring, an umbrella term which has morphed over the centuries from Greek myth to urban mythology in the corporate human resource world.

The thesis highlights tensions and ambiguities for the local education authority as it attempts to meet its legal duty for educational provision while interpreting national policy, employing teachers and meeting Government's expectations for schools. This study identifies the complexity over the role of the employer in managing a formal strategy which is predicated on a personal relationship; recommendations are offered which may be of significance to those with an interest in school leadership development and organisational mentoring.

This research set out to advance practice in managing a real-world leadership problem. This thesis proposes that leadership development does matter in Scotland today; the scale of the task to make our public services fit-for-purpose and fit-for-purpose is considerable. Tomorrow's leaders should be prepared for this new landscape with vision and pragmatism.

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## Preface

This thesis grew from interest in colleagues' experiences of school leadership - in the professional development that is designed to prepare teachers for headship, the support headteachers and depute headteachers require immediately after appointment and then as they progress through their first year in post.

The purpose of the EdD programme is to construct learning that is professionally relevant. This research was undertaken to enhance understanding of mentoring - what it is, what it does, how it happens and what it means to those who are involved over the 'year of the firsts' in order to improve the local authority support offered to newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers. The aim of the research was to explore the process and outcomes of a formal mentoring programme for school leaders within a rural local authority in Scotland. As the author is situated within education management of the local authority under examination, the tensions and apparent contradictions which epitomise the day to day reality of the complex relationship between headteacher and local authority as employer are highlighted. This work is of importance as it offers an examination of the purpose and practice of formal mentoring for novice school leaders in the current Scottish policy context.

A body of work on the development of school leaders already exists and has influenced this thesis. Although there has been research conducted on the use of post-appointment coaching and mentoring for new headteachers in other countries, there has not, to date, been empirical work published which explores the outcomes of formal post-appointment mentoring in Scotland. This research recognises and builds upon the work which has surrounded the Standard for Headship in Scotland but focuses upon exploring an employer-led formal mentoring strategy offered to novice headteachers and depute headteachers over their first year in post.

## Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks go to the many people who have helped, listened and advised throughout this EdD: to Margery McMahon and Peter Gronn who provided me with supportive, patient and challenging supervision throughout the thesis process and to the course team and fellow students who helped keep me going when burning the candle at both ends got tough. I am grateful to the Schools Service Management Team and colleagues at headquarters who supported my studies and to the headteachers and depute headteachers in the local authority who gave of their time to talk about their experiences.

Away from work, this EdD has been a team game and it could not have been completed without the family which surrounds me. The research process could not have been written up without Mark's intellectual testing, technical skill, emotional support and reassurance that it would be worth it. Love and grateful thanks to three special women; my Mum for her faith in the power of optimism and hard work and for her continual practical help which allowed me to carve out time to write; Auntie Aileen for always being interested; and sister Kara for her humour and grammar.

But most importantly, thanks go to James and Rowan who have put up with reading, writing and talking about education for most of their young lives and for their constant reminder that the ultimate point of any work related to school leadership is to improve the lives of the children and young people we serve.

## Author's Declaration

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own has been identified and no material is included that has been submitted for any other award or qualification.

Where I have drawn commentary from work submitted for previous modules within the EdD programme, this has been documented accordingly.

Signed

Gillian Brydson

## Definitions / Glossary

A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the agreement reached following the recommendations made in the McCrone report on reforms in the teaching profession.

Case Study Local Authority: all efforts have been taken to de-identify the local authority where this research was situated and it is referred to in these terms throughout the thesis.

Flexible Routes to Headship: a recognised route to achieve the Standard for Headship based on a work based coaching model.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education: an executive agency of Scottish Government, charged with inspecting the quality of education provided in establishments (*It was announced in October 2010 that HMIE will be subsumed, along with Learning and Teaching Scotland, into a new body named the Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency*)

'How Good is our School?': the set of quality indicators used for self evaluation and inspection of Scottish Schools.

National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services: a non-departmental public body for education leadership development in England and Wales (*previously the National College for School Leadership 2000-2009*)

Scottish Government: what was previously known as the Scottish Executive is now the Scottish Government. Both titles are retained for referencing and attribution purposes and are used dependent on the publication date of the documents. For clarity, departmental publications are also referred to by the title current at time of publication. Government sub-structures with responsibility for schools and education within Scotland have changed four times over the last 20 years. The Scottish Education Department was renamed the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) in 1991, and changed to Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) in 1995. Post devolution in 1999 the new Scottish Executive set up the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). In 2007 the Scottish National Party government removed the departments within the Scottish Executive, restructuring the new Scottish Government

around Directorates. Currently, the Learning Directorate is responsible for school education.

Scottish Qualification for Headship: a University led post-graduate diploma in school leadership and validated route to achieve the Standard for Headship.

Standard for Full Registration: the standard of competence expected of a fully registered teacher with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Standard for Chartered Teacher: a standard related to expertise and accomplishment in teaching.

Standard for Headship: the standard which defines the leadership and management actions required of effective headteachers and acts as a template for aspiring headteachers to evaluate themselves against.

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000: an Act of the Scottish Parliament to make further provision as respects school education.

The Parental Involvement in Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Appointments (Scotland) Regulations 2007: require an education authority to involve the Parent Council, as the representative body within each school of parents of pupils at that school, in specified stages of the appointment process of headteachers and deputy headteachers. These regulations are made under section 14 of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

## List of Abbreviations

EIS:	Education Institute of Scotland
CIPFA:	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting
COSLA:	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CSLA:	Case Study Local Authority
HGIOS:	'How Good is Our School?'
HME:	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
FRH:	Flexible Routes to Headship
NCLSCS:	National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services
NCSL:	National College for School Leadership
NPQH:	National Professional Qualification for Headship (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
SfH:	Standard for Headship (Scotland)
SEED:	Scottish Executive Education Department
SOED:	Scottish Office Education Department
SOEID:	Scottish Office Education and Industry Department
SOLACE:	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SQH:	Scottish Qualification for Headship
TP21:	Teaching Profession for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century

*In addition, the following coding is used to attribute quotations within the Reporting of Findings (Chapter 5):*

P HT ME:	Primary Headteacher Mentee
P HT MR:	Primary Headteacher Mentor
S HT ME:	Secondary Headteacher Mentee
S HT MR:	Secondary Headteacher Mentor
P DHT ME:	Primary Depute Headteacher Mentee
P DHT MR:	Primary Depute Headteacher Mentor
S DHT ME:	Secondary Depute Headteacher Mentee
S DHT MR:	Secondary Depute Headteacher Mentor

## Chapter 1. Setting the scene

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It sets the scene by offering a context to public service and school leadership in Scotland, highlighting policy development in relation to the teaching workforce and current challenges which form the landscape for this research. The relevance of the work for professional practice is proposed and a route through the thesis is offered in the final section.

This study is contextualised by two conflicting accepted realities which are reflected at a local, national and international level. Firstly, that it is widely accepted that school leadership makes a difference - that the actions and behaviours of school leaders are significant in determining the experiences of pupils and teachers (Day *et al.* 2009). Secondly, due to the reported challenges of the job, the recruitment and retention of senior school leaders has attained crisis status in some areas (MacBeath *et al.* 2009).

This is the day to day reality for the author and motive for the work based research situated in a rural local authority in Scotland. All efforts have been taken to de-identify the workplace and it is described throughout the thesis as the Case Study Local Authority (CSLA). This research is the culmination of a period of EdD study from 2003-2010, a significant period in policy development for educational leadership in Scotland. The empirical element of this work was undertaken in 2008.

### 1.1. Leading Scotland's public services

There is apparent consensus that problems are growing for leaders of public services (NHSScotland 2009, Audit Commission 2010, CIPFA 2010, SOLACE 2010) who together attempt to deliver what could be characterised as an 'advanced welfare state' in Scotland, focussed on addressing the main challenges of poverty, sustainable economic growth, early years interventions, demographic challenges and health inequalities (SOLACE 2010 p.3). The current narrative is a woeful tale of an increasing gap between demand and resources available: rapidly rising expectations in demands across the range of services; increasing complexity of demand in social care; accelerated pre-existing patterns of demand due to the recession; the likelihood of significant and sustained adjustments to public service funding; growing regulatory burdens; above inflationary rises in food and energy costs and a reduction of public trust and confidence (CIPFA 2010, SOLACE 2010). This 'perfect storm' raises questions about the historic and future roles of public services in general and local government in particular.

This has implications for, in Humes' terms (1986), the 'leadership class' in Scotland's public services. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) report that the leaders of Scottish public services will be tested by 'unprecedented challenges' (2010 p.2) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) believe that public sector officers will require 'highly skilled, visionary leadership' over the next few years (2010 p.7).

Recognising that almost as many definitions of leadership exist as there are people who have tried to define it (Stogdill 1974 p.7) this thesis uses the following broad conceptualisation:

*'Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'*

(Northouse 2010 p.3)

Some researchers argue that the actual influence of individual leaders on organisational outcomes is overestimated, that attribution can only be minimal in any dynamic system open to outside influences (Marion and Uhl-Bien 2001) and a romantic oversimplification (Meindl and Ehrlich 1987). It is largely accepted, however, that leadership does contribute to the ability of an organisation to achieve its aims and objectives and this is supported by empirical evidence that leaders do affect organisational performance - for better or for worse (Kaiser *et al.* 2008). The current economic reality brings public service leadership into sharp focus.

Since 2000, there has been significant activity in leadership development in the public sector in Scotland (Audit Scotland 2005) and England and Wales (Cabinet Office 2009). With the need for leaders and leadership assumed, many organisations invest a great deal of resource on their development. It is estimated that £120 million was spent on leadership development across the UK in 2005, £5 million for the public sector in Scotland alone (Tourish *et al.* 2007) but it remains in doubt whether the money spent has brought about the anticipated benefit to public service reform.

Due to the complexity of the sector and many competing views of leadership, substantive evidence- whatever that represents to those that pay - is not easy to obtain. Tourish *et al.* (2007) reports that from 192 Scottish organisations studied, there exists a great many barriers to develop leaders, 'most important of these is a perceived inability ... to prove a direct impact on organisational performance' (p.5). Martin *et al.* (2009) agrees that the causal link is weak; highlighting that evidence of the impact of

leadership whether at a political, strategic or operational level is based on perception rather than demonstrable links (p.iv). Expectations are high for leaders of public services across the UK to address new, changing and complex needs in their communities (King *et al.* 2006). Policymakers appear to consider there is room for improvement - the Cabinet Office (2009) challenged public sector leadership to 'raise its game' (p.1).

The purpose of the EdD programme through which this research was conducted is to construct learning that is professionally relevant. This research was undertaken with the overall aim to improve the support offered to newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in a Case Study Local Authority (CSLA). This research set out to offer a Scottish perspective on employer-led formal mentoring strategies for novice school leaders, addressing the current gap in the literature and assisting future observations on UK school leadership policy to include policy and practice north of the Border.

This work recognises the policy direction towards Children's Services in the UK <sup>1</sup> and has been informed by policy for leaders and managers in cross agency working (VSC 2005, DfES 2006, DCSF 2008a&b, CWDC 2007;2010, NCSCS 2010). Although efforts have been taken in the research process to prevent a school centric focus which excludes learning from the wider public and Children's service arenas, the heart of this work based research is school leadership.

## 1.2. Leading Scottish Schools - two realities

Although it is accepted that there has been interest in public service leadership over the past decade in Scotland, analysis of and commentary on school leadership has a much longer history. Accounts of such developments are offered in, amongst others, Humes and Mackenzie (1994), O'Brien *et al.* (2003) and Bryce and Humes (2008).

Whether one accepts either the convergence or divergence of UK education policy rationale in general terms (Rees 2004, Raffe and Burn 2005), it is the case that the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department endorsed the Blair Government's priority to raise standards of schooling and stated that headteachers were the driving force for improvement (SOEID 1997). The agreement of the devolved settlement in 1998

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<sup>1</sup> 'Children's Services' meaning integrated working for all who provide public services for children, young people and their families.

(Scotland Act 1998) and the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 did not change the political importance attached to education or alter the path to reform schooling in Scotland.

### 1.2.1. School leadership matters

The scholarly community tend to agree that the leadership of the school makes a difference to outcomes for children. According to Woods *et al.* (2009) 'at a common sense level, most stakeholders and professionals involved in education would probably agree that school improvement is unlikely if headteachers are not skilled' (p.254). Bush (2008) writes that the global interest in leadership development is predicated on the widespread assumption that it will lead to school improvement but does raise the challenge that empirical evidence for this is limited (p.122). Kendall *et al.* (2007) and Martin *et al.* (2009) also suggest limited evidence of leadership contributing to improved outcomes for pupils, the latter recognising that it is difficult to attribute leadership to pupil outcome but suggests further work to explore the links that are perceived to exist. As there are as many theories and conceptions of leadership in the literature as there are contexts in which leadership could be exercised, it is not unexpected that establishing a direct causal effect is troublesome.

Much of the recent published work in this area arises from various stages of the Effective Leadership and Pupil Outcomes Project (Day *et al.* 2009). This longitudinal study, undertaken for the Department of Children, Schools and Families and the National College for School Leadership in England, reports statistically significant empirical and qualitatively robust associations which supports the policy direction that leadership matters. Effective leadership, along with other variables in a school, appears to have an independent small to medium effect size - but that accumulation of these small changes in the same direction the 'synergistic effects'(p.10) - make a difference to pupils. The work could be critiqued as a 'privileging of measurement evaluations', in order to provide handy bullet points to policy makers for functional aims (Gunter 2007 p.20). However as a large, longitudinal mixed method study, it provides a contribution to knowledge on the relationship between leadership, school reform and school effectiveness.

This section began by questioning whether the leadership of and in the school makes a difference to schooling and improves outcomes for children. This question has been slightly reframed over the course of the study. There is a great deal of school effectiveness and school reform literature which considers this question from within

differing conceptual frameworks. Full review of these perspectives is not offered here as what this review essentially sought was an indication on the strength of belief that there is a link, not substantive evidence for the magnitude of the effect size. It is acknowledged that this is a shift but, it is argued, more in keeping with the aims of this study. What is apparent, and relevant for this research, is that there is little dissent from either the policy or scholarly community that leadership and school improvement are linked whilst being cognisant that a form of substantive empirical evidence, which is acceptable to all stakeholders' notions of leadership, remains elusive.

In summary, it is received wisdom, widely accepted but troublesome to evidence, that school leadership makes a difference. The argument now progresses to the second and conflicting reality experienced by the CSLA, that it is difficult to recruit people to take the lead in schools.

### 1.2.2. The recruitment challenge

Although school leadership is recognised by policymakers as a political imperative, the reality of being a headteacher in many parts of Scotland is not perceived as an attractive career option. The same OECD report which highlights the essential nature of school leadership in improving school outcomes also reports that participating countries have difficulty in recruitment (OECD 2008a).

There are many reasons put forward for teachers disinterest in pursuing headship (Hansford and Ehrich 2006, MacBeath *et al.* 2009, Duncan and Stock 2010). Earley *et al.* (2009) describe a demographic time bomb which is compounded by negative perceptions of the role of headteacher. Hickcox (2002) describes the job of school principals as having become 'tangled and difficult' (p.2), Gronn describes the demanding and greedy nature of principalship (Gronn and Rawlings Senai 2003). The OECD reports (2008a&b) concur, reporting starkly that as countries adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, expectations for schools and school leaders change; that the role of school leader as conceived in the past may no longer be appropriate. Accepting that the role of headteacher is multifaceted and complex whatever the context, it is also reported that being a headteacher in a rural area brings additional or intensified challenge (Browne-Ferrigno and Allan 2006, Duncan and Stock 2010). A vicious circle of the cultural and practical challenges from rurality intensifies the recruitment challenge and as a pragmatic consequence, less experienced staff are appointed to lead schools. These novices, subsequently and understandably, need higher levels of support. A high turnover rate for rural headteachers has been suggested by Clarke and Stevens (2009)

and is noted in reality in the CSLA. It is one of the propositions of this thesis that geographical, professional and emotional isolation can result from leading a school in a rural community which limits opportunities for professional dialogue, development and support.

Recent research for the Scottish Government (MacBeath *et al.* 2009) gives a comprehensive analysis of the problem of recruitment and retention of headteachers in Scotland; the story which emerges is a complex interplay among motivations, incentives and disincentives which play out differently in different contexts (p.9). Findings of particular relevance to this thesis were the added challenge of leading schools in rural communities, and a 'feeling among the profession that training and support do not balance with the challenge' (p.9). Given the concurrent timing of the Scottish Government Social Research, the design of this study could not be informed by this relevant and comprehensive work but the findings of MacBeath *et al.* (2009) have informed the recommendations offered in Chapter 6.

### **1.3. A personal perspective**

This thesis grew from interest in colleagues' experiences of school leadership - in particular the professional development to prepare teachers for headship, the support headteachers and depute headteachers require immediately after appointment and as they progress through their first year in post.

My interest in this research field stemmed from my work as a Quality Improvement Manager in the CSLA. The local difficulty in recruiting headteachers to some small rural schools reflects the national and international recruitment challenge (MacBeath *et al.* 2009) and the 'demographic time bomb' described by Earley *et al.* (2009). Consequently, a key service priority in the CSLA is the development of school leadership at all levels and I have responsibility for the design and delivery of the leadership development strategy which aims to build leadership capacity and recruit headteachers who are qualified for headship, ready for headship and right for the schools in our communities. As such the work undertaken for this EdD is directly related to a current real-world problem and the findings have implications for my professional practice.

This work has been shaped and informed by learning throughout the EdD programme. Themes in my reading and research emerge through the four taught modules which have influenced, acted as prompts to thought and led to my decisions on the research area. Firstly, from reflection on my professional practice and notions of professionalism in

Module 1, where Brookfield's work on 'hunting assumptions' (1995) challenged my previous superficial understandings of professionalism and experiential learning. Having no prior experience in the academic world of policy analysis, Module 2 was a significant challenge but opened previously unexplored avenues of thought which had relevance to my work. Themes from commentators Field (2000) and Patrick *et al.* (2003) prompted my critique of professional development policy for teachers and headteachers which informed local policy decisions in relation to teachers' terms and conditions. In Module 3, reading for 'Educational Futures' offered conflicting theoretical conceptions of the child and childhood which challenged my assumptions on the provision of education for the future if shaped around current curricular and structural norms. Reconceptualising schooling prompted deep questions from which I confronted whether we (as local authority education management who have ultimate responsibility for educational provision and employers of teachers) deliver a service fit for purpose to the children, young people and families of the CSLA. Due to learning from these modules in conjunction with my lived experiences, I came to believe that remodelling the forms and functions of the Children's Services workforce, including the role of headteacher, were necessary. This was within a timeframe where national developments were encouraging; Government sponsorship offered opportunity for employers to require headteachers to meet the SfH and that the consortia based delivery of SQH would, in conjunction with wider Children's Services developments, allow a formalisation of management and leadership capability.

This train of thought progressed to a critique of the research methodology used by Menter *et al.* (2003) in the evaluation of the SQH for Module 4. By this time my interest in the relationship between the public services, local authority, new forms of leadership and leadership development was narrowing to an area of study. The open learning modules gave opportunity for exploratory and preparatory work in coaching and mentoring for Children's Services leaders, narrowing ultimately to the area explored in depth within this thesis.

This work is born out of a desire to better understand how people develop as leaders and has been shaped by reading and research throughout the EdD programme. It is clear to me that the academic elements have been influential but are not in isolation from my own workplace experience. Over the past 20 years I have worked in the NHS, Higher Education, Education Authority and Local Government contexts and so have direct experience of what is expected of public service leaders in Scotland. From experience I have constructed my understanding that good leaders come in many forms. Notions of leadership styles can be, at best, lazy shorthand and, at worst, descriptions or excuses

for behavioural shortfalls. It is one of the arguments of this thesis that good leadership is characterised by the ability to influence others through building relationships and that this is a greater challenge for the novice leaders than technical or operational hurdles.

For new school leaders I believe that relational qualities can be developed through learning in the soft skills arena of self and other awareness. Development of people skills, I believe, is the 'glue' that is needed to bind technical skill and cognitive ability, to help the novice headteacher learn about themselves in their new professional role and how they interact and influence others in order to improve experiences for children. Due to this, I have designed and implemented person-centred, interpersonal development approaches for novice headteachers such as buddying, mentoring, coaching, counselling, facilitation and peer support. But 'soft' skills encompass such a range of tacit self-awareness and relational competencies which are by their nature unquantifiable and therefore challenging to evaluate.

I feel it is important to state my personal view on the issue of academic challenge for aspirant headteachers at this juncture. I believe that educational leaders must be able to make judgements on the critique of the evidence they have available and be able to justify decisions to themselves, their employer and outside agencies on that basis. Critical reflection and self evaluation are concepts which only have validity if the conceptual framework they are reflected on and related to is sound. Valuable self-evaluation is not possible on a flawed knowledge base or if the reflection is against a warped and dusty hall of mirrors which shows only what is sought. It is my view that academic challenge through reading, research and post graduate qualification should be expected of educational leaders given their role in shaping our communities and would be no more than what would be expected of commensurate professional groups. I continue to support academic programmes of development for aspirant headteachers for reasons related to the themes which emerge in this research. I do accept, however, that, just as there are different approaches to leadership in schools which can all be successful, a range of development approaches are needed which suit different people and which can be called upon where required. My belief is that the development of technical skills and conceptual understandings are part of the picture; the ability to influence people and to shape systems is the quality that lifts the knowledgeable manager to capable leader.

While recognising the value of formal training and preparation programmes for prospective headteachers, literature and stories from the field suggest that any

programme of study would not necessarily provide adequate development and socialisation into the role of headteacher. Mentoring and coaching have increased in prominence as approaches to support the development of leadership in Scottish education, but there is a limited body of evidence to assess the usefulness of these approaches, or consideration of how they compare to other forms of headteacher induction and support. With this in mind, I set out to enhance understanding of what mentoring means to the mentor, mentee and the employing authority.

#### **1.4. Developing the research question; making meaning from mentoring**

My initial thinking around making meaning focused upon establishing if mentoring 'worked' i.e. resulted in benefit for the mentee and the employing authority. The first step was to establish a model which could be used to frame understanding when exploring:

- i. The process - what happened
- ii. The outcome - what benefits were claimed and if these occurred in reality.

It is acknowledged that an assortment of views exist on what mentoring is and what it does. These different understandings of the process and outcome of mentoring are explored in Chapter 2. This study is limited to formal mentoring, the definition accepted here as 'a structured and coordinated approach to mentoring where individuals agree to engage in a personal and confidential relationship that aims to provide professional development, growth and varying degrees of personal support' (Hansford and Ehrich 2006 p.39).

A starting point for generating the research question for this workbased research was the operational policy of the mentoring programme in the CSLA. In this document the aims of mentoring are stated and some detail over the process to be followed is offered. As the policy and procedure document provides the backdrop for understanding mentoring in the CSLA it is provided as an appendix to this thesis (Appendix C). Making provision for a period of mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers by more experienced colleagues is generally accepted by the CSLA as useful and sustainable. Deeper critique of the mentoring policy and practice suggests that this acceptance appears to be premised on claims and unwritten assumptions which to date have gone untested and unquestioned, leading to action based upon no more than a feeling of common sense. It is proposed that this is an

unreliable premise on which to base any strategy. Daresh (1995;2004), in work on headteacher mentoring which informed this thesis, challenges researchers to examine their assumptions of mentoring and develop conceptual frameworks to guide their analysis or the knowledge base concerning this important topic may be 'doomed to the pursuit of the same tired issues over and over again' (p.8).

Brookfield (1995) considers the recognition and examination of assumptions to be a critical feature of reflective inquiry. As he suggests, it is not comfortable to challenge long or widely held assumptions for fear of what we might discover, but questioning the assumptions made within the mentoring policy of the CSLA checks the validity of the unchecked common sense which appears to form the basis of the arrangements.

In the process of generating the research question the policy claims and assumptions underpinning and intertwined with mentoring as a leadership development programme were teased out and articulated. Developing the research question was an iterative process informed by the literature, my knowledge and experience of practice and the early stages of the empirical work.

#### 1.4.1. The research question

This purpose of this study is to explore the process and outcome of formal mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in a CSLA. This study articulates and tests the claims and assumptions behind this approach to school leadership development.

#### 1.4.2. Early reflections on the research trajectory

As stated at the beginning of this section, my initial thinking in the very early conceptual phase of this work focused upon establishing if mentoring 'worked' i.e. resulted in benefit for the mentee and the employing authority. It may be helpful for the reader at this stage to recognise and reflect briefly on the trajectory of this research - from a raw understanding of what was, initially in essence, an evaluation of a leadership development programme towards, as I grew as a qualitative researcher, a more exploratory approach.

As indicated in 1.3, this work was shaped and informed by learning throughout the EdD programme. These learning experiences were challenging as they offered new perspectives and previously unexplored mines of knowledge. The taught element of the EdD influenced my decision on the research area but, on reflection, only began to scratch the surface of a deeply embedded quantitative, positivist worldview. This belief

was demonstrated keenly by my choice of paper used for the Module 4 assessment - a critique of research methodology used by Menter *et al.* (2003) in his evaluation of the SQH.

In my (then) reality, I had identified a real world problem for my professional practice and a policy challenge for the organisation I served. I recognised the expectations for Doctoral level study yet felt a dilemma: undertaking rigorous research with sufficient precision to make recommendations for practice but through a process which could make sense of complexity and ambiguity. Audit Scotland (2005) (2.5.2) offered a framework which led to my decisions surrounding the methodology selected for this study as I felt this would offer validation and rigour. But as I wrestled with, then embraced the data which I had created, my position within the research and my belief on what was venerated as knowledge was shaken.

As I review my early thinking around where I was placed within this research I feel it is illustrative of a struggle to fit emerging understandings into my pre-existing paradigm. I fought hard to retain the congruence of my knowledge - until the scratches on the surface of my positivist paradigm uncomfortably became cracks and the intent, motivation and expectation for this research was fundamentally challenged by the stories which emerged from the data. My prior research experience was all about measuring things about people and then creating stories about them. As I analysed my data, a new form of knowledge generation - where people created their own stories and I was part of the tale - suddenly became much more important than anything I could control from outside.

Embarking on research on school leadership within an exploratory and interpretive paradigm has felt like a foray into new, at times hostile, but enlightening and empowering territory. The narrative in this thesis occasionally weaves between what was planned and what was then enacted but, for the reader, I hope sense is made of any inconsistencies. Although a tangled and at times tortuous process I feel a much richer and more meaningful exploration of the research question has emerged, allowing me to making sense and develop some solutions to a messy real world problem.

## **1.5. A route through the thesis**

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature which offers an overview of school leadership development strategies, critiques the evaluation of leadership development and considers the body of research on mentoring with a specific

focus on school leadership. This chapter closes with an exploration of the CSLA mentoring context, exploring the stated aims of the mentoring policy and articulates claims and assumptions which form the focus for the research. Chapter 3 begins by proposing how the work meets the aims of a professional doctorate and develops by framing and positioning the research in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. This chapter offers an account of the shift in understanding that occurred within the research process. The study design, tools and the method of analysis are detailed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 reports on the findings of the research in subsections framed around the process and outcome of mentoring; this chapter concludes by summarising the key findings. The contribution of this study to the body of professional knowledge is discussed in Chapter 6. This chapter explores whether mentoring is conceptualised as context specific training or a form of psychosocial support. Furthermore it asks if mentoring prepares the mentee for the headteachers role as represented as it exists now and socialises them into that view or understood as a process which enables the mentee to question the established orthodoxy and reframe the role of headteacher. A theoretical framework, models for mentoring and implications for practice development are proposed in this chapter which may be helpful for others using mentoring in the workplace or those with an interest in school leadership.

Finally, Chapter 7 offers a reflective review of the research process, critiques the methodology used, discusses the limitations of the current work and makes suggestions for further research. The thesis concludes with a reiteration of the themes which emerged in the research and remarks on the relevance of this work to the development of leadership and management in Scottish schools.

## **Chapter 2. A review of the literature**

### **2.1. Aim of literature review**

As introduced in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to explore the process and outcome of formal mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. A review of the literature was undertaken as part of the conceptual stage of this work in order to:

- a) Examine the policy context for leadership development with particular reference to Scottish education (2.3)
- b) Explore the rationale and evidence for mentoring as a leadership development approach (2.4)
- c) Investigate methods used to evaluate leadership development strategies (2.5).

### **2.2. Method of literature review**

A narrative review was undertaken for this study, the purpose of which was to establish the focus for an empirical study, identifying related theoretical frameworks and examining the nature, extent and limits of existing knowledge.

The narrow focus for this review was mentoring for school leaders in English speaking countries but, given the range of purposes and practices for mentoring, a broad sweep of the leadership development literature gave valuable background and underpinning theory for the work.

The review entailed an initial search of databases of literature which included conference papers, published articles, reports and books. Educational/social science databases were searched (Australian Education Index, British Education Index, ERIC, Professional Development Collection (EBSCO Host)) using a combination of key word searching. Key words used were mentoring, coaching, leadership development, continuing professional development, schools, education, headteacher, school leader, school leadership. Citations on papers felt to be particularly relevant were then accessed.

The review of the policy literature was initially restricted to Scotland from 1997-2010 although, as parallels became apparent, the English, Welsh and Northern Irish contexts are compared. The time period for the scholarly work reviewed was much broader as much of the seminal work on modern mentoring theory emerged from the 1970s.

It is recognised that narrative reviews have been criticised for being inconsistent, partial, open to bias and unhelpful for decision making (Hobson and Sharp 2005). Systematic reviews or meta-analyses of the literature collate and analyse the results of multiple primary investigations and are viewed by some, particularly in international health research, as the 'gold standard' in literature reviews for evidence based practice as used in the Cochrane Collaboration (Evans and Benefield 2001 p.531). Considering systematic reviews as a research methodology in their own right has, however, been the subject of some concern; Hammersley (2001) critiques the movement toward systematic reviews as being preoccupied with 'what works best' (p.550) with practical, quantitative research driven by the policy agenda having priority.

It is accepted that the narrative review undertaken here is a less structured methodology than a systematic review. However it is argued that the volume of work retrieved from such a wide search allowed broad exposure to a range of related issues from different traditions which helped locate the research. This assists in giving a range of theory bases on which to draw during a deeper, more focussed critique on the use of mentoring for the development of school leaders. The combination of a broad theoretical base on leadership development with close focus on mentoring as a form of leadership development in schools allows the development of linkages between research areas.

### **2.3. The policy context of leadership development with particular reference to Scottish education.**

Chapter 1 introduced the policy landscape for school leadership in Scotland and offers the starting premise that leadership is a priority in education policy agendas across the developed world. There is general agreement among commentators that good leadership in schools is important in improving educational outcomes for children. Assuming the importance of leadership to a school, there is a great deal of literature which aims to improve understanding of what school leaders do and how they do it and, with this knowledge, develop strategies to recruit, train, develop and sustain headteachers.

To understand the policy landscape for school leadership this review explores the relationship between Government, local authority, schools and teachers in Scotland; the future of education authorities in the governance of schools, already uncertain (Bloomer 2008), is becoming increasingly unsteady. The thesis highlights tensions and ambiguities

for the local education authority as it attempts to meet its legal duty for educational provision while interpreting national policy, employing teachers and meeting Government's expectations for schools.

### 2.3.1. Leadership and education policy in Scotland

This section traces an outline of leadership development in the Scottish education policy literature over the past 10 years. What is notable throughout this sketch of the policy landscape is that the dialogue appears to be between Government, teachers and schools; the role of the local authority as employer of teachers and with statutory responsibility for the quality of schools provision is rarely acknowledged. It must be implied, therefore, that the local authority is considered the unquestioning implementer of government policy in the local arena. Given the recent challenges to the Concordat<sup>2</sup> it could be envisaged that this relationship will be sorely tested in the next decade. The following paragraphs offer an overview to the policy context for leadership, leadership development and recruitment to headship.

In 2001, the teaching workforce was remodelled in expectant readiness for change through the 'A Teaching Profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (TP21); a decade later the achievements of the agreement face close scrutiny and it is expected TP21 will be reviewed in 2011. In 2002 the Scottish Executive undertook a public consultation on the state of school education through the National Debate on Education. From this, Ministers established a Review group in 2003 to identify the purposes of education (SEED 2004a) resulting in 'A Curriculum for Excellence', the template for reform published alongside 'Ambitious Excellent Schools' (SEED 2004). These documents together set out the agenda for an extensive programme of reform and linked the heightened expectations of schools with the need for stronger leadership. Since 2004, the notion of leadership, leadership at all levels and leadership for learning has continued to dominate education policy in Scotland (SEED 2004, SEED 2005a, HMle 2006, 2007, 2009, EIS 2010). Government, inspectorate and union voices are united in an apparent consensus that excellent, innovative, distributed leadership is the panacea for improving Scottish education. But closer scrutiny of this dialogue suggests that what is, on the surface, an apparent consensus, beneath are conflicting realities. One of the arguments offered in this thesis is that ideas surrounding the conception of leadership differ between the main policy actors (Considine 2005) in Scottish Education.

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<sup>2</sup> The 2007 Concordat set out the terms of the relationship agreed between local government and the Scottish Government.

Given the level of policy interest, the development of leadership capacity in Scotland appears to sit within the broader dialogue about ambitions for Scottish Education. Scotland is not alone in determining the expectations of leaders alongside the aspirations for pupils and education systems. Educational reforms in many countries have included reformed ideals for school leadership to improve outcomes for children. In 2008 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published 'Improving School Leadership'. This influential report concurs that school leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally and offers the following rationale:

*...effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment.*

OECD (2008a p.9)

This is the prominent theme which recurs in the school leadership development literature. However although this is the dominant belief, empirical evidence linking systematic headship preparation or formal leadership development programmes to pupil outcome is difficult to ascertain and is, at best, indirect. The challenge to evaluate the impact of leadership development is explored further in Section 2.5. The review now considers the preparation and development of those leading schools in Scotland.

### 2.3.2. Leadership and the headteacher

Although in 2001 there was agreement in conditions of service that all teachers share in leadership decisions (TP21 (Annex D) SEED 2001) headship and leadership were not differentiated in the policy discourse at this point. In a national discussion paper on educational leadership (SEED 2005a) the dialogue began to differentiate between leadership emerging from others within the school and the more traditional titular leadership role of the headteacher. In 2010 the largest teaching union, the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS), updated and published their 2008 agreement, supporting the view that every teacher has a leadership role to play in school and not 'merely a function associated with a specific post or with school management' (2010 p.2). The concept of distributed leadership has influenced policy (Gronn 2000); it is acknowledged that a prominent theme in the current leadership development discourse is leadership at all levels (HMIE 2007).

This research recognises the contribution of 'teacher leadership' (Leithwood 1999) and the emergence of leaders, leaderly behaviours and leadership actions distributed throughout the school. However this review differentiates between collegiate

professional attributes and behaviours displayed by teacher leaders, the discussion of which is outwith the scope of this thesis, and those post-holders who have responsibility for the leadership and management of the school stated within their contractual duties. Northouse (2010) defines these two forms as emergent leadership and assigned leadership (p.5). In addition to shifting the contractual requirements for teachers, TP21 changed the leadership landscape for schools in Scotland, 'stripping out a number of management posts' (Reeves 2007 p.60) which removed tiers in the hierarchy to leave principal teacher, deputy headteacher and headteacher as the leadership class. Currently in Scotland leadership is contractually assigned to the headteacher, deputy headteacher and principal teacher (middle leader/head of department or faculty) (TP21 (Annex B) SEED 2001).

The focus of this work is to consider formal mentoring as a form of leadership development in newly appointed 'titular' school leaders - specifically headteachers and deputy headteachers. It is proposed that there are two facets to this review of leadership development in Scottish education which are related, but separated by chronology and purpose. Firstly, the policy and research on preparation and qualification for headship - the Standard for Headship (SfH), Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) and Flexible Route to Headship (FRH) - and secondly, evaluation of the support available to headteachers and deputy headteachers in the period immediately after appointment. To give an overview of the context, these are considered separately but it is recognised that there is no neat chronology to distinguish between these two facets.

The following critique considers the SfH within the commentary about preparation for headship and then progresses to explore the support offered for newly appointed school leaders. This is an artificial distinction as a range of possibilities exist and are evident in practice: some headteachers may not hold the SQH or meet the SfH on appointment; some may be working towards meeting the standard through the SQH or FRH, some may not; some deputy headteachers may have already met the standard whereas their headteacher may not and some headteachers or deputy headteachers may not consider a route to meet the SfH as necessary or desirable professional development. In reality, therefore, the preparation for headship and support after appointment are distinct but linearly progressive processes for some - but conflated, or even conflicting, processes for others.

### 2.3.3. Standard for Headship

Just as there is general consensus that the quality of school leadership is related to improved outcomes for children there is also general agreement from educational commentators that some form of preparation for headship is necessary. O'Brien and Draper (2001) state that it is 'accepted that aspiring headteachers require to be fully trained and developed in the necessary leadership and management skills, abilities and values' (p.110). The evolution of training programmes for school leaders and international interventions designed to prepare headteachers are reviewed elsewhere (Brundrett 2001, O'Brien *et al.* 2003, OECD 2008 a&b, Lewis and Murphy 2008) but the reiteration of the well worn theme continues - school leadership is a key constituent of an effective school and headteacher preparation is seen both as a support mechanism for the professional involved as well as minimising the risk of impacting negatively upon schools.

If it can be assumed that preparation of headteachers through a formal training and development programme is valuable for the individual and, at best, leads to improved outcomes for pupils or, at worst, minimises the negative impact on schools, the debate progresses to the type of preparatory programme which is most effective. As governments began to prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the policy imperative to improve school leadership was supported by analogous central government strategies to prepare headteachers for their role. Over the last 15 years across the UK there has been a broadly similar approach to the preparation for headteachers with formal standards for headship and associated qualifications for headteachers now part of the UK education policy landscape.

An outline of the place of the SfH against other professional standards for teachers in Scotland and for headteachers in the UK is now offered and routes to meet the SfH are reviewed. This section concludes by highlighting the ambiguity for the employer in the use of the Standards in meeting statutory and contractual requirements. During the period 1997-2002, the Scottish Executive developed and published a framework of professional standards for teachers in Scotland. The first of these, the SfH (SOEID 1998, SEED 2005c), now sits alongside three other standards of practice for teachers in Scotland - the Standard for Initial Teacher Education (SITE), the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) and the Standard for Chartered Teacher (SCT).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Taken together, these are described by the General Teaching Council for Scotland as a suite which provides a Standards-based professional learning framework for teachers in Scotland throughout their career.

The Standard for Headship in Scotland and Scottish Qualification for Headship were introduced in 1998 (SOEID), first as a series of pilots and then as a national programme delivered through three consortia, each of which comprises education authorities and at least one university. The history of the development of the SfH and SQH has informed this review but is not explored in this thesis. The underpinning philosophy, research, consultation and development and evaluation of the SfH and the SQH is offered elsewhere (Reeves *et al.* 1998, Morris and Reeves 2000, Murphy *et al.* 2001, O'Brien and Draper 2001, Reeves *et al.* 2001, Menter *et al.* 2003, O'Brien *et al.* 2003, Cowie and Crawford 2009). What is evident is that the timeline for a Scottish version of a stated standard of practice for headteachers and related qualification was broadly consistent with developments across the UK.

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was introduced in England and Wales in 1997 (Teacher Training Agency 1998), heralding an 'expectation of enhanced precision in the recruitment and selection of headteachers' (Law and Glover 2001 p.95). The Professional Qualification for Headteachers (Northern Ireland) was introduced in 1999, described by the Northern Ireland Regional Training Unit (1999) as a licensed adaptation of the NPQH in England. The National Standard for Headteachers in Northern Ireland was revised in 2005 - the same year the SfH was reviewed in Scotland (SEED 2005c). The SfH was introduced formally into Government policy in Scotland within the Ambitious Excellent Schools series (SEED 2005c) with the Ministerial statement that every newly appointed headteacher would meet the SfH by December 2005.

#### 2.3.3.1. *Flexible Routes to meet the Standard for Headship*

Although similar in chronology, it has been argued that the development of the SfH in Scotland was different to those in the other nation states in philosophy as it was based on an integrated model of action and not an enumeration of observable behaviours (Reeves 2007). Perhaps cognisant with what has been reported as the distinctiveness of Scottish education (Humes 1986, Greaves and O'Brien 1996, Clark and Munn 1997), the 'instrumental nature' of the NPQH has been compared with the 'professionally orientated SQH' (Gunter 2006 p116) - illustrative of the difference between the purpose of compliance in England (Gunter 2001) and engagement in Scotland (Menter *et al.* 2005).

As introduced in 1.2.2, education in Scotland in general, and education authority governance and school leadership in particular, is politicised and high on the Scottish Government's agenda, transcending party politics (Humes and Bryce 2008). There is no agreement over the best way to prepare teachers for headship and differing views have emerged from policy actors over the role of a University led qualification i.e. SQH. Competing 'academic' and 'experiential' paradigms of professional development are championed by actors with different interests in the system. To provide alternative means of providing evidence that headteachers or potential headteachers met the SfH, Scottish Government in conjunction with other policy actors (i.e. GTCS, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) designed the Flexible Route to Headship (FRH) programme around a coaching model. The FRH was introduced to the Scottish policy scene in 2007 and concurrently evaluated (Davidson *et al.* 2008). The evaluation concludes that the FRH programme 'deserves a place in the landscape of school leader development' (p.67) but found areas for improvement. The FRH evaluation team could not establish a clear conceptual view of leadership or pedagogy for the programme and it is apparent that the assessment process must improve to ensure credibility if FRH is to be compared with the SQH. The fact remains, however that the SQH is a post-graduate diploma and meets the internationally recognised criteria for such awards, whereas the FRH has no academic credit attached. This raises questions of what is expected of Scotland's educational leaders.

Whatever side of the 'academic' versus 'experiential' debate is taken, the introduction of the FRH did offer Government a more ready supply of qualified applicants for an increasing number of headteacher vacancies. Thus it is put forward that the route was accepted as a pragmatic solution to meet the 2005 aim that all newly appointed heads would meet the SfH. What is ironic and concerning is that due to the uncertainty over the exclusivity of the SQH (Cowie 2009), the 'alternative' route may oust the SQH as a funding priority for authorities. Currently, not all local authorities offer provision for SQH and, to date, Scottish Government has not confirmed its support for any future cohorts for FRH.

Whatever the outcome of these debates, it is likely that the nature of educational leadership, preparation and qualification for headship will remain a politicised and contested issue. The merits and demerits, complementarity or competing nature of the SQH and FRH are not considered in depth within this review but, given the relevance to research on headteacher mentoring, the use of a coaching model for school leadership development is revisited within Chapter 2.

### 2.3.3.2. *The Standard for Headship and TP21*

With specific reference to leadership development in schools, there are tensions in what is asked by the Standards and what can be asked by the employer in terms of their contractual agreement. A description of the invention of chartered teacher (a grade of expert teacher created by TP21) is outwith the scope of this thesis but its introduction to the career structure, aligned with the class teacher in duty but with management in terms of pay, was indicative of the contested and contrasting notions of teacher professionalism (Reeves 2005) and has had to be interpreted by the local authority as employer.

Examples of this complexity in practice are as follows: the duties of a chartered teacher in TP21 (Annex B) are synonymous with those of a teacher, but for the purposes of self-evaluation, professional review and CPD the relevant standards of practice differ with the teacher working to the SFR and the chartered teacher relating to the SCT. Moreover, a principal teacher has formal leadership and management duties detailed in TP21 (Annex B), but the relevant standard for self-evaluation and development is the SFR. This assumes the principal teacher was not previously a chartered teacher prior to promotion, wherein the use of either standard is possible. The contractual duty of the depute headteacher is to assist and where necessary deputise for the headteacher; therefore it may be assumed that this would be at a level commensurate with elements of the SfH but this is implied only and would not, it is proposed, stand challenge. For principal teachers and depute headteachers any remedial action and consideration of competence could only be viewed in relation to the SFR which is in relation to their teaching duty not the job they are contracted and paid to undertake. As a pragmatic response to these dichotomies, the SfH in conjunction with TP21 (Annex B) and the specific job description is often used by the employer in relation to the support and challenge of principal teachers and depute headteachers.

In response to this perceived gap in the national professional learning framework there has been recent discussion over the development of a 'Standard for Leadership' which would take account of others in the school who have responsibility for leadership and management duties. This has been mooted since the review of the SfH in 2005 but, given slow pace of development, and perceived lack of appetite, some local authorities have developed middle manager standards based on blends of the national framework which has allowed them to progress local agreements. At this time, however, the SfH is

the only nationally agreed leadership standard, hence template to evaluate development, either for headteachers or those who aspire to leadership roles.

