

# **MENTORING: TOWARDS AN IMPROVED PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIP**

**By**

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**A thesis submitted to  
The University of Birmingham  
For the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Department of Sociology  
The University of Birmingham  
November 2008**

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BIRMINGHAM

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis, I develop and then test an approach to mentoring that after Clutterbuck (1991), I call, Professional Friendship. This is to better understand the role of mentoring more broadly and that of learning mentors in particular. My hypothesis examines the problem of: ‘To what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships?’ I begin with an examination of the importance of mentoring generally and the role of the learning mentor specifically, before critically accessing the literature on both to date. I then explain the origin of Professional Friendship and give my own definition, before testing its validity in a study of the role of learning mentors in a large West Midlands Education Service. I use five sources of data: a systematic literature search; a mentee questionnaire; a set of mentoring case studies provided mainly by mentors; in depth interviews with mentors; and my own lived experience. The data shows me that Professional Friendship is a core component of successful mentoring relationships and that may be of broad benefit; certainly it is useful in assessing the role of learning mentors. However, the analysis also leads me to suggest ways in which the construct can be adapted and improved.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank the following people for their help, support, inspiration and encouragement over the time of my undertaking and completing this PhD thesis. My children, Rebecca and Lorna Gardiner for their understanding and tolerance. My parents, Coral and Andrew Gardiner, for their unremitting encouragement and patient support. My Supervisor, Dave Marsh, without whom I could not have succeeded. My thanks to all of those who have mentored me over time and have led me to, and along, the path, Professor David Clutterbuck, Keith Whittlestone, my colleague Naveed Khan, George Mardle, Vince Gordon, Dr. Les Franklin, Mike Yates, Eric Parsloe, Asif Mukhtar, Rahila Mukhtar, my good friend Keith Farr, to the memory of Geoff Sewell and to Simon Jordon and Graham Beaumont. They all believed in me.

I owe gratitude also to that person who once asked, “What is your dream Coral?” and who showed me that I could live it, Frank Preen.

Thank you of course to all those mentors on BEAT and all those Learning Mentors and Learning Mentees who participated in helping me and who too inspired me to do this study.

I wish to acknowledge all those children, students and adult learners who have mentored me or have been mentored by me during my journey. I hope that they will go on to make a difference to others in their own time. My hope for this PhD is that it may offer the voices of others to be heard in some small way. Finally, thank you to all of those who gave me something of themselves so that I could have this opportunity, Suzy Marsh, Sue Pace, Gill Willetts, Valerie Shakespeare, Judy Morgan, Peter Collins, Joyce Anderson, Paul Goddard Patel, Colin Beilby.

Thank you all.

**SECTION ONE: TOWARDS AN IMPROVED  
PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIP**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION: EXPLAINING MY CONCERNS**

The hypothesis of this thesis is: ‘To what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships?’ To address this problem, I have a conceptualised construct of Professional Friendship, which I previously began developing in a study of mentoring in the Probation Service (Gardiner 1996, p. 5), to better understand mentoring more broadly. The concept aims to identify a series of core components that indicate success in mentoring relationships, perhaps to differing degrees, in all mentoring relationships? To show how this operates, my empirical work examines the case of Learning Mentors based in schools and because their role is poorly understood and sometimes misinterpreted. Examining the role and responsibilities of Learning Mentors will allow me to assess whether my construct of Professional Friendship as a core component is a useful one that may help towards a possible model applicable across differing mentoring arenas. In essence, I shall argue that this promotes a greater understanding of what happens in mentoring relationships.

In this chapter, I begin by briefly discussing why it is important to study mentoring more generally and the role of the Learning Mentor in particular. Subsequently, I first discuss the problem of defining mentoring in relation to other similar helping activities. I link this to a definition of Professional Friendship and discuss friendship in this context, before turning my attention to the role of Learning Mentors. Finally, I outline the structure of the thesis. In the other two chapters in this section I first, in Chapter 2, look more closely at the existing literature on mentoring generally and Learning Mentors particularly to identify some of its weaknesses; weaknesses which my work addresses. My main focus here is on a critical evaluation of the existing models of mentoring. On the basis of this work and previous research I have undertaken, in Chapter 3 I then explain how this is a step towards a possible model and explain the Professional Friendship construct which underpins this empirical research.

### **1.1 Why is it important to study the role of Learning Mentors?**

Mentoring has become a major element of contemporary UK society and, more specifically, of government policy (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2004, p. 1). As well as the Learning Mentors who are the focus of this thesis, there are many other types of mentoring.

For example, authors have identified mentoring in relation to: teacher training (Glover and Mardle 1995); criminal justice (Gardiner 2000); business (Megginson & Clutterbuck 1995); the community (Parsloe 1995); the voluntary sector (Bennetts 1996); the spiritual sphere (Anderson & Reese 2000); and engineering (Hamilton 1993).

In addition, mentoring formed a key part of New Labour's strategy in relation to social inclusion after 1997 (Reid 2002, p. 156)<sup>1</sup>. New Labour saw mentoring as a necessary part of the radical overhaul of a failing post-Thatcher educational system that would raise standards and attainment in schools. This commitment led to the establishment of Learning Mentors.

There are more than fifteen thousand Learning Mentors in schools in England, who were funded initially by the Department of Education and Skills. They are educational practitioners working with children and young people inside and outside of schools in response to the government strategy called Excellence in Cities (DfEE 1999, p. 3).

The Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative targeted six inner cities areas and their conurbations to receive additional funding for secondary schools. The funding was intended to help identify and support gifted and talented pupils and to provide Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units which remove disaffected pupils from their classroom. Other strands of the initiative included: City Learning Centres with state of the art ICT facilities; Beacon Schools; and Specialist Schools.

The programme offered guidance from the Department of Education and Employment Skills (DfEE) and set challenging targets for GCSE achievement and reductions in exclusions and truancy. Following the six successful pilots (Sept 1999), the programme was extended in April 2000 to a limited number of primary schools and was further rolled out in September 2001 - 2004 to smaller pockets of deprivation in England; these were known as Excellence Clusters.

Today Learning Mentors are mainstreamed through educational services in England and Wales to support children and their families. As such, Learning Mentors are a recent development and for that reason worthy of study.

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<sup>1</sup> So, the Chancellor of Exchequer, Gordon Brown, argued in relation to mentoring that:  
You might say mentoring is about people helping people needing people to make the most of themselves and be all they can be, bridging the gap between what they are and what they have it in themselves to become. (18<sup>th</sup> February 2004 National Strategic Body National Mentoring Network)

However, much more importantly, they are a significant development, because they are a plausible response to a clear problem. Indeed, the Social Exclusion Report (1998, cited by Reid, 2002, p. 153) indicated that up to 65% of daytime crime in inner city areas was carried out by truants, absentees and excluded pupils. Similarly, the B.E.A.T initiative report (1994, p. 1) had found that:

To dismiss the correlation between unemployment and crime amongst young people would be folly as it could give rise to an act of moral dereliction abandoning those young people to the corrosive consequences of a future of unemployment and crime.

More recently, the 2002 Families and Children Study (FACS) by the Department of Work and Pensions emphasised the need for government policy makers to reduce social exclusion and hardship in society in order to improve educational achievement and attainment. The FACS found that one in ten families in the survey had been contacted by their child's school because of her/his behavioural problems or because the child had been suspended or excluded from school. In addition, some older children (5% of 14-15yrs and 1% of 5-13yrs) had been in contact with the police and five per cent of children had problems with smoking, drinking or drugs; this figure rose to 13% among 14-15yrs (FACS 2002, p. 2).

At the same time, a report on Excluding Primary School Children by the Family Policy Studies Centre (1994, p. 2) found that the majority of excluded children were boys (20:1) who came from families facing a range of problems including the divorce or separation of their parents. The researchers concluded that greater support for both families and schools through improved inter-agency working are needed if disruption for individual children is to be minimised.

Given such findings, it is unsurprising that the Government's Excellence in Cities Programme highlighted the correlation between economic and social deprivation and the need to build policies to increase social cohesion and economic prosperity and to reduce the likelihood of furthering the spiral of social and economic decline.

In this context, it is often argued that mentoring can reduce social exclusion and increase social cohesion. More broadly, Aldridge (2004, p. 35), citing Feinstein (2003), emphasises that how a child is brought up affects her/his psychological development and opportunities later in life. For example, those with high scores for self-esteem experienced shorter spells of unemployment and enjoyed higher earnings. By the age of 10, a child's self-esteem and sense of control of his/her own destiny is linked to behavioural qualities such as anti-social behaviour, peer relations, attentiveness and extraversion, all of which are strongly associated with social class.

In part, this is a reflection of material circumstance, but parents' own interest in education and their psychological support for their children also vary within social classes. However, increasing life chances requires greater social justice and the absence of barriers that act to decrease the quality of life.

Essentially, life chances are about the opportunities available to individuals in society throughout a lifetime. In addition, these chances can increase the quality of life, not only for the individual, but also for their family, the community and society. Of course, life chances in the UK are influenced by socio-economic status, ethnic group, gender and where you live. In the UK those at the top and the bottom of the income distribution are less likely to experience social mobility than those in the middle (DWP 2003, p. 34). However, life chances are also influenced by factors such as genetic inheritance, education and skills, childhood poverty, early years' development, family structure, attitudes and aspirations, discrimination and market forces (Aldridge 2004, p. 16).

At the same time, Riley (2003, again cited by Aldridge, 2004, p. 18) argues that life chances are not independent of intelligence and environment and Feinstein (2003, cited by Aldridge, 2004, p. 19) found that nurture during the early years may influence social class and intelligence. The argument here then is that childhood poverty affects outcomes in later life. In addition, self-esteem, especially where social skills development is poor, along with childhood poverty, seems to be influential later. Indeed, Aldridge (2004, p. 19) argues that Feinstein's (2003) study provides evidence that early year's development is strongly associated with educational outcomes later in life and that a person's cultural capital, the ability to flourish in the community, depends on their educational attainment.

Overall, there is a great deal of evidence that pupils who are unfocussed in their school education are less likely to do well. As Daniel Goleman, who many credit with increasing popular awareness of the importance of social and emotional learning, observes (1995, p. 78):

Students who are anxious, angry or depressed don't learn; people who are in these states do not take in information efficiently or deal with it well...when emotions overwhelm concentration, what is being swamped is the mental capacity cognitive scientists call 'working memory', the ability to hold in mind all information relevant to the task at hand.

More narrowly, Reid (2002, p. 168) argues that mentoring schemes in schools have the potential to reduce bullying, disruptive behaviour, exclusion rates, underachievement, dissatisfaction, truancy and other forms of non-attendance.

However, Aldridge (2004, p. 56) argues strongly that the life chances of the less well-off will improve, if they are given more second chances and are offered more effective empowerment, thus helping them, via greater choice and other public service reforms, to help themselves. In my view, effective mentoring is at the core of such empowerment. It is one way of helping to support emotional well being by establishing a very positive relationship between the mentor and the mentee and thus encouraging the learning process to flourish.

My key point here is simple. Mentoring is a growing and important feature of modern society. As such, developing a greater understanding of the mentoring process is important, if we are to improve the success rates of it.

## **1.2 What is Mentoring?**

Interestingly, the word ‘mentoring’ is not to be found in a dictionary. However, the term ‘Mentor’ is usually considered to derive from Greek mythology (Shea, 1992, p. 11). Roberts, (2000) who writes about both androgyny in, and the history of, mentoring, contends that the origins of the term ‘Mentor’ and the true description of mentor’s role lie in Fenelon’s *Les Adventures de Telemaque*, rather than in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. In Homer’s story of the Trojan Wars, Odysseus left his son to be guided by the goddess Athena in the disguise of a male persona called ‘Mentor’.

However, Roberts (2000, p. 32) argues that any reading of *The Odyssey* will not find such rich references to the character of *Mentor* who counsels, guides, nurtures, advises and enables as in Fenelon’s literature. In addition, Roberts (2000, p. 60) argues that his case is strengthened through a consideration of the work of other mentoring theorists and cites my own contribution to mentoring theory in two ways. Firstly, he cites my work on the requirements of the mentor role, which I view as involving *empowering*, and providing *friendship* to, the mentee (1995, p. 50). Secondly, he argues that I concur with others that mentoring is a teaching and learning process (see Roberts 2000, p. Table Three).

Mentoring was first utilised as a term in the late nineteen sixties in America. Clutterbuck (1991, p. 2) cites an early author, Ralf M Stodgill, who, at that time, viewed the mentor as an ambiguous authority figure. Wider debates on mentoring pondered its pros and cons. From this point, there were various new discussions of mentoring in the late nineteen seventies and early eighties as its use became more widespread.

By this time, mentoring was proliferating in the U.K. and, by nineteen eighty seven, a study of mentoring in eight countries-Australia, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Spain, the United States and the United Kingdom, found: a third of schemes were at the pilot stage; and up-to half ran only for two years or less. (Clutterbuck 1991, p. 4). Crucially, Clutterbuck (1991, p. 5) cites Agnes Missirian who argues, even at this early stage of development in mentoring, there is some recognition that the most successful mentoring relationships, blossom into friendships. Furthermore, Clutterbuck cites Tony Milne (1991, p. 5) who views that mentoring is: *'such a personal relationship'*.

Mentoring was used in the National Health Service during the 1980s (Clutterbuck 1991, p. 9). In addition, a growing number of organisations in various fields used it to develop their young graduate recruits and junior and middle managers. Some examples below reinforce this point.

- In the business sector, most advocates view mentoring as a development tool (DfEE 1999a; see also Shea, 1992, Zey, 1984, Parsloe, 1992 and Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1995). More specifically, BP Chemicals cited by Clutterbuck (1991, p. 35) argue mentoring creates a particular relationship within a general framework of developing and managing newcomers. Similarly, Clutterbuck (1991, p. 35) suggests that mentoring can be used to improve employee performance and emphasises the personal, almost secretive, nature of the relationship, given that what is discussed is only known to the individuals in the relationship and they can choose to keep that information secret. He advocates that the mentor be ready to extend friendship to the protégé and be willing for that relationship to extend beyond the usual limits of a business relationship. A particular pitfall, and potentially dangerous practice, is where the process can amplify favouritism (1991, p. 1) Of course, secrecy would play differently in a school context, where it might increase the vulnerability of the young and increase the likelihood of manipulation.
- In education, the Teacher Training Agency provides mentors to new teacher interns. More broadly, pupil mentors operate both inside and outside the institution, within contexts including Business in the Community, the Business Education Partnership and British Petroleum (Clutterbuck 1991, p. 35) etc. The reasons for their mentoring activities vary. Of course, different contexts provide a range of additional constraints, which may have a bearing on the relationship.



- Mentoring in the community often flourishes and involves partnerships between the public and voluntary sectors, e.g. B.E.A.T (Gardiner 1994, p. 2). These programmes commonly occur to encourage social reintegration and reduce social isolation, thus improving community cohesion (Colley 2003, p. 17). In this vein, Colley (2003) focuses upon the use of mentoring as a way of re-engaging the disaffected.
- The National Probation Service, via the courts, uses mentors from the community to mentor offenders in an attempt to discourage their offending behaviour. In addition, the Youth Offending Service provides community mentors to young people at various stages of their passage through the Criminal Justice process.

The Oxford Dictionary (2003, p. 386) defines a mentor as a trusted advisor, counsellor, guide, guru, teacher, tutor and coach. This recent definition gives us an insight into the multi-faceted nature of the role. Indeed, we need to distinguish between mentoring and these other related activities, teaching, counselling, coaching and tutoring to better understand the role.

### ***i) Mentoring and Teaching***

If mentoring is a relationship the purpose of which is to encourage learning and change, teaching focuses on learning. Gardiner (1996, p. 38) cites Hirst (1971, p. 165) who considers it vital teachers understand teaching as it affects what they actually do in the classroom. Hirst (1971, p. 173) suggested teaching is about proving, demonstrating and telling with a purpose and cannot exist independently of learning. Although, mentoring is not teaching it uses a teaching approach as and when appropriate. In the view of Hirst (1971, p. 165), teaching is an activity which involves ‘questioning; it is a ‘polymorphous activity’ which uses ‘telling’. In his view, teaching must have a point or purpose with a clear aim and intention. To Hirst, (1971, p. 174) the learning involved in teaching, can involve either one-to-one or group activity and can occur over an extended long period, “say all afternoon”. He also argues that it involves: ‘the aim of learning as creating a legitimate part of the teaching enterprise as a whole.’ (Hirst 1971, p. 164)

In addition, Hirst (1971, p. 170) sees the aim and end achievements of learning as being new ‘states of the person’. Here, I argue that this would be acknowledged as involving a life change. Of course, this idea that learning brings about a change is shared by mentoring.

However, whilst teaching does have some common ground with mentoring, it also differs because mentoring is purely a one-to-one activity.

In particular, the learning undertaken in mentoring can be of a generic or holistic, as well as a specific, nature. On the other hand, teaching focuses upon learning that is very specific. For example, learning related to the National Curriculum or learning how to drive.

### ***ii) Mentoring and Counselling***

Mentoring is often confused with counselling and some professionals view them as the same thing. However, Megranahan (1989, p. 2) sees counselling as:

A framework within which different helping strategies are appropriate for different people at different times. The ability to identify what is needed, when and why are integral to the process of counselling.

He (Megranahan 1989, p. 3) argues that counselling is a process which helps the person work through types of issues, understand them better, identify feelings and ways of responding and see how these are relevant to the problem. In addition, it involves seeing things from the others' point of view through active listening and developing mechanisms for self-reliance. It requires skills such as communication, trust, openness, acceptance, empathy, genuineness, respect and a non-judgemental attitude in a one-to-one setting. Counselling activity is intended to help develop the clients' problem-solving and decision-making skills. However, it aims to help the client gain greater understanding of self, so the counsellor is not directive. Mentoring, as a helping strategy, shares with counselling the aim of enabling the other to make appropriate change(s). Megranaham (1989, p. 3) suggests that counselling does not impose solutions, opinions, values or judgements. It does not minimise, negate or question the worth of what the person wishes to discuss. However, counselling's sympathetic approach is not always required in mentoring. Mentoring differs because it can challenge the mentee, and indeed the mentor, if this is required by the relationship. Mentoring is in part based on the idea that learning is more likely as a result of questioning.

