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The Mentor Handbook

A Practical Guide for VET Teacher Training

CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

www.cedefop.europa.eu

Foreword

Attractive and inclusive vocational education and training (VET) and high quality and easy accessible VET provision as EU policy goals, put quality of VET teaching specialists – teachers, trainers, counsellors, tutors, instructors and mentors – high on the agenda (Bruges Communiqué). Mentors and mentoring belong still to the less explored themes in terms of benefits for the stakeholders and final users, particularly regarding the diversity of provision across countries and in relation to professional development.

With this handbook the authors and publishers hope to contribute to the wider understanding of the role and importance of mentoring in organisational and national contexts, as well as to identify areas of future action and cooperation for supporting quality and attractiveness in VET through introducing and enhancing mentoring.

The handbook was initiated within CEDEFOP's Training of Trainers Network (TTnet)[1]. Specialist, practitioners, university lecturers in mentoring and leadership have contributed to compile the publication, drawing upon their own wide theoretical and practical experience and gathering and analysing additionally provided material from the national TTnet networks. The handbook has been put through a series of validation processes when the whole network reflected upon the findings. It was then edited by Professor David Gray and Harshita Goregaokar (University of Surrey, UK) and Professor Jill Jameson and Janet Taylor (School of Education, University of Greenwich, UK) and is published jointly by the universities of Greenwich and Surrey in collaboration with CEDEFOP.

We thank Chris Philpott, Dean of the School of Education, and Simon Leggatt, Head of Lifelong Learning Teacher Education, of the University of Greenwich, for their support of this publication.

We hope you find the handbook of value in developing mentoring systems within your own institution.

Professor David E Gray and Harshita Goregaokar
(University of Surrey, UK)
June 2013

[1] The TTnet was established by CEDEFOP in 1998 as a pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers involved in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers. The TTnet aims have been to foster cooperation between key national actors; produce recommendations, guidance and tools for practitioners and decision-makers, and support the implementation of EU priorities for VET teachers and trainers. The network is being dismantled during 2011. Its activities are being taken over by the new Thematic Working Group on trainers in VET set up by the European Commission / DG Education and Culture (DG EAC) in cooperation with CEDEFOP (**www.cedefop.europa.eu**).

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Introduction

Why this Handbook?

The European Commission set out objectives in the Copenhagen agenda to raise the quality of VET teachers, trainers, mentors and counsellors and in particular to improve their initial training, provide induction support for novice VET teachers at this crucial stage of their practice and build into their continuing professional development (CPD)[2]. The Council's conclusions from November 2009 emphasise that: "In view of the increasing demands placed upon them and the growing complexity of their roles, teachers need access to effective personal and professional support throughout their careers, and particularly during the time they first enter the profession".[3]

Mentoring forms a part of that 'effective support'. For the purposes of this handbook mentoring is understood as guidance and support to a new entrant in the VET profession, or as a part of his or her professional development, provided by an experienced person who acts as a role model, guide, coach or confidante. It is assumed that the mentees concerned would be trainee teachers or relatively inexperienced teachers and that the organisation referred to would be a college, a training organisation or an enterprise; in other words, any organisation within the world of VET (see Glossary).

Mentoring is growing in importance because it enhances the skills, confidence and motivation of teaching professionals as well as raises the quality of teaching and training. Knowledge, skills and attitudes would, we assume, be imparted through a close relationship between mentor and mentee. From an organisational perspective, this not only means that they are more effective, but that they become more integrated into the institution.

Mentoring helps organisations to create an environment that nurtures personal and professional development, supports and retains talented practitioners, increases work satisfaction for both mentors and mentees, develops more commitment and loyalty and becomes a stabilising factor in times of change.

We seek to share in the handbook not only models of useful practice, but also to capture, through case studies and examples, the skills and attitudes required by mentors to support their trainees through guided immersion into the difficult and challenging business of teaching and training in VET.

The handbook seeks to provide a general methodology for introducing mentoring as well as approaches to recruiting, supporting and training mentors, systems of mentoring and case studies that exemplify practice.

As Table 1 (overleaf) shows, the use of mentors is spreading across the EU and, interestingly, there appears to be no North-South divide in this. The diversity of practice across the EU is to be welcomed. We hope that the generic concepts, issues and principles set out in this handbook can be adapted to suit particular national, political or organisational contexts.

Thus the handbook is aimed at practitioners, VET providers, researchers and policy makers dealing with supporting initial teaching and training in the vocational education and training (VET) sector:

- It is for practitioners and VET providers who wish to learn about and apply generic principles and appropriate models of practice in mentoring initial VET teachers/trainees when on placement or during the first years of their teaching practice;
- It is for educational researchers who wish to fill the gaps in aspects of mentoring and who wish to provide evidence for the benefits of mentoring;
- It is also aimed at policy and decision makers at national, local and organisational level, seeking to set up mentoring systems within their own contexts.

Using the Handbook

The handbook follows a logical structure. Firstly, in Chapter 1 we define mentoring and differentiate it from similar helping interventions such as coaching, tutoring and counselling. Mentoring is a familiar term but one that elicits quite a wide range of different meanings and interpretations. We place an emphasis on formal mentoring systems, since one of the purposes of this handbook is to demonstrate how VET institutions can set up their own formal mentoring processes. Chapter 2 discusses the interactions between mentors and mentees (people undergoing initial teacher education and training, novice/assistant teachers). The chapter also discusses important issues such as formal and informal assessment methods and the ethical dimensions of mentoring. Finally, Chapter 3 takes this a stage further by showing in detail how institutions can integrate mentoring into both the systems and culture of the organisation. This includes how to recruit and train mentors into mentoring processes. In all chapters the objectives and summary points emphasise the main focal ideas.

In approaching this handbook, we suggest the reader takes time to consider the case studies as well, as these contain useful additional information and, often, examples of 'good practice'.

[2] European Commission (2010) The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020, **http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf**

[3] Council of the European Union, Brussels, 6 November 2009 **http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st15/st15098.en09.pdf**

Table 1: Mentoring implementation across a range of European countries

Criteria	Cyprus	Czech Rep.	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	Hungary	Ireland	Lithuania	Malta	Netherlands	Slovenia	Slovakia	UK
National policy	●	❍	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	❍	❍
Institutional policy	❍	❍	●	●	❍	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Mentors used in Initial Teacher Training	●	❍	●	●	❍	●		●					●
Mentors used in CPD	●	❍		❍	❍		●	❍		❍	❍	❍	●
Use of subject specialist mentors	●	●	●	❍	●		❍	❍			❍	●	●
Use of generic mentors	❍	❍		●	❍		●		❍	●	❍		
Use of pedagogical specialists	●	●		●	❍	❍		●		●	●	●	●
Given training	●	❍	●	●	❍	●	❍	●	●	●	❍	❍	●
Training compulsory	●		●	❍		❍		●		❍			
Involved in assessment	❍	❍	●	●	❍	❍		❍		●	❍	❍	●
Quality assurance in place	❍	❍	❍	❍			❍	●		●			●

● = Full implementation with teachers/trainers

❍ = Partial implementation with teachers/trainers

(Data gathered through research within the TTnet network 2009-11)

Chapter 1 What is Mentoring?

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

(a) appreciate and clarify some misconceptions in mentoring;

(b) justify to an organisation or policy adviser the benefits of mentoring;

(c) describe in outline the mentoring process and life cycle;

(d) describe in outline the mentoring role;

(e) distinguish between mentoring, coaching and counselling;

(f) outline some models of mentoring;

(g) summarise some key messages for policy advisers or organisational leaders.

Introduction

One of the most important factors in the improvement of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) is the professional development of the vocational teacher and, in particular, the initiation of the novice VET teacher into the profession. It is evident that every country wants to have an effective and vibrant VET system and the VET teacher will always be at its core. This target – the skilled and knowledgeable vocational teacher – is not so easy to reach, however. To prepare the effective novice vocational teacher it is necessary to answer a multitude of questions such as:

(a) what kind of vocational teacher is considered effective and why?

(b) how should we prepare such a vocational teacher?

(c) what training model should we choose?

(d) what models of vocational teacher training development (theoretical and practical) are appropriate?

(e) how should universities and vocational training institutions collaborate in this?

A particularly urgent issue in vocational teacher training development is to determine the optimal relations between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Novice VET teachers particularly lack practical pedagogical skills, often because their training courses tend to focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Today, this idea is being addressed in part due to the growth of importance of learning in the workplace – in this case, the novice VET teacher's placement institution. The key here is the organisation of effective cooperation between the student-teachers' university and their placement institution. Obviously, such cooperation between the two institutions is influenced by many factors. One of the most important actors in vocational teacher training is the *mentor*, who ensures a close cooperation between university and vocational education school and the skills, knowledge and competences necessary in the mentoring process. The mentor, as an experienced professional, is given the responsibility to provide guidance and support to a new entrant (i.e. someone joining a VET institution).

Before we examine the role and processes of mentoring, the reader may find it useful to reflect on some popular misconceptions of mentoring as generally perceived, together with considering a table on the benefits of mentoring to persuade the more sceptical within the VET teaching profession.

Popular Misconceptions about Mentoring

Misconception 1: A mentor has potential to exert power on the mentee

One of the most common and troubling myths about mentoring is that a mentor, as a powerful and influential entity, can exert great power over the mentee. Mistakenly, mentoring is considered to take place in a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is in a superior position in comparison to the mentee. It is often believed that such a person may even dominate a vulnerable mentee. Although this may occur in cases where the mentoring experience has turned sour, this is generally not the case. A mentor is a trained professional, usually abiding by an explicit code of mentoring conduct, or, at least, conforming to professional standards of behaviour (see Ethics section in Chapter 2). Though the mentee may be less experienced than the mentor in the teaching profession, this does not make him or her less equal in comparison to the mentor. A healthy and professional mentoring relationship comprises of elements of mutual trust and respect.

Misconception 2: The mentor is older than the mentee.

A common misunderstanding prevailing across the mentoring world is that a mentor is always an older, white-haired professional who is mentoring a relatively younger person. Although this may seem to be the case in the most classic examples of mentoring, such as in the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus, and that between Socrates and Plato, it should not be considered as a rule of thumb in the modern world. A mentor is a person who holds expertise in an area or problem the mentee wishes to develop or resolve. A mentor can be younger than the mentee if he or she has the necessary mentoring skills and expertise required to develop a nurturing mentoring relationship.

Misconception 3: Mentoring relationships are naturally blossoming relationships

One of the common myths is that mentoring is a rare experience occurring only for certain people. This may be true in the case of informal mentoring that most of us have experienced at some point in our lives. However, with an initial push from the institution, successful and long-term formal and informal mentoring relationships can also frequently develop between a teacher trainee and a more experienced teacher.

Misconception 4: Mentoring is a time-consuming process

Another misconception is that mentoring is a time-consuming process lasting for years. In fact, the duration of the mentoring process is variable, being unique to the objectives the trainee teacher wishes to achieve. Typically, individual mentoring sessions last between 1-2 hours. For some mentees the duration of the whole mentoring process can be as short as six months, whereas for others it may go on for years.

Misconception 5: Mentoring is a one-way process

Often, potential mentors believe that mentoring as an intervention contributes only to the knowledge enhancement of the mentee leaving very little benefit for the mentor. However, mentoring is in fact a two-way street to success which offers a knowledge and experience exchange for the teacher trainer, his or her mentor and also for the institution of which they are an integral part (see Benefits of Mentoring, Table 2.1-2.4).

Misconception 6: Mentoring deals only with personal problems or has no limitations

The view which holds that mentoring has no limitations is a misconception, as is the view that mentoring deals only with personal problems. Generally mentoring deals with specific professionally related issues faced by the trainee as well as providing a generic supportive mechanism for VET trainees in order to familiarise the novice VET teacher with the working environment of the VET institute or department. On those occasions in which the mentee is experiencing a personal crisis which is affecting his/her professional activities, the mentor may act as a referral agent directing/advising the trainee where he or she might find support inside or outside the institution. In any mentor trainee relationship, it is important to establish professional boundaries early on (see Ethics section in Chapter 3).

Misconception 7: Mentoring is a face-to-face process

Traditionally, mentoring is believed to be a face-to-face intervention. This, however, is difficult when one of the two players involved in the mentoring is unable to be physically present at the mentoring session. A mentoring relationship can be pursued via various modes of communication such as telephone, e-mails and video conferencing (see section on E –mentoring later in this chapter). One such mode of mentoring is 'blended mentoring', in which the process of mentoring commences with one initial face-to-face meeting and then moves on to several other mentoring sessions involving technological means of communication. Before making use of alternative means of communication, it is essential that the mentor and the mentee set and adhere to a number of ground rules that will help guide the process. These rules include setting a time for the communication, agreeing to a feasible mode of communication, such as e-mails, telephone or other methods, gauging each person's proficiency with the use of technology and making certain that the equipment to be used is in working condition.

Benefits of Mentoring

The following tables of benefits of mentoring (Tables 2.1–2.4) may be used to persuade policy makers or those in leadership positions outside or inside a VET organisation of the value of setting up some kind of a formal or informal mentoring system to support the novice VET teacher. Note that many of these benefits may also be supportive of any policy to build in a system of continuous professional development for a VET teacher at any stage of his or her career.

Table 2.1: Benefits of mentoring – Benefits to the Trainee Teacher (Mentee)

Mentoring is meant to provide effective support for mentees at three main levels: Personal, Emotional and Social
1. Contributes to personal development
2. Offers a tool for stress reduction
3. Overcomes the initial challenges and fears of becoming a teacher
4. Provides a safe and a conducive environment for learning and development
5. Helps identify personal learning needs
6. Widens one's professional competence
7. Generates learning from experiences of others in a safe environment (fast-track learning)
8. Provides professional support during the transition from theory to practice (for novice teachers)
9. Aids job retention and career advancement
10. Provides an opportunity to indulge in self-reflection
11. Offers assistance in problem-solving from a responsible neutral other
12. Helps goal setting and goal clarification
13. Provides tacit knowledge
14. Offers the value of having a 'critical friend' and identification model

Table 2.2: Benefits of mentoring – Benefits to the Teacher Trainer (Mentor)

Mentoring is meant to provide sufficient and effective benefits for mentors at the same three levels: Personal, Emotional and Social as in the case of the mentee.
1. Gives satisfaction in assisting a colleague in achieving his or her professional and personal goals
2. Promotes sharing of knowledge and demonstration of expertise
3. Gains recognition and respect for contributing to the development of others in the organisation
4. Generates new ideas and new perspectives from novice teachers
5. Enhances their own skills in listening, modelling and leadership
6. Widens one's own professional competence
7. Develops greater understanding of barriers and issues faced by colleagues in the organisation

Table 2.3: Benefits of mentoring – Benefits to the VET institution/organisation

Social and professional benefits of mentoring to the VET institution/organisation
1. Increases professionalisation within the training organisation
2. Creates a culture of learning and knowledge transfer/sharing
3. Increases staff satisfaction and staff retention
4. Improves communication, social relations and collegial culture within the training institute/organisation
5. Fosters a culture of shared values and team work
6. Provides cost effective training for the less experienced or novice teachers
7. Offers focused support that is more relevant to the job in comparison with classroom training
8. Improves leadership and people management skills
9. Improves motivation and productivity
10. Supports organisational change and restructuring (where applicable to a VET organisation)
11. Provides feedback for improving training provision
12. Offers a bridge between theory and practice

Table 2.4: Benefits of mentoring – Benefits on the level of the VET/Educational system

Mentoring raises quality in education and thus contributes to the attractiveness of VET
1. Enhances the quality of teachers' and trainers' education programmes and practice
2. Provides feedback for better coordination between initial and continuing professional development for teaching/training staff
3. Creates conditions for developing effective programmes for continuous professional development
4. Develops policies that support the professional development of teachers and trainers
5. Deals with skills deficits amongst the pedagogical staff and helps to improve the quality of staff
6. Supports the VET system in addressing new roles and competences of staff
7. Addresses and supports the complexity of the pedagogical provision
8. Supports teaching and training provision in meeting the challenges of the changing environment
9. Improves VET teaching and training performance
10. Increases professionalisation in the system
11. Makes teaching and training an attractive career choice by encouraging more people to enter and remain in the teaching profession
12. Reduces dropout rate of teachers

Mentoring: Nature, Forms and Phases

Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, & Garret-Harris (2006) define mentoring as help by one person to another in making important transitions in knowledge, work or thinking. Mentoring can be short-term or long-term, depending on the needs of the mentee. It can be either internal or external, but it is always conducted by someone experienced in the area the mentee wishes to address. Mentoring generally has two spectrums: sponsorship and developmental. Sponsorship is usually a one-way learning process, which occurs when the mentoring relationship is sponsored by the mentees' organisation in order to address his or her career and professional needs. In such a relationship, the mentor is in charge of the mentee's advancement. Sponsorship mentoring is widely used in the North American culture (Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004) and also in some European countries (e.g. Cyprus). It is primarily used to provide a new recruit with on-the-job training. In contrast to this practice, developmental mentoring which is more popular in the European context is a two-way learning process where the mentee is responsible for his or her own personal and professional development and career advancement. It is aimed at making the mentee self-resourceful (Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004). Moreover, developmental mentoring emphasises the experience gap rather than the status gap as is the case in sponsorship mentoring.

Mentoring in VET is generally understood as a process whereby an experienced VET teacher is given responsibility for helping the beginning teacher by providing emotional, social (introducing the beginning teacher into the institutional norms and values of the department/organisation) and professional level support[4]. In the process of practical teaching, the mentor has to be able to advise on various teaching, learning and assessment strategies across a range of various classroom contexts. The mentor must also be able to provide feedback in a supportive manner consistent with high professional standards. This includes help in the preparation of teaching materials, including, where appropriate, the blending in of new technologies to support student learning.

The mentoring process passes through certain identifiable stages in its life cycle (Miller 2005). The life cycle model Miller presents is visualised in Figure 1 and Table 3.

The winding up phase bridges the 'old age' and 'death' stages. The mentorship concludes when both the mentee and the mentor have determined that the set goals and expectations have been met. Therefore, the winding up phase could be divided into three sub-stages, such as:

(a) reflecting on and evaluating the mentoring process: the mentor and mentee complete a programme evaluation;

(b) celebrating: reviewing and praising the mentee's progress, highlighting her or his strengths and the experience gained;

(c) closure or follow up- discussing the need and possibility of future mentoring collaboration.

It is important that both the mentor and the mentee are active at all the stages of mentoring, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities during the mentoring process. Table 3 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee during each phase of mentoring.