#### 2.3.3.3. *The SfH and Appointment of Headteachers*

The appointment of headteachers is a duty of education authorities under the auspices of securing educational provision for children and improving quality of school education in the schools managed by them in order to raise standards of education (Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000). Although the appointment of staff in schools is a delegated function from the Council Chief Executive to the Director of Education, there is political scrutiny and public interest each time a headteacher or depute headteacher is appointed.

Parent Councils and elected members have formalised roles within the appointment process of headteacher and depute headteachers. All substantive appointments must satisfy The Parental Involvement in Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Appointments (Scotland) Regulations 2007 as well as the local agreement for Elected Member involvement. In order to meet these regulations, the appointment panel comprises 3 Directorate, 3 parent and 3 Elected Members which means that the final decision over appointment to a specified school at final interview can be, and often is, determined by lay members. It is therefore the function of the preparatory stages (i.e. application and first interview) for the Director's delegated officers to establish who is qualified and ready for headship. The final interview determines the preferred candidate for the school community. Having a national standard for headteachers, evidenced by meeting the SfH through the SQH or FRH, was expected to ensure all candidates short-listed to final interview were qualified and that the employing authority could be confident that any appointment made by the panel would be suitable.

When the SfH was reviewed in 2005 and introduced formally into Government policy within the Ambitious Excellent Schools series (SEED 2005c) it was alongside the Ministerial statement that every newly appointed headteacher would meet the SfH by the December of that year - less than a year later than the Welsh Assembly Government requirement and initial English government intention that all headteachers would meet the NPQH in 2004. However, as an example of the tension between national and local government, this policy is as yet unimplemented. Although not formally rescinded, subsequent communication to Directors of Education from Scottish Government diluted what was national education policy to a discretionary decision.

The way this has been operationalised since has added complexity to any consideration of the overall Scottish policy context as there are now significant differences in the practices of employing authorities. From the 32 education authorities in Scotland, some prescribe that meeting the SfH through SQH/FRH is obligatory for all headteacher appointments; others view it as desirable but not as essential while some authorities have withdrawn their support and do not make provision for the qualification at all (TES 2010b p.2). In the CSLA both SQH and FRH programmes are supported and the Standard for Headship is prescribed in the Person Specification for all headteacher appointments as desirable, but not essential.

In England, since April 2009 it has been mandatory to hold the NPQH in order to apply for a first headship in the maintained sector (NCLSCS 2010). Holding the NPQH when applying for headship has been mandatory in Wales since September 2005 and the National Standard for Headteachers in Wales was revised in 2006 (Welsh Assembly Government 2006;2008). Removing the expectation that headteachers hold a nationally agreed qualification in Scotland could be considered a retrograde step in the professionalisation of school leaders, as headship in some authorities now necessitates fewer years of practice and a lesser academic qualification to that required of a chartered teacher. It also raises significant questions over the place of the SQH in the national education policy landscape.

It is of note that the 2010 review of the NPQH by HMIE in Wales has brought into doubt the impact the qualification has on headship in Wales and ‘whether the training serves its intended purpose’ (HMIE 2010 p.6). The Welsh Assembly Government has since ceased recruiting for the NPQH through their current arrangements from September 2010, stating that they will be revising arrangements to ensure a constant supply of teachers progressing to headship. However contrary to the concerns of the Scottish Government which alluded to an insufficient supply of SQH graduates to fill the recruitment shortfall, the Welsh Assembly Government cite that the supply of NPQH holders far exceeds demand for headteachers in Wales and was a qualification held by teachers who did not aspire for headship. Progress of the review in Wales may inform Scottish thinking on the future place of SQH/FRH and the SfH.

The question remains, however, whether headteachers who meet the Standard for Headship either through SQH or FRH are, in fact, better candidates for school leadership than those who do not hold the award on appointment. Both the SQH and the FRH have been subject to external evaluation (Menter *et al.* 2003, Davidson *et al.* 2008) and although it appears that that the process is valuable from those who participate, there

is no evidence to suggest a causal link between externally validated evidence that the SfH is met and school improvement. The Scottish Government hold the external evaluation of school leadership for every school inspected by HMle and they have a record of every graduate from SQH or FRH programmes. Consequently the relationship between HMle inspection findings for the 'leadership' quality indicators and qualification of headteacher/management team would be a straightforward task to examine at face value but the fact that this has not been considered suggests differing notions of leadership by policy actors in Scotland.

#### 2.3.3.4. *Headteachers and notions of leadership*

This thesis offered a broad working definition of leadership for the purposes of this research in Chapter 1 but there is evidence that the conceptualisation of leadership, and thus agendas for leadership development, differ between some of the Scottish policy actors. No reference to the SfH can be located within HMle publications - surprising given their continued general commentary on leadership which has included self-evaluation documents, development resources, case studies, quality indicators and reports. This may suggest that the HMle perspective of excellent leadership is different to the professional actions expected to be evidenced in order to meet the SfH. This may be due, in part, to what is being viewed - the school or the individual. While it could be argued that the SFR is used for individual teachers where HMle processes examine the whole school, this does not sit so clearly for school leaders.

It could be that the SfH signifies a standard of personal achievement and therefore understandable that it is a different notion of leadership to what is sought by HMle when inspecting the organisation. However this does not fit comfortably as there are personal self-evaluation tools within the HMle resources (2007), the headteacher and leadership of the school are identifiable within reports and, up until very recently, the quality of the headteacher's leadership was graded. It does appear therefore that HMle does measure the headteachers' competence or capability but uses a different yardstick to the SfH.

One could consider SfH more as a personal achievement rather than a descriptor of role unrelated to contractual terms and conditions for their job. It could be argued that this is consistent with the teacher meeting the SFR and the SCT. If this is accepted, one has to revert back to TP21 Annex B to establish the 'job' of the headteacher, but, as discussed above, there is no requirement for evidence of meeting the SfH across Scotland. In this case the SfH is an expectation, being the benchmark of quality and

external accountability or 'a disguise for control and compliance' (Christie 2008 p.845). So, like the SFR, is it a minimum standard - the lowest common denominator- with increasing expectation as the headteacher grows in experience and expertise, perhaps using the HMIe leadership narrative as a tool for continuous improvement? To add another layer of complexity for headteachers, they are considered by the corporate world as highly paid local government officers; public service quality frameworks such as the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF 2006) and core competencies for leaders and managers of Children's Services (DfES 2006, DCSF 2008a&b, CWDC 2010, NCLCLS 2010) are emerging as alternative benchmarks to the SfH.

From this review it is proposed that notions of headteacher leadership are multifaceted and at times contradictory and so it is not surprising that the SfH has its critics. Cowie and Crawford (2008) examined the SfH and found opposing narratives 'one to do with developing capability and improvement, but the other is about accountability and policy implementation' (p.687). If it is accepted that there is confusion inherent in the SfH alongside debate over the role of the University sector in the provision of leadership qualifications, the nature of preparation for the role of headteacher is clearly contested ground. This raises fundamental questions about how school leadership is conceptualised in Scotland, about the relationship with local authority as employer and professional leadership by others such as the recently announced Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency.

Earlier in this thesis the concept of 'teacher leader' was introduced, but a distinction was made over the leadership demonstrated by autonomous professionals and those with titular leadership roles. What cannot be so easily overcome is that, unlike other professional groups e.g. Health Professionals working in contexts where generic health service management qualifications are in place, all staff with formal leadership roles in Scottish schools are professional teachers. A question this thesis raises is whether headteachers perceive themselves as professional teachers or strategic leaders and whether these are mutually exclusive or complementary identities.

Literature on teacher professionalism (such as Hoyle (1974)) gives insight to headteacher professionalism. Sachs (2003) offers theory which helps make sense of the opposing narratives in the SfH when she considers the conflicting views of professionalism. She considers democratic professionalism as favouring a commitment to social justice and collaborative working. This would clearly fit with notions of collegiality, distributed leadership, team working, building capacity and being a leader of learning. She contrasts this to managerial professionalism where there is a privileging

of compliance over policy directives, efficiency and individual accountability. Notions of leadership which prioritise performance management, project management, evidence based decision making and activity based budgeting fit with Sach's concept of managerial professionalism (2003).

This lack of coherence is problematic for Scottish headteachers, their employers and professional associations. While much is made of professional reflection, it is suggested that headteachers reflect upon their practice not in one plane but three - not a mirror but a prism cut with at least three facets: the SfH, the quality indicators for leadership as described by HMle and the contractual job of the headteacher as defined in TP21 (Annex B). Refractions from these reflections lead to complexity in the day to day reality of the relationship between headteacher and local authority.

This review so far has provided an argument which establishes that: professional development for school leaders is a professional obligation but not a mandatory contractual requirement; that the SfH is an envisaged minimum requirement for headteachers which has not yet been tested and that the place of SQH and FRH are currently in flux; that there is disagreement whether academic or experiential routes are preferable to prepare headteachers for the job; that notions of leadership for schools and schooling are contested and this lack of coherence is problematic in establishing the relationship between headteachers and local authority both in terms of what is expected and in governance. This review concurs with Cowie and Crawford (2008) who suggests that the dialogue over headteacher preparation and induction is located within the debate about the nature of contemporary professional identity, the titular teacher leader or strategic corporate manager, the freedom to act in line with educational ideals over the pressures to conform.

Having built this backdrop to what it means to be a headteacher in a Scottish school, the focus of the review now shifts to the support the new headteacher requires on appointment to headship and the beginning of a new phase of professional learning.

#### 2.3.4. Supporting novice headteachers

This thesis has previously outlined the challenges in recruiting and appointing suitably qualified school leaders to schools. In the CSLA there is a heavy investment of time and effort extended in securing the right person for each appointment premised upon the assumption that, in common with the rest of Scotland, school leadership impacts on outcomes for pupils. But once the appointment is made, the focus for the employing education authority must shift to supporting the new incumbent in the early days of

their new role. Experience from the CSLA would suggest that employer support is neither consistent nor always sufficient.

The recruitment and appointment of titular school leaders are statutory functions guided by national regulation but, as a non-statutory function, any support offered to a new headteacher is discretionary. Although headteachers may be offered induction to their post and have the support of a range of professional and Government funded organisations, there is not a required induction or standard programme of support for newly appointed headteachers in Scotland. This thesis argues that the local authority as employer has a duty of care both for any new headteacher in the period after appointment and also in ensuring the standard of educational provision for any school with a novice headteacher.

This review considers the support required by newly appointed headteachers; it is recognised that depute headteachers are included in the sample for this research but, as there is limited evidence on which to draw, parallels may be drawn from the literature on novice headteacher appointments. As the discussion progresses the validity of this line of reasoning is explored.

Teachers may not feel adequately prepared for the shock of transition to headship (Draper and McMichael 1998a&b, 2000) or the reality of being a new headteacher, potentially feeling professionally isolated and lonely (Hobson *et al.* 2002), with low levels of confidence in aspects of their new role (Holligan *et al.* 2006), and with declining confidence once taking on taking up post (Earley *et al.* 2002). Supporting aspirant headteachers in preparation for this step, and formal induction to the role once appointed may go some way to reducing the 'bumpy ride of reality' associated with becoming a new headteacher (Draper and McMichael 1998, p.207).

Cowie and Crawford (2008) present the view that no preparation programme or experience can quite prepare people for the experience of headship and the reality of being a new headteacher. Duncan and Stock (2010) suggest that beginning school leaders are frequently left to learn on the job with many feeling isolated and lonely (Hobson and Sharp 2005). Earley and Evans (2004) found that new principals did not feel well prepared for headship despite the development of preparation programmes. Day (2003) and Holligan *et al.* (2006) suggest that in the early years of headship, the needs of new heads change quickly. Woods *et al.* (2009) suggests a need to pay more attention to the socialisation processes involved. In their useful analysis related to the Scottish context, Cowie and Crawford (2008) suggest a need to build on the preparation

experience of new heads and pay more attention to their support and development needs; they agree with Crow (2007) in identifying this as a developing research area.

If it is accepted that both preparation and induction to post are required to soften the transition from teacher leader to titular leader, it is proposed that professional development and socialisation should aim to support the novice headteachers to develop as confident professionals, willing to exercise agency and able to deal effectively with the multiple accountabilities of headship and the complexity of leadership and management.

#### *2.3.4.1. School leadership and / or management?*

It is necessary to clarify whether it is school leadership or management which is under examination within this thesis. Although the literature is consistent that management and leadership are different constructs, there is less agreement on definitions of each. Kotter (1990) argues the major activities and functions of leadership and management are quite dissimilar, management producing order and consistency and leadership producing change and direction. Bennis (1989) creating a list of 12 distinctions ending within with the well known aphorism ‘managers do things right, leaders are people who do the right thing’ (p.45). This, and the other 11 less reported distinctions, attempts to summarise the operational with the visionary, systems with people, efficiency with effectiveness and implementation with innovation. In most of these descriptions however, both leadership and management are considered as processes. Rost (1991), also a proponent of differentiating between the two constructs, agrees but adds that leadership is a multidirectional influence relationship and management is a unidirectional authority relationship.

Similar distinctions are made by writers in the field of educational leadership and management. Bolam (1999) defines educational management as ‘an executive function for carrying out agreed policy’ whereas educational leadership has ‘at its core the responsibility for policy formation and, where appropriate, organisational transformation’ (p.194). Accepting that there is overlap between the two concepts Cuban (1988) considers management as a maintenance activity but Bush (1999), as with Kotter (1990) and Bennis (1989), also associates leadership with change. As interest in educational leadership has continued to grow, so does the extent of the literature and related commentary. Glatter (2009) offers what he refers to as a contemporary perspective of leadership as a complex, interactive, social process (p.226), accepting that it is a process, but a social one, reflective of Rost’s (1991) view of a

multidirectional influence relationship. This is helpful when considering the development of leaders, supporting the underpinning philosophy of this thesis in its belief in relational and interpersonal ability. However if this view of leadership is accepted, this could infer that management, as a uni-directional authority relationship, is less complex and a less interactive or social process.

How school leadership is conceptualised in Scotland has changed; last century the emphasis was on the management skills required of promoted posts but that 'today, the debate has turned to the role of the leader' (SEED 2007, p.24). With ideas of distributed leadership, teacher leaders, leaders of learning and leaders at all levels it appears that the notion of leadership in Scottish Education has become more palatable to the education community than that of management. Taking Rost's (1991) view that leadership is about influence and management is about authority, it could be argued that the distinction is made not on theoretical grounds but to reinforce the expectations from TP21 and placate the sensitivities of professionals with expectations of autonomy.

Currently, the term 'management' is not prominent in the policy discourse surrounding school leadership in Scotland but is included with the HMIE quality indicators and the SfH. 'How Good is Our School?' (HGIOS 3) (HMIE 2007b) includes 'management' with the support of staff (Section 7), differentiating it from the leadership indicators (Section 9). This suggests an evolution of thinking as the earlier iteration HGIOS 2 (HMIE 2002) separated 'resources' (Section 6) from 'management, leadership and quality assurance' (Section 7). The SfH is described by Government as a definition of the leadership and management capabilities of headteachers. In describing headteachers' professional actions it clearly states that headteachers have to both lead and manage (SEED 2005c 3.1). However within the professional actions within the SfH 'leadership' predominates apart from the reference to the 'management of resources'. There is much more explicit reference to management within the union publications (EIS 2010) but the inference surrounding 'management' within this discourse is less positive. As was introduced earlier in this thesis (2.3.2) some consider that every teacher has a leadership role to play (EIS 2010), but that management is only attached to a specific role(s). This is arguable as, if it is a professional responsibility to demonstrate leadership, albeit in a narrow context, the development of some degree of management skill (and self-management discipline) is also needed in order for teacher leaders to progress their practice. It could be argued that 'teacher leadership' is acceptable semantics for professional autonomy - every teacher's responsibility for effective pedagogy in another guise.

Management ability, i.e. skilled organisation of knowledge and information, decision making and communication systems, projects and resources appears from the discourse less important, or at least intellectually inferior to concepts of leaderships and behaviours of leaders. Although some time has passed, the metaphor of James March in 1978 is still an amusing reminder that a focus on the issues of organisation should not be overlooked at the expense of 'lofty conceptions' of the headteacher's role which may conflict with day to day reality - or, according to March 'creating bus schedules with footnotes from Kierkegaard' (March 1978, p.223).

One of the arguments of this thesis is that the policy dialogue has been too single-minded on the benefits of leadership and it is timely for value to be placed upon on effective management and organisational skills. Some recent commentators agree: Bush (2008) argues that leadership and management should be given equal prominence for schools to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. West-Burnham (2002) considers the two concepts not as competitive but as symbiotic, each compromised in the absence of the other. Glatter (2006; 2009) proposes a renewed focus on issues of organisation as management development in education is now given too little attention.

Although it is accepted that there are differences between the two constructs, the relationship between the concepts of leadership and management is not simple or static. Huber (2004) agrees, that in order to influence teachers' educational actions and learning activities of pupils the combination of leadership or management 'often perceived as contrary by school leaders loses its contradictory character' (p.673). It is proposed, therefore, that despite the lack of policy recognition for management, preparation for school leadership roles and support within the novice phase of headship should consider both leadership and management activity.

This research considers assigned leadership and explores the support offered to those newly appointed in titular leadership roles with contractual responsibility for leadership and management of the school. It is proposed that in taking the school forward to achieve common goals, headteachers and depute headteachers will need to both lead and manage. As such this thesis does not emphasise the difference between the two concepts and treats the roles of school leader and school manager as equally relevant.

In summary the first aim of the literature review was to examine the policy context for leadership development with particular reference to Scottish education. The review has established that school leadership is an important notion; there is some empirical evidence that it makes a difference to pupil outcome and clear policy direction, in the

UK and across the developed world, that leadership is linked to the ambitions for education. The review has also established that many teachers do not aspire to headship because the role is perceived as tangled, greedy - and, particularly in rural areas, an isolating experience which may involve juggling identities of teacher and manager. There are indications that standards-based qualifications are valuable but research continues to support the view that the novice phase of headship is challenging and necessitates both development and socialisation to the role. The review points towards layers of complexity: varied notions of leadership; changing conceptions of headship; ambiguity in professional and contractual responsibility and shifting relationships between national government, local authorities and schools, all of which offer rich seams to mine for greater knowledge and understanding.

The focus of the review now turns to the support which can be offered after appointment to a headteacher or depute headteacher post, specifically formal headteacher mentoring.

## **2.4. The rationale and evidence for mentoring as a leadership development approach**

Having established that it is important to prepare people for school leadership roles the focus turns to supporting them in the transition to headship. Mentoring is a frequently used approach in the development of school leaders (examples are Daresh and Playko 1990, Daresh and Playko 1992a&b, Walker *et al.* 1993, Daresh 1995; 2004, Low *et al.* 1994, Bolam *et al.* 1995, Bush and Coleman 1995, Southworth 1995, Hobson and Sharp 2005, Hansford and Ehrich 2006, Smith 2007, Duncan and Stock 2010), described as a ‘major strategy’ by Hansford and Ehrich (2006 p.36). There is policy support for mentoring as a development approach for educational leaders in Scotland (overviewed in 2.4.6) but it is consistently described in conjunction with coaching. The assumption that coaching and mentoring are valuable leadership development tools appears to be widely accepted by education and other public service policy makers (Duncan and Stock 2010) but less clarity exists on what is understood by the processes.

The coaching industry<sup>4</sup> is growing fast (CIPD 2005, Cohen 2009, Couto and Kauffman 2009) and became popular as a leadership development approach for headteachers in Scotland following Scottish Government support of the Columba 1400 Headteacher

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<sup>4</sup> Coaching emerged first from sport where tennis coach Tim Gallwey, author of ‘Inner Tennis’ (1986), was credited by John Whitmore (1992) as creating the foundation of coaching as a form of executive development

Leadership Academy (SEED 2005). Columba 1400 is a Scottish social enterprise charity which offers residential leadership development programmes; the Headteacher Leadership Academy (HTLA) was closely associated with the policy imperative for good leadership alongside the launch of Ambitious Excellent Schools (SEED 2005b).

The evaluation of the HTLA programme reports that the intensive coaching sessions were the most powerful elements of the Columba 1400 programme for school leaders (Deakins *et al.* 2005 p.2). The leadership agenda led by the National CPD team<sup>5</sup> from 2005 -2008 was focussed around the development of coaching and mentoring in schools. This Scottish interest mirrored school leadership developments in England (Creasy and Paterson 2005, CUREE 2005). In 2007 HMle reported that they were beginning to see a shift from courses towards experiential development which takes place in the workplace (HMle 2007 p.100) listing eight forms of leadership development for school leaders. These recommendations include coaching and mentoring.

The focus on coaching and mentoring by the COSLA National CPD team was influential in the inception, design, consultation and subsequent delivery of the FRH programme where coaching was reported to encourage critical self-evaluation and personal proactivity of candidates (SEED 2006 p.5). The coaching which forms the centrepiece of the FRH was described in the evaluation as a ‘significant mechanism for forming leaders’ (Davidson *et al.* 2008 p. 68). In the early consultation documents of the FRH there was an attempt made to differentiate coaching, mentoring and assessing-although mentoring was described as drawing on many of the same skills as coaching (SEED 2006). The coach’s role in the FRH programme is stated as that of coach, mentor, tutor, facilitator and assessor (FRH 2009), but the lingering ambiguity which exists over the blurring of these roles was criticised by the FRH evaluation team (Davidson *et al.* 2008).

Coaching and mentoring have been reported as holding the ‘place of honour on the management stage (and) destined to be the leadership development approach of the 21st Century’ (Belasco 2000 p.i) but, as Davidson *et al.* (2008) highlight, the scholarly community is divided on the merits of such approaches. There is an assumption by the policy community that the use of coaching and mentoring as leadership development strategies add value in some way, but whether this is in terms of the impact on the individual, the outcome for the organisation and /or the return on investment for the

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<sup>5</sup> The National CPD team created post McCrone have moved between Learning and Teaching Scotland, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scottish Government

employer is not clear. There is concern by some scholars on the 'conceptual looseness' (Davidson *et al.* 2008, p.31) of person centred leadership development relationships. Other writers agree, Conger (2004) questioning what is 'inside the black box of coaching' (Conger 2004 p.1) with others concerned that researchers pay insufficient attention on any negative aspects of mentoring (Ehrich *et al.* 2004).

The second aim of the literature review is to critique the rationale and evidence for the use of mentoring as a leadership development strategy in schools. As policy support for mentoring in leadership is often described in conjunction with coaching, before the use of mentoring can be investigated in any depth, greater understanding of the concepts of coaching and mentoring is required.

#### 2.4.1. Coaching and mentoring - a definitional tussle

As introduced above, the terms coaching and mentoring are often used together in the policy literature. This thesis accepts that coaching and mentoring are both individualised, person-centred approaches to leadership development predicated on the concept of a relationship and 'helping conversation' or developmental interaction between two individuals but understands them as different constructs. Developmental interactions involve exchanges between two or more people with the goal of personal or professional development and D'Abate's (2003) examination of nomenclature - 'what's in a name' - advances thinking considerably. However it appears that the plea for a consistent taxonomy is unheard at the current time.

Suggett (2006) states that, like Hobson (2003) with reference to the English school leadership context, national bodies and senior educational leaders are grappling with different understandings and definitions of coaching and that reaching an agreed definition has 'proved almost impossible' (Suggett 2006). Some authors use the terms coaching and mentoring interchangeably (Hobson 2003) or are 'mixed up' (Gray 1998) but this is problematic as the validity of considering coaching and mentoring synonymously is questionable. The inclusion of coaching within mentoring would appear to be a contentious issue. Some see coaching as one of a number of mentoring activities, often having a more skill specific focus (Clutterbuck 1992). Gibb (1999) describes the definitions as elastic and that mentoring can be characterised as a 'grand name for coaching' (p.1060). Other commentators agree that mentoring is the broader concept, with coaching one component of a mentoring relationship alongside peer support, socialisation, guiding, directing and counselling (Bush and Coleman 1995, Hobson 2003, Luck 2004, Hobson and Sharp 2005). Others argue for a broader

understanding of coaching which includes some processes normally included in mentoring, such as a focus on the psycho-social elements (Popper and Lipshitz 1992).

Swaffield (2004) considers both coaches and mentors to be concerned with the performance of specific people, aligning the two with counselling. Similarly, CUREE (2005) considers mentoring to have elements of both coaching and counselling. Stokes (2003) agrees that mentoring and counselling are related, Connelly *et al.* (2003) refers to a 'definitional tussle' (p.6) with mentoring and common assumptions about counselling, all of which adds complexity to the semantic argument.

Some of the ambiguity may arise from pragmatic rather than philosophical grounds where the approach used depends on who is involved and what is expected from the relationship. In practice what may occur is that the previous experiences of the mentor or coach will determine whether they are in a position to offer direct advice and guidance in an expert to novice relationship. Swaffield (2004) considers that coaches and mentors have generally had experience in the same role as the person they are working with, contrasting that with 'critical friends'. Duncan and Stock (2010) consider coaches to have high levels of knowledge in specific skills (p.297), however others would disagree (Connelly *et al.* 2003) describing the coach as not necessarily working from a position of expertise but on the premise that clients have the answers or solutions themselves (p.4).

A non-directive concept of coaching was used by Columba 1400 (Deakins *et al.* 2005) and it was from this understanding that the National CPD Leadership Team constructed the FRH programme. Davidson *et al.* (2008) reports the general perception of candidates on the FRH programme that coaching is non-directive, fitting with Whitmore's concept of 'helping them to learn rather than teaching them' (1996 p.8). Some commentators disagree on this perspective, considering coaches to be very directive, skill or performance orientated in their approach (Swaffield 2004). D'Abate *et al.* (2003) suggests a great deal of conceptual confusion exists in the literature and there is a need to 'better understand the meaning of developmental interaction constructs for the field to advance with more certainty, clarity, and agreement' (p.365).

The debate could continue with sports coaches and life coaches at opposing ends of a spectrum but this is not particularly helpful without the recognition that there are distinctions between forms and types of helping conversations such as coaching and mentoring, just as there are differing approaches understood and recognised with

counselling (Stokes 2003). D'Abate's taxonomy (2003) provides a comprehensive matrix for nomenclature but it is proposed that transactional analysis allows a simpler theoretical model which can be used to help develop a shared understanding of different kinds of developmental interactions.

#### 2.4.1.1. *Towards a model of the helping conversation*

A transactional analysis (TA) model may be useful in conceptualising the distinctions between the different approaches taken by any of the talking therapies or helping conversations such as mentoring, coaching and counselling. Berne (1961) conceived TA as a theory, building upon earlier Freudian work on the individual personality, to explain human behaviour in relation to others. TA was described by Berne (1961) as a 'unified system of individual and social psychiatry' (p.11). Berne's work considered Freud's personality theories involving three states of id, ego and superego as 'concepts... [and not] phenomenological realities' (1961 p.4) and argued, in the early days of psychotherapy, that there were observable behaviours which could be used to help people in their relationships and communications. It is recognised that the psychoanalytic theory of TA is not wholly accepted by the psychotherapy world as it was considered an oversimplification and too significant a departure from Freud's theory. However Berne's ideas still appear to resonate with people who seek to improve their understanding of human interaction, communication, motivation and behaviour and TA methods have been refreshed and expanded (Stewart and Joines 1991) but rarely evaluated. Neath (1995) reports on limited but generally supportive evidence of TA being used as an approach to training and development but all are self reports and based on small samples.

TA has not been applied directly to leadership but Northouse (2010) does consider the 'ideas interesting and can elucidate leader follower interactions' (p.274). As TA offers a psychological theory of social interactions and a way to frame understanding of the interactions between people this thesis suggests it has relevance in building a model of the relationships involved in coaching and mentoring. It is of note that TA emerges from the field of psychotherapy and, as highlighted in 2.4.1, both coaching and mentoring have been aligned to forms of counselling (Stokes 2003, Swaffield 2004, Swaffield and MacBeath 2005).

This thesis accepts that coaching and mentoring are both individualised, person-centred approaches to leadership development predicated on the concept of a relationship and helping conversation between two individuals. This interaction can be viewed as a

series, or interplay, of transactions; each of which a 'unit of social intercourse' (Berne 1964 p.29). TA offers a way to analyse the transactions which occur in coaching and mentoring relationships and conceptualising the distinctions between the different approaches. Using a TA model, an authoritative 'parent-child' relationship reflects the mentor as guide, expert tutor or directive coach but where the 'adult-adult' relationship is indicative of non-directive coaching, peer mentoring or perhaps reflective of more recent discussions surrounding the role of school improvement partner or critical friend (Swaffield 2007, Gibbs and Angelides 2008).

Although this critique indicates that there are differing understandings of what coaching involves, an operational definition is not sought in this thesis as coaching is not the focus of this study. A definition of formal mentoring for the purposes of this thesis has been offered in 1.4, the review now offers an analysis of the mentoring literature in relation to this study.

#### 2.4.1.2. *Towards a definition of mentoring*

The importance of mentoring relationships in adult development has been documented for centuries. Scholars of mentoring remind us that the term appears to have derived from Homer's *Odyssey* where it is recorded that Odysseus entrusted Mentor to tutor and raise his son, Telemachus. Daresh (2004) suggests that it is this 'image of the wise and patient counsellor serving to shape and guide the lives of younger colleagues' (p.498) which lives on in modern definitions. Mentoring as a form of management development is predominately a concept identifiable in Western cultures (Bright 2005), the majority of research in the field relates to the US and Europe where the term began to be defined in management development literature from the 1970s (Applebaum *et al.* 1994).

There is general consensus that mentoring is an evolving dynamic relationship between two individuals but that there is much debate over any more detailed definition. Levinson *et al.* (1978) in his seminal work on the mentor function in young men, describes the mentor as a critical actor in the development process who teaches, coaches, supports and guides a mentee towards developing and fulfilling the mentee's potential - 'a mixture of parent and peer' (p.73). Sheehy (1976), with reference to young women, defines the mentor as a 'non-parental role model who actively provides guidance support and opportunity for the protégé' (p.34). Shein (1978) includes similar conceptions of mentor and adds opener of doors, protector, sponsor or successful leader. Roche (1979) considers a mentor as someone who takes a personal interest in

the protégé's career and who guides or sponsors (p. 15). Gladstone (1988) defines mentors as 'trusted counsellors or guides who provide direction toward a line of thought or inclination - developing personal concern and responsibility in assisting others' (p.9). Ragins (1989) described a mentor as higher ranking, influential individual who has 'advanced experience and knowledge and who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to careers' (p.2). Malderez (2001) defines mentoring as 'support given by one (usually more experienced) person for the growth and learning of another, and for their integration into and acceptance by a specific community' (p. 57). Zellers, Howard, and Barcic (2008) synthesise a contemporary definition of mentoring as a relationship in which a mentor supports the 'professional and personal development of another by sharing his or her experiences, influence or expertise' (p.4).

The literature offers diverse uses of the mentor and mentoring and recognises different types of relationship; Phillips-Jones (1982) identified six types of mentors ranging from the traditional mentor who serves as an advocate, educator, and constant presence in the life of the mentee, to the 'invisible godparent'. Anderson and Shannon (1988) provide a three-part model of mentoring; firstly, as role model, nurturer and caregiver; secondly through teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending and finally by acting as an observer who offers feedback and facilitates social support. Burlew (1991) also identifies three types of mentoring relationships: the mentor serving as trainer, facilitating the mastery of a job; as educator, preparing the mentee for a new position or new responsibilities; or as developer, facilitating the growth of the mentee. Smith (2007) makes distinctions between roles and tasks of the mentor; roles proffered are advisor, catalyst, critical friend, guide, listener, role model, sounding board, strategist, supporter, tactician and teacher. Daresh (2004) notes 'mentoring needs to be understood as a combination of most, if not all, of these individual role descriptors' (p.500).

In 1978, Levinson *et al.* report that no word in use is adequate to convey the nature of the mentoring relationship (p.97) and other authors comment that mentoring is referred to in disparate (Healy and Welchert 1990) or elusive (Piper and Piper 2000) terms. In 1985, Bogat and Rednar describe the problem within the mentoring literature as the 'lack of any one comprehensive, yet functional, definition' (p.851). In 1998, Chao was critical of the mentoring literature for lack of conceptual clarity. Jacobi (1991) explains the definitional vagueness as due in part to the lack of a strong theoretical base, accepted by Gibb (1999) who also offers the 'lack of theoretical clarity about what mentoring is and how formal mentoring works' (p.1060) as the reason mentoring appears to almost defy definition. Feldman (1999) suggests that the depiction has

moved from an intense, exclusive, multiyear relationship between senior and junior colleagues 'to also include a wide variety of short-term, low-intensity interactions with peers, slightly older co-workers and direct supervisors' (p. 249). Conceptualisation of mentoring and comparison across and between studies has subsequently become much more difficult. This 'definitional conundrum' (Healy and Welchert 1990, p.17) continues as Ehrich (2008) reports that there is little consensus over the meaning of mentoring (p.851). In an interesting alternative view on a shared understanding of mentoring comparing US and European perspectives with Japanese culture, Bright (2005) questions whether the increased number of definitions has resulted from a change of focus or a change of focus has resulted from more definitions. Gibb (1999) stresses that clarity of definition is not simply an academic point, as the success of mentoring is determined by those involved having an understanding of their respective roles.

Although the authors in the field do present their understanding of the term or attempt to define mentoring in their research, Luck's (2004) view is that it is a difficult concept to define as it is often used as an 'umbrella term' (p.6). D'Abate (2003) and Ehrich (2004) use the same metaphor - describing a number of activities falling under the mentoring umbrella. If this metaphor is accepted then the concept of mentoring will require a broad definition but should attempt to establish shared understanding of what is at the core of the concept, what activities are scaffolding features, what functions and purposes could be included under the canopy and which fall outwith.

Mertz (2004) argued for narrowing the definition of mentoring, as researching any concept that has as many definitions as mentoring is difficult. Others welcome a broader operational definition, noted specifically in educational leadership (Hobson 2003, Luck 2004, Suggett 2006). Bolam *et al.* (1995) states that the School Management Task Force in England and Wales while considering mentoring as a familiar concept, noted its varied application and accepted that 'mentoring is whatever the two people regard as appropriate' (p.33). This is problematic if seeking a shared conceptual understanding as Gibb (1999) suggests is necessary and also in developing the research base from which to build and test theory.

#### 2.4.1.3. *Dimensions of mentoring: process or outcome*

McClellan *et al.* (2008) presents a crucial argument in the question of defining mentoring when she posits that the deliberation over whether the definition of mentoring should be narrow or broad appears to have two dimensions. McClellan *et al.*'s dimensions of process or outcome - of what and why - are helpful in exploring

definitions of mentoring and are considered in relation to the headteacher mentoring for this study.

The first dimension McClellan *et al.* (2008) identifies relates to ideas of structure and process i.e. what experiences, relationships or learning opportunities should be considered mentoring. It can be accepted then, that mentoring is an umbrella term which covers a range of activities, and that the single label of mentoring is applied to situations that are very different from each other. According to Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) mentoring is so flexible an approach it can help almost any group of people with difficult transitions to make. From the literature it is evident that mentoring as a strategy is used across society and the recipients of the process are diverse: potential high-flyers in graduate training schemes in multinational companies; newly qualified entrants to professional communities such as in education, law, health, librarianship, social work; as induction or internship for new managers in both private and public sectors or for young people in schools or the community who are socially disadvantaged through gender, race, disability or the justice system. Mentoring therefore, it could be proposed, could benefit either the most talented or intelligent individuals or equally, form part of the social inclusion agenda.

So perhaps the key question is not what mentoring is, but what is expected as an outcome i.e. that which falls within the second dimension of mentoring (McClellan *et al.* 2008). This is helpful as it prompts examination of the purpose of mentoring rather than attempting to constrain the complexity of what mentoring might be within discussions and definitions of process. This idea almost brings thinking full circle as Levinson *et al.* (1978) defines mentoring 'not in terms of the formal role, but in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves' (p.75).

While recognising the many definitions of mentoring, it is the conceptualisation of mentoring functions offered by Kathy Kram from her work in the 1980's (Kram 1983, Kram 1985, Kram and Isabella 1985, Kram and Hall 1989) from which many other definitions have been borne. She purports that that characteristics of mentoring fall into two broad categories - career enhancing functions and psychosocial functions. In elaboration of these constructs, Kram (1985) argues that career functions are those which enhance 'learning the ropes' (p.22) and 'better enable them to get the job done' (Kram and Isabella 1985 p.117) and include sponsorship, coaching, exposure, visibility, challenging work assignments and protection. Psychosocial functions are those which enhance a sense of competence and clarity of identity with mentors acting as role models who provide friendship, counselling, acceptance and confirmation. Together

these functions enable the novice to address the challenge of the career stage; the more roles included under the mentoring umbrella the more successful the mentoring relationship.

Bright (2005) raises concerns that as definitions of mentoring have become broader and less clear, the attention of commentators has moved away from viewing mentoring as a relationship and instead towards considering it as a strategy. If the lens is focussed solely on the purpose, expected outcome and strategy of mentoring the importance of the relationship between those involved may be lost. The research question for this study explores both the process and outcome of mentoring, examining career and psychosocial functions as described by Kram (1985).

#### 2.4.1.4. *Peer Mentoring*

Hierarchical mentoring i.e. between a senior and junior colleague, has been reported as an industrial approach (Bolam *et al.* 1995). Smith (2007) recognises that although mentoring traditionally and still is often hierarchical, this is 'not always the case in modern organisations' (p.278) as mentors and mentees 'serve as both teachers and learners in a relationship based on shared purpose, co-inquiry, respect and trust' (Fritts 1998 p.3). The mentoring programme in the CSLA is based on a peer mentoring model; there is no management relationship between the expert and novice headteachers and depute headteachers involved. This is a similar model to that used in other educational studies in the UK (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Luck 2004). Kram and Isabella (1985) recognise the value of other developmental relationships in the workplace and compare conventional hierarchical mentoring with support and development which is available from peers. No direct career enhancing functions such as promotion or sponsorship can be an expected outcome of the model of mentoring used in the CSLA but the career enhancing functions of peer mentoring are described by Kram and Isabella (1985) career strategising and task related - information sharing and job-related feedback (p.117). These are considered the understanding of career enhancing functions of mentoring in this research.

Mullen (2005) describes peer mentoring where two or more people enter into a mutual mentoring relationship which each individual functions as both a mentor and a mentee to the other, emphasising mutual interdependence among members with equal balances of power. This thesis explores what is considered peer mentoring as it is between those within a community of equal organisational rank. However whether the relationship between novice and expert is one of equal power is debatable as, although equal status

in terms of assigned leadership role, the level of influence and status within the professional community of headteachers may be seen to transcend the job title. Whether in reality the novice considers mentoring in the CSLA as a peer relationship is questionable.

Rabbe and Beehr (2003) suggest that research which conceives co-workers as mentors encounter a measurement dilemma (p.272), a concern with relevance to this work. In peer mentoring, as some of the functions classically considered as the role of the mentor cannot be played out and the assigned peer mentor relationship cannot be considered in isolation from other potentially important work relationships, the direct impact of mentoring can be difficult to determine. In the CSLA it is likely that the novice headteacher will be supported by others outwith the formal mentoring relationship, the part that mentoring plays in the overall leadership development and support for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers is examined in this research.

This review indicates the definition of a mentor can differ but title offered to the person in this role remains consistent - mentor. However the term used for the person being mentored is more variable: the protégé; apprentice; learner; mentoree or the mentee. The discourse of mentoring suggests differences in the power base of the relationship and hence in the theoretical construct of mentoring used. A protégé is understood as somebody under the patronage of another, an apprentice or novice being trained by a skilled professional. These descriptions are suggestive of a beginner being dependant on the guardianship and tutelage of the expert or master craftsman, a form of mentoring reflected by, in TA terms, the parent-child relationship. Mentoree, or more commonly mentee, conveys no relationship over and above that of being somebody who is mentored and could be more likely to include an adult-adult dynamic in TA terms. Although this thesis focuses upon formal mentoring (as defined in Chapter 1.4) language such as ‘apprentice’ or ‘protégé’ does not reflect the equal power status that it is purported exists within peer mentoring relationships. For clarity, therefore, unless referring to another author’s descriptor, the term ‘mentee’ is used this study to refer to the person who is in a helping relationship with a mentor.

#### 2.4.1.5. *Formal and informal mentoring*

The distinction between formal and informal mentoring relationships is recognised in the literature and in this thesis (Healy and Welchert 1990, Chao *et al.*1992, Kim 2007, Rabbe and Beehr 2003). As described in the preceding section, it is likely that the

novice headteacher will seek relationships with others outwith formal mentoring which influences their personal and professional lives. The idea that many relationships are important to development has been established by social psychologists and sociologists (Neugarten 1975, Levinson *et al.* 1978); career enhancing or psychosocial functions from informal mentoring in the CSLA may also be provided by peers, managers or friends (Swaffield 2007, Gibbs and Angelides 2008).

This review confines its scope to formal mentoring where the employing organisation instigates a structured process. It is of note that this is a Western approach (Bright 2005) and may be a formulaic attempt by organisational development or human resource professionals to create the conditions for supportive developmental relationships in the workplace. Informal mentoring, in contrast, are spontaneous relationships which are not managed, sanctioned nor formally recognised by the organisation (Chao *et al.* 1992 p.620) and, in the same research, highlighted to have more positive outcomes when compared to formal mentoring. From a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of mentoring in corporate settings, Underhill (2006) agrees, reporting that informal mentoring had a greater effect on career outcome than formal mentoring but results were suggestive that individual characteristics were a greater determinant of outcome rather than receipt of mentoring per se. Some commentators suspect that marriages of convenience (Daresh 2004) or forced pairing (Brown 1990) violates the true spirit of mentoring (Applebaum *et al.* 1994) resulting in less positive outcomes because the relationships remain too superficial to provide sufficient developmental opportunity (Kim 2007) or tries to legislate interpersonal chemistry and personal commitment (Rabbe and Beehr 2003).

#### 2.4.2. Conceptual frameworks for mentoring

A number of theories have been put forward to explain the way learning through mentoring takes place. The theoretical and conceptual framework accepted will depend upon the process understood as mentoring and outcomes expected from the relationship. Given the varied perspectives which these frameworks offer it is therefore not surprising that a universal definition of mentoring has not evolved from the practice or scholarly community.

These differing conceptual frameworks support differing views of mentoring, for different purposes and hence mentees and mentors playing different roles. Daresh (2004) and Ehrich (2008) provide useful overviews of the conceptual frameworks which could be used to guide the analysis of mentoring for school leaders. Ehrich (2008) identifies several theoretical categories used to explain mentoring: learning theories,

developmental theories, human capital theories, theories relating to power, leadership and management theories, sponsorship theories, organisational structure and network theories and interpersonal relationship theories (p.470). Daresh (2004) presents three conceptual frameworks to explain mentoring; the cognitive frame, organisational frame and the socialisation and development frame (p.497). Each of these has relevance for considering the learning and support of new headteachers and so these are considered in turn below.

Considering mentoring for educational leaders through a cognitive development perspective, one would view the role of mentor to assist the new leader to solve problems, form ideas and patterns of thinking. Analysing mentoring through a cognitive development frame may provide insight into the growth of knowledge, understanding, judgement and decision making but may not take into account issues of psychosocial support or professional identity.

The organisational frame to analyse mentoring relationships is the most prevalent perspective from the business literature; the focus of the personnel, organisational development and human resource literature suggests that this framework is the dominant view. Mentoring has been viewed from within social exchange theory (Blau 1964) as a type of business transaction with costs and benefits (Gibb 1999) and understood as a reciprocal relationship between employees in order to benefit the organisation. Social exchange theory does offer a useful perspective to ponder why mentors mentor, although relationships based on 'reciprocal altruism' Gibbs (1999) could be viewed as a predominately private sector model. To consider mentoring for education leaders through social exchange theory would not fit closely with a peer mentoring programme, where career success or remuneration are not expected outcomes. However the altruism which is exchanged may be less material and more of a social network and sense of belonging. The organisational framework does have some relevance for employer-led mentoring but much of the language assumes hierarchical mentoring as a form of training and induction which does not fit with the model of mentoring in the CSLA.

Within the socialisation frame, authors have written of mentoring from within attachment theory - highlighting the central role of relationships in human development (Bowlby 1969, 1973). From Bowlby's initial work on child development, attachment theory has more recently been used to explain adult relationships (Hazan and Shaver 1990, Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991). In whatever context people find themselves, humans seek meaning, social ties and opportunity for learning. Mentoring is a process

which offers such connections and growth (Oglensky 2008), characterised by Levinson *et al.* (1978) as a type of love relationship. Attachment theory does offer some insight into the psychosocial functions of mentoring, what school leaders seek and expect from mentoring and why mentoring relationships evolve differently but offers a limited perspective on the career support functions.