### ***iii) Mentoring and Coaching***

Like coaching, mentoring is an activity involving discussion. Kalinauckas and King (1994, p. 1) define coaching as a process that aims to bring out the best in people. Their view is that coaching involves a discussion to gain commitment to take action leading to a result or 'goal'. They prefer to describe it as a three-stage activity involving demonstration, practice and progress assessment.

The coach is tasked to 'plan', 'do', 'finish' and 'review' on a one-to-one, or group, basis. The role of coach is to instruct and the skills they use involve active listening, questioning, giving praise, building rapport and trust, being non-judgemental, giving encouragement, support and focusing on the possible opportunities. In addition, the coach gives feedback through self-reflection. Coaching is similar to mentoring, but differs because it is not directive in approach. Interestingly, Kalinauckas and King (1994, p. 10) have a view on mentoring:

Mentoring has been defined as 'providing individuals with the opportunity, through regular discussion, to look objectively at their performance and future development. Mentors should also be able to share broad awareness of their organisation's business and their professional opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, Kalinauckas and King have a view of the mentoring relationship in a formalised, as opposed to unformalised, programme. They see it as involving supporting a more experienced manager to assist a junior member of staff from an alternative area of the organisation. In addition, in their view, mentoring is often confused with coaching. Whilst I agree with their statement, I think their sense of mentoring is restrictive. They conclude by suggesting mentoring will ensure that the methods, systems, processes and practices used do not necessarily encourage change, development or growth (Kalinauckas and King 1994, p. 10). In my view, this indicates a narrow approach and a lack of practical experience of mentoring.

#### ***iv) Mentoring and Tutoring***

John Miller's (1983, p. 54) sees the tutor as a guide helping to overcome the potential blocks to learning. He lists six components of guidance (John Miller 1982, p. 44):

- its aims
- stages of intervention
- the tutors' task
- values held
- skills required
- the context

In addition to viewing the tutor as a guide, Miller includes counselling within the role. He views the guidance role of the tutor as multifaceted. Miller seems to be confusing tutors with mentors, although the roles are distinctly different, even if similar skills may be required.

The roles differ because tutoring is usually a group activity, while mentoring involves a one to one relationship. In addition, mentoring does not usually impose values.

So, mentoring is a multi-faceted process that I shall discuss at more length in the next chapter. There, I shall suggest that approaches to mentoring can be broadly divided into three categories with focus on the mentor, the mentee or the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. I examine these three approaches, arguing that it is most fruitful to view mentoring as a friendship relationship. Before moving on to this, below I give consideration to the meaning of Professional Friendship in the context of this study on mentoring and discuss what the literature says about friendship to help make the link from friendship to professional friendship.

### **1.3 What is Friendship?**

Professional Friendship in mentoring is best understood as a special form of friendship involving a range of core components (I have constructed the concept fully in chapter three). To understand better this ‘specialness’, it is important to review the concept of friendship in the available literature. Ray Pahl (2000, p. 79), quoting Graham Little, writes:

Friendship is not an optional extra but the most alive of all human relationships: it is more alive than politics, markets, churches and even families and sex. It is a social sprite and can never be the ‘social juggernaut’ that class or race or even gender can be.

In the light of this, Pahl considers that there are qualitatively different kinds of friendships. Deep communicating friendships offer psychological and social anarchy and this type of friendship is qualitatively different from the friends of unity and pleasure that are more readily analysed by social scientists.

In these deep-communicating friendships each individual grows and flourishes because of the other. This indicates these friendships are one-to-one relationships. Friendship in this view is a relationship built upon the whole person and aims at psychological intimacy and freedom. In addition, Pahl (2000, p. 164), states that a society in which this type of friendship operates is qualitatively different from a society based on culturally reinforced norms of kinship and institutional roles and behaviour.

Pahl (2000) suggests that the development of friendship involves a spirit of mutual awareness. This is akin to the idea of 'mutuality' that Clutterbuck (1991) uses to explain successful mentoring relationships. Indeed, we might regard 'mentoring', involving a 'senior's' relation with a 'junior' as a special kind of 'mutuality', where the benefits to the different parties are not symmetrical, but are equally deep. This also links with Levinson's (1978) argument the mentoring relationship is one of the most complex, and developmentally important an individual can have in early adulthood.

My point is that Pahl identifies a similar process in deep communicating friendships. It seems to me there is little doubt that friendship is at play in successful mentoring relationships but it is in tension with the need for objectivity in formal mentoring settings.

Pahl, for example, points out that in a personal friendship there is no formal institutional support (2000, p. 14) meaning there is nothing structurally holding the relationship together. This is different to the special type of friendship in mentoring which I have described as professional friendship as it has institutional support and context.

In the light of the above, I define a Professional Friendship in mentoring is:

A 'care-full' mentoring relationship in a formal setting successfully involving an experience for learning and change in which mentor and mentee utilise a range of core components including, honesty, trust, and respectful listening etc.

In the context of this definition, '*care*' is to be understood as a two-way process. As the definition implies, it denotes 'success' in mentoring relationships. I use this definition to help me argue that without the mentor caring for the mentee, the quality of the relationship may be much reduced, and similarly, where the mentor does not 'get on' with ease with their mentee, nor develop a rapport, then this will inhibit trust and trusting, a core component that Pahl (2000, p. 162) states is a precondition of friendship. Inevitably, where this is found to be the case, these relationships are less likely to be as successful as those operating a range of core components that are utilised in professional friendship.

Now, I turn to the issue of emotional work, as this is the link between friendships (and professional friendship) and young people in school needing to gain access to a learning mentor. In section 1.6, I look specifically at the need for their role and responsibilities, which is a new phenomenon in schools.

## 1.4 Emotion Work and Social Exchange

Hochschild (1979, p. 551) defines the term emotion in this context as denoting a state of being. As a social psychologist her work is a the re-examination of class differences in child rearing arguing middle-class families prepare their children better for emotion management than do working class families.

Hence, each class is preparing to reproduce itself. However, learning mentoring (and indeed mentoring) is intended to break this cycle and increase social mobility and social inclusion, increasing social capital through helping to develop emotional intelligence leading to new life chances. This is the aim of the professional friend mentor and especially the Learning Mentor as opposed to an informal mentor who is found maybe by accident but certainly outside of a systematic structural institution (or organisation) such as a school.

Hochschild coins the term ‘emotional work’ as the work of managing emotions to better manage ‘self’.

Returning to this interpretation of the social constructs at play between individuals in their lives, and drilling down further, Hochschild argues there are two ways to view ‘social exchange’ and this involves on the one hand, the exchange of goods and services between people and on the other, the exchange of gestures (without having cost –benefit). In feelings terms, this is still considered as a debt to pay to the other or indeed to oneself. Now comes the link with learning mentors. Hochschild follows Goffman (1979, p. 568):

The exchange of gestures has, in turn, two aspects: it is an exchange of display acts (Goffman 1969, 1967) - that is, of surface acting - and also an exchange of emotion work - that is, of deep acting... Emotion work is a gesture in a social exchange: it has a function there and is not to be understood merely as a facet of personality

In the interaction between mentors and mentees it may well be that a sense of deep acting is underway. This is about emotional buy-in to the relationship (or not)

This brings us back to the nature of professional friendship and to what extent professional friendship is a core component of a successful mentoring relationship. In chapters five and six of this thesis my life experiences and those of the learning mentors lean toward professional friendship as a social exchange involving emotional labour with learning mentees. It is evident to me from my lived experience that 'buy in and debts owed are integral to the mentoring operation.

Indeed, I follow Allan, (1996, p. 89) who argues that whatever the social differences outside the friendship, its core is the notion that friends regard and treat one another as equals within it. He argues that it is important to view friendships as ties of equality. In contrast, professional mentoring is asymmetrical, in that the mentor is recognised as more experienced than the mentee and able to provide advice and support, but the mentoring relationship is directed toward producing someone equally equipped and has norms of reciprocity similar to those of friendship relationships built into it. In terms of emotional exchange this indicates that over time the social exchange invested is balanced and paid. Allan actually links this pay, and pay back to the raising of self-esteem and its growth with that of the relationship.

Interestingly, Allan (1996, p.107), although not in equal part, discusses common elements found in different types of friendship, these are:

- sociability
- practical support
- emotional support
- confirmation of identity

His discussion of these, concludes, that friendship is linked to broader social and economic factors. Friendship also helps to integrate people into the social realm acting as a resource for helping and supporting them to better manage their life events. A form of friendship which my study examines draws from the readings of the literature as well as my lived experience.

Now I turn more specifically to the Learning Mentor to explain their emergence in the education system now.

## 1.5 The Learning Mentor

The Government White Paper Excellence in Schools (1997) addressed the need to increase national competitiveness. Subsequently, David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, produced a Green Paper 'The Learning Age' (1998, p. 1) and, in the forward, wrote:

Learning is the key to prosperity – for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole. Investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge – based global economy of the twenty first century.

Our first policy paper addressed school standards (1997). This Green Paper sets out for consultation how learning throughout life will build human capital by encouraging the acquisition of knowledge and skills and emphasising creativity and imagination. The fostering of an enquiring mind and the love of learning are essential to our future success ... (DfEE 1998, p. 1)

These documents provided the context for the development of 'Learning Mentors' and the term of 'Learning Mentor' is attributed to Sir Michael Barber. Their role was formally announced in the Government White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' (1999, p. 43, para, 6.4). It targeted six major cities in England, London, Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield, in which the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative was government-funded. The initiative involved six strands of work of which one was the establishment of Learning Mentors in Secondary Schools.

David Blunkett (1999, p. 1) described EiC as an 'Action Plan'; a plan for implementation designed to raise the standards of education for students in inner cities. The action plan intended that a 'Learning Mentor' would be available for every young person who needed one, as a single point of contact to tackle barriers to pupils learning. The term 'Learning Mentor' came into use and Learning Mentors were tasked with:

To ensure that barriers to learning are overcome, the Government is determined that every child in the designated areas will have the personal attention they need in order to succeed. For many families the support they are meant to get has no coherence.



It demands so much energy to access it that many simply give up, and for others it delivers too little too late. From September 1999, each secondary school pupil will have access to Learning Mentors, based in schools and professionally trained for their role and responsible for making sure that any barriers to an individual's learning-in school or outside the school-are removed. Learning Mentors will build on successful models of multi-agency behaviour support teams, which the Government is promoting in order to reduce truancy and exclusion.

Learning Mentors will be available to all who need them and will devote the majority of their time to those individuals needing extra support in order to realise their full potential. They will liaise with Primary schools to identify children about to enter secondary school who need help (DfEE EiC 1999, p. 19).

### ***i) The Policy Context***

The policy context for the emergence of Learning Mentors was one of standards in cities. This is because it was recognised that the demands of the future would require everyone in secondary education to succeed. The in-coming Labour Government of 1997 wanted their Education strategy to set out policies that provided a firm foundation for raising standards in all schools. Research showed, that fifteen percent of all fifteen year olds in maintained schools in England went to inner city schools. As such, the Government realised that raising standards for these pupils was crucial to the creation of a prosperous and inclusive society as well as the achievement of the National Learning Targets (DfEE EiC 1999, p. 8), which they set. In addition, information from the 1993 OFSTED report on Access and Achievement in Urban Education, as cited by the DfEE, in the EiC report (1999, p. 8), identified the many features of underperformance.

- Underachievement which is apparent at an early age
- Weaknesses in pupils' oral and written communication
- Insufficient pace and challenge in teaching
- Poor arrangements for learning support
- Weak monitoring and evaluation in schools
- Many pupils unconvinced of the value of continuing their education
- Weaknesses in individual institutions which were exacerbated by poor links between them

Government viewed standards in inner city secondary schools as unacceptably low, finding:

- 33% Inner city pupils gained five or more GCSEs at grade A\*-C
- 46% of all pupils Nationally gain this

A further National target was set in 1999 of 50 percent of all pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at A\*-C grades to address these identified issues.

Consequently, the demand for Learning Mentors has significantly grown and many thousands are now employed in nursery, primary and secondary schools in the UK. Their role aims to have an impact on policy and practice, especially as their work involves meeting the requirements of OFSTED, 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2000, p. 3 para b), the Five Outcomes For Children Agenda, the Children's Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002.

As such, Learning Mentors are government-sponsored, mentoring change agents. They aim to remove barriers to learning to increase the educational benefits for children and young people, thus increasing opportunities and life choices by raising standards. They are para-professionals and educational practitioners. Indeed, to Cruddas (2005, p. 5), Learning Mentors are on the front-line as radical agents of change, aiming to franchise the disenfranchised and will be essential, if schools are to deliver the five Outcomes for Children specified in *Every Child Matters: Change for children* (DfES 2004e) within OFSTED's new framework from September 2005.

Interestingly, Cruddas considers that, whilst Learning Mentors are very much part of the 'well-being' agenda and actively support children and young people's learning, she sees dangers:

Within neo-liberalism there is a danger that learning mentors will become merely the agents of the standards agenda and engage in purely instrumental practices that can be measured in quantifiable ways. There is also a risk that learning mentors will become the instruments to impose institutional goals on young people in ways that are experienced by them as diminishing and destructive rather than engaging. If they function within a neo-liberal perspective, there is the danger that learning mentors will be disciplinary agents, who aim to increase compliance among young people whose attitudes and behaviours are perceived as a 'threat' to school improvement. (Cruddas 2005, p. 3).

## ***ii) The Plan for Learning Mentors***

However, the DfEE EiC – Planning Guidance for LEAs on Learning Mentors (1999, 2/99, para. a1) clearly intended that the Learning Mentor role to act as an interface between the School and family. Their stated objectives for the Learning Mentor programme included:

- To ensure, through the recruitment of a network of professionally trained learning mentors, that every pupil of secondary school age in eligible schools in EiC areas will have access to a new resource focussed on removing barriers to the pupil's individual learning both in school and outside
- Target help on those who need it most in deprived areas, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantage
- Raise standards and reduce truancy and exclusion in the target areas, and to help local education authorities and schools make accelerated progress in achieving their attainment, truancy, exclusions and other relevant targets
- Provide a complimentary service to existing teachers and pastoral staff in school, such as social and youth services, the Education Welfare Service, the Probation and Careers Services, and business, community and voluntary workers

## ***iii) The Role and Responsibilities of the Learning Mentor***

The role of Learning Mentors was intended to offer direct one-to-one mentoring support and act as a point of contact for involving other services, based on the assessment of a student's needs. This can include the Learning Mentor accessing mentoring from other agencies, such as the community and or business-based mentoring programmes, to ensure the right support reaches the right student and their family. Indeed, this involves the Learning Mentor working in and out of the school to provide, if required, a traditional type of Volunteer Mentor for additional support to individuals in their families. In particular, key challenges will be to champion the learning needs of the child and to overcome any barriers to effective learning. Learning Mentors are intended to work closely with the pastoral and other staff of the school as mentioned but with the individual achievement of the pupil as their common focus.

The key responsibilities of Learning Mentors include presenting information for students moving either from primary to secondary school or across and within their current school. In addition, this could include making arrangements for those leaving school at mid-term. The DFEE EiC Guidance (1999, 2/99, para, a.1) suggested a number of responsibilities for Learning Mentors:

- To promote the speedy and effective transfer of pupil information from primary to secondary schools, across secondary schools, and within schools, and to ensure that the arrangements for those leaving the school mid term before 16 are managed properly.
- With teaching and pastoral staff, to participate in the comprehensive assessment of all children entering or returning to school (including teenage mothers) and, at the end of years 7 and 9, to identify those who need extra help to overcome barriers to learning inside and outside school.
- To identify those children who would benefit most from a learning mentor and, working with others, draw up and implement an action plan for each child who needs particular support (except where the pupil was already subject to an individually tailored plan).
- To develop a 1 to 1 mentoring relationship with children needing particular support aimed at achieving the goals defined in the action plan.
- To work closely with local community and business mentors and take an active role in co-ordinating and supporting the work of voluntary mentors working with pupils both in and out of school, so that the mentor's efforts meet the needs of the young person in a focused and integrated way

In addition, Learning Mentors are expected to:

- network with other Learning Mentors
- share best practice and share information, as required, with other Learning Mentors, Business and Community Mentors.

Estelle Morris, the then Minister for School Standards, gave the Government perspective on the role and responsibilities of Learning Mentors at the National Mentoring Network Conference in May 2000 (NMN, p. 17). She argued that they should be:

- paid employees of the school, not volunteers
- only located in inner city schools
- work one-to-one, as one part of their job
- responsible for ensuring the flow of information about pupils at the point of transfer from primary to secondary
- coordinate external, volunteer mentors
- select students for volunteer mentoring
- directing students to wider support services outside the school including, study support, counselling or social services

In addition, Morris explained the value of mentoring to the government, in particular its capacity to support young people at 'risk'. She identified the following 'risk' factors:

- a troubled home life
- peer group pressure
- drug and alcohol misuse
- poor attainment at school
- truancy
- school exclusion

Interestingly, Morris disclosed:

We are working with the National Mentoring Network to ensure that the existing learning mentors understand good practice in mentoring.....And all learning mentors are taking part in a national training programme to develop the skills they need to do the job effectively (NMN, 2000, p. 18)

As a Learning Mentor Coordinator at the time, I undertook the national training referred to above and found that it was limited.

#### ***iv) Learning Mentor Practice***

As such, a typical, if hectic, day in the life of a Learning Mentor in a school might involve:

- A start that sees them setting up and running the breakfast club.
- Next, they could deal with late duty, which involves observation of late-comers to chase up absentees.
- Then, they might mentor two pupils.
- At break time they could be involved in playground observation and intervention.
- After break, they might tutor individual pupils requiring numeracy support.
- Next, they may run a lunchtime club.
- This could be followed by further mentoring sessions.
- Finally, they might run after-school clubs, such as a music club, study club, sports club, dance club, etc.
- Throughout the day they would also have administrative tasks.

The person specification for Learning Mentor recruitment states that they may be selected from a range of backgrounds, including teaching, counselling, youth work, careers, social services and HR.

Indeed, in my study reported below the Learning Mentors came from diverse backgrounds and included an Estate's Officer, a Bank Manager, a Chef, a Scout Leader and a Litigation Solicitor. Some of these Learning Mentors took a reduction in pay and/or of hours of work to take up their post. In addition, they had a variety of qualifications, ranging from Masters and undergraduate degrees, to Diplomas and vocational qualifications; some had no academic qualifications at all. The key point is that they need to be capable of responding to the needs of the young people, rather than being just an additional member of staff for school.

