

Understandings of mentoring in school placement settings within the context of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland: dimensions of collaboration and power

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Abstract

This study critically addresses mentor and mentee understandings of mentoring primary education student teachers within existing operations of power in the context of Scottish Initial Teacher Education. Semi-structured interviews of mentors and student teachers were used to elicit relational understandings of the mentoring process within an instrumental, collective case study research design. Findings indicate that participants understood mentoring as a multifaceted process aimed at supporting the professional learning of student teachers. The article addresses the main mentoring relationship between class teacher mentor and student teacher mentee. Analysis of their responses suggests an understanding of mentoring as involving both personal and professional dimensions. From these dimensions emerge the focus of this article: implicit collaboration and conceptions of power as a relational duality situated within a more Foucauldian 'flux' form. Critical discussion of findings extends understandings of the complexity of the mentoring process with reference to perceptions of collaboration, power and their co-existence. Conclusions focus on the need for a quality, consistent mentoring education programme to promote an informed knowledge and understanding of the complex nature of mentoring in order to improve the quality and consistency of mentee learning experiences.

Keywords: Mentoring; Initial Teacher Education; collaboration; power; mentor education

Introduction

Mentoring is a recurrent theme within the literature on initial teacher education. Current discourses of a 'knowledge society' emphasise the importance of lifelong learning and school improvement where achievement is shown to be linked with quality teaching and learning (Forde, McMahon, McPhee and Patrick 2006). This connection suggests that the processes of learning and teaching are significant in influencing student teacher success and mentor development. This means that more wide-ranging, complex knowledge, skill and competence bases are necessary to foster a future generation of teachers of appropriate quality and has implications for the mentoring practices employed to foster such quality. The term 'quality' itself is problematic in its varied definitions across local, national, cultural and political contexts (Rauschenberger, Adams and Kennedy 2017). In educational settings, quality tends to be correlated with effectiveness, more specifically educators' abilities to foster knowledge and understanding or to develop attitudes and values in learners (*ibid.*), and the particular facets of quality correlated with such educational effectiveness (Gibbs 2010).

Within the context of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), this article is derived from an empirical study aimed at exploring mentor and mentee understandings of mentoring primary education student teachers within Scottish school placement contexts. It builds on previous work about class teacher mentor (CT mentor) and student teacher (mentee) understandings of mentoring primary education student teachers (Mackie 2017). While it may seem obvious that the CT mentor/mentee relationship is key in influencing student teacher success, the study highlights the extent to which this relationship is critically important, having potentially long-term consequences for such success and the quality of education being provided in the Scottish educational context. As previously documented, analysis of CT mentor and mentee responses suggests an understanding of mentoring as involving both personal and professional dimensions (*ibid.*). From these dimensions, elements of collaboration and

different conceptions of power emerge. These two elements are the focus of this article which has its epistemological basis in constructivism, fostering research that investigates and interprets processes through detailed exploration of participants' understandings within their social and historical contexts (Littledyke and Huxford 1998; Jonassen 2006). This process involves the development of knowledge and understanding both independently and collaboratively.

Contributions to knowledge are three-fold: the article extends understandings of the complexity of mentoring relationships in building on previous literature about personal and professional dimensions of mentoring (for example, Yeomans and Sampsons 1994; Kwan and Lopez-Real 2005; Ambrosetti, Knight and Dekker 2014) through its findings and interpretations of collaboration, power and their co-existence in relation to such dimensions. Further, it emphasises the role of mentees as well as those of the mentor, filling a gap in current literature (Ambrosetti 2010), and highlights the importance of quality and consistent mentoring education opportunities. In addition, it adds a Scottish perspective to the international body of literature on mentoring within ITE contexts. Scottish education policy is used to frame and exemplify points made alongside those from international literature to inform discussions and suggest recommendations for future mentoring policy and practices.

Mentoring in Initial Teacher Education

Learning to teach occurs within the realms of relationships with others (Harrison, Lawson and Wortley 2005) therefore having a mentor who is part of the teaching community is essential (Hargreaves and Fullan 2000). Effective mentoring practices require a mentor who understands the complexities of the mentoring process (Ambrosetti 2010). Definitions of mentoring abound (Ambrosetti and Dekkers 2010). It may be viewed as a more experienced colleague supporting, challenging and facilitating the professional learning of another

(Carnell, MacDonald and Askew 2006). It involves a complex array of social interactions including an interpersonal element (Yeomans and Sampson 1994) which fosters an ethos of openness to individual and joint constructions of knowledge and understanding (Hargreaves 2010) through its emphasis on a more educative perspective on learning, one focused on independence and empowerment (Jones and Straker 2006).