Feeney and Bozeman (2008) consider the social ties which develop during mentoring from a social capital perspective, exploring the assumption that the most successful people have greater social networks. Mentoring is also seen from within social learning theory (Bandura 1977) where the mentee learns through observation, socialisation and the mentor acting as a role model. Mentoring through internships or for beginning teachers clearly fit within this frame but it is argued that a social learning model of mentoring would only allow part of the picture to emerge.

Theories of cognitive development, social capital, leadership and management, human capital, attachment, social exchange and social learning all offer insight to learning that takes place within mentoring. However, the socialisation and development frame (Daresh 2004) is considered the most appropriate perspective to analyse mentoring for new educational leaders in this study as it parallels Kram's key constructs of psychosocial and career enhancing functions as the novice learns the ropes of being a headteacher and assumes a new professional identity.

### 2.4.3. Gender, leadership and mentoring

Recently, the scholarly fields of women and leadership and mentoring of and for women have been fertile research areas with relevance to this thesis. The independent and joint works of Belle Rose Ragins, John Cotton, Raymond Noe and Terri Scandura, amongst others, provide a valuable base.

Although still underrepresented in the leadership ranks in politics and business, as more women occupy assigned leadership positions there has been much attention placed on the way women lead, whether it differs to the way men lead and whether women or men are most effective. There is a considerable body of research on personality and gender in general (Carducci 2009) and women and leadership in particular (Northouse 2010) detailed consideration of which is outwith the scope of this study. The review indicates, however, that what we believe to be good leadership and how leaders should behave is influenced by gender with stereotypes pervasive, well documented and highly resistant to change. It appears that men are stereotyped with agentic characteristics

such as confidence, assertiveness and decisiveness whereas women are stereotyped with communal characteristics such as sensitivity, warmth, helpfulness and care (Heilman 2001). These stereotypes affect perceptions of women as leaders but it is suggested also affect self-perception. Small *et al.* (2007) reports women as less likely to self-promote or negotiate for leadership roles than men. Although there is reason to believe that differences in self confidence is not a general phenomenon, it is possible that stereotypic sex-role expectations of women as communal and men as agentic may limit perceptions of self-efficacy for some women, leading them to question their ability for elite leadership roles.

The leadership gap where women are more in middle leadership roles than men has been described as a global phenomenon (Powell and Graves 2003). In the CSLA in 2009/2010, of the top 5% of earners, 38.1% are women, of the top 2% of earners, 30% are women. This has been a stable picture since 2006/2007 (Audit Scotland). The picture of leadership of schools however, is different.

Across Scotland, in primary schools between 2006-2009, 86% of headteachers and depute headteachers were women but much less predominant, at 78% last year, in the CSLA. In secondary schools across Scotland in 2009, women made up over 43% of secondary headteachers and depute headteachers, increasing by 5% since 2006. In the CSLA the increase has been more marked; between 2006-2008, 36% of secondary headteachers and depute headteachers were women but this increased to 54% in 2009 (Audit Scotland). Conforming to the expectation that women take care and men take charge (Hoyt and Chemers 2008) may explain the predominance of women in leadership roles in primary schools, reducing in secondary and reducing still within local government. Although women are, in general terms, becoming more proportionally represented in leadership roles in schools, it is argued that this does not extend sufficiently to system wide educational leadership and public service roles in local government.

Northouse (2010) notes the lack of formal training for woman and fewer developmental opportunities at work than men, stressing the importance of mentoring as a leadership development experience. However Powell and Graves (2003) propose that women are faced with greater barriers in establishing informal mentoring than men. In this case formal mentoring provides greater access to disadvantaged populations and people who are less likely to be selected informally (Ensher and Murphy 2005) and so it is argued that formal mentoring programmes for women in or who aspire to leadership positions

are necessary<sup>6</sup>. Ragins (1989) concurs that mentors are particularly critical for women but recognise that women need and get different types of mentoring than male counterparts.

Driscoll *et al.* (2009) refer to mentoring as helping women ‘navigate the lonely sea’ (p.5) but they question the benefit of what they describe as traditional mentoring in the induction of new leaders who are not of the dominant paradigm. They promote peer mentoring aligned with feminist principles as an alternative. As described in 2.4.2, much of the historical basis of mentoring relates to concepts of male apprenticeship; the research in management development from the 1970s was associated with male career advancement and socialisation to the prevailing corporate culture. Although Driscoll *et al.* (2009) challenge the benefits arising from a hierarchical view of apprentice-based mentoring, they do appear to support Kram’s (1985) concept of mentoring for both career and psychosocial functions. Putsche *et al.* (2008) describes feminist mentoring as emphasising relational qualities ‘including empathy, mutual contributions and benefits, empowerment, the integration of psychosocial support into the experience and active participation on the part of the mentee’ (p.516). O’Brien *et al.* (2008) propose greater emphasis on the psychosocial function of mentoring in woman compared to men. Other commentators include emotive expression, an ethic of care as a source of knowledge (Reger 2001, Driscoll *et al.* 2009) and the integration of home and work lives (Chandler 2006) into feminist frameworks of mentoring.

Feminist mentoring could be considered with the TA model as an adult-adult mentoring. Putsche *et al.* (2008) contrasts this with traditional hierarchical and directive models of mentoring where the mentee is a passive subject ‘moulded by an omnipotent mentor’ (p.516). This traditional master: apprentice relationship is considered using the TA model as a parent-child mentoring relationship.

Research on mentoring on feminist principles is of interest as it suggests that mentoring for women should not rely on fitting women into the existing institutional culture. The work on barriers to mentoring for female managers or mentoring as a strategy to promote diversity within management structures has limited comparability to schools as women are not a minority group at depute headteacher or headteacher level and, it

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<sup>6</sup> There is also a body of work specifically related to race and mentoring (Thomas 1990, Dreher *et al.* 1996) however this is felt to be less relevant to this thesis given the demographics of the CSLA and so is not considered further in this review.

could be argued, represent the existing institutional culture particularly in primary schools. However the development of peer mentoring relationships as Driscoll *et al.* (2009) and Smith (2007) suggest may allow new headteachers to develop their own professional identity which challenges existing norms. Traditional hierarchical mentoring (either by or for men or women) which is conducted in a TA parent-child model, may promote the continuation of dominant ways of being a headteacher and 'passing on the baton' (Low *et al.* 1994 p.35) of outdated organisational practice.

Ehrich (2008), reviewing a limited body of research on cross-gender mentoring highlights some potential risks that can emerge from these relationships. For example, cross-gender mentoring dyads may foster stereotypical behaviours in men and women (Clawson and Kram 1984, Schramm 2000) such as dependant father/daughter relationships. Ehrich (2008) also notes the risk of sexual dynamics and related risks such as jealousy from spouses and organisational gossip in male: female mentoring. Should these risks play out into actuality this dynamic alters the expectations of both parties and subsequent outcome. Bolam *et al.* (1995) reported that only a small minority of women saw gender differences as problematic, Hansman (1998) Kram (1985) and Schramm (2000) agree, suggesting that although there are risks inherent within the male: female mentoring dyad, such risks can and should be minimised (Erich 2008). This all assumes however, that cross gendered mentoring relationships are heterosexual and risks arise from this sexual dynamic.

It was noted that on the Headteacher Mentoring Pilot scheme in England and Wales it was more common for males to have a male mentor than for female head teachers to be mentored by a woman (Bolam *et al.* 1995). This is surprising given the number of female headteachers but could be related to the employer's perception of who makes a 'good mentor' and the willingness of headteachers to undertake the formal mentoring role. That men are more often mentors compared to women is consistent with meta-analysis of mentoring research (O'Brien *et al.* 2008).

What is relevant from the work of Ragins (1989) was the recognition that the criticality of mentoring for women was related to building self-confidence. Women have been reported to have lower self confidence in almost all achievement tasks when compared to men (Lenney 1981, Lenney *et al.* 1983), although others have proposed that there is bias in the design and reporting of this early work. Clark (1993) raises questions on the specific task and social comparison features of the situations examined, reporting higher levels of confidence in women in 'comforting tasks' than men. More recent work suggests that these findings are responses to complex stereotypical reactions and

prejudices. Although not agreed by all commentators, there is empirical evidence that women lead in different ways to men, using more democratic or participatory styles (van Engen and Willemsen 2004). Northouse (2010) however suggests that this finding is indicative of prejudice; the greater use of participatory styles is an adaptive response to the way a woman would be devalued if seen to be leading in a directive or autocratic manner, in a male environment, or by men. It is argued that if women lead in different ways to men - for what ever reason - then they may mentor in a more participatory manner, aligned with the feminist framework offered by Putsche *et al.* (2008).

It is proposed that mentoring for new, male or female, school leaders supports the novice in learning the ropes of their new role and helps them develop self confidence in their new professional identity. Whether the form of mentoring used in the CSLA fits within a feminist framework or a traditional master: apprentice model is explored.

This section so far has considered what mentoring is, what it sets out to do and how it is understood in terms of functions and as a mode of learning. The review now moves on to consider whether mentoring makes a difference to those involved.

#### 2.4.4. Evidence for the benefits of mentoring

There is a considerable body of evidence; empirical, conceptual and anecdotal, which reports the positive benefits of mentoring both as a form of work related learning and as a career development strategy. In 1978, Collins and Scott commented that 'everyone who makes it has had a mentor' but the relevance of this is more related to the initial emergence of mentoring from a business model where much of the evidence still emerges. Underhill (2006) reports a significant mentoring effect in a meta-analysis of the outcome of mentoring over the past 20 years in corporate settings.

Gilbreath *et al.* (2008) conclude that mentoring is a potentially powerful career development strategy that can offer benefits to the mentor, the mentee and the organisation. The findings from research which has focussed on career development has indicated that those who are mentored experience greater compensation (Dreher and Ash 1990, Allen *et al.* 2004), career satisfaction (Fagenson 1989, Allen *et al.* 2004), career mobility (Scandura 1992), and career commitment (Colarelli and Bishop 1990, Allen *et al.* 2004) and learn the ropes faster and more effectively than those who are not mentored. Mentoring is considered such a career necessity by some that the difficulties faced by women and minority groups in finding mentors was reported as a major career liability (Hurley and Fagenson-Eland 1996, Ragins and Cotton 1996). However there is a view that prescriptions for management practice soon outpaced any

empirical research to the contrary (Phillips-Jones 1982). Underhill (2006) highlights that more quality studies on lesser reported outcomes are required, particularly in differentiating process and outcome between men and women. Feldman (1999) reports the bulk of the evidence suggests that mentoring can have positive effects on mentees' careers, but with the caveat that results are not consistently found across different sets of dependent variables and the magnitude of the results has been modest. Allen *et al.* (2008) are also critical of the quality of research examining mentoring and helpfully pinpoint the most pressing methodological concerns (p.344).

Although the bulk of the earlier work on mentoring at work relates to the business world from whence it emerged, there is much recent activity about mentoring as a form of professional development in the public services. Examples of the breadth of this literature are as follows: Higher Education (Cawyer *et al.* 2002, Putsche 2008, Driscoll *et al.* 2009); Public Service Managers (McDougall 2006); Social Work (Kelly 2001); Occupational Therapy (Scheerer 2007); Physiotherapy (Jarvis 1991, Godges 2004); Nursing (Greggs-McQuilkin 2004) Medicine (Walker *et al.* 2002) and other Health Care Professionals (Koberg *et al.* 1998, McAlearney 2005).

#### 2.4.4.1. *Mentor or Tormentor?*

Although the bulk of work that has been conducted is reported positively, it is not an entirely affirmative picture (Scandura 1998). Ehrich *et al.* (2004) reports that the body of work on negative aspects of mentoring is not substantial but Simon and Eby (2003) do present a useful typology of negative mentoring experiences. They suggest that mentoring researchers should view the effects as a continuum from effective or functional to ineffective or dysfunctional (p.1100). Ragins *et al.* (2000) talks of 'marginal' mentoring, a concept which is supported by Simon and Eby (2003) recognising that mentor type and mentoring quality can be diverse.

Gilbreath *et al.* (2009) accepts that mentoring relationship quality and the perceived effectiveness of a given mentoring approach can vary across organisations and employees. Dawley *et al.* (2008) considers that the effort and expense put into mentoring (and other forms of management training) do not overcome shortfalls in what he describes as perceived organisational support- fair procedures, rewards and job conditions<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> This is in keeping with classic organisational behaviour and motivational theory where Herzberg's 'hygiene' factors (1964:1986) i.e. relationships, status and security, have to be in place before workers can be motivated to move towards personal growth and advancement.

Duck (1994) and Long (1997) recognise that as with any interpersonal relationship, there can be a 'dark side', Berglas (2002) agrees, reporting the dangers of coaching, and Oglensky (2008) describes mentoring relationships evolving into 'emotionally laden attachments' (p.420) and highlights that, as with any human relationship, closeness or intimacy can become problematic where there are complicated dynamics of loyalty. Feldman (1999) suggests that toxic mentees can be as prevalent as toxic mentors. He argues that mentees as much as mentors contribute to the interpersonal dynamics that result in dysfunctional outcomes - with mentors, as well as mentees, being hurt by destructive relationships.

Having overviewed mentoring as a form of work related learning or a career development strategy in business and other public services the review now focuses on the establishing the benefits, or otherwise, of mentoring headteachers.

#### 2.4.5. Evidence for the benefits of mentoring new headteachers

As highlighted earlier in this thesis, mentoring is a frequently used approach in the preparation and development school leaders. It is important to clarify that 'pre-service' mentoring in education i.e. professional induction for new teachers or as part of formal headteacher preparation programmes have a separate, yet related, body of research literature. As such, mentoring which occurs through the teacher induction scheme in Scotland (Menter *et al.* 2010) and as part of the SQH (Reeves *et al.* 2005) or FRH (Davidson *et al.* 2008) offer insight to professional learning and developmental relationships in Scottish Schools but this thesis focuses on employer-led mentoring for novice school leaders in the induction phase after appointment.

There is policy support for mentoring as a development approach for educational leaders in Scotland (overviewed in 2.4.6) and mentoring is widely accepted by education and other public service policy makers as a valuable professional development approach (Duncan and Stock 2010). However this could be an assumption based upon no more than a feeling of common sense although the amount of programmes, people involved in and descriptive reports about mentoring suggests that it is helpful in some way. As was introduced in 1.4 and throughout the literature review the theoretical base and conceptual frameworks and even nomenclature for mentoring are loose which, it is proposed, has limited the development of knowledge generation.

There is, however, evidence that new head teachers value the support of other head teachers, and for formal mentoring arrangements to have been perceived to be successful by the majority of participants (Daresh and Playko 1992, Walker 1993, Bolam 1993, Brady 1997, Grover 1994, Low *et al.* 1994, Bush and Coleman 1995, Bolam *et al.*, 1995, Daresh 1995; 2004, Southworth 1995, Blandford and Squire 2000, Newton 2001, Luck 2004, Hobson and Sharp 2005, Hansford and Ehrich 2006, Duncan and Stock 2010). In 1995, Daresh highlights that while the idea of mentoring has been accepted as logical, there is 'not a substantial amount of valid data on which it is possible to draw any strong support' (p.8). A decade or so later, whilst recognising the significant body of literature on mentoring for school leaders, Hansford and Ehrich (2006) report concern that there has not been a great attempt at identifying and isolating specific outcomes of mentoring for principals from empirical research. Luck (2004), with specific reference to headteacher mentoring in England and Wales, reported that evaluation in general appeared to be 'an underdeveloped aspect of many schemes' (p.11). Luck also comments that if evaluation did take place, the focus is on the process rather than on the outcome (2004 p.11) which concurs with the findings of Hansford and Ehrich (2006) where those involved found it difficult to articulate the expected outcomes for mentors or mentees.

Daresh (1995) is critical of researchers who, he feels, over generalise conclusions from limited local findings or situations where the purposes of the studies were 'probably unclear in the first place' (p.14). Should mentoring be difficult to define it is not surprising that the anticipated outcomes of the relationship go unarticulated. If it is not clear what would constitute a positive outcome, it is not unexpected that goal-focussed evaluations which consider the impact are not used and process driven evaluations are more common. Hobson and Sharp (2005) agree - in their findings from a systematic review of literature relating to mentoring headteachers they highlight notable gaps in the evidence base.

Table 1 depicts the studies from the review which are most influential to this work as they report work on mentoring headteachers which can be directly compared to the CSLA context.

Author(s)	Date	Publication type	Data collection tool	Findings / Commentary
Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Pocklington, K., Weindling, D.	1995	Research report	Questionnaire survey (541) and interviews (16)	Mentoring should be seen as an element of support for new headteachers. No national scheme continues allowing regional variation across England and Wales. Mentoring is valued and differs from other forms of induction support.
Bush, T., Coleman, M.	1995	Case study	7 mentoring dyads interviewed, logs and interview with LEA coordinator	Mentoring is a significant element in the professional development of headteachers, mentors also reported gains. Supportive role of mentor noted and concern that if a more rigorous approach to induction replaced more supportive arrangements.
Daresh, J.C.	1995	Literature review;	Systematic review 1984-1994	Limitations in the conceptual frameworks; need to identify and test underlying assumptions for practice.
Daresh, J.C.	2004	Scholarly paper		Assumptions about mentoring, limitations and practical problems are identified, theoretical frameworks offered.
Duncan, H.E., Stock, M.J.	2010	Research report	Questionnaire survey (187)	Mentoring as induction confirmed as important by all respondents -noted as particularly crucial in rural areas. Greatest role is helping the novice manage relationships.
Ehrich, L., Hansford, B., Tennant, L.	2004	Literature review	Structured review 1986-2000; education (159), business (151) and medical mentoring (8)	82.4% studies reported positive outcomes for mentees, 4 studies (2.5 %) exclusively problematic outcomes Although a significant review, the educational mentoring research also included teacher mentoring.
Hansford, B., Ehrich, L.	2006	Literature review	Structured review, 40 papers from 1987-2004	MENTEES; 31 studies reported positive outcomes for mentees, 11 studies reported negative outcomes. MENTORS; 16 studies reported positive outcomes for mentors, 19 negative outcomes for mentors.
Hobson, A., Sharp, C.	2005	Literature review	Systematic review 24 research papers <2002	Wide range of benefits reported - most commonly psychological wellbeing but also professional skills. Also of benefit to mentors. Four main factors determine success.
Luck, C.	2004	Research report	Telephone interviews with 27 participants and 5 providers	All mentees and mentors reported positive benefit. Uses the skills of the NPQH in England as descriptors of 'effective' heads. Shows how regional variation developed from the Bolam (1992) task force work.
Southworth, G.	1995	Reflective paper	Reports and reflects on evaluative findings	Reviews mentoring in England. Many self-reported benefits to mentoring but raises concerns that rhetoric may be too distant from reality and may pass on conservative role assumptions.

Table 1 Summary of comparative studies

#### 2.4.6. Mentoring in the education policy literature

Mentoring programmes for newly appointed headteachers have been included in education policy for England and Wales since 1992, but such an approach was not national policy in Scotland although there is often an assumption in the literature that policy is UK wide. Hobson and Sharp (2005) review the research evidence on mentoring new headteachers and state that they describe the UK policy context but make no reference to Scotland or Northern Ireland. Pocklington and Weindling (1996) report on what is described as the 'national pilot headteacher mentoring scheme in the UK' but report solely on the English and Welsh programme. Bolam *et al.* (1995) discusses recent 'British experience' and refers to a national evaluation of the British scheme. This is problematic.

The national mentoring scheme in England and Wales referred to by these authors preceded the establishment of the Scottish Parliament as a devolved national legislature in 1999, however all educational matters have been the responsibility of what was originally the 'Scotch Education Department' and Scottish Office throughout and since the 19th century. Although, as discussed in 2.4.3, standards based developments and related qualifications for Headteachers were broadly consistent across the UK over the last 10 years, education policy in Scotland remains separate and different to that in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and so is worthy of exploration.

There has been no nationally driven induction scheme for newly appointed headteachers in Scotland; unlike England and Wales there has been no nationally coordinated formal mentoring programme beyond the mentoring included within SQH/FRH. However some Scottish local authorities built formal mentoring programmes for headteachers into local policy frameworks. There is research on formalised employer-led mentoring programmes for newly appointed school leaders in other countries: England and Wales (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Pocklington and Weindling 1996); Canada (Sackney and Walker 2006, Robinson *et al.* 2006); USA (Daresh and Playko 1992, Duncan and Stock 2010); Australia (Brady 1993); Singapore (Ho and Chong, 1993, Low, Chong and Walker 1994); New Zealand (Smith 2007) but to date there has been no published research which has examined a formal mentoring programme for newly appointed headteachers within the Scottish policy context. The following section details the local arrangement which forms the basis of the empirical element of this research.

#### 2.4.7. The history of the development of the mentoring programme in the CSLA

The CSLA introduced a mentoring programme in 2005 as the Scottish National CPD team placed a renewed emphasis on coaching and mentoring. There had reportedly been a previous scheme in place and so, to establish the history of mentoring in the CSLA, any background, rationale or arrangements for mentoring prior to 2005 was explored through a search of the policy archive. No evidence appeared to be retained in electronic format although it was believed, through anecdotal reports, that some headteachers who had been involved throughout had retained a paper record. This archive was sought by personally contacting individual headteachers who had been mentoring for some time and asking if they held any documentation on the processes prior the instigation of the current arrangements.

From this search, it was found that the policy arrangements surrounding mentoring for newly appointed headteachers in the CSLA was introduced 1987. The programme aimed to support new headteachers and was managed by the link Education Officer for the school with the new incumbent. A two day residential training programme was required of the experienced headteachers who had agreed to act as mentors. The aims of this training programme and what was included was not explicit within the documentation available. In the 1987 policy, mentoring was described as ‘an informal, one to one relationship which lasts for the first year of appointment as a headteacher’. The criteria for matching as stated within the policy document was that the ‘mentor would be selected on the basis of size of school and geographical area’. The mentor was selected by the link Education Officer or then Advisor for the school. Following the year long period of mentoring, headteachers were then invited to join a peer support group. This progression was also managed by the school link Education Officer although the details of matching criteria and aims of the peer groups were not available. It was clear however, from conversations with headteachers who were involved at the time, that the progression to peer group was only considered appropriate after the newly appointed headteacher had undertaken the allotted year long period of mentoring.

There are no details available as to how many headteachers participated in the mentoring arrangements either as mentor or mentee. What is known is that 14 peer support groups, each group with between 4-8 members, were ongoing in 2005. These peer groups necessitated no employer input and could be considered informal voluntary networks. Neither the peer support groups nor the mentoring programme were evaluated and it is not clear from authority records exactly when the mentoring arrangements for newly appointed headteachers stopped. One headteacher colleague

recollected that this programme fell into abeyance in the 1990s due to a lack of headteacher mentors. When asked her perception of why this was the case, her recollection was that the mentors felt under-supported in dealing with the emotional aspects of mentoring. Although this is only one recollection, it provides useful background as to one reason why the 1987 programme ceased to exist as a formal, employer-led, induction strategy.

Following the recommendation of an authority consultative group on headteacher support, a decision was taken in 2005 to resurrect mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and, in a shift from the previous arrangements, included depute headteachers. The timing of this response was consistent with the prominence of leadership development and initiatives on coaching and mentoring at a National level as discussed earlier in this thesis. The policy arrangements which emerged from this consultation process - The Headteacher and Depute Headteacher Mentor Programme Policy and Procedures August 2005 - forms the basis of practice to be explored in this thesis (Appendix C). This policy was implemented at start of session 2005 with all newly appointed headteachers and deputes having the offer of mentoring. All existing headteachers and depute headteachers were invited to join a pool of mentors to provide formal mentoring to a newly appointed headteacher or depute headteacher over their first year in post. There was a positive response from experienced headteachers and, following a day of training, the mentor pool was established and the matching process initiated. The matching process was overseen by a small working group of headteachers and officers.

Mentors and mentees were put into contact with one another following the agreed process and, if nothing further had been communicated, after a year the officer responsible would establish whether the dyad were still within a formal mentoring process, by letter to the mentor. If not, the mentor was 'freed' to go back to the pool and the cycle repeated. Refresher training and support sessions were offered to mentors as part of the authority level CPD programme.

The policy in 2005 stated that after a year in a mentoring relationship each mentor would be entitled to an honorarium of £500 per mentee, paid on submission of invoice to the department. The rationale behind the offer of payment at the time was to ensure teaching headteachers, and the schools which they led, were not disadvantaged. For example, should a teaching headteacher of a rural school relinquish their management time on a regular basis in order to support a colleague, it could be argued that the school's devolved budget would be adversely affected.

On reflection, there was an unwritten assumption that if payment was requested, the mentoring meetings had been undertaken outwith the school day. Also problematic was the assumption that the newly appointed headteacher would (i) wish to have a mentor and (ii) attend mentoring sessions in their own time without additional payment - again on the untested assumption that they would find this of such benefit to their professional practice that they would concur.

These payment arrangements were reviewed in 2007 following feedback from School Leaders Scotland<sup>8</sup> who recommended that providing an honorarium for currently employed headteachers to mentor colleagues was not standard practice across Scotland. It was, however, felt to be more acceptable to provide payment to retired headteachers to undertake the same task. To ensure that no person or school be disadvantaged by the decision to be involved in mentoring a newly appointed colleague, the 2007 arrangements led to the honorarium being discontinued and the equivalent of three days cover being added to each mentor's devolved school budget. This would allow the teaching headteacher to be released for mentoring meetings during school time in addition to attending training and review meetings. In sum, the operational policy in the CSLA is as 2005 with the 2007 amendment related to payment (Appendix C).

#### 2.4.8. Claims and Assumptions

As introduced in Chapter 1.4.1 this purpose of this study is to explore the process and outcome of formal mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. This study set out to articulate and test the claims and assumptions behind this approach to school leadership development. A starting point for this work based research was the operational policy of the CSLA, the history of which is as described in the previous section.

To enhance understanding of McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) first dimension of mentoring, this research set out to explore and describe the processes involved. Descriptive elements felt to be of most importance to make meaning from mentoring were: what happens; when; where and how. From this descriptive knowledge, understanding of the process and models of mentoring used in the CSLA emerges and assumptions can be tested.

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<sup>8</sup> A professional association which represents secondary headteachers and depute headteachers, previously the Headteachers' Association of Scotland.

#### 2.4.8.1. *Hunting assumptions*

Making provision for a period of mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers is generally accepted by the CSLA as useful and sustainable. Deeper critique of the mentoring policy and practice establishes that this acceptance appears to be premised on assumptions around what mentoring means and how people behave. Work of Brookfield (1995) was helpful in prompting this reflective enquiry into unchecked 'common sense' and as Brookfield terms the 'conspiracy of the normal' (p.10). There was much in what was assumed about the mentoring process that was both prescriptive - what was thought to be happening - and predictive - what was thought would occur as a result (Brookfield 1995). In order for assumptions to be tested, understandings which underpin and intertwine with mentoring as a leadership development programme were teased out and articulated, as recommended by Daresh (1995).

Developing a testable series of assumptions was an iterative process informed by the literature, knowledge and experience of practice and the early stages of the empirical work. These assumptions are made explicit below:

- The match of the mentor to mentee is important and that the 'right' match is determined by the size of school which offers relevant experience and location as these are factors - 'to be taken into account' for matching in the mentoring policy (Appendix C).
- All newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers will want a mentor as it is perceived to offer a unique form of support.
- Sufficient peer headteachers will come forward to take on the mentoring role because it is valuable or beneficial to them.

The assumptions about the mentoring programme tested in this research are articulated as follows;

- Assumption 1:** Relevant experience and location are important factors in matching a mentoring dyad
- Assumption 2:** Peer headteachers will accept a nomination to become a mentor or volunteer to join the scheme because they find it a rewarding process.
- Assumption 3:** Mentoring provides a form of support which differs from other forms of leadership and management development

#### 2.4.8.2. Testing Claims

To explore McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) second dimension of mentoring, the policy aims were translated into a series of outcomes. These outcomes were expressed as claims which were tested by this research. Mentoring in the CSLA aims to support **wellbeing and effectiveness and build self confidence and independence (Appendix C)**. These four concepts form the outcomes which were expected to be achieved by the mentoring programme. It was apparent that these were not four discrete outcomes, as they are broad functions where, it is proposed, synergy and overlap exist. Using the conceptualisation of mentoring functions proposed for this thesis (2.4.3), these four concepts were separated into two claims, based upon Kram's psychosocial and career enhancing functions, recognised as separate by Allen *et al.* (2008). These claims are as follows:

This research tests the claim that mentoring achieves psychosocial outcomes;

**Claim 1: Mentoring builds self-confidence and supports wellbeing**

This research tests the claim that mentoring achieves career enhancing outcomes;

**Claim 2: Mentoring builds independence and supports effectiveness**

In sum, the purpose of this study is to explore the process and outcome of formal mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. The description of what happens throughout the process and within a relationship help make meaning about mentoring. The claims and assumptions made about the outcomes of mentoring are tested in order to understand more about this approach to leadership development which could translate into recommendations for practice.

## 2.5. Evaluating leadership development

Having established the research question for the study, the review progresses to investigate practices used to evaluate leadership development strategies. As discussed in Chapter 2.4.5, the evidence base for the impact of mentoring upon the development of school leadership is mainly self-reported, the claims untested or underlying aims and assumptions unarticulated.

Given the level of importance placed upon professional development in its widest sense, and leadership development in particular, it is not surprising that there is a political imperative around evaluation. The purpose of this aspect of the review is to examine practices used to evaluate leadership development strategies in order to inform the

methodology for this study. Audit Scotland (2005) is critical of the evaluation of leadership development in the public sector across Scotland, even with the imperative to do so as described in this excerpt:

*It could be assumed that evaluating the impact of leadership development is far from straightforward - given the political pressure to do so, it continues to be an under examined issue.*

(Audit Scotland, 2005)

The thinking behind the structure of the review may be helpful as a route through the following section; mentoring is one form of leadership development, which in turn is a form of professional learning and development. To set the broader context, the critique focuses upon the evaluation of professional learning in education by exploring three areas of weakness. The review then offers an overview of thinking in considering frameworks, models and theories to evaluate mentoring as a form of leadership development.

### 2.5.1. Evaluating professional development in education

Professional development of teachers and school leaders is widely accepted to make an important contribution in maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and is an essential component of successful school level change and development (Day 1999a&b; 2003, Harris *et al.* 2006, Bolam and Wiendling 2006, Day *et al.* 2007;2008;2009). There is widespread belief by both policy makers and researchers that professional growth through learning ultimately benefits the system which teachers serve, hence, a good thing. But, in an argument similar to determining the impact of leadership to schools (1.2.2), this belief is open to challenge as, although much work has been undertaken, little empirical evidence is available to quantify the impact of professional development upon service users. Menter *et al.* (2010) identifies the difficulty in attributing any impact to CPD and report that few studies attempt to provide evidence of improved pupil performance (p. 33).

Consequently, all with an interest in CPD for teachers/leaders- those who do, design, deliver or finance CPD, may be called to account whether the experience has improved outcomes for pupils. According to Guskey it is the responsibility of this professional development community to provide the evidence base for their practice:

*'Over the years a lot of good things have been done in the name of professional development. So have a lot of rotten things. What professional developers have not done is to provide evidence to document the difference between the good and the rotten.'*

(Guskey 2000)

A complete review of the impact of teacher professional development upon outcomes for pupils and schools is outwith the scope of the study, and has been examined by others e.g. Goodall *et al.* (2005), Cordingley *et al.* (2003; 2005;2007) Harris *et al.* (2006) amongst many. Studies have also been conducted on recognition of teacher accomplishment schemes (Egan 2009, Reeves *et al.* 2010). However what is clear is that, although the link between professional development of teacher, school leaders and improved outcomes for children is often assumed, it is far from straightforward to define and delineate the factors involved.

Before any critique of the evaluation of professional development can be undertaken, an operational definition of what is under scrutiny is required. Goodall *et al.* (2005) base their work on the definition of professional development proposed by Day (1999) which, they argue, provides an extended conceptual framework which to consider models for evaluating professional development:

*Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which constitute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives*

(Day 1999a p.5)

Providing evaluative evidence for anything so broadly defined is challenging. Perhaps a policy based definition may provide a narrower focus? The definition of CPD offered by Scottish Government (2003) offers a deceptively simple definition:

*The range of experiences that contribute to teacher development is very wide and should be recognised as anything that has been undertaken to progress, assist or enhance a teacher's professionalism.*

(Scottish Government 2003 p.3)

This is, on closer inspection, equally complex to the definition proffered by Day (1999a). Depending on viewpoint, this definition could be considered inclusive and wide-ranging, or, less positively, as nebulous and unhelpful.

From these definitions, it appears that researchers and policy-makers agree that what constitutes professional learning is multifarious. If what is considered 'professional development' is as wide a concept as that defined by Day (1999a), or as nebulous as the

definition by the Scottish Government (2003), then any evaluation presents a complex array of variables.

Goodall *et al.* (2005) reflect that any evaluation of professional development under Day's definition must therefore take account of the indirect and direct impact upon different stakeholders, of its effects not only upon knowledge and skills but also commitment and moral purposes and to its effect upon the thinking and planning, as well as actions of teachers taking account of their life and career phases and the contexts in which they work. Given this level of complexity perhaps it is not unexpected that the teacher professional development community have been unable thus far to fully address the question of 'impact'. This concern is not only recent; in 2000 Guskey reported that for decades, 'researchers have tried unsuccessfully to determine the true impact of professional development in education' (p.32).

Returning to the question of leadership in schools, and at Woods *et al.* 'common sense level' (2009 p.254), most stakeholders and professionals involved in education would probably agree that school improvement is unlikely if headteachers are not skilled and their attributes not continually developed and so, it is argued, good learning and teaching is unlikely if teachers are not skilled and continue to learn. Providing substantive evidence that any learning and development makes a direct impact - for leadership or teaching - remains the Holy Grail for providers and sponsors of CPD.

### 2.5.2. Three common errors in the evaluation of professional development

This thesis proposes that those who design and deliver CPD (including leadership development) are responsible for testing the claims and questioning assumptions on the merit and worth of their approach. Evaluations of training or development are regularly presented as evidence to those who fund or attend courses, but, it is argued, these evaluations are weak and at best indirect. Todnem and Warner (1994) highlight three major mistakes in past evaluations of professional development and this provides a helpful map of the common traps which informs thinking on evaluations of leadership development.

Firstly, that they are not evaluations at all but a report upon the descriptive quantitative variables i.e. how many, how long and how much. Although some consideration may be given to listing what was covered or the aims or outcomes of the event, variables which address effectiveness or impact are not included (Guskey 1994,

2000). In their two year project which investigated the evaluation of the impact of continuing professional development in schools, Goodall *et al.* (2005) agrees, concluding that there is a high degree of confusion between dissemination and evaluation, resulting in a proliferation of low level dissemination that is equated with evaluation. It is argued that this error is mirrored in evaluations of leadership development programmes and descriptions of process in mentoring research are common (Luck 2004).

The second mistake described by Todnem and Warner (1994) is that evaluations regularly consider the enjoyment or perceived value of the learning activity as a measurable outcome. This is described by Guskey (2000 p.9) as 'too shallow' with initial reactions being insufficient and that the impact of this perceived value on practice is not explored. Goodall *et al.* (2005) agree, reporting that evaluation is often based upon individual self report which relates to the quality and relevance of the experience and not its outcomes and rarely attempts to identify benefits to the school or pupil. It is argued that this error is mirrored in evaluations of leadership development programmes. Mentoring research in education tends to focus on self reports of perceived value (Hobson and Sharp 2005).

The third mistake in the evaluation of professional learning identified by Todnem and Warner (1994) is that the evaluation of effect is expected too quickly. Goodall *et al.* (2005) agree, reporting that evaluation practices in their study rarely focused upon longer term or indirect benefits. There has been growing understanding that professional development is an active as opposed to passive process; that it is not a one-off event but a series of job-embedded experiences (Sparks and Hirsh 1997), and an ongoing and continuous process (Lieberman 1995, Louks-Horseley *et al.* 1988). This continuous process is designed as a systematic effort to bring about positive change and improvement; described as 'intentional' by Guskey (1994) and by Sparks (1996). If, through continuous and ongoing professional development, systematic or even system wide change is sought, the validity of seeking a direct causal relationship within a short timescale has to be questioned. Conversely, it could be hoped that if the evaluation was undertaken too soon to directly measure impact, then it may be sufficiently early within the process to be used formatively to enhance the experience. However Goodall *et al.* (2005) found that this was not the case, as it usually occurred simultaneously after the learning experience. It appears therefore, that evaluation practices are often too early, with the measures of impact expected too quickly, or too late, the findings being unable to inform the ongoing learning experience. This is also reflected in the evaluation of leadership development programmes. It is argued that it is unlikely that the development of leadership ability can be directly attributed to any single

experience, and even if this was the case, it would be challenging to know this immediately following the event.

Todnem and Warner's work (1994) is helpful as it establishes the limitations in practice at the time and, it is argued, are still present. What they describe as errors in the evaluation of professional development can also be applied to evaluations of leadership development. Those who do, design, deliver and finance CPD should take a more critical stance to what is described as evidence for effectiveness. However it is evident that there are many variables involved in establishing the merit and worth of any approach, leading to a multifaceted, interrelated array of variables to consider within any evaluation. Methodologies used to evaluate the impact of professional learning need to be sufficiently sophisticated to deal with this complexity. This review set out to investigate practices used to evaluate leadership development and examines models or frameworks which may inform and shape the evaluation of mentoring that is required for this study.

### 2.5.3. Frameworks for evaluation professional learning.

When considering theories or models of evaluation there is a considerable body of work and clear evolution of thought from Ralf Tyler's 8 year study (Smith and Tyler, 1942; Tyler 1949) through to Thomas Guskey (2000) on the evaluation of educational programmes. Guskey's work was influenced by one of the best known frameworks to evaluate the impact of training or development developed by Donald Kirkpatrick (1959; 1994). Kirkpatrick's model explores the relationship between the trainee, the training and the workplace at four levels. It is interesting to compare the evolution of evaluative methodology for education programmes since 1940 but the model produced by Kirkpatrick remains the predominant model for evaluating most training programmes in business or commerce (Earley and Bubb 2004). It is suggested that this is primarily because of the simplicity of the model, and the way in which it can be applied to almost every type of work situation and learning process (Bubb and Hoare 2001 p.114).

Further exploration of the Kirkpatrick model is necessary as it is the framework recommended by Audit Scotland (2005) for the evaluation of leadership development to ensure greater rigour in managing investment in leadership development. The Kirkpatrick model for evaluating training and development, adapted for specific reference to leadership development is presented in Table 2.

Level 1	REACTIONS	How participants in a leadership development programme react to it
Level 2	LEARNING	Extent participants in a leadership development programme have advanced in areas such as: competencies, skills, knowledge and attitudes
Level 3	TRANSFER	Extent to which learning from a leadership development programme has transferred in participants' behaviour at work
Level 4	RESULTS	Measures of success of the leadership development programme in terms that link to performance such as: return on investment, higher profits, increased sales, increased production, improved quality and decreased costs

**Table 2 Kirkpatrick's model of training and development (adapted for leadership by Tourish et al. (2007))**

Although Kirkpatrick's work is reported to be common practice in many sectors, it is not without its critics. Although accepting that the model is helpful in addressing a broad range of descriptive, 'what' questions, it is criticised as it does not address the 'why' (Allinger and Janak 1989; Holton, 1996). Guskey (1994) agrees highlighting that Kirkpatrick's approach has seen only limited use in education because it lacks explanatory power.

The model assumes a relationship between levels of learning as it implies a hierarchy of outcome. The first three levels are focussed on the person participating in the training or development in terms of their reaction, their learning and their behaviour, which it is implied, leads to the fourth and highest level which is on results for the organisation. The logic path implied is as follows; if the person is happy after the training and feels they have learnt, then changes their behaviour as a result of the learning, subsequently the desired results will follow. This supposition is too simplistic as it assumes that their working context has no effect i.e. the organisation has no role to play in the support, or other wise, of the behaviour change. The model also fails to consider variables such as the individual's motivation to learn or self-awareness being a prerequisite to any change and resultant impact on the organisation. These are all crucial interactions (Hammond 1973).

Guskey adapted Kirkpatrick's model to be specific for education, proposing a five level strategy, the effect of organisational support and change added at level 3, and the desired result is specified as the impact on student learning outcomes. Guskey's five

levels of evaluation for educational professional development programmes are shown in Table 3.

Level 1	REACTIONS	How participants in a professional development programme react to it. Examples of questions: Did they like it? Was their time well spent? Were the chairs comfortable?
Level 2	LEARNING	The extent to which participants in a professional development programme acquired the intended knowledge and skills.
Level 3	ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT and CHANGE	The organisational characteristics and attributes necessary for success. Examples of questions: What was the impact on the organisation? Did it affect organisational climate and procedures?
Level 4	BEHAVIOUR	Extent to which learning from a professional development programme has transferred in participants' behaviour at work. Have participants effectively applied the new knowledge and skills?
Level 5	IMPACT on PUPIL LEARNING OUTCOME	Measures of success of the professional development programme in terms that link to pupil performance such as: <i>achievement, attendance, influence on confidence, physical or emotional wellbeing</i>

**Table 3 Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey 2000 pp.79-81)**

Although Guskey's (2000) model does offer a helpful way of thinking about impact at different levels and intended outcomes, it still does not form a comprehensive picture. Professional development in general, or leadership development in particular, may result in increased confidence and renewed commitment of teachers and school leaders as change agents, and in renewed or extended moral purpose. These outcomes are crucial to school effectiveness (Goodall *et al.* 2005), and need to be taken into account at this level of evaluation although they are not stated as the desired result. The Teacher Development Agency (2008) recommend that the 'evidence base for impact evaluation needs to be broad'. By recognising the multifactorial nature of professional development, Hammond's (1973) work provides a clue as to why valid 'return on investment' measures remain the holy grail of professional development disciples. As a measurable causal link in the 'logical chain' (OFSTED 2006) remains elusive and arbitrary; this thesis suggests that the focus should be shifted to be more accepting of a qualitative perspective.

While recognising the value of the Kirkpatrick (1959) and Guskey (2000) models in organising thinking, this thesis argues that the most appropriate model to evaluate a person centred leadership development approach, such as mentoring, is at level 1 -

participant reaction. It is acknowledged that the prevailing culture of superficial evaluation - the preponderance of the post-course 'happy sheet'<sup>9</sup> - has given level 1 evaluation a bad name. Evaluations which focus upon learning and behaviour over the longer term are becoming more visible, such as the self-evaluation and 360 appraisal tools used with the FRH. The predominant view emerging from Audit Scotland (2005), the Cabinet Office (2009) and others concerned over the public purse, is quantifiable return on investment. This is a difficult and a debatable point in services for and with people. It is proposed that the process of developing leaders for a complex, challenging and rapidly changing world is much a much deeper, complex, layered and longitudinal process than can be simply captured by any superficial and short term measure.

## **2.6. Summary of literature review**

This literature review was structured around three strands which offer a basis for the empirical element of the work: firstly, to review the policy context of leadership development with particular reference to Scottish education; secondly, to explore the rationale and evidence for mentoring as a leadership development approach and thirdly to investigate practices used to evaluate leadership development. A synopsis of key elements from the review which provide the context and influenced the nature of the research is offered below.

Received wisdom is that school leadership in Scotland is central to post-devolution education policy and a political imperative. There is an aging population of incumbent headteachers which, coupled with a negative view of the role of headteacher, makes recruitment to headteacher posts difficult across Scotland, particularly in rural communities. There are reported headteacher shortages across the world and international concern that the role of headteacher as it was once perceived may not be sustainable with changes in what is expected of schools and schooling. There is evidence that school leadership is directly related to the quality of learning and teaching thus the development of educational leadership is viewed as critical in school and system wide educational reform strategies. Preparation for headship and support for new headteachers is considered necessary, and formal mentoring by an experienced headteacher is a commonly used strategy which may form part of that support.

Mentoring has been regularly reported to be of positive benefit for career enhancing functions and psychosocial support. Reports of UK mentoring as a form of induction have

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<sup>9</sup> A nickname for the evaluation form distributed as part of a face to face training event.

not considered the local government relationship with the teaching workforce in Scotland, the distinct Scottish policy context, nor the Standard for Headship. To date, no published work has been found which considers whether a Scottish concept of mentoring is similar to those used in other countries.

That mentoring has any measurable impact upon leadership performance remains disputed. Sponsors require evaluation of leadership development in Scotland to be more rigorous but to consider if mentoring meets its aim requires clarity on the expected outcome. If this is not determined, as some authors suggest is the case (Luck 2004, Hobson and Sharp 2005), any goal directed evaluation framework such as Kirkpatrick (1959) or Guskey (2000) are not appropriate. Mentoring does appear to 'make sense' (Daresh 1995 p.8) and is based on an 'act of faith' Suggett (2006 p.12) although formal mentoring programmes have implicit assumptions on which the rationale for their use is built. These assumptions are not well understood and it is the aim of this research to make meaning from the process of mentoring and test whether the expected outcomes are met. Although it is recognised that funders seek return on investment this thesis argues it may be unhelpful to seek outcomes which demonstrate a causal link in the 'logical chain' between leadership development and school improvement (OFSTED 2006) as any division between the impact on the individual and the organisation may be a false dichotomy (Suggett 2006).