As such, in practice, the role appears to be less about being a professional and more about being an advocate for the child. In addition, it is important that candidates for the post of Learning Mentor see the mentoring role as a long-term activity, designed to achieve the stated goals in the action plan and not as a quick fix or as trouble-shooting. Learning Mentor advocate Anne Hayward, who wrote the Good Practice Guidelines for Learning Mentors on behalf of the DfES and EiC schools, interestingly poses the question: What is Mentoring? In response she argues (2002, p. 8):

Learning Mentors work with groups of pupils and individuals, teachers and managers, parents, carers and families, schools and other agencies, helping to construct a support network. Within that framework they develop trusting relationships in which information can be shared.

In my view, Hayward has misunderstood the true nature of their role, because she has over-simplified their mentoring contribution. Not only is the Learning Mentor role multifaceted, in addition it is often interpreted differently both by Education Authorities and individual school's. The role can reflect the interpretation of Head Teachers, rather than that of the DfES or Estelle Morris. So, a Head Teacher may see the Learning Mentor role as focusing on her/his school's weaknesses, such as low attendance rates or high exclusion rates, thus using the Learning Mentor to help address these weaknesses and downplaying aspects of the actual role that the DfES viewed as crucial. For example, in one large West Midlands Education Service, some Learning Mentors do not undertake one-to-one mentoring, despite the DfES guidance and Learning Mentor job descriptions emphasising such mentoring intervention.

Of course, although the range of Learning Mentor duties are diverse, these are expected to fall within the DfES framework. Essentially, the core of their function is to work with pupils on a one-to-one mentoring basis, with a caseload of approximately 10-15 in one-to-one relationships.

As well as the mentoring, they will engage with small and larger groups to create and offer better learning opportunities which will lead to better life-chances for individual learners by reducing barriers to their learning both inside and outside school. The Learning Mentor may act as advocate, coach, tutor, counsellor, teacher, surrogate parent or other such role(s) as required by the learner to increase their self esteem and capacity for learning and change. The aim is, ultimately, to increase rates of achievement and academic attainment.

While recognising that the Learning Mentor agenda works differently in different geographical areas, it may be useful here to give an example of how one small West Midlands authority has operated the scheme. In 2001, the then Council of a small Midlands town gained Government funds to introduce a range of provisions under the EiC initiative. This was known locally as the town's Excellence Cluster. The Cluster funding included provision for Gifted and Talented students and the creation of Learning Support Units to support less effective learners, as well of the creation of Learning Mentors.

The funding provided was to be used, in part, to provide a Learning Mentor in each of the initial eighteen Schools in the Excellence Cluster and to employ a manager to coordinate their work. Since that time, all schools in the borough gained funds to employ a Learning Mentor, if they wished to do so. This was effective from April 2006.

Learning Mentors in this small Midlands town are para-professionals who come from all walks of life and who are paid staff working with children and young people on the school's payroll. In some cases they work with those returning to school to take their place after a period of absence, which may have occurred for one or more of a range of reasons. Their aim is to raise standards by removing barriers to learning for individual learning mentees and their families.

They act as a bridge between home and school to improve children's attendance and attainment, including reducing truancy and the incidence of exclusion. In particular, they try to resolve barriers to learning by increasing self-esteem, confidence and self-directed success. Learning Mentors are not intended as corridor monitors, surrogate parents or teachers assistants (Hayward 2002, p. 8). Overall then, the Learning Mentor's role is fluid and flexible and also, if OFSTED is to be believed, successful:

Learning Mentors are making a significant effect on attendance, behaviour, self-esteem and progress of the pupils they support ....the most successful and highly valued strand of the EiC programme....In 95% of the survey schools, inspectors judged that the mentoring

programme made a positive contribution to the mainstream provision of the school as a whole, and had a beneficial effect on the behaviour of individual pupils and on their ability to learn and make progress.

Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones Report: Management and Impact (Ofsted 2003, p. 46)

To return to the small authority in the West Midlands, it is clear there that Learning Mentors are usually highly valued by schools, teachers, parents and students. So, a Head Teacher of an Excellence Cluster school said of the school's Learning Mentor: 'It is actually very difficult to think back to what our school was like before she arrived!' (Excellence Cluster Annual Report, Gardiner, 2004, p. 3)

Similarly, a teacher in a school with a Learning Mentor argued:

Our Learning Mentor is highly valued by both pupils and staff! His smartness, sense of etiquette, calmness and wisdom make him an extemporary adult: for many, a positive role model. (Strand Evaluation Report, Gardiner 2004, p. 2)

A parent of a child in a Cluster School confirmed this positive view:

The programme has given S a lot of confidence. Stopped all her worrying at school and it has improved her literacy and numeracy skills. The mentoring helped S through the worry of the SATS. (Strand Evaluation Report, Gardiner 2004:3)

Finally, a learning mentee of a Learning Mentor said: They really help you and talk about my problems. Every problem I have had, C has sorted!' (Strand Evaluation Report Gardiner 2004:2)

Obviously, the context of the role of a Learning Mentor is explicitly different from that of other mentors.

In particular, while an unpaid volunteer has historically taken up the role of mentor, the Learning Mentor is in paid employment, being an educational practitioner paid by the state. This study explores the similarities and differences between the Learning Mentoring role and other types of mentoring in order to establish whether the Learning Mentor role is best seen as a sub-set of the mentor role. As such, one of the aims of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of that role.



I shall argue that the key aspect of the mentoring process, the need to establish and sustain ‘professional friendship’, is broadly similar across different types of mentoring.

The learning mentors taking part in this study, either work in schools, or with schools, and their learning mentees were all aged between eleven and eighteen. The fifteen learning mentors each have 10 – 60 learning mentees each to support in one to one relationships. I arranged to interview individual learning mentors either at their place of work or at my office, providing a quiet place without too much disruption. Inevitably, some distraction was caused by telephones. However, the interviews were conducted smoothly. The order of the interviews was based on people’s availability and the order of the data provided below is random. I return to issues concerning my sample and methods in Chapter 4.

## **1.6 The Structure of this Thesis**

In this thesis my concern is to explain the genesis of the Professional Friendship concept and assess its applicability to the case of Learning Mentors. As such, this study will help me improve my approach and offer a better understanding both of mentoring generally and the role of Learning Mentors particularly. Overall then, my study aims to:

- Help clarify the poorly understood and sometimes misinterpreted role of Learning Mentor.
- Increase knowledge of mentoring to help identify what works successfully in both mentoring and Learning Mentoring relationships.
- Assess the utility of the Professional Friendship construct and, in doing so; develop it to benefit Learning Mentors.

To achieve these aims the thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two review the literature on mentoring and Learning Mentors. Then, in Chapter 3 I develop a Professional Friendship construct for mentoring. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, I outline its use in my empirical research on Learning Mentors.

Next, in Chapters Five and Six, I present the results of my empirical work and assess the utility of Professional Friendship to better understand the role of the Learning Mentor. Finally in Chapter seven, I discuss my conclusions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ON MENTORING AND THE LEARNING MENTOR**

I briefly considered the definition of mentoring and the role of Learning Mentors in the last chapter. Here, I need to deepen this consideration. In particular, my aim is to consider the literature on mentoring and the Learning Mentors, focusing especially on the models of mentoring which have been developed. On the basis of that critical assessment, in the next chapter I outline my own Professional Friendship construct and show how it developed. I begin with a consideration of the approaches to mentoring, before turning to the work on Learning Mentors.

#### **2.1 Approaches to Mentoring**

Here, I start with a discussion of why this new way of thinking about mentoring relationships is necessary, before turning to a consideration of existing mentoring models.

##### ***i) Why do we need a New Approach to Mentoring Relationships?***

A new way of thinking about what happens in mentoring relationships is important in large part because it will ensure we have a better understanding of the processes involved and, hopefully, lead to better practice and more success for mentoring pairs. While each mentoring experience, and indeed each interpretation of that experience, is different, my construct will allow us to focus on some of the common aspects of those experiences. To the participants in the mentoring process, greater knowledge of what that involves should help create better opportunities for learning and for change. This is important for a more successful mentoring relationship, for helping create more life chances from mentoring and for a healthier society.

In particular, this could improve Learning Mentoring by reducing the rate of failure, thus enabling greater social inclusion, social cohesion and social mobility and increasing individual and family stability in the face of uncertainty and social fragmentation.

In addition, this will help Learning Mentors and others understand this important role more fully, in particular establishing why one-to-one mentoring is crucial within the Learning Mentors' remit.

## ***ii) Mentoring Models***

Approaches to models of mentoring can be broadly divided into three categories that focus on the mentor, the mentee or the relationship between the mentor and the mentee.

## **2.2 Focusing on the Role of the Mentor**

Initially at least, the main focus was on the role of the mentor and, here, I begin by examining their role via the work of Levinson (1978), Zey (1984), Gray and Gray (1985), Roberts, (2000), Clutterbuck (2004) and Miller (2003), before turning to two crucial issues in relation to the role of the mentor: the question of whether mentoring pairs need to be matched; and the issue of training.

Daniel Levinson introduced the traditional model of mentor in 1978, arguing:

The mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of great experience and seniority in the world the young man is entering. This person acts as teacher, sponsor, counsellor, developer of skills and intellect, host, guide, exemplar and one who supports and facilitates the realisation of the young man's dream. (1978, p.97)

Levinson argued that the mentor should help the mentee through a key transition, usually being half a generation older. He contended that age differences which were much greater or less than this were uncommon and posed special problems, particular because they resembled the parent – child relationship.

In addition, Levinson was concerned that a dependency on the mentor would interfere with the mentoring function. At the same time, where the age difference between them is less, there is a risk of them becoming intimate friends, thus minimising the mentoring aspects. In Levinson's view, the 'mentor' is not a parent or crypto-parent (1978, p.99).

To Levinson, the primary function of mentor is to provide counsel and moral support in times of stress and to act as a teacher, sponsor and host, guiding the mentee into a new occupation or, more broadly, into the social world.

In addition, he viewed the mentor as an exemplar and, most importantly of all, as supporting and facilitating the realisation of the protégé's' dream. This latter activity he argues is the role of the 'true mentor'.

As such, the mentor fosters the young adult's development by believing in him, sharing the dream and giving it his blessing. Indeed, the mentor should help the young person construct themselves a world in which their dream is ultimately fulfilled. Consequently, Levinson argues strongly that mentors can play a significant role throughout the early adulthood of their protégé.

After Levinson, Zey (1984) examined mentors for senior and middle managers in American businesses. He showed how individuals are helped in their careers by mentors. He found that these mentors advertised and marketed their protégés, protected them from organisational pressure and served as personal counsellors and supporters (1984, p. 3). However, in my view, his definition of the role of the mentor reflects the American model, where the focus is on 'sponsorship:'

A mentor is a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counselling, providing psychological support, protecting and at times promoting or sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of the above functions during the mentor relationship (1984, p. 7)

In his model, Zey views a mentor as an older person in an organisation who oversees the career development of a junior. Of course, this definition implies a power differential and suggests that the mentor has more power than the mentee. However, Zey (1984, p. 7) is clear that these functions provide solid benefits to the protégé:

- Knowledge
- Personal growth
- Protection
- Career advancement

Interestingly, Zey points out that his working definition of the mentor derives from both his literature search on the subject and his own research.

From this perspective, the purpose of mentoring for the mentee is career advancement and Zey sees the mentor performing four functions, teaching, counselling, organisational intervention and encouraging promotion, which, he suggests, can be arranged into a logical hierarchy (1984, p. 8):

On level one the mentor is teaching and this benefits the protégé as they receive instruction in organisational skills, management tricks, social graces and is given insider information. At level two, the mentor provides psychological counselling and personal support, benefiting the protégé by enhancing their sense of self.

This is achieved through confidence building, pep talks and help on occasion, with their personal life. Moving to level three, the mentor intercedes on the protégé's behalf in the organisational setting. Finally, on the fourth level, the protégé is recommended by the mentor for promotion and more responsibility.

To Zey (1984, p. 6) the concept of mentor is often confused with other concepts, particularly, coach, sponsor, teacher, 'rabbi' and 'godfather'. He sees mentoring activities as involving the skills of teacher, counsellor, intervener and sponsor. He also argues that there are mutual benefits for both protégé and mentor, because the protégé can give support and protection to the mentor for the purpose of building his/her empire (1984, p. 11). Zey claims, in turn, that this brings benefits to the organisation. He also recommends that protégés ask a number of questions when selecting their mentor (1984, p. 167):

- Is the mentor good at what he/she does?
- Is the mentor getting support?
- How does the organisation judge the mentor?
- Is the mentor a good teacher?
- Is the mentor a good motivator?
- What are the protégé's needs and goals?
- What are the needs and goals of the perspective mentor?
- How powerful is the mentor?
- Is the mentor secure in their own position?

I agree with Levinson (1978) that a mentor is someone who helps a mentee through an important transition in the circumstance of his/her life.

This view is shared by Clutterbuck (1991, p. 47) who suggests that a mentor must act as a surrogate parent, combining authority and friendship, offering counsel and commitment. To Clutterbuck, selecting the mentor is a critical task and good mentors have empathy, experience and relevant skills.

Clutterbuck (2004), who is a business mentoring theorist and practitioner, claims that mentors need high self-awareness to recognise and manage themselves in mentoring relationships.

He also suggests (2004, p. 50-51) that an effective mentor needs:

- Behavioural awareness (understanding others)
- Business or professional savvy
- Sense of proportion/good humour
- Communication competence
- Conceptual modelling
- Commitment to one's own continued learning
- Strong interest in developing others
- Building and maintaining rapport/relationship management
- Goal clarity

In addition, Clutterbuck argues that mentors need to:

- Manage the relationship
- Encourage
- Nurture
- Teach
- Offer mutual respect
- Respond to mentee's needs

He delves deeper still by suggesting that the ideal characteristics to seek in a mentor (2004, p. 57) are:

Someone who already has a good record for developing other people. Has a genuine interest in seeing younger people advance and can relate to their problems. Has a wide range of current skills to pass on. Has a good understanding of the organisation, how it works and where it is going. Combines patience with good interpersonal skills and ability to work in an unstructured programme.

Has sufficient time to devote to the relationship. Can command a mentee's respect. Has his or her own network of contacts and influence and is still keen to learn.

Gray and Gray (1985, p. 16) also focus on the mentor in a business context and define mentoring as: 'A process in which one person (mentor) is responsible for overseeing the career and development of another person (the protégé) outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship.' Here, again, mentoring is viewed from the mentor's perspective and seen as having particular application to the field of business. However, in my view, this definition does not apply within the area of education, where the focus is much more on the mentee.

Roberts (2000) reviewed eighty books and articles on mentoring and argued that it was a formalised active relationship that involved teaching and learning, career and personal development and reflective practice. While he recognises that there is 'no single animal called mentoring,' he defined it as:

A formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to help that person's career and personal development. (2000, p. 54)

As such, Roberts' definition does not cover mentoring relationships between children and young people. In summarising the views of mentoring theorists on the role of mentor, Roberts finds that:

Homer's Mentor was a wise and trusted figure who displayed, towards Odysseus's son Telemachus, the admirable qualities of counsellor, teacher, nurturer, advisor and role model (2000, p.3).

In addition, he views mentoring solely from the perspective of the mentor. In part, this may reflect the fact that he is not a mentoring practitioner and, thus, has little personal experience of the mentoring relationship. If he did, he would focus more on the relationship between mentoring pairs. In my experience, the mentoring relationship is a two-way, dynamic, constructed, evolving experience.

Roberts did find many examples of the wisdom, the support, the nurturing and guidance of Fenelon's Mentor (Roberts 2000, p. 9). He argues that it is crucial to distinguish between the Homeric Mentor from the Fenelonian Mentor.

He argues that Fenelon was, for his time, a great educator, whilst, Homer's Mentor was more concerned with the trials of Odysseus than with educating Telemarchus (Roberts 2000, p.10). As such, he sees Fenelon's mentor as a truer model of the mentoring role.

Miller (2002, p. 190)) reviews the literature on the attributes of good mentors and argues that 'good' mentors need to be:

- Enthusiastic volunteers
- Accessible
- Sensitive
- Self-aware
- Discrete
- Willing to learn
- Non-judgemental
- Patient
- Positive
- Kind, tolerant and understanding

Miller views mentoring as an idea and a practice, (2002, p. 23) both of which have evolved over time. He contrasts what he calls 'planned' or 'structured' mentoring and 'natural mentoring'. In his view, natural mentoring is incidental and found in various life settings that involve friendship or teaching, coaching or counselling. In contrast, in planned mentoring, mentors and mentees are formally matched and operate with a structured programme that has defined objectives.

Miller usefully looks at how competing mentoring philosophies, and different types of mentoring programmes, might be classified. He suggests that mentoring could be classified in four main ways (2002, p. 39): by the programme's aims and objectives; by the main characteristics of the mentee cohort; by the main characteristics of the mentor cohort; and by the type of programme. In addition, he lists some of the main types of mentors, including Learning Mentors. Sensibly, he does not offer a new definition. However, he seems to be merely re-naming as 'planned' and 'natural' mentoring Clutterbuck's distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' mentoring. In addition, there is some, albeit limited, focus on the mentee in his work.



Miller (2002, p. 30) uses the term 'holistic' to describe a particular type of mentor who deploys a wide range of interpersonal skills, befriending, counselling, coaching and tutoring, to help the mentee reach a range of academic, work-related and personal goals. In addition, Miller suggests that holistic mentors are likely to be paid professionals who are very experienced, well-trained, with high levels of skill.