[4] Developing Coherent and System-Wide Induction Programmes for Beginning Teachers – a Handbook for Policy Makers. Commission staff working document, European Commission, 28.04.2010, p. 16 **http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/handbook0410_en.pdf**

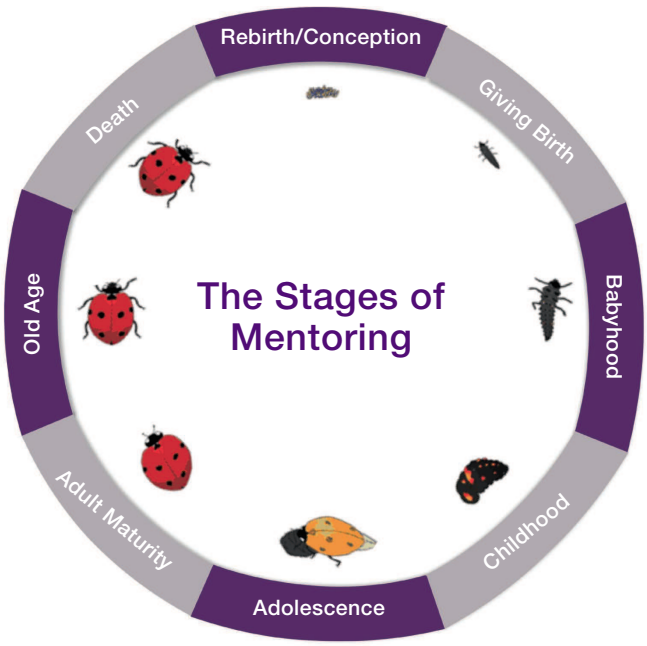

Figure 1: The stages of mentoring
(Source: Miller, 2005 adapted)

Stage 1: *Conception*: Gaining commitment to the mentoring process;

Stage 2: *Giving birth*: Creating a relationship based on a common understanding of the mentoring process and each other's roles and expectations and a healthy rapport;

Stage 3: *Babyhood*: Exploring professional development (PD) needs, setting goals and preparing proformas (guides/ templates) to be used for the rest of the mentoring relationship;

Stage 4: *Childhood*: Develop a common understanding of the mentor's style and its effectiveness;

Stage 5: *Adolescence*: Assist in goal-setting;

Stage 6: *Adult maturity*: Mutual learning and development;

Stage 7: *Old age*: Reflecting together on what has been achieved through the relationship;

Stage 8: *Death*: Achieving closure and moving on once goals are attained;

Stage 9: *Rebirth*: Identifying needs for future collaboration.

Each of these stages is discussed in Table 3 (below and overleaf).

Table 3: Roles and responsibilities of mentor and mentee within the mentoring stages

Stages of mentorship	Roles & Responsibilities of MENTOR	Roles & Responsibilities of MENTEE
Stage 1: *Conception*	• Embark on a commitment to the mentoring relationship • Clarify to mentee the purpose and benefits of mentoring • Explain mentoring process to the mentee	• Initiate the need for mentoring • Embark on a commitment to the mentoring relationship • Identify own professional development (PD) needs • Understand benefits of mentoring
Stage 2: *Giving birth*	• Clarify and explain own mentoring style • Present mentee with mentoring structure • Discuss mentoring principles, professional values and ethical issues • Establish a healthy rapport with the mentee	• Outline own expectations of mentoring process • Discuss and understand mentoring principles, professional values and ethical issues • Actively participate in the rapport building process • Get acquainted with the mentoring process and the format of meetings
Stage 3: *Babyhood*	• Show genuine interest in mentee's PD needs • Research mentee's PD needs • Create documents and proformas (See Chapter 3 for examples) as per mentee's needs	• Formulate own needs and expectations from the initial meeting • Disclose PD needs with the mentor
Stage 4: *Childhood*	• Explain documents and proformas to the mentee • Evaluate the use of these tools to ensure their effectiveness for the mentee • Discuss style of mentoring and feedback strategies	• Understand the documentation involved • Report on the working and effectiveness of the documentation in view of the PD needs • Discuss, report and voice expectations of mentors proposed style and feedback strategies

Table 3: Roles and responsibilities of mentor and mentee within the mentoring stages (continued)

Stages of mentorship	Roles & Responsibilities of MENTOR	Roles & Responsibilities of MENTEE
Stage 5: *Adolescence*	• Assist mentee in setting goals and objectives • Suggest mentee the PD action plan for a certain time period	• Set goals and objectives with mentor's assistance • Discuss and state agreement/disagreement with the action plan set • Revise suggested action plan in the light of own PD needs • Be responsible for the implementation of the action plan
Stage 6: *Adult maturity*	• Observe mentee's working and learning processes • Frequently consult mentee to evaluate the effectiveness of the process • Learn from mentee's issues and experiences to understand the changing nature of the VET profession • Present criteria of assessment being used (formative or summative) • Observe mentee's behaviour or signs of dependency or emotionally breakdown (See Chapter 3) • Problem management by referring to an alternative support service (if needed) (see Chapter 3)	• Be open to constructive feedback • Analyse own teaching and learning practice as per the structure agreed upon • Explore mentor's past experiences of similar situations and evaluate the relevance to the issues being dealt with • Be reflective of personal, professional practices and relations • Be self-observant of potential dependence on the mentor • Be open and tolerant to suggestions or referrals by mentor to alternative support service if need be.
Stage 7: *Old age*	• Prepare plan and documents for reflection of the mentoring process • Get feedback from mentee on what could have been better • Feedback to mentee on what the mentee could have done differently	• Reflect and revise if the PD plan was fulfilled • Inform mentor on what could have been done better • Reflect on suggestions from mentor • Give subjective information about the mentoring process
Stage 8: *Death*	• Reflect on mentoring process and its effectiveness • Improve mentoring strategy for future mentoring activities	• Think of future PD needs • Reflect on mentoring process and its effectiveness
Stage 9: *Rebirth*	• Look for possibilities / areas to extend professional collaboration • Identify further PD needs of mentee	• Show initiative for maintaining professional collaboration (if need arises)

(Source: Miller, 2005)

Example from practice 1: Birth of the mentoring relationship

Peter, who is undertaking an initial teacher training course, is being mentored by Maria at a VET college; their subject specialism is computing. Prior to their first meeting Maria has e-mailed Peter requesting him to bring his own agenda to the meeting; she also tells him that she will bring her own agenda. This helps to allay Peter's anxiety, as it would seem that this is the first attempt to encourage the relationship to be one which involves mutual pro-activity and respect.

At the meeting they begin with Peter's agenda and his initial concerns, in particular practical resourcing issues such as IT facilities, desk space and photocopying allocation. He also raises the issue of the frequency, duration and location of future meetings. Maria is able to address his concerns.

Maria's agenda begins with the central issues of confidentiality, of the boundaries of the relationship and of the expectations and obligations both of herself and of Peter. They also discuss subject specific issues such as the curriculum, the level of the students and more general issues connected with the teaching of computing.

They agree that each will take notes at alternate meetings and e-mail the notes to the other.

Finally they both read and discuss the agreements they have signed.*

The meeting lasts for 30 minutes and both leave feeling relieved that a rapport between them has begun to be established.

**See Chapter 3, Figure 5*

The Mentor Role

A mentor is generally an experienced teacher who helps the future vocational teacher trainee successfully integrate his/her theoretical knowledge and practical skills – that is, acquire appropriate practical teaching competences as part of their entry into the profession.

A mentor, then, helps the future vocational teacher to:

(a) convert theoretical knowledge to practical skills particularly during their teaching practice;

(b) understand the peculiarities and subtleties of being a vocational teacher or trainer;

(c) adjust to, and work effectively within, institutional and organisational cultures.

In practice, the mentor will often have to:

(a) be a role model by allowing the mentee (trainee teacher) to observe them teach;

(b) observe the mentee teach and offer constructive feedback.

The mentor will also cooperate with tutors, seeking to ensure that the vocational teacher training programme encourages the development of practical teaching competencies during the process of teacher training. The mentor also helps a novice VET teacher to understand formal and non-formal rules of institutional life and culture.

There are certain requirements for mentors: he or she should be an experienced teacher, believe in the significance of pedagogical work, love their work and comply with pedagogical ethics requirements, be creative, tolerant, empathetic and respect others. In this sense, the mentor provides a role model for the novice VET teacher to demonstrate the way in which imparted knowledge, attitudes and skills can be more long-lasting than formal instructions.

One problematic issue in the mentoring role is whether mentors should 'assist' or 'assess'. On a practical level, this issue is generally interlinked with the availability of resources: for example, whether the institute has enough assessors to carry out the assessment. Certainly when the mentor is involved in formal assessment of the trainee, it alters the dynamic of the relationship. In such a situation, the novice VET teacher may be apprehensive of being totally honest and revealing about his or her worries and concerns. As a result of this, he or she may prefer to discuss the more serious issues with a friend or confidante outside the mentoring relationship, thus defying the purpose of mentoring and leaving small trivial matters for discussion with the mentor. Breakdown in the relationship can create distrust and suspicion as well as a likelihood of resistance towards future opportunities of supportive relationships.

Differences between Mentoring, Coaching and Tutoring

Mentoring is similar in terms of some of its functions to coaching and tutoring, but there are also important differences. Table 4 suggests that, compared with coaching, mentoring is usually quite a long term relationship (or at least as long as the mentee's training period), wide ranging in focus (depending on what objectives have been agreed between mentor and mentee) and with a focus on personal and career development.

Table 4: Summary of differences between mentoring and coaching

Mentoring	Coaching
Can be quite long term	A short term relationship
Wide ranging in focus	Focus on specific issues and goals
Focus on career and personal development	Focus on performance and development issues
Focus on the future	Focus on the present

(Source: Gray, 2010)

In contrast, tutors help learners to 'fill in the gaps' in their subject knowledge and to gain a better grasp of the subject. They will help student teachers to learn new processes or concepts. Tutors, then, will be skilled as teachers. Mentors, as part of their role, may also help student teachers acquire new subject knowledge. However, their role is much wider than this. As we shall see in this handbook, the relationship between mentor and learner is a much more interpersonal

one, in which the mentor provides personal support and reassurance, in part, to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the student teacher. The primary aim of the mentor is to ease the passage of the novice VET teacher into the profession.

While mentoring needs to make use of some of the skills and approaches of a counsellor (such as empathetic listening and positive regard for the mentee), mentoring should not be confused with counselling. Counselling helps people to come to terms with the past, and provides support to, first contain, and then move out of a crisis. So it is, essentially, remedial, helping someone to become 'whole' and to rediscover their place in the family, community or workplace. Also, counselling may be quite long term in duration. A mentor who has reason to believe that a mentee is suffering from depression or deep-seated psychological problems has a duty to refer this person on to a trained and qualified counsellor. When and how this is done, will normally be included in the Ethical Code of Conduct which should be part of an institution's mentoring system (see Chapter 2 section on Ethics).

Models of Mentoring

This handbook offers three models of mentoring:

1. Formal mentoring versus Informal mentoring.
2. Subject specialist mentoring versus Generic mentoring.
3. E- mentoring

Formal mentoring versus informal mentoring

Mentoring can take place at either a formal or informal level. Informal mentoring is largely a spontaneous, ad hoc, relationship, with no organisational interference or control. Typically, a novice teacher may approach a more experienced colleague and ask for help and guidance. They may call this relationship 'mentoring' or use a different term (or none at all). In informal mentoring, the mentor-mentee may meet on an 'as required basis'.

In contrast, formal mentoring is arranged by an organisation, usually using a structured, pre-designed programme and is often used for developing new members of staff. Roles and responsibilities in formal schemes are usually clearly defined. The mentor-mentee may arrange meetings in advance at a designated venue and at regular intervals, take notes and time limit the discussions. In some cases the mentor may be required to also engage in formal assessment of and reporting about the novice VET teacher. This may alter the dynamics of the relationship (see earlier in The Mentor Role section).

The merits and demerits of formal and informal systems have been long debated by researchers (Allen, Day and Letz, 2002; Chao, Waltz & Gardner, 1992; Ragins and Cotton, 1999). Although an informal mentoring system may seem to stand out as regards its benefits to the mentoring pair (due to the perceived freedom and lack of obligations in comparison to the formal mentoring system), the success of any mentoring programme depends on the bond and relationship between the pair. Ragins, Cotton, & Miller (2000) are of the opinion that the assumption that informal mentoring relationships are more beneficial than formal mentoring relationships is too simplistic.

Subject/Skill specialist mentoring versus Generic Subject mentoring

There is a serious tension between policy makers and specialist regarding this issue. Some argue that, if a mentor is sufficiently experienced in teaching and learning processes, they can mentor a novice VET teacher irrespective of the mentor's knowledge (or lack of it) of the subject specialism of the novice VET teacher (generic mentoring) as is the case in Estonia, Ireland and The Netherlands. In contrast there are those, for example, the inspectorate in the UK, who state assertively that, for any effective mentoring to take place, the mentor must be a subject/skill specialist as well as being recognised for his or her pedagogic expertise (subject/skill specialist mentoring).

The tension between generic and subject/skill specialist mentoring occurs particularly in situations where it is hard to find sufficient specialist mentors within an organisation. Pragmatism in this regard might have to prevail. Where possible, the combination of subject/skill knowledge and pedagogic expertise is an ideal one. The practicality is often that, at a minimum, a mentor should be well recognised and acknowledged (by the organisation) as having pedagogic skills and an engaging personality. Such qualities might be sufficient but necessary conditions for a VET teacher/trainer to take on a mentoring role.

E-mentoring

As the mentoring relationship is often subject to the constraints of geography and time, the use of technology may offer certain solutions. Often there is a physical distance between the employment location of the mentor and mentee or between the mentor and the institution, which poses difficulties for mentor training. Technology can certainly be used in mentoring, but, as mentoring centres on a relationship, its limitations must be acknowledged. It should never be a substitute for this relationship, but can be used to enhance it.

In terms of the mentor-mentee relationship, in addition to regular face-to-face meetings, there can be 'virtual' meetings online, regular e-mail contact or a blog might be used. Of course, both participants must be wary of the misunderstandings that can arise from an over-casual use of the written word - a medium without tone, body language or other features of face-to-face communication. It should be added that, alongside face-to-face meetings and e-contact, in many educational or training contexts the mentor would be observing the teaching/training of the mentee, although theoretically, this could be carried out through a recording in some form. However, the ethos and atmosphere of a learning situation is far better served by actual attendance.

The other dimension of mentoring which can be served by technology is that of mentor training and mentor-mentee evaluation. Again, on account of the constraints mentioned above, it is sometimes impractical for the mentor to attend training. Once a mentor is registered centrally, an e-mail controlled database can be used to send a training course, in which the mentor is asked to reflect on many aspects of the mentoring relationship, such as: their own competencies, a mentor skills inventory, the initial meeting with the mentee, the stages of mentoring, subject specialist issues, observation and feedback, the challenges and supportive dimensions of mentoring and evaluation. This is then submitted and assessed centrally.

Furthermore, an e-mentoring system is very useful if we wish to evaluate the relationship. This could be done by setting up a central mentor database that is monitored and run by a designated mentor coordinator. Through the database, the mentor and mentee are sent evaluation forms which can then be sent on to interested parties in the institution. Once there is evidence of training and evaluation, an e-certificate can be issued at the end of the mentoring cycle.

As a conclusion to this chapter, some key messages about mentoring to help organisations and practitioners considering setting up a mentoring system can be highlighted. The actual practicalities of setting up a mentoring system within an organisation are set out in Chapter 3.

Summary Points

(a) leadership and management of the overall purpose, vision and ethos for the use of mentors needs to be clearly explained at the outset of mentoring arrangements;

(b) a clear, straightforward model of mentoring needs to be set up that identifies who the mentors and the mentees are, with contact details, role expectations, proposed timings and deadlines for carrying out and fulfilling all mentor duties;

(c) it is helpful for the mentoring model to be explored in a face-to-face training session so that mentors can raise queries and discuss these or any other issues;

(d) there are many potential effective models for mentoring, but it is useful for mentors to have training and support from senior mentors who are engaged at a higher level to consider issues to improve overall practice;

(e) appropriate resources need to be provided for mentors-mentees to do their work;

(f) expectations of mentors and mentees should be sufficiently straightforward, flexible and well-planned to allow people time and freedom to do their work in their own way;

(g) methods for sharing and disseminating the benefits of mentoring can be considered to foster a collegial culture throughout the organisation.

Chapter 2- The Foundations of Mentoring Communication and Interaction

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

(a) appreciate the meaning of trust and honesty in mentor-mentee dialogue and relationship;

(b) demonstrate the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication;

(c) show how mentors must offer both support and challenges;

(d) describe how cultural and ethnic diversity affects communication;

(e) outline approaches to measuring the progress of the mentee;

(f) discuss types of mentoring feedback;

(g) apply ethical perspectives and principles in mentoring.

Introduction

In Chapter 1, we discussed some of the benefits of mentoring to individuals (mentees), to mentors in terms of their own professional development and to VET institutions. In this chapter we will be examining the mentoring process itself, looking in some detail at the communication process, at how mentors need to pay particular attention to their use of language, and at the building of rapport between the mentor and their mentee. A productive mentor-mentee relationship has to be built upon trust and mutual respect. However, as we shall see, this does not mean that the mentor has to agree with everything the mentee says and does. It is the role of the mentor to both support and challenge the mentee. But while being honest, the mentor must be sensitive to the vulnerability of the mentee and provide feedback that is valid, honest and accurate, while at the same time avoiding feedback that could destroy the self-confidence of the mentee.

Communication and Interaction

Human activity is based on communication and interaction. A human being has a need to express intentions, needs, opinions and to understand and interpret the environment. Individuals also learn and develop through interactions between themselves and others. Interactions with the self are about inner dialogue and self-reflection. Interactions with the others take place mainly in discussions, in either oral or written form. Below we explore various elements that influence communication in mentoring:

(a) communication and the mentoring relationship;

(b) mutual respect and trust;

(c) support and challenge;

(d) challenges related to language, background and situation;

(e) listening and communication;

(f) non-verbal communication;

(g) personality and communication – can one learn to be a good communicator?

Communication and the mentoring relationship

The key tool in a mentoring process is the discussion between the mentor and the mentee. The success of a mentoring relationship, then, is directly related to the success of the interactions between the mentor and mentee. These interactions can be in the form of face-to-face discussions or via e-mail, telephone or other social media. Moreover, interactions can also be non-verbal in nature.

Interactions are essential for both mentor and mentee to adopt new ways of thinking and observing. In order to learn mutually, differences between the participants in a discussion or dialogue are vital (see, for example, Leskela, 2005). Thus, the less experienced mentee can benefit and learn from the experiences of the mentor. The mentor in turn can learn to look at things from a different perspective, with 'fresh eyes'. A mentoring process should be creative, exploring new areas and perspectives. When a mentor is genuinely interested in the professional development of the mentee, the development of the interactions can be remarkable (see, for example, Kram & Hall 1996; Clutterbuck 1998).

A real mentoring dialogue occurs when the participants learn to understand and interpret each other's messages correctly, and take into account the recipient's competences and different contexts when sending their messages. A real dialogue is mutually conducted and not directed at another person (Isaacs, 2001).

It is important then that the mentor and the mentee establish and clarify their roles, relationships and trust during the mentoring interactions. Care should be taken that the mentor, who is usually and falsely perceived as the superior figure in the relationship (see Chapter 1 Popular misconceptions about mentoring), is not a domineering personality. This means that the mentor's achievements and merits should be kept peripheral in the communication. A good mentoring communication is based on dialogue, not monologue. Hence, a mentee should be given enough space and opportunity to communicate.