Scholarly tussles emerge from the review of mentoring. Given the breadth of application of mentoring, the exploration of purpose, practice and outcome could be from a range of disciplines with different research traditions; this may go some way to explain the elusive nature of the concept. Chapter 3 frames and positions the research in terms of my position as researcher and the place of the EdD in relation to professional practice.

### Chapter 3. Framing and positioning the research

This research was undertaken as part of a professional Doctorate in Education, with the researcher situated within local authority education management. A short recap of the aims of the professional doctorate assists in placing this research in the context of the development of professional practice.

The professional doctorate is commonly defined in relation to the PhD and gains identity from both similarities and differences with the latter (Lee *et al.* 2009). In considering if the research question was appropriate to consider in doctorate level enquiry, comparisons were made of the ways of knowing which are produced from professional doctorates.

The professional doctorate incorporates the practice setting as the research site, appropriate for a research area arising from a real work problem. Lester (2004) and Bourner *et al.* (2001) agree that professional doctorates are situated in a professional context and examine a particular area of practice usually with the intention of generating knowledge which will have implications for the development of that practice or result in substantial organisational or professional change. However even within the landscape of these awards, there are reported differences between first and second generation professional doctorates (Maxwell and Shanahan 1997).

The knowledge generated from what Lester (2004) describes as a 'practitioner doctorate' differs from traditional ideas of doctoral research. First generation doctorates are more rooted in Mode 1 knowledge production (Gibbons *et al.* 1994, Maxwell and Shanahan 1997) with research applied to practice in an apparently one way relationship - that of the researcher working on practice rather than from within practice. The EdD appears more accepting of Mode 2 knowledge production (Lester 2004) which is created and used by practitioners in the context of their practice and of Schon's constructionist view of knowledge where research and practice coexist (Lee *et al.* 2000), Taylor 2008). The need to research 'real world problems' in order to make meaning and to make a difference is put forward by O'Leary (2005) who recognises the opportunities but also the dilemmas of practitioner research. I recognised the dilemma in undertaking doctoral level research while working within practice to address a complex professional and organisational issue but felt that the EdD would allow robust exploration of the concept and practice of mentoring in order to improve the level of support offered to newly appointed school leaders.

### **3.1. Basic beliefs about knowledge**

Initially in this work I was anxious not to stray into ‘epistemological inconsistency’ (Racher and Robinson 2003 p.477) but I was aware that the paradigm, understood here as the ‘basic belief system that guided the investigation’ (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p. 105) was consciously considered after the real world problem which stimulated this research was determined. This is considered acceptable practice by some commentators but not by others; given the practice related requirements of the EdD I felt comfortable with this sequence. As it is the choice of paradigm that sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for research (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006) this now required explicit consideration.

As introduced in Section 1.4, my initial intent was to establish if mentoring ‘worked’ for those who participated in the process, but I became aware that what is meant by ‘working’ is dependant upon the worldview held. Furthermore, as the research was conceptualised, I became more aware that the motivation for the research was not to establish one truth or evidential proof that mentoring worked through any single hypothesis but explore, seek understanding and test out claims and assumptions held about mentoring practice in the CSLA. The expectation for the research, as described earlier, was to generate knowledge about a complex professional and organisational issue which would have implications for the development of that practice and result in organisational change. Exploring the intent, motivation and expectation for this research helped frame the epistemological basis for the study.

#### **3.1.1. An ontology of mentoring**

Mentoring has been examined from different epistemological positions; researchers have situated themselves within different research paradigms and applied different methods to construct knowledge that has added to my understanding of the purpose and practice of mentoring. The theory base for mentoring research has strands from a range of disciplines and research on mentoring is published in journals with varied epistemological bases. As described in Chapter 2, the association of mentoring with theories of cognitive development, social capital, leadership and management, human capital, attachment, social exchange and social learning may all offer insight. I examined these in relation to the intent, motivation and expectation of my research and constructed a set of ways of knowing about mentoring that would be philosophically congruent with some approaches. As stated in 2.4.4 the socialisation and development conceptual framework (Daresh 2004) is used to explore mentoring in this study.

As a professional doctorate, with the researcher situated within practice, I felt it was important that this was empirical research - to hear from those who had experienced mentoring in the CSLA, to learn from their realities in order to make generalisations which could be used to influence future organisational policy. I found it difficult to align to one paradigm, but a question of testing claims and assumptions is one which could fit within a positivist/post-positivist frame. Commentators are in agreement that positivist/post-positivist research is an empirical, explanatory approach where observables are king. Research in such a framework seeks explanation, prediction, and control and involves making generalisations and cause-effect linkages.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that the positivist/post-positivist paradigm assumes an ontology of critical realism. Researchers working from a realist perspective observe the empirical field to discover by a 'mixture of theoretical reasoning and experimentation' (Outhwaite 1983 p. 332) knowledge of the real world. There is a belief that reality exists but is only imperfectly describable, theories are held to be provisional and new understandings may challenge the whole theoretical framework (Kuhn 1962). Looking at mentoring through a lens of critical realism requires objective epistemologies with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies considered appropriate (Healy and Perry 2000).

Much of what I expected from my research, in terms of being able to build knowledge that I could use to improve the policy arrangements for mentoring, fits this paradigm. That I can align my research to the positivist/post-positivist paradigm is perhaps not surprising given my previous research in human mechanics and now, working within the policy environment, my views are in keeping with the epistemological view held by the majority in the policy community (Morcol 2001). However a purely positivist approach is problematic as mentoring involves human relationships and the exploration of social behaviour where interpretive paradigms have much to offer.

So for the reasons explored above, the positivist/post-positivist paradigm was attractive in framing the intent, motivation and expectations of this research, but there were limitations to this approach when exploring social interactions. There is much about understanding mentoring practice which defied a positivist frame. In seeking to understand interpersonal relationships which develop personal transformation through self-confidence, self-efficacy, leadership capacity and leaderly behaviour, mentoring could be examined through a nominalist lens. Researchers who work within a nominalist epistemological frame hold interpretive and constructivist beliefs with ontological assumptions that reality is complex, holistic, and context dependent (Monti

and Tingen 1999, Racher and Robinson 2003). Knowledge is created through seeking to understand the complex world of lived experience from the view of those who live it (Schwandt 1994). Although I sought to test the claim that mentoring built self-confidence and supported wellbeing in new leaders, I also sought description and meaning about the relationships through interpretation, which would be consistent with an interpretive paradigm.

In determining the framework to consider my research question, I came to understand that a socialisation and developmental perspective of mentoring could be examined within both post-positivist and interpretative paradigms but I was wary of having a lack of congruence between my epistemological and methodological assumptions. What was initially concerning was that I could equally frame my research in both traditions, and that there appeared to be overlap between the epistemological positions described by some authors. In contrast to the view of post-positivism which sits solidly within an ontology of realism as described above, Clark (1998) concluded that post-positivism acknowledges the complications of claims about universal knowledge. O'Leary (2005) went further suggesting post-positivism as an intuitive and holistic, inductive and exploratory approach acknowledging multiple realities where 'what might be the truth for one person or cultural group may not be the 'truth' for another' (O'Leary 2005 p.6). If I accepted this belief methodologies which focus on the experiences or meanings of individuals such as phenomenology, grounded theory and other interpretive methodologies may be encompassed by a post-positivist paradigm; a view consistent with Racher and Robinson (2003).

As my previous work had been situated in what I now recognise as a positivist paradigm within an ontological framework of realism, I found the debate over definitions of competing or overlapping paradigms of postpositivism and interpretism initially frustrating and confusing. It was unhelpful that some literature did not make reference to the position of the researcher at all or when it was explicit, definitions differed or were even contradictory.

Work from nursing research helped me make sense of this predicament. Racher and Robinson (2003) present their view that phenomenology and post-positivism although appearing 'strange bedfellows' (p.465) have shared perspectives, overlapping in their epistemological position. I began to understand the two main ontological positions of nominalism and realism (Cohen *et al.* 2007) as more of a continuum between subjective and objective conceptualisations of reality than opposing, neatly categorised, sets of rules.

The concept of paradigmic plurality (Weaver and Olson 2006) was also attractive as a solution to frame a complex real world question. Supporters of the use of a combination of several paradigms have argued that knowledge developed from one perspective could complement knowledge developed from another, that polarisation between approaches is not meaningful or helpful (Leddy 2000, Erickson and Roth 2006). Mixed methodology research allows a question to be approached from more than one perspective in order to explore the findings from more than one tradition or philosophy. Although debate exists whether there can be mutual tolerance of differing ideologies I felt there was a benefit in recognising the coexistence of paradigms in my work based research. In the inter-professional workplace such a blend of ideology can allow research findings to be interpreted and disseminated, and thus accepted, in the language and traditions of the participating professional groups. If knowledge about leadership in schools was of value to those working in Integrated Children's Services, paradigmic plurality which recognises the research traditions of nursing, social work, community learning and education, may suit an inter-professional audience.

Paradigmatic plurality could be considered a pragmatic response to complex real world issues, placing as it does 'the research problem' as the central focus (Weaver and Olson 2006). Kikuchi (2003) presented an argument for anti-paradigmatic inquiry although Weaver and Olson (2006) disagreed, considering her stance as positivism in another guise and a limiting position. With a similar aim to paradigmic plurality, Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) describe the pragmatic paradigm as 'not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality' (p.4). Pragmatic researchers focus on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem (Creswell 2003 p.11) unguided, or unconstrained to one system of philosophy or reality. Both paradigmic plurality (Weaver and Olson 2006) and the pragmatic paradigm (Creswell 2003, Mackenzie and Knipe 2006) are offered as ways of understanding mixed methodology research. With the research question central to both approaches, methodologies are chosen as those most likely to provide insights to the question posed. Such a stance was attractive to explore a real world problem in a work based doctorate.

### **3.2. Conclusions about ontology, epistemology and methodology**

Having started with the aim to develop knowledge and understanding of a complex organisational issue, I initially considered the debate as a paradigm war to be the dominant worldview - a duel between the giants of realist, objective, positivist normative research on one side and nominalistic, subjective, naturalistic, interpretive

research on the other. I have since come to understand that this is not a duel, but a tug of war, where the two positions are anchors on a continuum, the middle ground shifting back and forth and that I can place my own flag, and that of my research question, somewhere on the rope.

In summary, reflection upon the intent, motivation and expectation for this research led me to frame it within an ontology of critical realism, in a post-positivist paradigm, but with a 'nod' to interpretive work. The research question was central to my deliberations over methodology, but with cogniscence that it should be epistemologically consistent with the above. I decided to explore this real world question empirically, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data while recognising the individuals' experiences as reality. Although accepting multiple realities, I hoped common themes would emerge which would allow the assumptions to be explored and knowledge to be generated which would sufficiently generalisable to be of value to the professional community.

Having reviewed the literature to inform and influence the study and frame the research in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology, Chapter 4 details the study design and the tool used to generate data.

## Chapter 4. Making data: study design and tools

### 4.1. Preparatory work and ethical approval

As introduced in 1.3, the two open study modules which formed the latter part of the taught element of this EdD Programme gave opportunity for wider preparatory work which narrowed to the area explored in depth within this thesis. Open Study 1 created the research proposal and Open Study 2 comprised small scale exploratory work for the Dissertation element of this thesis which was influential in the study design.

- Ethical approval was granted for the preparatory work by Glasgow University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee in June 2007 (Appendix A).
- Ethical approval was granted for the full study by Glasgow University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee in April 2008 (Appendix B).

Four interviews were conducted with school leaders as exploratory work in this area, with the aim to use learning from this process to inform a substantive study on coaching and mentoring for Children's Services leaders. I found this early work a useful and salutary lesson in exploring my position and in helping to frame the study proper. Key learning was:

- (i) I had not sufficiently refined what the research sought to explore. As the literature review progressed, it became clear that the examination of mentoring *and* coaching were different constructs, used differently amongst the proposed sample population.
- (ii) I had not sufficiently refined the sample population and the motivation for the study. Exploring an approach to leadership development in a sample consisting of those who worked within different policy contexts was problematic, both practically in terms of what was going to be researched and in terms of my place within the research.
- (iii) I had not reached the necessary level of clarity over my own ontological position and had sought to explore the question from a positivist frame, which was inconsistent with the tool designed to generate data.

These findings significantly influenced what I set out to explore and a reappraisal of intent, motivation and expectation of this research as detailed in Chapter 3. This thesis now offers a rationale for the methodology and tool used to generate data, an overview of the data collection process and detail on data management, validity, reliability and data analysis.

## 4.2. Study design

As introduced in Chapter 3, I decided to explore this real world question empirically, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Methodologies in similar descriptive or exploratory studies of mentoring have, in the main, been those identified within the survey tradition (Underhill 2006): satisfaction questionnaires; behaviour and attitudinal questionnaires; interviews on key aspects of behaviour, role or contribution; commentaries on changes and organisational themes. These methods make certain presuppositions about the nature of reality - that there are patterns of responses and individuals share broad views - so individual responses are gathered for the purposes of subsequent collation. Although the information is gathered at the level of the individual respondent, the generality of the data is seen as more important than their individuality (Ackroyd and Hughes 1992). I had already determined that common themes would allow the claims and assumptions to be explored. This would allow knowledge to be generated which would sufficiently generalisable to be of direct value to the CSLA and for others with scholarly or practical interest in mentoring for school leaders. The survey tradition was felt to be consistent with the purpose of this research. Data collection methods within the survey tradition, principally questionnaires and interviews, are now compared to determine the most suitable tool for this study.

Although neat categorisations can at times be useful in generating a shared understanding of the processes involved, questionnaires and interviews take different forms and there are a number of sub-classifications. The concept of a continuum across the survey traditions, with the anchors based on the type and control of data, may be more helpful. Sim and Wright (2000) consider the self-completed questionnaire at one end of this continuum (highly standardised with predominately quantitative data) with an unstructured interview (minimal standardisation and predominately qualitative data) at the other. Although any simple division runs the risk of failing to recognise the similarities between some forms of questionnaire and interview, the two are considered separately here for the purposes of brevity and clarity.

### 4.2.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires comprise a series of items designed to elicit responses presented in a written format in a fixed order. Depending upon the forms of question used they can elicit quantitative and/or qualitative data, are considered a quasi-experimental methodology as they can comprise categorisations or scales, and they are methodologically consistent with a positivist / post-positivist paradigm (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006). Cohen *et al.* (2007) describe the field of questionnaire design as 'vast' (p.317); a complete overview is not included here but the main distinctions are drawn.

Questionnaires can be differentiated by the method of distribution e.g. postal or on-line, and of completion e.g. self completed or researcher completed, as an individual or group.

Any form of questionnaire would allow quantitative data to be collected through a controlled response set. This would meet descriptive elements of the research question with an explanatory, generalised objective. However the exploratory elements of the research question would not be sufficiently supported by this approach, requiring more qualitative information and an interpretive approach not consistent with questionnaire methodology,

#### 4.2.2. Interviewing

Interviews are described as a ‘way to understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate’ (Rubin and Rubin 1995, p.1) and a ‘way of making data’ (Morse and Richards 2002 p.91) within a qualitative methodological approach (Creswell 1998, Seidman 1991). Dille (2004) considers interviews ‘key in many forms of qualitative educational research’ (p.127). Although consistent with an interpretive paradigm (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006) quantitative data can be produced, depending upon the nature of the question, recording, collation and analysis.

The personal contact available through interviewing allows the researcher to work directly with the respondent, reassure, gain trust, ask for explanations or ask follow up questions. Given the potential complexity of perceptions of experiences related to human relationships and performance, interviews appeared initially to be an appropriate approach for my research. Supporting this view, Sewell identified interviews as an appropriate method of data collection in studies which aim to:

*‘... evaluate programmes that are aimed at individualised outcomes, capturing and describing programme processes, exploring individual differences between participants’ experiences and outcomes, and evaluating programmes that are seen as dynamic or evolving.’*

(Sewell, no date)

The justification offered by Sewell is particularly relevant for my research question; I decided that interviews would provide a useful way to ‘make’ data which could tell the story of the ‘what, when, where and how’ elements of mentoring which, once collated, could capture and describe the programme processes. However this alone would not provide the richness of meaning that would come from exploration of stories about mentoring. Mentoring is aimed at individual outcomes and so, in addition to the meaning that would come from the collation of individuals experiences, interviewing

would provide a route to explore what mentoring meant to the people involved. The reasons I offered to explain why I felt mentoring could not be best examined through a positivist paradigm was due to the nature of measuring human and organisational behaviour. Interviewing was a source to provide more interpretive analysis and make meaning about the socialisation and developmental characteristics of mentoring. This is described by Seidman (1991) when he writes:

*Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience. . . . Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding their action.*

(Seidman 1991 p.4)

I therefore decided that a form of interview was in keeping with the intent, motivation and expectation for my research and was consistent with a post-positivist paradigm which recognised interpretive work.

The literature describes a range of forms of interview which are conducted for different purposes. Oppenheim (1992) describes essentially two kinds - the standardised interview 'as used in market research or government surveys' (p.65) and the exploratory interview. Morse and Richards (2002) categorise four which can create qualitative data: unstructured interactive; informal conversations; semi structured and group interviews. Other commentators suggest the form of interview is less critical than the skill with which it is carried out - Kvale (1996) offers less certainty on the forms, stating there is no common procedure, but describes good interview research as an art (p.13).

For the purposes of my study I sought some descriptive information that could be collated to provide a description of programme processes. Although the 'grand tour' question (Morse and Richards 2002 p.91), as used within unstructured or conversational interviews, could make useful data for the purposes of meaning making about individual cases, such lack of structure would not provide the opportunities for generalisable knowledge. The research question in my study needed data created from both fact collection and ideas collection (Oppenheim 1992) so a blend of both standardised and exploratory interview was felt to be an appropriate tool. Such a form of interview is described as semi-structured (Morse and Richards 2002).

Having determined the data collection tool to be the semi-structured interview, methods of conducting this interview were considered. It was accepted that individual

interviews would be suitable but were the most time intensive model, the focus group was considered as an alternative.

#### 4.2.3. Focus groups

A focus group has been defined as a group interview, centred on a specific topic and facilitated by a moderator, which generates primarily qualitative data by capitalising on the interaction that takes place in the group setting (Wright 2000)<sup>10</sup>. The group format provides a less resource intensive methodology than data collection with individuals. However, there are weaknesses with this form of data collection in meeting the expectations of this study:-

(i) The interaction of participants in focus groups may support the expression of attitudes and provide a forum where participants feel empowered by the nature of the group, or indeed the reverse, where some people do not feel they can speak freely. Due to the sensitive nature of the questioning the purpose of which was, in effect, to examine the performance of a school leader, both as mentor and as mentee, there may be a distortion in the expression of attitudes due to the group dynamic.

(ii) The setting and grouping is contrived and might lead to a collective, rather than individual, view emerging (Cohen *et al.* 2007). This can be either positive or negative; the group can be focussed on a very specific issue and can yield insights that a series of interviews with individuals might not, but this may be at the expense of the richness of data about an individual's mentoring experience.

(iii) Focus group research is not well designed to generate numerical data; as every mentoring dyad will have its own story, a consensus view from the collective may not be possible and even if agreed, would lose the subtlety from the individual reality.

(iv) Focus groups tend to work best amongst relative strangers (Cohen *et al.* 2007) - the headteacher and depute headteacher community in the CSLA tend to know one another, often very well.

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<sup>10</sup> Some authors would separate this definition, differentiating a group interview defined as a 'facilitated group discussion' and those where the insights or data on the interpersonal dynamic between the participants is, in itself, of interest (Gibbs 2007, Kitzinger 1995)

(v) Focus groups are useful to assess need or vision futures (O’Leary 2005). The complexity of issues that can be explored is limited and any consensus may neither be genuine, nor in fact, appropriate to seek, given the personalised experiences of the topic under scrutiny.

In sum, the focus group would be a tool consistent with an interpretative paradigm and may be a useful method to pilot any research tool or triangulate research findings for validity. However, for the five reasons presented, a focus group was not considered an appropriate tool for primary data collection to meet the intent, motivation or expectations of this study.

#### 4.2.4. Telephone versus face to face interviewing

Once it was determined that the individual interview was more suitable for this study than a group interview, the alternatives of telephone and face to face interview were considered. Given the resource intensity of interviews, and the geography of the sample under question, telephone interviews were attractive as they would increase the speed of turnaround. The face to face interview has the advantage of extending the relationship with those participating in the study and, through the personal contact available in a face to face interview, there would be the opportunity to clarify the intended area of enquiry if questions were ambiguous, judge the quality of response, increase the intensity of the interview and offers the possibility of longer response categories. For this research it was felt that participants would recognise that value had been placed on their views if time was allotted for travel and the interview was conducted in person, within their school. In addition it was felt this would enhance the depth of exploration that would be available in some of the more sensitive issues. It was decided that, given the reasons presented above, face to face interviews would be undertaken.

Although an interview was felt to offer the participants a greater voice for this study there is an ethical and political complexity in any ‘inter-view’ as one individual faces another. I had to challenge my conception of what I understood my place to be within this research, whether I was inside or outside the study group researched.

##### 4.2.4.1. *Insider or Outsider?*

Although interviews are described as conversations between interviewers and interviewees (Polgar and Thomas 1995), Dilley (2004) also talks of the continual conversation the interviewer has to have with oneself. In my internal dialogue during the early stages of this research, I was troubled by my place within the research.

Although I was clear this was a work based EdD, the findings from which would inform practice, I shifted back and forth over my conception of where I sat and the strengths and weaknesses of each position. Kitwood (1977) provides a structure which was helpful to organise my thoughts on this issue; while recognising this was published some time ago it was thought to have relevance.

Kitwood (1977) offers three differing conceptions of interview - firstly that it is a means of pure information transfer. In this view there is an assumption that, if the researcher asks the right questions and the respondent is sincere, biases can be controlled and accurate data can be obtained.

Kitwood's second conception, which chimed with my understanding, assumes the transaction inevitably has bias, that each participant responds differently, but that this can be recognised and controlled. Both these viewpoints consider that interpersonal transactions are potential obstacles to sound research. On reflection, this had been my initial conception of the interview process, perhaps in keeping with my original positivist epistemological view.

If the purpose of an interview is to elicit certain information, the study brings forth an analysis of respondents' comprehensions of their experiences and beliefs. Rubin and Rubin (1995) describe this as the 'art of hearing data' but I was wary within this design phase of the study of hearing only what I wanted to hear. This, perhaps, could be understood from my previous positivist standpoint. Initially I was concerned about introducing bias and influencing the outcome of the study, and thus felt I needed to be outside the research to ensure reliability and validity. I tried to remove my experiences and understandings of the mentoring process to ensure a blank slate on which to build knowledge which would come, untainted, from the research process.

However as my reading and thinking progressed I came to realise that the intent, motivation and purpose for the research, and the thematic frame used for analysis, came from my previous experience and beliefs and I could not claim to be an objective neutral observer standing outside the research process.

Kitwood's third conception (1977) is one of social encounter where the interviewers and interviewees co-construct the interview. Barker and Johnson (1998) concur; they consider interviews far from neutral in that they are a way of enacting how people make sense of one another. In this case, given that I was situated within the CSLA,

there was an acknowledged risk of acquiescence in responses for the participants and hearing what I wanted to hear on my part.

Although I now see my insider status as a strength in the development of knowledge that can be generalised and implemented but, as Brewer (2000) and Denzin and Lincoln (1998) remind me, I sought to be reflexive in my account of the research process and preconceptions, stating how understandings and interpretations changed as well as being clear on my epistemological position and conceptual frame for the research.

In summary, having considered tools to generate data and confirmed my place within the research process, the most appropriate option was felt to be a semi-structured interview conducted face to face. An interview schedule was then designed to frame a conversation from which the process and claims about mentoring outcomes could be explored.

### **4.3. Study design**

Although Kvale (1996) advocated a rigorous though non-formulaic approach to interviews, describing their use as a craft and their analysis as an art (p.105), he also provided instruction on how to conceptualise and conduct an interview study. This guidance was used to inform this research and the seven step process of thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verifying and reporting (Kvale 1996 p.88) provides the shape to the remainder of this chapter.

#### **4.3.1. Identifying themes**

Identifying the research themes has been the focus of this thesis as, up until this point, the research questions have been established, the research is placed within an epistemological frame and the data collection tool selected.

The thematising stage was also informed by other perspectives: experience of running the programme; from exploratory work in this area conducted in June 2007; from collaborative discussions with two colleagues experienced in designing and delivering training for mentors and the findings of a mentee review day in January 2008.

#### **4.3.2. Designing: schedule and sample**

The second stage is 'designing'. The design of the interview schedule was considered around the aims of the research considering first process then outcome, but the question format required consideration. As there were descriptive and exploratory elements to this research, the sequence of questions was determined. In the schedule,

the descriptive process elements were considered first. This was to set a context for the remaining exploratory discussion which would focus on the claims about outcomes. This, it is argued, allows a rapport to be built before more qualitative, exploratory questions were raised and to allow a structured thought process with a chronological flow by discussing mentoring from the first meeting onwards.

The design of the interview schedule used a blend of closed and open ended questions. The closed questions were either 'yes/no' or required the respondent to select one or more of a choice of options through the use of response scales. It was felt that the use of a response scale would allow answers to be categorised, collated and then used to give a general picture of how mentoring was used by those involved. Prompts or follow up questions could then be used to allow respondents to elaborate upon their answers or clarification could be sought.

True scaling that associates qualitative constructs with quantitative metric units<sup>11</sup> were not felt to be appropriate, as no inference was sought between the answers offered and any other construct. Uni-dimensional forced choice response scales were used to categorise the data. The response scales selected here were adjective and adverbial only using a numerical analogue scale as a final summary of overall value. The frequency response scale used was; 'never', 'sometimes', 'usually' and 'always'. In this type of scale, the meaning of a word in question, e.g. 'often', is only dependent upon the relationship to the other adjectives described e.g., 'never, rarely, sometimes and often' as opposed to 'sometimes, often, very often and always' therefore the four options for frequency responses were kept consistent throughout the interviews.

Survey methodologies assume a common discourse of shared meaning amongst people. To anchor the discourse to familiar statements, the skill sets detailed in the Standard for Headship were used in an attempt to categorise the work of a headteacher and thus allow responses to be made against these areas of work which could then be collated. As detailed in 2.3.4, the SfH is the only nationally agreed leadership standard, hence template, to evaluate development. The Standard for Headship delineates the work of headteachers into five areas of professional action: leading and managing learning and teaching; leading and developing people; leading change and improvement; managing resources and building community. My experience of mentor training and learning from

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<sup>11</sup> Examples are summative scales (Likert 1932), cumulative scales (Guttman 1944), equal-appearing interval scales (Thurstone and Chave 1929) or semantic differential scales (Osgood 1957)

the mentees' review day led to 'nuts and bolts issues' and 'personal issues' being included in the response options. 'Nuts and bolts issues' was a term which derived from the exploratory stages of this study as some mentees found it difficult to categorise some areas of discussion under the professional actions of the Standard for Headship. 'Nuts and bolts' referred to issues related to day to day running of a school, basic information which was often factual - two examples given in discussion with Mentees were 'what colour of travelling expenses form was needed' and 'who to phone about a wasp's nest'. Neither of these could be specifically categorised within the professional actions of the Standard for Headship so the 'Nuts and Bolts' response category was created. This also allowed a judgement of importance over the issues discussed which might be revealing. Experience from the mentoring programme and from the literature review also suggested that personal issues were sometimes raised. To allow learning about this aspect of mentoring to emerge, 'Personal Issues' was added as a response category.

This study set out to explore formal mentoring using the definition of Kram (1985) to consider the kinds of processes and functions that can take place and the types of approaches which fall under the mentoring 'umbrella' (2.4.2). To assist in creating a shared meaning, a response scale for the approach taken by the mentor was created. This decision was taken after discussions with participants at mentor training and the mentees' review day where there was evidence of confusion over language describing the spectrum of 'helping conversations' -specifically in trying to differentiate coaching and mentoring. The options within the response scale, and associated explanations, were designed with two experienced colleagues who both acted as coaches and mentors in the business world, through our shared experiences of the CSLA mentor training for headteachers, the National CPD team publications and the literature on concepts of coaching and mentoring. This response set included four conversational techniques that could be used within a mentoring relationship and was tested during the preparatory study. The response set used the following terms: telling (directing); coaching (helping you find your own solution); collaborating (working together on a problem) and counselling (exploring personal issues).

Open ended response items were also felt to be valuable as interviewing offers further opportunities to interpret the experiences proffered or explore issues of increased complexity, where a predetermined response scale may not cover all possible reactions. The open ended response items had no predetermined categories; those being interviewed would therefore answer in their own words. An example of this would be; 'How do you decide on what issues you are going to discuss?' Some questions sought

descriptive information at first, then, depending on the response, a follow up question which sought greater explanation.

The indicative interview schedule used to generate data for this study is offered in Table 4<sup>12</sup>

Indicative Interview Schedule	
Welcome, introductions, purpose	
1.	Our records show that your formal mentoring started in **; are you still in contact with your mentor?
2.	How many times have you met?
3.	Where do you meet?
4.	When, in the day, do you meet?
5.	How long are your meetings, on average?
6.	The policy says that the first meeting is very important and gives some tips on what to cover. How did the first meeting go for you? How did you feel about mentoring before and after that first meeting?
7.	Do you create a plan for the meeting, or agenda, beforehand?
8.	How and when do you decide on what issues you are going to discuss?
9.	How often do you (does the mentee) take away an action plan to be implemented before the next meeting?
10.	Is there any advice you would give, or tips, that you would give to new mentors?
11.	What advice could you give to the authority regarding the way mentoring is arranged in the CSLA? Is there any comment you would like to make about the policy arrangements or matching - do we get that right?

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<sup>12</sup> *Continued overleaf*

12.	<p>Issues discussed in meetings in terms of SFH skillsets          'I would like to ask you about the areas of your / your mentee's job that you explored during your mentoring sessions. To learn about aspects of the job where mentoring might help, I would like us to refer to the school leadership skillsets as outlined by Standard for Headship (SfH). If I read out these areas to you, could you give an indication how often you focussed about these areas of work within the mentoring conversation.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="437 383 1401 1055"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="437 501 1082 551">SfH Skillsets</th> <th data-bbox="1082 383 1161 551">Never</th> <th data-bbox="1161 383 1241 551">Sometimes</th> <th data-bbox="1241 383 1321 551">Often</th> <th data-bbox="1321 383 1401 551">Very Often</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 551 1082 622">Leading and managing learning and teaching</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 622 1082 694">Leading and developing people</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 694 1082 766">Leading change and improvement</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 766 1082 837">Using resources effectively</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 837 1082 909">Building community</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 909 1082 981">Nuts &amp; Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 981 1082 1055">Personal issues</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	SfH Skillsets	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Leading and managing learning and teaching					Leading and developing people					Leading change and improvement					Using resources effectively					Building community					Nuts & Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information					Personal issues				
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Nuts & Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information																																									
Personal issues																																									
13. Mentee only	<p>I would like you to reflect on any things that you have learned in your mentoring sessions which you think will stay with you and help you in the future....          If I could ask you within which of the SfH skillsets you have been helped most by your mentor?</p>																																								
14. Mentee only	<p>Have your mentoring sessions been useful to you in carrying out your job?          Have your mentoring sessions affected your behaviour as a HT? Have they helped in terms of confidence, stress levels etc? Exemplars of professional actions?          In what way? Examples?</p>																																								
15.	<p>Have you tended to use a particular mentoring style?          Or, to mentees          Has your mentor used a particular mentoring style within the conversations?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="555 1675 1246 1928"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="555 1675 1171 1738">Telling (directing)</td> <td data-bbox="1171 1675 1246 1738"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="555 1738 1171 1809">Coaching (helping you find your on solution)</td> <td data-bbox="1171 1738 1246 1809"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="555 1809 1171 1881">Collaborating (working together on a problem)</td> <td data-bbox="1171 1809 1246 1881"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="555 1881 1171 1928">Counselling (exploring personal issues)</td> <td data-bbox="1171 1881 1246 1928"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Telling (directing)		Coaching (helping you find your on solution)		Collaborating (working together on a problem)		Counselling (exploring personal issues)																																	
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16. Mentor only	<b>In terms of your own development</b> , have your sessions with your mentee had an influence on your own practice/mindset? Did you anticipate this effect?
17.	How valuable has the mentoring programme been for you compared to other leadership and management support that is available from the authority? i.e. courses, the role of the school QIO, SQH.
18.	Would you recommend mentoring to a colleague who was thinking of joining the mentoring programme?
19.	Overall, on a scale of one to 10, with 0 as the most negative and 10 as the most positive, where would you place your overall experience of mentoring?

**Table 4 Indicative Interview Schedule**

#### 4.3.3. Sampling

Blanket sampling was used in this study. The reason for this was to offer a voice to all who had experience of the phenomenon under exploration, using a time period as the selection filter as opposed to any other variable. Other ways of filtering the potential sampling frame were considered namely:

- Geographical district (schools within one functional area)
- Primary dyads
- Secondary dyads
- Mentees
- Mentors
- Headteacher mentees/dyads
- First headships mentees/dyads
- Female

Either or any combination of the above sampling frame would have been possible however these elements of the population would not offer insight to the research question as a whole. What was sought was the ‘reality of a population’ (O’Leary 2005 p.87). I wanted to explore the reality of those who had participated in the mentoring programme and sought depth and breadth of data about their experiences, thoughts, knowledge, attitudes and feelings that could be sufficiently representative to be generalised back to the population. As such the sample had to match the population characteristics, so the use of any of the above sampling filters would provide only part of the picture.

Although some quantitative information was sought, the purpose was descriptive, not inferential and therefore the sample size was not constrained by confidence intervals or variation. To create a snapshot in time with a sample which was representative of the population, the decision was taken to include within the sample frame all who had participated in the mentoring programme during the calendar year prior to the study.

The year prior to the study, i.e. 2007, was selected as it allowed conversations with those who were at different stages of the mentoring process. The sample included those with between 6-18 months experience of mentoring, and all had recent experience on which to draw. It was recognised that the sample may include those still within a formal mentoring relationship.

The period for the blanket sample was 2007; all Headteachers (HT) and Depute Headteachers (DHT) who participated in the mentoring programme within this year, and their mentors, were invited to participate in the study. To ensure the sample was sufficiently broad to capture subjects who did not engage in the mentoring programme, 'participated' was defined as the mentoring arrangements having been set-up by the authority.

In summary, the criteria for selection to be involved in the study were:

- Newly appointed HTs or DHTs allocated a mentor through the CSLA Mentor Programme during 2007.
- The allocated mentors for the above.

#### **4.4. Conducting the interview**

The third stage of the interview process detailed by Kvale (2007) is interviewing. The interviews were conducted at a place and time convenient to the participants. The advice offered by Kvale (1996) and others (Drever 1995, Oppenheim 1992, Cohen *et al.* 2007) to address the interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional aspects of the interview was followed.

The interview schedule was followed and responses to closed questions were transcribed directly on to a hard copy response sheet, leaving full, post-interview transcription required for the open response questions. Field notes and prompts were added. The interview was taped throughout using a Sony portable minidisc recorder (G\_PROTECTION type R). Each interview was identified using the shorthand P.ME and P.MR (Primary Mentee / Primary Mentor) and S.ME and S.MR (Secondary Mentee /

Secondary Mentor), and by sequential number. HT and DHT was added as appropriate to differentiate between headteacher or depute headteacher mentoring.

#### **4.5. Transcription**

Following the interview the nominal and ordinal responses to closed questions and response sets were inputted as counts onto an EXCEL spreadsheet. Stage four in Kvale's guidance is that of transcribing and this process is now described.

I listened to each interview audio-recording in full, in order to encapsulate and understand the social encounter. In transforming information from oral to written form, it immediately becomes interpreted through what is retained and how this is construed (Kvale 1996). Listening to the interview again as a whole, over viewing the flow of the discussion, hearing the tone, mood, speed inflections -while also remembering the non-verbal cues which were associated with statements, all assisted in keeping as close to the event as possible. This was in an effort to balance what Cohen *et al.* (2007) describe as the tension in retaining the holism of the interview with the tendency to fragment the data (p.368). The interview responses to the open questions were then transcribed in full, noting the response sheet findings alongside the responses to the open questions plus any deviations from the interview framework or prompts required.

Each interview transcript was retained in full so that I could go back to the original conversation in order to remind myself of the context, to re-interpret the whole rather than rely on reduced fragments.

#### **4.6. Data handling and storage**

How the data was managed, handled and stored is not considered a 'stage' by Kvale (1996) but was considered in some depth in this research. Strategies were put in place to ensure that who the participants were and what they said could not be accidentally disclosed. Undoubtedly there were moral and ethical requirements to ensure confidentiality was maintained and participants were anonymous and non-identifiable. It was also an ethical concern to me that good and proper use was made of the information shared. It was therefore vital that information could be retrieved accurately and attributed to the correct respondent without compromising their identity at any and all stages of the research.

Although this is necessary for all research, I felt the need for such non-attribution keenly, as those who contributed to the findings were colleagues, and their perceptions were often reflections on other colleague's actions and behaviours. In a small local

community of school leaders, 'who said what about who' was politically and personally sensitive with potential consequences on the working relationships and career paths of those involved. Personal views were offered in a spirit of collegiality and trust, and I did not take this responsibility lightly.

Practically, to ensure these ethical requirements were met, robust and reliable administrative strategies were put in place. Gibbs (2007) refers to the 'major headache' which is the sorting through and searching the data while at the same time creating a consistent and perceptive analysis that remains grounded in those data (p.2). He describes the office procedures when he talks of the need for good organisation and a structured approach. Cresswell (1998) offers useful suggestions on the handling and management of data, the use of a master list and data collection matrix were used here in order to keep an overview of the considerable amount of data created. Each interview required an invitation, arrangement documentation, consent information, interview schedule, response record sheet, field notes, full transcript and audio tape. The information collected at interview was allocated to the respondent using identification codes. Mentor/mentee dyads were identified and cross referenced to the identification codes. Each identifier had a file created where information was held and a paper copy of all transcripts was also retained in a locked filing cabinet. Consent information and information which would identify person or school such as invitation letters, were retained only in a general information file and not attributed to any transcript. The mentor/mentee dyad information and the list which identified name to code, was destroyed once the cross reference was undertaken. The audio recordings were cleared once the full and final transcription was made. Once data was cleansed of any identifiable names or places, the transcripts with associated response sheets and field notes were analysed.

## **4.7. Method of analysis**

Stage five of the Kvale guidance on conducting an interview investigation is that of data analysis. Given that the data was made out of both descriptive quantitative information as well as exploratory qualitative information, the analysis had to both crunch the numbers as well as work with words (O'Leary 2005).

### **4.7.1. Quantitative analysis: crunching the numbers**

The purpose of the descriptive analysis was to collate the individual accounts of the narrative to capture and describe programme processes. Nominal and ordinal data was collected within the closed questions and response scales and therefore descriptive

analysis was used. Although non-parametric inferential statistics would allow for correlational or comparative analysis, relationships between constructs were not sought as this was not the purpose of the research.

The EXCEL spreadsheet containing the nominal and ordinal data was manipulated to produce descriptive statistics. Frequency tables were constructed as a way of presenting the summarised data to show the patterns of responses to the closed ended items and response scales (Appendix E).

#### 4.7.2. Qualitative analysis: working with words

The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to explore individuals' assumptions about mentoring and what being involved meant to them. The interpretive motive behind this research was to make meaning from participants' thoughts, knowledge, attitudes and feelings, allowing research findings to emerge through the development of frequent or dominant themes within the interview data.

There is a wide range of literature that documents the underlying assumptions and procedures associated with analysing qualitative data, although as Creswell (1998) highlights, there is no consensus over methods of analysis. There are, however, common features. Morse and Richards (2002) identifies the key features of good qualitative analysis as synthesising, comprehending, theorising and re-contextualising: these strategies were used in this research to make sense and meaning from a complex, sometimes contradictory collection of individual experiences.

Seidman (1991) considers two distinct paths for analysing interviews - developing profiles and developing themes. Returning to the intent, motivation and expectations of this research the theme approach to analysis was determined most appropriate; it was envisaged that the themes emergent from the whole sample would provide generalisable learning for the CSLA and others with a policy or scholarly interest in school leadership and/or employer-led mentoring. Although profile analysis was not undertaken here, the individual transcripts and the mentor dyad information were available if additional context was needed to inform the thematic analysis.

The initial thematic frame was learning around McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) first dimension of mentoring - to understand the process of mentoring in the CSLA. This theme involved both process and understanding of the interpretation and implementation of the mentoring policy. The initial topic coding of text was related to the process questions

asked and considered: place and time; what was important in the first meeting; the expectations of both mentors and mentees on purpose and process; the level of direction involved in the mentoring approach used; the documentation used to support the process and how the relationship evolved over time.

Data analysis to explore McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) second dimension of mentoring required a number of stages as the interview schedule had deliberately not asked directly about the claims made over the anticipated outcome of mentoring but asked for commentary about experiences in broad areas. In order to move from data to abstraction, the transcripts were interrogated firstly by using first broad topic coding, then shaped through analytic coding, then conceptualised through a thematic frame. I was aware of the debate around data-driven or concept driven coding (Gibbs 2007) and at times became frustrated with the contested ground around open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Morse and Richards 2002). Although I was wary of 'forcing data' - the criticism levelled by Glaser (1992) over the selective coding methods of Strauss and Corbins, I determined that analysis most coherent with the intent, motivation and expectation of the research would be concept driven, using a thematic frame as advocated by Ritchie *et al.* (2003).

A thematic frame was constructed as advocated Ritchie *et al.* 2003. Lists of thematic ideas, based around the research question, were taken from the literature and the knowledge, understandings and beliefs the researcher. The thematic frame altered as the results were interpreted as participants told stories which touched on a number of aspects, or reiterated themes throughout the interview which would move back and forth around one issue of importance to them.

The synthesising stage of this analysis required working with the words in the transcripts, categorising the content of the text, clustering natural units of meaning (Miles and Huberman 1994) and linking sections of text with thematic ideas (Gibbs 2007). Each transcript was fragmented in this way through a process of manual topic coding, putting the passages from each interview which exemplified the same idea, explanation, activity or phenomenon, together. A useful description of topic coding was offered in Morse and Richards (2002). Topic coding was needed as the first stage towards abstraction, moving the data from a series of responses to a set of questions towards a focus for thinking about the concepts that could help understand them.

The second stage was beginning to conceptualise and make meaning from the data through analytic coding. This was not, as suggested above, a strictly linear process; as

the data was topic coded from each transcript as it was completed, the development of the analytic codes shaped the topic codes from later interviews. What began as a series of collated responses to the questions within the interview schedule, based around the research question, was then refined into categories through a process of analytic coding, shaped into patterns and themes, as concepts, new meanings and some surprises, emerged.

#### **4.8. Methodological quality; issues around validity and reliability**

The sixth stage in Kvale's guidance (1996) is that of 'verifying'. Whatever the epistemological view of the researcher, the issue of ensuring good quality research cannot be escaped (Gibbs 2007, Kvale 2007). In this research the terms validity and reliability are used although recognising the view of some qualitative researchers (Lincoln and Guba 1985) that these terms belong to the positivist paradigm (Morse and Richards 2002).

For validity, this means that the data making and analytic process accurately captures participant's reality, that it is trustworthy, has truth, value and credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Reliability as a concept here is not used in terms of the study being replicable, as this is difficult with any qualitative study where data is richly within a particular context (Sandelowski 1993) but more that it is stable, consistent and dependable (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

##### **4.8.1. Analytic quality; validity and reliability**

Ways of ensuring validity and reliability were considered throughout the design phase and were previously considered within the discussion around the sampling frame, the choice of questions, the structure and conduct of the interview and the transcription process. Verification of the analysis of data as valid and reliable was considered through reality checking, triangulation with the literature, saturation of responses within themes and respondent validation. These steps are described briefly below.

Within a frame of critical realism there was an attempt to ensure that the analysis was as close as possible to what was really happening (Gibbs 2007). The strategy used in verification was to continually check and verify relationships in the data and then consider the 'fit' as a reality check of the analysis against the literature. Triangulation was not available within the design of the study as no data from observations or external verification on the professional actions of headteachers was felt to be

consistent with the aim or position of the study. There could be triangulation of sorts, against results from other studies (Morse and Richards 2002), considering whether the study findings supported or provide a logical extension to the literature. Due to the sampling frame, there was a great deal of data to analyse and saturation within each element of the thematic frame was obtained.