However, he claims that most programmes do not aspire to be holistic, although he suggests that 'Learning Mentors' are the most likely to be of this type, because they need to understand the complex linkages between a student's knowledge, skills and attitudes, academic performance and personal life, motivation, classroom performance and achievement and career aspirations, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Miller's interpretation of holistic mentoring misses the point, because he is misusing the term. The Oxford English Dictionary (2003, p. 294) definition of 'holistic' suggests that it means treating the whole person, rather than particular, isolated symptoms. As an example, the BEAT project (Megginson and Clutterbuck 1995, p. 44) was a holistic mentoring scheme for young offenders with very complex needs. One of the key lessons of that programme was that mentors need to know which skills are applicable, in which order of priority in any given scenario. In that project, mentors were drawn from all walks of life in the local community and were trained in the mentor-specific skills of active listening, empathy, counselling, negotiation, coaching, advocacy, problem solving, decision making, reflection and review, constructive feedback, interpersonal skills, verbal and non-verbal communication. In addition, specific training was given in the structure, history and workings of the criminal justice system which set the context of their practice.

One issue which has received considerable attention in the literature is the extent to which the difference in backgrounds and interests between mentor and mentee can affect their relationship. In particular, there has been a focus on how gender, race/ethnicity, religion, class and age impacts on the mentoring relationship (Shea 1992, Clutterbuck, 1991, Zey 1984, McLennan 2000, Bennets 1996, Parsloe 1995, Miller, 2002). Obviously, differences between the mentee and the mentor may create difficulties. As one example, a Learning Mentor I worked with, who was previously a bank manager, mentored a pupil at a primary school in a small town in the West Midlands.

As an ex-bank manager and an adult, she did not share a common language with her learning mentee, because the words they both used originate from their experience of their own world(s) which were very different.

Rix and Gold (1999) argue that there should be a greater focus on the process of mentoring to help make meaning, rather than focussing on models of roles. They suggest that participants in mentoring relationships need to reflect on their own 'responsive ways of going on' (1999, p. 1). Importantly, they observe:

Despite the growing popularity of the idea and practice of mentoring, there remains continuing ambiguity over the meaning of the term and mystification about what actually happens within the process (1999, p. 2).

They view a focus on the role, its competencies and skills provide limited understandings of the mentoring relationships processes.

They produced a further paper, entitled 'With a little help from my academic friend: mentoring change agents', again using a narrative framework based on a social constructionist perspective. This paper argues, and I would largely agree, for greater focus on the process of mentoring and making meaning, than on the role and skills base of the mentor. More specifically, they claim that there is common ground in mentoring, regardless of such differences in background, age, culture etc. The researchers studied a mentoring relationship that involved academia (the mentor) and business (the mentee). They suggest that mentoring is about finding shared values, (tacit) understandings and speaking 'the same language' (2000, p. 48).

Similarly, J.P. Young *et. al.* (2004, p. 34) argues that barriers such as language and age can be overcome in the developing relationship process involved in mentoring. They call the process relational knowing:

Relational knowing rests on the assumption that our use of language mediates the meanings we make of ourselves and others, especially as these meanings play out in the dialectical tensions between our personal selves and our public performances of these selves.

Here participants in mentoring are more likely to be successful if they remain open and honest about their own motives for the relationship and do not rely too heavily on the expertise, or not, of others to match mentors to mentees, as the relationship itself has the core components of a professional friendship.

Interestingly, given my concerns, Young *et.al.* (2004) explored the place of friendship in female, adult, mentoring relationships and identified the development of shared common values which provided the basis for communication. They claim that this type of relationship holds mutual benefit, because both the mentor and the mentee learn and change as a result of their mentoring experiences.

In their view, a mentor can also be a friend. Certainly, these findings suggest that a focus upon professional friendship, as in my approach, may prove useful in broader categories of mentoring relationships.<sup>2</sup>

Surprisingly, there is little focus in the literature on the qualities needed to be a good mentor, although Reid (2002, p. 154) emphasises that the appointment of suitable people as mentors is a vital part of establishing success. If the wrong or untrained, people, are employed as Learning Mentors by a Head Teacher unfamiliar with Department of Education Guidance (1999, EiC (G) - 2/99), this will clearly weaken the value of the role of Learning Mentor.

In addition, of course, children being mentored could be at risk, including being potential vulnerable to paedophiles, if mentors are not well screened, trained and monitored. In fact, a series of issues are important:

- How thorough should Criminal Records Bureaux checks be?
- What should be in training programmes and how long should these last?
- How are they accredited and who decides the programme content?
- Who decides what a mentor is and how long mentoring continues?
- What is a Mentor/Learning Mentor actually going to do?
- When might it be valuable to have a mentor?
- Where do mentors come from?
- Who will they be?
- Who decides to make a match between Mentor and Mentee?
- On what basis of judgement is this match made?

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<sup>2</sup> They also identify 'responsiveness' and 'collegiality', which as we shall see resonate with my thinking within friendship mentoring.

## **2.3 Focusing on the Role of the Mentee**

Fewer researchers have placed more emphasis on the mentee. Here, I consider the work of Parsloe (1995), Shea (1992), and Hamilton (1993). In his initial work on mentoring, Parsloe (1995, p. 72) argues that mentoring in the workplace is a similar activity to coaching and, indeed, suggests that both activities may be carried out by the same individual. He argues that mentoring has origins in advising and counselling. As such, he sees mentoring, coaching, counselling and advising as all interrelated and only devotes one chapter of his book to mentoring activities. In 1995, he argues that mentoring is a new and unfamiliar concept which would take time to prove its value. However, in his more recent work with Wray (2000, p. 81), they distinguish between coaching and mentoring, arguing that the latter is: 'A process that supports and encourages learning to happen.' In their view mentoring and coaching occur in different 'contexts' that set the roles and responsibilities in the relationship.

Parsloe (1995, p. 84) emphasises that the mentor needs to encourage the development of self-awareness in the learner by showing how this can be achieved by self-assessment and honest questioning. He later defines mentoring as: 'A process which supports learning and development, and thus performance improvements, either for an individual, team or business' (Parsloe & Wray 2000, p.82). Parsloe initially describes the mentee as a protégé (1995, p.88), but, in his more recent work with Wray, uses the term learner (2000, p. 82). However, he makes no reference at all to the role or participation of the mentee in the mentoring relationship.

Shea (1992, p. 7) introduces the term of mentoree to mentoring, describing it as a process whereby mentor and mentee work together to discover and develop the mentoree's latent talents. He argued the goal of mentoring is: 'not a particular position in the company. Rather it is empowerment of the mentoree by developing his or her ability.' In his view (Shea, 1992, p. 13) mentors are 'helpers'. Importantly, he points out that sound mentoring respects the uniqueness of the mentoree and strives to enhance the special strengths of that person (1992, p. 28). He goes on to argue that the mentoree's desire to 'do it my way' is critical to a mentoree's sense of self, for it respects that person's specialness. Doing something the mentor's way may lessen mentoree involvement, reducing their sense of responsibility. Indeed, these helpers have their own personal style, which may vary from person to person. Here, there is more focus on the mentee's role and their personal development than in the work considered to date.

Reg Hamilton (1993, p. 5) argues that mentors use some of the skills of the manager to develop the person (learner) they are helping. He provides perhaps the most explicitly focus upon the mentee, suggesting a range of questions that mentees may find helpful in choosing their mentor and assessing their mentoring relationship (1993, p. 41):

- Is having a mentor a sign of weakness?
- Does this mean that they don't really trust me as a responsible person?
- Can I trust my mentor?
- How much is it safe to reveal?
- Will what I say get back to my boss or in some other way damage my prospects?
- Do I have the time, or will it undermine my work effort?
- How will my boss react – is s/he really in favour of this?

Interestingly, Hamilton observes that it is not the mentor's role to turn the learner into a 'clone', cast in their own image. More importantly, mentors, by their behaviour, provide a standard against which sound judgements can be made. Hamilton (1993, p. 97) argues that what mentors do is ten times more powerful than what they say.

## **2.4 Mentoring as a Relationship**

I now consider the work undertaken by Levinson (1978), The National Mentoring Network (2004), Clutterbuck (1991), Miller (2002), and Gardiner and Gordon (2000) on mentoring relationships. Subsequently, I look at the phases of mentoring relationships, compare the modes of formal and informal mentoring and, finally, consider the issue of transitional mentoring.

Levinson's early work on mentoring relationships provided the field with some initial insights into the mentoring relationships' processes. He developed a model at a time when mentoring was newly emerging in America and his book was instrumental in generating wide interest in mentoring activities. Indeed, his focus is directly on mentoring as a relationship. Levinson argued:

The mentor relationship is one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a man can have in early adulthood....No word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. Words such as 'counsellor' or 'guru' suggest more subtle meanings, but they have other connotations that would be misleading. (1978, p. 97)

Levinson's research on mentoring relationships is focused on employment. However, he suggests the role may also be undertaken by a teacher, boss, editor or senior colleague (1978, p. 98). He is describing formal mentoring here and goes on to suggest that mentoring may also evolve informally, when the mentor is a friend, neighbour or relative. Interestingly, he emphasises a particularly important point:

Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles but in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves. A student may receive very little mentoring from his teacher-adviser, and very important mentoring from an older friend or relative. We have to examine a relationship closely to discover the amount and kind of mentoring it provides. (1978, p. 98)

Levinson sees the need for, and is advocating, a general mentoring relationship model that he sees as important to better understand mentoring.

The National Mentoring Network (NMN) Development Group (2004) wanted to develop a model which identifies the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship to ensure mentors and mentees be better equipped to undertake successful mentoring. They stress two propositions:

- 1) all 'one-to-one developmental relationships' are based on a set of dimensions and successful relationships are characterised by a particular configuration of these dimensions which is appropriate to the purpose of the relationship; and
- 2) whatever the configuration of these dimensions, high levels of emotional intelligence are needed in the mentor and the development of the emotional intelligence of the mentee is central to success." (NMN Newsletter No.20.Feb.2004, p. 6)

Unfortunately, this doesn't get us very far, especially as a model did not emerge from the working group. In particular, the first proposition is bland and tells us nothing about the 'particular configuration of these dimensions' in different types of mentoring. In contrast, the second proposition is more interesting, but may be erroneous. One example, drawn from the voluntary sector, The Lantern Project (Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes & Garrett-Harris 2006, p. 47), may be indicative here. It was a mentoring programme which aimed to support women victims of domestic violence in social isolation.

Here, the mentees involved were in crisis and, perhaps, not be stable enough to be emotionally intelligent, yet they were involved in mentoring relationships, many of which are ‘successful’.

It is also worth emphasising here that the language used by the NMN may discourage people from engaging with mentoring.

Based on my own experience of mentoring, for example from BEAT (Gardiner 1994), a mentor could see the NMN’s explanation of mentoring as overly complex, unclear and confusing; so it is likely to lead to misunderstanding.

However, it is still fruitful to see mentoring as a relationship. Here, as stated above, I begin with the work of Clutterbuck (see especially Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995); Clutterbuck and Ragins 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Clutterbuck *et. al.*, 2004) who is particularly associated with the focus on mentoring as a relationship. Subsequently, I examine two issues that have received considerable attention in the mentoring literature which sees mentoring as a relationship, the identification of various phases in the process of mentoring and the distinction between formal and informal mentoring.

Clutterbuck (1991, p. 14) refers to mentoring as a ‘relationship’ that he suggests involves learning by the mentee from the mentor (1991, p. 15) and this is closer to my view. In my view, a contemporary mentor should be a trusted adviser who acts as teacher, tutor, coach, counsellor and friend (Gardiner, 1996, p. 92), within a one-to-one mentoring relationship. As such, mentoring involves a one-to-one relationship that encourages learning and change for both the mentor and the mentee’, albeit learning of different sorts, in their relationship of mutual trust and respect (Clutterbuck and Ragins, 2002, p. 129).

A mentor has responsibility to befriend a mentee and to develop rapport and trust with them. Consequently, mentoring creates a particular, personal, relationship within a general framework for developing people. Indeed, Hamilton (1993, p. 2) views the mentor as a ‘non-judgemental friend’. In contrast, a mentee is a person who requests non-expert, or expert, help and support from a willing, helping, individual prepared to take up the chameleon-like mantle of a mentor, which may or may not require her/him to undertake prior training.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The term ‘mentee’ is traditionally used in the UK, while in other countries, such as the USA, the term used is protégé. My view is that, as the purpose of the relationship is learning, the term learning mentee might be more appropriate to the activity of mentoring undertaken by learning mentors.

At the same time, there is no shared, common, understanding of the purpose and process of mentoring. The actual mentoring relationship process is difficult to explain because each mentoring partnership creates a different set of ideas drawn from its individual participants' lived experience and consequent understandings. As such, it is not easy to develop a model of mentoring which fits with the various lived experiences of different mentors and mentees.

Despite this, perhaps the key overall point is that, together, the mentor and mentee develop trust and understanding as their relationship grows. Consequently, as I will emphasise below, I see 'professional friendship' as at the core of successful mentoring relationships. This is a term used by both Clutterbuck (1991) and Hayward (2002), although they do not develop, or fully explain, the term, a point to which I shall also return.

### ***i) Mentoring Relationship Phases***

Clutterbuck follows Kram (1983) in suggesting that the mentoring relationship, once initiated, undergoes a number of phases (for other attempts to periodise the mentoring relationship see Gray and Gray 1985; Miller 2002). On the basis of an empirical study of mentoring, Kram found that a mentoring relationship has the potential to enhance the career development and psycho-social development of both individuals (1983, p. 613). Interestingly, Kram sees the psycho-social functions as including, on the part of the mentor, role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship to develop the protégé's competence, confidence and effectiveness (1983, p. 614). In addition, Kram lists the career benefits that include: sponsorship; coaching; protection; exposure and visibility; and challenging work projects. The average duration of these relationships is five years and, generally, proceeds through four distinct and predictable phases:

- The initiation phase, during which period of time mentoring sessions are most frequent.
- The cultivation phase, during which Kram argues the friendship between the two strengthens as a high degree of trust and intimacy builds between the mentor and protégé.
- The separation phase, which occurs after between two and five years when the relationship becomes less important to the protégé as s/he gains greater autonomy.
- The redefinition phase, when formal mentoring has finished and the relationship develops into a friendship in which the parties meet on an equal footing.

Miller's periodisation of the mentoring process (2002, p. 223) is particularly interesting because he emphasises mutual learning as the process develops. He also argues that the relationship can pass through four levels:



- 1. The mentor acts as a directive teacher because the mentee is limited in experience and competence.
- 2. The mentor changes her/his approach to act as a guide for the mentee as he/his own expertise and experience grows.
- 3. The mentee grows further and the role of mentor becomes one of facilitator and equal.
- 4. Both mentor and mentee are engaged in learning from each other.

Unsurprisingly, it is the initial phase of the relationship that has received most attention. At this stage, mentor and mentee will be matched as a result of either a formal context or an informal process; this invokes a distinction I return to below. At this stage, objective goals and ground rules, dealing for example with issues of confidentiality, will be set. At the initial stage of a formal mentoring relationship, a contract will be drawn up between the mentor and the mentee and sometimes other parties such as the line manager of the mentor or the parent of the mentee depending on the mentoring context.

A contract of some type is important because it helps to set out the rules and boundaries for all the parties involved in mentoring. In addition, guidelines are helpful to show what is 'off-limits' in the relationship, for example when to involve others as regards child protection issues etc. The contract can be recorded in writing, agreed verbally or be tacit.

Of course, there are different types of mentoring contract. The purpose of the contract is both to make explicit a formal undertaking that is clearly understood by the parties and to encourage commitment to its obligations. However, as with any contract, problems can arise, if for example: a) mentor and mentee do not share the same understanding of it; b) the contract breaks down and the consequences are not understood c) the contract has not taken account of confidentiality and d) a risk assessment is not undertaken.

From my experience with Learning Mentors, little information or training is available in schools about mentoring contracts. In particular, there is little information about the legal requirements of the Children's Act 2004, the Education Act 2002, the Health and Safety at Work Act, the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Human Rights Act 2001. Yet, all may have a bearing on any of the parties in the implementation of a mentoring contract. For example, all adults working in a school act in 'loco parentis'. In addition, employment law and civil or criminal law may need taking into account, depending on the context of the mentoring situation.

For example, no adult can be left unsupervised with a child under eighteen without a current Criminal Records Bureau check with enhanced police clearance status.

A contract is a vital component for a successful mentoring relationship in a formalised mentoring programme. In my experience there are a number of potential barriers to mentoring relationships that can have a bearing on the contract:

- Lack of support
- Inflexibility
- Lack of interest
- Imposed relationship
- Imposed relationship values
- Lack of commitment
- Differing agendas
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of time
- Dependence
- Lack of trust
- Sexuality
- Culture
- Language
- Stigma
- Stereotyping
- Judgemental attitude
- Lack of emotional stability
- Lack of goals/targets
- Conflict of interest
- Perceived lack of power/influence
- No network
- Body language
- Resources

Gardiner and Gordon (2000, p. 29) suggest that the mentor and mentee should agree a contract which includes a commitment to:

- a) respect each other's differences; b) be supportive of, and listen to, each other; c) be open and honest; d) challenge the issue, not the person; e) respect institutional confidentiality;
- f) encourage and build confidence; g) be willing to learn from each other; h) share knowledge and resources; i) actively participate; j) create a safe, friendly, happy environment; k) give time to each other; and k) allow each to finish.

A contract may also specify the number and length of mentoring sessions. However, at all stages of a mentoring relationship there is a need for a flexible and individual approach. During this period, progress is made towards the set goals. Nevertheless, the rapport-building phase is particularly important and essential to a healthy relationship. Failure to build rapport at this early stage will undoubtedly influence the conditions of the contract. In my view, the mentor role at this point is to befriend the mentee to help the relationship find a firm footing. The mentor should ask open questions, listen respectfully and show interest in the mentee by mirroring their positive body language.

The contract ends when the time comes to end the relationship, Gardiner and Gordon (2000, p. 42) offer advice on how to do this by asking and suggesting:

- Do you both feel you have largely met the set goals with no significant, new ones to define at this time?
- Does the mentee feel he/she can tackle problems confidently without the intervention of the mentor?
- Saying goodbye by:
  - Looking back together
  - Looking forward together as individuals
  - Sharing positive feedback
  - Celebrating the success of each other
  - Wishing each other well for the future

## ***ii) What is a Successful Mentoring Relationship?***

Little is available in the literature to define success in mentoring relationships. Here, I sought successful relationships to test my concept. Learning Mentors explained in the tape-recorded interviews what they perceived as success and that is documented in the fifth chapter of this thesis

Mentoring authors have indicated what mentoring involves as a way of expressing what mentoring is. For example, I previously showed that mentoring involves a one-to-one relationship that encourages learning and change for both the mentor and the mentee', albeit learning of different sorts, in their relationship of mutual trust and respect (Clutterbuck and Ragins, 2002, p. 129). Further, a mentor has responsibility to befriend a mentee and to develop rapport and trust with them. Consequently, mentoring creates a particular, personal, relationship within a general framework for developing people. Indeed, Hamilton (1993, p. 2) views the mentor as a 'non-judgemental friend'.