Mentoring is about working together to identify the professional strengths and weaknesses of the mentee and about working on these. Good mentoring communication is open and honest (see sections on Mutual respect and Trust below). Trust and respect mean that both parties can be comfortable in each other's presence. Openness is also about being genuine and sincere. Mentoring relationships in which the participants do not express their feelings on more sensitive issues tend to remain superficial (Leskela, 2005). Openness and honesty in expression further increases trust.

Mutual respect and trust

A relationship built on trust and respect eventually creates a secure and safe environment for mentoring to take place. In such a conducive environment, it is possible to deal with unpleasant or sensitive issues as well as freely express emotions. Feelings can effectively reveal sore points and issues to be developed and improved. A trusting relationship also enables the testing of new ideas in such a safe environment, with no risk of being mocked or having feelings of failure. A trusting relationship also enables honest and constructive feedback, even when negative. Such feedback can create innovation and new ways of thinking – for both parties.

Mentees should effectively receive and deal with critical feedback, even though this may seem difficult. This means being receptive to their mentors' suggestions and maintaining an open-minded approach to honest criticism in areas in which they wish to improve.

The starting point for establishing mutual respect is the matching process. Research shows that mentors and mentees are likely to feel more motivated to maximize the relationship when both parties perceive they have a voice in the matching process (Allen, 2006). Hence, in some institutions, mentees may be given a choice of two or three mentors from which to choose.

Once mutual respect and trust have been established, they should also be maintained. This requires regular reflection on the mentoring process and the mentoring relationship, keeping track of what has been going on and preparing for the next meetings. So, at intervals, mentors and mentees might address the question: 'How are we doing?'

An important aspect to consider in maintaining trust is the question of 'mistakes' – how should the mentor intervene when it is obvious that the mentee is going to make a mistake? Should the mentor intervene at all or let the mentee learn from his or her errors? It is common knowledge that sometimes it is best to learn from your own mistakes, but not letting the mentee know about the potential pitfalls may be harmful for the trusting relationship. It would be best to discuss the matter of independent decisions and possibilities of failure at the beginning of the mentoring relationship and agree upon how to deal with this issue. Whenever necessary, it will then be possible to refer back to that earlier agreement.

It is essential that the mentee and the mentor mutually agree that the content of their discussions will be kept confidential. This will enable a mentee to try out preliminary ideas that he or she may want to explore before sharing them in a wider audience, as well as expressing doubts and reservations without having to be afraid of any consequences at an organisational level.

Support and challenge

Most definitions of mentoring consistently include the word 'support'; it is undoubtedly one of the main functions of mentoring. Wang, Tomlinson and Noe (2010) refer to three distinct types of functions: psychosocial support (for example, counselling, friendship), career-related support (for example, coaching, sponsorship) and role modelling. However, mentoring without an adequate level of challenge often may not be successful. According to Daloz (1986), the effective mentor – mentee relationship should balance three elements: support, challenge and a vision of the mentee's future in the profession. If mentors are only supportive and do not challenge mentees, the mentees' professional growth is not adequately stimulated, leading to 'validation' without 'growth'. However, challenge without support leads to 'regression' in the mentee's professional development, also without 'growth', while a lack of both challenge and support leads to 'stasis'. The ideal combination is therefore a combination of support and challenge, which leads to appropriate levels of 'growth'. (see Figure 2)

	No support	Support
Challenge	Regression	Growth
No challenge	Stasis	Validation

Figure 2: Support versus challenge *(Source: Daloz 1986, adapted)*

Challenging discussion and action, led by the mentor and carried out in a supportive way, relies on mutual respect. If there is no respect towards the mentor, any challenge can be treated in a negative way and the ideas rejected. Similarly, if there is no respect towards the mentee, challenges may become too demanding or even spiteful. When that happens, the mentor should reflect on the process they are using and try to find out when and in what circumstances he or she started to feel some grudge towards the mentee and why he or she did not bring it up in an open dialogue.

In order to challenge in a supportive way, the mentor should discuss options and opportunities, set positive expectations and ask curious questions about how and in what ways the mentee might discover how they are able to deal with challenging issues.

Challenges related to language, background and situation

The mentoring process requires the development of a relationship between the mentor and mentee. Figure 3 overleaf illustrates the many aspects influencing this mentoring process.

Figure 3 shows the multitude of dimensions that influence and contribute to the success or shortcomings in a mentoring process. All these dimensions and their components contribute to our, sometimes very individual, perceptions and understanding of things and why we 'speak different languages'.

The figure illustrates how the relationship is influenced by the participants' backgrounds such as age, cultural background and gender (socio-cultural dimension), their personalities (personal dimension) and their educational background and knowledge about the issues at hand (skills dimension). Finally, the situation and context in which the mentoring takes place (situational dimension) can also affect the relationship. For example, if the working atmosphere is very formal and competitive, there are less chances of success than in a less competitive and informal environment where trust and equality are easily established.

Interpretation and understanding takes place in relation to these dimensions and factors. The realities in which people live provide different meanings for words or messages. Linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally, but interpret, organise and classify (see, for example, Fowler, 1996; Karvonen, 2002; Volmari, 2009). Thus, for example the word for *teacher* can signify graduation and a dream coming true for a teacher student, while in contrast, *teacher* can be understood as a resource by an administrator. Understanding is determined by society, by culture and by awareness of other factors that influence a situation.

Further, differing expectations and aims can greatly influence interactions and interpretation in mentoring. Every statement has a motive and thus one can always ask, 'Why do you say that?' Statements can be fully understood only when the said is understood together with what is not said (Gadamer, 2004). The statements could be continued with, 'because this is what I value' or 'this is what I think you value'.

The complexity of the interaction process requires clarity in the mentoring relationship. Clarity arises from good planning and preparation as well as simple and clear communication. Planning and preparation are necessary so that the participants can focus on the interaction and address the issues at hand in a logical and meaningful order. Planning and preparing also means that the participants understand what they are doing and can consequently express themselves in a clear and simple way.

Often in VET institutes across Europe, linguistic barriers can be a hurdle in the communication process of a mentoring relationship amongst migrant teachers and trainers. In such cases where language is an issue between mentor and mentee, clear and simple language is of particular significance. In situations where there is no obvious and common means of communication, the use of non-verbal communication is more important than in situations where both parties understand the nuances in language.

In addition to differences in language skills, the mentoring process can be a challenge due to cultural differences. The mentor's responsibility is to interpret cultural differences, for example arising from ethnic, gender or age differences, to enable mutual understanding.

Cultural sensitivity requires open-mindedness, honesty and awareness. This does not mean that either the mentor or the mentee should downgrade or negate their cultural background or express exaggerated humility with regard to the other person's culture. Nor does it mean that either party has to be familiar with every aspect of the other person's culture. If the relationship is based on trust and openness and a good rapport between the mentor and the mentee has been established, cultural differences may not be an issue.

Awareness, sensitivity and understanding of the dimensions described above are some other prerequisites for a successful mentoring relationship. A good mentor is capable of asking appropriate questions. He or she does not impose onto the mentee his or her own views or answers. Both should have the capacity to be active and genuine listeners. A good mentor is skillful in encouraging a mentee through feedback. He or she can provide facts and knowledge that are appropriate for the situation as well as convey his or her own ideas and thoughts (Juusela, Lillia & Rinne, 2000).

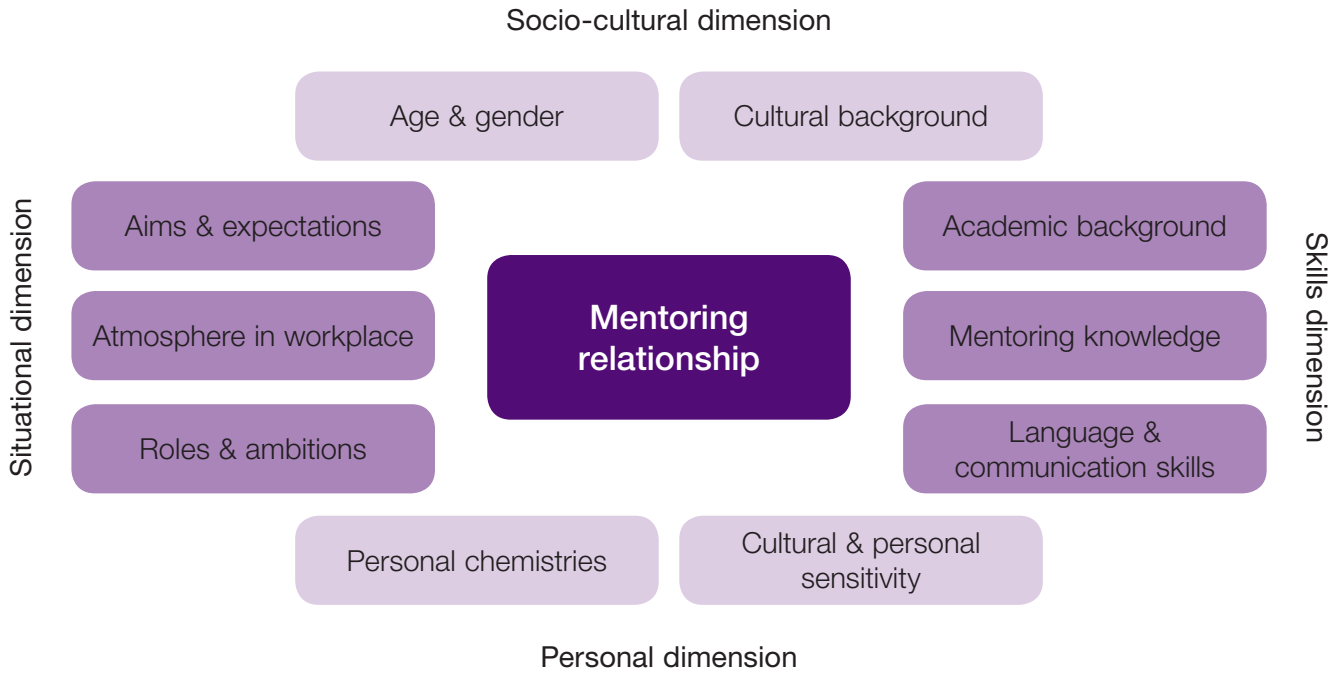

Figure 3: Dimensions and factors influencing the mentoring relationship (*Source: Volmari, 2010*)

Listening and communication

The mentor's responsibility is to create a relationship that gives room and space for the mentee to learn. Mentoring is not about teaching how things are. This can be a problem for teachers who have traditionally been the sages to 'dish out the truth' in their roles in the classroom. Listening indicates respect, caring and a genuine interest in the other person – the building blocks of trust. The thought processes behind such an approach are: 'If I show you that I appreciate you, you will appreciate me too'. It is unlikely that a person will mistrust someone who signals appreciation, and vice versa.

Listening is necessary for identifying and understanding the needs and aspirations of the mentee and reacting to these. Listening entails the ability and willingness to look at things from the other person's perspective. This requires empathy and sometimes keeping back the mentor's immediate reactions, thus leaving room for reflection.

A good mentor listens to verbal messages and also observes non-verbal signals (see next section), and he or she can change their approach according to the situation, that is, they can show sensitivity to the situation and to the personalities involved. Listening is also about recognising what is not being said. 'Hearing' what a reticent mentee does not talk about or refers to ambiguously, can reveal what the difficult and sore issues are, issues that would need to be discussed and opened up. Thus, listening can help a mentor create the right questions that help the mentee recognise and deal with his or her problems and challenges. Such questions also guide the mentee to assess his or her own professional behaviour, actions and thinking.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication can be more powerful than verbal communication. It is estimated that the majority of communication between people is non-verbal (Leathers, 1997). Non-verbal communication includes facial and bodily expressions, such as smiling or shaking one's head, distance and placement in relation to other people, use of emphasis and volume when speaking and touching (for example, shaking hands or embracing another person).

Non-verbal communication has many functions. It can complement verbal communication or sometimes even speak more than words. For example, eye contact can indicate various emotions in a mentoring session. It can be used to communicate whose turn it is to speak. Eye contact can also be used to signal feelings and relationships between people. For instance, frequent, confident eye contact by the mentee can indicate comfort or trust, whereas the same, used by the mentor, can convey a sign of genuine interest. In contrast, lack of eye contact by the mentee can act as a reflection of his or her current state of mind, indicating, for example, feelings of dejection or sadness. Interpreting non-verbal communication can be difficult and requires sensitivity. It can contain a number of messages and it can be easily misinterpreted. Non-verbal communication is also culturally bound. In Mediterranean cultures, gestures tend to be frequent and rather animated in comparison to the Central/North European cultures. A familiar example is that in Greece nodding means 'no' and shaking one's head means 'yes'.

Non-verbal communication, or rather the lack of it, is one of the main challenges involved in e-mentoring. Obviously, in e-mentoring, the participants are unable to make use of body language and non-verbal cues. Nonverbal communication is particularly powerful in communicating issues of trust, liking and empathy that are fundamental to the mentoring relationship. As these aspects are missing in mentoring sessions that take place online in written form, participants need to pay more careful attention to the verbal, in this case, written expression. Using 'smileys' and other pictures to enforce 'emotional' messages and to convey a sense of goodwill can be a good idea.

Personality and communication – can one learn to be a good communicator?

Personality and communication go hand in hand. The personality is the framework within which communication and expression exists and develops. Consequently, there are limits to, for example, how mature a communicator an immature person be or how vivid discussions can be between very introverted persons.

This does not mean that one cannot develop as a communicator. One can become an excellent communicator within the limits of one's personality. Good mentors can have different types of personalities and be different as communicators, with their own strengths and weaknesses. What is common to them is the courage to be themselves, and that they are genuinely interested in mentoring, and in promoting the well-being and development of the mentee. They also offer a range of rich experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, a good mentor must also have the capacity to appreciate that his or her mentee's personality may be opposite to that of his or her own or in some cases not as pleasing as the mentor may have expected it to be. Hence, it would be inappropriate to expect a mentee to have the kind of personality that one may look for in a friend or from someone in a social situation.

An attempt has been made in this section to point to the diverse ways of communicating and the key issues that should be considered in the interaction and communication in a mentoring process. Good mentoring communication is not about being an orator; it is about coming across as a person with strengths, weaknesses and differences, about communicating empathy, caring and the willingness to participate in mentoring proactively and to help the mentee develop professionally.

Measuring Progress

Measuring progress can focus on two elements, evaluation and assessment. Evaluation looks at the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Assessment measures or judges the mentee in terms of their placement and teaching performance. In many European contexts, a mentor is not involved in the assessment process (see Table 1). Indeed, assessment could be seen as contrary to the nurturing and supportive role of the mentor. However, in other countries such as Denmark, Estonia, The Netherlands and the UK, the mentor is required to both support and assess (see Table 1).

Evaluating the relationship

Evaluating the progress of the relationship should be an aspect of most meetings between the mentor and mentee, but, in the cycle of the relationship, it must be central to the final meeting/s. Evaluation should be carried out by both the mentor and the mentee and probably should form an item on all agendas at the end of each meeting. Both members should be encouraged to carry out self-evaluation. Moreover, the mentor can evaluate the progress of the mentee and vice-versa. The outcomes of their respective evaluations should be shared by both members.

Formal and informal assessment

Formal assessment may focus on issues concerning, for example: punctuality, reliability, subject specialist knowledge, lesson planning, communication skills, use of resources, main strengths, developmental needs, application of teaching methods, and classroom management issues. Assessment can be formal or informal. Formal assessment results should form part of a report written at the end of the mentoring relationship. Informal assessment is linked to every day comments, informal advice and friendly critiques, often provided by more experienced departmental colleagues. The results of informal assessment do not form part of formal assessment reports.

In observations of teaching or training, assessment may involve pre-set criteria, set either locally or nationally. The criteria could involve, for instance, aspects of planning, communication, methodology, assessment issues, classroom management, resources, differentiation, and other such areas of work. The institution would also have to decide whether to use Pass/Fail, whether to grade a lesson, or whether to use a developmental model. In addition, the mentee should self-assess the lesson, perhaps taking into account any learner feedback. The mentee should also be encouraged to write a response to the mentor's assessment.

The manner in which feedback is given is clearly central to the issue of assessment. Threats or undiluted criticism often produce defensiveness and are counter-productive to the main purpose of the mentoring relationship, that is, the improvement of teaching and learning. Feedback should be given promptly and should include as many positive points as possible. It is often desirable to deliver feedback as 'tips' for improvement, using a 'Why don't you try....?' style. Another effective means of giving feedback involves an empathetic style, as in: 'Yes, I had that problem when I first started teaching...' (see next section for more on Feedback).

If assessment of a mentee is carried out by an institution, one must not forget its main goal – improvement. Most mentees improve through encouragement.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Effective feedback is a vital aspect of mentoring. The way in which feedback is administered can either make or break a mentoring relationship. This section of the handbook provides suggestions on how mentors might best give feedback and the importance of being sensitive to the mentee's responses.

It is the duty of mentors to give honest, critical, timely, regular and supportive feedback to their mentees. Such feedback should always be aimed at the well-being of the mentee in order to develop their practice effectively, to learn and grow to take on and achieve new challenges. Often, a mentoring experience is described as experiencing the world from someone else's shoes without actually having to be in them. This may also be a good guiding principle for a mentor in giving effective feedback to his or her mentee. For instance, would you like to hear some of the (harsh) feedback you would give someone? In most cases, the answer, to this question is 'No'.

The main principles of giving feedback are as follows:

(a) mentors should be specific and realistic about feedback, mentioning practical methods and particular areas in which the mentee can achieve the recommended changes;

(b) a feedback session must always start with feedback and acknowledgement of positive areas in which the mentee is doing well, even if these are relatively minor, before moving on to discuss challenging points;

(c) feedback must always be honest and genuine. Feedback must never be personal in nature and should address the target areas for development;

(d) mentors need to avoid giving over-positive or over-negative feedback, adjusting their expectations to suit the level of development of the mentee and the overall situation involved;

(e) mentors must avoid both over-formal *and* over-familiar approaches when giving feedback. A skilful balance between these opposites ensures a good mentoring approach which is simultaneously positive and challenging, in which the mentor provides appropriate guidance and support to develop the mentee (see next section on Types of mentoring feedback for more information on dealing with sensitive feedback);

(f) a mentor should be observant of the way in which the mentee deals with feedback. He or she must have a contingency plan if he or she notices the mentee getting upset or hostile over the feedback received. Some steps to resolve such a situation are by adjusting the mentoring discussion, postponing the meeting if necessary or allocating time to the mentee in order to explore the feedback, reflecting and discussing areas of unwelcomed feedback;

(g) mentors may also need to prioritise between items of feedback. In the case of several points of criticism, it may be wise to raise only the most important areas in the first instance, gradually introducing the other issues as the mentee makes progress in adapting to changes he or she may need to make.

Types of mentoring feedback

Feedback is one of the sensitive aspects of the mentoring process. It is up to the mentor and the mentee to decide and to choose what kind of feedback is most effective in a concrete mentoring situation. The mentee has the right to choose the kind of feedback he/she expects. Four types of mentoring feedback are explained below:

Acknowledging and summarising

A mentor can approach the process of acknowledging and summarising mentees' work in this way. In every mentoring meeting or related exchange, the mentor must not only regularly *acknowledge* communication from the mentee but also acknowledge the mentee's work and progress. *Summarising* what the mentee has said and interpreting it back to the mentee is a form of acknowledgement. This gives the mentor control of the process and allows a two-way exchange, enabling the mentee to realise that their contribution is being recognised, received and valued. This also provides the mentor with an opportunity to gain an overview of the mentoring relationship and to monitor progress. Further, it gives the mentee an opportunity to correct any false impressions or expand on their thoughts if the summaries are inadequate.