The complex nature of mentoring means that there is no one 'recipe for success' (Harrison et al. 2005, 425) and is influenced by intercultural performances within learning environments (Kemmis, Heikinnen, Fransson and Aspfors 2014). For example, a 'quality assurance' context restricts mentoring to supervision, emphasising skills through directive and non-dialogic strategies (Rix and Gold 2000) where traditional separations of expert/novice prevail. An opposing constructivist view sees collaborative school cultures employ more non-directive, educative approaches to develop autonomous, self-regulated learners (Iancu and Oplatka 2014).

Collaboration is recognised as a key concept in contemporary mentoring practices (EPPI 2008) and is the act of working together to achieve something (Collins 2015). It is central to mentoring as it improves teaching and addresses issues of social justice and equality through practices such as critical reflection, active trust, self-regulation, respect and reciprocity (Hargreaves 2000). However, all learning environments are influenced by power relationships (Seddon, Billet and Clemans 2004). In the context of mentoring, traditional hierarchies of power may inhibit collaborative, constructive dialogue (Graham 1999) in that mentors are viewed as more experienced and may use this perception to direct dialogue, sanction particular actions and associated reasoning (Ritchie, Rigano and Lowry 2000). Within this sort of traditional power duality, an oppositional dynamic of powerful/powerless becomes apparent (Seddon et al. 2004) which may lead to mentees feeling exposed (Sewell, Cain, Woodgate-Jones, and Srokosz 2009), bullied (Maguire 2001) and relationships

breaking down (Kim and Danforth 2012).

Study Context

In Scotland, prospective teachers are required to undertake either a four-year undergraduate or one-year postgraduate qualification within a university provider followed by one year of induction (or equivalent) to evidence competence against the Standard for Full Registration set out by the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS 2012). Mentoring quality within Scottish ITE has been reported as inconsistent in ITE review reports for some years (for example, Deloitte and Touche 2001; Education Scotland 2015). More effective partnerships between teacher educator providers, schools and local authorities have been suggested as significant in promoting improvement in such quality (for example, Kirk 2000; Brisard, Menter and Smith 2006; Education Scotland 2015). The significance, and requirement, of better partnerships between Scottish teacher education stakeholders has been documented in the previous three reviews of teacher education (Deloitte and Touche 2001; Scottish Executive 2005; Scottish Government 2011). In the stage one report recommendations about more formal ‘Teacher Development’ partnerships between teacher educator institutions, local authorities and schools were made (Deloitte and Touche 2001). However, no such arrangements were evident before the stage two review was undertaken which, again, made suggestions about improved partnership, specifically that local authorities should play a more substantive role in the organisation, mentoring and assessment of school placements (Scottish Executive 2005). Further, it recommended that formal processes were developed to measure the quality of these placements and that more effective communication between stakeholders was necessary to foster improvements (ibid.). Additional suggestions were made in terms of accountability for ITE being the responsibility of both local authorities and teacher educator institutions (ibid.). The latest review reiterates these recommendations and further states that

all teachers are teacher educators (Scottish Government 2011). It suggests careful selection of mentors in school contexts based on their knowledge, understanding and skills of mentoring and associated assessment processes gained through appropriate mentor education (ibid.). However, mentor education is currently only available to a small minority of mentors who oversee post-ITE induction year teachers (Education Scotland 2015). This disparity is problematic given the complexities of mentoring and the positive correlations between mentor education and the quality of subsequent mentoring practices suggested by research evidence (for example, Hennison, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen 2008; Hoffman, Wetzel, Maloch, Greeter, Taylor, DeJulio and Khan Vlach 2015).

Methodology

An instrumental, collective case study design was adopted: instrumental to examine an overarching case, the process of mentoring primary student teachers, in order to comprehend the phenomenon of mentor and mentee understandings of mentoring; collective to provide a more holistic view of that phenomenon in that individual cases are examined but situated within a collective study (Stake 2005). Case study research is reported as suited to the study of a single case rather than multiple cases (Simons, 2009), however, both are appropriate with regard to the use of multiple cases to promote increased understanding of a single case (Gillham 2000). Cresswell (2007) advises that four or five cases are sufficient so analysis can be carried out within and across cases. Within the overarching collective case of the mentoring process, four individual cases were investigated: class teacher mentors, mentees, school management mentors and local authority mentors. The placement mentoring process employed by the teacher education institution in this study is located almost wholly within the school context. Therefore, university tutors were not a case as the study focus is on the everyday mentoring of student teachers and the reality of that process. University tutors

make one school placement visit to the student teacher which gives a snapshot of student progression in learning to teach. Any other contact tends to be limited which is insufficient in developing a substantive mentoring relationship with the mentee. 'Teamed models' of mentoring, where teacher mentors, university tutors and mentees collaborate in the mentoring process (Fenimore-Smith 2004), are not evident. These kinds of partnership arrangements are emerging from other ITE providers such as the University of Glasgow's use of 'hub' schools where university tutors and school staff work more closely together to promote quality and consistency of placement experiences (Menter, Baumfield, Carroll, Dickson, Hulme, Lowden and Mallon 2011).