However, success, as such, is relative to a number of variables that include:

- where it takes place
- with whom
- what are its aim

For an example, success in BEAT was defined as the number of young offenders who ceased offending behaviour. What I have set out to test in this study is where success is valued by Learning Mentees and Learning Mentors, what does that look like and what can we learn from this? It is important to understand there is a difference between the nature of formal relationships, which is the case here, compared to informal relationships because success in a formal setting is the interest of this study.

## ***iii) Formal and Informal Mentoring Compared***

The literature, commonly distinguishes between two modes of mentoring activities: formal; and informal. Clutterbuck argues that formal mentoring involves a structured programme in which mentoring relationships are established and supported (2004, p. 27). In contrast, informal mentoring is viewed by Gray (1985, p. 15) as 'happenstance' and by Bennetts (1996, p. 1) as the traditional mentor relationship which occurs naturally and can lead both parties to achieve their fullest potential.

Interestingly, Clutterbuck asserts that formal mentoring is far more effective than informal mentoring, although most academics, particularly in the USA, suggest the opposite (2004, p. 27); so, there is an on-going debate and a clash between scientific studies and the experiences of practitioners.

Formal mentoring, following Clutterbuck (2004, p. 27), involves:

- A clear purpose
- A sense of direction
- Sets specific goals
- Provides support to both the mentor and mentee
- Includes training
- An appropriate environment
- On-going review
- Set boundaries

When establishing mentoring schemes, I have found the following framework has been helpful:

- Establishing a systematic structure and organisation.
- Making clear the relationship's boundaries via a contract.
- Ensuring both mentor and mentee are subject to a range of conditional constraints.
- Ensuring these mentoring relationships are bound by rules, for example, as regards the time or place of the meeting. These 'rules' are necessary for the benefit of the relationship and are instituted to encourage its success. Some may be necessary to meet organisational or legal requirements.
- Ensuring training is given to both parties and that relationships are commonly measured, monitored, evaluated and supported over the whole of the programme life.

In contrast, Bennetts (1996, p. 1) argues that informal mentoring<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the European Mentoring and Coaching Committee views formal mentoring as:

- ✓ Of limited duration
- ✓ Hold to clear objectives
- ✓ Have measurable outcomes
- ✓ Have a higher failure rate for matching and objective setting stages than informal modes of mentoring
- ✓ Involves Professional Friendship
- ✓ Selection of mentors for benefit of the mentee
- ✓ Supports organisational culture change
- ✓ Is inclusive of minorities/disadvantaged
- ✓ Of clear benefit to the organisation
- ✓ Likely to hold relatively few problems with 'cross – gender' mentoring (EMC.87, 1993)

- Involves a relationship without structure
- Involves Intimate learning
- Happens naturally
- Occurs in any life setting

Experience of informal mentoring suggests that it involves the spontaneous take-up of a mentoring relationship between two people who agree by mutual consent. In addition, the relationship ends when one or both of the parties terminates it, for whatever reason. Prior training is not usually offered to either mentor or mentee and this type of mentoring relationship is 'organic' in its nature. Finally, the relationship boundaries between the two participants are drawn on an 'ad hoc' basis.

The key argument in the literature is that formal and informal mentoring have different advantages and which is appropriate depends on the context. So, Clutterbuck (2004, p. 27) argues that formal mentoring is structured, so that both parties have a clear concept of what is to be achieved. This is intended to help reduce potential problems, for example the over-stepping of boundaries in cross-gender mentoring relationships.

**Table 2.1: A Comparison of Formal and Informal Mentoring**

<b>Formal Mentoring</b>	<b>Informal Mentoring</b>
Structured	Unstructured
Organisation driven	Mentee driven
Involvement of third party to ensure standards	No others involved
Mentors trained	Mentors less likely to be trained
May not choose a mentor	Choice of mentor
Dedicated time	Indeterminate time
Restricted access to mentor	Unrestricted access to mentor
Formal contract	Verbal or tacit contract
Known agendas	Unknown agendas
Explicit Expectations	Unclear expectations
Known boundaries	No explicit boundaries
Monitored	Not monitored
Objectives set	No objectives
Specified outcomes	Outcomes known or unknown

Table 2.1 compares formal and informal mentoring more systematically. Formal relationships usually operate with the oversight of the line managers in the organisation. This is it to be alerted to any problems early and take appropriate action to intervene. In contrast, informal mentoring is of an indeterminate duration and can lack clear, specific aims and objectives, which could make it a less effective mode of mentoring. More specifically, Bennets (1996, p. 7) argues that what is important to the traditional mentor in informal relationships appears to be that informality in the relationship.

Clutterbuck (2004, p. 28) suggests that getting the best from mentoring involves building in the best aspects of both formal and informal approaches. He notes that the highest failure rate in informal mentoring lies in the initial approach stage and often involves the mentee having false, or overly high, expectations of their mentor. This type of informal relationship is based on a personal, rather than a professional, friendship relationship. However, in formal relationships, selection is a systematic process and similarities in personality which help the relationship can be taken into account.

Certainly, formal mentoring is more likely to encourage the mentee to take greater levels of personal responsibility. In addition, it will allow them to place less reliance on the relationship, which may lead to greater life chances, social mobility and inclusion. This is because relationships have clear boundaries in formal mentoring and, therefore, breaking those boundaries has consequences. The main focus of this thesis is on formal mentoring because of the formal context within which Learning Mentors work, as paid professionals in mainly, public sector schools. In the next section of this chapter I consider the role of mentoring during professional/personal life transitions.

#### ***iv) Transitional Mentoring***

Meggison and Clutterbuck (1995, p. 14) suggest that one distinctive feature of mentoring is that it often involves support during significant transitions. Indeed, Clutterbuck, (1991, p. 75) suggests that mentoring is not only important for a young person's development, but also for those at the mid-career stage. He argues that, during this period, many executives find little chance for further growth or advancement. Furthermore, suggesting the mentor's career might be in danger of stagnation otherwise. He claims:

Entering a mentoring relationship at that stage of the mentor's career provides him with refreshing new challenges. He can redirect his energies into a stimulating and creative role. Mentoring demands a flexible and individual approach rather than applying old, well-used formulae. As a result the mentor finds new self respect as he recognises he has valuable experiences and knowledge to pass on to the protégé.

Levinson (1978, p. 334) focuses on transition into manhood via mentoring during which a mentor can be of great help to a young man as he seeks to find his way and gain new skills. In Levinson's view, a good mentor is helpful in the developmental sense because it helps a protégé to identify with a person (the mentor) who has the qualities he seeks.

Here, the mentor helps him develop into a person who offers love, admiration and encouragement. Levinson argues the protégé can acquire a sense of belonging and the benefits are those of a serious,



mutual, non-sexual, loving relationship. In addition, he contends that, like all love relationships (1978, p. 334), the course of a mentor relationship is rarely smooth and its ending often painful.

Interestingly, he points out that, whilst these relationships have developmental functions, there are potential negative aspects as well. For example, on the part of the mentor:

- exploitation,
- envy,
- smothering
- oppressive control

On the part of the protégé:

- demand behaviour
- clinging admiration
- self-denying gratitude
- arrogant ingratitude

If loving is involved in a good mentoring relationship, it remains unclear as to its place and how it is directly linked to the process of a person's transition. However, others have also referred to the importance of 'love'. To give one example, Bennetts (1996, p.7), whose work is informal mentoring, notes that, without exception, respondents in her study described the over-riding emotion within the relationship as one which ranged from deep affection, warmth and intimacy, to love. Controversially, Bennetts argued from her study that this was true regardless of the gender of either mentor or mentee and was indicative of the depth of the affective side of the relationship. In the next section, I discuss the literature on the role of Learning Mentors.

## **2.5 Understanding the Learning Mentor's Role**

There is a limited amount of work on the role of the Learning Mentor. Here, I examine the work of Huskin's (2001), Cruddas (2005), Chowcat (2005), and Miller (2002), before turning to my own experience.

In Huskins (2001) view, the term 'Learning Mentor' refers to any non-teaching professional whose role it is to promote 'inclusion' outside the classroom. In my view, this is a narrow interpretation and it was not shared by the, then, DfES. For example, he claims that the term is applicable mainly in the Excellence in Cities initiative which is the case. However, as I have pointed out, Learning Mentors are

employed widely across many types of formal and informal educational establishments in and outside of the EiC programme regions. In addition, he applies the term Learning Mentor to a variety of other appointments, particularly teaching and classroom assistants. This seems to me to be misguided.

Huskins (2001, p. 85) argues that all Learning Mentors have the same main tasks, to:

- Raise standards of attainment for underachieving students (including the gifted)
- Ensure continuity and progression at Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transfer
- Improve attendance
- Raise standards of behaviour

In describing the functions of the Learning Mentor, Huskins suggests that Learning Mentors need to address the basic personal support needs of the 'disaffected pupil', by:

(being) a 'parent' figure, with credibility in terms of relevant life experiences, and possibly a role model (same ethnic group and gender?), a good listener, able to empathise with them, be non-judgemental, trusted, reliable and honest, maintaining confidentiality (within certain agreed boundaries), and with personal commitment, forming a partnership with the student,

- a. (providing) personal support, encouraging open discussion of all aspects of life, within and outside the programme, with agreement; to assist with decision making and problem resolution,
- b. (identifying) student's perception of difficulties experienced, e.g.: in school, with crime and drugs, and eventually to help them see the other side as well,
- c. (supporting and developing) their 'self concept', promoting:

i) High self – esteem (e.g.: necessary to give experience of success, counter past failure and resist peer group pressure), and an accurate self-image based on self-awareness, and appropriate role models.

ii) A linked positive life-view, something to look forward to and work for, linked to motivation (e.g.: hope, rather than resignation such as 'there are no jobs anyway so why bother').

iii) A commitment to control or change their lives (e.g.: recognising that they themselves by their own effort can achieve a worthwhile future (Huskins 2001, p. 86).

In fact, Huskins identifies a total of 26 functions within the Learning Mentor role, including, for example:

(facilitating) experiences designed to develop the priority social skills needs identified, including, in addition to high self-esteem:

(recognising and managing) feelings (e.g.: impulse and stress control, defer gratification, develop alternative strategies for addressing conflict than violence)

(understanding and identifying) with others (empathy) (e.g.: to recognise the feelings, needs and points of view of others, such as pupils and teachers, or victims of crime), and values development (to identify, understand and explore alternatives to current values, beliefs and behaviour, and their consequences). (Huskins 2001, p. 87)

Perhaps, the main problem with Huskin's interpretation of the Learning Mentors role is that it focuses too heavily on the mentors. He appears to expect Learning Mentors to be directive, to actively teach or impose socialisation skills and behaviour.

Cruddas' (2005) view of Learning Mentors differs greatly from Huskins' and reflects a greater focus on the mentee. For example, Cruddas sees the Learning Mentor as a 'learning discourse guide', tasked with closing the educational engagement and achievement gap. However, Cruddas (2005, p. 10) also suggests:

evidence of how Learning Mentors contribute to the doxa (or dominant policy position) in which the functional drive for standards marginalises the personal, and also to demonstrate how Learning Mentors' work operates within an antithetical person-centred position in which 'the functional is used for the sake of the personal' (Fielding, 2004:211). It is in and through this contradiction, this dialectic, this equivocal space, that I hope to open up sites of struggle and argue that Learning Mentors' work creates one possibility for achieving more equitable forms of schooling.

Cruddas (2005, p. 25) identifies the Learning Mentors' role as linked to the European tradition of social pedagogy and suggests that the Learning Mentor performs a social pedagogic role in the tradition of Dewey (1916). Cruddas (2005, p. 85) follows Dewey's view based on the need to encourage the: 'widening area of shared concerns, and the liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities' (Dewey, 1916:71).

More directly, Cruddas builds upon the work of Vygotsky (1978) who argued that social interaction plays a critical role in the development of cognition. Both Vygotsky and Carl Rogers (1967), another key source for mentoring theorists (Gardiner 1995, p. 47), share the view that relationships facilitate learning. Rogers (1967, p. 33) suggested:

If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth and change, and personal development will occur.

Rogers 'helping relationship' is characterised by genuineness, warmth and empathy. However, given Cruddas' research is mainly focussed on the practice of primary school Learning Mentors, she views them as both social pedagogues and learning 'guides' for children. This, she suggests, following Egan (2002), involves 'skilled helping'; an idea Egan developed in the field of counselling. I make the link with my model's approach to counselling via Rogers approach as above. Thus I make the generalised point that mentoring as an activity is utilising counselling approaches.

Another link, this time between learning mentors to social pedagogues is seen by John Chowcat (2005, p. 11), the General Secretary of NAEIC, (the professional association for educational consultants and advisors), who along with Cruddas also identifies the value to education of the social pedagogue and their possible role in learning. He suggests that a version of the 'social pedagogue' role may be developed within the context of the educational Workforce Reform agenda. He argues that a social pedagogue would work with groups and individuals to help them develop socially. In my view, this is a feature of the Learning Mentor role, given that they are facilitators of social development, learning and change. Indeed, Smith (2006, p. 20), another proponent of the social pedagogue, explains that social pedagogy is a distinctive form of social work offered in a number of countries in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, with around half of German social workers holding a qualification in it. Interestingly, he found various researchers identified key principles of pedagogic practice:

- a focus on the child as a whole person, and support for the child's overall development
- the practitioner seeing themselves as a person, in relationship with the child or young person
- while they are together, children and staff are seen as inhabiting the same life space, not existing in separate hierarchical domains
- as professionals, pedagogues constantly reflect on their work and bring both theoretical understandings and self-knowledge to the process

- pedagogues are also practical; their training prepares them in many aspects of children's daily lives, such as preparing meals and snacks, or doing arts/or crafts
- when working in group settings, children's associative life is seen as an important resource – workers should foster and make use of the group
- pedagogy builds on an understanding of the children's rights which is not limited to procedural matters or legislated requirements
- there is an emphasis on team work and on valuing contributions of other people: families, community and other professionals

The New Collins Dictionary (1985, p. 833) emphasises that the word 'pedagogue' has Greek origins, being derived from the word 'paidagogos' which referred to a slave who looked after the master's son taking on the task of giving a holistic education. As such, the role is very similar to that of the 'Mentor'. Both require teaching which is intended to increase learning and the acquisition of greater knowledge which enables the quality of life and life chances to improve.

Miller (2002, p. 20) argues that Learning Mentors in England approach the role in a holistic, and professional, manner. As such, Miller has a clear view of the Learning Mentor as a professional, because they are paid staff, and this is a view shared by Cruddas (2005). However, he fails fully to explain what he means by seeing their role as holistic. Miller also focuses strongly on the context within which Learning Mentors have emerged. So, he examines Government policy on mentoring during the last years of Conservative Administration. In particular, he stresses the role of business mentors in schools (2002, p. 12), who aim to encourage employability skills and motivate borderline students to achieve five GCSE A\* - C grades. Finally, he (2002, p. 14) noted the intention of New Labour to expand mentoring programmes further across a range of policy areas.

The main problem with the work of Crudas, Huskins, Chowcat and Miller is that it fails to recognise that mentoring involves a relationship; so it does not acknowledge the strong arguments of Clutterbuck considered above. In contrast, the argument in this thesis is that mentoring will fail if it is not rooted in a professional friendship relationship.

Here, my own experience is particularly relevant. I joined a large West Midlands Education Service in 2000 from a regional West Midlands role with National Probation. My remit was to develop Learning Mentoring in the large local authority's ninety two Secondary Schools. I immersed myself in the Learning Mentor community working in a partnership with Learning Mentors, Head Teachers, the Education Service and Voluntary Sector mentors. At that time, I found a lack of clarity and understanding about the role, which was, of course, a totally new concept to the educational system. In

particular, I was frequently asked: ‘What is Mentoring?’ This emphasised to me that there was a need for greater understandings.

Having previously developed BEAT (1994), a mentoring programme for young offenders, I first began conceptualising and testing to what extent Professional Friendship is a core component of successful mentoring relationships. I further developed this in my Mentoring Programme, both as practitioner and researcher (see Gardiner 1996), and, here, I owe a great deal to Clutterbuck’s work. I developed from it my own approach to my work in the Probation Service and beyond. Subsequently, I observed the full range of Learning Mentor activities in their schools, this involved:

- providing guidance as and when required to a range of professionals, volunteers and other enquirers
- promoting a sense of belonging to school
- providing general support at school(s)
- being available on a planned and on an un-planned basis
- being responsive and flexible
- liaising with others in school and out
- setting SMART targets within a positive and supportive context
- reviewing progress and revising targets where needed
- recording achievements
- building self esteem and confidence
- motivating and encouraging
- forming new relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- informing relevant staff, parents and mentees at each stage of the mentoring process
- breaking down the barriers to learning
- offering strategies for success
- evaluating progress
- networking with other Learning Mentors
- liaising with other agencies
- undertaking learning mentor training
- working with volunteer mentors in and outside of school.
- setting up home school diaries
- offering family support via home visiting
- helping home–school behaviour management – school/parents/Learning Mentor/learning mente

- monitoring and improving learning mentee attendance, punctuality, relationships, motivation and attainments

In addition, learning mentors ran groups dealing with: circle time; parenting; anger management; assertiveness; self esteem; girls' sports; and friendship. they also established clubs, including a: breakfast club; homework club; curriculum support club dealing with literacy, numeracy and maths; lunchtime club; tag rugby club; quiz club; art club; music club; and swimming club. This makes it clear that the Learning Mentor's role is multifunctional and any mentoring model will need to take account of this diversity.

More specifically, I provided on-going training to the learning mentors from March 2000 and I evaluated their role in July 2000 via the SWOT analysis (page 58). In addition I asked Learning Mentors at their training sessions a series of questions, which are presented below with some of their answers:

What do you see as your role?