Feedback as analysis and clarification

The mentor should provide feedback that goes well beyond merely providing summaries of what has been said by the mentee. A process of checking for clarification enables the mentor to probe what is happening to the mentee more deeply. For example, if the mentee has reported that things are not going well, the mentor can investigate this as part of the mentoring conversation. The mentor can also analyse what the mentee has said, and provide an overview analysis of the situation in which they find themselves. This analysis can clarify the facts of the mentee's current placement, their subject skills, the numbers and kinds of students involved, the requirements of their teacher training tasks, the timeline, resources and accommodation involved, and other appropriate issues. This kind of analysis enables the mentee to see the facts of their situation through the eyes of the mentor, so that they gain some distance from it, in order to help with their progress and further professional development.

Feedback as interpretation

Apart from providing feedback as clarification and factual analysis, the mentor should also provide further feedback as an *interpretation* of the mentee's situation. This requires deeper exploration and discussion of the areas the mentee has outlined. The mentor's experience of prior similar work situations and contexts will be invaluable here, as they will need to be imaginative in thinking through what may be happening behind the obvious words, actions and situations the mentee is describing. The mentee themselves may be unable to interpret the situation. Hence the mentor has an opportunity to provide an invaluable advisory overseeing role, drawing on their own tacit knowledge of work experiences from the past, enabling the mentee to interpret the situation in new ways and put matters in context. The mentor can, through these means, encourage the mentee to see their situation in a fresh way and to develop positive responses.

Feedback as supportive evaluation

The mentor can also provide feedback as a form of supportive formative and/or summative *evaluation* of the mentee's work, progress and the overall effectiveness of their progress as a mentee. Mentors should engage with evaluative analysis with caution, however, and should ensure that evaluative feedback is accurate, timely and appropriate to the mentee's situation. Mentors should avoid giving emotive or speculative feedback and should concentrate on observable, practical facts. When suggesting changes, mentors should avoid focusing on any subjective analysis of mentees' personal characteristics but rather should concentrate on nudging the mentee to recognise for themselves the characteristics of observable behaviours that can be changed. Mentors should also recognise their own limitations in accurately assessing the mentee's situation, honestly admitting any areas of difficulty or misunderstanding. If the mentee does not agree with the feedback and/or provides evidence to the contrary, mentors should be open to a revision of feedback and to the testing out of evidence if necessary.

Checklist for mentors giving feedback

(a) always have the mentee's best interests at heart;

(b) always start with some positive feedback;

(c) prioritise feedback to avoid overload if necessary;

(d) observe the mentee's reactions and be responsive to these;

(e) concentrate on facts and behaviours rather than emotions and personalities;

(f) avoid blaming the mentee for all problems: seek 'the big picture';

(g) acknowledge and summarise mentee's contributions;

(h) provide critical feedback in a supportive way;

(i) strike a balance between being too informal and too distant;

(j) strike a balance between being overly positive and overly negative;

(k) work with the mentee to interpret the situations being discussed;

(l) probe mentee's responses as necessary to derive further insights.

Ethical Dimensions of Mentoring

Mentors and mentees should be aware of the potential ethical issues involved in mentoring with regards to personal relationships and codes of conduct. Using an Example from Practice as a starting point, this section provides an overview of the ethical dimensions of the mentoring process and offers the reader a professional code of conduct to work to.

The Example from Practice 2, 'Where mentoring can go wrong' illustrates a number of errors that can occur in dysfunctional relationships. The section will explore and expand on some of these ethical issues.

Example from practice 2: Where mentoring can go wrong

A student teacher with a background in plumbing is assigned a mentor by his Head of Department. He is a tall, good-looking man of about 27 years of age. His mentor is a recently divorced handsome woman in her mid fifties. Her subject specialism is forestry. His mentor had been to observe his first lesson to a group of trainee plumbers and she has asked him to come to her office the following day to discuss the lesson. The lesson had been a disaster, with the trainee lecturer losing control of the class and seeming to not know his topic: '*Dealing effectively and efficiently with toilet overflow problems*'.

The trainee knocks on the mentor's door and enters the room to find the mentor sitting behind her desk, talking on the telephone, discussing the latest hunting rifle with her gunsmith. She motions the trainee impatiently to sit down. There is no spare chair, so he goes out to bring in a chair from a classroom. He waits for her to finish her conversation. When finished, she looks surprised to see him and tells him she can just about squeeze him in, as she has an important meeting with the new Head of Department in 15 minutes time.

The trainee opens the conversation apologetically, saying he was sorry the lesson was a disaster. The mentor agrees it was awful, with no redeeming features, and enquires whether he really wishes to take up teaching. The trainee ignores these remarks and asks how he might improve his planning, delivery and classroom management skills, saying that he is really anxious about his next lesson. Just as the mentor is about to reply, the telephone rings. It is the gun shop offering a cut price on the new hunting rifle if an order can be placed immediately. The order is placed. The mentor returns her attention to the trainee.

She thinks hard and replies that his colleague on the training course, Sarah, whom she is also mentoring, also had a bad lesson and did he know that she had domestic difficulties at home? The trainee looks irritated at this, ignores her question and continues to ask for help in specific areas. His mentor shakes her head and says that she is sorry but she has no subject specialist knowledge in the plumbing area. As for planning and classroom management, she describes in detail how, in her day, new teachers were thrown into the classroom to sink or swim and that this 'VET institution of hard knocks' approach to new teachers in training did her the world of good. This approach, she asserts, sorted out the wheat from the chaff in no time, with weak teachers quickly leaving the profession to seek a new trade. In his case, however, she believes he is strong and capable and will survive. She comments on his handsome looks.

She then looks at her watch. It is time to go. She takes his hand and holds it for some time, commenting on his strong grip. She asks him to come and see her any time and finally enquires if he is doing anything this coming Friday. The trainee nods miserably. The mentor cheerfully asks him to come round to her hunting lodge that evening for a sauna and to share the venison meal she had prepared from her last hunting trip. The trainee reluctantly agrees. The mentor looks pleased and insists that when they meet on Friday they must not talk about work. The mentor then rushes out of her office, leaving one very confused trainee!

What did you notice in this Example from Practice? Clearly, we have drawn attention to some of the issues:

(a) A lack of preparation and rapport building. The mentor is on the telephone when the mentee arrives and does not end the conversation. She also takes a follow up call from the gun shop, interrupting their discussions with non-urgent personal business. There is nowhere for the mentee to sit. She is impatient when asking the mentee to sit. She looks surprised to see him as though the meeting may not have been in her diary. She has not planned for the session or thought about the mentee's needs and concerns in advance. She does not attempt to build professional rapport with the mentee by finding out about his views and his situation in any depth. At the end, she rushes from the office, without closing the meeting – for example, summing up the outcomes and actions, and planning for the next meeting. She abandons him as a professional mentor and, far worse, rushes immediately into suggesting an inappropriate personal meeting at her home, failing to deal adequately with the important teaching issues he has raised.

(b) A lack of support and empathy. She agrees, without reference to any redeeming features, that the lesson was awful. She inquires whether the mentee wishes to give up teaching. Although the mentee has shown his vulnerability by stating that he is anxious about his next lesson, the mentor still takes her 'important' telephone call, and does not respond effectively to his anxiety at all.

(c) Inappropriate self-disclosure. Self-disclosure (saying something about oneself) can be a useful approach in mentoring, helping to build rapport and trust. However, in this instance, the mentor describes how 'in her day' teachers were left to 'sink or swim'. She demonstrates insensitivity and lack of sympathy for the mentee.

(d) Breaking of confidentiality. The mentor mentions another mentee by name and also divulges confidential information about her domestic circumstances.

(e) Crossing of ethical boundaries. A number of boundaries are crossed here. Firstly, she takes his hand (touching someone in a professional situation is almost always inappropriate, except when in a routine professional greeting situation amongst colleagues); she invites the mentee to her home (again almost always inappropriate, since the purpose may be misconstrued and may lead to gossip and innuendo, damaging to both mentor and mentee).

(f) Inappropriate professional behaviour. Throughout, this mentor acts in a way that is irresponsible, unplanned, unethical, arrogant, brusque, insensitive and inappropriately sexually suggestive. Her behaviour completely fails to meet professional standards of competence, benevolence and integrity and she would quickly lose the trust of any alert mentee.

The central maxim on which to advise potential mentors is 'Do no harm!' This maxim is set in the context that the central purpose of mentoring initial trainees/VET teachers is to support them to become competent autonomous professionals. Many mentors are confused as to whether the mentor relationship is about challenge or support, but, as this handbook points out above, mentoring is about an appropriate balance of both.

Ethical boundaries

Before commencing a mentoring relationship, would-be mentors should be aware of ethical concerns and decisions that are likely to occur. The diverse personality types of mentors may dispose them to particular decisions or even risks in this respect. For instance, in a cross-gender mentoring relationship, advances by an outgoing mentor may be misjudged by an introverted mentee as an invitation for a closer personal relationship. What maybe a friendly pat on the back can be misinterpreted as a sexual advance. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the subtle boundaries that may hold a mentoring relationship together and the consequences that result from the breaking of such boundaries.

For some mentors, a set of rules focused on the sole purpose of the mentoring relationship, to develop competent VET professionals, gives clarity and psychological security to both mentor and mentee. Such a framework also helps neutralise the power differential between an experienced practitioner and a novice. Both know their place. For others, boundary crossing is vital to develop the reciprocity, trust, transparency and openness of a rich mentor-mentee relationship. Boundary crossing might involve such things as self-disclosure, appropriate touch, time, gifts and meeting places. If boundary crossing is part of the mentor's style, then he or she must be aware of his or her intentions in the context of: 'Is what I am doing in the mentee's best interests?' For example, timely, safe and limited self-disclosure by a mentor about human frailty, perhaps delivered in a warm, honest and/or humorous way, can provide leadership, relieve angst and strengthen the self-confidence of an apprehensive mentee.

However, once boundary crossing is introduced into a mentor-mentee relationship, the worry might be that that this approach includes a risk of sliding down a 'slippery slope' of over-familiar mentoring practice that can lead to breaches of confidence. Certainly organisational procedures must be in place for 'exits' in cases of violations of boundaries such as breaches of confidence or too much intimacy, where it is obvious that such violations are not in the mentee's interests. Exit processes for mentors must also be in place in the case of dysfunctional relationships such as over-dependency or mismatch of support expectations by a mentee from their assigned mentor. Whatever the decision, the risk-averse or risk-taking mentor needs to be able to navigate successfully around these boundary issues. Being aware of them is a start.

For mentors and those seeking to set up mentoring in national or organisational contexts, some boundary tips might be of use:

(a) engage with your mentee in an open and clear discussion about boundaries and mutual expectations and set these clearly in the form of a written contract at the initial meeting;

(b) always ask the question of yourself 'Are my mentee's interests being best served here?';

(c) be aware of your own mental and emotional states and motivations: keep yourself in check to ensure professional mentoring standards are always maintained;

(d) make sure you have formal mechanisms in place for conflict resolution including neutral exit strategies for your mentee and for yourself;

(e) we stress again 'Do no harm.'

Boundary tensions in overlapping roles

Boundary tensions occur in relation to mentor roles that overlap with other professional duties or personal interests. The obvious one is where the mentor is involved in the formal assessment of a mentee in either initial training or in the period of probation in the first year of employment. One question that arises from this is whether the two roles of mentor – support and assessment – can ever be reconciled. Ideally, organisations should consider strategies for separating out these two roles.

In practice, often due to resource issues, it is not always possible. This issue of boundary tensions relates to the earlier point as to whether the mentor-mentee relationship is about challenge or nurturing. It also raises a question about whether the mentor's role is, in addition, one of a 'gatekeeper' to the profession. The 'gatekeeper to the organisation' role demands professional objectivity and a need to be able to confront problematic behaviour of a mentee. A mentor in such a situation will feel an emotional pull between his or her nurturing and evaluative roles. Similarly, in a situation where a mentee displays signs of self-harm, it is the duty of the mentor to refer the mentee to a professional service (integrated as a part of the mentoring system by the VET organisation – see Chapter 3 Referral of mentees). Moreover, if the mentoring programme is sponsored by the organisation, the organisation may demand certain information of the mentoring relationship. In this case, how much information should the mentor disclose to the organisation as a part of the assessment/evaluation of the programme? What is to be divulged should be made clear to the mentee at the start. Towards whom does the mentor's loyalty lie and what impact will the information provided to the organisation have on the mentee? This brings us to the issue of confidentiality between the mentor and the mentee. Confidentiality is the central tenet of any supportive relationship and, particularly, of mentoring. The mentor and mentee must assure each other of the utmost confidentiality about all the information discussed during the mentoring sessions. As highlighted in Example from Practice 3, the mentor should strictly adhere to a professional code of conduct and avoid discussing his or her relationship with or naming any other mentee.

One way out of this possible dilemma is to have a well-understood professional code of ethics to which both mentor and mentee adhere: a professional two-way contract on how to behave. Such a code may well help to allow for a more blended role responsibility that encompasses both mentor and mentee. Several institutions and associations have drawn up their own ethical codes. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council's (EMCC) ethical code serves as an example (see **www.emccouncil.org/fileadmin/documents/EMCC_Code_of_Ethics.pdf**).

Example from practice 3: Overlapping roles and professional judgement

Dorothy is on an initial VET teacher training programme. She is being mentored by John, who is tasked by his organisation to support Dorothy throughout the training programme. John has been asked by his line manager for an intermediate report on Dorothy's performance so far. Dorothy is proving to be a difficult trainee. At the initial meeting, Dorothy was briefed on what to expect from her mentor and what obligations she had to John whilst on the programme. Attendance and punctuality for both classroom teaching sessions and for mentor development sessions were highlighted as being of prime importance. Dorothy has however on two occasions failed to turn up on time for her teaching session and has been irregular in her attendance at her set times for mentor development/performance feedback sessions. John has formally assessed her classroom teaching once. On this occasion she failed to produce a formal lesson plan and her teaching performance was weak. John did see some flashes of inspiration on her part but it was clear that for her to progress to the required standard, she would need a great deal of encouragement and support.

Issues to consider:

1. John's responsibility to his organisation and to his mentee. What should John say in his report which could satisfy these overlapping roles?
2. John is tasked to make formal assessments of his mentee's teaching performance and overall professionalism. How might the dual role of formal assessor and developmental support affect his relationship with Dorothy?
3. Professional judgement. At what point might John judge that he can go no further in mentoring Dorothy?

Summary Points

(a) the success of mentoring depends on the *quality* of interactions between the mentor and mentee;

(b) roles and responsibilities should be clarified early in the mentoring relationship;

(c) the mentor should seek to build rapport with the mentee and to provide a mixture of both support and challenge;

(d) trust, honesty and integrity are essential features of the mentoring relationship;

(e) mentors must be sensitive to language and cultural issues when mentoring people from different countries and cultures;

(f) mentors should pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication when talking to mentees;

(g) feedback to mentees must be specific, honest, realistic (in terms of what behaviours and attitudes can change), and sensitive to the mentee's needs;

(h) mentors must abide by the ethical principles of mentoring, including the need to maintain boundaries and confidentiality.

Chapter 3 Setting up and Embedding a Mentoring System in Your Organisation

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

(a) prepare for a mentoring system, including the identification of resources;

(b) implement a mentor system, including the recruitment and training of mentors;

(c) embed a mentoring system in an organisation, including a process of evaluation and referrals;

(d) establish a robust quality assurance system for mentoring.

Introduction

In Chapter 2, we looked at the processes and interactions between the mentor and mentee. In this chapter, we will be concerned with a more macro kind of picture – setting up and embedding a mentoring system within an institution. We recognise that there will be a considerable range of national and local needs that require consideration. It is expected, then, that organisations might adopt aspects of this approach, according to their own needs. Clearly, for instance, if a national legislative policy for mentors exists, then institutions will pay heed to this when setting up their own systems.

Preparing for a Mentoring System

The process of preparation for a mentoring system will be of great significance if this system is to make any impact on an organisation, and on its mentors, mentees and students. It is suggested that the timescale for such preparations would take about one academic year; a pilot scheme should take place over the same time and then there should be regular reviews.

Preparing the organisation

> '*...mentoring – as well as excellent teaching – is part of what turns a college into a learning organisation.*' Wallace and Gravells (2006: 106)

The commitment of the organisation to a mentoring system is a vital ingredient in its success. Initially, it is suggested that a working group should be set up to prepare, implement and evaluate the proposed mentoring programme. The organisation must be persuaded of the benefits of such a scheme to the mentees, the mentors, the students and the organisation itself (see Chapter 1 on the Benefits of Mentoring).

It can be argued that, if a mentoring system were to be set up, the mentees would gain increased confidence, increased professional skills and would begin to feel integrated within the organisation. The mentor would also benefit by revisiting and reflecting on their own teaching through the mentoring process and by possibly observing the teaching of a colleague or a trainee teacher. In addition, it can be argued that, through the mentoring system, a mentor would feel that their professional skills and experience were being acknowledged. The main impact on both the mentee and the mentor, however, would be the improvement in the learning of the students: a more confident and skilled mentee and a more reflective mentor would enhance student learning and improve assessment results and evaluations. The benefit to the organisation lies, as stated, not only in improved student learning and satisfaction, but also in the establishment of the centrality of teaching and learning within an organisation and a possible reduction in staff turnover. In conclusion, a mentoring system can positively influence all aspects of professional learning – learning as belonging (as a community), learning as identity, learning as experience and learning as doing.

A mentoring policy should be written which might contain the benefits as stated above and a clear statement of the objectives of the programme. These may include the retention of teachers, the improved skills and performance of teachers, an increased sense of professionalism and the development of a culture of reflective practice.

Such a policy must clearly state the time span, structure and objectives of the pilot scheme and a clear means to evaluate the effects and success of the scheme.

Resources for setting up a mentoring system

An effective mentoring scheme will be underpinned by adequate resources of both time and money. The most significant aspect of these is probably the fair compensation of mentors for their efforts; although mentors will hopefully be motivated by other considerations, reasonable compensation will affect the way in which the mentor views this role. In addition, adequate compensation and recognition will influence the perceptions of the mentee, of other colleagues and of the management of the organisation. Compensation can either be given in terms of timetabled hours or direct financial reward.

Other resourcing considerations for a mentoring scheme would include the time devoted to this by a working/advisory group, the resourcing of a mentor coordinator, administrative costs and the costs of training.

The mentor coordinator would play a pivotal role by:

(a) recruiting mentors;

(b) holding regular reviews of the progress of the system;

(c) acting as an arbiter in any disagreement or dispute (for example between mentor and mentee);

(d) evaluating and amending the system;

(e) planning for the training of mentors.

Preparing documentation

A vital aspect of the preparation for a mentoring system would be the writing and production of a **mentor handbook or guidelines**. This would serve as a point of reference for the mentor throughout the mentoring cycle; it could also be disseminated to the mentees and to other colleagues.