A purposeful sampling strategy was selected for all participants. Those pertinent to CT mentors and mentees follow as the understandings of these participants are the focus for this article. Six third year undergraduate primary education student teachers were recruited who had experienced mentoring on a previous placement. The six CT mentors of these student teachers were recruited to make up six mentoring pairs (twelve participants in total). The structure of these pairs was to facilitate comparative analysis of responses where appropriate. CT mentors were all qualified primary class teachers situated in six Scottish primary schools. These schools were all of a reasonable size, had at least one class at each stage, which gave student teachers access to a variety of staff members, and all mentored student teachers on a regular basis.

The British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines (2011) were used as the main reference document for relevant ethical considerations: informed consent, confidentiality, accuracy of reporting and positionality. Student teacher participants were from the researcher's own university programme thus awareness of potential issues was important such as traditional conceptions of university tutor/student hierarchy. This may lead to the 'interviewer effect' where interviewees say what they think is expected as opposed to

giving an honest account (Denscombe 1998). To address such issues, it was stressed to mentees that the researcher's role in this school placement was not as a university tutor but as a researcher. Fears about students feeling unable to be open in their responses were unfounded. In fact, the researcher's own attitudes and beliefs about the importance of establishing positive relationships with students were evident in that they appeared to feel at ease and therefore confident to be honest in their interview responses. This was evident through their non-verbal body language in appearing relaxed and able to share laughter and sharing amusing stories. Mentees' honesty was evident in the content of their responses, for example, in being critical of mentors and willing to share their thoughts on how the university and school might improve school placement experiences.

To address any possibility of bias, a strategy of 'detached honesty' was adopted in continually questioning and challenging all aspects of the research undertaken (Gillham 2000), for example, seeking advice about aspects of the research process from others and engaging in data analysis that looks for and discusses that which does not fit with emergent themes (ibid.). Throughout the process colleagues were an important resource in discussing the reasonableness of findings and subsequent interpretations, for example, at the coding stage of analysis then in synthesising codes to abstract key themes and in making sense of them.

Methodological congruence was attended to in the selection of an appropriate approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation which is consistent with the researcher's epistemological position and the research design (Thomas 2009). In accordance with constructivist epistemology, these processes are viewed as active (Esterberg 2002) and shared where participants co-create data and meaning. The partially structured format of the semi-structured interview was appropriate as it fosters elucidation of data particular to individual cases as well as comparative analysis of data sets (ibid.). To explore their

understandings participants were asked a variety of questions about mentoring based on a review of apposite literature. In addition, probing questions were used as the flexibility of this type of interview presents opportunities to explore participants' understandings of their lived experiences further during the interview (Kvale 2007).

Approaches to data analysis and theory generation were derived from constructivist grounded theory as it offers detailed guidelines for analysis where theories are constructed from the data (Charmaz 2006) as opposed to those objectively 'discovered' based on pre-existing ideas (Hallberg 2006). A collective case study requires within case analysis to identify key themes and foster thick description of individual cases prior to cross-case analysis (Simons 2009). A systematic approach to coding was employed involving three stages: initial, focused and theoretical.

Initial coding is where data is analysed in detail through close reading of word, line and segments of data (Charmaz 2006). It helps researchers to interpret what is actually in the data and to avoid preconceived ideas (ibid.). Focused coding was carried out within each case to refine initial coding by examining codes for commonality and difference. Analysing codes for commonality was determined to be an effective basis for justifying construction of focused coding and subsequent theoretical coding/themes. In this respect, initial codes evident from over 50% (four out of six) of participants within each case were utilised in constructing focused codes whilst also paying attention to salient differences. A constant comparative method was employed to revise codes whilst revisiting data as the research process progressed. Theoretical coding is used to identify connections between codes so theories begin to emerge (ibid.). Focused codes were examined within each case with themes and sub-themes noted. These were then compared across the four cases to further refine themes and sub-themes. Throughout the process research memos about emerging themes, absences and interesting aspects were noted. This fostered construction of meaning from

data at a more holistic level alongside finer detail derived from coding. The qualitative nature of this study means that traditional positivist notions of generalisation are rejected in favour of a conception of ‘fuzzy’ generalisations where no absolute social truths are stated. Instead possibilities are suggested in terms of research findings being more widely applicable with regard to influencing policy and practice through dialogue between relevant parties (Bassey 1999).

Findings and Discussion

Participants understand mentoring as a multifaceted process comprising a range of relationships that support the mentoring of student teachers within school placements. This particular article is concerned with the relationship between CT mentors and mentees as findings indicate that this is the key one within school placement contexts. As previously reported, analysis of CT mentor and mentee responses suggests an understanding of mentoring as involving both personal and professional dimensions (Mackie 2017).

Referencing Yeomans and Sampson’s (1994) model, the professional dimension focuses on mentee professional learning in the process of learning to teach and associated mentor roles (ibid.). The personal dimension is concerned with interpersonal elements and involves mentor roles such as host, friend and counsellor (ibid.). Building on previous work (Mackie 2017), within the dimensions of this close working relationship, elements of collaboration and different conceptions of power emerge. These findings are the focus of this article and are summarised in Figure 1.1.