- To identify learning barriers
- To remove learning barriers
- To monitor progress
- To build pupil confidence/self worth
- To guide pupils through school
- To maintain positive relations with pupils
- To reduce exclusions
- To link home/school/community
- To be a role model
- To make school successful for the pupil
- The role is to encourage, advise and guide pupils to make a difference in their achievement and personal development so they can reach their potential

What are the expectations on Learning Mentors?

- To improve attendance
- To improve pupil academic achievement
- To improve behaviour
- To reduce exclusions

- To improve pupil attitudes to learning
- To reduce academic differences between gender and ethnicity
- To develop pupil skills
- To provide support
- To meet government criteria
- To help pupils with coping strategies
- To negotiate in school how pastoral structures and learning mentors can work within the school system, together
- To undertake and complete training and administration in relation to the role

Here I give examples of the activities learning mentors as mentors, engage in:

Encouraging, listening, supporting, communicating (verbal and non-verbal), reflecting, interpreting, attention giving, questioning, empathising, enjoying, sharing, motivating, learning role modelling, reliability, diplomacy, fun, relationships, being positive and advocacy.

What are the barriers to learning for pupils?

- Behaviour
- Level of literacy
- Attendance/truancy
- Low self esteem/confidence
- Poor health
- Poor concentration
- Low motivation
- Exclusion(s)
- Poor communication skills/language barriers
- Personality clashes
- Bullying
- Peer pressure
- Substance abuse/drugs
- Boredom
- Emotional problems
- Disability, e.g., visual/hearing impairment
- Home environment/value system



- Financial problems
- Teacher acceptance/awareness

What are the barriers to learning for Learning Mentors?

- Time (lack of) allocated to mentors and pupils
- Accessing pupils/parents
- Relationships
- Space/privacy
- Knowledge of the curriculum (lack of)
- Appropriate training (lack of)
- Expectations of the role (high)
- Access to resources (lack of)
- Lack of support
- understanding of role (lack of)
- absence/truancy of pupils
- relationship with pupil
- language/cultural barriers
- accommodation (lack of)
- pupil co-operation (lack of)
- short-term targets and funding
- recognised qualifications (lack of)
- prioritising pupil need for mentoring
- lack of experience
- lack of flexibility in role due to rigidity of the systems

These responses concurred with my own experiences as their manager in my day-to-day role. The main purpose of my work was to manage and train up the learning mentor cohort to raise standards, improve continuity and transition and reduce truancy and exclusion rates, through ensuring that all pupils in schools have access to a professionally trained learning mentor. Other core responsibilities involved providing visible and dynamic leadership, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for pupils and promoting a culture of trust between the education service and its schools. Importantly, I was tasked with being on the leading edge on professional matters concerning pupils with barriers to learning and to provide high quality policy advice as required.

As explained earlier, every two weeks I held training sessions for learning mentors to better up-skill and develop them. I carried out an early SWOT analysis of their emerging role at the end of their first year in schools. It is worth reporting those results here:

**Table 2.2: The SWOT Analysis**

**a) *Strengths:***

- Flexibility
- A unique opportunity.
- New approaches to familiar situations
- Holistic view
- Big picture perspective
- Forming and developing meaningful relationships-children/parents/staff/outside agencies
- Sharing interdependence
- Receiving high levels of responsibility
- Role modelling
- Being seen as extra/in addition to
- Not having to be the disciplinarian
- Being an alternative adult figure in school/class
- Receiving on-going development
- Understanding the role
- Consistent practice with other LMs
- Receiving support-School/Head teacher/line manager/LM and school team(s)/EiC Coordinator/families
- Challenge
- Links with external agencies
- Being seen as giving a chance that was not previously available
- Being a confidant (within the boundaries)
- Approachability
- Being in an evolving, innovative and dynamic role
- Opportunity of good communication
- Being in a positive environment
- Encouraging a positive attitude
- Having a can do culture of no blame

- Using high levels of imagination and creativity
- Having a common professional understanding
- Satisfaction gained from helping others
- Offering time and attention
- Use of a range of styles and approaches
- Willingness to share experiences and good practice
- Ability to command respect from others
- The creation of mutual learning opportunities
- Being able to demonstrate trustworthiness
- Being adaptable
- Being good humoured
- Personal/Professional development-on-going

***b) Weaknesses:***

- Current absence of professional accreditation and standing
- Lack of role clarity
- Misuse or misunderstanding of language-jargon
- Misunderstood role in school and outside
- May be interpreted as vulnerable
- Emotionally draining
- Little respect for the role
- Perceived stigma due to the assumption that a pupil is and has a problem therefore needs the Learning Mentor
- Isolation
- Red tape
- Over use of role

***c) Opportunities:***

- The introduction of new initiatives
- Using new ways of working
- Developing new strategies
- Developing the role for the benefit of the school
- To form new networks both in school and out

- To encourage and develop new/positive relationships
- To develop informal structures
- For influencing
- For personal/professional development and progression
- For the learner to develop
- For sharing good practice
- For supporting others
- For team building and partnership working
- To work with young people and help to prepare them for the future
- For job satisfaction and validation
- For building bridges
- For the child's voice to be heard
- To undertake National Training
- To develop within the role/self and others
- Help to bring about positive change

***d) Threats:***

- From other staff
- Parents
- Outside agencies
- Shortages of Learning Mentors- within the school
- Other learners
- The environment
- To personal safety
- Lack of support in school
- Poor attitude from others
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of understanding
- Misunderstanding/misinterpretation of role
- Lack of communication
- Being over used
- isolation

From analysing the SWOT analysis, I found that the Learning Mentor role was complex, multifaceted and sometimes poorly understood. In particular, it was clear that the role of Learning Mentors was sometimes misinterpreted. As such, I identified a number of early problems. For example, the Learning Mentor was seen in some schools as ‘all things to all people.’ In addition, these problems were affecting the developing role of Learning Mentors by creating barriers to professional development and effectiveness. In particular, these were a range of obvious problems:

- Lack of time – Often, schools failed to allocate appropriate time for the task to be effectively undertaken.
- Poor access to learners - Some schools did not suspend the curriculum and, as such, short, regular periods of mentoring could not take place. This made some relationships problematic.
- Relationships - The role of Learning Mentor was sometimes undermined because of their dependency on others when it came to developing positive contacts outside the mentoring relationship, with parents, teachers, other agencies etc. In particular, there was suspicion about the Learning Mentor’s role and why they were there in schools.
- No space for privacy- Confidence in the relationship was undermined, or not gained sometimes, due to a lack of respect for the need for relative privacy in mentoring sessions. Some sessions were held in the corridor or playground.
- Lack of knowledge about the curriculum - Learning Mentors’ lack of understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum could potentially increase their learner’s stress. However, this improved if Learning Mentors had some understanding of the Curriculum and, where schools required holistic mentoring rather than academic mentoring, this problem was significantly reduced.
- No, or poor, training - There was a lack appropriate CPD/training for Learning Mentors. So, while all stakeholders had high expectations of the role, the Learning Mentors had too little information or skill to carry out their role effectively.
- Poor communication and limited resources– There was poor communications at all levels with all those in and outside of education and insufficient appropriate resources to meet the needs of the role.
- Lack of support – The Learning Mentors needed supervision and support because they had different needs than other members of staff.
- Lack of understanding – There was insufficient understanding of the role and what it involved and this of course is the key theme of this thesis.

Understanding these problems helped to inform the local policy direction at that time. However, in 2001 I joined a smaller education service in the West Midlands, which, in partnership with a private company, SERCO, gained government funds to employ Learning Mentors in its schools. Here a group of Primary and Secondary schools worked collaboratively to raise standards with an element of the funding dedicated to providing a Learning Mentor in each school. My work there was as Learning Mentor Coordinator.

It became clear to me, reflecting on my work in the large authority, that a greater focus on the mentoring process was required. Later, at the end of 2004, the Laming report on the death of Victoria Climbié signalled a growing need for the role of the Learning Mentor to be mainstreamed in educational provision to help address the way children are protected and supported in society.

I found some schools failed to utilise the Learning Mentor fully, preferring to use her/him as a teaching assistant. In particular, I identified that, if schools take this view, it restricts the effectiveness of the role, encouraging patchy provision for its recipients.

In addition, students were sometimes confused as to why they found themselves with a Learning Mentor at all. Another issue was that some schools, parents, teachers or students failed to understand the importance of the mentoring aspect of the learning mentor role. It seemed to me that where this was the case, children and young people were more likely to fail.

However, where I found that where there was a deeper understanding of the one-to-one mentoring relationship process, it was more likely this could bring about change(s) to empower individuals, giving them opportunities to increase life chances, and encouraging social mobility, social inclusion, social cohesion and social justice.

In addition, it also helped increase individual and family stability during transitions and helped by reducing uncertainty, instability and social fragmentation.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The main conclusions of this review of the existing literature on mentoring generally and the role of Learning Mentors particularly is that mentoring in both schools and other types of mentoring more generally needs to be viewed as a developmental relationship. This is consistent with the views of the mentoring theorists and my experience as a practitioner. The literature search is helpful in assessing

the potential impact on learning mentor practice in schools to help their role be better understood. In turn, this helps schools to interpret their role better, assisting schools to find dedicated time for successful mentoring activity. This is especially because literature search shows that mentoring can be utilised to create new life chances thus creating a range of outcomes of benefit to students and pupils. However, while a number of researchers have made the point that mentoring is a relationship whose purpose is for learning, this perspective is underdeveloped. In particular, I consider, there is insufficient recognition that mentoring involves a professional friendship in the relationship. Consequently, in the next chapter I outline the Professional Friendship concept I developed in earlier work, which the empirical work in this thesis is designed to test.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIP**

As I indicated in the last chapter, the terms friendship, and indeed professional friendship, have been used in the mentoring literature. However, their usage has been far from systematic. My own previous work is an exception here, because in it I first began to develop my construct of Professional Friendship. I compared mentoring to the other activities of teaching, coaching, counselling and tutoring. My hypothesis was then that mentoring is best understood as part of a cluster of concepts, which, collectively, gives it contemporary meaning and expression. As such, my study undertook qualitative research to compare mentoring theory with its practice. Out of this work the concept of friendship began to emerge and from this the thinking about to what extent professional friendship is a core component of successful mentoring relationships was developed.

The aim of my study then was to gain a better understanding of mentoring and its activities: to discover what makes it a unique helping strategy. In addition, the term ‘friend’ was used in my study by the Probation and Educational mentors to describe the nature of their relationships with their mentees. This was the origin of my study of friendship in mentoring. Indeed, this gave rise to my concept of professional friendship in both Probation and Education mentoring.

I then wanted to undertake further research to find out to what extent professional friendship was a core component of successful mentoring relationships. To this end I continued on with my studies to this current thesis developing the idea of professional friendship via my published article, ‘Mentoring: Towards a Professional Friendship’ (Mentoring and Tutoring 1998, pp. 77-84).

The aim of this chapter is to outline that development of the professional friendship that I have defined in chapter one. In the rest of this thesis I then examine the utility of it in the context of this empirical study of Learning Mentoring in schools in the Midlands, the details of which are discussed in the next chapter. My broad argument is that Professional Friendship provides a useful way of helping mentoring be better understood and is a construct that can be utilised by Learning Mentors to help explain their role in schools. In this chapter I begin by briefly reiterating why this is useful, then I examine other usage of the terms friendship and professional friendship in the mentoring literature in more detail. Subsequently,



I offer a brief outline of the previous work (Gardiner, 1996) from which the Professional Friendship concept developed. The next section then outlines this, before in the final brief section I examine my work since 1996 that reflects on this construct.

### **3.1 Why this Concept?**

The mentoring process is not yet fully understood and a better way is necessary to help clarify a highly complex process. By using a conceptual construct to test out and understand how the mentoring relationship works, we can improve mentoring practice and increase the life chances of mentees. In the last chapter, I examined existing models of mentoring. However, many of these models fail to recognise that mentoring involves a relationship that is based on friendship. Even fewer identify that professional friendship is a core component of successful mentoring relationships. In particular, it is not recognised that mentoring involves a special type of friendship relationship. Indeed, it is a mentoring friendship relationship whose purpose is to create greater life chances, thus, in individual cases, achieving more success from mentoring than from any other types of activity. As such, my idea offers a different, useful approach to understanding mentoring.

### **3.2 Friendships and Professional Friendship in the Mentoring Literature**

On friendships I begin by turning to the social psychologists that study human behaviour and argue that an individual has no meaning in relation to others without interacting with them (Buchanan & Huczynski). This interaction known as social exchange is also at play in mentoring (Bennett's) relationships. Indeed, social exchange theory explains that we choose our friends because of the support we get from them. So there is a mutual exchange of benefit. In mentoring terms this links to what is known as mutuality (Clutterbuck 1991). As we saw in Chapter One, Pahl (2000) regards friendship as a relationship built upon the whole person and aimed at psychological intimacy and freedom. This, clearly links to activities that I will describe later in my model as core components of successful mentoring relationships. On friendships, Karen Kabo (2008, p. 1) writes:

once a friendship is established through self-disclosure and reciprocity, the glue that binds is intimacy. According to Fahr's research, people in successful same-sex friendships seem to possess a well – developed, intuitive understanding of the give and take of intimacy. "Those who know what to say in response to another person's self-disclosure are more likely to develop satisfying friendships".

Here, there is a clear link between the process described and the professional friendship approach to mentoring. This indicates to me there are deep processes of engagement between the mentor and mentee that are about providing support to one another. Later in the learning mentor semi-structured interviews, this need for 'support' is described by learning mentors.

Lesley Button (1974, p48), a psychologist and author on developmental work with adolescents points out that young people in particular found friendship making difficult. In a study of how young people viewed friendship he found that young people described a close friendship as with someone you like and someone whom you can rely on and that you could confidently tell secrets to expecting the other to do the same.

In short, developmental friendships appear critical for personal growth. Mentors and learning mentors may be fulfilling this role in the absence of others. My research is intended to test if this type of relationship is at play in mentoring via my model.

As indicated in the last chapter, there is a range of references to friendship in the mentoring literature (Shea 1992; Mattoon 1991; Parsloe 1992; Hamilton 1993; Clutterbuck 1991; Hayward 2002). In particular, Shea (1992, p. 13) points out that the protégé can only experience the beneficial gifts of mentoring by assuming ownership of what the mentor has offered. Certainly, it is crucial that a model of mentoring acknowledges what the mentor offers to the mentee and in reciprocation, what the mentee learns from the mentor. As Shea (1992, p. 17) argues, mentors are people who have a special, helpful, effect on our lives. Indeed, he asserts:

Often, mentoring is a process whereby mentor and mentoree work together to discover and develop the mentoree's latent abilities, to provide the mentoree with knowledge and skills as opportunities and needs arise, and for the mentor to serve as an effective tutor, counsellor, friend and foil who enables the mentoree to sharpen skills and hone her or his thinking.

Consequently, Shea supports the idea of the mentor as a friend in the context of the range of activities undertaken. Yet, he doesn't discuss what friendship actually means in this case. Friendship is not defined, nor are its characteristics considered in detail.

n the other hand, mentoring theorist Reg Hamilton (1993, p. 2) argues that mentoring creates a particular, personal relationship within a general framework in which a business organisation's new staff are developed and managed. In this business context, Hamilton argues, most advocates of mentoring see it as a development tool and view the mentor as a non-judgemental friend.

In another vein, Mattoon (1991, p. 167) views personal friendships as based on individual choice and, unsurprisingly perhaps, her empirical work concentrates on informal mentoring. She suggests that such friendship relationships are rooted in shared interests and that a limited number of them will develop a deep mutual appreciation and trust. She argues:

we may find persons – contemporaries or elders – who become our teachers and mentors. As we appreciate in school, religious institutions and clubs, these persons instruct us in the world. Later we may find mentors who teach and encourage us in establishing ourselves as adults...A teacher/mentor may pass out of one's life when that function is needed no longer, or that person may become a friend.

As such, whilst Mattoon argues that mentors may become friends, she does not contend that successful mentoring relationships are based on friendship. Rather, she implies that mentoring is a stage on the road towards a possible friendship.

In contrast, Clutterbuck (1991), Shea (1992) and Hamilton (1993), who have all been previously mentioned, although they differ, do see the mentor as a type of friend. For example, Clutterbuck (1991, p. 20) cites the case of AMI Healthcare whose mentors assist in the career development of employees and whose guidance explicitly talks of friendship. The guidelines argue:

One thing the mentor does not receive and should not be led to expect from the scheme is a direct payment or bonus to compensate him for his time and effort.

One argument against such payments is that developing others is an integral part of every manager's job. A more powerful argument is that mentorship has to be built on friendship and is a close and personal relationship.

Clutterbuck (1991, p. 35) also argues that the mentor must be ready to invest time and effort into the relationship and extend friendship to the protégé and be willing to go beyond the normal limits of a business relationship. However, he also views the mentor as a 'critical friend', possibly implying that the mentor can be both objective and also judge the mentee.

His view seems to me to be immediately problematic as the nurturing role of mentor makes it difficult to also be 'critical'. So, here I would argue that the mentor should be a non-judgemental friend rather than a critical friend as trying to be both could create a conflict of interest in the relationship.

In Eric Parsloe's, (1995, pp. 73-85) work, he groups mentoring into three specific areas of activity:

- The mainstream mentor
- The professional qualification mentor
- The vocational qualification mentor

At that time, he argued only that mentoring was a new and unfamiliar concept that would take time to prove its value. As such, he viewed mentoring as similar to coaching. However, he does not link coaching to friendship or other mentoring activities. Of course, more recently, Parsloe & Wray (2000, pp. 80/81) acknowledge both that community mentoring involves acting as a friend and that all mentors seek to develop a special relationship.

However, I agree with Clutterbuck (1991, p. 75) who emphasises that mentoring demands a flexible and individual approach. Indeed, it involves mutuality. He explains this term by arguing that the most essential ingredient in any mentoring relationship is mutual respect between the two partners (1991, p. 43). Here, the argument is that there is a mutually shared experience within a one-to-one 'mentoring relationship' from which both parties can learn. As such, in my view, mentoring is an activity for learning, and for changing, which is a 'lived experience' one, which can change an individual's 'way of life'.