The mentor handbook/guidelines should begin with an index and a glossary of terms, followed by a welcome and introduction section; this should comprise a statement of the objectives and possible benefits of the role. This should be followed by a description and discussion of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor and of a mentee.

These might include:

(a) the initial meeting (see The Training of mentors below) to discuss practicalities and 'ground rules';

(b) the frequency and content of meetings;

(c) the protocol for observations of teaching (if these are part of the programme);

(d) the involvement of the mentee in the wider life of the organisation;

(e) descriptions of the mentor's and mentee's role;

(f) subject specialism issues and resources.

The observation of teaching (see Figure 4) is often a central aspect of the mentor's role and should be addressed in the handbook. As this is the activity which is likely to cause anxiety on the part of the mentee, the purpose, expectations and difficulties of this need to be openly discussed. Issues of giving and receiving feedback (see Chapter 2) also need to be addressed. Any proforma used in teaching observations should be included.

The document should also explain the importance of mentor training, of any use of electronic communication, and possibly, as an appendix, a referral proforma, in case of any referral to other agencies or colleagues (see below).

Another document which should be produced is the **mentor-mentee agreement or contract** (see Figure 5 Example of Mentor Agreement). The content of this document would largely be determined on a local basis but might include:

(a) induction responsibility;

(b) observation of teaching responsibilities;

(c) advice and support responsibilities;

(d) practical considerations;

(e) the frequency of meetings;

(f) any liaison with the tutor (in teacher training situations);

(g) reports which should be written;

(h) evaluations required (and when).

It is likely that there will be a need to produce **an observation of teaching proforma** (see Figure 4), if this is not already available in the organisation. One possible model is to produce a two page document: the first page records the details of the observation (name, time, date, subject, number of students) and a space for free writing; the second page is designed with criteria/tick boxes, covering aspects of teaching such as planning, differentiation, resources, communication, subject knowledge, methodology, classroom management, assessment/the checking of learning, rapport, and other relevant items.

Your organisation may decide to prepare an **Individual Action Plan or Professional Development Record** for use by the mentee. Again the contents are largely determined according to local need, but this document might include:

(a) a record of meetings;

(b) the observation proformas;

(c) the mentee's responses to the comments made by the mentor in the observation proformas;

(d) examples of the mentee's involvement in the wider life of the VET organisation;

(e) reports;

(f) evaluations.

Aspects of **e-mentoring** (see Chapter 1) should be prepared, for example an online discussion forum or an e-training session.

Finally, **evaluation proformas** should be prepared (see Figure 6). Such evaluations processes should be carried out throughout the pilot year, each reflecting the cycle of the mentoring relationship. Evaluations should be devised to gather the views of both the mentor and the mentee.

OBSERVATION SHEET

Trainee name: Assessor name:

Topic of lesson:

Duration: Course: Date:

Please indicate strengths and action to be taken to improve lesson planning/delivery, including any action needed to meet specific criteria.

Please transfer targets to tutorial record form.

Signature (tutor/mentor): Date:

Assessment 1 - Each essential skill must be evidenced twice in each phase

Planning – essential (evidenced in Lesson Plan)

P1 Plan a teaching session which meets the needs of individual learners and groups

P2 Plan a variety of appropriate teaching and learning activities

P3 Identify appropriate assessment methods linked to clear learning outcomes

P4 Select and/or develop a range of resources

P5 Identify literacy, language, numeracy and ICT skills which are integral to own specialist area and which may need to be taught

P6 Plan for opportunities for obtaining learner feedback to inform future planning and practice

P7 Apply minimum core specifications in literacy, language, mathematics and ICT when identifying barriers to learning and planning to meet the needs of learners

Planning – desirable (evidenced in Lesson Plan)

P8 Prepare flexible lesson plans to adjust to the individual needs of learners, with reference to Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) or group profile

Delivery – essential

D1 Conform to organisational and statutory requirements and apply codes of practice

D2 Establish a purposeful learning environment where learners feel safe, secure, confident and valued

D3 Demonstrate that knowledge of own specialist area is current and appropriate to the teaching context

D4 Use a range of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment approaches which are relevant to the subject area and which engage and motivate learners

D5 Use a range of skills and methods to communicate effectively with learners

D6 Use strategies for encouraging behaviours that contribute to an effective learning environment

D7 Work with learners to address particular learning needs

D8 Apply minimum core specifications in literacy, language, mathematics and ICT to delivery of lesson

Delivery – desirable

D9 Collaborate with colleagues (e.g. support assistants) to encourage learner progress

D10 Make appropriate use of new and emerging technologies

D11 Negotiate and record appropriate learning goals and strategies with learners

D12 Keep records of progress (e.g. Individual Learning Plans, tracking sheets etc)

D13 Create an environment which encourages learners to reflect on, evaluate and make decisions about their learning

Tick here if all essential criteria met this time ☐ OR Indicate any essential criteria not met this session:

Figure 4: Observation of teaching proforma (example)

MENTOR AGREEMENT FORM

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

Name of Mentor: Name of Tutor:

As mentor you agree to:

1. Provide an induction and introduction to the institution, section and/or department and to your subject specialism or vocational area.

2. In the first academic year to arrange for your trainee to observe a variety of classes including a range of lessons in the relevant specialist area.

3. Provide support and advice about teaching methods appropriate to the specialist area.

4. Ensure the trainee teacher has access to relevant syllabi, schemes of work and appropriate access to resources in the specialist area.

5. Plan an appropriate timetable of teaching to include a total of at least 150 hours by the end of (insert time period). The timetable should include an appropriate variety of classes and levels depending upon the work of the institution and the particular knowledge and skills of your trainee.

6. Liaise with relevant staff within the institution to enable your trainee to complete a case study on one learner as set out in the assessment requirements for the course, Managing and Supporting Learners.

7. Meet with your trainee regularly, if possible at least once a week, for formal discussion and feedback, support, advice and guidance.

8. Observe your trainee teaching and provide formative feedback.

9. Liaise regularly with the training institution's tutor about your trainee's progress and alert her or him immediately if problems arise.

10. Encourage and secure professional opportunities for the trainee to become involved in the wider life of the institution through team meetings, visits, staff development opportunities as appropriate.

11. Carry out formal assessments of your trainee's practical teaching. At least one visit should be conducted with your trainee's training institution tutor. Your trainee will be responsible for organising this visit.

12. Complete reports on your trainee as required.

Signed (Mentor) Date:

Figure 5: Example of mentor agreement

Setting up a Mentoring System

Recruitment

The careful selection and recruitment of motivated and competent mentors is a central prerequisite of any mentoring programme. An organisation could advertise for volunteers, who will be subsequently selected as mentors through an open and fair process. If a VET institute finds it difficult to recruit mentors based on altruistic motives, other means of recruitment should be adopted. Mentors may be offered incentives and rewards for their extra time and effort, should the organisation wish to introduce this. Furthermore, mentoring can also play a pivotal role in the CPD of teacher trainers in terms of the skills and knowledge they may gain through the process. This could possibly contribute to promotional opportunities. Another method could be a policy change whereby each VET institution makes mentoring work a part of the job specification for all VET teacher trainers.

The recruitment process for mentors should include selection criteria such as:

(a) knowledge of subject, organisation and community;

(b) excellent teaching or training skills: a good role model;

(c) teaching experience (in Estonia, for example, this has to be a minimum of three years);

(d) commitment and enthusiasm for the role;

(e) good communication and listening skills;

(f) a willingness to reflect and improve;

(g) a commitment to equal opportunities/inclusivity.

Ideally aspects of 'matching' should be taken into account, for example, relating to age, gender and culture (see Choosing/matching mentors). An example of a mentor agreement between a mentor and their employing institution is offered at Figure 5.

Choosing/matching mentors – some additional ethical considerations

Issues around matching mentors to mentees in relation to age, willingness, expertise, gender and culture have marginal ethical dimensions but are important considerations to raise. We sketch in some comments in relation to such issues.

Age

The traditional view of a mentor supporting initial teaching/training is of someone who is older and wiser than the novice mentee. There is little or no research on situations where the mentor is younger and, if so, how this affects the power relationship. We would encourage mentors to be honest and open about age differential issues, and to promote mutual respect between mentors and mentees, regardless of age.

Willingness

The 'Why me?' response of a VET teacher/trainer when assigned a mentoring role is often an unhappy response particularly expressed by busy, often overworked experienced teachers and trainers. The ethical issue here is one of being a willing volunteer. If resources such as allocated hours or payment or even career progression are missing, then unsurprisingly, the mentor sees the role as a chore or a burden to be minimally addressed. In situations where mentors are obliged to carry out mentoring duties but are reluctant to do so, we would advise that mentors should strictly aim to put aside all personal feelings of unwillingness in favour of prioritising the needs of the mentee and the organisation. Complaints about resourcing and appropriateness of mentoring duties are best handled only with resource managers. Such issues should not interrupt or disturb the mentor-mentee relationship: a mentor should *never* express to a mentee that he or she is unwilling to carry out the mentoring role.

Gender matching

Often, in a male-female mentoring relationship, the male mentor could be tempted to act in an overprotective and paternalistic way to his female mentee. The situation that applies, vice versa, between females and males could be equally problematic. In the interests of ethical good practice in mentoring, a relationship of mutual respect should be encouraged, regardless of gender issues. Mentors should guard against approaches, including the use of language, which could be perceived as being overprotective, paternalistic, or gender-biased.

Culture

Individuals from certain cultures are more respectful of authority and, in turn, of authority figures. Culturally, they view a person with authority such as a teacher or a mentor to have the ultimate say and may refrain from questioning their views or judgements. Mentors should be aware of these cultural differences and work to encourage an open and more assertive or at least self-confident stance from the mentee. Moreover, mentors should also be sensitive towards mentees from a minority group or culture whilst giving feedback. Comments that may be deemed as acceptable in a particular European context may be considered impolite in another European or an ethnic minority context.

Expertise

Here we have a serious tension between those who argue for generic mentoring and those who argue for subject specialist mentoring. Those who promote subject specialist mentoring usually state assertively that, for any effective mentoring to take place, the mentor must be a subject/skill specialist as well as being recognised for his or her pedagogic expertise. The tension between generic and specialist mentoring was noted in Chapter 1. It may be difficult to locate sufficient mentors who are both subject specialist and teaching experts. At a minimum, the mentor must be acknowledged by the organisation for their pedagogic skills.

Role of mentors at induction

A mentoring programme follows a cycle which is often an academic year; Wallace and Gravells (2006:93) describe this as a "...cyclical process of setting objectives, acting on them, monitoring progress, evaluating progress and if necessary reviewing and/or revising them." The period of induction is clearly one of the first stages of this cycle: what we describe as 'conception' in Chapter 1.

Induction has a pivotal role in most learning experiences, including in the experiences of a new teacher or of a trainee teacher on placement. It is at this point, therefore, that a mentor can have the most significant influence and set the tone for the relationship. It is advisable that meetings are more frequent in the induction period than at any other time in the cycle.

REFLECTION ON OBSERVED TEACHING PRACTICE	
Evaluate what you have done well and what you still need to develop, based on your own reflection and your assessor's feedback. For example, think of your planning skills, your delivery, your use of resources and activities and your group management skills. **Word count**: 50 words for 'my strengths' and 50 words for 'areas for development'	
My strengths / progress made, target met since previous observation	
Areas for development	
My Action plan	
Targets*	By when

Figure 6: Evaluation proforma (example)

Almost without exception, a new mentee's initial anxieties will focus on practical issues and a mentor should allay these anxieties from the outset. These could include: seating arrangements, through the use of graphics, IT resources, the facilities of the organisation and key members of staff. If there are other new mentees, then the coordinator could set up a meeting to include all mentees, all mentors and other relevant colleagues. The mentor should arrange, as early as possible, an initial meeting with the mentee at which mutually agreed 'ground rules', frequency and location of meetings, boundaries, confidentiality and other central issues are discussed (see below). If possible it would also be beneficial for the mentee to arrange an observation of the mentor's teaching.

Training of mentors

In order to ensure quality of mentoring, it is vital for mentors to be trained. Ideally special mentors' programmes should be offered. In some countries the teachers education institutes and universities offer mentor training programmes (see the example of Lithuania in the Appendix). There are also countries, where the mentors' training is embedded in an induction programme for novice teachers, which is supported at national level (as in Estonia).

In other cases only a short-term training for mentors is organised before the beginning of the mentoring relationship with the aim to familiarise the mentor with any organisational/administrative documentation, to give confidence and 'tips', to provide the basis for a support network and to practise, through role play, the skills of observing teaching and giving feedback (see the examples in the Appendix).

If in situ training is not a possibility, then an e-training session could be devised (see Chapter 1). Sometimes this is a short, non-accredited session and sometimes an accredited longer course (this may give credits towards a Masters programme). The e-training programme would normally consist of a variety of information and exercises. Information would be given about expectations, about the mentoring relationship, about the stages of mentoring and about subject specialism. The mentor would be asked to complete, for example, online activities in assessing their own skills, on 'ground rules' of an initial meeting and on observation/feedback. The resulting form should be assessed by the coordinator, and feedback given, possibly alongside an e-certificate.

The following is a suggested structure for a training session, but of course this would vary according to local needs and priorities. Ideally, the training should constitute a variety of trainer-led and mentor-centred activities. This sample training session would last about three hours, as Table 5 below.

The session should begin with the mentors introducing themselves in pairs, using prompts devised by the trainer, concerning subject specialism, past experiences, individual concerns and perceptions of the skills and qualities of mentoring.

The session would continue with a presentation given by the trainer, explaining any systems, explaining the expectations of the role and presenting some of the general features and objectives and the benefits to the mentee, the mentor and the organisation. The next exercise is interactive, in pairs or groups, in which 10 'ground rules' which might be agreed on by the mentor and mentee in an initial meeting are discussed. It should be emphasised that the proactivity of the mentee is crucial to the success of the relationship: for example, both the mentor and mentee should agree on 'ground rules' and each should bring an agenda to each subsequent meeting. Mentees should be made aware of potential dependency issues. Care must be taken to ensure that the mentee does not develop dependency; problems which arise should be solved on a mutual basis.

There should then be feedback on the exercise and the issues raised should be discussed by the whole group; examples of issues may be confidentiality, boundaries, expectations, frequency, length and location of meetings, punctuality, dependency, and other appropriate matters. The first of these, confidentiality, should be stressed. As Pask asserts (2007:21), "A relationship of trust and confidence will be much more likely to develop if a guarantee of total confidentiality can be given by the mentor-coach."

The training session should then proceed with a short presentation on the stages of mentoring: building rapport/setting objectives, the progress of the relationship, evaluation, winding up and moving on.

The exercise which follows is concerned with observation of teaching and feedback; this is carried out in triads (groups of three people). Initially, the participants read a case study of a class from the point of view of the teacher/mentee and from the point of view of the observer/mentor. Alternatively, a video clip could be used. Individually, the participants complete an observation proforma; their comments are discussed in triads and then within the whole group. Issues which may arise are the beginning sentences of the commentary on the feedback proformas and their impact on the mentee, the use of grammatical person (that is, whether this should be third person – he or she – or second person – you), how the commentary might be both supportive and challenging and whether there was general agreement on the issues raised.

Table 5: Example structure for a mentor training session

0–30 mins	Refreshments, welcome and introductory exercises
30 mins – 1 hour	Presentation/questions. Administration/documentation
1 hour – 1 hour 15 mins	An overview of issues of mentoring
1 hour 15 mins – 1 hour 30 mins	Group work – initial meeting with mentee
1 hour 30 mins – 1 hour 50 mins	Break
1 hour 50 mins – 2 hours	Feedback from groups
2 hours – 2 hours 10 mins	Presentation – the stages of mentoring
2 hours 10 mins – 2 hours 50 mins	Observation and feedback exercise
2 hours 50 mins – 3 hours	Presentation on feedback, evaluation and close

Using the same case study or video clip, the triad then carries out a role play exercise, with one person acting as the teacher/mentee who is receiving feedback, one person as the observer/mentor who is giving feedback and one person as the reporter. The reporter then feeds back any comments to the whole group and there is a general discussion of feedback issues, especially the difficulties of receiving feedback (see also Chapter 2).

Finally, a summative presentation on feedback is given by the trainer, the training session is evaluated and the session is closed.

Embedding a Mentoring System

Models

Across the EU, and within individual organisations, there are a variety of ways in which mentoring systems are introduced. In some countries a national programme is established, which sets out the details for introducing mentoring in the education and training system (for example, Estonia). In other cases, the organisations themselves decide upon the contents and phases for embedding mentoring. In many countries and organisations a two phase system has been chosen with a pilot phase in the beginning, lasting for months or even one academic year. A second phase starts only after receiving feedback from management, mentees, mentors and any working parties on experiences gathered during the programme and evaluations undertaken to improve the programme.

Evaluation

From the outset, it should be emphasised to all concerned that evaluation implies a judgement on the success of the mentoring programme, not on individual mentors. Evaluation could serve several purposes, for example, to provide evidence of the benefit to the organisation, the benefit to mentors and mentees and the benefit to the students. It might pose questions which concern the retention of teachers, the improvement of teaching and learning, the improvement in collegiality and transition issues in the early years of teaching. All of the mentees, the mentors and the coordinator should evaluate the programme.

The type of evaluation could take many forms, such as questionnaire/survey, online discussions, reflective journals, focus groups and mentor's/mentee's documentation.

In a typical cycle of one academic year, there would be opportunities for formative evaluation (for example, initial meetings/induction, expectations, ongoing progress, observation of teaching, feedback after observation of teaching). Of course, it is vital that summative evaluation is carried out at the end of the year to ascertain overall success in meeting objectives, the costs of the project, and the experiences of all participants. Over time, it would be important to evaluate whether there were any correlations between the operation of a mentoring scheme and teacher retention.

The types of issues that evaluation can address are, of course, very varied. But institutions may wish to gather data on themes such as:

(a) Are the mentor guidelines fit for purpose? What do mentors say about it? Are there gaps that require filling?

(b) Have the appropriate number of mentors been recruited? Do we have too many? Do we have too few? Do they have the rights sets of skills? Do we have enough subject-specialist mentors? How successful was the system for mentor training?

(c) Is the documentation used within the mentoring system accurate and relevant? Are systems in place for collecting and analysing the documentation (for example, mentor and mentee agreements)?

(d) What do mentees say about their experience of being mentored? What benefits do they say they have gained? What problems or issues have arisen that require remedial action by the institution?

(e) How have ethical problems been identified and addressed?

(f) How successful was the system for referring mentees onto specialised help from professional support services? Do mentors understand when they need to make referrals? (see next section).

The institution will also have to plan how it is going to collect and collate data on these questions.

Referral of mentees

It is possible that the mentee may demonstrate personal or professional problems which the mentor feels are beyond the scope of his or her expertise. In these cases, it would be advisable to refer the mentee to the mentor co-ordinator who may then choose to engage a professional support service to help the mentee. The issue of referral should be discussed at induction and at training; it should be discussed as a viable possibility and not be treated as an extraordinary measure or as a 'failure'.