Gibbs (2007) describes respondent validation as a way of checking that the transcription process faithfully captured the respondent's view of the world (p.95). In this study such a stakeholder check was undertaken with the initial four pilot subjects, when they were asked if the transcript reflected what they really meant and that a summary of the analysis was acceptable, convincing and credible. Given the size of the sample this was not undertaken in the full study. One benefit of insider research where the findings can influence professional practice is that there is opportunity for legitimacy to be reaffirmed following completion of the study, that the transferability and generalisability of the findings can be tested through implementation. It is expected that the trustworthiness of the findings and associated recommendations in this study will be further tested through implementation and can be verified by subsequent evaluation and research.

Kvale (1996) describes the seventh and final stage of the interview process as reporting. The following chapter presents the findings of the research, reported within the thematic framework for the analysis.

## Chapter 5. Reporting of findings

This chapter reports on the findings of this study which explores the process and outcome of formal mentoring for newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. The findings of the research are reported in subsections arranged around the claims and assumptions tested. A reiteration of the questions which were offered in Chapter 2 makes links from the work up until this point in the thesis and acts as a signpost for the implications for practice that emerge in Chapter 6.

### 5.1. Research questions reiterated

To enhance understanding of McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) first dimension of mentoring this research set out to explore the processes involved in the CSLA. The description of what happens throughout the process and within a relationship help make meaning about mentoring. The assumptions about the mentoring programme tested in this research are as follows:

**Assumption 1:** Relevant experience and location are important factors in matching a mentoring dyad

**Assumption 2:** Peer headteachers will accept a nomination to become a mentor or volunteer to join the scheme.

**Assumption 3:** Mentoring provides a form of support which differs from other forms of leadership and management development

To explore McClellan *et al.*'s (2008) second dimension of mentoring this research tests the claims that mentoring achieves psychosocial and career enhancing outcomes:

**Claim 1:** Mentoring builds self-confidence and supports wellbeing

**Claim 2:** Mentoring builds independence and supports effectiveness

The findings are now presented. Selected quotations, presented as spoken, are used to illustrate the key messages which emerged. All quotations are attributed to the sample group using the following coding:

P HT ME: Primary Headteacher Mentee

P HT MR: Primary Headteacher Mentor

S HT ME: Secondary Headteacher Mentee

S HT MR:	Secondary Headteacher Mentor
P DHT ME:	Primary Depute Headteacher Mentee
P DHT MR:	Primary Depute Headteacher Mentor
S DHT ME:	Secondary Depute Headteacher Mentee
S DHT MR:	Secondary Depute Headteacher Mentor

The quantitative data which support this chapter is presented as frequency tables in Appendix D (Table D1-18).

## 5.2. Sample

Twenty three mentoring dyads commenced within 2007 and all mentors and mentees were invited to participate in this research. From the 46 invitations, 42 participants consented to be interviewed. Four subjects who met the sample criteria declined to participate in the study. Responses were therefore not available from two primary headteacher mentors and two secondary depute headteachers who were a mentoring dyad. The sample for the study is shown in Table 5.

	Primary HT	Primary DHT	TOTAL PRIMARY	Secondary HT	Secondary DHT	TOTAL SECONDARY
Number of Mentees	11	3	14	3	5	8
Number of Mentors	10	2	12	4	4	8

**Table 5 Study Sample**

The 42 interviews generated over 50 hours of recorded data which was subsequently analysed as described in Chapter 4.

The CSLA mentoring policy states that mentoring will normally last one year after appointment. Given the time period over which the subjects were appointed, it was to be expected that the formal period of mentoring would have naturally concluded for some. If the formal mentoring period had ended, around half the mentees (5/8 primary and 2/4 secondary) reported they were still in informal contact with their mentors (Table D1). Most mentoring dyads reported that they had met 3-5 times on average once or twice per term (Table D2).

### 5.3. The process of mentoring

This study set out sought to establish if there was a consistent interpretation and implementation of the mentoring policy (Appendix C) in order to improve understanding of its' use as a leadership development strategy in the CSLA. Results are presented in relation to the specific questions as follows:

- I. Where and when does mentoring happen?
- II. What happens at the first meeting?
- III. How formal is 'formal' mentoring?
- IV. Do mentors use a consistent approach in the 'helping conversation'?
- V. What could be done to improve the experience?

Data showed that the understanding and implementation of mentoring was different across and between mentoring dyads. The findings allow a model of mentoring to be built which can be used to share understandings and improve the support offered to novice school leaders. Analysis, through the conceptual framework for this study, indicates that mentoring is understood as a socialisation and developmental process but the emphasis between the two functions differ between and within relationships. Some mentor dyads met outwith the school day, in a social space with no planned learning. Other mentor dyads met within contracted time on school premises with an agenda and action plan. The following section offers narrative which exemplifies the themes which emerge from the analysis and tests Assumption 1.

#### 5.3.1. Making space for mentoring; place and time

Data related to where and when mentoring took place provided insight into how space was made for mentoring both, both in the physical and the temporal sense.

##### 5.3.1.1. *Mentoring places; on whose turf?*

Findings about place indicated differences between mentoring in primary and secondary dyads. Where the mentoring meeting took place was not raised as a debatable or difficult issue for secondary dyads; meetings tended to take place in school and no problems were reported regarding the mutual agreement of the spaces available.

Where mentoring took place was emphasised as important in responses from primary colleagues. Meeting in school suggested a greater formality and a greater focus on task functions through direct sharing of practice. Meetings in social spaces, such as cafes, were seen as less formal, which may have led to a greater emphasis on socialisation and

emotional support functions. In the main, mentors valued a greater level of formality in the meetings than mentees, who welcomed the opportunity for a relaxed conversation. As can be seen from Table D3 the majority of mentoring meetings were held in the mentee's school. What emerged was that, for some primary mentoring dyads, finding an appropriate place for the mentoring conversation to take place was not easy. Primary mentoring dyads reported using social spaces such as hotels or cafes. Secondary mentoring dyads did not.

Data indicated that the elements considered in finding the right place to mentor were the travelling time, confidentiality, lack of interruption and a comfortable environment where the mentee felt confident to speak freely. This quotation encapsulates the major themes which emerged throughout the responses of primary colleagues and it provides a useful summary of the issues surrounding place:

*We agreed it at the first meeting, as I say, we kind of wracked our brains looking for something that was near both our schools, that was easy to travel to from our schools and that it was somewhere that we had both been to on courses actually, so we knew where it was, we were not scared of that environment as we'd already been in that environment, and we knew it would be quiet. We wouldn't be disturbed, things like that.*

P HT ME<sup>13</sup>

Where a mentee or mentor lived some distance from the school, travelling distances could make meetings time consuming. Mentoring would tend to take place after school and both mentors and mentees preferred to meet closer to home. Although mentors did feel that meeting in the mentee's school was best, they tended to defer to the wishes of the mentee, particularly in the early stages of the relationship.

Due to the nature of the school estate, the accommodation provided within the school may not be amenable to uninterrupted, confidential conversations. Many headteachers do not have a private office; instead a base may be within a classroom or shared with the clerical staff. In addition, any meeting room may have a dual function as a staffroom. If this was the case meetings would either be in school time but out of the school building or in the school but when staff and pupils had left. The following quotation highlights the importance of the confidentiality in selecting an appropriate venue:

*If it's a wee rural school it can be difficult to find somewhere to talk during school. Quite frankly, the average small school staffroom is hardly the kind of environment where you would want to unburden your soul.*

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<sup>13</sup> P HT ME: Primary Headteacher Mentee (for other definitions see 5.1).

Data showed that being comfortable and relaxed in the surroundings was also important. A range of differing solutions emerged, but the common theme was the need for the mentee to feel confident within the surroundings, particularly in the early stages of the relationship as the following quotation illustrates:

*Our first meeting was on my turf which I think made it a bit easier.*

P HT ME

Others preferred to be out of school altogether, and talked of the benefits of informality by being 'offsite' or on 'neutral ground'. Mentees considered meetings in school to be more formal than if they took place in a more social space. The following quotation reflects mentees' preference that meetings should be informal:

*Meeting needs to be relaxed - get out of the schools if you can. Sitting behind a desk; she was behind hers and I was in front of it - it looked a bit like an interview. Go for the comfy chairs.*

P DHT ME

For mentors, seeing the mentee in situ gave an insight into the work context which was valuable. Mentors felt that meetings in school brought a greater focus on education to the discussion, it kept conversations 'on track' and emphasised developing skills and abilities. Mentors felt the conversation was less likely to move to the 'social side' which was felt to make the best use of time. Having the meeting in the mentee's school was also described as adding balance, giving an overview of how the mentee was progressing in all aspects of work, not just the areas which were challenging, as this quotation illustrates:

*I think it's good to have meetings in their school - it gives you a context to set their issues in and it also enables you to look at all the positive things that are going on instead of focussing on the more problematic ones.*

P DHT MR

Analysis suggested that the mentoring relationship went through stages and where the meetings took place would change as the relationship developed. Although these would differ between dyads in terms of pace, most reported that the relationship was led by the mentor at first, with the balance of power shifting over time. In the early phase the priority for mentors was for the mentee to feel confident and relaxed, but once the relationship had been established, a different venue was useful to see alternative ways of working. Mentees felt that it was also useful to see the mentor in action, to share their context and assess their attitudes and behaviours. The following quotation

suggests that seeing the mentor at work was an opportunity to evaluate their ability and credibility:

*It was good to see the mentor in his own den, how he acted professionally, how he was professionally. Walking into a school you can sense an ethos, I would have known straight away whether that person was for me or not and I knew walking in that [he] is a people person, which is good, which is good.*

S HT ME

### 5.3.1.2. *Making time for mentoring: the year of the firsts*

Findings about time also indicated differences in how mentoring was enacted between primary and secondary dyads. Data shows that the majority of meetings lasted between 1-2 hours but with a third of mentors reporting the meeting was over 2 hours in length. Meetings tended to last longer in the primary sector (Table D5).

Mentors and mentees reported that was difficult to find the time for mentoring. Secondary colleagues reported that meetings tended to be within the school day, whereas for primary staff, meetings were after school. Both primary and secondary colleagues reported that there was a reluctance to disrupt the school day or to be unavailable within school time. A disparity was noted within the policy arrangements as primary mentors found it easier than their mentees to make time for mentoring as there was a class cover funding allocation available. No issues related to class cover were raised by secondary colleagues.

A matter related to time was raised as a concern by mentees. Data showed that mentoring support from the right person at the right time was crucial but the speed of allocation of the mentor was not consistent. Mentoring was particularly helpful in preparing for, or reflecting and learning from, critical incidents of which the novice had had no prior experience. One mentor referred to this essential period for mentoring as the 'year of the firsts'. School life is cyclical and certain 'firsts' in the life of a novice headteacher could be anticipated. Examples given were the first staff meeting, quality improvement visit or working time arrangement negotiations. In addition to the planned events, there are the reactive challenges - the first pupil exclusion or parental complaint. If mentoring was accepted as a form of developmental support it needed to be available in time for this to be helpful. The support of a mentor being offered too late, once the new appointee had already 'hit the ground running' and had learnt from the critical incident on their own, was seen as weakness in the management arrangements as this quote illustrates:

*I am not sure whether they had been told or whatever but it seemed to stretch on, by which time as a new depute head I was already 6 or 7 months into it and learning on my feet.*

S DHT ME

Given the importance of mentoring through the 'year of the firsts', concern was raised by respondents over the speed at which mentors were allocated and initiated a first meeting. Analysis showed that newly appointed school leaders needed support in the very early stages of appointment, even in the period before they took up post. This was particularly problematic if the headteacher had been acting-up to a promoted post before being appointed to a substantive post. This is not uncommon and a situation in which the mentoring policy is not applied consistently due to the diverse nature of the acting up arrangements.

### 5.3.2. The first meeting

Participants were asked about their experiences of the first meeting. All respondents stressed the importance of the first meeting in setting the scene and establishing a relationship. A theme emerged from analysis of mentor and mentee responses which indicated there was neither a consistent understanding of the role of the mentor nor the aims of mentoring.

Data showed that there was not a clear, shared understanding of how the meetings were to be arranged. Responses suggested there was some confusion over who should initiate contact and how often the mentoring meetings should take place as the following quotation illustrates:

*I think, well I didn't know what was expected from the relationship, in terms of number of meetings and what type of meetings and I think I expected to meet somebody fairly regularly and pretty semi-formally, and that didn't seem to be the expectation of the other person.*

S HT ME

The need for a shared expectation emerged strongly from responses from both mentors and mentees. This was considered important to the growing mentoring relationship since the way that one party views the other is immediately affected if expectations are not met. However tensions emerged as to who had this responsibility - with the CSLA, the mentor and the mentee each perceived as having a role. Mentors tended to feel that the CSLA and mentees should be explicit over their expectations, and mentees tended to feel that the CSLA and mentors should give greater guidance. It was apparent

that neither side perceived that they could, or should, own the process and that the employer had responsibility for guiding what was expected.

The data showed that the role of the mentor was not always clear to both parties. Mentees highlighted that the purpose of mentoring and the role of the mentor needed to be clarified at the first meeting. Mentors appeared confident that, although they were mentoring the newly appointed headteacher or depute headteacher selected by and on behalf of the CSLA, their role was as colleague. Although mentors appeared clear on their role they did not always discuss this with the mentee as the following quotation illustrates:

*I had no idea what to expect, and with what I heard later the mentors HAD had some ideas as to what to cover and how it should work.*

S DHT ME

There was a consistent view that an initial meeting or clearer guidelines be available for mentees so they could participate more fully in the relationship from the outset and limit the time that was spent at the first meeting agreeing the arrangements. A form of mentee induction was reported as needed in order to manage the mentees' expectations. Mentors felt that mentees wanted a 'cosy chat' or 'praise' but that this type of emotional support and encouragement was not what some mentors were expecting to provide as this quotation illustrates:

*The mentees needed a clearer idea of what this was about and that it wasn't just a cosy chat. That this was about driving leadership and improvement forward.*

P HT MR

This difference of view concurs with the initial comments regarding 'place' where the mentees valued informality, whereby the mentors could see more benefit in the meetings being within school. It may be that novice school leaders may lack confidence when new in post and seek affirmation and emotional support from experienced headteacher colleagues. This fits within Kram's (1985) psychosocial function of mentoring, learning occurring with an emphasis on socialisation. The mentors, however, although recognising this need, may view the main function of mentoring as task related - akin to Kram's (1985) career enhancing function- with learning occurring within a developmental frame as they consider the elements of both support and challenge in developing the abilities of the new school leader. This difference of emphasis over the function of mentoring is reflected throughout the findings of this research.

### 5.3.3. How formal is 'formal' mentoring?

Although this study considers the mentoring in the CSLA as formal, in that it is employer-led and policy driven, the levels of formality in practice were explored. Responses to questions allowed a picture to emerge on how relationships worked; whether mentoring was enacted as a form of psychosocial support or as a more managed leadership development approach. In this study, the signal for formality was a mentor who led or managed the process through a planned and/or documented process. Responses to questions on agenda setting, action planning and recording the mentoring conversations are summarised in broad themes below. Analysis of responses from this theme of questioning offered polarised views on how mentoring is best implemented. The area where the strongest views emerged was whether there was a need for any written record of or from the mentoring process. Although a template record sheet and action plan were offered within the mentoring policy, it was not a mandatory part of the arrangements.

Around half of the mentoring dyads set an agenda, or plan for discussion, beforehand (Table D7). Agendas were considered to increase the formality of the relationship, whether this was seen as a positive or a negative element differed between respondents. The value of formality was reported as valued more commonly by mentors as the following quotation illustrates:

*Yes, we kept notes and then from the notes we created a minute of the meeting, and from that we created a plan for the next meeting which was the agenda.*

P HT MR

The benefits of formality were reported less commonly from mentees, where for some, an agenda was perceived as a potential barrier to openness, what was described as conversational 'flow' (P HT ME) or 'free-flowing' discussion (S HT ME). As the following quotation indicates, some mentors reported that they responded to mentees' wishes to reduce the formality of the relationship:

*I think by writing things down it was a bit intimidating to the mentee. We abandoned note taking after the mentee said she didn't think it was necessary.*

P HT MR

It was evident from responses that the formality of the relationships evolved, but on closer scrutiny, they grew in different directions. For this mentor, once the personal relationship was established, the increased formality arising from agenda setting became less daunting:

*Once we got to know each other better, we then started to create agendas. It seemed too formal at first.*

P DHT MR

However for another mentor, the process began quite formally, but evolved to be more informal as the relationship built:

*I probably felt it was going to be more informal than it turned out to be. Having said that, it did evolve into being more informal as we went on. We did start with quite a strict format.*

P DHT MR

Whether the function of mentoring had predominately a task or psychosocial emphasis differed between dyads, prompting strong views from respondents. The following two conversational approaches are examples of different process models for mentoring. The first quotation suggests a psychosocial emphasis on what was understood as the function for mentoring where the initial prompt for discussion creates an emotional reaction:

*We tended to decide what to talk about at the meeting. She would say 'How are you' and then it all would tend to pour out from there.*

P HT ME

The alternative view suggests a more task centred emphasis on what was understood as the function of mentoring, as the following quotation shows:

*We used a standard sort of agenda list that started by recapping what we talked about last time and any urgent or new stuff would come under 'matters arising'.*

P DHT MR

The data showed that both parties had a role in determining the focus for the conversation (Table D8). Depending upon who introduced the discussion topic this could be interpreted as reactive, where the mentee was facing a new and significant challenge and wanted to raise it with the mentor. Alternatively it could be proactive with the agenda reflecting the cyclical nature of the school year, previously highlighted as 'the year of the firsts', as the mentor predicts key times within the school year or tasks within the quality assurance calendar where the mentee may need support. What emerged from the responses was that different arrangements evolved with differed relationships. There was a general consensus from mentors that mentoring a newly appointed school manager needed to be both a reactive and a proactive process in terms of responding to immediate concerns while also planning for the future as this quotation illustrates:

*I think mentoring needs to be a mixture of 'What can I do about this incident?' and 'What am I intending to achieve next year?'*

P HT MR

Around half the mentoring dyads produced an action plan (or what was described as a development task or homework) (Table D9), a similar proportion to those who reported using a form of agenda. As was consistent in the differing views of the use of agendas, there were polarised views as to whether this was the function of mentoring as the following responses illustrate:

*How often did I leave meetings with a task to do? Every bloody time! But it was what I needed.*

P HT ME

*That's a difficult one, I didn't see that leaving with tasks was the role of mentoring, I do that with my education officer, as part of a PRI - this was more like exploration.*

S HT ME

Some mentors suggested that notes might be important as an ongoing 'aide memoir' to help the relationship progress, to remember to do what they had agreed, or if the mentor had a concern. As this mentor highlights, a written record may only be necessary in specific circumstances:

*I think if it had been a really big issue we would have made some notes*

P HT MR

What this mentor means by the phrase 'big issue' merits further exploration. It could mean that it is an area for significant development for the mentee, requiring support over an extended period of time and referring back to notes is helpful to reflect on progress. Or, that it is a big issue because of the potential consequence of the area under discussion. My experience of the mentoring programme leads me to infer that the 'big issues' for new headteachers are challenging staffing issues. Notes on such issues may be helpful if there are a number of political actors in the situation, as an aide memoire, or created as a series of steps to follow for the mentee. However a record of mentoring may also be kept if the mentor had a concern over the actions or behaviour of the mentee. From this it could be inferred that a note of the meeting may be considered useful should the mentor be required to substantiate their actions or advice. Should this inference be accurate, this is concerning, as it would suggest some disquiet over the accountability of the mentor.

In summary, mentors reported the benefits of signals of formality more than the novice headteachers and depute headteachers in this study. The need for a written record of the mentoring relationship prompted strong views from respondents, some agreeing it was a useful part of the learning and development process, while others felt such a model was inconsistent with the function of mentoring. A planned and documented process was reported in around half the dyads, and signals were more consistent within relationships where a more task orientated, learning and development emphasis was evident. Around half the dyads reported a more reactive model where there was a greater focus on the psychosocial functions of mentoring.

#### 5.3.4. Developing a model of mentoring.

Findings showed different approaches were taken to the 'helping conversation' which was enacted in mentoring. Mentors would move between direct advice, helping mentees find their own solutions or working together, depending on the context and the nature of the relationship. The importance of listening, in giving space to mentees to think and lead the conversation was prominent in most mentors responses. Helping the mentee find their own solution and working together on a problem were the most commonly reported approaches. Most mentors were conscious of the approach that they were using, most steered away from telling their mentee what to do or how to do it - they were wary of 'advice giving' and were conscious of the weaknesses of 'instruction'. Most mentors said that they wanted mentees to find the solutions for themselves and advocated the benefits of 'coaching' techniques to achieve that outcome. Mentees also found that non-directive approaches were useful. The following quotation is illustrative of this theme, where the mentor helped the novice achieve what s/he wanted by directly assisting with practical advice on steps to take in order to reach the goal s/he had set:

*Not the direction I was going but how to get there? I don't think she ever influenced where I was going but in what I wanted to do with my vision, but then helped with perhaps, the nitty gritty of where do I go for information to achieve that vision. I knew the change that I wanted, she didn't tell me the change, but she helped me with the way I was going to implement it - the practical - I knew the end point - she helped me with the path.*

P HT ME

However some mentors found that it could be difficult to assist the mentee to find their own solution, particularly if they had little knowledge or experience on which to draw. Some mentors expressed care for their mentees, and were protective over them for decisions they were making or going to make. As is illustrated in these quotations, both mentors and mentees highlighted that, at times, direct advice was felt to be appropriate:

*'I know 'telling' like in instructing is unfashionable but sometimes a direct question needs a direct answer....but I know it seems wrong when we are supposed to have these coaching conversations'*

P HT MR

*Sometimes it's good just to be told. Why wander about? Why not just tell me now?*

P HT ME

However if mentees asked for direct advice or assistance, some mentors talked of the difficulty of knowing *'where to draw the line'* (P HT MR).

Findings indicated that the approach taken by mentors changed as the mentoring relationships evolved, as did the topics under discussion. There was a general view that dyads evolved from an advisory relationship on basic operational issues with the expectation that more strategic conversations came later. Mentoring during very early headship was described by some as a reactive stage where the focus was on *'immediate issues to keep my head above water'* (S HT ME). There was a need for practical guidance on operational matters - direct advice initially about *'what to do and how to do it'* (P HT ME) and *'what do I throw away and what do I keep.'* (P HT ME). It was recognised that the level of direct advice depended on the mentee's level of experience and this was reduced over time as experience grew. Experienced headteachers needed more support in knowing the business if their prior knowledge was not relevant to their new context (size of school, local authority or education system) or if they had no local pre-existing professional network.

Data suggested that the basis for the mentoring relationship had to be solid before topics for discussion could become more challenging. A commonly held view was that learning and teaching issues were relevant and provided trouble-free topics for early mentoring conversations. Before the relationship could be progressed, trust and a shared understanding of the purpose of mentoring had to be in place before *'ugly or thorny'* issues - people, politics or budgets - could be raised which would require more sophisticated exploration.

#### 5.3.4.1. *Time with the guru*

Some responses indicated that mentors were used in an advisory or quality improvement role with mentees reporting that they *'benchmarked'* their practice on the basis of feedback. Some mentoring dyads were described by mentees in terms indicative of a *'master: apprentice'* model as the following quotation illustrates:

*'He talks a great deal and I listened, like at the feet of the master'*

S HT ME

This was not construed negatively, having the opportunity for an uninterrupted audience and advice from a well respected colleague was seen as *'time with the guru'* (S DHT ME). In both the relationships quoted above, the mentors were male with female mentees. Both these quotations raise the potential complexity of male: female mentoring dyads. One female secondary headteacher mentee provided greater evidence that male:female dyads were different as she recognised that the relationship she had with her mentor was likely to be different from the other secondary heads as she was not part of the *'boys network'* (S HT ME).

Analysis showed that that the power within some dyads evolved over time. Where at first the relationship was advisory with the mentor providing the answers it could grow to be more of a peer dialogue - professional equals discussing challenging leadership issues. If this shift did not occur, then mentoring could be a *'limited experience'* (S HT ME) and did not fulfil its potential as a development experience.

As indicated above, the master: apprentice model that emerged in responses was seen positively by some. However this model was also reported negatively, where mentees lost confidence in their previous decisions or proposed solutions. One mentee described *'only'* crying twice in her first few months of headship, both times immediately following a mentoring session. She described feeling that she was doing OK, she was enjoying headship and felt that she was making progress, but that her mentor expected greater pace and breadth of improvement. Following mentoring meetings she subsequently felt overwhelmed by the tasks to be undertaken.

#### 5.3.4.2. *Dropping pebbles in the pond*

Some mentors talked of the need for mentees to engage in the process and in the difficulty in mentoring someone who did not appear to want the support. Mentors became frustrated if mentees did not raise issues for discussion, or suggested that they would *'use'* the mentor in times of crises, accepting the support but not the challenge role - described as the *'I'll phone you if I need you'* approach.

Although findings indicated that giving time for the mentee to discuss what they wanted was important, many mentors used their experience to foresee issues, or raise the *'what if'* scenario as a prompt for discussion. Mentors talked of their mentee *'not seeing things that were going to come round the corner to hit them'* (P HT MR) or that they

*'did not know what they did not know'* (S DHT MR). Using coaching techniques to help mentees find their own solution was viewed as positive but of limited usefulness if the mentee proffered no issues to discuss. In these situations, proactive mentoring using *'what would you do if'* (S DHT MR) scenario planning and reflective prompts were useful techniques as this quotation illustrates:

*I would bring up topics - like dropping a wee pebble in a pond and see what ripples would come from that. Then we would explore what those ripples threw up.*

P DHT MR

In summary, analysis showed the most common conversational approaches used in mentoring were helping the mentee find their own solution and working together on a problem. These methods were not reported by all respondents for every context - advising and giving feedback on practice were also described. Some mentoring dyads were more hierarchical, more task focussed and less emotionally supportive than others. Mentors were clear of their advisory role and how that differed from a CSLA officer's quality improvement function. Responses suggested that most mentors had given direct advice as part of the mentoring process, but there was no evidence of direct action in undertaking tasks on the mentee's behalf. Mentors were aware of the weaknesses in just giving direct advice and had an understanding of non-directive coaching approaches. Although direct advice on operational issues tended to be the approach in the early stages, mentoring appears to be an evolving relationship where, over time, the mentee takes increasing control of the process and the ownership of solutions.

## 5.4. Matching - crucial but complex

As discussed in 2.4.8.1 it was assumed that the match between mentor and mentee was important and, as the criteria for matching are considered as 'size of school and geography', the following assumption was tested:

**Assumption 1:** Relevant experience and location are important factors in matching a mentoring dyad

Good matching was reported by both mentors and mentees to be the single most crucial aspect of the mentoring process; the assumption that it is a determining factor to the mentoring outcome appears to be substantiated from the data. Analysis also showed that matching the dyad was the overriding practical aspect which could be improved upon. Although the mentoring policy assumes size of school and geography to be

significant, data showed that there were a number of factors that determined the success or otherwise of a mentoring relationship. This complexity was reflected in the following quotation:

*The potential is there for[mentoring to be] a real source of support and reassurance for a new headteacher, I think that it is an excellent ideal but there are many, many variables that you have to get right.*

P HT ME

The 'variables' for good matching fell within three areas of focus:

- (i) Whether the mentors had relevant, directly related experience
- (ii) Whether the location of the mentor / mentee was conducive
- (iii) Whether the mentor and mentee chose to build a relationship.

The first two themes above supported the assumption of directly related experience and geography, the third focussed on the interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee. The data suggested, however, that each variable was multifaceted, themes were interrelated and, at times, contradictory. Some of this complexity is explored through the discussion of these three main areas.

The following section presents the findings that lead to this study accepting the assumption that directly related experience and location were important factors in matching mentor and mentee. In addition, however, the thesis proposes that the relational capacity of the mentor and personalities involved are also significant variables.

#### 5.4.1. Size matters

The majority of mentees reported that relevant experience was seen as necessary for a good match- that the mentor had past or present experience similar to the context in which the mentee was working. Both mentors and mentees felt that the size of school was an important variable to ensure mentors had knowledge which could be used directly to help mentees. The size of school emerged as a determinant for what the role of that headteacher entails and whether there would be directly related experiences to share. For headteachers in large schools with management teams, the issues and strategies employed were perceived as different to those of a teaching HT role. Although it is recognised that similar characteristics and behaviours are needed for successful leadership in any school, the following quotation illustrates that contexts for headship lead to very different realities:

*There's no point in somebody in a two-teacher school mentoring somebody like me in a twenty teacher school. I've done both and they are completely different jobs!*

P HT ME

Leading a primary school with a nursery was highlighted as a specific context where newly appointed headteachers sought direct advice and guidance from their mentors. Mentees talked of having experience of school management tasks such as development plans and quality assurance but that managing a nursery was the '*biggest gap*' (P HT ME) or '*what all my questions were about*' (P HT ME). Mentees spoke of the need for their mentors to help them '*get up to speed*' (P HT ME) with the different quality assurance arrangements and legislative frameworks which surround early years and childcare and manage staff with different contractual arrangements and qualification structures.

With secondary schools, having remits which were similar or with direct experience of a particular role was also seen as necessary. Having a curricular remit was compared with a pastoral remit - although each found the other interesting, having a mentor from the '*other side*' was described as '*a different dynamic*' and '*not totally helpful*' (S DHT ME).

In summary, the majority of responses supported the assumption that related experience is a key variable for matching. This suggests that mentees expect, either in full or in part, an advisory relationship (particularly in the early stages) where the mentor uses their experience to give direct advice, reflects upon strategies which worked in similar situations and gives feedback on proposals with an understanding of context. However this was not a consensus view as a minority of mentees considered the personality of the mentor as a more important factor. This is explored in 5.4.3.

#### 5.4.2. Location, location, location

The second theme which emerged from the analysis was the location of the people and /or the schools, i.e. where in the authority mentors or mentees lived or worked, was important in the matching process.

The CSLA is a large authority in Scotland in terms of land area and there are four organisational and political districts. Schools collaborate in clusters, the cluster comprising one secondary school with its associated feeder primaries. There were a range of views offered as to whether mentors should be matched with mentees within or outwith the same district or cluster. There were some who perceived benefits to mentoring within the same geographical area, apart from practical convenience, as it

offered an understanding of the local educational, interagency and community contexts. This was felt to be particularly helpful if mentoring a deputy headteacher, where knowing the headteacher would prevent conflicting advice or approaches.

However analysis indicated that, on balance, responses from both mentors and mentees tended to favour mentoring outwith the group of associated schools or geographical areas. Although close proximity made meeting easier, that benefit was outweighed by sharing practice from other school communities and the ability to be open and unguarded in mentoring conversation. The issue of trust was often linked to personal friendships in neighbouring rural primary schools and close knit communities, but also noted as a potential political problem as this quotation highlights:

*It is difficult to know when you are talking to someone how well they are connected in the local area - with politicians and authority figures and so you can't really relax and talk about issues to do with any individuals.*

S DHT MR

Competition between schools for recruitment of staff or students was seen as a potential problem for schools within the same area although it was recognised that they 'might not like to admit it in various circles' (S DHT MR). Headteachers also had stories to share of 'poached' deputies, and the challenges of the interviewing a past or current mentee. It was also felt that some schools were in direct competition with each other for pupil roll, so open and honest mentoring dialogue between neighbouring schools could be restricted if it jeopardised recruitment, as the following quotation illustrates:

*I am not wanting to go down into discussing issues relating to school where the impact might be on numbers, that's the bottom line.*

S DHT ME

In summary, analysis supports the assumption that location is an important variable for matching but there was disagreement whether mentoring within or outwith the cluster was preferable. Being from the same district or cluster was useful both to reduce the travelling time and to have knowledge of the context, but the tension which emerged was between balancing these benefits with the risks of existing close working relationships, competition between local schools and disclosure of information within a small community.

#### 5.4.3. Building relationships - liking and respecting

The findings of this study support the assumption that directly related experience and location of schools and personnel were important variables. The third theme which emerged from the thematic analysis was the interpersonal relationship between mentor

and mentee. Analysis suggests the character of the mentor and compatibility of personalities were significant variables to consider in any match and the relational capabilities of mentors were highly valued. The characteristics which were viewed as key attributes for mentors are illustrated in these quotations and then explored in the section below:

*I think, individuals are key, wrong type of person, they will struggle to do that kind of task, I think my mentoring relationship has worked because, of the very positive character of the person who is fulfilling that role for me.*

S DHT ME

*Openness, approaching things with an attitude of humility - in them doing the jobs for as long as they had they certainly did not have to be so self effacing, they certainly did not have to come to me as their equal, but they made me feel like that, that was very useful.*

S DHT ME

#### 5.4.3.1. *First impressions last*

Mentees were consistent in their responses that personal and relational capabilities of mentors were highly valued. It was also clear from most mentors' responses that the development of a positive relationship or rapport was their aim during the initial stages of the mentoring process<sup>14</sup>. Although the language used by both the mentors and mentees differed, both parties appeared to seek emotional affinity and the development of a harmonious relationship which gave a foundation on which to speak freely. The first meeting was important in the development of the rapport necessary to the relationship, and mentors were anxious to get it right; *'to get things off on a good footing'* (P DHT MR) *'because I wanted it to be a success'*. (P DHT MR)

Findings showed that mentors made efforts to 'soften' the first meeting. Although mentors and mentees were, in the main, equal in rank, i.e. in job title, the mentees did not feel that they were professional equals. To be put at ease in the early stages of the mentoring relationship by removing any perception of hierarchy was welcomed by mentees as these quotations illustrate:

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<sup>14</sup> The term 'rapport' was related in the thematic analysis to the ability to build a harmonious relationship through personal and relational capabilities of mentors and mentees and included empathy, equality, approachability, openness, honesty, trust, integrity, and interest in and concern for others

*They (mentors) are in a position of superiority, seniority and if not in rank, then experience, and for my mentor to sit down and instantly make me feel at home and equal, for me said a thousand things which otherwise would have had to be said.*

S DHT ME

*The relationship was set up to sustain me, not to disdain me or look down on me as a lesser mortal!*

S DHT ME

‘Approachability’ was considered by mentees as a positive attribute and by mentors as an aim in terms of their behaviour. There are two potential meanings of ‘approachability’, both relevant to mentoring; firstly, in the sense of being accessible and secondly the attribute of being easy to interact with. Being approachable, therefore, was both a personal capability of mentors, where the mentees feel it requires no labour or effort to talk to them, and also related to a sense of accessibility, in the granting of permission to contact and speak freely to the mentor.

#### 5.4.3.2. *Respect and credibility*

Related to the interpersonal nature of any mentoring match was a strong theme around the need to respect the mentor and believe them to have credibility. Responses included the terms ‘rate’, ‘respect’ and ‘credibility’ which were considered together in the thematic frame. This concept of respect and credibility appeared to relate to the mentors experience in conjunction with mentees judging them to have positive characteristics such as humility, approachability and integrity.

It appeared from responses that mentors used their direct experience as a form of justification for their mentoring role. Credibility seemed to come from having already functioned at that level and therefore gave them permission to mentor someone else. In addition to the need for direct experience, the following comment from a mentor suggests that they see the need for credibility:

*I am quite young to be in my position and I was glad that my mentee was similarly young. It might have been a bit more difficult to mentor someone who was much older than me, you know, like, in being credible.*

P DHT MR

Mentors did not say they needed to be respected. Mentees however, use the term ‘respect’ which defers to the greater experience and professional standing of mentors. In terms of matching, it is notable that ‘liking’ was often used together with ‘respect’. It suggests that the mentee may hold a colleague in professional high regard but also need to admire their personal and relational capabilities in order to feel well matched.

#### 5.4.3.3. *Just ‘clicking’ and a question of trust*

The personal and relational capacities of the mentor in conjunction with the personalities of the dyad appear to be key variables in the matching process. Responses showed being compatible at an interpersonal level - ‘*just clicking*’ (P HT ME) as mentor and mentee - was important. Analysis suggested ‘clicking’ was differentiated from descriptions of rapport, although related in meaning. Whereas individuals could have similar personality traits, shared values, educational background and culture which could be conducive to rapport, what makes people have an unspoken, intuitive, mutual understanding with one another at a deeper level is not easy to quantify as the following quotation illustrates:

*Yes, I think there has to be, a part of it is fit together in terms of personality, getting on with each other. ...We sort of clicked, I’ve never sat down and examined exactly why that is but I felt really comfortable.*

P DHT ME

Alternatively, there were respondents who were equally aware that there would be colleagues who would not be welcomed as mentors. There emerged a ‘happy medium’ - knowing the mentor personally or professionally before embarking on the mentoring relationship was seen by some as helpful but alternatively knowing someone too well was not conducive.

A consistent theme emerged in findings which emphasised the importance of trust which appeared to be aligned with compatibility at an interpersonal level. Although an assurance of confidentiality is stated in the policy and emphasised in training, the mentee has to rely on the integrity of the mentor to ensure this is adhered to. Confidence to trust the mentor to retain confidentiality may develop early in the relationship as part of the mutual understanding and rapport already explored. Responses were consistent that an assurance of confidentiality should be explicitly stated by the mentor at the first meeting. But there was also recognition that the mentee had to make a judgement as to whether to trust this assurance would be honoured, as this quotation illustrates:

*Mentors need to reassure mentees that they can be open. The mentee needs to feel comfortable enough with the mentor, and trust them enough, to maybe admit that some things aren’t the way they should be just now.*

P HT ME

Findings indicated a sense of vulnerability on being judged by the mentor as not being up to the job. Mentors will be already established within the headteachers’ community

and have the potential to inflict professional damage to the credibility of newly appointed colleagues. Having sufficient trust in the integrity of the mentor to maintain confidentiality is crucial in having developmental conversations which, by their nature, identify areas in which the new headteacher is unsure. In referring to the 'danger' involved, this mentee's fear of exposure is clear and illustrates the need for trust and confidentiality:

*I think there is a danger ... I hope this person is not going away thinking what I mess I am making of this job, or be disparaging to other colleagues. There is a big trust and confidentiality issue.*

P HT ME

Some mentees were concerned that if their trust was betrayed they would be thought disloyal within the headteachers' community. If an incoming headteacher raised issues or concerns on the working practices of the school with their mentor, who then shares these views with others, colleagues and friends of the preceding headteacher may take offence. Failure to show regard to the experience of the previous incumbent may cause feelings of anger against the new headteacher from those who had previously aligned themselves, whether it be philosophically, pedagogically or politically, with the old.

Views were consistent that confidentiality and trust are necessary components of the mentoring process. Being entrusted with the confidence of another was not to be taken lightly, the unauthorised disclosure of the information shared as part of mentoring could affect the professional reputation of that person, and has serious consequences for the continued health of the mentoring relationship. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that the need for trust between parties was made much of in responses, and that the fear of judgement or retribution from a lapse of confidentiality had such significance in the views expressed.

This section set out to report findings about matching. Good matching was reported by both mentors and mentees to be the single most crucial aspect of the mentoring process but the overriding practical aspect which could be improved. Some responses suggested that the matching process was, in itself, rather a mystery. There was a sense that it was an unchallenged, authority led process in which it was 'luck' if it worked in terms of both relevant experience and personality. The authority policy states that mentees can change mentors if they wish, and that this will be handled sensitively (Appendix C). It may be, however that mentees simply choose not to engage in the mentoring process or the mentor selected for them does not meet their expectations. The following comment may reflect one such situation:

*My mentee is very slow to return emails and phone calls and so I am wondering if they are getting much out of our meetings.*

S DHT MR

In sum, three areas about matching emerged from responses. Being able to build a relationship, the location and relevant experience of the mentor were seen as necessary when matching a mentoring dyad, Good mentors needed personal characteristics such as humility, integrity, empathy and approachability alongside credibility as a school leader. Mentees needed to respect the professional experience of the mentor as well as like them as a person. Confidentiality and trust were crucial and are related to the need for mentors to have personal integrity.

## **5.5. The outcomes from mentoring**

Having explored the process, in terms of where, when and how mentoring was understood in practice, the reporting of findings now considers the outcomes of mentoring. A generally positive picture of mentoring was reported which indicated that participants valued their experience. There was, however, a range of responses when participants were asked to rate the value of their experiences on a ten point scale (Table D17). Primary colleagues were more positive than secondary and, in both sectors, mentors were more positive about the experience than mentees.

Findings are now reported on the claims and assumptions about the outcome of mentoring tested in this research.

### **5.5.1. Claim 1: Mentoring supports the well-being and confidence of newly appointed school leaders**

The data from this study supports the claim that mentoring helps newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers develop confidence and self-belief as they began to accept a new professional identity. Mentees described 'learning how to be a headteacher' or 'acting like a headteacher' , or 'thinking of myself as a headteacher' , even 'thinking what a headteacher should do' which suggests a shift in self-perception from a 'teacher' to a 'leader'.

Many respondents talked of their lack of confidence in the initial few months of headship, adjusting to the perception of themselves as leaders. Headteacher mentees talked of feelings unworthiness, crises of confidence and even that the '*panel must have made a mistake*' (P HT ME). Mentors acted as guides and role models as mentees learnt to 'be' headteachers. Mentees aspired to absorb the characteristics and mirror

the behaviours of mentors perceived as excellent role models for headship, as this quotation illustrates:

*I would hope that long term I would be able to model some of what I admire in them, short term you just copy some of the bits that you see, but long term the characteristics, the way that they do things, the bits that have impressed, I would like to absorb some of these things too.*

S DHT ME

One of the most valuable effects of mentoring offered in responses was in building confidence and self-efficacy. This mentee describes the effect of mentoring on the way they perceived themselves in the role, in what they describe as their ‘mindset’:

*I think that the meetings we have had a positive impact on my mindset and self-confidence. They have really helped me to prioritise and realise that you can't do everything at once or know everything at once. It is OK not to know everything.*

P HT ME

The effect of mentoring on the emotional state of the newly appointed school leader was also reported as very important. Mentees described emotional fragility, crying while driving to work, the need for someone to talk to as a safety value and being ‘*stressed out of my brain*’ (S HT ME). It was clear from responses that mentoring could provide critical emotional support in the early stages of taking on a school leadership role. As well as developing emotional resilience and self-confidence, this led to greater independence and confidence in building strategy and making decisions. Mentees reported that the impact the mentor had was not to change their actions but to give them the confidence to embark on the process. Confidence grew from having worked through and gained reassurance from a respected colleague that the chosen strategy would be practical and credible - that it would have ‘*street cred*’ (P HT ME) - and they had done the necessary preparation, as the following quotation illustrates:

*It's confidence. When I am chairing groups, when I am giving presentations to staff, then I am more confident, that they get a better idea of what I wanting from them and how I want it done, it comes from being reassured, from knowing that I have done my homework on it.*

S DHT ME

#### 5.5.1.1. Rehearsal

The language chosen to describe learning through mentoring suggested rehearsal was an important function. Mentees described their mentoring conversations as ‘practice runs’ or ‘dry runs’. Further exploration to this suggested that mentees talked through their strategies with the mentor and, in articulating these, benefited from both the process of rehearsal as well as the feedback received. This suggests the value of rehearsal

within a supportive environment, with the opportunity to seek alternative strategies and anticipate as yet unconsidered reactions.

A consistent theme throughout the exploration of learning from mentoring was that mentees needed to find their own solutions. Mentees talked of the need to have professional courage, to do what they thought was right even though it might be difficult and described mentoring as giving them the '*courage of their convictions*' (P HT ME). It was helpful for newly appointed school leaders to recognise that there were often no 'right or wrongs', that there was no single correct way to leading a school and that there could be many ways to meet a desired outcome as this quotation illustrates:

*It's been a positive thing rather than a negative thing, rather than me thinking which is right and which is wrong. It's useful to see a variety of approaches, this might seem .... Well, both are right, both can be right, and understanding the decision making process behind them both, teaches me a whole lot more than just seeing it one way.*

S DHT ME

#### 5.5.1.2. Long term effects on confidence and well being

Responses indicated that mentoring was believed to have longer term effects on mentees' well being - even after the formal period of mentoring was completed. There were three main reasons given for this:

- (i) A feeling of reduced isolation
- (ii) An understanding of the importance of optimism
- (iii) A better ability to deal with pace and demand

Firstly, mentoring appeared to offer a way to reduce the potential isolation of headship. Having a relationship with a more experienced colleague was felt to offer a long-term source of support and advice. The mentor could also open up other social and professional networks for the mentee, which, as this quote shows, had longevity:

*My mentor also opened up other avenues of support which will run and run.*

P HT ME

Secondly, mentoring provided perspective on what was possible, and in the futility of trying to 'be all things to all people'. Mentoring was expected to have long term effects as it emphasised the need to be realistic, optimistic and recognise success as this quotation illustrates:

*My mentor encouraged me to step back sometimes and look at what I have achieved instead of what I hadn't. That gives you a different perspective. I will always remember to do that.*

P HT ME

Thirdly, mentoring gave important messages from experienced headteachers who had stayed the course. As well as emotional support and reassurance, mentees also benefitted from practical guidance on managing their workload and structuring their administrative processes to manage a new pace and complexity of work and cope with competing demands. Also emphasised by many was the importance of balancing the pressures of work with home life as this quotation illustrates:

*In the long term, I hope it is terms of my health and wellbeing. I can make sure that my needs and the needs of my family are being catered for, if everything is so frenetic, you try to work with that, but you have to make sure that it is punctuated with recovery time.*

S HT ME

In summary, Claim 1 was supported by the findings of this study. There is evidence to suggest that mentoring helps newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers develop confidence and self-belief as they began to accept a new professional identity. Mentoring was also perceived to have effects which would outlast the period of formal mentoring through increasing professional networks, offering new realistic perspectives and recognising the need to manage the demands of headship over the length of a career.