In an article (Gardiner, 1998, p. 82) which built on my previous research (Gardiner 1996) and further developed the concept of professional friendship, I pointed out that Kalbeisch and Keyton (1995) compared the mentoring relationships of women within formal situations in employment to their informal friendship relations.

They found, perhaps surprisingly, that the latter were perceived as being more formal, and less open, than the former. They identified friendship characteristics in same-sex female mentoring relationships and emphasised that women use their friendship to talk about feelings and problems and that this extended to the workplace. They argued that a 'good mentor' (1995, p. 194) needed to be:

- More than a good role model
- A teacher
- A sounding board

- A cheerleader
- A friend
- Upwardly mobile

In addition, Kalbeisch and Keyton (1995, p. 192) reported that their study sample identified few differences between mentoring and friendship. Both types of relationships were characterised by positive feelings, emotional intimacy and satisfactory outcomes. These findings may suggest that female mentoring relationships are more relaxed and casual than previously thought; unfortunately, there is no comparable research dealing with men. Certainly, Kalbeisch and Keyton concluded that the need for 'friendship' was an important aspect within the mentoring relationship and that, for women at least, adopting a friendship model in their professional mentoring relationships increased their empowerment in the workplace.

Here, I identify the link between the friendships described above and the social and emotional exchanges between learning mentor and learning mentees. Indeed, as the interviews in chapter five indicate, for learning mentors both male and female, the professional friendship social – emotional engagement is perhaps, one of 'emotional labour'. In one learning mentor case even moving toward the role of pro-parent (Toffler). Of course, the term friend is used in a number of situations that are not entirely social, but also have a professional element. As an example, my lawyer might be regarded as a 'professional friend', given s/he is someone whom I could expect to be 'on my side' and to 'act as an advocate' for me. At the same time, I would expect to receive a professional service and have my case presented with objectivity.

I view, both the Mentor and the Learning Mentor act as a 'professional friend' to their mentee. For example, the Learning Mentor helps the Learning Mentee discern her/his own options and supports them to make her/his own decisions. The Learning Mentor also helps the Learning Mentee to speak up, although they will do so for them if required.

As such, the concept of legal friendship shares some common ground with professional friendship in mentoring generally and particularly with Learning Mentoring. Indeed, I argue in my article, 'Mentoring: Towards a Professional Friendship' (1998) that successful mentoring relationships are based upon providing impartiality or 'professional objectivity' in the professional friendship relationship.

The term professional friendship has also been used in mentoring in a number of different ways. So, Hayward (2002, p. 8) argues that Learning Mentors practice professional friendship, although she does not explain what she means by using this term; rather, she presents what might be seen as a best practice guide.

In 'The Good Practice Guide for Learning Mentors' (sponsored by the DfES in 2002, p7) Hayward identifies a series of 'critical success factors' for secondary schools that employ Learning Mentors:

- ✓ Understanding and appreciation of the Learning Mentor's role across the school.
- ✓ Effective Learning Mentor induction, integration into the school culture and access to training opportunities
- ✓ A dedicated space for the Learning Mentor
- ✓ A clear project framework including.
- ✓ Sufficient time allocation – at Partnership and school level
- ✓ Senior Management Team – support and commitment
- ✓ Clear line management
- ✓ Whole – school approach and flexibility to use Learning Mentor processes
- ✓ Support to work with multi – agencies
- ✓ Clear criteria for allocating support
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluating systems from the start

In addition, she points to the key barriers to effective implementation of good practice in the role (2002, p. 8):

- “Lack of effective management systems and practices in school
- Misunderstanding about the role of the Learning Mentor by teaching and other staff working with schools
- Learning Mentors being too narrowly focussed – in particular on behaviour problems
- Lack of career structure and access to professional development time
- Different salary structures causing anxiety and confusion
- Isolation of those Learning Mentors who have not had an induction, and are not integrated into the school' support systems”.

Yet, Hayward fails to clarify the parameters of the Learning Mentor role, leaving this to the discretion of employers who may be tempted to use them inappropriately. More specifically, her list of the features of best practice for Learning Mentors fails to take account of the nature of the professional friendship involved in mentoring.

The term professional friendship is also found in research undertaken by Philip, Shucksmith and King (2004) for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Sharing a laugh? : A study into mentoring interventions with young people'. Here, the term professional friendship is used in a slightly different context.

The focus of their study is on the roles of befrienders, mentors and 'key workers' (a term coined by the Government department DfES in 2003 to represent an important role played in society by a professional such as a Doctor, Nurse, Teacher, Learning Mentor etc.). However, the researchers argue that Learning Mentors, in working with young people, managed what amounted to 'professional friendships' (p. 50) and asserting that a version of 'professional friendship' should be promoted. They found that such 'befrienders' saw their role as a 'friend' who listens and challenges, but this friendship has limits because they are viewed as professionals. Unfortunately, here again, the use of the term is unclear and unexplained. Nevertheless, the researchers argue (p.50):

Both housing and education projects offered a higher dosage of mentoring that ultimately aimed to reintegrate the young people into the mainstream. Many of the young people had a complex array of difficulties and had contact with a range of professionals with whom mentors often acted as advocates.

Unexpectedly the status of paid workers did not appear to distance them from their clients although it made for more problematical relationships with other professionals. This is very different from the 'engagement' mentoring that Colley describes in that it is a relationship grounded in the negotiation between young people and mentors, highly demanding of time, skill and tact. It also implied a knowledge and understanding of the local context, patterns of exclusion and community. Such an intensive level of support is unlikely to be possible without a voluntary context. Paradoxically it also demands some flexibility of voluntary commitment in promoting a version of 'professional friendships'.

In contrast to prior usages, my approach emphasises that mentoring is a relationship, involving a particular type of friendship, which is a professional friendship. The main purpose of my construct is to show to what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships and is therefore operating as a relationship process in mentoring.

Friendship is a way of thinking about what mentoring involves. It could, but subject to further research, be seen as a range of transferable attributes/skills that potentially can be applied to the range of mentoring modes, models and programmes. Consequently, the friendship element in mentoring applies across all mentoring relationships, whether in Probation, the Primary Care Trust, education etc. The problem being, to what extent professional friendship is a core component of successful mentoring relationships. In the next section below, I reflect in more detail on the historical development of Professional Friendship.

### **3.3 My Previous Research**

#### ***i) Background and Research Design***

As the Development Officer of the West Midlands Probation Service I was supported by my employer to undertake my original mentoring research, leading to Masters Degree in Education, which was completed in 1996. I undertook this research because the rise in crime, and particularly in violent crime amongst the most frequent perpetrators, was, and remains, a key problem in society. At the time, the Home Office estimated that one in three men had acquired a criminal record by the age of thirty and that there was a direct or indirect link between the level of unemployment and crime. In addition, young men from ethnic minorities, who were disproportionately more likely to be in contact with the criminal justice system and to be unemployed, were particularly prone to the vicious cycle of unemployment, crime and imprisonment and re-offending.

I managed as the Coordinator the BEAT project between 1993 and 1996. It aimed to reduce crime through mentoring. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I chose to undertake research into the BEAT project's mentoring relationships, for which I had been previously responsible, although I only undertook this research once the project was managed by a new Coordinator. I wanted to compare and contrast this work with another mentoring scheme involving young people, but operating different types of mentoring programmes, in order to gain a comparative perspective. As such, I choose to focus on educational volunteer mentors working in schools in Doncaster because, as we shall see below, one of the aims of this scheme was to prevent school children becoming young offenders.

The mentors of the BEAT Project were volunteers (BEAT, 1994), most of whom had been recruited and trained by me. These mentors, known as Community Mentors, were unpaid members of the public drawn from the local community and from all walks of life to work with young offenders in order to encourage a greater sense of self-respect and worth among their mentees.

As I argued in 1995 (p. 44):



The aims (of BEAT) were to develop and implement programmes to increase the personal and vocational effectiveness of young people (offenders) identified by the Probation Service, and also to assist young offenders (16-18years) to develop realistic careers plans...and improve levels of success in placements in employment and further education and training. The process included the carrying out of needs assessment, access to careers education and identification, and recruitment and training of mentors.

In contrast, the Doncaster mentors were parents, dinner supervisors, technicians etc.; that is people who were already working in, or contributing to, the school, and had easy access to their mentees during the school day. One of the purposes of Doncaster's schools-based mentoring project was to discourage pupils from entering a cycle of crime, with the idea that this would be of benefit to society through an increase in community safety. Mentors were recruited and trained to work with young people in school. The recruitment was conducted centrally, but responsibility for the scheme was then devolved to individual schools. This was supported by the production of a training manual to ensure consistent best practice.<sup>5</sup> The programme's mission statement was:

Mentoring is the planned intervention of selected adults from the local community, schools, industry and commerce in the practice of working with targeted children who are failing to realise their potential in school, for the purpose of promoting each child's personal, educational and vocational development within the context of a secure, ongoing, caring relationship.

When designing the research, I used my own experience and a thorough reading of the existing literature on mentoring and related skills, drawing particularly on the work of Clutterbuck (1991). Certainly, my work at National Probation West Midlands enabled me to use my lived experience of

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<sup>5</sup> The understanding of mentoring in the manual seems to me to be a great deal better than is usual in the literature. The approach of Beattie' who wrote the manual to mentoring generally and the programmes particularly was essentially pastoral with a focus on three key areas of pupil needs:

- pupil value systems
- pupil performance in school
- pupil awareness of the world of work

Beattie (1992 p. 2) argues that the foundation of successful mentoring is the one-to-one relationship built on equal responsibility, reflecting mutual commitment and understanding by both the mentor and the young person. In addition, there should be no power differential and the mentor's role is impartial and non-judgemental. Moreover, Beattie, in his Programme handbook points to the many roles that mentors play, , including that of 'Friend'(p. 2).

mentoring to understand and theorise about the process. For example, as a mentor to the first mentee on the BEAT programme, Steven, I recognised that he was more likely to respond to mentoring when I communicated with him on equal terms. In my view at that time, a friendly approach to the relationship was needed, along with clearly set boundaries. It became clear to me that it was not only my mentee, but also myself, who experienced personal growth and development as a result of the mentoring relationship and this seemed also to be the case for other mentors in the BEAT Programme in their relationships. Two other examples will indicate how my experience fed into my thinking about mentoring.

First, I found that the biggest pitfall of the project was my failure to successfully match mentor to mentee. When this happened, and, basically, the mentor and mentee did not get on with each other, each person was left with a sense of failure, and of rejection by the other. To me, the solution was to re-match them as quickly as possible into new pairs, enabling a rapid fresh start to allow rapport and trust to grow. Second, it became clear to me from my own practice that, for a mentoring relationship to be successful, it was essential to understand the barriers to its success. As such, my work on the BEAT Project suggested a range of barriers to success for the young offenders. Two were particularly important: relationship breakdowns, particularly the failure to make and maintain successful relationships with family and friends; and the lack of qualifications and appropriate opportunities for ex-offenders to gain education, training and/or employment. To me, it was important to build an ethos in which mentor and mentee valued each other, because most of those individuals who were choosing mentoring as a strategy for success (offenders and ex-offenders) were used to a history of failing.

In addition, it was important, given the B.E.A.T project's ethos, that the mentors viewed relationships as holistic (whole person) to better benefit the mentee.

For me, as the project's Manager-Practitioner, it was important to encourage others and actively demonstrate an ethos of caring. I trained mentors in a person-centred approach to show potential community mentors that I valued both them and their mentees.

At the same time, reading the literature on mentoring and related skills deepened my knowledge of mentoring. In particular I was interested in assessing whether mentoring was a distinct, identifiable discipline and, if so, what distinguished it from other disciplines.

This was a particularly important question in relation to my research because I needed to understand whether it was mentoring that was making a difference, or if, instead, the mentor was actually

performing the role of a teacher, tutor, counsellor etc, and it was this role that was bringing about change and increased life chances.

At this stage, I was strongly influenced by Clutterbuck's work, as must be clear throughout this thesis, and it was his work, together with my own experience, which convinced me that mentoring was a separate discipline. Consequently, I utilised his model of mentoring to help develop my own work with both young offenders (mentees) and their community mentors.

Clutterbuck (European Mentoring Centre. *O.H.T.* 66, 1993) argued that mentoring involves primarily:

- listening with empathy
- sharing experience and learning (usually mutually),
- professional friendship
- developing insight through reflection
- being a sounding board
- encouraging

In addition, he also suggested that these mentoring activities are the key aspects of the mentoring relationship necessary for it to be successful. At the same time, Clutterbuck argued that there were other, secondary, skills which mentors use, particularly:

- coaching
- counselling
- challenging assumptions/being a critical friend
- opening doors
- being a role model

He also identifies activities that should occur in the mentoring relationship:

- the mentor should not discipline
- the mentor should not carry out the appraisal (as the line manager)
- the mentor should not become involved with the assessment of the mentee for a third party
- the mentor should not carry out the supervision of the mentee

In his view, most successful mentoring relationships blossom into friendships (1991 pg 5). So, the mentor is: an off-line friend and guide; a sounding board and confidante; and a provider of support, stimulation and insight that helps the mentee with self-learning (European Mentoring Centre. *O.H.T.* 87, 1993). As such, the term mentor does not apply to activities that can be classed as formal teaching, supervision or administration.

This view encouraged me to see that a tutor for example is not a mentor and that a mentor was not a specialist in anything, but rather someone who helps another and does so by utilising many different skills. In my study, I frequently returned to Clutterbuck's views to help and guide me.

Clutterbuck argued that mentoring involves professional friendship and that the mentor can act as a critical friend, but, as I indicated earlier, there may be conflict of interest here. In my view, the implied nurturing role of the mentor may make it difficult to be critical of the mentee. The idea of a 'critical' friend implies that a judgement is being made. However, mentors are mostly trained to be non-judgemental and they can be uncomfortable with a more critical approach, preferring suspension of judgement as a better basis for helping mentees. Nevertheless, Clutterbuck's idea that the mentor is 'a friend' (1991, p. 5) was crucial to my research.

On the basis of my reading and experience, I generated a research design which would allow me to explore what mentors saw as the main features of mentoring, focusing on the B.E.A.T Programme in the West Midlands and a Doncaster Business Partnership, where mentoring operated across ten schools. Consequently, I wrote to the mentors requesting their participation by completing a semi-structured questionnaire. In total 185 questionnaires were completed by mentors on twelve sites. The questionnaires were anonymous but I collected information on the gender of mentor and mentee and the age of mentor.

I asked the following questions:

1. How would you describe your role as mentor?
2. Could you please state the activities you undertake?
3. What specific skills relating to mentoring were conveyed by your training?
4. Would you say the tasks undertaken could be described as, teaching, tutoring, counselling and/or coaching? If so, please describe how this applies.
5. Can you list concepts of mentoring you use and explain why they are applicable
6. What theoretical constructs are you using in your practice?
7. If you work to a definition of mentoring, please note it here.

8. What part do mentor and mentee play in defining goals, process and outcomes?

The BEAT Project circulated thirty-five anonymous questionnaires and fourteen (40%) were completed and returned. In this case, the average age of the mentors who responded was twenty seven years, seven of the mentors were men and seven women, while seven (50%) of the mentoring relationships were cross-gender.

Of the one hundred and fifty anonymous questionnaires sent out to mentors in Doncaster, only seventeen were returned. The average age of the mentors who responded was forty and fifteen of the seventeen relationships were single gender, i.e. eleven female mentors to eleven female mentees and four male mentors to male mentees (27%). In this case, the mentors were asked how they would describe their role, whether they used other skills like counselling or tutoring, what skills they had learnt from mentoring and whether they operated with some 'theory' of mentoring.

These questionnaires were complimented by two, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the Coordinators of the two projects intended to explore their views of what their mentors were undertaking in their role. The Coordinator of the Doncaster Business Education Partnership mentoring programme had been involved with the initiative since its inception in 1991 and was funded by National Development Funding. The coordinator of BEAT had succeeded me in September 1995. The Coordinators were asked open questions about how they saw the role of the mentor. The questions I put were:

1. What is it like being a mentor?
2. Can I ask you now what do you do?
3. Could you tell me please has being a mentor helped you?
4. Has it helped you to achieve any of your personal goals?
5. Can you say if it has enabled you to see the world in a different way and in what way?
6. Would you say then that it has made any difference in your life?

For the purpose of this study, I used a definition of the role of the BEAT (1996, p. 93) mentor as below:

The role of the B.E.A.T mentor is to help, guide and support a young person on a one to one basis.

Their application of a holistic approach allows mentors to not only recognise the complexity and interconnection of problems, but to consequently engage the young person in a non-judgemental, non-directive, person-centred way. This approach offers the young person the opportunity to shift their self –perceptions from negative to a more positive one in order to improve communication and motivation.

### **3.4 Results**

#### ***i) BEAT***

The Coordinator, who was also a mentor, as I had been, viewed the role of the mentors as involved supporting, advising, guiding, listening, networking, communicating, teaching and being non-judgemental, flexible, accessible and aware of different cultural issues, and operating as a ‘friend’. When asked about which mentoring concepts the mentors were utilising, the Coordinator’s response was that mentors take a person-centred approach, one in which effective communication increases the chances of a successful relationship and the process includes a level of social interaction. The mentors befriend, listen and support. In the Coordinator’s view, the predominant skills demonstrated by BEAT mentors involved counselling to enhance effective communication in relationships.

When asked about how they would describe their role, the fourteen Probation Community Mentors who completed the questionnaire responded:

- To be a role model
- To be honest, non-judgemental and treat your mentee with integrity
- To be a good friend
- To be a careers adviser
- To offer information, advice help and support
- To be a person who helps in the personal and professional development of the mentee
- ‘I would describe my role as a mentor working with my mentee on a person-centred and holistic basis. My main aim is to empower the person I am working with to bring out the best in him.’

These last two responses indicate that the theoretical constructs of the ‘Person Centred Approach’ (derived from Rogers’ Client, Centred Therapy 1967, p. 4) and the ‘Holistic Whole Person’ approach

(Gardiner, 1994, p. 47) has been absorbed into and utilized in practice. A common theme for mentor respondents (50%) was their view that the mentor role included being a 'friend'.

When mentors were asked in the questionnaire if they undertook teaching, tutoring, counselling and/or coaching, the single largest response (64%) was that all of these tasks were required of them at some stage of the relationship. However, 14% of respondents replied that they undertook none of these roles. Only 7.3% indicated that they undertook only counselling and a similar number said they were involved solely in coaching in their role as mentor. However, the largest proportion of respondents (78%) identified counselling as a mentoring activity.