The mentor may need to refer the mentee to a counsellor, psychologist, doctor, careers advisor, another subject specialist or a member of the organisation's management. The mentor needs to recognise signs of when a relationship may be becoming dysfunctional, perhaps due to overdependence, breaches of boundaries or other ethical issues. Table 6 lists the kinds of symptoms the mentor should look for when

Table 6: Symptoms that suggest a mentee might require counselling

(a) the mentee seems helpless, exhausted and hopeless;
(b) they phone in 'sick' or cancel appointments on a regular basis;
(c) they get panic attacks (e.g. racing heart, chest pains, dizziness and light headedness);
(d) they have strong mood swings including manic 'highs';
(e) they constantly feel guilty and anxious;
(f) they throw temper tantrums or have other emotional outbursts.

(Source: adapted from Gray, 2010)

detecting signs that a mentee might require counselling.

Quality Assurance of a Mentoring System

Virtually every aspect of teaching or training is subject to Quality Assurance (QA) processes; mentoring is no exception, especially if there are financial implications or if the mentoring involves assessment of the mentee. Hence, the external QA of mentoring may be performed on an organisational level by a mentor-coordinator who could examine whether the mentor handbook or guidelines are 'fit for purpose', whether mentor training achieves expected results, or if the observation proforma is valid and reliable. On a national level it could be driven, directly or indirectly, by national QA agencies, through inspection regimes etc. They may examine many elements of mentor systems, including the processes of observation of teaching/training, the training of mentors and evaluation systems.

More frequently, the institution may wish to impose its own QA systems on the mentoring process, which forms the internal QA mechanisms. This might consist of an overview of agendas and minutes of meetings, but more often QA concerns itself with the observation of teaching and training. For instance, at the simplest level, the institution may develop an observation proforma with observation criteria (recall Figure 4). If the mentoring relationship forms part of a teacher training course then there may be a co-observation between the mentee's tutor and the mentor, in which the mentor and the tutor both observe the same class in order to standardise and possibly to train the mentor. A proforma or Individual Learning Plan for this exercise may be produced. In addition, there may be an expectation that the mentor receives training and also that the mentor and the mentee complete evaluations of the relationship (see Chapter 2).

Clearly, in a relationship which involves a delicate balance between nurture and challenge, QA should ideally have a light touch and should be collaborative and supportive in manner. An overbearing, authoritarian QA system could easily have a detrimental effect both on the mentor and on the mentee.

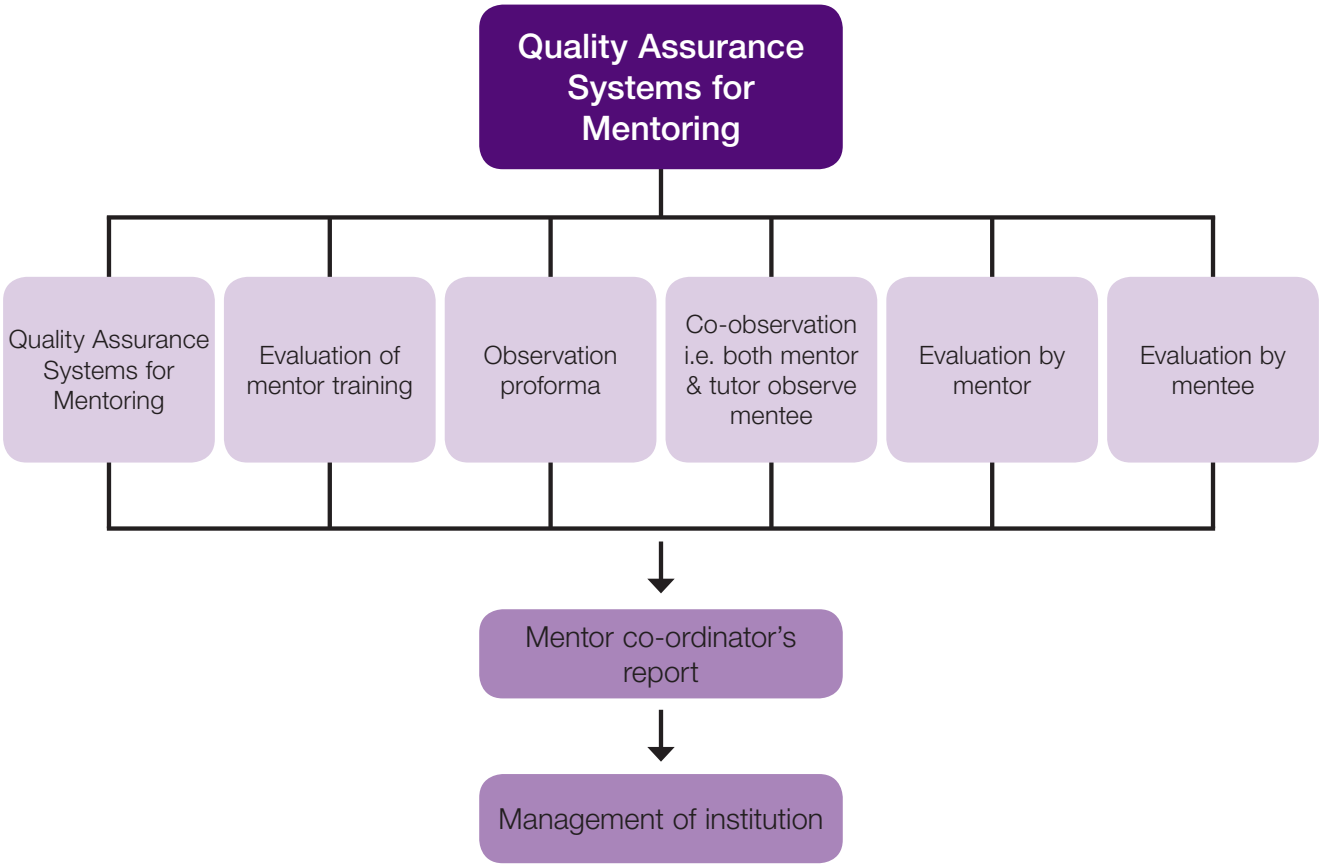

Figure 7: Overview of the internal mentor Quality Assurance process

Support for Mentors

Throughout the cycle of the mentoring programme, the mentors will need the support of the coordinator, of management and of other mentors. Support groups should be set up to discuss ongoing issues and an online discussion forum should be available. Individual support should also be available for mentors. Although mentoring is not a supervised and monitored support mechanism like psychotherapy or counselling, it can be an emotionally demanding experience for the mentor. Therefore, organisations should make sure that a mentor has access to a senior colleague who can act as a sounding board or a critical friend for support and providing feedback.

Example from practice 4: Setting up a mentoring programme in a VET institution

VocColl is a medium-sized, post-16 institution, located within a large city, with an annual intake of 400 full-time and 1500 part-time students. VocColl has always had a good working relationship with its local university, which runs an initial teacher training programme for post-16 vocational teachers. Every year 20 trainee teachers are sent to VocColl to undertake their teaching practice.

Senior managers at the college decide that the experience (and progress) of the trainee teachers would be considerably enhanced if they could be mentored by more experienced VocColl teachers, so a decision is made to set up a mentoring scheme. Plans are prepared and relevant documents (such as mentor agreements) drawn up. These plans are also shared with the local university who offer some useful input. However, in the build up to the launch, the institution finds that one of the biggest challenges proves to be the recruitment of mentors, with only 4 suitable people volunteering, when it was hoped that 10 would join the scheme. Hence, each mentor is given 5 mentees, more than double the anticipated number.

No discernable problems seem to occur for the first few months of the mentor programme, but then two trainee teachers approach the mentor co-ordinator with complaints about their mentor. They claim that he has missed some meetings, is over assertive and domineering when they meet and has been negative and critical about some of their teaching. They request that they move to a new mentor. The college, however, turns this down, in part because there are no 'spare' mentors. The mentees then decide to withdraw from the mentoring scheme arguing that it is not helping them. The mentor hears about this, is upset, and also withdraws from the programme. The mentor is sent a Mentor Exit form and mentees a Mentee Exit form to elicit feedback that might help the programme. At the end of the academic year, the mentoring programme is evaluated by both mentors and mentees and receives some very mixed comments – most good, some critical.

College senior managers, along with representatives of the university, review the evaluation report for the programme and seek to learn some lessons. Overall, the programme has been a success. The number of trainees giving up on their placement (and quitting teaching) has dropped from an average of 10 per cent, to zero.

However, some issues need addressing. Firstly, they agree that it was a mistake to introduce the programme without running it, in the first year, as a small scale pilot. They rushed its introduction and failed to get everyone 'on board'. Secondly, it is clear that they need to establish (and make transparent) criteria for the selection of mentors, and their matching with mentees. Mentors also need to be trained. Thirdly, they need to put in place a procedure for when a mentor-mentee relationship breaks down. But it is also clear that the evaluation process is flawed. They have evaluated the programme summatively (right at the end), when it should have been evaluated at a number of stages across the academic year. If this had been done, issues could have been picked up at an earlier stage before they became problematic. Nevertheless, some of the feedback has been very positive, and it is clear that mentoring has an important contribution to make towards the effectiveness of teacher training.

Summary Points

(a) VET institutions will normally need a lead-in time of at least a year in order to establish a mentoring system;

(b) preparing the organisation for mentoring will require the writing of a policy document and general agreement that a mentoring system is required;

(c) successful mentoring systems require VET institutions to know how to motivate and reward their mentors;

(d) institutions should prepare and publish a mentoring handbook or mentoring guidelines which explain the mentoring process and which contains examples of all relevant quality assurance documents. These include mentor-mentee agreements, teaching observation proformas and mentee professional development records;

(e) institutions will need to pay attention to how and when mentors are to be trained and supported;

(f) systems should be established for both the formative and summative evaluation of the mentoring system.

Appendix: Case Studies

The case studies presented in this Appendix have been selected on the bases of existing practice examples in several EU countries. While in the main text the issues of basic characteristics of mentoring in VET and ways of setting up a mentoring system in an organisation have been highlighted, the case studies focus on different examples of training mentors across Europe. In this way the case studies complement the main information in the handbook, embedding mentoring within the context of VET.

Training mentors is an important contribution to raising quality in mentoring and training provision. The practical examples here reflect the differences in the national and organisational approaches in several countries. They range from practices provided or initiated by universities and VET teacher training institutes (UK, Denmark, the Netherlands) through to those piloted at vocational adult education centres (Finland), to ones supported by a legislation act or evaluation procedures at national level (Lithuania, Slovakia, Cyprus). The information provided, as well as the points for consideration, might serve as an additional inspiration for countries and organisations which might consider introducing training courses or programmes for mentors in VET.

Research Driven Developments of The Teachers Mentoring Programme

Cyprus

This case study focuses on the developments over time of four key elements of the Cypriot Mentoring Programme: the structure (form) of training offered to the participants; the need for the establishment of mentoring centres; the utilisation of trained mentors; the allocation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits to the participants in the programme.

Objectives and Structure of The Training Programme

The Mentoring programme was first offered in the year 2008 by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute for 51 mentees and 47 mentors.

The Induction training programme aims at the smooth integration of newcomer teachers in the working environment of the school and their role in education in general. Recent educational research indicates that a high quality teaching force, consisting of qualified and appropriately trained teachers with cultural and social awareness, is the most important factor leading to improved learning results. A competent and qualified teacher, who cares for each child, is the most important component in any educational reform (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2005)

The Induction programme is intended to bridge the gap between the initial pre-service training of teachers and their lifelong professional development (Department for Education and Employment, 1999; Vubb, 2001; Earley, 2004). It is especially designed to provide direction, vision and development support to newly appointed teachers, in order to render them as active members of a learning community. Teachers are not expected 'to know it all', but learn from and with other teachers. During the Induction program the newly appointed teachers solve problems in their own classroom, in their school and have a sense of 'belonging' to this community.

The programme consists of the following elements: theoretical part and practical part with interactive methods

- The theoretical input (Phase A, B & C) which consists of five afternoon meetings for the newly appointed teachers and eight morning and afternoon meetings for the mentors. The theoretical input is based on the competences that the newly appointed teachers should acquire during their training.
- The practical implication in the workplace (Phase B) which lasts for six to eight months (October to May) and where the newly appointed teachers are expected, in collaboration with the mentors, to apply the following practices:
  - investigate needs;
  - develop an individual action plan to cover the seven points in the list of skills of the newly appointed teachers;
  - attend at least ten teaching periods headed by their mentors with emphasis on the methodological approaches proposed in the theoretical input;

- discuss and analyse at least ten lessons that the mentee would plan and apply;
- organise at least six co-teaching periods with the concerned mentor or other teachers in the school.

Evaluation and Further Development of The Programme

Over the last three years several internal evaluations of the programme were conducted (see Table 7). The evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative research on the training seminars offered and on the school support provided from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) personnel.

The following findings that contributed to improvement of the programme are to be highlighted:

- The evaluation revealed firstly, that the training seminars offered to the participants (mentors and mentees) in the Mentoring Programme during the first year had a mostly theoretical approach to the majority of the subjects taught. Gradually, in the second year, both the context and the approach of each subject were based on a theoretical and practical approach. For the third year, they were mainly based on practical approaches through role-playing, videos, group work and studying of case studies. This change was greatly appreciated by the participants and it was obvious in the third year evaluation. It is very important to highlight the contribution of CPI subject coordinators to the development of the training material used throughout these years.
- The Mentoring Programme was initially offered for all participants (twelve meetings for the mentors and five meetings for the mentees). The meetings took place in the beginning and the end of each school year. The evaluation showed that the meetings, especially for the mentors, were too many and the afternoon sessions were too tiring. After two years and the necessary procedures, the CPI managed to change the Ministers Council's decision and obtain the Ministry of Education approval to offer the training during the current year with the following major changes:
  - fewer seminars for the mentors (eight meetings instead of twelve);
  - the seminars context is restricted to the essentials focusing on the major issues;
  - the seminars are distributed throughout the school year (one new phase was added, so there are meetings for both mentors and mentees in February, in the middle of the school year);
  - half of the seminars for the mentors are taking place in the morning during working hours for the current school year in 2010–11 (four afternoon meetings and four morning meetings).

Towards the end of the school year, the participants will evaluate the above changes.

- The establishment of schools as Mentoring Centres came up as an idea towards the end of the second year as a means to achieve:
  - more interaction among the participants (not only between the mentoring dyads);
  - valuable opportunities for interaction involving other school staff and not only among the participants;
  - gradual cultivation of a culture in the school unit promoting solidarity.

During the current school year the Mentoring Centres were partly set up and will be evaluated throughout the school year.

- One of the main issues that came up is the use of the trained mentors. There are still ways to be found how to perfectly take full advantage of mentors who have been trained and have acquired the relevant experience.
- The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is studying the possibility of allocating ECTS credits to the participants for the next years. The procedure is in progress and the participants will fill in a questionnaire mainly around the time they are allocated each action involved in the Mentoring Programme. It is very important to mention that some of the participants, throughout the three years of the Programme, have chosen mentoring for their postgraduate studies. Those participants acted as valuable partners and promoted the mentoring culture in their school units.

Key Learning Points

- Institutions should consider flexible ways of applying mentors' competences in various areas of organisation's activities.
- Institutions should seek to limit the number of meetings and seminars (especially for mentors) to those that focus on essential issues.
- Mentoring programmes should be evaluated both formatively (as they proceed) and summatively (at the end) to create stepwise improvements.

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Table 7: Evaluation and Further Development of Mentoring Programme

Key programme elements	First year, 2008–09	Second year, 2009–10	Third year, 2010–11	Future planning
(1) Training (seminars) offered to the participants (mentors and mentees)	**Context** Theoretical approach	**Context** Theoretical and practical approach	**Context** Practical approaches (e.g. role playing – videos – group work – studying case studies)	**Context** Developing of existing material
	Time schedule Too many afternoon seminars in the beginning and the end of the school year	**Time schedule** Too many afternoon seminars in the beginning and the end of the school year	**Time schedule** – Less seminars restricted to the essentials and focusing on the major issues – Distributed throughout the school year – Half of the seminars took place in the morning during working hours	**Time schedule** Evaluation of the new time schedule
(2) Establishment of schools as Mentoring Centres	Not used	Not used	Partly set up: – Ability for more interaction among the participants (not only between the mentoring dyad) – Opportunities for interaction involving other school staff – not only among the participants – Gradual cultivation of a culture in the school unit promoting solidarity	Evaluation of the mentoring centres
(3) Use of trained and experienced Mentors	Training of the first mentors	– Training of mentors for the second year – Limited use of the trained mentors	– Training of mentors for the third year – Limited use of the trained mentors	Attempt to utilise the mentors who had been trained and acquired relevant experience
(4) ECTS credits awarded	Some of the participants chose “mentoring” for their postgraduate studies/degree	Some of the participants chose “mentoring” for their postgraduate studies/degree	Some of the participants chose “mentoring” for their postgraduate studies/degree	The Pedagogical Institute is studying the possibility of allocating ECTS credits to the participants

Training Practice Tutors

Denmark

The case study from Denmark highlights the role of practice tutors[5] being an integrated part of the Danish VET teacher training system for decades and provides an example of how a comprehensive training programme for practice tutors (mentors) has been put in place for the benefit of the general quality of VET teachers. The comprehensive nature of the training, as well as the long history of the system, is relatively unique compared to most of the EU. The practice tutor and the training programme have been "exported", e.g. to the Baltic countries, providing inspiration to the shaping of similar systems.

Objectives and Structure of The Training Programme

Mentors connected to teacher training in Denmark have traditionally been called practice tutors. The role of the practice tutor is to assess and guide in relation to the practical part of the teacher training taking place at the VET school[6].

The training of practice tutors aims at enabling experienced teachers to become responsible for the practical part of the pedagogical training of teachers at vocational schools and to carry out this function in a professional way.

The training is split up into three theory modules of varying duration (five days, three days and two days). Besides actual participation in individual modules, the training course consists of two periods with experimental practice (see Figure 8). The training has a total duration of 111 hours[7].

Admission to the programme presupposes a passed pedagogical education demanded of teachers at vocational schools or a similar teacher education background.

The objective of the practice tutor training is to qualify the participants (the practice tutor trainees) to be able to carry out practical training and guidance tasks during the practical part of the Danish post-graduate teacher training programme[8] - two-thirds of the full post-graduate vocational teacher training programme (compulsory for Danish VET teachers).

The participant acquires:

- competencies enabling him/her to combine theory and practice in teacher education and training;
- skills which make the participant able to observe and analyse the relations in the teaching process between teacher, student, aim, content and methods;
- insight into the ethical aspects involved in supervising in relation to the practical part of teacher education;
- competences enabling him or her to co-operate with other participants and supervisors as well as heads of training departments at the vocational school.

The participant becomes capable of developing both personally and professionally in the job as a mentor (practice tutor). The practice tutor training is basically very close to practice. It takes as its starting point the participants' practical teaching experiences, elaborates on these and puts them into a broader perspective with the guidance and support of the supervisor/practice tutor teacher.