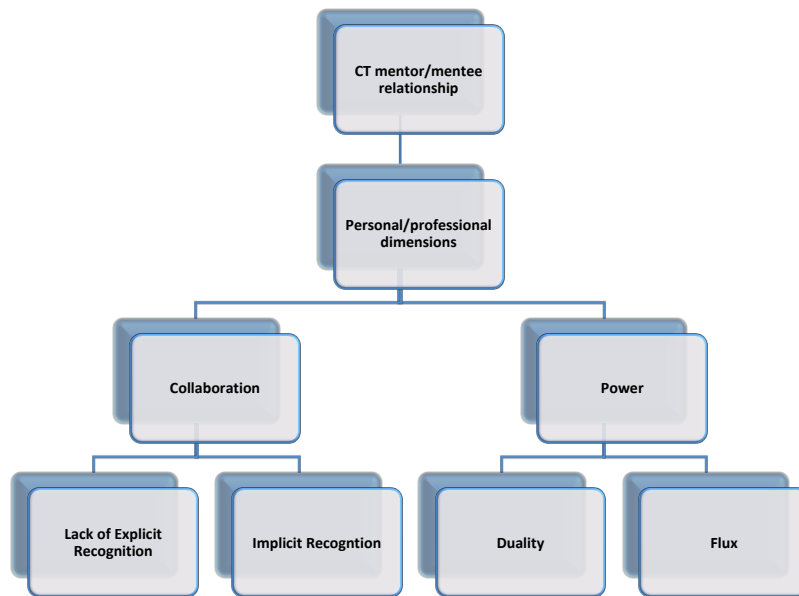


Figure 1.1: Class Teacher Mentor/Mentee Relationship

Within and cross-case data is summarised in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 followed by presentation and discussion of findings with reference to a selection of participant responses. Cross-case data is used for purposes of illustrative exemplification. For each example an overview of CT mentor and mentee understandings is provided then specific respondent data cited to provide further detail. Participants are accorded pseudonyms: CT for class teacher mentors, ST for student teachers, for example, student teacher A is STA.

Implicit collaboration

Table 1.1: Implicit Collaboration

	Class teacher mentors	Mentees
Forms taken by mentoring process	<i>having discussions (professional sense) making joint decisions re: topics of discussions team teaching</i>	<i>having discussions (professional sense) making joint decisions re: topics of discussions</i>
Mentoring style	<i>having a balance of directive and non-directive</i>	<i>having a balance of directive and non-directive</i>
Mentor role	discussing the lesson	reassuring

		supporting (professional and personal senses) sharing ideas being positive guiding questioning re: self-evaluation building confidence
Mentee role	being open to constructive dialogue	
Mentor role in mentoring conversations	<i>encouraging self-evaluation</i> <i>listening in order to respond</i> <i>guiding</i> encouraging the student to lead conversations supporting positively (professional sense)	<i>encouraging self-evaluation</i> <i>listening in order to respond</i> <i>guiding</i> encouraging student to think asking questions
Mentee role in mentoring conversations	<i>asking questions</i>	<i>asking questions</i> recognising both have input into conversations
Characteristics of effective mentor	reassuring	being approachable
Characteristics of effective mentee	<i>being open to constructive criticism</i> communicating with mentor and others being involved with wider school	<i>being open to constructive criticism</i>
Characteristics of effective mentoring relationship	<i>being trust (personal and professional)</i> communicating having mutual respect	<i>being trust (personal and professional)</i>
Benefits of mentoring for the mentor	<i>learning from the student</i>	<i>learning from the student</i>
Benefits of mentoring for the mentee	<i>asking questions/for help</i> being part of an organisation	<i>asking questions/for help</i>

*Cross-case commonalities

CT mentors and mentees noted *having discussions* as a central element, before and after teaching episodes, that were both formal and informal. In this respect, collaboration may be identified as both planned and spontaneous (Williams and Prestage 2002). While spontaneous collaboration is more effective in fostering the professional learning of beginner

teachers (Patrick, Elliot, Hulme and McPhee 2010) due to the use of continual dialogue as the key support mechanism (Williams and Prestage 2002), structured collaboration is successful in improving mentoring practice as consistent structures are in place (ibid.). From a social constructivist perspective, dialogue is vital in fostering learning and helps organise thinking, re-frame or build new understanding within social contexts (Vygotsky 1978). It is significant to beginner teacher learning (Schwille 2008) in terms of considering difficult situations, addressing anxieties and specific aspects of teaching (Hargreaves 2010). These conversations are an outside-the-action component of mentoring, which takes place before and after teaching episodes in a cyclical form of dialogue and reflection (Schwille 2008), where mentors assist mentees to interpret and understand teaching and learning in order to further develop teaching capacity (Iancu and Oplatka 2014). Although advantageous in mentees' gaining practical experience, outside-the-action mentoring may promote inferior quality teachers in that the mentor role is on the periphery during teaching episodes and can take a supervisory, rather than educative, position depending on the nature of post-lesson conversations (ibid.).