#### 5.5.2. Claim 2 : Mentoring supports the development of effective professional action of school leaders

From the exploration of the areas where mentoring was valuable, data showed that conversations tended to focus upon the professional action areas of leading and developing people, and leading change and improvement (Tables D11&12). The area of professional action where most learning was felt to have occurred was within 'leading and developing people' whilst 'leading change and improvement' was the second most frequent response. When asked to elaborate, make comment or give an example of the most valuable learning that took place one key message emerged; mentoring provided valuable learning about leading people through a process of change.

##### 5.5.2.1. *It's about the people... 'big people, not mini-people'*

The strongest theme which emerged from the exploratory comments was the importance of mentoring in supporting newly appointed school leaders in people

management issues. As this quotation illustrates, a teacher has experience of leading children but working with adults can be a different issue:

*Developing people - that's the big change in the job I am doing now, leading and developing - not mini-people, but big people*

S DHT ME

One experienced headteacher, used to leading a large organisation, gave clear advice to his mentee which they reflected on in the following quotation:

*One thing he did say to me which will stay with me for ever is that he said ' this job is not about systems, a headteachers job, it's about people. People, people, yes he didn't tell me how to do it but he told me, forget your development plan, look after your people.*

S HT ME

Many respondents spoke of the challenges they experienced in the first few months in post, both with individual staffing issues and in building their new teams. Many reflected that they had been surprised by the challenges that staff brought, in their unfamiliarity with the kinds of conversations needed to keep people on track and on board. The development of interpersonal and communication skills and greater insight to organisational behaviour including a 'radar' for brewing trouble were fertile ground for learning through mentoring.

Respondents talked of the challenges of being new: of being different, acting differently and often expecting things to be done differently than the previous headteacher. Some spoke of the honeymoon period of a new team coming together and where there was great potential for change and a staff who were 'up for it' (P HT ME). However there was also the opposite reported where change was not welcomed, where mentee replaced a successful and well-liked headteacher or changed the dynamic of an established high-performing leadership team.

For the participants in this study, mentoring provided valuable learning about leading people through a process of change. Mentoring provided reassurance that people needed support through any change process and that staff would react differently to school improvement projects. Mentors worked with mentees to develop a range of strategies to support and / or challenge staff, as the following quotation illustrates:

*I think the most valuable help came in dealing with the introduction of change. Change can be very threatening to some people and she certainly helped me manage the impacts on the different personalities on my staff. She gave me ideas of different ways of dealing with it.*

P HT ME

In managing people through change, some mentees saw parallels in what they themselves were experiencing, and being supported through, by the mentoring process. In being mentored they were able to learn from the mentor's practice, describing the reflection, pacing, empathy and the coaching language being useful modelling and exemplification, as the following quotation illustrates:

*For me it has been a way of learning how to mentor off my mentor.*

P HT ME

In an authority of many rural schools, one commonly reported concern was the move from colleague to manager, the feelings of isolation, in being all things to all people and in maintaining good relations when the team is very small. Newly appointed teaching headteachers talked of the challenges in balancing the demands of being both a teacher colleague while also being the headteacher. Particular challenges were noted with internal or acting headteacher appointments where the change in role had to be sensitively managed as this comment shows:

*I went from one of them one day to the headteacher the next and that was hard.*

P HT ME

As well challenges arising from staff within the school, other adults involved in school life also brought people management difficulties to the novice. It was often highlighted that where, as a teacher, there was someone more senior to refer on to, as a school manager '*the buck stopped with me*' (P HT MR) and it was their responsibility to resolve the issue. In there being no-one else to pass it to, the mentor would often be used for direct advice or as the sounding board for the proposed strategy. The following quotation illustrates both the concern and the role of the mentor in this situation:

*Dealing with parents, dealing with problems, with issues with parents. I had been going through a difficult situation and I spoke to [my mentor] who had been through something similar and she helped me formulate some strategies, get feedback on my practice.*

P DHT ME

In summary, Claim 2 was supported by the findings of this study. There is evidence to suggest that mentoring supports the development of effective professional action of newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers, particularly in the professional action areas of 'leading and managing people' and 'leading change and improvement'.

## 5.6. Why mentor?

In the CSLA, joining the mentoring programme is voluntary and is not used specifically as a development opportunity for mentors. Headteachers choose to become mentors, often citing their own experiences of early headship as the reason for wanting to be involved. However some experienced mentors suggested that they continue to be involved as they benefitted from the conversations. Although an honorarium was offered, no mentor highlighted that this payment had influenced their decision to volunteer or accept a nomination to become a mentor. In the conceptual stages of this research it was felt that there were assumptions made that experienced headteachers would opt to join the scheme as mentors. This assumption was articulated and tested as follows:

**Assumption 2:** Mentors will accept a nomination to become a mentor or volunteer to join the scheme because they find it a rewarding process

As seen in Table 12 (Appendix E), all mentors reported that sessions with their mentees had been of benefit to their own development and most had anticipated that being involved in mentoring would have a positive influence on their own practice.

Mentors reported that they felt being involved in mentoring was beneficial to them in three main areas.

- (i) It provided a valuable context for mentors to review and refresh their knowledge and practice
- (ii) It offered the opportunity for mentors to realise their own ability and recognise their experience
- (iii) It created the environment for mentors to feel reinvigorated about education

Each of these motives for mentoring is now explored.

### 5.6.1. Reflecting, reviewing and refreshing

Analysis showed most common theme was that mentoring was mutually beneficial as it allowed mentors to the opportunity to reflect upon and articulate the reasoning behind their practice. Through this, mentors gained new understandings and challenged their own practice as this quotation illustrates:

*In terms of my own practice its funny how when you talk through the steps needed in a particular situation that you realise how you have missed one or two of them yourself which makes you think.....*

P DHT MR

As well as time for personal reflection mentors extended their knowledge - gaining new insights from other schools and taking on board the views and experiences of others. Mentors talked of learning new ways of doing things from more recently qualified headteachers who had fresh ideas and in viewing mentoring as '*CPD for both of us - a relationship of two equals*' (P HT MR).

Findings also indicated that mentoring skills were valuable to mentors within day to day practice. They also claimed that having experience of mentoring outwith the school had altered the way they themselves had engaged with and worked with staff within their own school. It was also clear from responses that being a mentor for a headteacher colleague could affect the way the headteacher perceived themselves as a potential mentor for other adult learners. Mentors talked of mentoring as increasing the range of techniques and strategies they could use in school, with a shift from instructing staff to facilitating, coaching and collaborating as the following quotation illustrates:

*I am less of an informer and more of a coach when dealing with my own colleagues now.*

S DHT MR

Mentors highlighted that mentoring skills were useful in professional review interviews, classroom observation, in encouraging distributed leadership, as well as helping staff take responsibility for their professional development.

### 5.6.2. Realising their ability

As well as changing their perception of themselves as mentors to other adults in the school, being a mentor also appeared to shift a headteacher's view of themselves by recognising the value of their experience and expertise. Mentors commented that they had not realised the level of their craft before they compared it to someone more novice, the developmental growth of expertise was gradual and so it only became self-evident when they were asked to articulate the reasons behind their actions, or to offer options for a strategy. Some mentors appeared surprised and were self-effacing with this revelation as the following quotations from primary and secondary mentors illustrate:

*I suppose I maybe did really only then fully realise that I did know what I was doing*

P HT MR

*It's helped me realise that I'm getting there, yes, I'm getting there, I'm not floundering.*

S DHT MR

As well as a process which helped them recognise the value of their experience, two secondary deputy mentors commented that being a mentor made them more confident to apply for headteacher posts.

### 5.6.3. Reinvigorated

Mentors also talked of enjoying the process, and feeling they had made a contribution, in giving something back. They spoke of the positive benefits of seeing someone else grow in confidence, taking pleasure from others' victories and as well as feeling reinvigorated about education through the energy and enthusiasm of a younger colleague and positive about the future of teaching, as the following quotation illustrates:

*I have had a ball doing it! It gave me an insight into another school and into what's out there in terms of teaching talent in the area.*

P DHT MR

In summary, there is evidence to indicate that mentoring was a rewarding process for mentors and it had a positive influence on their practice. The assumption that mentors would accept a nomination to become a mentor or volunteer to join the scheme because they find it a rewarding process was supported by the findings of this study.

## 5.7. The jigsaw of support

Given the range of leadership and management development opportunities available to school leaders, the place of mentoring within that landscape was explored. The mentoring policy makes no reference to any other form of headteacher preparation or support. From this it was assumed that mentoring is offered in addition and isolation to other forms of headteacher preparation and support as it offers something different. The following assumption was articulated and tested in this study:

**Assumption 3:** Mentoring provides a form of support which differs from other forms of leadership and management development

From the analysis of responses, both mentors and mentees consistently reported that mentoring fulfilled a role that other leadership and management support did not, although there was recognition that mentoring was just one element in a range of support mechanisms:

*I think the mentoring programme is a very important part of the jigsaw of support given to heads and deposes.*

P HT MR

There was a consistent view that mentoring differed from other forms of support as it was a confidential, one-to one, person centred process. As well as being reported as a different process, four specific outcomes emerged for mentoring when compared to other forms of development available:

- (i) Mentoring provided learning which was relevant to the specific circumstances and needs of the mentee.
- (ii) Mentoring provided an opportunity for deeper learning and greater self-awareness.
- (iii) Mentoring provided emotional support.
- (iv) Mentoring introduced the newly appointed HT to the professional community of headteachers in a safe and supportive way.

These four outcomes now considered in turn:

#### 5.7.1. 'Everything is for me'

Firstly, mentoring differed from other forms of support as it offered bespoke practical and relevant basic advice, which other forms of leadership development did not as this mentor reflects:

*There are amount of pamphlets and documents about the higher order things but where do you go for the day to day stuff?*

P DHT MR

Mentees compared mentoring to leadership development courses, where the learning had to be made relevant and an intellectual jump has to be made by the learner to make the content fit the context. With mentoring however, the help was seen to be more direct and context specific - the learning outcomes designed around the needs of the individual learner as this quotation illustrates:

*Made it fit for me - made it more personal, made it fit me rather than me having to fit something else, a course on offer I go and see what can I take from this course which would help me whereas I go to this then everything is for me.*

S DHT ME

Mentors suggested that mentoring was under the control of the mentee rather than a process driven by an external framework:

*I think it differs from the others because it is very much owned by the mentee whereas the others aren't.*

P HT MR

Mentees, however, did not make reference to the concept of ownership.

### 5.7.2. Takes it to a different level

Whereas some respondents describe mentoring using the concept of breadth employing terms such as 'landscape' or 'jigsaw' others used language relating to depth, referring to mentoring as providing an opportunity for deeper learning and greater self-awareness, a deeper process, providing a tier of support, or as taking it to a different level - as these statements reflect:

*I think the mentoring provides a tier of support that is very unique and very necessary.*

P HT ME

*We have a headteachers' peer support group... and we talk, talk to a level, but because we are in a group and in a public place it tends to be a 'guess what's happening... and what kind of stuff, and its no-more formal that that. But because in mentoring you are with one person it's a very confidential, mutually supportive, mutual respect, mutual respect; this takes it to a different level.*

P HT MR

### 5.7.3. Emotional support: the something extra

A strong sense of the emotional support offered by mentoring emerged from analysis which differed from some other forms of leadership development support. The 'something extra' (S DHT ME) that mentoring provides over other forms of support is proposed to be the emotional support which is required for the development of confidence, professional courage and feelings of self-efficacy. The following quotation illustrates that for some, the mentoring process is more about the emotional aspects of headship than developing task specific skills:

*I needed a life coach, a life counsellor. This is what being a headteacher means, this is how to organise your life, this is what it feels like when things don't go right, this is what it feels like when there is conflict and this is what it feels like to be on your own.*

S HT ME

Some mentees referred to the need for counselling and highlighted mentoring as playing a role in providing this form of support. The lack of counselling, supervision, facilitation or debrief for headteachers was highlighted. The level of emotional support services provided to headteachers was contrasted to that offered to other Children's Services workers such as social workers, educational psychologists, behaviour support teams and health service colleagues.

Respondents contrasted the support provided by mentoring compared to supportive line management, the role of the school quality improvement officer, Heads Together <sup>15</sup> and SQH. Although it was recognised that many managers provide support in developing leadership, how this differed from mentoring was clearly related to the openness and honesty that could be provided within a relationship where there was no accountability or line-management responsibility. The role of the school quality improvement officer (QIO) was also highlighted as providing support, but of a different nature. As well as having line management responsibility for HT, the QIO was also perceived to be less accessible. Heads Together was noted as useful, particularly with direct questions, suggested approaches to a task or exemplars but was not considered a forum where a headteacher could open-up emotionally because of lack of intimacy afforded by the format.

SQH was perceived as useful preparation for headship both in terms of knowledge and in developing a professional network. It was considered by those on or having completed the programme as challenging and rigorous but that it held a different function in terms of leadership development when compared to mentoring. SQH was considered by some mentees as an external verification of quality, something for the Local Authority, a hoop to jump through and a test of endurance - as this quotation illustrates:

*SQH is a helluva thing to do, it is really, really tough, it's a helluva thing as I say, its huge, it's absolutely immense and run a school as well, I mean and your family, I mean they may as well just say cheerio you for two years, every holiday is spoken for. It is very, very tough. I came so, so close to giving up but I think I feel strongly that if you can't hack it ...it's a test of commitment.*

P HT ME

It was recognised that mentoring was an important part of the SQH process which may reduce the need for other mentoring programmes. Having more than one mentor may work for some but may also create a conflict on role - tension as to purpose as well as adding to workload which lead to one colleague feeling that she was 'mentored to death' (P HT ME). Having the opportunity to choose to be involved in the mentoring programme, and who to work with would prevent any tensions, as the SQH candidate could potentially select the same mentor for both roles should they choose to do so.

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<sup>15</sup> Heads Together is an on-line forum for headteachers in Scotland

#### 5.7.4. Islands of learning

Mentoring was viewed as an important form of peer support. Having other headteachers to speak to, to share with and to offload to was seen as necessary personal and professional support. Particular reference was made to the physical and professional isolation of rural headship, or 'going solo'- the loneliness of the non-teaching headteacher with neither management team nor the collegiality that comes from teaching.

Mentoring was also viewed in an inductive role, as an introduction to the headteacher community. It was recognised that for headteachers, particularly those new to the area, it took time to build networks and mentoring accelerated this process and provided an interim level of peer support whilst other networks were formed. Some mentors highlighted that formal mentoring is necessary if and when headteachers feel isolated but, as education generally and headship particularly is purported to be becoming more collegiate, that it may be easier or less necessary to have formal schemes. This quotation illustrates the role that mentoring plays in reducing isolation:

*I think the wider aspect of peer support has big potential. We have traditionally worked as islands of learning and we have only now started to break those islands down with cluster working etc. You need to have links to other people and schools. The more systems that we can put in to break down isolation the better - and mentoring is one of those.*

P DHT MR

In summary, analysis of responses indicate that mentoring differs from other forms of support as it provides:

- (i) a confidential, one-to one, person centred process and opportunities for learning relevant to the specific circumstances and needs of the mentee
- (ii) emotional support and opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and
- (iii) introduces the newly appointed head to the professional community of headteachers in a safe and supportive way.

Findings from this study support the assumption that mentoring provides a form of support which differs from other forms of leadership and management development.

### 5.8. Conclusions from reporting of findings

This chapter has reported on the processes of mentoring in the CSLA, helping to enhance understanding of McLellan's (2008) first dimension of mentoring and making meaning about mentoring in practice. This research found that there was not a

consistent interpretation or implementation of mentoring across and between mentoring dyads in the CSLA with relationships evolving depending upon need and/or expectation. Analysis of the stories told about mentoring, what happened throughout the process and within a relationship helped make meaning about mentoring. The analysis suggested that mentoring is understood as both a socialisation and developmental process but the emphasis between the two functions differ between and within relationships.

This research established there was strongly held, differing views whether the function of mentoring in the CSLA was primarily psychosocial or career related. This distinction coloured the understanding of mentoring in terms of: where and when meetings took place, how meetings were arranged and conducted, how the relationship was initiated and evolved, how mentors approached the process and in determining the criteria for a good match between mentor and mentee. These findings allow a model of mentoring to be built which can be used to share understandings and improve the support offered to novice school leaders.

Data indicated that experiences of mentoring were mainly positive and valued by both mentors and mentees. Findings of this study support the claim that has a psychosocial function, building self-confidence and supporting wellbeing in the short term as the novice begins to accept a new professional identity and in the medium to longer term by increasing professional networks, offering new realistic perspectives and recognising the need to manage the demands of headship over the length of a career. Findings also support the claim that mentoring has a task related function, building independence and supporting effectiveness of the novice particularly in relation to leading people through a process of change.

This research sought to articulate and test assumptions about the mentoring programme in the CSLA. The key findings about the assumptions are as follows:

**Assumption 1** was supported in that relevant experience and location are important factors in matching a mentoring dyad. However it was equally identified that personality and relational abilities were significant variables which determined the success of any mentoring relationship.

**Assumption 2** was supported as peer headteachers will accept a nomination to become a mentor or volunteer to join the scheme because they find it a valuable process.

Mentoring was identified as an opportunity for mentors to reflect on practice, review and refresh their knowledge, realise their ability and feel reinvigorated.

**Assumption 3** was supported as mentoring provides a form of support which differs from other forms of leadership and management development as it is a confidential, one-to-one, person centred process which provides opportunities for learning relevant to the specific circumstances and needs of the mentee. Mentoring provides emotional support and offers opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and introduces the newly appointed head to the professional community of headteachers in a safe and supportive way.

These findings are now explored in relation to professional knowledge about mentoring for new school leaders which allows recommendations for practice to be proposed.

## **Chapter 6. Discussion in relation to professional knowledge**

This chapter discusses the contribution of this study to the body of professional knowledge on mentoring and school leadership, beginning by exploring conceptualisations of mentoring in the CSLA. Findings indicate that conflicting beliefs are held about the function of mentoring and that the distinction between psychosocial or career constructs influences the process and outcome of mentoring.

The implications for practice development and possible directions for future work are offered in this chapter which may be helpful for those leading mentoring programmes or with an interest in the development of school leaders.

As the purpose of this research at inception was to improve the support that the employing local authority could offer to newly appointed school leaders, recommendations are made for the mentoring policy in the CSLA. This discussion concludes by building on current understanding of mentoring and reflects upon the place of mentoring for the development of school leaders in the future.

### **6.1. Tensions about purpose and function of mentoring**

This study set out to explore the process of mentoring in the CSLA, seeking to establish if there was a consistent interpretation and implementation of the policy in order to better understand headteachers' beliefs about mentoring. Findings suggested that the implementation of mentoring was different across and between dyads and there were tensions in what was understood as the purpose of mentoring in the CSLA. It is proposed that mentoring is understood through a socialisation and developmental frame but the emphasis between the psychosocial or career related constructs differ between and within relationships.

This study suggests what is believed about the purpose of mentoring shapes how it is enacted and experienced; the trouble with contradictory expectations is thus a recurrent theme in this discussion. This is consistent with related literature where it is reported that mentors and mentees are often not clear at the outset what is expected in terms of responsibility or programme goal (Daresh 1994, Ehrich *et al.* 2004). Kim (2007) suggests that it is problematic if the mentor and mentee bring differing learning goal orientations to the relationship, a view which offers a theoretical basis to reasons

why some relationships did not progress beyond a superficial level or ‘cosy chat’ in this study. Reasoning for the different conceptualisation of mentoring is offered throughout this chapter. Models are proposed in Section 6.5 and Section 6.6 which allows this theory to be built upon.

Firstly, to inform the debate about how mentoring is construed, where, when and how mentoring takes place in the CSLA is compared to thinking and evidence from literature.

#### 6.1.1. Within or outwith the school gates

Findings from this research showed that the majority of meetings were held in the mentee’s school, consistent with Luck (2004) who reported a similar finding along with the use of social spaces (‘the local pub’). The factors which emerged in finding the right place to meet were the travelling time, confidentiality and a comfortable environment where the mentee felt confident to speak freely. Consistent with Luck (2004), some mentoring dyads met in a social space but this was only reported by primary school dyads in the CSLA. Other mentoring dyads met on school premises; all secondary mentoring dyads and some primary dyads used this model. Meetings in school were perceived as more formal and task focussed. Where a dyad chose to meet could be associated with what they understood as the purpose of mentoring. Meetings in school were perceived as more formal, associated with career related functions of mentoring, and meetings in a social environment more in keeping with expectations of psychosocial support. If this interpretation is accepted then mentoring of newly appointed primary school leaders has a greater psychosocial function than secondary mentoring.

Findings suggested that where the meetings took place changed as the relationship developed, meeting in the mentees’ school initially as it was construed as ‘home turf’. The fact that mentoring relationships evolve is consistent in the literature, Kram’s work on mentoring phases of initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition (1983, 1985) are still heavily cited.

Casavant and Cherkowski (2001) report that travelling over rural districts can be problematic when trying to find appropriate places to meet, a finding also reflected in this study and also more notable with small primary schools in outlying areas whereas secondary schools are in the main conurbations of the CSLA.

Related to ‘place’, findings confirmed that location is an important variable for matching mentor to mentee but there was disagreement whether mentoring within or outwith the local cluster context was preferable. During the interviews respondents

spent a great deal of energy discussing the costs and benefits of the relative location of mentor and mentee. Being from the same district or cluster was seen as useful to reduce the travelling time and to have knowledge of the community, but tension emerged in balancing these benefits against existing close working relationships, the risk of competition between local schools and disclosure of information within a small community. This was also noted by Daresh and Male (2000) and Draper and McMichael (2000). Given the strength of feeling, it is proposed that the debate over logistics masked a deeper concern over confidentiality and trust.

### 6.1.2. Before or after the bell

Finding time to meet was reported as difficult, which is consistent with literature (Bolam *et al.* 1995). A well conducted review of the literature on mentoring for school leaders (Hansford and Ehrich 2006) concludes that the majority of mentors report that they could not devote sufficient time to the demands of the mentoring role (p.42). Luck (2004) reports the use of retired headteachers to overcome this issue but recognises the weaknesses in this model. The CSLA scheme does use retired headteachers as mentors although practice suggests they consider their credibility reduces after around three years out of the system. This lends weight to the argument that mentors perceive their role as an advisory, task focussed support mechanism or socialisation process as opposed to psychological support alone.

Both primary and secondary dyads reported that there was a reluctance to disrupt the school day or be unavailable within school time. However secondary colleagues reported that meetings tended to be within the school day, whereas primary dyads met after school.

### 6.1.3. Primary and secondary differences in time and place

The reasons for the reported primary/secondary differences in this study may be pragmatic responses to different operating conditions. In the CSLA the majority of primary schools are small and it is reasonable to consider that mentoring has a socialisation emphasis at least in part due to the isolation of the rural headteacher. Duncan and Stock (2010) note similar findings in rural Wyoming, USA. In secondary schools in the CSLA the headteacher is less isolated as each management team has least two DHT and a team of curricular and pastoral principal teachers (middle leaders). However it could be argued that although surrounded by a larger workforce, they remain isolated through their position and authority in school.

All secondary dyads reported meeting in school rather than a social space but with secondary schools tending to be larger establishments it is more likely that a place could be found that was suitable for the mentoring meeting. Some teaching headteachers in small primary schools do not have dedicated office space, using the staff room for parental meetings or negotiating with the clerical support to use the school office or reception area. Very rarely does a DHT in a primary school have dedicated office space.

Another practical difference which may account for the sectoral disparity may be the size of school - as the roll drives the staffing formula. Non-contact time was used for mentoring by secondary colleagues whereas primary headteachers and deputy headteachers are more likely to be class committed as the school rolls are smaller.

Whether mentoring takes place before or after the bell at the end of the school day may be related to the timings of the pupil day. All full time teaching staff are contracted to a 35 hour week however the pupils' school day in primary ends earlier than in secondary. This may allow meetings 'after the bell' in primary to take place before 5pm whereas in secondary the non-contact time is used as the pupil day ends later.

The picture painted is one of primary staff meeting in the mentee's school or a social space after the school day, perhaps in their own time, and secondary staff perceiving mentoring as valid use of contractual time in school. From this it could be proposed that secondary staff understand mentoring more through a developmental frame, emphasising the career enhancing functions compared to primary colleagues who make greater use the psychosocial functions and understand mentoring more through the socialisation frame.

#### *6.1.3.1. A question of gender?*

Although there are practical reasons why the process of mentoring differs between primary and secondary mentoring dyads, this thesis proposes that the differing conceptualisations of mentoring may be gender related. Most primary mentoring dyads in this study were female, reflecting the demographics of the CSLA leadership class (detailed in 2.4.5). All secondary mentors were male, reflective of the cadre of experienced school leaders in secondary schools in the CSLA but also concurring with O'Brian *et al.* (2008) who notes that men are more often mentors.

Both Reich (1986) and Burke (1984) found that female mentors appear to offer more psychosocial support than male mentors, but this finding was not supported by later work of Ensher and Murphy (1997). A recent meta-analysis of gender differences of mentoring (O'Brian *et al.* 2008) concluded that no differences in outcomes of mentoring between male and female mentees were experienced but differences did exist - from the analysis males reported giving and receiving greater levels of task support to mentees where female mentors reported giving greater psychosocial support. This strengthens the argument of this thesis that mentoring was understood and enacted as a form of psychosocial support with the predominately female primary headteacher group.

Although helpful to consider potential gender differences in the emphasis for mentoring, the potential for gender stereotyping is noted as in the leadership literature i.e. women as nurturing mentors and men as task driven mentors, must be guarded against. The studies analysed in the meta- analysis (O'Brian *et al.* 2008) were small and considered, in the main, heterogeneous groups where results may have been influenced by a design bias for certain leadership traits. Ragins and Cotton (1993) indicate that gender role orientation, rather than gender itself is a better predictor of the level of psychosocial support involved in mentoring for and by either men or women.

Data was recorded on the gender of the dyads but the complete data set was not analysed by this variable. Gender, sector and learning goal orientation for new headteachers it is one of the avenues of future study proposed by this research.

#### 6.1.4. Smoothing the bumpy ride through the 'year of the firsts'

A slightly separate but related issue emerged about time which related to the immediacy of mentoring i.e. the speed at which the arrangements could be put in place. Findings suggested that the allocation of mentors should be made quickly to allow the first meeting to take place before the newly appointed school leader took up post. Those appointed to acting posts also required mentoring to be put in place immediately after notification of their promoted role. This is indicative of the shock of transition or bumpy ride of reality reported by Draper and McMichael (1998, 2000) and thus the need for rapid support and socialisation to the headteacher role. This reflects findings in other related studies (Earley *et al.* 2002, Hobson *et al.* 2002, Day 2003, Earley and Evans 2004, Hobson and Sharp 2005, Holligan *et al.* 2006, Cowie and Cowie 2008, Woods *et al.* 2009, Duncan and Stock, 2010). Mentoring was reported as necessary immediately within the 'year of the firsts' to prevent the novice hitting

critical incidents alone - to enhance the learning that could take place, reduce the stress on staff and to minimise the detriment of critical errors of judgement in the early days. This function of mentoring is supported by literature outwith education where benefits of mentoring are highlighted as allowing the novice to contribute to the organisation immediately as they learn the ropes more quickly and effectively as a form of damage limitation. But Southworth (1995) is concerned about the use of mentoring for advice and as a 'survival strategy' (p.28) in schools.

It is one of the recommendations from this research that an adequate induction process on appointment should take some of the survival function from mentoring as it would give a basic scaffold to the novice's knowledge of the 'nuts and bolts' of headship in the CSLA.

#### 6.1.5. Development or socialisation

A socialisation and development conceptual framework (Daresh 2004) was used to explore mentoring in this study. From the analysis it appeared that some mentor dyads understood their relationship more within a socialisation frame, aligning with Kram's psychosocial functions of mentoring - friendship, acceptance-confirmation and role modelling. Other dyads understood their relationship more within a developmental frame, aligning with some career / task related functions such as tutelage, coaching, information sharing and, more indirectly, protection and sponsorship (Kram 1985).

Concepts of formality appeared to be linked to how mentor dyads understood the purpose of mentoring in terms of socialisation and/or development. Findings showed polarised views over the use of an explicit signal of formality - a written record of, or from, the mentoring process. Strong views both for and against documentation were expressed which suggests very different beliefs on how a mentoring relationship was best conducted.

Analysis indicated that some mentors and mentees expected a formal relationship where the purpose was to meet the development needs of the mentee; in this scenario meetings were planned and recorded. Although the mentor may take steps to put the mentee at ease and remove perceptions of hierarchy, appropriate boundaries for conversations were established. As relationships developed over time, less formality would emerge if both parties saw this as mutually enhancing. For other dyads, formality was considered detrimental to building a relationship where the understanding of

mentoring was more within the socialisation frame with a focus on functions such as acceptance-confirmation, counselling and friendship.

A full critique of the concepts of counselling and friendship is not within the sphere of this study but there does appear to be overlap with some mentoring characteristics (Stokes 2003, Gibbs and Angelides 2008). Mentoring literature often describes the use of counselling skills, although tends to shy away from describing counselling per se. Both are generally, but not universally, considered as helping relationships but have different theoretical and evidential backgrounds. Friendship also is characterised by good counsel (Gibbs and Angelides 2008) but counselling professionals distance themselves from befriending (Stokes 2003). Mentors and counsellors should not offer judgement, but friends do; mentors and friends can offer advice, but counsellors do not. Comparisons and differentiating factors between these forms of relationship offer a plethora of definitions, however, it does appear that there is a spectrum of helping behaviour that can be used, depending on the context and the form of relationship under examination. Notwithstanding this, it could be argued that mentoring relationships which are understood through the socialisation frame have a greater focus on psychosocial support and are less developmental in terms of skill and knowledge.

#### 6.1.6. Meeting expectations

Findings showed different approaches were taken to the 'helping conversation' which was enacted in mentoring. Mentors tended to offer direct advice to mentees in the early stages and, as the relationship progressed and the novice's experience grew, reduced the level of direct support and increasingly helped the mentee find their own solutions. However this evolution was not reported by all. From the analysis of mentoring process in the CSLA it is clear that that mentoring relationships were structured in different ways and for different functions; some mentoring dyads were more hierarchical, more task focussed and less emotionally supportive than others. It appears that beliefs about the purpose of mentoring shape how it is enacted and experienced; relationships are perceived as successful if the expectations of the mentor correspond with those of the mentee.

Findings indicated that mentors sought greater formality from the relationship than mentees. It could be argued that this is because of perceptions of safety in a bounded relationship, where the mentor adheres to a defined role. The mentor is already established in the headteacher community, their motive for mentoring does not include friendship, they may be wary of initiating an informal relationship with someone they

do not know and so, until they have established their own perception of the novice they do not seek to engage in an informal relationship. But this study also found that the majority of mentors recognised that a friendly, informal start would allow the interpersonal relationship to be established which may allow the dyad to become more developmental over time and so they sought to focus on the socialisation aspect in the early stages. Less commonly, some dyads began within a clear developmental frame but could, depending upon the interpersonal dynamics, evolve to encompass psychosocial functions. In both models the developmental aspect of mentoring was seen to be necessary by mentors - that it was not just a 'cosy chat'. Luck (2004) also reported concern that mentoring could become too 'cosy' (p.3). The term 'cosy' suggests comfort and lack of challenge as could be considered in a social friendship however the concept of critical friendship as described by Swaffield (2007) appears to overlap with some mentoring characteristics.

Young and Perrewé (2000) offer useful insight into role behaviour affecting the expectations of mentors and mentees which is relevant to the findings of this research. They propose that mentors consider a relationship successful when mentees show task related behaviour i.e. being open to advice and undertaking actions related to career enhancing functions. Mentees, on the other hand, place high value on mentors demonstrating social support behaviours. This offers some theory on which to build in examining the differing expectations of formality and the emphasis on either psychosocial or task focussed mentoring functions between mentors and mentees. Young and Perrewé (2000) also highlight that trust and effectiveness of the dyad is enhanced if expectations of both parties are met; also played out in practice within this research as mentors bowed to the wishes of mentees to reduce formality in the early stages. Young and Perrewé (2000) further suggest that mentees must come away from the helping conversation with a positive feeling which then enhances future interactions; this research also saw this enacted and used as a deliberate strategy by mentors who used their relational abilities to help the mentee feel equal which allowed the relationship to build. Mentees valued characteristics such as humility and approachability in mentors which was conducive to trust being established before tricky issues or personal dilemmas could be raised.

This thesis suggests that wise mentoring explicitly considers, responds and adapts to needs and expectations of the mentee with the implication that each relationship is best viewed as an independent dyad. Findings suggest that a notion of mentoring as a human resource strategy enacted through the consistent interpretation of policy may not be conducive to a positive mentoring outcome. This thesis was initially critical of

Bolam *et al.* (1995) due to the definitional vagueness inferred from 'mentoring is whatever the two people regard as appropriate' (p.33) However, acknowledging the findings of this research in conjunction with the conceptual looseness of the terms in the policy and research literature this definition may, in part, be helpful. In addition this research recommends that to be successful, a mentoring relationship needs to grow but, in the early stages the mentor should recognise the needs and expectations of the mentee that they tend to seek initial informality - concluding that the cosy chat in the comfy chairs is perhaps not such a bad idea after all.

That there are differing understandings and expectations of mentoring in the CSLA provides useful areas for policy development and further research. D'Abate (2003) identifies seven categories of mentoring and three of coaching in her useful study of taxonomy and interaction characteristics, work that is helpful in determining the uniqueness of constructs such as mentoring, coaching, or counselling. The conceptual stage of this thesis would have benefitted from D'Abate's insight as it offers nomological network matrices (p.371) which illustrate the meanings of mentoring constructs. Although McClellan *et al.*'s distinction between process and outcome (2008) was helpful in organising thinking for this research, an opportunity for future work is offered by D'Abate (2003) to help make sense of the conceptual confusion around mentoring and which would assist practitioners and policymakers to have a more sophisticated shared understanding of mentoring.

## **6.2. Matching - luck or judgement?**

Good matching of the mentor to mentee was found to be the single most important aspect of the mentoring process in determining the success, or otherwise, of the mentoring relationship. However the matching of mentor to mentee by the CSLA emerged from the responses as the overriding practical aspect which could be improved upon.

### **6.2.1. Guide and role model**

That mentors had relevant, directly related experience contributed to the perception of mentor credibility which was viewed as necessary by mentees. Findings suggest that this is closely related to notions of respect and credibility. For the mentor to have credibility appears to derive from having already functioned well at that level - having 'been there and done it' - and done it well. This indicates that mentees expect, either in full or in part, an advisory relationship where the mentor uses their experience to give direct advice, reflect upon strategies which worked in similar situations or make suggestions and give feedback on proposals with an understanding of context. The need

for mentors to have role specific knowledge and professional credibility is consistent with definitions of classic mentoring explored in Chapter 2 all of which involve elements of tutelage, role modelling, the development of task competence and professional identity.

This finding is in agreement with literature on novice headteacher mentoring. Studies examined within the literature review reported that experienced headteachers acted as mentors for either aspiring or novice heads in an apparent 'expert to novice' relationship (examples are Daresh 1995;2004, Low *et al.* 1994, Bolam *et al.* 1995, Bush and Coleman 1995, Southworth 1995, Hobson and Sharp 2005, Hansford and Ehrich 2006). Smith (2007) agrees, describing the practice of mentoring in the school context to have 'traditionally utilised a sponsorship and guidance focus' (p.279). Hobson (2003) concludes that new headteachers value the provision of practical advice and 'solutions' (p.iv). Hansford and Ehrich (2006) reported that 'sharing ideas and problem solving' was the second most commonly reported specific positive outcome (p.47). This study also reported that the most common negative or problematic outcome for mentees was a concern over the expertise of their mentor (p.47). Luck (2004) reported that mentors chose a mentor who had experience of their own context and setting (p.2). Daresh and Male (2001) suggested that, with reference to headship of special schools, mentors should be appointed from a similar type of school - a similar conceptualisation was noted in this research. Findings from this and most other studies of HT mentoring all suggest that directly relevant experience is considered necessary in matching mentor to mentee. These factors strongly suggest that mentoring in the CSLA is conceptualised as context specific training which prepares the mentee for the headteachers role as represented as it exists now and socialises them into that view. This is problematic and this purpose of mentoring as it is conceived in the CSLA is now challenged.

This conceptualisation of master: apprentice mentoring offering context specific training is problematic as, although in general terms it is practicable, i.e. mentors from the same sector, it is questionable how far this level of specificity should be taken. Data offered the example where secondary depute headteachers did not feel well matched if one had a curricular as opposed to a pastoral remit. Primary headteachers were concerned if their mentor had no direct experience of managing a nursery or if the size of school differed. Logically, this could be extrapolated to infinite interpretations of job descriptions where mentors recreate 'the How-to Book of Headship' for every possible context. It is proposed that such a reductionist understanding of mentoring, based purely on context specific training, must be challenged.

The Standard for Headship in Scotland is based on the premise that there are similar professional actions associated with headship. Texts which have been included as essential reading for school leadership preparation over the last decade have not differentiated between primary and secondary schools (e.g. MacBeath 1998, Fullan 2001, McCall and Lawlor 2003, Hargreaves and Fink 2006, Tomlinson 2008) and there are apparently similar behaviours associated with successful school leadership (Lewis and Murphy 2008). If this premise is accepted it should be perfectly possible for a mentor from any school context to support the task related functions of another - as it could be anticipated that strategies to support headteachers 'leading people through a process of change' would have transferability across sectors. It is concerning if notions of leadership and management functions are so different between primary and secondary establishments. If a headteacher's development is indeed predicated on how to 'be a primary head' then ideas of cluster, community and Children's Services leadership with headteachers as strategic partners in education policy research and development is some way off current reality. With this in mind, it is argued that the process of mentoring should be more forward focussed, challenging to the status quo and facilitative of change, particularly in view of current trends in public service finance.

It is accepted that this research examined novice school leaders whose sphere of influence is more likely to be at school level, and that mentoring in the early days focussed around the practical 'nuts and bolts' of headship. As highlighted in the preceding section the use of mentoring was considered a 'survival strategy' in the very early days and so is easy to see why direct experience is perceived as necessary in order to provide the practical solutions to immediate problems. The introduction of an adequate induction process as recommended by this research could reshape what is expected from mentoring and therefore what is needed from a mentor in terms of being well matched. It is also recognised that the credibility of mentors has been derived from existing practice, measured by existing benchmarks, and so it can be mutually reassuring for both mentor and mentee to embrace roles of master and apprentice. Although perhaps comfortable, such a limited conceptualisation of mentoring should not be supported by the CSLA. Effectively, the more menial functions of mentoring (i.e. the nuts and bolts) could be addressed more effectively through other means so releasing mentors to operate at higher leverage levels. This is considered in more detail in Section 6.5

In sum, the findings from this study suggest that the matching of mentor to mentee is, in part, related to what both mentors and mentees expect from the relationship. There is the expectation, particularly in the early stages of the relationship that directly

related experience is needed to allow career enhancing, task related mentoring functions perceived through a developmental frame. However findings also indicated that 'a good match' was much more complex and career history should not be the sole basis on which the relationship is based. Mentoring is, first and foremost, a human relationship and mentoring was understood by many in the CSLA through the socialisation frame with a high emphasis on psychosocial functions. The need for mentor and mentee to form a relationship in order to fulfil the psychosocial functions of mentoring is now discussed.

### 6.2.2. Friend and counsellor

The previous section proposes that directly related experience is useful in matching mentor to mentee, but that there are dangers in what that means for the conceptualisation of mentoring in the CSLA. Findings from this research also lead to the proposal that relational abilities and personality factors of mentors are highly valued. The concepts of respect and credibility do not appear to be solely related to experience but recognise positive personal characteristics such as humility, approachability and integrity. It appears that although a mentee may acknowledge the expertise of a mentor, in order for a positive mentoring relationship to be established they also, more importantly, need to like them, trust them and have confidence in their personal and relational capabilities.

Literature suggests that a safe emotional and psychological environment is necessary in order to foster critical personal and professional learning for headteachers (Carruthers 1993, Bolam *et al.* 1995, Smith 2007). The personal and relational capabilities of mentors are therefore crucial in creating the conditions for emotional and psychological safety. Perceptions of power and position are not conducive in establishing the form of open, honest and trusting relationship necessary for psychosocial functions of mentoring. Humility was valued by both mentors and mentees in this study which concurs with Luck (2004). In the literature and in the interview data, the characteristic of humility appears to be related to ideas of integrity, reliability, honesty, ethics and morality. Godshalk and Sosik (2000) offer work which supports the importance of humility in mentoring. In their study, mentors who accurately rated or under-estimated their leadership behaviours when compared to ratings by subordinates were more highly valued by mentees. Those who over-estimated their leadership ability were less valued as mentors, which Godshalk and Sosik (2000) suggest, arises from a lack of self-awareness and a need to maintain self-perception, attaching less importance in the development of the mentee.

Findings indicated that the ability to build a relationship based on professional equality was seen as necessary for a good mentoring dyad. Mentoring for school leaders in the CSLA is a peer mentoring scheme and so differs from some other forms of formal mentoring schemes noted in the literature. Although mentors and mentees held the same role, and no management relationship existed between any dyad, it appeared that, due to their novice status, many mentees did not feel that they were professional equals with experienced school leaders. A key theme which emerged from analysis in this respect was that the first meeting was important in reducing the perception of hierarchy between mentor and mentee. The first meeting was felt to be critical in setting the tone and rapport, with both parties seeking emotional affinity and the development of a harmonious relationship to provide a foundation on which to build trust.

Kram (1983) documented four phases in the mentoring relationship. The first, initiation, involves the initial interactions from which the cultivation phase grows, 'allowing the career and psychosocial functions of mentoring to peak and learning to accrue' (Scandura 1998 p.450). However, Kram's work notes that the initiation phase takes 6-12 months which could encompass the entire time available within the CSLA mentoring scheme. It could therefore be considered that the formal period of mentoring only allows the mentor and mentee to move through the initiation phase, and, should they choose to sustain an ongoing developmental relationship outwith the formal mentoring arrangements, the cultivation phase would grow. This was noted in this study as a number of mentor dyads were still in contact after the period of formal mentoring.

The relationship model proposed by Scandura *et al.* (1996) suggests that, as the social distance decreases between mentor and mentee, mutual caring and loyalty increase. This is helpful to understand the importance of the 'cosy chat and comfy chairs' as described in the preceding section and the importance of the initial meeting in seeking emotional affinity and rapport. This could be viewed as an effort to short-circuit the 'getting to know you' process in order to move quickly to a position of mutual trust and into the cultivation phase where more learning can take place. As discussed in 6.1.4, behaviours in mentors which reduce formality are valued by mentees (Young and Perrewe 2000), this is recognised by mentors and seen in this study where there was attempts to decrease the social distance to allow a supportive peer relationship to develop.

Mentees need to experience positive feelings from mentoring which then enhances future interactions (Young and Perrewe 2000); only in relationships where such 'strong

positive thoughts' (Kram 1985 p.51) are experienced do behaviours result which encourages an ongoing relationship to grow. As has been reported in the literature and reported in the findings of this work, mentoring is a potentially powerful human relationship and, as in all human relationships, trust is an important component (Erdem and Aytemur 2008). As raised in 6.1.4, trust grows when the expectation of both mentors and mentees are met and where there is recognition of the interaction being of mutual value, described by Kram (1985) as complementarity (p.101).

### 6.2.3. Trust and complementarity

Trust has been frequently cited as critical in order to build a relationship between mentor and mentee, and this is supported by the findings of this study. Trust in relations is based upon the positive expectations of the intentions or behaviours of another (Rousseau *et al.* 1998). Erdem and Aytemur (2008) report that the concept of trust is associated with considering the other person to be 'competent, consistent, benevolent, interested and open to communication' (p.56). Whitener *et al.* (1998) also report similar dimensions of personality and moral, social and organisational values that determine the levels of trust in a relationship.