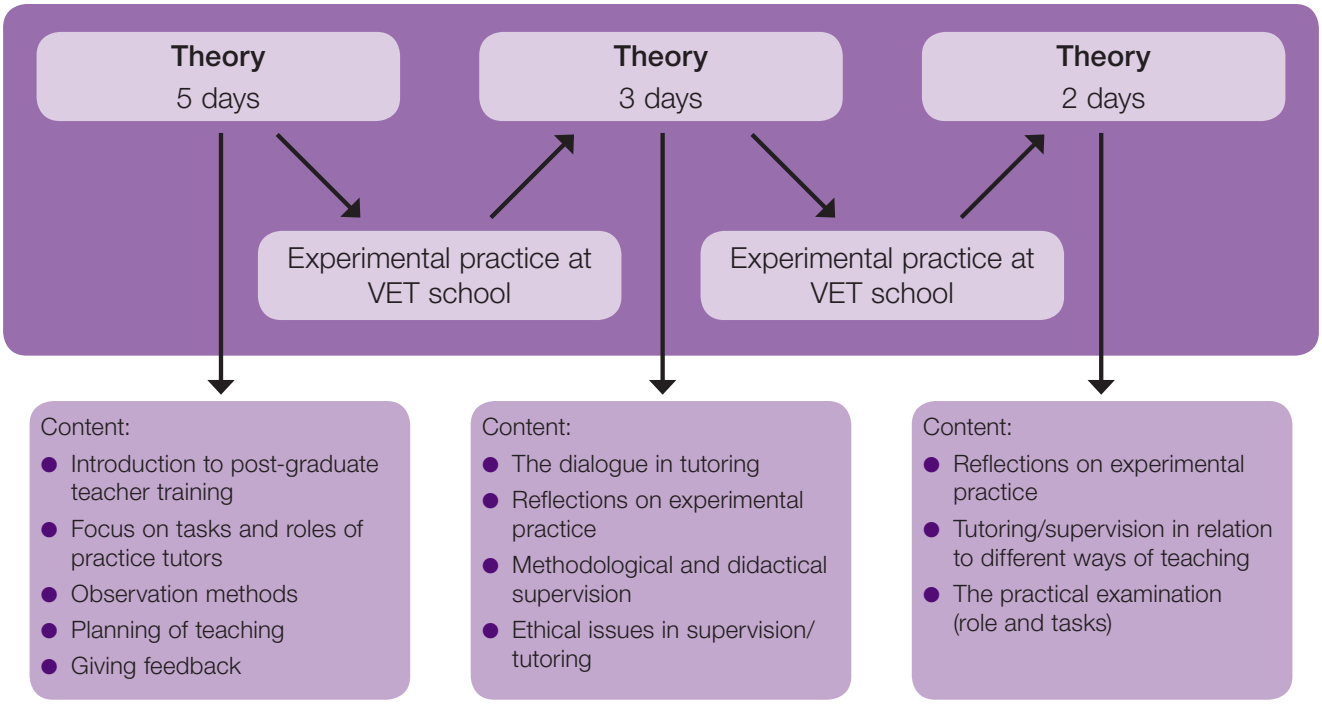

Figure 8: Illustration of the practice tutor training programme in Denmark

[5] Mentors connected to teacher training in Denmark have traditionally been called practice tutors.

[6] The professional post-graduate teacher training programme in Denmark alternates between theoretical training and practice teaching at a VET school.

[7] The system is under revision and is consequently undergoing change. The case thus focuses on how the system has worked until now.

[8] The programme is under revision and the position of the practice tutors in the revised teacher training programme is still unclear.

The teaching alternates between supervision exercises and lectures on theory, and the exchange and further processing of experience. Process-oriented methods and methods based on experience are therefore highly emphasised in the training.

Contents of the training

The following contents and themes are included in the training programme:

Introduction to the national (vocational) teacher training

The Ministerial Order regulating the teacher education and the curriculum of post-graduate teacher training are important focal points for understanding the distribution of roles and responsibility between the teacher trainee, the practice tutor and pedagogical theory teacher.

Focus on the practice tutor´s tasks

Delimitation of tutoring and supervision vis-à-vis therapy, consultation and teaching is an important part in understanding the role of the practice tutor. Another aspect is the identification of the various tasks including identifying the teacher trainee's expectations and demands to the tutor.

The many roles of the practice tutor

The practice tutor has several roles: Observer (supervisor), person of confidence and organiser – and all these must be specifically emphasised in the practice tutor training programme.

As an *observer* (supervisor), the practice tutor has to support the teacher trainee and help develop his/her professional (hard) competences as well as the soft competences related to his or her personality as a teacher.

This means that the practice tutor has the following tasks:

- to acknowledge the trainee's level of knowledge and experience and his/her strong and weak points;
- to determine the direction of development and to formulate a plan of work which may create the basis for didactical and analytical reflections.

As an *organiser*, the practice tutor should take care of the planning and supervision of the trainee's practical and pedagogical learning. The progress and the results of the vocational teacher training achieved by the trainee depend to a certain extent on how their personal experience, interests and need for development correspond to the content of the programme. This requires a systematic approach to the activities. When planning the practice element, the practice tutor should keep in mind the interaction between observation, teaching supervision, theory, and the teacher trainee's other tasks.

As a *person of confidence*, the practice tutor must take responsibility for supporting the teacher trainee as much as possible so that he or she is not exploited at the VET school. The practice tutor is in the best position to support the teacher trainee and to ensure an optimal overall learning responsibility.

Observation in actual teaching situations

The practice tutor must be trained in various observation methods, techniques and identifying sources of errors. In addition, the programme focuses on conditions which, intentionally or unintentionally, exert an influence on teaching and learning, 'the concealed syllabus' and related issues. The importance of learning environments should not be underestimated as a conditioning factor to teaching.

Supervision dialogue

The dialogue is an extremely important agent in the supervision process and consequently the foundation for the dialogue, interviewing techniques, prerequisites for 'the perfect supervision dialogue', as well as feedback as a correction of practical teaching abilities and as a development tool, are very important factors in the practice tutor's daily work and therefore specifically highlighted in the training programme.

Methodical and didactical guidance

There is a strong focus on methodical and didactical guidance in the programme, including guidance in those subjects where the participant has professional qualifications. In addition, the practice tutor is trained in advising the teacher trainer in experimental teaching, including documentation and reporting, training and educational planning, selection and organisation of professional content.

Ethical problems concerning the tutoring process

Central problems and possible role conflicts which can occur in connection with the co-operation between the practice tutor and the teacher trainee are debated and possible ways of dealing with them are highlighted.

The practical examination

The practice tutor takes part in the final evaluation of the practical part of teacher training, together with an external examiner. Thus, the practice tutor is trained in the various assignments and roles in connection with the practical examination, including the formal regulations to be observed.

Key Learning Points

- A comprehensive and ambitious training programme for practice tutors or mentors in relation to teacher training enhances the general quality of VET teachers and thus of the VET system as such.
- The alternation between theory and practice in training programmes for mentors or practice tutors adds value to the training process and gives trainees the contextual knowledge necessary to perform their future role in the best possible way.
- Observation as a fundamental part of training provides the opportunity for feedback directly related to the actual execution of the professional role.
- The emphasis in the training on making the trainee aware of the different roles he or she takes in different professional contexts provides an important preparation for knowing when a certain role is necessary or not.

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Mentoring and Mentor Education

Estonia

Mentoring in Estonia is applied as a means to facilitate professional development and provide emotional support to the novice teachers. The mentor is a key figure in induction programmes in Estonia, supporting the socialisation of novice teachers in the school context and also their professional development. Specific training programmes for mentors as well as a format for the induction of novice teachers with the support of mentors have been designed in the country.

Background Information

Estonian education policies try to consider teacher education as holistic, consolidating three levels of the teacher education system that creates opportunities for teachers' professional development:

- initial training – degree studies at university;
- induction year – novice teachers' first year of work following primary training implemented in cooperation with the mentor and university and completed by passing a special examination and receipt of a corresponding certificate;
- in-service training – either improvement of an already acquired qualification or acquisition of an additional qualification on the basis of a degree in pedagogy (including additional subject studies or the acquisition of additional competences in order to teach at different school levels).

According to the legislation in Estonia, the first stage of the induction year programme to support novice teachers was started at national level at the beginning of the academic year 2004–2005.

What should the mentor be trained for?

As a full time teacher during the induction year the novice teacher is supervised by a mentor who works in the same school. The final aim is to support novice teacher's adjustment to school as an organisation, to develop the professional skills acquired in the course of primary training and provide support in solving problems caused by lack of experience, and to give feedback to the educational institution on its teacher training curricula and their effectiveness.

In order to meet the needs of the novice teacher, the mentoring training should address skills and competencies of mentors such as guiding, advising, coaching, educating, counselling and motivating. Mentoring may be pursued with different types of goals and objectives in mind, and it may be approached from various perspectives. During the induction year the novice teacher initially forms collegial relationships, acquires membership of the teaching profession, consolidates knowledge, acquires skills, and accepts or rejects the norms and values of the school. Mentors have two key roles to play in the induction year programme: 1) to support novices' socialisation into the educational institution and 2) to support novices' professional development. Supporting socialisation into the institution means that the mentor must know the values that are essential for the institution and the arrangement of work within the institution. These processes may be influenced by the behaviour, opinions and attitudes of more experienced teachers, but also the newcomer with his fresh perspective may help to raise the awareness and question the status quo. The mentor may function as a bridge between the novice teacher and the organisation, facilitating the novice teacher's socialisation into the community, but ultimately the roles mentors adopt largely depend on the school's culture.

Mentor's duties in supporting professional development include (see Figure 9):

- establishing the mentor-novice relationship;
- supporting novices in setting their professional development goals (based on the professional standard);
- observing novices' performance;
- giving feedback;
- supporting novices' self-analysis and reflection.

Mentors should have at least three-years teaching experience and suitable personal characteristics such as commitment to the profession and area of specialisation, professionalism, supervision competence, willingness to help others etc. The mentor does not have to be a teacher of the same subject, but desirably teaching in the same field and at the same school level. A good mentor values the teaching profession, readily supports colleagues' growth and development, is open and empathetic and has positive attitudes towards learning and teaching. In addition, the mentor must have good interpersonal skills to help novices in getting included in the work of the teaching staff.

The mentor-novice relationship is a form of partnership in which the mentor is not the evaluator but the facilitator of novices' growth, who also learns in the process himself. Therefore, it is essential that the mentor volunteers for the work and expresses willingness to take the role. For experienced teachers, mentorship offers new challenges and motivating development opportunities as well as the sense of being involved in the professional development of the school and colleagues. Furthermore, being selected as a mentor also means recognition. As mentoring should be a dialogue between two colleagues, it is essential for the novice teacher to be ready to acknowledge his needs for development and receive feedback. But at the same time it should be kept in mind that the school community and the values of its members have a substantial effect on novices' learning and attitude towards reflection as well as researching and developing his practice.

Mentor-Education: Structure and Content

In order to be prepared for taking over the above described duties, mentors in Estonia are trained within a university training course.

The aim of the mentor training is to facilitate the formation of counselling competences and attitudes necessary for the analysis and development of pedagogical practice, and to acquire skills necessary for supporting teachers' professional growth and a culture of cooperation.

The scope of mentor training is six ECTS (160-hour) in-service course.

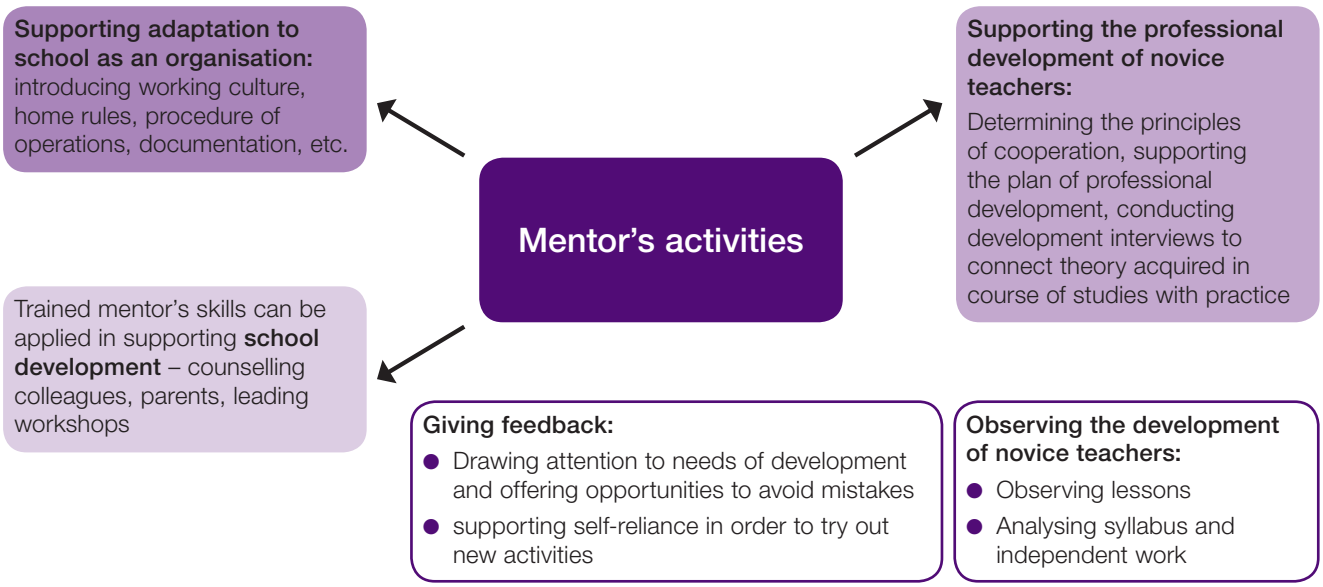

Figure 9: Mentor's activities in Estonia *(Source: Eisenschmidt, 2006; Poom-Valickis, 2007)*

During the mentor training, skills such as active listening, observing, giving feedback, goal setting, supporting self-analysis and reflection are acquired. All these skills are valuable for a teacher not only for work as a mentor but also for individual teaching practice, cooperating with colleagues, and supporting school development.

The mentor training consists of four modules. Table 8 (overleaf) gives an overview of topics and independent work of participants.

Key Learning Points:

- Being a mentor requires specific skills. In Estonia, the universities take ownership of developing a structured programme for mentors' training.
- The function of a mentor relies very much on leadership, analytical skills and empathy. Therefore, mentors are often selected not only based on their professionalism but also on their supervision skills and personal qualities, which must be further developed during the training.
- Taking on-board university initiative and developing a national induction programme, provides sustainability and opportunities for an application and taking advantage from a mentoring training and practice on a large scale.

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Source(s) for Further Information:

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Poom-Valickis, K. (2007). Novice teachers' professional development across their induction year. Tallinn University, *Dissertations on Social Sciences, 33*.

www.tlu.ee/kutseaasta/

Table 8: Modules and topics of mentor training in Estonia

Module and scope	Topics	Independent practice/work
Module I: Supporting the profession of the teacher and the adjustment to the educational institution Two days	The concept of mentoring, mentoring as the professional partnership between an experienced and a novice employee. Mentoring as an opportunity to enhance professional development and to alleviate the processes of adaptation and change. Possibilities provided by mentoring in the development of the organisation and the formation of a learning organisation. The induction programme as the development of professional skills. Teacher's competences. The role and tasks of the mentor The aims of mentoring. The image of the role of mentor. Adults as learners, teachers as learners. The factors influencing adult learning. The changed meaning of learning. The process of learning. Learning motivation. Posing development tasks. Supporting professional development. Self-analysis in the teacher's professional development.	Mentoring of a novice teacher, regularly compiling one's study portfolio. Independent task related to the role of mentor and the aims of mentoring.
Module II: Mentoring as a dialogue Two days	Mentoring as cooperation. Building a relationship based on trust. Detecting the needs for development. Counselling process and the basic skills of a counsellor. Ethical issues related to counselling. Preparing and conducting a development discussion. Mentoring styles. Discussion styles. Active listening, asking questions. Making an outline and conclusion. Avoiding defence mechanisms. Levels of communication. Obstacles in communication.	Mentoring the novice teacher's adaptation process, regularly compiling one's study portfolio. Independent task related to communication skills.
Module III: Mentor as a supporter of professional development Two days	Mentor's activities in supporting professional development. Observation. Aims of observation. Discussion before and after the observation. Feedback. Supporting self-esteem and motivation while providing feedback. Alleviating emotions.	Supporting and supervising the novice teacher's adaptation process, regularly compiling one's study portfolio. Independent task related to skills for conducting the observation and providing feedback.
Module IV: Mentor as a teacher and learner Two days	Mentoring as a process. The mentor's activities at various stages. The mentor's meta-skills. The mentor's and teacher's self-care. Boosting self-esteem and avoiding burnout. The mentor's self-evaluation. Supporting the novice teacher's self-evaluation. Supervision in the work of a teacher and mentor.	Supporting and supervising the novice teacher's adaptation process, compiling regularly and presenting one's study portfolio. Independent task related to planning, analysing, and reflecting on the study process.

Group Mentoring

Finland

The case study from Finland provides an example of piloting of two models of mentoring programmes, tacit knowledge and three-directional mentoring, at the level of one specific organisation, Amiedu. Amiedu is the largest vocational adult education centre in Finland, providing services for enterprises, public institutions and individual students. There are both initial and continuing training services available. The organisation has grown steadily, but the older generation of teachers and trainers is retiring – hence, new personnel are needed. In 2009, organisational reform took place to ensure continuous development and economic efficiency. The structural reforms and the changing of the personnel's age structure require tools. In this process, mentoring emerged as a useful tool to support the teaching personnel.

Objectives and Structure of The Training Programme for Mentoring

Internal piloting training has been offered to the Amiedu teaching personnel. Some of them are new comers and are considered mentees in the framework of the programmes. Teachers with profound experience and motivation act as mentors.

Within the two pilot models of training for mentoring the following objectives have been set up:

- to ensure change and knowledge management in organisational reform;
- to ensure transition of knowledge to guarantee the commitment and efficiency in recruiting;
- to raise the quality of services and reduce the number of complaints;
- to transform tacit knowledge to new recruits;
- to transform methods of teaching from formal learning to work-based learning;
- to commit the personnel – to extend the working period at Amiedu.

Tacit Knowledge Mentoring

This is peer learning training. The more experienced teachers of Amiedu, one to two teachers, called further mentors, and four to five novice teachers, called further mentees belong to one and the same group. There was an internal facilitator to support the group dynamics. The training was organised as group training, where the mentors introduced the mentees into the specifics and the requirements of the organisation. Both didactical and VET-based subjects were covered based on the mentees' needs.

Tacit knowledge mentoring includes:

- tailor-made programme based on the participant's needs;
- two groups of five to seven teachers;
- an internal facilitator;
- mentoring period: October – June, 16-18 hours/person.

Each group set and agreed the common goals and principles for the mentoring activity:

- commitment (being present at meetings);
- schedule (ten times, each two hours, once a month);
- documentation (tacit knowledge and good ideas are documented and used in development and introduction for new teachers);
- evaluation (regularly, in the middle and at the end of the process);
- roles and responsibilities (exchange of ideas and experience);
- methods (mainly informal discussions);
- rules (listening to everybody, right to restrict one's speech if necessary);
- getting prepared (orientation to the next theme, questions and ideas prepared);
- confidence (good ideas and practices can be spread freely, personal issues are confidential);
- goals: the preliminary goals were introduced, evaluated, agreed and specified;
- themes of discussion: groups made a list of challenges in their work.