CT mentors and mentees indicated that *both sides instigated discussion topics*. Topics focused on mentee learning in emphasising planning and teaching practice. CT mentors talked about topics based around lessons and associated resources while mentees noted aspects such as preparation for the following day and any questions/issues that had arisen.

I think they just came about because (participant's name) asked or maybe it was something that had come up if I'd looked at her folder. Or something that I thought of. **CTD**

...a kind of mixture between the two of us but it was mostly situations that would arise during teaching or during the class time, even after school. And she would bring things up as well 'I

noticed you did this, you could have done that better by doing ...’ or ‘how do you think you could have done that better’. **STA**

Joint instigation of discussion topics reflects mentors taking an interactive role where topics of conversations are initiated by either party and are responsive to both mentor and mentee needs (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith and Erickson 2005). An interactive role requires equity in the mentoring relationship where mentors and mentees acknowledge each other’s unique and valuable input (ibid.). Non-directive methods of mentoring are likely where the focus is on facilitating mentee understanding through mentor scaffolding using a variety of educative strategies in order to foster responsibility for learning (Carnell et al. 2006). Such practices are collaborative, indicative of both individual and co-constructed learning (Hargreaves 2010).

Encouraging self-evaluation was viewed as a mentor role within mentoring conversations. CT mentors viewed this as important in fostering the independent and reflective practice required of teachers. Given that mentees tended to be harsh in their self-evaluations, it fostered opportunities to encourage them to focus on strengths as well as development points. CTE noted self-evaluation in terms of assisting the mentee to engage in balanced reflection as well as specifying next steps in her teaching and for the children’s learning.

To help her reflect on what had gone well. What hadn’t gone so well and maybe to help her to identify next steps as well as for the children so that she could then think ‘ok, that lesson, didn’t go well, why didn’t it go well?...So to really help her reflect and evaluate her practice more than anything else. And then look at how she could develop that further. **CTE**

Mentees saw being encouraged to self-evaluate as significant in developing abilities to think for themselves in order to progress in their teaching practice. STB recognised that the CT mentor was encouraging her to think about her teaching practice in relation to her own experiences and knowledge.

...she would get me to think about it so I came up with an answer and she would say 'yes' or 'no, have you thought about this'. Getting you to enquire and think about your own experience and your own knowledge and how you can put that into practice. **STB**

Contrary to this finding, a variety of studies indicate that encouraging self-evaluation was not a dominant mentor role (for example, Certo 2005; Harrison, Dymoke and Pell, 2006).

Instead mentors led and dictated mentoring conversations, which were focused on their own thoughts and experiences (Certo 2005). In encouraging mentees to engage in self-evaluation, CT mentors in this study were again adopting an educative role in respect of challenge as opposed to instructional support. Challenge involves aspects such as encouraging experimentation, sharing insight, asking questions and encouraging reflection (ibid.). Such practices are collaborative and educative in that mentors facilitate mentee understanding by encouraging them to consider a variety of perspectives (ibid.) and to develop the professional autonomy (Harrison et al. 2006) vital for entry into a profession involving both pupil academic and pastoral care, where teachers need to take responsibility for their own professional learning in order to foster quality learning and teaching (Hudson 2013). In opposition to this study's findings, previous studies indicate a lack of challenge and predominance of instructional support (Certo 2005). In this respect, it may be argued that challenge is only appropriate when a basis of competence has been achieved (Harrison et al. 2005). However, beginner teachers do have capacities in areas associated with challenge even with limited teaching experience (Eraut 1995). If challenge is not evident mentees may

fail to develop the broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills required. Instead compliance to current procedures may dominate and result in stagnation of practice (O'Brien and Christie 2005).

This study also centred around wider educational contexts and professional learning. Given the attention accorded to collaboration within the current Scottish education context, influenced by the broader discourses and agendas of a knowledge society, study participants may have been expected to be more explicitly recognisant of this element. In Scotland, several significant reforms evidence a focus on collaboration through recommendations about collegiality and engaging in broader partnerships. For example, the McCrone Agreement on teacher pay and conditions promotes a cultural shift from compliance to collegiality (MacDonald 2004), and the most recent review of ITE advocates professional learning in mentoring within a model of enhanced partnership between schools, universities and local authorities (Scottish Government 2011).