These definitions and conceptualisations of trust are a valuable field of study for organisational mentoring. Although in-depth exploration of the psychology of trust is outwith the scope of this current work it may be a fruitful source of insight for developing organisational climates which support mentoring. In synopsis, it appears that to trust a person, the other must have confidence that the person will comply with social conventions and be of good character. What is meant by this will vary, but perhaps, at its core is understood to be a person having good social intent by being competent, reliable, consistent, honest, benevolent, moral and ethical. The convention which was consistently reported in this study along with concepts of trust was confidentiality. Responses were consistent that an assurance of confidentiality should be explicitly stated by the mentor at the first meeting; data showed the mentee had to make a judgement as to whether to trust that this assurance would be honoured. Such a judgement would be based on many tacit factors and not taken lightly as the findings of this study suggested that the fear of judgement or retribution from a lapse of confidentiality has significant consequences. Any perception of betrayal can lead to emotions of disappointment, regret or a sense violation of organisational justice (Scandura 1998). Negative or dysfunctional mentoring is discussed in more detail in 6.2.5.

Insight is offered to the matching conundrum by reflecting back to the mentoring umbrella and the range of mentoring functions that can fall under the canopy of the definition. Kram (1985) offers a range of career enhancing and psychosocial functions for mentoring; she highlights that the more of these functions that can be encapsulated the more positive the relationship, a view supported more recently by others (Godshalk and Sosik 2000). Career enhancing task related functions based on knowledge or competence may benefit from direct experience and may still be successfully met within a mentoring relationship with limited emotional affinity. Functions which are more psychosocial in essence, such as confirmation, counselling and friendship, require higher levels of self-disclosure, intimacy and trust which requires greater emotional affinity. The formula for the perfect match, as with all human relationships, remains elusive.

#### 6.2.4. Some thoughts about matching in formal mentoring relationships

Findings indicated that the personal or relational capacities of the mentor or the compatibility of personalities may result in a less positive mentoring experience. Given the complexity of matching mentor to mentee, with such a wide range of variables to take into consideration, it could be argued that mentees should be offered a choice of mentor. It was surprising that having an element of choice was not raised at any point in the interviews by either mentor or mentee. It may be that mentors and mentees have limited expectation of this form of autonomy from an authority led programme. Given that there is little or no choice available with the school quality improvement personnel, cluster arrangements, student or probationer allocation or staffing arrangements within their own school, it may have been assumed that this was a top-down managed process and they had no expectation of power or autonomy in selection of mentors.

Allowing mentees a choice of mentor would allow the expectations to be made explicit and a mentor chosen or recommended accordingly. The two extremes could be at either side of Kram's construct of mentoring functions; a headteacher matched with another with relevant experience from within their own cluster in order to be guided on task focussed learning or a mentor from a different sector and cluster, with no experience of the mentees role, who provides emotional support. As there is no clear conceptualisation of mentoring within the CSLA, both positions are supported but it has already been argued that some mentoring functions could be more effectively addressed by other means. A pragmatic response to this complexity could be that mentors are matched according to the preference of the mentee.

Although on the surface an attractive option, the detail of such procedures could be problematic and unsustainable. It is also likely that, given the earlier analysis that mentees welcomed informality, their preference would be a mentor perceived as ideal through the socialisation frame in the short term but not the best developmental option for the longer term. Mentees may have already 'picked' personal mentors with whom they received forms of support, with the authority programme being an additional resource. Mentees may also feel under pressure to select certain headteachers for political reasons. However that being said, by asking mentees if they wished to work with someone they already knew, or had no preference would be an initial option which could improve the matching process. Furthermore, a clear exit strategy and stated process regarding changing a mentor should be built into the system if the relationship fails to thrive. It could also be argued, as this is an employer-led programme, that the CSLA has the right to ensure its own agenda is met regarding the function of mentoring but unless this direction is clarified, it is likely that the inconsistency of policy interpretation will continue.

The findings of this study and the literature indicate that mentoring is a complex, dynamic interpersonal relationship that has potential to bring about learning and personal growth but, as with any interpersonal relationship, it is not always harmonious.

#### 6.2.5. Negative effects of mentoring

Personality mismatch has been cited as a problem in the mentoring literature (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Bush and Cole 1995, Daresh and Male 2000, Ehrich *et al.* 2004). Personality is often reported as a cause for mismatch but figures reported are combined with expertise or ideological differences, so it is difficult to establish the scale of the issue. It is proposed that complete incompatibility is rare, but when it does occur, a mentee's dislike for a mentor may be wrapped up in other more acceptable reasons for failure such as 'ideological difference'. There is a body of research on personality and leadership which is not considered further within this thesis but which may offer insight into matching of mentor to mentee and opportunity for further work.

Dysfunctional mentoring is reported in the literature, but has received much less attention than more positive relationships. Scandura (1998) suggests that although poor relationships do not occur as often as good relationships, when dysfunctional mentoring does occur, it can have serious consequences (p.450). This is supported by the findings of this study where most relationships were positive but two much less so. In the final question of the interview where respondents were asked to rate their overall experience of mentoring overall, on a ten point scale with 0 as the most negative and

10 as the most positive, one primary and one secondary mentee rated their experience as 3. Notably, one secondary mentor rated their experience as 2, the lowest response offered in the study. It is proposed that, in agreement with Ehrich *et al.* (2004), poor mentoring is worse than no mentoring at all and so a closer exploration of dysfunctional mentoring is worthwhile.

As mentoring can be a close personal relationship, negative interactions can have the potential to be destructive even although issues of power or dependency are not as apparent in a peer mentoring process as compared to a supervisory one. The example was offered in Chapter 5 where a newly appointed headteacher found the mentoring conversations damaging to her confidence; it may be of note that this dyad had been in a supervisory relationship in the past, and perhaps the mentor was unable or unwilling to re-establish a new form of non-hierarchical relationship. Myers and Humphreys (1985) describe a stereotypical tyrannical mentor who is egocentric and exploitative, consciously reinforcing the power differential through their actions. Issues such as envy, jealousy and revenge are reported as causes for negative relations; but it is also possible that an experienced headteacher who is used to an autocratic leadership style may find it difficult to use a facilitative, more collaborative, mindset.

The definitions of mentoring, where different understandings of mentoring can expect participants to play out different roles, can help understand this transaction. If a master: apprentice relationship has been established understood through a transactional analysis framework as parent: child, the mentee would expect the function of mentoring to be directive with the mentor moving between nurturing and/or critical parent roles. The mentee would play a more submissive role, perhaps, as described by Bushardt *et al.* (1991), in exchange for relational or organisational rewards. If such a relationship meets the needs and expectations of both parties, it would not be considered dysfunctional. However if the conceptualisation of mentoring was from an Adult: Adult relationship, as played out in non-directive coaching, the mentee would expect a more active role in determining the mentoring functions. In this case, direct advice, direction, judgement and feedback would not meet the needs or expectations of the mentee who may then determine the relationship dysfunctional. This debate assumes that the organisation supporting and funding formal mentoring does not offer a view on what constitutes dysfunctional mentoring.

Kram (1985) highlights that it is the subtle attitudes towards authority, ones own competence, conflict, competitiveness and intimacy which affect the functions which mentors adopt in their mentoring. These attitudes are shaped by life experiences and

relationships (Levinson 1976, 1996) and it cannot be assumed that all dysfunctional mentoring relationships involve deliberate malice or poor relational capability on the part of the mentor.

Duck (1994) conceptualised four categories of destructive relationships which is helpful in conceptualising what can occur. The first two, 'Bullying' and 'Sabotage' do indeed involve malice or mal-intent. Negative mentoring arising from these quadrants was not reported within this study. However the third and fourth quadrants - 'Difficulty' and 'Spoiling' - involve both mentor and mentee having good intent towards the other but in spite of this the relationship evolves to become dysfunctional. In 'Difficulty' Duck describes disagreement on the judgement or ultimatums being offered. Within the understanding of 'Spoiling', the relationship sours due to perceptions of unfairness or betrayal leading to emotions such as disappointment or regret.

Findings of this study suggest the majority of dysfunction did not arise from malice but from the inability in the relationships to evolve as the interests of the parties change. Scandura (1998) describes a relationship as dysfunctional when it continues to be pleasant but fails to meet the needs of either party, fitting with Kram's concept of complementarity as described in 6.2.2. Kram suggests that all mentoring relationships start as complementary ones but mutual fit only exists for a limited period of time and may, if it does not evolve, become non-complementary which is a threatening state to either mentor or mentee. Some stories told as part of the interview process lend weight to this idea of relationships which evolve at different rates and which, although good at the beginning, led to disappointing conclusions.

In this study two mentees had stopped responding to contact, one had formally requested another mentor, but none had consciously and explicitly terminated the relationship. This may be due to the recognition that there would still be an element of professional contact required within a relatively small community of headteachers. An implied and, apparently, mutually understood assumption that the relationship was no longer required prevented any uncomfortable conversations which may have soured future professional working.

Just as the initial meeting is important in decreasing the social distance between mentor and mentee, the final meeting should also be an opportunity to terminate the relationship positively. Kram (1985) reports that the termination phase of some mentoring relationships end badly, marked by anger and frustration. This was not reported as part of the stories told within the interviews. Most of the mentoring dyads

reported that although they were no longer in what could be described as the formal mentoring period, they were still in informal contact with their mentors (Appendix Table 1a). This is a positive finding, where the relationships evolved beyond mentoring towards personal friendships.

The concepts of complementarity discussed in this section suggest that the relationship has to be mutually enhancing for it to be sustained. The discussion now progresses to consider the motivations and rewards for mentors.

### **6.3. Mentoring - a market commodity or a collegiate responsibility**

Findings of this research lead to the recommendation that, as the mentoring scheme is considered a support strategy enshrined in policy, associated recompense (time or payment) should be made by the employer to those providing the service. This is not in keeping with understandings of classic mentoring and signals a tension which may account for some of the inconsistencies in interpretation and implementation of the mentoring policy in the CSLA. To add complexity to the conceptualisation, the CSLA mentoring policy as it stands states that mentoring is ‘informal voluntary support’ (Appendix C) but an honorarium was paid to mentors up until 2007, in contrast to and perhaps conflicting with ideas of classic mentoring (Levinson 1978, Kram 1985).

Some reflection on the use of the honorarium is helpful in making sense of the apparent tension between voluntary support and paid duty. Problems were recognised with the honorarium arrangement (Section 2.4.9) and the payment was replaced by additional funding to the mentor’s devolved school budget. This suggests a significant shift; mentoring initially understood as an additional personal responsibility then later perceived as a school based activity. As the author has in-depth knowledge of local work practice some observations around the payment for mentoring provide prompts for thought; many mentors did not claim the honorarium, some going as far as writing to decline payment as they felt mentoring was a professional responsibility which they undertook in their own time. Alternatively, others claimed the honorarium regularly even with limited time spent with the mentee. When the honorarium was stopped, one mentor chose to leave the programme and others refused to undertake the meetings in their own time, claiming additional funding for the school which subsequently led to the current arrangements for all mentors’ school budgets. However many primary mentoring dyads continued to meet outwith school time in a social space. Critique of

this practice leads this thesis to conclude that some people view mentoring as a professional responsibility - a social norm, and others consider the practice as an additional responsibility, a form of training where the market norm prevails. It is sensible that school staffing levels should not be disadvantaged because of the mentoring programme but it could be argued that whether staff are paid or not (either personally or through devolved budget) provides a signal to what is understood as the purpose of mentoring. Paying a mentor to undertake the role suggests a contractual transaction which may not be compatible with a view of mentoring as a professional responsibility and undermines the idea that the mentor also gains from the experience.

In 1964 Blau wrote that only social exchange 'engenders feelings of personal obligations, gratitude and trust; purely economic exchange does not' (p.94). This early theory appears to be accepted by contemporary economists. If informal voluntary mentoring is the prevailing view, shifting this towards one of a market exchange by placing upon it a monetary value may limit the emotional attachment and goodwill which arises from a social exchange (Ariely *et al.* 2009) and reframe it into a 'market or commercial relationship' (Kube *et al.* 2010 p.21). The motives for mentoring are discussed later in this chapter but initial thoughts on this issue indicate that mentors in education are not 'in it for the money' but engage for other reasons.

Conflated notions of the role of mentoring are again apparent in the mentoring policy in terms of what is expected to be written down. Although described as 'informal voluntary support' (Appendix C) there are explicit signals of formal structures such as guidance for the first meeting, templates for documentation and budget arrangements. That there did not appear to be a consistent understanding of the aims of mentoring and the role of the mentor may arise in part from this lack of congruence. The need for a shared expectation emerged strongly from responses from both mentors and mentees but there was no agreement as to who had this responsibility. There appears to be an attempt to create the conditions for developmental collegiate relationships between experienced and novice leaders but if the CSLA views mentoring as a workforce development strategy and not a relationship, this violates the true spirit of mentoring (Brown 1990, Applebaum *et al.* 1994) and is only a Western construct (Bright 2005).

Where it is examined explicitly, the literature tends to find that that informal mentoring results in more positive outcomes. This makes sense at face value, as it could be assumed that for any developmental relationship to stand the test of time, the motive, personal commitment and interpersonal chemistry are in place. This thesis suggests that any formal, employer-led mentoring strategy attempts to create a culture

and climate which are conducive for the growth of professionals and so benefit the organisation. It could be argued that a profession or organisation with a culture of intergenerational support and succession planning would not require mentoring to be used as a human resource strategy.

Such a 'vertical society' is noted in Japan through its kinship system which is worthy of interest for future work on mentoring although the different cultural context in East Asia does limit direct relevance to our immediate policy concern. However recent research on the culture of the CSLA by the Chief Executive Office is relevant to this workbased study. Based upon the organisational culture types described by Cameron and Quinn (2006) the clan culture emerges as dominant within the CSLA (Speedie 2009). The clan culture is described as 'held together by loyalty and tradition like an extended family, attaching great importance to adhesion and morale' (Speedie 2009 p.21) contrasted against more dynamic, creative, results-orientated and competitiveness cultural types. Speedie (2009) concludes that understanding and comparing the 'now and future' culture types allows change programmes to be designed to take the Council towards a more dynamic culture which values individual initiative and a commitment to innovation. From the seven directorates examined in the CSLA, analysis showed Schools Service to have the highest clan culture type across the CSLA. This thesis has previously highlighted the need to reconceptualise the role of headteacher. It is further proposed that a clan culture is not the optimal organisational mindset to re-imagine schooling

It is recognised from workforce planning statistics and personal knowledge that staff live and work in the area for long periods, having many network ties and family connections. Although the predominant clan culture of the CSLA can be criticised in terms of limiting innovation and change, such a vertical society is notable locally and informal mentoring relationships are commonly reported. The challenge for the leadership class in the CSLA is to ensure that the informal relationships which occur develop behaviours and practice which confront the prevailing orthodoxy and bring about innovation and change. If it does not and the 'aye been' [this is how it has always been] clan culture prevails, formal mentoring strategies which seek creative responses (Casavant and Cherkowski 2001) are even more necessary.

This thesis proposes that if the organisational climate and professional relationships within the CSLA could be unshackled and shaped to reduce the need for formal mentoring as a strategy, then informal mentoring through intergenerational distributed leadership is likely to have more powerful outcomes. Many elements of such a culture are developing - some at embryonic stage but others now walking independently:

cluster working; teacher learning communities; partner headships; headteacher strategic leadership roles across communities; distributed leadership and collaborative working. This thesis has already recommended improving the induction support to novice headteachers and now would add a greater emphasis on supporting informal mentoring as pro-social behaviour. While recognising the strengths of the clan, the perceived need to shift towards a culture of adhocracy<sup>16</sup> offers additional context on public service leadership which would be useful direction for future research in the CSLA.

### 6.3.1. Motivations for mentors

The findings from this research suggest that mentoring was a rewarding process for mentors and that it had a positive influence on their own practice which is consistent with literature that relationships are indeed, as Kram initially described, mutually enhancing (1985). Reports on the benefits of mentoring to mentors reflect the themes which emerged from this study. Mentoring has been reported as a valuable form of professional development for experienced headteachers (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Coleman *et al.* 1996, Hansford and Ehrich 2006, Pocklington and Weindling 1996, Luck 2004), offering insights into current practices and alternative approaches (Bush and Coleman 1995, Hobson and Sharp 2005). Mentoring provides an opportunity for collegiality and networking (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Boon 1998, Ehrich *et al.* 2004, Hansford and Ehrich 2006) and reflection upon or reappraisal of the mentors' own practice (Bolam *et al.* 1995, Hopkins-Thompson 2000, Ehrich *et al.* 2004, Luck 2004).

In keeping with the findings of this study, the literature also reports mentors increasing in self-esteem and confidence (Hopkins-Thompson 2000, Luck 2004) with mentors recognising their knowledge when discussing issues with another or through the external verification of being considered sufficiently expert to act in a mentoring role. Mentors also report feelings of satisfaction or reward (Daresh and Playko 1992, Ehrich *et al.* 2004, Hansford and Ehrich 2006), describing a sense of purpose, a feeling of giving back to the profession. Just as in this study, mentors talked of feeling reinvigorated. A greater enthusiasm for the profession was also reported in the literature (Boon 1998, Daresh and Playko 1992).

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<sup>16</sup> As opposed to bureaucracy - a form of organisation that cuts across normal bureaucratic lines to capture opportunities, solve problems, and get results.

Negative issues for mentors do not appear to be related to the learning opportunities afforded but more focussed upon the practicalities of time, clear expectations for the role and matching (Bolam *et al.* 1993, Daresh 2004).

There is a great deal of literature on mentoring in organisations which supports the assumption that being a mentor is a rewarding process and so mentors participate without obvious extrinsic reward. Most of this literature is based upon asking mentors about their experiences although some report on the expected costs and benefits of being a mentor (Ragins and Scandura 1999) and others have explored the career outcomes of being a mentor (Allen *et al.* 2006). The majority of work which reports the benefits of mentoring does so through a human resources perspective i.e. increasing the development of human capital in a business environment, considering markers of career success as promotion rate and salary. Gibb (1999), in relation to the private sector, puts forward two theories on why mentors give of their time and efforts in what he refers to as ‘apparently virtuous helping human social behaviour’ (p.1061). He suggests that there can be instances of both social exchange (Brehm and Kassin 1993) and communitarianism (Etzioni 1993) apparent in mentoring. Although this does give a theoretical basis, the model is neither compelling nor comprehensive to explain the motive for mentoring in this study.

The mentoring literature gives little emphasis or explanation to differences in motivation which may exist between public and private sector mentoring, although work by Bozeman and Feeney (2009) is helpful as they agree distinctions may exist. With a focus on mentoring in education, it is recognised that motivations may be from a range of personal, professional and situational grounds which may change through time. Scandura (1996) highlights that such a ‘kaleidoscopic mix’ can shift from the selfish to the altruistic (p.50).

Being invited to mentor a new school leader legitimises the mentor’s status in the local employing authority, evidence that they are considered credible with knowledge skills and behavioural attributes which would assist the novice leader. As such, a prospective mentor may accept the invitation as a form of self-interest or reciprocal altruism, which could be considered within social exchange theory (Gibb 1999, Bozeman and Feeney 2009). It could be considered that being the formal mentor of a novice school leader is seen as collegial while also overtly supportive of the employing authority’s strategy. This type of pro-social or organisational citizenship behaviour has been linked with career reward (Allen and Rush 1998, Allen *et al.* 2006). Conversely, to decline the

invitation to participate may be construed as rejecting the organisational hierarchy as they place no value on supporting others within the system.

Mentors may be driven by motives of reciprocal altruism but as a social exchange for intrinsic, not extrinsic, reward. Although a stark warning against mentoring as a business exchange is offered by Healy and Welchert (1990), they recognise that some of the developmental reasons why mentors mentor is as a form of social exchange through reciprocal development. The perceived benefit to mentors here may be for reasons aligned to the opportunities for professional development - to engage in professional dialogue with others who may have different approaches and to become re-enthused, re-motivated and reminded why they came into education. One mentoring motive not explicitly stated within the literature, although perhaps assumed, is that mentors for headteachers are primarily educators, their professional 'raison d'être' is the learning, growth and development of others and as they move up the educational hierarchy, moving farther away from the classroom and, perhaps, new pedagogy, they may feel less connected with learning and teaching of children. Being and feeling able to support a new headteacher from a position of experience offers the mentor the additional opportunity to be involved in the learning and development of others and perhaps feel refreshed or reinvigorated as a result. This could be considered self-interest but for intrinsic reasons, with positive social intent. One theoretical basis proposed for the motivation for mentoring suggests that for a mentor, the relationship is a way to achieve midlife generativity (Healy and Welchert 1990), part of a concern and interest to create and care for the new generation (Erikson 1959, Merriam 1983, Levinson 1976; 1994).

Feelings of care for the new headteacher and an interest in supporting the new headteacher's school may also lie within what Bozeman and Feeney (2009) describe as public service motivation. Individuals choose to work in the public sector, it is proposed, by a set of ideals and it may be this motivation which forms the prime reason for participating in a mentoring programme. Giving something back, working for the common good, gives experienced headteachers a renewed sense of purpose and subsequent intrinsic reward. This could be described by Gibb's alternate theory of why mentors mentor, that of communitarianism (Etzioni 1993, Gibb 1999). He proposes this as active theory to reinvigorate community spirit, describing the motive as based on duty, shared values and being member of a community and a belief that helping behaviour is the 'right thing to do' (p.1064). This theory fits in part as the headteacher community tends to be strong, there are network ties (Feeney and Bozeman 2008) and

there is a responsibility for others and the community at large which also fits with Bozeman and Feeney's theory of public service motivation (2009).

However the origins of Gibbs' theory of communitarianism are more problematic, as the purpose of communitarianism in maintaining social and moral order does not sit comfortably with the challenge this thesis has offered to the existing conceptualisation of mentoring and the recommendation from Chapter.3 that the process of mentoring should be more forward focussed, challenging to the status quo and facilitative of change.

### 6.3.2. More of the same wont do

One of the two realities offered in the introduction to this work was that the existing conception of the role of headteacher may not be sustainable in the light of changes to autonomy, accountability and sociological change. The findings of this study indicate that mentoring in the CSLA is conceptualised as context specific training which prepares the mentee for the role of headteacher as it exists now and socialises them into that view. A conceptualisation of mentoring as a form of initiation which supports the prevailing orthodoxy, maintains traditional, at times disenfranchising power relationships, stifles creativity and breeds more of the same must be challenged.

Grogan and Crow raise concerns over the purpose of mentoring if it produces 'old wine in new bottles' (2004) with the transmission of traditional ways of being a headteacher, old orthodoxies unchallenged and conventional roles reinforced (Southworth 1995, Casavant and Cherkowski 2001). A tendency to limit diversity and 'pass a torch which is no longer consistent with new expectations' (Daresh 2004 p.512) may be even more notable in an organisational culture which is culturally orientated to limit innovation and change (Speedie 2009). This thesis argues that developing novice headteachers through a master: apprentice model of mentoring must be challenged. Although mentors may embark on the programme as a form of recognition for their experience and status, as a vehicle for mid-life generativity and purpose, they must be warned from simply passing the baton - playing guru through transmitting a function which will not serve mentees well. Although perhaps a rewarding mid-life role for some mentors, such a limited conceptualisation of mentoring should not be supported by the CSLA.

This thesis has put forward that there is an identified need within the CSLA to unshackle and reshape the organisational culture both to support informal mentoring and to cultivate a climate able to re-imagine schooling and the role of headteacher. It is

further proposed that mentors have a professional responsibility to support mentees find creative and brave solutions as they grapple with today's issues, seeking professional growth, not cloning. But this is not easy. If there is acceptance that the old orthodoxy is no longer fit for purpose, this may reduce the intrinsic rewards for experienced mentors who seek recognition through replication and imitation. Mentors, it is proposed, need support to be confident to develop innovation and creativity in future headteachers, feel comfortable to challenge their existing identities but also feel positive and rewarded by their experience. It is a recommendation from this research that mentor selection and training in the CSLA must be reviewed to ensure there is a balance struck in recognising their experience and status while supporting their growth as cultural change agents.

This chapter so far has discussed aspects of process - time, place and expectation, what McClellan *et al.* considers the first dimension of mentoring (2008). The discussion now progresses to consider implications from the second dimension - what this research established about the outcomes from mentoring in the CSLA.

## **6.4. Does mentoring work?**

As described in 1.4, initial thinking around the question for this research focused upon establishing if mentoring 'worked' and this was loosely, and naively, understood in the very early conceptual phase of the study as 'resulting in benefit for the mentee and the employing authority'. The research process undertaken as part of this professional doctorate has explored the problem with that question, conceptualised and framed the issues, hunted down some assumptions, established the claims and examined related scholarly knowledge and the policy landscape. Having undertaken a significant piece of empirical work and reported the findings, now, as this thesis moves towards reaching conclusions the question is re-posed.

### **6.4.1. Building self-confidence and supporting wellbeing**

The findings of this study support the claim that mentoring in the CSLA has a psychosocial function, helping newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers develop confidence and self-belief as they began to accept a new professional identity. This finding is consistent with the literature on headteacher mentoring in England and Wales; Bolam *et al.* (1995) highlighted that improving self confidence was 'widely mentioned' (p.37), Luck (2004) reported developing confidence and adapting to the change in circumstances was the 'most positive response' (p.15).

There is agreement in the literature, reviewed in Section 2.3.3, that transition to headship is challenging with new headteachers reporting problems as they settle into their new role (Draper and McMichael 1998; 2000, Earley *et al.* 2002, Day 2003, Hobson *et al.* 2002, Grogan and Crow 2004, Holligan *et al.* 2006, Cowie and Crawford 2008, Woods *et al.* 2009, Duncan and Stock 2010) and that mentoring may be one approach, though not problem free, to support the transition from teacher colleague to school leader. The findings of this study agree with the themes from the literature; for new headteachers the ‘year of the firsts’ was a period of self-doubt and, for some, emotional fragility where the support of an experienced colleague was valued. What is not so evident in the literature to date but which emerged in this study was the similarities in the benefits of mentoring for depute headteachers over this period. It can therefore be assumed that the transition to a leadership role, not just headship, is a period where existing skillsets are challenged and new professional identities emerge.

The development of depute headteachers has been studied by some (Draper and McMichael 2000) but there is a limited body of work on peer mentoring for middle leaders. This is an interesting and potentially valuable avenue for future work as some of the nuances of mentoring between headteachers and depute headteachers may have been missed due to the design and frame for analysis used in his study. Adding weight to this argument was the view from many respondents that principal teachers should also be offered mentoring- in the CSLA all principal teachers in secondary schools operate within faculty structures and lead teams outwith areas of curriculum speciality. The transition from classroom leader and curriculum specialist to team leader and head of faculty will require shifts of professional identity which may, it is proposed, bring similar challenges to those currently identified in transition to more senior roles.

Findings on the psychosocial functions of mentoring mirrored themes in the literature. That mentoring acted as a dry-run or a test bed also emerged from analysis, leading to the suggestion that one purpose of mentoring not explicitly explored in other studies was the concept of rehearsal.

#### 6.4.1.1. *Mentoring as rehearsal*

The role of mentoring as a form of rehearsal in preparation for new experiences emerged strongly from the findings of this research. Mentees were mostly not seeking answers or solutions or judgement on their routes of action, but they were seeking a safe space to think through and test out plans with someone who had more honed

organisational radar and, through experience, greater ability to foretell consequences and sense brewing trouble. As this thesis has previously proposed, the school year is cyclical and many experiences or expectations for new school leaders can be predicted; as each experience is met and successfully overcome the 'year of the firsts' can be navigated without a potentially damaging professional faux-pas.

Earlier in this chapter the speed of allocation of mentors was raised in order to 'smooth the bumpy ride through the year of the firsts' (6.1.2.1), learning the ropes quickly in order to be prepared for critical incidents. Scandura *et al.* (1996) highlights that being told of organisational and professional 'do's and don'ts' limits the trial and error approach (p.52). Hopkins-Thompson (2000) highlights that mentoring accelerates learning - implying that shortcuts can be made in some contexts perhaps through minimising the options and opportunity for error. It is argued that a novice school leader seeks to establish credibility in their new role quickly, that 'trial and error' may be too great a risk in the early stages of headship and that rehearsal through mentoring is useful to test out the organisational and professional do's and don'ts.

Daresh (2004) suggests that some principals believe that the 'school of hard knocks' is inevitable and somewhat necessary (p.511) and perhaps it is likely that the shock of transition to headship cannot be totally dampened. As such it could be argued that every novice headteacher took the personal decision to apply for the job and, with appointment, has their own professional journey to take and responsibility for their own professional development. That being said, it does not benefit the employing authority to stand back and watch the novice use a 'suck it and see' approach to leadership in one of its schools as the stakes for children, families and relationships are high. The employer also has a duty of care for all staff and, it could be argued, the psychosocial functions of mentoring allow a mechanism to support staff during a period where stress and anxiety levels are heightened. If some of the survivalist task related functions are more effectively addressed through induction processes, the function for mentoring may shift to focus on wellbeing. Given that the recruitment and retention of headteacher is problematic (MacBeath *et al.* 2009) this may be a useful area of focus for future work.

#### 6.4.1.2. *Long term effects*

The findings of this study also indicated that increased confidence and self-belief would outlast the period of mentoring. This is a very positive finding given the current concerns over the sustainability of headship as it is currently constructed. The themes which emerged related to the longevity of mentoring effects were that it reduced the

potential for isolation through increasing the professional network available for support in the future, offering new realistic perspectives and recognising the need to manage the demands of headship over the length of a career. Other authors have presented similar findings with benefits reported such as; reduced isolation (Grover 1994, Bolam *et al.* 1995, Bush and Coleman 1995, Draper and McMichael, 2000), opportunities to let off steam (Bush and Coleman 1995), reduced stress and frustration (Grover 1994).

Daresh (1995) reported that headteachers who were mentors were more likely to have been mentored themselves. This is a trend which is recognised in the CSLA programme. Mentoring supports the creation of professional network ties within the new professional identity, and once a (then) novice becomes established in this role, welcomes the new novice to the group which affirms their place in the professional and organisational hierarchy.

While the literature agrees that being a headteacher in any setting is challenging, the context of the small rural school can intensify these issues (Duncan and Stock 2010). As described in the introduction to this work the small rural school in the CSLA is often the first rung of the leadership ladder for novice headteacher or deputy headteachers in partnership schools. In a small community the leader of the school is a visible and accessible public servant; the role both isolating yet crammed with stakeholders. Although it was not the focus of the study it is recognised that the teaching headteacher wears many hats - juggling roles of classroom teacher, instructional leader, strategic corporate partner and community champion. It could be argued that a conceptualisation of mentoring as context specific training is difficult with such a varied role. Adding the predominately female demographic to this picture of rurality it is perhaps not surprising that the psychosocial elements of mentoring appear to have greater emphasis for primary school leaders.

In summary, the conceptual framework for mentoring based on socialisation and development (Daresh 2004) was used for this study. Findings of this study suggest that mentoring was viewed through a socialisation frame and the psychosocial functions of: acceptance-confirmation; counselling; role modelling and friendship are dominant in understanding mentoring for many, predominantly primary, headteachers in this study.

#### 6.4.2. Independence and professional action

The findings of this study support the claim that mentoring in the CSLA has a career enhancing function, building independence and supporting effectiveness of novice

headteachers and depute headteachers. This study used the Standard for Headship in Scotland as the basis for describing the professional actions of headteachers. Analysis indicated that the main effect of mentoring in the CSLA was in leading and developing people and leading change and improvement. There is no direct comparison to other studies which have considered forms of employer-led mentoring against specific elements of the Standard for Headship in Scotland. Findings can, however, be compared to a study undertaken by Luck (2004) on mentoring of new headteachers in England which used the National Standards for Headteachers as a framework to evaluate the outcome of the process. The findings from this thesis are similar to that reported by Luck (2004) who describes the main benefits of mentoring in being in 'Leadership skills - the ability to lead and manage people to work to common goals' (p 13).

In this study, mentoring did not focus upon leading learning and teaching - a finding which differed from Ehrich *et al.* (2004). In their review of formal mentoring programmes in education, assistance with classroom teaching was the second most cited positive outcome with 35% of studies reporting this as a benefit (p.523). However this review did not differentiate between mentoring for pre-registration, post registration or school leadership roles; the high emphasis on learning and teaching is likely to be attributed to mentoring for novice classroom practitioners. For those assigned to a leadership role, having authority over learning and teaching beyond their own classroom, the new challenge is to improve learning and teaching indirectly - by power or influence.

This thesis has already considered that leadership is a process of influence and offered a working definition in Section 1.1. Many models of leadership have been described, theorised and critiqued in the literature and this study did not set out to examine these but did establish (Section 2.3) that the conceptualisation of being a headteacher in Scotland has changed - with virtues of leadership in Scottish Education being heralded over the possibly less lofty merits of management. Notions of management, authority and legitimate power do not appear to be welcomed in the post-McCrone era where the expectations of 're-professionalised' teachers are recognised. If what is sought is system-wide change to tackle the global challenge for education, it is perhaps unsurprising that thinking about transformational leadership predominates. Concepts of transformational leadership appear to fit with received wisdom about school leadership - writers highlighting the need for shared vision, common goals, professional confidence, supportive cultures, capacity building, participation and facilitation, emotional intelligence and resilience in order to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty (e.g. MacBeath 1998, Tomlinson 2004, Bush 2008). Rather than assuming a

technical approach to change with metaphors of factory processes, this more human form of leadership is attractive to thinkers grappling with current educational challenges in the people industry but is by no means a new concept<sup>17</sup>. The role of the follower in leadership development and examination of the interaction between the leader and the social environment has formed the basis of much of the more recent discourse around 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership. Cavanagh (2010) offers an insightful and progressive analysis of collegiality and school leadership in Scottish Schools which informs debate on the leader-follower milieu.

Transformational leadership appears to have become the normative model of leadership in schools today with empowered teachers, inspired and motivated by those in assigned roles but also moral authority, to not only meet their professional responsibility but to go beyond, to meet higher standards and take on broader roles in the leadership of learning. It is argued that some of the current thinking around authentic leadership and spiritual leadership can also be traced to a basis in transformation leadership. The central theme of this new leadership paradigm is influence, not authority.

It is proposed that influencing the ‘big people’ in schools requires technical, conceptual and human skill. Credibility to be the head *teacher* encapsulates skill and competence in teaching and being the lead learner but this is not enough. As the findings from this study indicate, leading teachers through a change process is the challenge for novice school leaders, moving beyond the management transactions in order to build positive relationships which affect the actions, behaviour, attitudes and feelings of others. Prescribed forms of leader development can help headteachers with ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’ but more emergent forms of development can support the higher order capacities which are required to change behaviours or work on attitudes or feelings (Lewis and Murphy 2008). This study found that mentoring is a form of leadership development which can build independence and professional action in the technical skills of headship but it is proposed that mentoring also supports the development of people skills - the higher order relational capacities needed to influence and motivate others.

This section began by reiterating the original question - if mentoring ‘worked’ for new school leaders. Summing up, findings from this study uphold the claims that mentoring

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<sup>17</sup> Transformational leadership was originally differentiated from transactional leadership by sociologist James McGregor Burns in 1978, where he considered the importance of the needs and motives of followers.

builds independence and supports the development of effective professional action, confidence and self-belief in newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. Results fit the conceptual frame (Daresh 2004) and definition of mentoring (Kram 1985) used in this study which anticipated both socialisation and developmental perspectives, with psychosocial as well as career enhancing, task related functions.

However, findings indicate the emphasis between the 'doing' and 'being' aspects of mentoring differs between and within relationships with the consequence that conflicting understandings about the psychosocial or task related constructs influences the process and outcome of mentoring in the CSLA. Mentoring appears to be understood through a socialisation and developmental frame but the perspective is not balanced - the lenses can have a greater focus on either socialisation or development depending upon a range of factors at different points in time.

Findings also indicated that the quality of mentoring relationships was inconsistent, with some better i.e. encapsulating more functions (Kram 1985) than others. Although most mentoring was considered positively, and only rarely cases of distress reported, some relationships did not meet the expectations of both parties and became spoiled. As this is not expected to be the initial intent of any party involved in mentoring in the CSLA, it is important to explore how relationships evolve in relation to the learning that takes place.

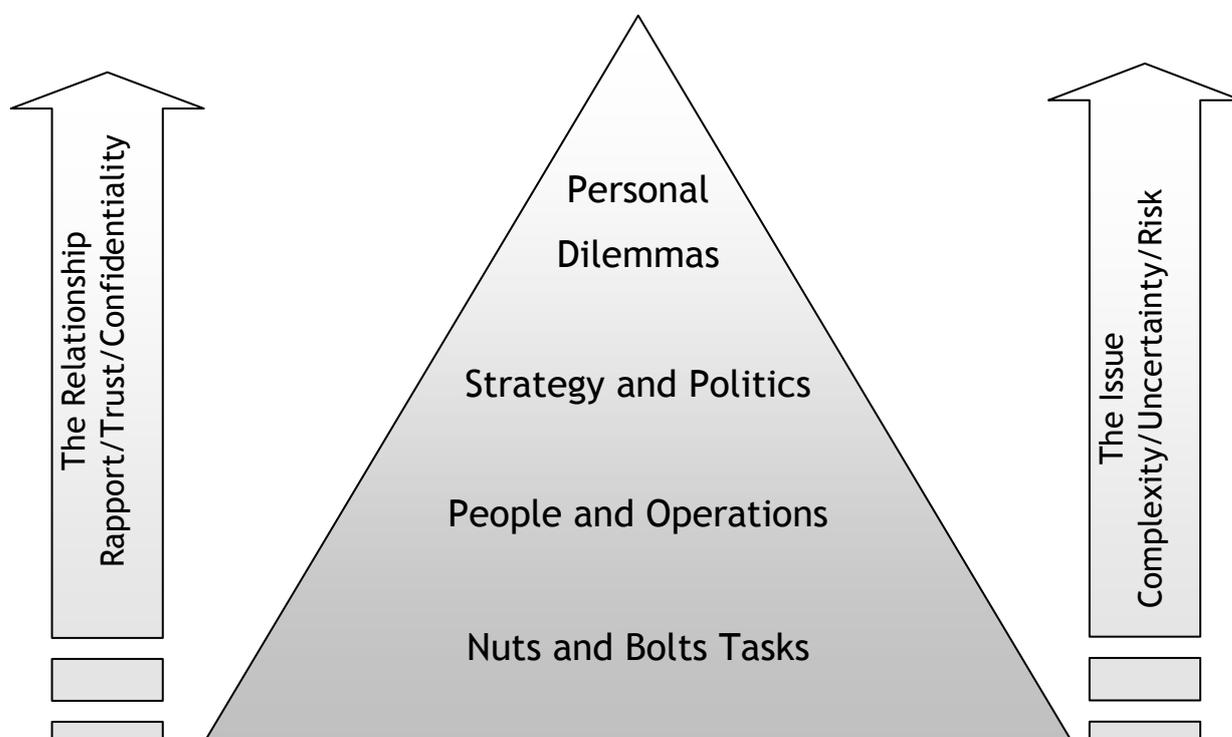
## **6.5. The Mentoring Mountain**

This thesis has already highlighted that successful mentoring relationships evolve if the expectations of both mentor and mentee are aligned and met in the early stages. Findings from this study indicated that conversations in the early phase of mentoring tended to focus upon the nuts and bolts of headship but, as the relationship between mentor and mentee grew, the immediate task focus was overtaken by more complex people management issues. Having built a foundation of trust in dealing with the internal challenges of processes and then people in school, the mentoring relationship may begin to focus on more externally focussed issues - political insight and strategic planning.

Mentoring is more successful if both career enhancing and psychosocial functions can be encapsulated; wise mentors employ techniques to put mentees at ease in the early stages of the relationship to develop rapport which allows the 'thornier' issues to be

discussed. This thesis proposes a model which offers a synopsis of the evolution of the personal relationship in relation to the learning that takes place.

Figure 1 depicts the Mentoring Mountain - a model to describe how a mentoring relationship may evolve over time. Whether and when this mountain can be climbed by the mentoring dyad is determined by a complex interplay of factors arising from relationship between mentor and mentee, the level of complexity of the issue required to be addressed and the preparedness of the dyad to shoulder the risk involved. It is proposed that as the needs of the mentee move from an operational to strategic focus, the issues become increasingly complex. With this shift there is also more inherent risk - risk of exposure or risk of consequence - and without a solid foundation of personal trust and mutual respect, the mentoring relationship may not progress as the benefits may not outweigh the risks perceived.



**Figure 1 The Mentoring Mountain**

As the mentoring mountain is climbed, it is proposed that the purpose of the conversation shifts from 'doing' to 'being'. Learning about doing is conceptualised as gaining knowledge about certain things - the knowing how and knowing what of headship (Burgoyne and Williams 2007) with notions of certainty and precision - what this thesis has considered the 'nuts and bolts', survival skills of early headship, transactional leadership or, more simply, management.

More sophisticated mentoring conversations are required at the higher slopes of the mountain and have a greater focus on being - on the tacit, personal knowledge, self awareness, empathy and self-regulation needed to make wise judgements in complex situations where values are contested and the leader has to find a pathway through paradox (Handy 1994 p.3). It is at this higher altitude where personal and social competences can be developed; traits required in the predominant paradigm of transformational leadership in schools. Mentoring at the mountain summit is reserved for issues where there is greatest ambiguity and risk - a space where the novice leader can safely explore ethical tensions, moral dilemmas, doubts, uncertainties and crises of identity.

#### 6.5.1. Mentoring at the margins of the mountain

This thesis has established the need for shared expectation and positive feelings about mentoring to allow the mentoring relationship to develop; relationships can be spoiled where expectations change and the relationship is no longer mutually enhancing. It is proposed that such effects can be included within the model in Figure 1. If the positive feeling, expectation, need or the learning goal orientation (Kim 2007) differs between mentor and mentee, the relationship could stall at the base of the mentoring mountain, resulting in a focus on lower level task focussed issues, symptomatic of 'marginal' mentoring with limited effectiveness (Ragins *et al.* 2000, Simon and Eby 2003).

Marginal mentoring reflects a theme within this study where there was the recognition that mentoring was perceived to be extremely useful but acknowledgment that there were many factors that had to be right in order for the relationship to fulfil expectations. If mentoring did not progress to a place where more challenging developmental conversations took place, or personally fulfilling relationships resulted, there was a sense of disappointment expressed. In these cases, blame was rarely targeted at the individual mentors and mentees but on external factors - the matching process, clarity of expectation, practical arrangements and the training and support provided by the CSLA. It is proposed that the basis for the use of mentoring as a strategy is flawed if it is expected to fulfil the functions of classic mentoring. It is not surprising that there are inconsistencies in what is expected in terms of both outcome and process of mentoring in the CSLA if it is not a dyad but triad - with the responsibility for the relationship perceived to be the CSLA. It could be argued that the responsibility for the success of the relationship ultimately does fall on the employer if mentoring occurs in contracted time as the time spent on mentoring is publicly funded. As such, secondary school mentoring is an employer-led support strategy and can be

examined in terms of outcomes to the organisation. The model enacted by most primary school mentoring dyads is more challenging to characterise in terms of ownership, as it tended to be outwith the pupil day but within contracted hours.

## **6.6. What does mentoring do that other forms of leadership and management support don't?**

The findings of this thesis support a considerable body of evidence, summarised in Section 2.4.6, which report the positive benefits of mentoring for school leaders. In addition this research suggests that mentoring in the CSLA fulfilled a role that other leadership and management support did not although there was recognition that it was just one element in a range of support mechanisms available. Mentoring differed from other pieces of the 'jigsaw of support' as it was a confidential, one-to one, person centred process which provided opportunities for deep learning relevant to the specific circumstances and needs of the mentee. Mentoring was felt to have particular potential to raise self-awareness in the novice leader helping them manage interpersonal issues; it introduced the new appointee to the professional community of headteachers, allowed them to develop confidence in their new role and grow into their new professional identity. This combination of factors was unique to other forms of leadership support available in the CSLA.

These findings support the view of Lester (1981) and Daresh (1994) that mentoring is an important part of adult learning because of it is a holistic and individualised approach to learning which is experiential<sup>18</sup>. Leadership support offered through the quality improvement functions of the CSLA, SQH, FRH or through collaborative working is also experiential but findings from this work suggest that mentoring offered 'something extra'. In addition to the benefits which fit within the task functions, results indicated that it was the psychosocial functions of mentoring - the personal and social competence, emotional support and role socialisation - which was that unique piece of the jigsaw. Other models of learning help prepare aspirant leaders for the 'knowing what' and the 'knowing how' of school leadership (Burgoyne and Williams 2007) but may not be well placed to support the shift in professional identity to be a headteacher.