Specifics of training the teachers of immigrants:

- support for being a teacher in a 'slow-progress- group'
- practical support for leading a 'slow-progress- group'
- empowerment of a teacher

Main elements of contents of training for property maintenance and construction teachers:

- the role and responsibilities of an adult trainer
- pedagogics and counselling among adults
- procedures and training processes in Amiedu

Three Directional Mentoring

This is peer learning training. Three training managers with varied experience form a mentoring group to mentor each other. They were called a junior, a senior and a veteran who are not in subservient roles to each other. They had an external teacher trainer to facilitate the mentoring process.

Juniors had little experience as a training manager. They may have been working in the same organisation in different responsibilities. Mentoring supports in-depth familiarisation. The junior shares his or her valuable experience with colleagues in the organisation and helps the older employees see their working theories in a new light.

The veteran had worked as a training manager for a long time and had perspectives and experience of previous changes at work. He or she would have several work years ahead before retirement.

The senior had long work experience as a training manager and had held other various positions. He or she would be retiring soon. He or she retains a valuable body of experience and this should be harnessed by the organisation. At the same time, the senior receives an esteemed position in the organisation for their last work years.

There was a common kick-off for all groups to set the goals, content and methods of the mentoring process. The themes for the introductory lectures were introduced: change

management, training manager's role and responsibilities, setting and achieving goals, success and motivation, evaluation of the mentoring process and results. The themes of the lectures were orientation for the mentoring process.

- four introductory lectures for all groups together followed by four mentoring sessions with an external facilitator and four meetings without the facilitator.
- mentoring period October–June.
- follow-up sessions, October–November, four face-to-face and web-based sessions.

Key Learning Points

- Mentoring training can be organised as group training, where one and the same training specialist can be in the role of both mentor and mentee. Changing perspective provides benefits for both roles.
- Training in mentoring supports quality in educational provision of the organisation.
- Mentors need to have the willingness and ability to share their experience and openness to the experiences and points of view of others.
- Mentoring is one of the tools for reforming organisation and its culture. For achieving sustainable results, it needs to be combined with other development tools.

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Mentor Training Programme

Lithuania

The VET teacher education system in Lithuania is based on the idea of harmonising theoretical studies at university with pedagogical practice at teacher trainees' work place (the VET school). The role of the mentor is to facilitate trainees' pedagogical practice, share their own pedagogical practice, supervise and consult VET teachers at their work place. The focus of this case study is to introduce the mentor training programme, which was prepared in Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus University, (Lithuania). The programme was developed in 2000, under the European Training Foundation project, by transferring the experience of Denmark (The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers) and applying this in a Lithuanian context. So far there is no national policy on mentoring.

Target Group (Mentors and Mentees)

Mentors in VET teacher education in the Lithuanian context are more experienced teachers working at the same school as VET student teachers. There are five qualification categories of VET teachers: junior VET teacher, VET teacher, senior VET teacher, VET teacher methodologist and VET teacher expert. Mentors are required to have a qualification category at least of VET teacher methodologist. A person has to have special training to formally become a mentor.

Mentees: According to the regulations in Lithuania, persons willing to become VET teachers are employed at a VET school, having no formal teaching qualification, only having their formal subject qualification and three years of practical experience in it. During the first two years after having started to work at a vocational school, they are obliged to acquire, in addition, a formal teaching qualification. At this point, the role of a mentor is essential to help trainees combine theoretical studies with practical experience. In the majority of cases, mentors are involved in initial VET teacher education, but occasionally they participate in the continuous professional development of VET teachers as well (in cases when the teacher applies for a higher qualification category).

Objectives and Structure of The Programme

The mentor training programme forms the basis for enabling experienced teachers to become responsible for the practical part of the pedagogical training of teachers in VET schools and to carry out this function in a professional way. The aim of the programme is to award the mentor qualification. Mentorship in VET teacher education covers mainly the pedagogical field.

The mentor training programme is linked to the VET teacher initial education programme *Vocational Pedagogy*. Both *Mentor training* and *Vocational Pedagogy* programmes combine theoretical studies at the university with pedagogical practice at vocational schools. During the practical part of the studies, mentors work with the mentees (VET student teachers), by observing their teaching, helping them to build their teaching portfolio, discussing their practical pedagogical problems and sharing experiences. Mentors are involved in the assessment of the mentee, both formative and summative. However, mostly, mentors conduct formative assessment, providing feedback on the mentee's teaching and pedagogical progress.

Figure 10 demonstrates how each of the study modules of the programme is combined with practical assignments in the school.

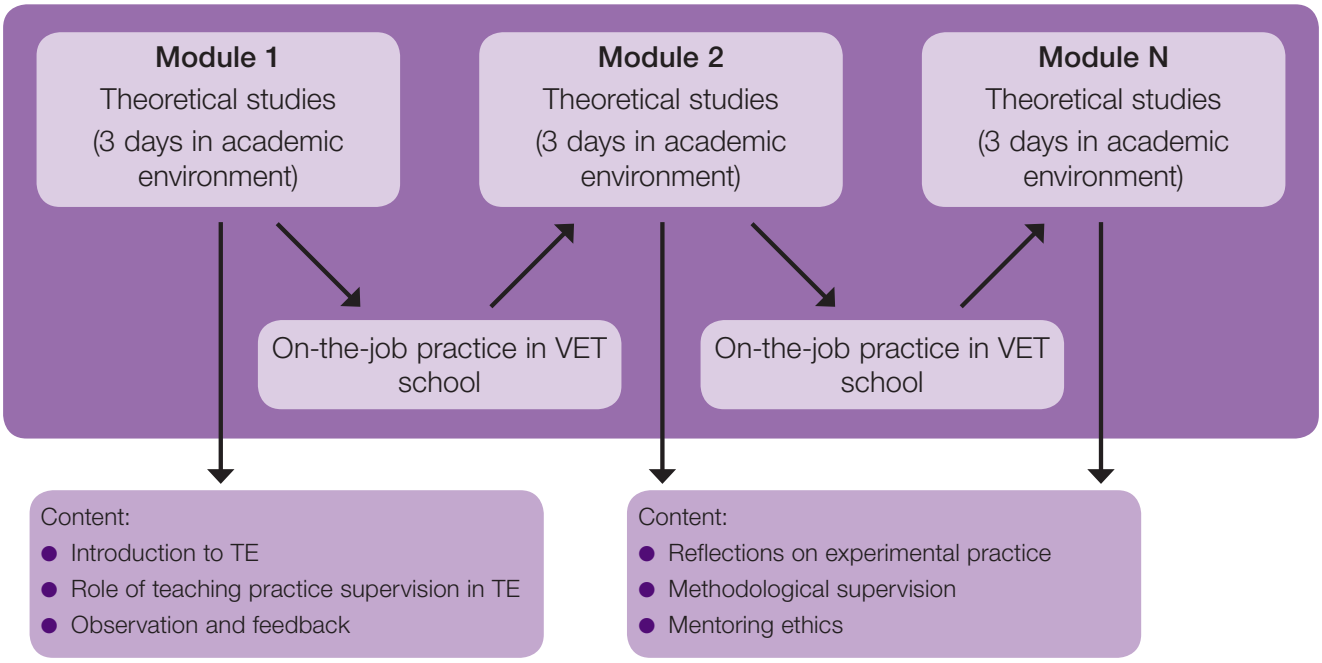

Figure 10: Combining theoretical studies and pedagogical practice in mentor training programme in Lithuania

Programme Contents

Each training module in the programme is oriented towards acquiring certain knowledge and skills that are necessary to be a mentor in VET teacher education. There are nine study modules in the Mentor education programme:

(a) the role and functions of the mentor in VET teacher education;

(b) observation and feedback to VET teacher on pedagogical activity;

(c) counselling of junior VET teachers;

(d) assistance in acquiring competences in career design;

(e) assistance in acquiring (and upgrading) didactical qualifications;

(f) communication and collaboration skills, mentoring ethics.

(g) introducing the school's culture;

(h) assessment and evaluation;

(i) design of the curriculum;

Teaching/Learning Methods

The modes of teaching and learning used in the programme are lectures, experimental practice and professional portfolio building activities. The portfolio includes reflections on theoretical studies at the university as well as on experimental practice at the vocational school. This is the basis for assessing the success of the mentor-student relationship and work progress at the end of the programme.

Key Learning Points

- Mentors have to be trained and professionally qualified as teachers.
- The role of the mentor is to help trainees combine theoretical knowledge with their practice.
- International experience, adapted to national context can serve as inspiration and a good practice example.

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Mentoring Circles

The Netherlands

Background

The teacher training institute for teachers in technical vocational education (PTH Eindhoven) of Fontys University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands cooperates with institutes for vocational training and adult education (ROC's) in training their educational personnel. Schools for vocational education need didactical skilled staff in a differentiation of educational functions (teachers, tutors, trainers, educational assistants).

In this case study we describe the considerations of setting up a mentoring system in which the student-trainers mentor each other in a so called 'mentoring circle' in a two year dual training programme for the VET trainer. In this programme the student is considered as 'owner' and 'architect' of his or her own learning and development process. This basic assumption deserves, as a consequence, a trial in the 'empowering' of the mentoring and monitoring process.

Structure and Objectives of The Training Programme

The training programme for VET trainers consists of two closely connected components: (1) an on-the-job programme in the schools, and (2) an off-the job programme taking place at the Fontys teacher training institute. Typically, four days a week are spent on learning and working at the ROC (most student-trainers are employed) and one day a week is spent at the Fontys teacher training institute.

Student-trainers are involved in so called productive learning tasks: authentic learning projects defined by the students themselves. These student-trainers are mentored by their coaches and teachers in their school and at the Fontys institute by the educator. It is in fact, a 'dual mentoring system'.The cooperating mentors from Fontys and from the ROC face quite a difficult task in fine-tuning the activities in such a way that the student-trainer will not be strangled in 'mentor-overkill'.

The objectives of these productive learning tasks are:

(1) encouraging the student-trainer to take ownership of their own learning process and mentor their peers;

(2) contributing to the personal development plan of the student-trainer;

(3) linking the student-trainer's activities to the specific demands of the employer (ROC);

(4) contributing to the professional competences of students trainers as formulated by the Fontys training institute.

Approach and Contents of The Programme

Mentoring-circles

The mentoring process applies the social constructivist approach, with 'richness of learning environment', 'ownership of learning process', 'responsibility for results', and 'learning communities' (we learn together and we are responsible for each other). The small study groups, consisted of student-trainers are'upgraded' into so called 'mentoring circles', where mutual learning and mentoring is promoted. Every other week student-trainers meet with their 'mentoring circle', taking care of each other, exchanging knowledge and ideas and sharing articles and instruments, visiting the schools of the others. They discuss the experiences in the mentoring circle. An important mentoring activity is the supporting and coaching of each other with the study programme (the planning, the activities, the reporting, the connections to the competences etc.). Another aspect of mentoring activities is the mentoring of the whole process of mentoring circles, provided by the Fontys mentor. He supports the circles, based on narrative description and some topics for discussion, sent to him by the group of student-trainers.

A third level of mentoring is the individual mentoring and coaching which is also available as part of the group work within the circles.

Key Learning Points

- The approach of peer mentoring within mentoring circles where student-trainers mentor each other contributes to establishing learning communities.
- Mentoring circles support taking ownership of own professional development.
- Cooperation between teachers training institutes and VET schools and centres is at the heart of successful linking of theoretical and practical professional development of teachers and trainers.

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Initiation Of Novice VET Teachers Into The Profession

Slovakia

Being a teacher does not just mean organising lessons and teaching students, but it also means dealing with educational problems, managing meetings with parents, coping with demanding paperwork, laws and regulations, etc. This is something that a university very often does not prepare future teachers for and they have to learn it during their first years of teaching practice.

On November 1, 2009, Act No 317/2009 Coll. was enforced on pedagogical staff, changing the system of preparing novice teachers for their everyday teaching practice in Slovakia. The Initiation of the novice teacher into practice (defined in the Act as *adaptive education*) is aimed at gaining professional competences needed for teaching that cannot be gained by studying at the university.

Adaptive education is provided by the school placement, where the novice teacher (mentee) works by a colleague (mentor), who is an experienced teacher, possessing the highest career positions according to the Slovakian legislation.

Objectives and Structure of The Adaptive Education Programme

The *Adaptive education programme* aims at supporting the induction period of a novice teacher in the school environment. Introducing this programme for novice teachers has the following objectives:

- to facilitate transition of novice teacher from the university/ theoretical base of his or her initial education to the teaching practice;
- to acquaint future pedagogical specialists with the variety of tasks and the working atmosphere in an educational/ training institution;
- to support development of teachers' competences, required by the law in order to possess one of the four career positions (novice teacher, independent teacher, teacher with first attest, teacher with second attest)[9].

Adaptive education is compulsory and has to be finished successfully within two years after being hired to a teaching position. Otherwise, it leads to the termination of mentee's employment.

The mentor is a more experienced colleague from the same school, awarded with a first or second attest. He or she is appointed by the headmaster and receives a financial bonus.

Between mentor and mentee both formal and informal relationships exist and are usually highly appreciated. The formal mentoring consists of consultations, discussions, observations of mentor's classes.

The advantages of having a colleague from the same organisation as a mentor provides opportunities for both sides to interact on an everyday basis and – for the mentee – to gain from the experience of a colleague from inside of the organisation. The disadvantages may occur if the mentor-mentee relationship develops in a problematic or inefficient way.

The adaptive education programme is successfully completed (formally assessed) after:

- presenting an open lesson in front of the examination committee (headmaster and two teachers with first or second attest);
- final discussion of preselected issue with the examination committee;
- fulfilment of requirements set by law for the position of the independent teacher confirmed in the mentor's written report and accepted by the examining committee. The mentee has to meet prescribed competences corresponding to independent teacher working position standards.

Key Learning Points

- Mentoring is important because becoming a teacher involves much more than just teaching itself. Mentoring supports novice teachers in preparing for the multi-tasks of the teaching profession.
- It might happen that selecting only one among the more experienced teachers in a school could not be good enough for supporting a novice teacher. A solution could be the introduction of two mentors for one mentee. One mentor could help the mentee with teaching of a particular subject and the other mentor could help the mentee cope with paperwork and administrative procedures.
- There is time pressure on the mentoring process. Since the mentor and mentee are full-time teachers, it is not easy to synchronise their schedules without skipping some regular classes. A solution might be a guarantee of less teaching for novice teachers so they can spend time observing mentor's lessons, or even other teacher's lessons, and studying pedagogical documentation.

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Source(s) for Further Information:

Act No 317/2009 Coll. on pedagogical staff and proffesional staff. http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/Legislativa/Zakony/317_2009.pdf

[9] Competences have a significant role in teachers' education as well as in their continuing professional development reform in Slovakia. According to the law, pedagogical staff in every career position should possess prescribed competences. A list of relevant competences is still in the process of finalisation and standards for respective positions and levels are still not completed. Initial versions of standards were submitted to the public discussion, but there have been no officially recognised standards explicitly set so far.

Mentor Training

United Kingdom

Teacher training in the UK in post-16 institutions is almost always impossible to deliver in respect of subject specialism. As there are so many subjects in post-16 education, all post-16 teacher training programmes are generic in nature. However, at the same time, the inspection regime, Ofsted, requires that subject specialism is addressed. At the University of Greenwich these requirements meant that all trainees (i.e. student teachers) had to have mentors in their specialist subject at their institution. In order to support the mentors, the School of Education at the university developed a system of support, training and quality assurance.

Aim and Organisation of Mentoring

In the post-16 teacher training department at Greenwich there are approximately 1500 mentors, but only approximately 200 of their trainees attend at the university. The remaining trainees follow the Flexible programme (distance learning) or are based at the network of colleges, which are spread throughout the south east and south west of England and even in Northern Ireland. In other words, some trainees attend the University of Greenwich for some of the formal, 'taught' part of their training programme, whilst others access this programme through one of Greenwich's network of partner colleges. These partner colleges deliver the Greenwich programme.

Mentor training at the University of Greenwich aims at supporting the mentors in training them to cope with the described situation and to provide a quality service. Unfortunately, in terms of organisation there has been no government lead on this issue and therefore no nationally consistent pattern: some mentors are compensated, others not; some mentors are trained, others not; some colleges have a mentor/placement system, others do not.

The mentors can choose in situ training at Greenwich or an online mentor training system.

- A face-to-face training session which was 'portable' was developed and was sent to all the network colleges – these deliver their own training. The programme consisted of 'icebreakers', PowerPoint presentations (explaining the programme at Greenwich, the cycle of mentoring, and also points about giving feedback). More interactively there was a group discussion about 'ground rules' and the first meeting between the mentor and mentee, an exercise about observation using a case study, and a role play about feedback using the same case study. The session usually takes about three hours and has been very successful in addressing many issues which occur in the mentoring relationship.
- An online system for mentors was also set up, because, due to the number and geographical spread of the mentors, the majority were not able to attend the face-to-face training session at the University of Greenwich. This consists of registration (done by the trainee), an online training session, three evaluation forms (one by the trainee and two by the mentor) and an online certificate of mentoring. The online training session consists of a review of skills, a first meeting exercise, an exercise in the 'stages' of mentoring, an exercise in subject specialism, an observation and feedback exercise, an exercise discussing challenge/support issues and an evaluation of the mentor-trainee relationship. The session takes approximately one hour and has received excellent feedback from mentors.

Key Learning Points

- In the UK, there is a requirement to have mentors in the trainee's subject specialism. Mentors also assess their trainees in the observation of teaching.
- Training mentors is essential. If this cannot be done face-to-face (for reasons of geographical distance) then other means must be found e.g. online training. Online training can include a blend of guidance, exercises, and evaluations.

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Glossary Of Terms[10]

Mentoring: Guidance and support provided to a new entrant (i.e. someone joining the TT institution) or to someone as a part of professional development and support, by an experienced person who acts as a role model, guide, coach or confidante.

Mentor: A person who is experienced, qualified and knowledgeable in a professional field relevant to the mentee, who offers guidance and support.

Mentee: A person being mentored through guidance and support, either as a new entrant or within the context of professional development.

TT institution (Teacher/Trainer training institution): An institution, for example, a university or other institution providing formal initial teacher or trainer training.

Mentoring context: Organisations or systems within which mentoring takes place on a formalised or voluntary basis. The organisation is commonly a VET institution or an enterprise.

Students: The people the mentee is teaching or training. In some countries, such people are referred to as learners or trainees, but for the purpose of this handbook the word 'students' is used.

Student-teacher: See *Mentee*

Induction: A form of support programme for new entrants to the teaching profession that involves mentoring. Induction may be aimed at new teachers who have completed their teacher qualifications or may be part of their pre-service training.

Tutor: A person working in the TT (teacher training) institution who has responsibility for the progress, supervision and support of the student-teacher/mentee and for the formal mentoring process.

Assessment: *either:* The process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against pre-defined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification. *or:* The total range of methods (written, oral and practical tests/examinations, projects and portfolios) used to evaluate learners' achievement of expected learning outcomes.

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