Participants may lack understanding about the complexities of mentoring due to a lack of provision of professional learning opportunities but also of the aforementioned education reforms. Confusion may be evident given the tension between rhetoric and reality where collaboration is promoted but within external managerialist agendas not conducive to collegiate practice in their focus on accountability, competence and pupil attainment. However, it could be that teachers do understand these reforms and that they are engrained in school cultures and structures so are established practice. Study findings are indicative of implicit collaboration suggesting that school cultures were positive in this sense. Strong school cultures champion collaboration where teachers are able to discuss the nature of learning and teaching (Williams and Prestage 2002). Beginner teachers who work within collaborative cultures are reported as experiencing greater professional learning and personal fulfillment (ibid.).

Power

In opposition to the notion of implicit collaboration, conceptions of power emerged from CT mentor and mentee understandings of mentoring. This study showed that power is interpreted as a traditional opposition (duality), where one party is perceived as powerful and one as powerless, and as a more Foucauldian ‘flux’ form where no one person is viewed as owning power, rather actors can be both powerful and powerless in the same context (Foucault 1979). Within and cross-case data is summarised in Table 1.2 followed by presentation and discussion of a selection of findings.

Table 1.2: Power

	Class teacher mentors	Mentees
Forms taken by mentoring process	<i>observing/being observed giving feedback on next steps</i>	<i>observing getting advice/feedback</i>
Mentoring style	<i>being directive having a balance of directive and non-directive</i>	<i>being directive having a balance of directive and non-directive</i>
Mentor role	<i>giving feedback observing formally and informally giving ideas modelling</i>	<i>giving constructive feedback observing/being observed questioning re: self-evaluation</i>
Mentee role	<i>learning meeting university expectations</i>	<i>learning observing</i>
Mentor role in mentoring conversations	<i>giving advice/feedback leading</i>	<i>giving feedback asking questions</i>
Mentee role in mentoring conversations	<i>asking questions feeling need to be compliant</i>	<i>asking questions feeling need to be compliant feeling unable to disagree taking advice</i>
Characteristics of effective mentor	<i>having practical knowledge giving advice/feedback</i>	<i>having practical knowledge being knowledgeable re: university documents/input</i>
Characteristics of effective mentee	<i>learning</i>	<i>learning</i>
Benefits of mentoring for the mentor	<i>learning from the student</i>	<i>learning from the student</i>

	<i>making mentor reflect on own practice</i>	<i>making mentor reflect on own practice</i>
Benefits of mentoring for the mentee	<i>asking questions/for help getting practical experience</i>	<i>asking questions/for help getting practical experience getting constructive criticism</i>

*Cross-case commonalities

Power as duality

Findings suggest an understanding of power as a duality with CT mentors in positions of power and mentees as powerless. For example, the mentoring styles of CT mentors encompassed a *directive* element. CT mentors noted that mentees require a lot of guidance as they are learning to teach. CTB felt that student teachers could not be left to their own devices.

...the students need a lot of guidance...they're learning. And...so they can't just be totally left to their own devices, do what you like...so you have to direct them a lot. **CTB**

CTD noted that the class was her responsibility so she had to retain control over learning and behaviour.

I do...kind of like to be in control with my class but only cause I...had to make sure everything was right cause they are my class and I've got to, that's my responsibility. **CTD**

In addition, CT mentors' style of mentoring was seen as differing depending on the mentee's teaching confidence and competence.

Well I'd probably be more inclined to...be more directive...so that the student would realise...that they don't actually know it all. They have to learn...you would be slightly

different depending on the ability and character of the person that you're the tutor for... some would need a lot more help than others. **CTB**

Responses indicate that as mentee competence improved, mentor confidence increased and so mentoring styles became less directive. The importance of giving mentees the freedom to try things out as part of their learning was acknowledged and that making mistakes was important. STE noted that the CT mentor was less directive as more confidence in her teaching abilities developed, this was linked to being trusted in a professional sense.

I think it was the element a' trust. She got to know me and I think she...realised where my strengths were with planning and things...I was checking things out wi' her about the children...I think when you take the ownership a' them on, there's a shift in trust as well. **STE**

All learning environments are influenced by power relationships (Seddon et al. 2004). In mentoring relationships such as the ones in this study, a power duality manifests because mentors are positioned as authoritative due to them being qualified teachers and because of their assumed expertise (Garvey et al. 2009). However, expertise does not necessarily equate with experience, some teachers may never progress beyond a level of basic competency (Berliner 2001). Mentors adopt a training approach, utilising more directive strategies (Yeomans and Sampson 1994), symptomatic of a perception of teaching as simplistic (Hargreaves and Fullan 2000) as opposed to the realities of its complexity. This can assist mentees to develop some degree of understanding of the academic and pedagogical facets of teaching (Schwille 2008) but may be limited to a conception of teachers as technicians as opposed to an educative view of those able to reason and exercise professional judgement. This may be restrictive rather than promotional of mentee capacity (Hargreaves

2010) and encourage mentee dependence suggestive of managerialist notions of compliance (Harrison et al. 2005).