The review for this study concluded that headteacher preparation is necessary and formal preparation programmes have their place in the leadership landscape. Support for SQH and FRH in the CSLA has not diminished over the course of this research

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<sup>18</sup> Experiential learning is defined by Bova and Phillips (1984) as 'learning resulting from or associated with experience' (p.196)

however these programmes by their nature and, more importantly, their timing do not and arguably should not act as induction to the doing, and socialisation to the being, of headship. Daresh (1994) reported that mentoring is a form of leadership development which builds on university based programmes by helping novice leaders put educational theory into daily practice, a complementarity which is supported by the findings of this research.

The purpose of this study at the outset was to improve the support that the employer offered to novice headteachers and depute headteachers. It is a key finding of this work that the induction processes after appointment to a titular school leadership position in the CSLA are insufficient. Mentoring in the early days after appointment was a survival strategy to cope with operational issues and compensated for weakness in other support arrangements. If mentoring was not offered immediately the new appointee was left to learn on their feet through the transition, using existing networks and informal support from colleagues. Therefore, it is recommended that a formal induction process be designed (in conjunction with recent appointees and SQH/FRH graduates) to ensure that the employer offers basic information and induction on appointment - including who to phone about a wasps nest!

A key finding from this study was that mentoring helped the novice headteacher in leading people through a process of change, an idea which adds weight to the argument raised in the introduction to this thesis (1.2) that good leadership is characterised by the ability to influence others through building positive relationships but that this is a greater challenge for a novice leader than technical or operational hurdles.

This discussion has already considered the value of mentoring in developing the personal and social competence of novices, improving their relational capacities in order to influence and motivate others to accomplish the changes they, as the leading learner, want to accomplish for the school. But unlike input driven, content-led leader development, the development of 'softer' people skills in novice leaders is an amorphous area and more about capability than competence. As mentoring is predicated upon a person centred helping conversation aligned with aspects of counselling, role modelling and tutoring, it may not be surprising that this form of learning is best placed to develop learning about the self: self-awareness; self-regulation; self-worth; self-confidence and self-efficacy. This thesis argues that if it is transformational leadership that is sought, the first transformation has to be in terms of self-concept and that this in turn allows the development of interpersonal skills and relational capability to influence and motivate others.

### 6.6.1. Mentoring to the core of leadership

Findings from this study point to mentoring offering depth of learning compared to other forms of support. This thesis proposes that a successful mentoring relationship is so personal that it can reach parts that other forms of leadership development may not. It is put forward that the unique form of support offered by mentoring was in helping novice leaders know themselves better and develop their sense of self as a leader. This in turn allowed them to better understand the needs and motivations of others which increased their ability to influence the 'big people' in schools.

Findings indicated that mentoring developed the novice's identity as a leader by providing role modelling, a thinking space for reflection and a sounding board for rehearsal. This conscious and unconscious process of professional and personal growth helped the novice clarify their relationship with themselves and their new work world. Mentoring, if it is successful, can offer the novice school leader acceptance - confirmation from a credible and respected colleague who sets a desirable example. The novice may admire and hope to emulate the mentors values, principles and behaviour and create a picture of an idealised self - the kind of headteacher they want to become. Kram's mentoring functions of acceptance and confirmation, it is argued, play an important role in legitimising the novices growing self, giving the novice that 'confirmatory nudge' (Bolam *et al.* 1995 p.37) or 'the courage of their convictions' that was described in the findings of this study.

As described in the previous section, psychosocial mentoring functions succeed because of the emotional attachment and psychological nurturance which exists between mentor and mentee, where the relationship has climbed to the top of the mountain and personal dilemmas can be explored within a safe space. It is now proposed that development within this safe space is deep learning about what is meaningful - both personally as a human and professionally as a school leader. Figure 2 presents a complementary model of mentoring to that offered in Figure 1, where knowing and doing the business of headship are on the slopes of the mountain, but the space where the deepest learning takes place is at the core.

Mentoring at this level allows the novice to clarify their values, what they believe about education and their hopes for children, families and communities, but also offers opportunity to have the moral and ethical soundness of their vision legitimised by a respected colleague. Through this process it is proposed that the novice finds their voice to express the change they want to see and the confidence and self belief to model the behaviour needed to realise this change. If their aim for the school

community stems from deeply held values, beliefs and principles, the honesty offers an authenticity to their leadership. When there is congruence in doing and being, the integrity demonstrated appeals to the better professional instincts of others in school, affecting trust in the person and subsequently the willingness to adopt change. The narrower the radius between the rings in Figure 2, the less emotional labour is required; the greater the radius, a larger dissonance is suggested between what is enacted and what is believed, the greater emotional labour and stress is likely to result or, potentially, criticism of rhetoric, superficiality and careerism.

This study found that mentoring had effects which were believed to outlast the formal period; it is suggested that one of the reasons for this is the recognition that optimism and realism balanced with authenticity and integrity are important in order to manage the demands of headship over the length of a career.

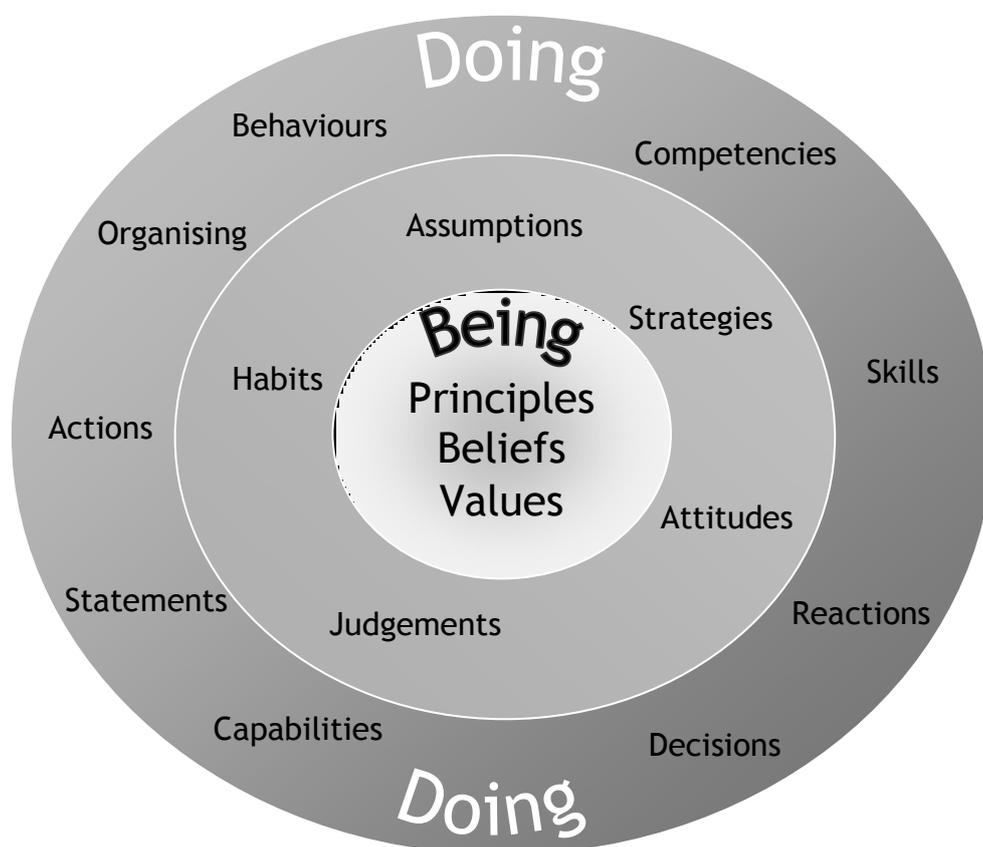


Figure 2 Mentoring to the core of leadership

This model can also be considered in terms of dysfunctional mentoring where mentors expect conformity in their mentees. As with any deep personal relationship there can be a darker side; if the psychological nurturance that comes with mentoring encapsulates almost parental levels of protection and emulation, this can be a threat to

the identity, let alone development, of the novice. As this study has shown, psychological elements of mentoring are highly valued by the novice, but can be damaging if that nurturing rewards only certain behaviours. This thesis has proposed that negative mentoring is worse than no mentoring at all; this model offers a rationale for this view. Just as good mentoring can support and legitimise a person's sense of self and self worth, poor mentoring can affect a person deeply - at the core of what they believe about themselves.

Humility, integrity and being non-judgemental were reported as characteristics needed in mentors, traits which could offer the novice the acceptance or confirmation they need to legitimise their place in their new community even if they saw the world differently from their mentor. Lack of trust and fear of judgement were the most reported negative traits - if the novice does not receive acceptance - confirmation, they may labour hard to act and behave in a way to meet the expectations of the mentor, such conformity is potentially damaging to the mentee both in terms of their personal identity and also how they conceptualise headship for the future.

In summary, this chapter has discussed the key findings of the workbased research in relation to professional knowledge about mentoring for new school leaders. A central tension has been identified as the lack of shared understanding over the purpose of mentoring and the complexities of the role of the employer in managing a formal strategy which is predicated on a personal relationship. This discussion considered what occurred in the process of mentoring and the outcomes in terms of the career enhancing and psychosocial functions of mentoring, explored the motivations for mentoring, the perceptions of a good match and the place of mentoring compared to other forms of leadership preparation and support. Arguments were developed over the course of the discussion which led to the development of two models offered in an attempt to make meaning from mentoring and synthesise the findings of this research in a practical manner in order to help explain mentoring in the CSLA for those who will participate in the future.

This thesis has made proposals and recommendations throughout Chapter 6 with the aim to improve the support offered to newly appointed headteachers and depute headteachers in the CSLA. Concluding commentary on the implications for practice, including a summary of recommendations arising from this study and a reflective review of the research process are now offered.

## Chapter 7. Reflective Review

This chapter offers a reflective review of the research process with a reiteration of the themes which emerged in the research and remarks on the relevance of the work for professional practice. As can perhaps be expected in work of this nature this thesis does not offer any simple answers - although I hoped at inception it would - but it does pose questions and some notions to take further; firstly for policy development with a summary of the recommendations for practice deriving from this research and secondly, by suggesting avenues for further research. As this thesis began with a personal commentary on the purpose of the research, it ends with a commentary on the limitations of this work and reflections on my professional learning which has been shaped by this period of study.

This thesis started by considering two conflicting realities for schools in Scotland - that school leadership makes a difference to children but that the role of headteacher is not an attractive career option for many teachers, with particular challenges in rural schools as characterises the CSLA. The research set out to improve the support that could be offered by the employer to newly appointed school leaders but, through growing experience and study, other tensions, ambiguities and apparent contradictions which epitomise the reality of the complex relationship between teachers, schools, local authority and Government have emerged. Over the course of this EdD the local authority role in school governance has become unsteady and the relationship between local and national government is troubled as welfare challenges for the public services in Scotland increase. Leadership is put forward by those in power as the panacea for the nation's ills and popular understanding is that the lack of it is the root of the problem. But there is much about leadership and leadership development which is fad and fancy, snake oil and superficiality, so it is with that in mind that a pragmatic approach to improve existing provision was the focus for this research.

### 7.1. Contribution to professional knowledge

This research found that experiences of formal employer-led mentoring, as operating in the CSLA, were mainly positive and valued by both mentors and mentees. Findings indicated that mentoring supported self-confidence, wellbeing, independence and effectiveness in the novice school leader, particularly in relation to managing people. However this research established that there was a lack of shared understanding over the purpose of mentoring with differing views on the importance of psychosocial or

career related functions. There were differences noted in how primary and secondary school dyads enacted mentoring. These differences may be reactions to practical issues or related to women making use of mentoring as a form of psychosocial support more than men. There was tension noted in the dichotomy of the employer managing a formal strategy which is predicated on a confidential personal relationship. The policy assumptions that experienced headteachers would agree to mentor others and that mentoring offered something extra to other forms of leadership and management support were supported by the findings of this study.

It is proposed that this work progresses knowledge about mentoring as it offers a chronological model to explain how mentoring relationships can evolve. The model depicts how mentoring can provide the novice with necessary survival skills in the early days, to, in later stages, sophisticated conversations which can develop the personal and social capability needed to make wise judgements in situations where there is ambiguity and risk. Mentoring at the high altitudes of the Mentoring Mountain, if carried out skillfully, offers a safe space where ethical tensions, moral dilemmas, doubts, uncertainties and crises of identity can be explored.

The second model this thesis proposes is that mentoring can support deep learning at the core of what is meaningful to a novice - both personally as a human and professionally as a school leader. These models also go some way to explain why mentoring can go wrong or fails to deliver on its initial promise. The models proposed are a useful outcome from this research- they not overtly scholarly or intellectual but did not set out to be. They are simple ways to describe what I think, through this research, tends to happen in mentoring relationships. Each model provide a schematic which can be challenged and adapted to help share understandings of mentoring, an umbrella term which has morphed over the centuries from Greek myth to urban mythology in the corporate human resource world.

Much of what this study found has been reported, in part, elsewhere in the mentoring literature but this research contributes to scholarly work as it offers a synthesis of mentoring theory over the last 30 years applied to a current real world problem. This study contributes to professional knowledge and practice in school leadership as it takes an employer perspective and offers a conceptualisation of post-appointment mentoring in Scotland.

### 7.1.1. Implications for professional practice

As this work developed I began to have serious doubts over the place of mentoring in the CSLA for the future. Though the research process I challenged fundamental assumptions I held about mentoring. I think now that there is disparity in what a formal, employer-led mentoring strategy can provide in terms of policy and whether the potential for mentoring can ever be accomplished within a formal arrangement. It is highly debatable if any third party can design and broker the type of mutually enhancing relationship which encapsulates career and psychosocial functions as described within classic mentoring and seen in practice - where the experienced headteacher chooses to nurture the development of a younger colleague, taking them under their wing over the long term and taking pleasure and midlife reward from their success.

It could be argued that, if there are conflated notions of headship and changing relationships between schools and the local authorities, the latter is not best placed to broker professional support. It is suggested here that support for the novice headteacher could be effectively offered by professional associations or arranged by existing headteachers as they welcome one of their own into their clan. Due to this alternative viewpoint, basic operating options for the future of the mentoring programme in the CSLA had to be addressed before recommendations for practice could be considered. The options derive from these three scenarios, in whole, in part or in combination:-

#### Scenario 1

- Formal mentoring retained in conjunction with structured induction support but adapted to focus on coaching over difficult transitions

#### Scenario 2

- Formal mentoring as a strategy be stopped, replaced by structured induction support and the novice headteacher supported by the professional organisations and colleagues

#### Scenario 3

- Psychosocial support be made available through self-referral to counselling, personal coaching and facilitation

What is significant from these scenarios is that blends of each are already in place amongst other forms of leadership support; the place of employer-led mentoring is less than clear within this landscape. However what emerged from this research was that mentoring was valued, for different reasons and to a different extent by those involved but it did fulfil a role and was experienced positively.

It is my view that a headteacher has a personal and professional responsibility to be prepared for the role and seek support and development from the professional community and external sources in order to meet the functions they are contracted to undertake. But we, as the employer, have a duty of care for the wellbeing of staff as well as a statutory duty to ensure their effectiveness. This study concluded that mentoring did support the self-confidence, wellbeing, independence and effectiveness of the novice headteacher and depute headteacher and as such it is the recommendation of this thesis that a formal programme of mentoring be retained in the CLSA but improved in line with some practical recommendations from this study.

#### 7.1.2. Summary of recommendations for practice

As I hope is evident from the reflection included in the narrative elements of this thesis, undertaking this study has significantly impacted on my thinking and practice as a CSLA Officer. This has influenced my practice when working with school leaders and managers and hence the approach adopted in certain policy matters within the CSLA. Some of this influence to my thinking has no immediate overt outcome as the consequence of embarking and progressing through this intellectual journey has led to subtle shifts in understanding over issues across a broad landscape. These shifts are no less significant but more challenging to demonstrate than the direct consequences of the results of this study. As a result of this research, recommendations arose and have now been enacted as series of changes to the policy.

Specific recommendations for practice deriving from this work are as follows;

- 1) The formal mentoring programme in the CSLA be continued but arrangements and documentation reviewed, using case studies as examples of how the roles can evolve differently. The role of the CSLA in this matter is to encourage a professional network - not to control the relationship.
- 2) The CSLA should ensure structured support for very early headship where direct advice is required on practical issues. This may be in the form of

induction and designed in conjunction with colleagues and SQH / FRH graduates to enhance the complementarity between formal learning and employer -led mentoring.

- 3) Formal mentoring should be an expectation for all those in first time headships but also available for more experienced headteachers moving to a new context.
- 4) An initial invitation with clearer guidelines should be offered for mentees so that there is a shared expectation of the practice and purpose of mentoring.
- 5) Should they opt in to the programme, mentees should be offered the choice of who they would prefer to work with in terms of either a specific individual or a person who would be able to fulfil a specific function.
- 6) A mentor should be allocated immediately upon appointment to allow the first meeting to take place before the newly appointed head or depute takes up post.
- 7) The purpose of mentoring as psychosocial support and in re-visioning the future should be supported, with less emphasis given to task-focussed, context specific training.
- 8) The selection of and training for mentors and mentees must be reviewed to ensure that it is consistent with the purposes in (6) above, considering the use of the training models to share a common understanding, in terms of purpose and behaviour about mentoring for both mentors and mentees.
- 9) To be consistent with the notion of voluntary, professional support and with the expectation that relationships are mutually enhancing, no recompense is offered in terms of payment or time.
- 10) All opportunities be taken to facilitate headteachers meeting and supporting one another in order to develop innovative and future focussed approaches to schools and school leadership.
- 11) The authority should consider cross-sectoral or interagency mentoring for headteachers and depute headteachers who are beyond the novice phase. Mentoring for established headteachers based around a short term coaching model should also be considered for headteachers with challenges to face.
- 12) The authority should keep the arrangements for any ongoing mentoring programme under review and consider future research to increase understanding of the support needed by novice school leaders.

## 7.2. Limitations of the study and areas for further work

This study set out to make meaning about mentoring in the CSLA, constructing understanding that is professionally relevant as part of the EdD programme. However the research would have benefitted from hindsight in terms of focus and scale. I set out on the EdD journey to undertake workbased research to examine a real world problem - hoping to shine some light on policy issues about developing leadership of Children's Services. But real world problems by nature are complex and the research was pulled in many directions as it considered scholarly and policy work in diverse fields. The breadth of reading undertaken was helpful in boundary spanning, giving a broad landscape from which to make links between areas of study which I feel is necessary for real world problems - but it was, at times, a tangled and tortuous process.

In brief and with hindsight, the study was too ambitious - even after it was significantly reduced in focus following exploratory work. As described in Chapter 1, Part of the complexity of undertaking the research over a longitudinal period was the shift in my thinking

### 7.2.1. Critique of the design and use of the interview schedule

As stated at the beginning of this thesis there has been a trajectory in the development of this work from evaluation to exploration. Initially, the recommendations of Audit Scotland (2005) (2.5.2) offered a framework which led to my decisions surrounding the methodology selected for this study. I felt this evaluative approach would offer validation and rigour, a view consistent with my positivist mindset at that time. The design of the interview schedule and my subsequent analysis of the data which was generated were illustrative of a struggle to fit emerging understandings into my pre-existing paradigm.

Firstly at a pragmatic level, the divergence between evaluation and exploration brought with it logistical challenges. The sampling frame was determined for reasons of validity and generalisability, consistent with my positivist intent, but this decision, taken alongside the breadth of the interview schedule designed for the study generated a great deal of data when the full transcriptions were subsequently analysed through an interpretative approach. Although there were benefits to having this scope of empirical information on which to draw, different forms of questioning would have allowed more depth within fewer key areas of exploration. Quite simply, the interview schedule, although carefully constructed and piloted with evaluative intent, may not have provided the depth of focus when the motivation and expectation for the research

shifted as my thinking matured. Although logistically challenging, having a broad framework for the conversation did provide rich narrative which offered opportunity to re-engineer the focus of the research through an iterative process as I worked with the data. As my previous postgraduate experiences were predominately numerical in nature, I had considerable ground to make up in order to be able to construct a written argument sufficient for doctoral level. The writing process has been a challenge throughout but I understand now and concur with the concept of 'writing as research'<sup>19</sup>.

Secondly, and more fundamentally, the interview schedule was designed in a semi-structured format with elements of scaling; a rationale for this is offered in Chapter 4.3.2. The use of response scales was consistent with my evaluative approach as it did allow the answers to be categorised, collated and used to give a general picture of how mentoring was enacted by the dyads. This approach was helpful at a superficial level in describing aspects of mentoring - where, when and how - and able to determine differences between primary and secondary school mentoring and how the 'time and place' variables evolved over the term of the relationship.

However at a deeper level the attempt to use uni-dimensional forced choice response scales to categorise professional actions was, on reflection, a naïve concept which I now consider as a methodological flaw in my work. A rationale for my initial decision is offered in 4.3.2; principally that survey methodologies assume a common discourse of shared meaning amongst people and the SfH offered these familiar statements. Also significant to my choice of design was that earlier work on mentoring in England and Wales had been undertaken using a similar approach, mapping responses to the skillsets in the NPQH which would allow my findings to be compared to those elsewhere in the UK. I now recognise what I was attempting to do but view this as a weakness in my research. The scaling aspects of the methodology using the SfH skillsets as anchors was significantly limited conceptually as it attempted to force respondents to categorise their responses when reflecting upon complex behaviours and actions.

It was while undertaking the interviews that I recognised the limitations of an evaluative approach if the categorisation of skillsets was to be used as the central tenet of the analysis. Fortunately, using interview over questionnaire methodology offered the opportunity to focus upon the open ended response items, allowing further opportunity to explore issues of increased complexity and interpret the experiences

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<sup>19</sup> Dr N Hedge offered this concept as part of the dissertation support. The synthesis of message and formation of ideas have been significantly influenced by the writing process for this thesis.

offered in the conversation. Due to my decision within the design phase to interview face to face and with a semi-structured format, each interview had been enacted as a conversation; this meant the transcription could subsequently be analysed through an explorative perspective. I recognise the weakness and incongruity in this trajectory though remain confident that what emerged from the research was professionally useful.

Over the EdD process I have come to believe that some shortcomings in terms of the approach I took to this research was because much of the learning was in scholarly fields of which I had no prior experience. I was new to the field of 3-18 education - embarking on the EdD six months after leaving the health service and Higher Education. Much of the contextual work around schools and schooling in general, and Scottish Education in particular, was bread and butter for teachers, and many on the EdD, but it was novel and necessary for me. Policy analysis and most of the qualitative traditions were a revelation; my previous research was in mechanics and this was the first time I had tackled qualitative work as a researcher. Over the data collection phase, I experienced real professional doubt as I tried to build knowledge while on shifting (or at time sinking) sand. I began to recognise that the knowledge which could be generated from the stories told about mentoring were more influential than those I could create if I constrained my analysis to frequency tables. This recognition led to the change in my ontological stance; but subsequently meant that if was to engage in this form of research I had to learn to work with words as well as crunch numbers. This has been a revealing and rewarding process.

#### *7.2.1.1. Working with words*

The quantitative and qualitative analysis undertaken in this study was detailed in Chapter 4.7 but, given that this consisted of an iterative process of reviewing and developing themes, it is worthy of further comment as it was demonstrative of the shift from the initial intent, motivation and expectation of this study.

The data surrounding the first dimension of mentoring - the process - was more directly transferable to topic coding than those of the second dimension - the outcome. Although the closed response interview questions generated direct responses as was expected, the open ended elements generated a free flowing, open commentary about what mentoring meant to those involved despite, perhaps, rather than due to the interview schedule. Recognising the richness of these stories - so much more than the frequency tables derived from the response sets alone would have provided - the data

from any follow-on or open ended responses to questions 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 (Page 101) were taken from transcripts, encapsulated into broad themes and then further grouped into what I considered units of meaning. Most significantly, while I worked with the data my depth of understanding of mentoring as a human relationship increased and I was able to make a more informed analysis and critique of the CSLA mentoring policy.

The design of the response scale questions was intended to elicit the effect of the intervention upon the SfH skillsets. On reflection this was, however, limited in meaning and validity. My maturing understanding allowed me to see our local policy through new eyes; this alternative perspective offered other possibilities in what was really important about mentoring. This meant I could create an alternative scaffold to make sense and meaning - a scaffold which subsequently formed the thematic frame for analysis. This was by no means a linear or straightforward process and the abstraction, grouping and shaping process was as, highlighted in Chapter 4.7.2, an iterative process.

Although not by deliberate design but through the scale of the research undertaken and the rich narrative the conversations provided, the stories began to follow patterns and I was able to achieve saturation through the analytic coding process within emerging themes. An example of this was the amount of narrative about the matching process which emerged from the transcriptions. Although responses were not specifically sought on this subject, the degree and depth of data which emerged on this theme had to form an important part of the story about mentoring or would have been lost. Much of what my research could contribute to professional practice involves or has consequences for the matching of mentor to mentee; allowing the research to be re-engineered to respond to what the data indicated meant that my learning, and thus contribution to professional knowledge, was increased. I recognise now, with hindsight and growing experience, that I may have made more from the data if the initial conception had been clearer but I do consider myself fortunate that I have been able to make use of the stories I was offered in order to make meaning about mentoring, to shape practice and broaden my understanding about the nature of knowledge.

In summing up my reflections upon the limitations of this work, I hope I have adequately shared my view that although the empirical element of the EdD was flawed in parts and, I would argue, fell short of its full potential, it has allowed me to develop a deeper awareness of my new work context while recognising and valuing my previous experience. I believe that listening to the stories of colleagues resulted in shifts in my understanding about the nature of knowledge which resulted in professional growth. This is significant I believe because, in the future, those who lead services for children

need to be able to span professional boundaries, understand the worldviews of those with different professional traditions and apply intellectual rigour to analysis of practice in whatever paradigm is offered. I feel now, a few years on, that this thesis can make a contribution to professional knowledge about school leadership. In addition, this research identified avenues for future work which it was envisaged would improve the theoretical base for mentoring and school leadership. Some initial thoughts on a closer focus for a future study are now offered.

#### 7.2.1.2. *Thoughts for further work*

The obvious next step within this area would be to implement the recommendations detailed in this study and then use subsequent research to reaffirm findings, providing a basis for sequential triangulation. This research was undertaken retrospectively, asking those who had participated to reflect upon their experiences. Had the research been undertaken longitudinally, where mentors and mentees were asked before, during and after the experience, a different picture may have emerged. From this point, future research could include follow-up of those interviewed here, to explore their view on the effects of mentoring to their professional lives in the medium and longer term or undertake a more focussed study for those embarking on mentoring going forward. Some additional areas for focus are put forward below:-

1. Variations in how mentoring was enacted between primary and secondary school dyads were noted and it was proposed that gender differences may have played a part. Data was recorded on the gender of the dyads but the complete data set was not analysed by this variable. Gender, sector and learning goal orientation for new headteachers is one of the avenues of future study proposed by this research. There is a body of research on personality and leadership, which may offer insight into gendered leadership and indicate opportunity for further work.
2. If some aspects of support for very early headship are more effectively addressed through induction processes, the function for mentoring may shift to focus on wellbeing. Given that the recruitment and retention of headteacher is problematic (MacBeath *et al.* 2009) this may be a useful area of focus, particularly in conjunction with (1) above.
3. This research included depute headteachers, but the complete data set was not analysed by this variable. This is an interesting and potentially valuable avenue for future work as some of the nuances of mentoring between headteachers and

depute headteachers may have been missed due to the design and frame for analysis used in this study.

4. With the political move towards integrated services for children and families, further research could explore if mentoring can be used across traditional professional boundaries to support role extension and partnership working. The perceived need to shift towards a culture of adhocracy offers additional context on public service leadership which would be useful direction for future research in the CSLA.
5. An opportunity for future work is offered by the nomenclature matrices of D'Abate (2003) to help make sense of the conceptual confusion around mentoring which would assist practitioners and policymakers.

### **7.3. Pragmatic visioning**

All those with an interest in education - pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, local authority and national policy makers amongst others - want excellent school leaders, who come into the job for the right reasons, and do the right things in the right way - although what is 'right' is a contested notion. The continuing policy and scholarly focus on preparation for headship, the career motivations for seeking headship, the expectations of and for headteachers and what headteachers need to sustain them to be effective in their roles can only add to what is understood about the complexity of being a school leader today.

My belief in the importance of school leadership in creating the conditions for learning has not diminished over the course of this research, concurring with the general gist of the school effectiveness literature and policy discourse. But although schools are reported as complex organisations - paradoxically bureaucratic and organic - it is people that lead schools and they do this through their ability to influence others through building relationships. The central argument this thesis offers is that people skills for school leaders are crucial and, for new school leaders, create more challenge than technical or cognitive skills in leading learning and teaching. Understanding ourselves and others, moderating our responses and being able to build relationships of trust, respect and productive interactions are, I propose, more challenging for novice school leaders who may have little prior experience of having to influence adult action and behaviour. Leadership development programmes fail to give these qualities due emphasis at their peril.

The scale of the task to make public services in Scotland fit-for-purpose and fit-for-purpose is considerable; the consequences of 'show-stopping' decisions, and the political scrutiny on those tasked with taking them, leads me to conclude that leadership development does matter in Scotland today. This research set out to advance practice in managing a real world leadership problem but hoped that theory could be built to make learning from messy reality more accessible to others who can take it further. It is the role of doctoral work to advance knowledge but I have been wary since embarking on this journey that, as understandings are developed and complexities revealed, an element of pragmatism must be retained.

There is a recognised fracture between theory, policy and practice in Scottish public services and a rift notable in Scottish education; others are better placed to comment on the reasons for this. Nevertheless, the way to bridge the gap and move towards enhanced praxis must be trodden first by the leadership class in education including, though not exclusively, those who employ headteachers. In the real world, the need to react to show-stopper challenges does not always afford the luxury of timely scholarly reflection but it is crucial for those who are assigned the task of managing Scotland's public services out of troubled waters to look deeply at the layers of complexity in order to make wise judgement on the route ahead. The need for vision which spans professional boundaries based on clear understanding of theory, research awareness and intellectual rigour balanced by pragmatism, is, it is proposed, the new paradigm for public service leadership.

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## List of accompanying materials

### APPENDIX A

Ethical approval for preparatory work June 2007

### APPENDIX B

Ethical approval for study April-November 2008

### APPENDIX C

Case Study Local Authority

Headteacher and Depute Headteacher Mentor Programme Policy and Procedures

### APPENDIX D

Frequency tables - quantitative responses

## Appendix A

Ethical approval for preparatory work June 2007

UNIVERSITY *of* GLASGOW

Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee For Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

**EAP2 NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION**

**FORM APPROVAL**

**Application No.** (Research Office use only)

E829

**Period of Approval** (Research Office use only)

18/06/2007 to 30/07/2007

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Date: 19 June 2007

Dear Gillian

I am writing to inform you that your application for ethical approval, reference E829 'Coaching and mentoring as an approach for leadership development in the context of Scottish Schools' has been approved, subject to the following amendments. This means that you can begin your data collection, but the requested changes should be made and submitted to the Ethics Office, electronic copies will suffice.

### **Consent Form**

As your participants are adults, please remove the section for signature of parent/guardian; this is not required in this case.

### **Plain Language Statement**

You have clearly adapted the Plain Language Statement guidelines which are available through the Ethics website, but you have not removed the headers from the original document. Please remove these, so that "Faculty of Education: Plain Language Statement Guidelines" does not appear in the document given to participants. Also, please remove the instructions from the bottom of the document which say "The subject information sheet and consent form should be

dated and given a version number in the footer of the document.” as these are part of the instructions in the original guidelines and should not appear in the document which you give to your participants.

Please provide an electronic copy of the consent form to the Ethics Office for inclusion in your file, as this was omitted from your original application. Please also amend the Plain Language Statement as indicated above.

Regards,

Terri Hume  
Ethics and Research Secretary

## Appendix B

Ethical approval for study April-November 2008

**UNIVERSITY of GLASGOW**

**Faculty of Education**

**Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects**

**EAP2 NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION FORM APPROVAL**

**Application No.** (Research Office use only) E1051

**Period of Approval** (Research Office use only) 22 April 2008 to 30 November 2008

Date: 23 April 2008

Dear Gillian

I am writing to advise you that your application for ethical approval, reference E1038 for 'Mentoring for Education and Children's Services Leaders in Scotland - does it work?' has been approved.

You should retain this approval notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me in the Research Office and I can refer them to the Faculty's Ethics Committee

Regards,

Terri Hume  
Ethics and Research Secretary

# Appendix C

## Case Study Local Authority

### Headteacher and Depute Headteacher Mentor Programme Policy and Procedures

#### Headteacher and Depute Headteacher Mentor Programme

#### Case Study Local Authority

#### Policy and Procedures

August 2007 (2005\*)

### 1. Introduction

#### What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is to support the well-being and effectiveness of school managers in the *CSLA* and forms part of the authority's duty of care for our educational leaders.

Mentoring is essentially about helping people to develop more effectively. It should be a relationship designed to build confidence and help 'new colleague' take increasing initiative for his or her own development. It is informal voluntary support, offered to colleagues in their role as a new Head Teacher or Depute Head, with the intention of improving the quality of their development. It is the aim of mentoring to help build self-confidence and independence.

Mentoring is not

- (I) Helping to run your school, or
- (II) Taking on the role of school QIO

### 2. Duration

The mentoring process will begin immediately a Head Teacher or Depute Head is appointed. The programme will normally run for one year but will remain flexible so as to meet expressed needs and may be lengthened as appropriate.

### 3. Meetings

It is the responsibility of mentors to arrange meetings on a regular basis. The meetings should last no longer than two hours and time should be allowed to bring the meeting to a satisfactory conclusion. Mentors will be prepared to respond to a request from the mentee for an extra or un-scheduled meeting.

The venue for the meeting should be arranged between the two parties to allow for uninterrupted conversation and be a pleasant environment for discussion.

The initial meeting is very important and should cover

- introductions,
- aims of mentoring,
- role of mentor, and
- confirmation of confidentiality
- care and well-being

This meeting should be brief and be followed quickly by a second meeting.

Subsequent meetings should have a regular structure and agreeing an agenda a few days in advance will help to focus discussion. However you should be prepared to explore worries or concerns even if the issue does not appear on the agenda.

At the end of the period of mentoring, the timing of the final meeting will vary according to individual need but it should be used to reflect on progress over the period. At the end of the mentoring period, the mentor will liaise with the *Officer of the CSLA* to confirm the process has concluded.

#### **4. Mentors**

Mentors are selected from a pool of established headteachers and depute headteachers. The criteria for selection are as follows;

- Experienced headteacher or depute headteacher (may include recently retired headteachers)
- Recommendation from QIO
- Available to undertake a short period of training in the mentoring process, with annual update
- Head teachers with experience as DHT may provide DHT mentoring

Mentors are offered support over the period of the mentoring arrangement. This is offered by the school QIO where appropriate, whilst maintaining the agreed confidentiality of the relationship, the *CSLA Officer* and external consultants contracted by the authority for this purpose.

*\* Mentors will receive an honorarium on completion of the mentoring arrangements for each candidate. (2005, reviewed in 2007)*

## **5. Matching**

Every attempt will be made to offer a choice of colleagues to act as a mentor though the chosen mentor is not obliged to take up the request. In drawing up the list account may be taken size of school and geographical factors. The matching process will be administered by the *CSLA Officer* and QIO (school).

## **6. Confidentiality**

The relationship between mentor and mentee will be based on mutual trust. Mentors will continually emphasise that any discussions that take place remain confidential.

No information resulting from the mentoring process will be made available to any other person without the express permission of both parties.

## **7. Breakdown of the Mentoring Process**

There may be several reasons for the premature conclusion of a mentoring arrangement. These could include: -

- Incompatibility of mentor and mentee
- Change of circumstance for the mentor and mentee

It is the responsibility of the mentor to inform the *CSLA Officer* of the need for a replacement.

Mentees may, without prejudice, make a request directly to the *CSLA Officer* for a change of mentor. Mentors will be replaced as soon as is practicable in order to minimise disruption to an individual mentoring programme.

## **8. Mentoring Activities**

The support and help that you can be expected from a mentor will vary accordingly to individual circumstances but may include some of the following: -

- Discussion of progress on a regular basis
- Acting as a sounding-board
- Exploration and consideration of particular situations

## **9. Documentation**

A summary of the meeting is completed with action points noted. Both parties sign the profile and retain. A template profile is available for this purpose.

## **10. Reviewing Mentoring**

There will be an opportunity for mentees to review the effectiveness and worth of the mentoring system following the end of the first year or should the process end prior to that time. This evaluation must not breach the confidentiality of the mentoring arrangements, but informs *CSLA Directorate* regarding the effectiveness of the procedures.

## Appendix D

Frequency tables - quantitative responses

### Summary of quantitative data

Totals are reported for mentors and mentees, by sector

**Q1. Our records show that your mentoring started in (\*\*). Are you still in contact with your mentor / mentee?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Yes	6	6	3	4
No	6	8	5	4
Informal Contact	5	5	2	2

TABLE D1

**Q2. How many times have you met?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
1 or 2	2	4	1	4
3 - 5	7	10	5	3
6 or more	3	0	2	1

TABLE D2

**Q3. Where do you meet?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Mentees School	7	12	8	4
Mentors School	1	4	4	5
Hotel/cafe	2	4	0	0
Various	2	3	3	2

TABLE D3

**Q4. When in the day did you meet?****Q 5. How long are/were your meetings, on average?**

The average length of time of meeting reported by mentors and mentees, by sector is summarised in Table 4.

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor	Secondary Mentee
< 1 hour	0	3	1	3
1 - 2 hours	8	8	7	5
> 2 hours	4	3	0	0

TABLE D4

**Q6a. Which of these four options best described your feelings before your first meeting?****Q6b. Which of these four options best described your feelings after your first meeting?**

Table 5 summarises the 'before and after' (B/A) responses from Q4 and Q5 with the four anchors decreasing in positivity from 'enthusiastic', 'interested', 'sceptical' to the lowest as 'negative'. Category totals are reported for mentors and mentees, by sector

	Primary Mentor (B/A)	Primary Mentee(B/A)	Secondary Mentor (B/A)	Secondary Mentee (B/A)
Enthusiastic	10/11	8/9	8/7	5/5
Interested	2/1	6/4	0/0	3/2
Sceptical	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1
Negative	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0
No answer	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/0

TABLE D5

**Q7. Do you or did you create a plan for the meeting, or agenda, beforehand?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee(14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Yes	9	7	3	4
No	3	6	4	3
No answer	0	0	1	1

TABLE D6

**Q8a. Who decides what you are going to talk about?**

	Primary Mentor	Primary Mentee	Secondary Mentor	Secondary Mentee
Mentor	9	8	2	5
Mentee	12	13	7	7
Both	9	8	2	4

TABLE D7

**Q8b. For your regular meetings, when do you decide on what issues you are going to discuss?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Previous Meeting	7	7	0	1
Beginning of meeting	9	3	7	6
Communication between meetings	7	6	2	4

TABLE D8

**Q9. How often did you / the mentee take away an action plan to be implemented before the next meeting?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee (14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Never	1	3	4	2
Sometimes	5	6	1	3
Usually	3	1	2	0
Always	3	3	0	1
No answer	0	1	1	2

TABLE D9

**Q10. Is there any comment you would like to make about the first meeting or tips you would like to give to future mentors?**

**Q11. For future programmes, do you think there is a need to improve the practicalities?**

	Primary Mentor (12)	Primary Mentee(14)	Secondary Mentor (8)	Secondary Mentee (8)
Yes	3	3	2	4
No	8	6	5	4
Don't know	1	5	0	0

TABLE D10

Those who answered 'yes' were asked the open question, 'In what way, or in what particular area?' to give both mentors and mentees an opportunity to expand upon their affirmation.

**Q 12. Issues discussed in meetings**

The professional actions of the Standard for Headship were used to categorise the responses, while also considering basic operational actions, described as 'nuts and bolts issues' and personal issues.

'I would like to ask you about the areas of your / your mentee's job that you explored during your mentoring sessions. For the purposes of this evaluation, I would like us to refer to the school leadership skillsets as outlined by Standard for Headship (SfH). If I read out these skill sets to you, could you say roughly how often you addressed these areas in your discussions with your mentor / mentee?'  
Please will you respond: 'Never, Sometimes, Often or Very often.'

<b>PRIMARY MENTEE RESPONSES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
Leading and managing learning and teaching	0	4	6	3
Leading and developing people	0	4	6	3
Leading change and improvement	0	3	8	2
Using resources effectively	4	7	1	1
Building community	3	7	2	1
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	1	5	5	2
Personal issues	2	6	4	1

TABLE D11a

<b>PRIMARY MENTOR RESPONSES</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
Leading and managing learning and teaching	0	1	8	3
Leading and developing people	0	4	6	2
Leading change and improvement	1	0	9	2
Using resources effectively	2	8	1	1
Building community	0	7	5	0
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	1	3	4	4
Personal issues	1	4	6	1

TABLE D11b

SECONDARY MENTEE RESPONSES				
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Leading and managing learning and teaching	1	3	3	0
Leading and developing people	0	0	5	2
Leading change and improvement	0	2	3	2
Using resources effectively	1	6	0	0
Building community	2	2	3	0
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	1	1	1	4
Personal issues *	1	2	3	0

TABLE D11c

SECONDARY MENTOR RESPONSES				
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Leading and managing learning and teaching	0	3	4	0
Leading and developing people	0	1	1	5
Leading change and improvement	0	0	4	3
Using resources effectively	0	6	1	0
Building community	2	4	1	0
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	0	2	4	1
Personal issues	2	5	0	0

TABLE D11d

Having explored the issues which were discussed between mentors and mentees, at this point the interview sought insight to the learning that took place as a result of these mentoring conversations. Mentees were asked to comment on the learning that took place for them.

#### Mentees Responses

I would like you to reflect on the things that you have learned in your mentoring sessions which will stay with you and help you in the future....

**Q13. If I could ask you within which of the SfH skill sets you have been helped most by your mentor?**

<b>PRIMARY MENTEES RESPONSES</b>	<b>Most Helped</b>
Leading and managing learning and teaching	2
Leading and developing people	6
Leading change and improvement	3
Using resources effectively	0
Building community	1
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	0
Personal issues	1
Don't know	1

TABLE D12 a

<b>SECONDARY MENTEES RESPONSES</b>	<b>Most Helped</b>
Leading and managing learning and teaching	0
Leading and developing people	5
Leading change and improvement	2
Using resources effectively	0
Building community	0
Nuts n Bolts task issues - practicalities/facts/information	0
Personal issues	0
Don't know	0

TABLE D12b

**Q14. Have your mentoring sessions been useful to you in carrying out your job? Have your mentoring sessions affected your behaviour as a HT? Have they helped in terms of confidence, stress levels etc?**

**Q 15 Have you tended to use a particular mentoring style?**

Or, to mentees

Has your mentor used a particular mentoring style within the conversations?

<b>Mentors' Responses</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Telling (directing)	4	2
Helping (assisting the mentee find their own solution)	12	8
Working together on a problem	12	8
Counselling (exploring personal issues)	1	0

TABLE D13a

<b>Mentees' Responses</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Telling (directing)	7	4
Helping (assisting the mentee find their own solution)	9	6
Working together on a problem	12	8
Counselling (exploring personal issues)	0	0

TABLE D13b

**Q 16. In terms of your own development, have your sessions with your mentee had an influence on your own practice/mindset?**

<b>Mentors' Responses</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Yes	12	7
No	0	0

TABLE D14

**17. How valuable has the mentoring programme been for you compared to other leadership and management support that is available from the authority? i.e. courses, the role of the school QIO, SQH.**

Mentees' Responses	Primary	Secondary
Yes	14	8
No	0	0

TABLE D15

All 22 mentees reported that they would recommend having a mentor to other new Headteachers, depute headteachers or principal teachers.

**18. Would you recommend mentoring to a colleague who was thinking of joining the mentoring programme?**

Mentors' Responses	Primary	Secondary
Yes	12	8
No	0	0

TABLE D16

All 12 primary mentors and 8 secondary mentors replied that they would recommend mentoring to colleagues.

**19. Overall, on a scale of one to 10, with 0 as the most negative and 10 as the most positive, where would you place your overall experience of mentoring?**

	Primary Mentor x (range)	Primary Mentee x (range)	Secondary Mentor x (range)	Secondary Mentee x (range)
Response	8.9 (8-10)	7.4 (2-10)	7.4 (3-10)	6.8 (3-10)

TABLE D17

**Do you think that this mentoring programme should be available more widely? If yes, to whom? If not, why not?**

	Primary Mentor	Primary Mentee	Secondary Mentor	Secondary Mentee
Yes	9	13	8	7
No	0	0	0	1
Don't know	3	1	0	0

TABLE D18