The directive element of CT mentoring styles in this study may also be conceptualised as ‘judgementoring’ where mentors’ focus is on judging the performance of mentees through approaches which over-guide and restrain rather than foster mentee capacity to be critically reflective of their own practice (ibid.). Such positioning aligns with mentors having issues with adopting more non-directive methods (Langdon 2014) and the resultant danger of mentees feeling bullied due to demands for practice to be carried out in specific ways (Maguire 2001). Mentees may experience learned helplessness through being over-directed by mentors and feel unable to discuss areas for development and incur negative critique (Manning and Hobson 2017). However, mentees may desire direction (Strong and Baron 2004), employing mentors as sources of information and skills to foster performance as opposed to learning through constructing and co-constructing understanding (Hargreaves 2010). Further, direction may be required based on mentee learning needs so non-directive methods might not be conducive to their professional learning.

Power as ‘flux’

It is difficult to avoid traditional hierarchies of power as they pervade school cultures and structures (Fenimore-Smith 2004). However, considering other conceptions of power provides alternative interpretations and bases for reflection. Power may be viewed as resistance (Foucault 1979). In this study mentees noted that they felt the need to be *compliant* in mentoring conversations and that they could not express disagreement due to the mentor being more experienced.

Sometimes you just felt a bit like, 'well you are the teacher...you have been doing this for so long...I'm just starting out'...you don't really feel in the position to disagree...And then reading up on it, you realise that it, it's just a difference a' opinion...sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't...I wouldn't turn round and be like 'no I dinnae agree wi' that'. But just...question it...without being disrespectful obviously. Cause at the end of the day she's been a teacher for my whole life... STA

STA's strategies of questioning in a respectful manner and reading on the topic helped her to view it as a difference of opinion rather than right or wrong. This may be viewed as resistance to CT mentors' enactment of power. This resistance distorts the traditional power duality of being silenced so therefore powerless. Therefore, a conception of power as 'flux' is apposite where participants may be interpreted as being both powerful and powerless in the same context (ibid.). In this sense power is viewed as enacted within interactions, rather than something that is possessed (Foucault 1979) and is in a constant state of change (Graham 1999).

With regard to *learning*, mentees are positioned as both learners and being learned from, powerless and powerful respectively. To exemplify, regarding characteristics of an effective mentee, mentees are positioned as powerless in the role of learners in the classroom of a more experienced teacher. A willingness to learn by trying out new things was viewed as vital by CT mentors. CTE noted that mentees need to learn how to improve through failure but should not take such experiences personally while CTF maintained that taking ownership of learning was important. Mentees noted being open to new ways of teaching and guidance from mentors as key characteristics of an effective mentee. STB remarked on learning as happening progressively and the importance of having your own 'knowledge' but being open to other ideas.

You have to learn, and I think it is something you acquire over time. The most important thing is obviously have the knowledge...about your role as a teacher but being open to observe, to get instruction, to take things in that are going on around you rather than having the mind-set 'I am going to do this my way'... **STB**

In opposition to the above, mentees are positioned as powerful in responses about the benefits of mentoring for mentors in that they are viewed as being learned from. CT mentors viewed mentees as sources of learning on different aspects of teaching, such as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, based on their university learning and other teaching experiences. CTF remarked that she was aiming to improve her own teaching by observing and talking to the mentee.

I like the idea of they are coming out with all these brand, new ideas...Being able to use some of the ideas that they are coming in with...I am looking to improve my practice by taking on anything that I have learned from watching the student teach or professional dialogue that we have together... **CTF**

Mentees thought that they could bring new ideas for curriculum and teaching strategies if mentors were receptive to learning from them. STA noted that mentors may be encouraged to look at things differently.

I think quite often student teachers, cause they're just learning everything they can bring new things to the classroom. Cause if you've been doing something for a while you, some people kinda get stuck in their way a' doing things...I feel sometimes that like student teachers have a lot a' ideas... She was like 'oh I never thought about doing that'. So I think they can kinda learn from us as well. **STA**

Mentees are also in a position of power in that their presence in class makes the mentor reflect on their own practice more than usual. CT mentors talked about seeing themselves as role models for mentees so felt it was important to think about their teaching practices carefully. CTD explained that it made her consider not just what she did in class but why.

I think it keeps...you kind of, not on your toes but makes you aware of what you're doing all the time...cause you've got somebody there watching you, it makes you aware of what you're teaching and why you're teaching it. Cause you're justifying it to the mentee. **CTD**

In terms of professional learning, CTF noted that this heightened reflection could highlight areas for development in her own practice.

...I am looking to improve my practice by taking on anything that I have learned from watching the student teach or professional dialogue that we have together and sometimes having to go back and reread some of the theories and think 'I remember that somehow'... It might highlight some of the knowledge and understanding for me that 'I thought I knew that' and there is a wee gap there that I have to go and do some professional reading myself to get myself back up to where, in my head I thought I was, but maybe I'm not actually there. **CTF**

Mentees felt that having responsibility for a student teacher made CT mentors think about their own practice in more detail and to question it. STA remarked that this depth of self-evaluation might not be a usual occurrence given the demands of daily classroom practice.

...at the end a' the day everybody needs to reflect on what they've been doing. And...in the day to day struggle [laughs], I dare say it gets forgotten about quite a bit. But obviously cause

that's like a really important part a' what we do and involving them in it as well will help them to do it. **STA**

However, by engaging in more in-depth reflection STC noted that CT mentors could be learning from the mentee.

I think it helps them in their development as well...the fact that someone is sitting watching everything else they're doing...And while I'm there to learn from them, they're still human and they must still think 'I have to get this lesson right'. It might make them...raise their awareness of how they're teaching...it would make them stop and think 'well am I doing this right, is there a better way I could teach'. **STC**

Mentor willingness to position themselves and be positioned as learners is demanding as openly adopting an alternative perspective may be viewed as a weakness (Ulvik and Langorgen 2012). In this respect, personal and professional trust is important and can facilitate openness to cognitive conflict around existing ways of working and thinking. This conflict presents opportunities to learn and understand teaching in new and different ways, leading to a more symmetrical mentoring relationship appropriate for co-constructed knowledge and understanding. It is indicative of the concept of 'mentoring up' where mentors are mentored by mentees to support professional learning through strategies such as sharing information, collaborative planning and offering feedback (Mavrinac 2005). Mentees are empowered with confidence and competence through this 'mentoring up' position by way of recognition of their contribution to the mentoring relationship thus promoting reciprocity as opposed to hierarchy (Lee, McGee, Pfund and Branchaw 2015). This context can also be beneficial for mentors if they have identified development needs that can be addressed through engagement in mentoring (Ambrosetti et al. 2014). It may also challenge them to

question existing school cultures and their inherent understandings, beliefs and values (Ulvik and Langorgen 2012). This kind of reciprocal mentor/mentee relationship is in opposition to the traditional notion of mentoring based on mentor knowledge (Ambrosetti and Dekkers 2010; Ambrosetti et al. 2014) so may assist in avoiding stagnatory practice. Collaborative school cultures are more cognisant of learning for all and so more effective contexts for beginner teachers (ibid.) because learners occupy positions of visibility (Long et al. 2012). However, in the process of power differentials becoming more equal, mentoring relationships may suffer as the mentee gains in confidence to question mentor capacity (Garvey et al. 2009). Maintenance of an effective relationship is dependent on how this is approached by both parties with collaboration and positive interactions as key.

Conclusion

The complexity of mentoring relationships is highlighted by this article in its building on previous literature about personal and professional dimensions (for example, Yeomans and Sampsons 1994; Kwan and Lopez-Real 2005; Ambrosetti, Knight and Dekker 2014) through its findings and interpretations of collaboration, power and their co-existence in relation to these dimensions. Such complexity draws attention to the importance of quality mentoring education opportunities to promote an informed knowledge and understanding in order to improve the quality and consistency of mentee learning experiences. Mentor education is widely reported as significant in fostering such mentoring experiences (for example, Kwan and Lopez-Real 2005; Pogodzinski 2012; Langdon 2014). However, it is variable with regard to its quality and availability (for example, Harrison et al. 2005; Bubb, Earley and Totterdell, 2005). Therefore, all teacher education providers and student placement schools should attend to the provision of effective mentoring education in order that student teachers are adequately supported in their professional learning. Within the Scottish context, this is

particularly applicable as such education is currently only available to a small minority of mentors who oversee post-ITE induction year teachers (Education Scotland 2015). As noted in previous work (Mackie 2017), student teachers also require such opportunities so that they are more prepared to effectively engage in the mentoring process hence use of the phrase ‘mentoring education’ as opposed to mentor education.

In respect of quality, it is important that content addresses the complexities of mentoring, rather than oversimplifying the process, which leads to a proliferation of undifferentiated techniques underpinned by lack of understanding of a rationale for their use. This kind of educative conception entails examination of both the theory and practice of mentoring (Webb, Pachler, Mitchell and Herrington 2007), including an understanding of ways in which they complement each other, their differences and potential areas of tension (Ulvik and Sunde 2013). This study highlights that the variety of complex roles, relationships and potential tensions within the mentoring process need to be attended to alongside appropriate practices to address them. Collaboration and power emerge as elements in tension. They are particularly significant given that movement to more equitable mentoring relationships brings the matter of their co-existence to the fore as in this study where they co-exist within the professional dimension of mentoring. When mentoring comprises of different approaches, each aligned with particular perspectives on teaching, conflict and confusion may arise for both mentors and mentees (Kemmis et al. 2014). As such, quality mentoring education programmes are vital in assisting them to moderate such conflicts in order to promote effective professional learning experiences. Such moderation may be carried out by attending to particular aspects of mentoring such as supportive interpersonal relationships where mentors and mentees comprehend the importance, and possible facets, of quality relationships within a mentoring process influenced by the education context in which it is situated.

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