Mentors were asked to identify other activities in which they were involved and mentioned:

- Assisting the securing of employment via the careers service
- Assisting in gaining educational training
- Befriending
- Giving support and guidance
- Advocating
- Negotiating
- Assisting in career choices
- Finding information
- Reviewing/discussing the next steps mentees could take
- Acting on mentee's concerns
- Assisting the mentee's decision making
- Giving advice
- Teaching
- Supporting
- Listening a lot
- Making weekly visits
- Form-filling
- Taking mentees to appointments i.e. open days, the job centre.
- Sharing experiences
- Responding to mentee's needs
- Encouraging
- Accompanying to court
- Being a friend

- Social activity

Mentors are clearly using a variety of skills/attributes to help them carry out their role. They also identified a range of skills/attributes they gained from undertaking their role, particularly, listening, understanding, communication, and friendship, honesty, adopting a non-judgemental approach, not making assumptions, coaching, interviewing, confidentiality, disclosure, counselling, reflection, review, negotiation, self-expression and the development of verbal and non-verbal skills. In addition, the mentors felt that their mentoring experience allowed them to develop realistic expectations of the mentee, life experience, a holistic perspective and a person-centred approach. They also claimed that they developed an understanding of the power relations involved in mentoring relationships, as well as dignity, integrity, a better use of body language, rapport building skills and knowledge of how to use facial expressions.

The mentors were asked to list the aspects of mentoring that they felt they used. Their responses included:

- A non-judgemental approach
- A holistic approach
- A person-centred approach
- Mutual empowerment
- Honesty
- Self-sufficiency
- Self – advocacy
- Befriending
- Common sense
- Flexibility
- Open mindedness
- Listening
- Reliability
- Evolutionary approach
- Barriers
- Trust
- Congruence
- Rapport



Finally, mentors were asked which, if any, theoretical constructs they utilised in their practice. Here, different mentors mentioned: Maslow's hierarchy of needs; Herzberg's focus upon motivation/hygiene factors; the person centred approach; and the holistic perspective.

## ***ii ) Doncaster Business Education Partnership***

The Doncaster Coordinator saw the role of the mentor as a facilitator, an enabler of personal development, a person who offered a safe relationship by providing unconditional regard, guidance and advice for mentees, allowing the mentee to set his/her agenda and own the relationship. In the Coordinator's view, the mentors needed to see their role as holistic nurturing and, above all, directed by the needs of the mentee. The mentor was described by the Coordinator as a sort of 'friend' who utilises the skills of enabling, facilitating, listening, counselling, advising and nurturing. Asked to give an overview of the mentor's role on this programme the Coordinator explained:

Mentoring can only be described in terms of the context within which it takes place at an individual level but what actually takes place is down to the individuals concerned....mentoring utilises the fundamental principles of counselling as the primary object of mentoring is the empowerment of the student.

The Coordinator also viewed coaching and tutoring skills as useful for a mentor. It was also his view that mentors should have a good psychosocial profile to be effective.

When the Doncaster mentors were asked how they described their role, their responses included:

- being an adult to whom the student can relate, not a member of the establishment, who can offer advice and encouragement on personal development
- be able to help the young person through a difficult stage in their life
- a listener and encourager,
- befriending,
- acting as a sounding board,
- a confidant,
- support, guidance, non-judgemental,
- being available,
- practical help,
- occasional intermediary,

- a guide.

When asked if they undertook teaching, tutoring, counselling and/or coaching, eighty two percent responded that they used counselling, six percent cited all of the roles, six percent identified none of the roles and six percent did not respond.

When asked for more details about what they did, the respondents cited talking and listening, guidance, help with reading and spelling, educational visits, talk on phone, social visits, interviewing the mentee, helping with job seeking, offering work placement, agreeing goals and assisting with the achievement of goals.

The mentors were asked in addition to say which skills they had developed from their role.

They identified:

- Communication
- Listening
- Guidance
- Loving
- Being non-judgemental
- Being sincere
- Being understanding
- Supportive
- Encouraging
- Open
- Honest
- Developing life experience
- Networker
- Empathetic

Another question the mentors were asked was to list aspects of mentoring that they were utilising and eleven answered that question, with nine citing listening, while other aspects identified were encouraging, confidence building, sharing, raising self esteem, developing the mentee and communication. Importantly here, fifty three percent cited friendship as important to their relationships.

However, when they were asked what theoretical constructs they used in mentoring nine gave no response, while one respondent said she was not sure what the question meant. One response was typical:

I am assuming that you want to know if I am working to a plan? The answer is no. I have a set of moral guide-lines and I work to them.

As we saw, the responses to this question from the BEAT mentors were much clearer. However, the question itself was not carefully enough worded to ensure a consistent response. In a similar vein, when asked to define mentoring fifteen of the mentors left this blank. The mentors were also asked to write freely any comments they had and here one mentor stated:

Mentoring is merely a community response to the problems of family breakdown. It provides the normal loving human support that could be received from the extended family.

### ***iii) Comparing the Case Studies***

The BEAT Project mentors appeared to have a more sophisticated view of mentoring in which their practice was underpinned by theoretical constructs and clearly understood concepts. The responses indicated that both schemes identify counselling as at the core of good mentoring. However, BEAT recognises that the role of teacher, tutor and coach can be adapted by the mentor when that is required by the mentee. Again, both schemes place friendship at the centre of good mentoring.

An aspect of mentoring flagged up by mentors and their coordinators is the need for socialisation of the mentee. This appears important for the development of the individual as mentee or mentor, being valued by all. The research suggests that this element of psycho-social development is being utilised to break barriers in what is a different and special type of relationship. Indeed, a mentor in Doncaster felt that mentoring was filling a sociological gap or need in Britain.

## **3.5 Summary of Results**

This initial study of mentoring, which examined the concept, theory and practice of mentoring in the probation/educational field (1996), suggested four conclusions that informed my further thinking of friendship mentoring. Firstly, I argued that mentoring had at its core a set of key attributes/skills, which are transferable across a range of roles such as, mentor, teacher, counsellor, coach and tutor.

Secondly, I suggested that, consequently, mentoring could be distinguished from other forms of 'helping' relationships.

Thirdly, I argued that mentoring relationships need to be better understood and that this could be based on the idea of mentoring as involving a professional friendship. Fourthly, that there was clear evidence that the mentoring was successful. Each of these conclusions deserves a brief exposition.

The key attributes/skills that I identified as core components of mentoring relationships clearly stem from the results reported earlier (Gardiner, 1996, p. 117). They were:

- Advocacy
- Negotiation
- Giving support
- Guidance
- Information giving
- Advice giving
- Teaching
- Listening
- Communicating
- Sharing-experiences
- Encouraging
- Motivating
- Identifying need
- Goal setting
- Networking, etc

This special type of friendship mentoring relationship has core components that distinguish it from other allied helping activities. It is a special relationship that is a one-to-one helping activity able to engender a high level of commitment and trust. It also requires a flexible that operates within clear boundaries, often including a set of professional regulations, in the context of a formal organisation, and it is bounded by the rules of friendship.

Unlike other allied activities, it involves flexible responses to mentee-driven needs which means changes in working practice where required. This is much less evident in the other activities of, teaching, coaching, counselling and tutoring. Here, contact tends to be appointment or by arrangement. At the same time, the mentor is not necessarily viewed as a professional inside that mentoring

relationship; rather they are viewed as a person. Of course, outside the relationship, they are likely to be, indeed should be, seen as a professional. The mentor's aim is to achieve 'professional objectivity', to assist the mentee in making a 'professional judgement' enabling them to achieve a new 'state of the person'.

So, for all these reasons, mentoring should not be viewed as coaching, tutoring, teaching or counselling, rather it is its own unique activity. Certainly, my earlier research suggested that mentors may use all these skills/attributes listed above, but they do so as a conscious, professional friend.

In that earlier research, I argued that a better understanding was needed because mentoring was not well understood and, as such, the practice of mentoring, and its relationship to associated activities, was often distorted and ineffective. At the same time, I emphasised that a more adequate understanding would enable an accessible, well-documented common view of what is involved in mentoring relationships and, to hopefully, improve the practice of mentoring. Reflecting on my findings, I suggested that teaching, tutoring, coaching and counselling are activities that were perceived by mentees as the type of activities utilised by a friend. Consequently, the mentor is perceived as a friend, even though s/he is, at the same time, a professional. In addition, my research indicated that 51.5% of the respondent mentors viewed friendship as an aspect of their mentoring relationships.

I suggested that mentoring was a diverse activity driven by the needs of the mentee and, crucially, that a form of 'conscious friendship' was at the conceptual core of mentoring relationships.

Mentoring might involve the mentor using the skills of a coach, counsellor, tutor or teacher, as and when called for by the mentee, but it is a distinctive discipline inside the umbrella of 'helping' strategies. To explain this I argued that the mentoring relationship is capable of utilising the professional approaches of teacher, tutor, coach and counsellor within its own activities. Indeed, I emphasised that mentoring should use these skills/attributes, as and when they are required in order to help the mentee bring about a change to improve his/her life chances.

The study of BEAT (Megginson and Clutterbuck pg56 1995) interestingly showed that the positive intervention of a mentor in the life of a young offender can lead to: a) the cessation of offending behaviour; and b) to the acquisition of employment, training or education.

While I found that social factors, particularly class, education and ethnicity, can work against a young persons' efforts to become economically active, mentors have the capacity to assist the young person to cease their criminal behaviour to achieve as much as they are capable of.

### 3.6 The Professional Friendship Concept

It was on the basis of this prior research, together with my critical reading of the existing mentoring literature, that I developed a step towards a mentoring model with my Professional Friendship construct<sup>6</sup> as I have outlined,

- Mentoring activities are usually one-to-one and may sometimes be of a small group size i.e. 1:2 or 3 maximum.
- Mentoring intervention is available as required and by negotiation
- The relationship is entered into voluntarily by both parties
- Matching of mentees is unprejudicial
- The relationship is for the purpose of achieving its stated goals
- The relationship is clearly understood by all those who need to know
- The holistic relationship provided is known as a professional friendship
- The relationship aims to be of mutual trust and respect

Based on the research, I identified a range of core components involved in a one-to-one mentorship relationship (see Table 3.1) and this, allows us to distinguish mentoring from other ‘helping’ activities. These activities need to be used flexibly by the mentor, especially given that there are different types of mentoring modes (formal & informal) and mentoring types (Probation, Education, etc). Nevertheless, as I shall argue below, all these activities can be subsumed under the term ‘professional friendship’, coined, but not developed, by Clutterbuck (1991).

As such, I suggest that the friendship mentoring relationship to some extent provides a framework for analysing and developing success in mentoring relationships. I argue this approach (professional

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<sup>6</sup> While my thinking was strongly informed by my original research it also built on earlier conceptual work, as should be clear from the discussion in the last chapter. However, I also drew on the work of Carl Rogers (1967) which is not discussed in that chapter. Rogers’ theory of client-centred counselling (1967, p. 226) had a clear influence on my person-centred mentoring approach, which emphasises the mentors’ use of genuineness, warmth and empathy. Rogers suggested that, if a certain type of relationship is provided, the other person will discover within them the capacity to use it for growth and change, so that personal development will occur. In short, he emphasised the importance of the ability to accept another individual for who, and what, s/he are at that moment. From this concept, I developed a holistic mentoring approach I utilised in all my subsequent mentor training.

friendship) has generality of application; for example, it could be used to benefit ex-offenders, women returning to the labour market or students at risk of being excluded from schools, etc.

Table 3.1 shows the extent to which the core components of professional friendship mentoring, as drawn from the mentee questionnaire responses, compared with counselling, teaching, tutoring, coaching and friendship. The key point here is that there is greatest similarity between mentoring and friendship.

**Table 3.1: Comparing Core Components**

Attribute/Skill	Mentoring	Counselling	Teaching	Tutoring	Coaching	Friendship
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share Experiences	✓					✓
Openness	✓	✓		✓		✓
Respect	✓	✓		✓		✓
Genuineness	✓	✓		✓		✓
Warmth	✓					✓
Honour	✓					✓
Support	✓				✓	✓
Non-Judgemental	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Empathy	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Acceptance	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Guidance				✓		✓

<b>Feedback</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Questioning</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Focusing</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Goal-Setting</b>	✓			✓	✓	
<b>Challenging</b>	✓				✓	
<b>Non-Directive</b>	✓	✓				
<b>Loyalty</b>	✓					✓
<b>Advocacy</b>	✓					✓
<b>Congruence</b>	✓					✓
<b>Understanding</b>	✓					✓
<b>Honesty</b>	✓					✓
<b>Rapport</b>	✓				✓	✓
<b>Awareness of Need</b>	✓					✓
<b>Shared Values</b>						✓
<b>Trust</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Confidentiality</b>	✓	✓				✓
<b>Intuition</b>	✓					✓
<b>Love</b>	✓					✓
<b>Advising</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓



<b>Encouraging</b>	✓		✓		✓	✓
<b>Motivating</b>	✓				✓	✓
<b>Accountability</b>	✓					
<b>Clear Boundaries</b>	✓					
<b>Reliable</b>	✓					✓
<b>Clarifying Aims</b>	✓		✓			
<b>Review/ Summarising</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Praise</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Negotiate</b>	✓	✓				✓

This Table (3.1) suggests there is a (generalised) set of core attributes/skills (components) utilised by mentors in their relationship(s) and that they are rooted in friendship. However, I further suggest that the relationship is characterised as being based on a professional and not a personal, friendship

**Table 3.2: Friendship in Mentoring**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Personal Friendship</b>	<b>Professional Friendship</b>	<b>Formal Mentoring</b>
<b>Reliable</b>		✓	✓
<b>Shares Feeling/Ideas</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Respects Me</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>They Are Supportive</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Is Loyal To Me</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Understands Me</b>		✓	✓
<b>Honest</b>		✓	✓

<b>Listens To Me</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>I Trust Them</b>		✓	✓
<b>They Trust Me</b>		✓	✓
<b>Cares</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Helps Me To Change</b>		✓	✓
<b>Is Usually Right</b>		✓	✓
<b>Allows Me To Make Up My Own Mind</b>		✓	✓
<b>Helps Me Understand Things</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Is Encouraging</b>		✓	✓
<b>Gets On With Me</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Speaks Up For Me</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Does The Right Thing</b>		✓	✓

Table 3.2 indicates that a professional friendship mentoring relationship involves the professionalisation of a type of 'friendship' and, as such, carries some expectations, which are likely to be absent in subjective, personal, friendships. Of course, such mentoring relationships will, to some extent, also be influenced, by the style of mentor. However, a professional friendship relationship involves a type of mentoring which is more robust and committed. For example, it is one in which mentors do not give up on, or fall out with, their mentee, but, rather, try to negotiate ways of 'getting on'.

The mentoring relationship is not dissimilar to the relationship between doctor and patient or priest and parishioner.

The mentor, like the doctor or priest, is acting in a professional manner that is with a sense of even-handedness and relative objectivity. The relationship also involves a contract, which makes it very different from personal friendship.

As I emphasised, the core components are rooted in the idea that mentoring involves a professional friendship relationship. My conceptualisation of this term is also based on the view that a mentoring relationship based upon 'professional friendship' is more likely to be a successful mentoring relationship. Understanding that mentoring involves a relationship is crucial. When I acted as mentor to a young offender (Stephen), I was conscious that the approach I needed to use was one that did not involve a power relationship.

In addition, our relationship became useful to both of us because a friendship relationship developed, which was based upon trust and the ability to get on with, and to respectfully listen to each other. It was a mutually beneficial, professional friendship in which we both developed.

However, professional friendship also involves a range of subjective processes, which, acting together, enhance the mentoring experience. This dichotomy of objectives and subjective indicates to me the relationship is charismatic i.e. that it involves 'caring'. As we saw in the last chapter, all formal mentoring relationships involve a contract, which may be written and recorded or verbal and tacit, that mainly covers the establishment of ground-rules and boundary setting.

If friendship is implicit in the mentoring contract, it should be a two-way process that is entered into freely and openly by the parties, so that the contract is an element of the mentoring friendship relationship. At different phases in a mentoring relationship the contract will be revisited and amended, because, given that, following Clutterbuck, I argue that mentoring is a lived experience leading to learning and change, then an on-going renegotiated contract is critical to the developmental processes which move the mentor and the mentee on.

My previous research (1998, p. 77) identified twenty-five core components of the professional friendship relationship and these are at the core of the mentoring activity and crucially impact on mentoring relationships.

Here I briefly outline them:

### ***i) Reliability***

For a relationship to develop, each party should expect the other to be reliable in their attitude and practice. This is particularly important in developing trust. The process used to develop the contract, which includes objective-setting, is a key stage at which mentor and mentee can demonstrate reliability to each other.

### ***ii) Openness***

In mentoring relationships, both parties need to be open to 'learning' and 'change'. Openness in the professional friendship allows for professional and personal growth which is essential if learning and change is to occur. I view; this is the basis of holistic mentoring. Learning about 'oneself' is implied within the mentoring relationship and growth is an outcome of that learning process, which, by necessity, involves change, because it brings about 'new states of the person' (Rogers, 1967). It is critical to the success of a good mentoring relationship that both the parties are open.

### ***iii) Sharing***

Sharing is a characteristic of 'friendship' that involves the sharing of experiences, knowledge, thoughts and feelings. In the mentoring friendship this is a contributory factor to the openness for the learning process.

### ***iv) Respect***

Respect in friendship is about treating or regarding the other party with understanding, esteem and honour. To show respect as a friend or mentor is based on a demonstration of consideration for the other party. This can involve voicing respect, but it can equally mean paying attention-using active/respectful listening skills or utilising non-verbal signalling.

### ***v) Genuineness***

Carl Rogers (1967) developed 'Client Centred Counselling' theory which emphasises personal growth through the development of a special kind of human relationship. He argued that relationships are characterised by what he calls 'genuineness', which to him involves a transparent approach in which 'one's real feelings' are displayed. In the context of the mentoring friendship this is about giving the other party access to your 'authentic' self.

### ***vi) Warmth***

Rogers (1967) defines warmth as an: 'acceptance of prizing the other person as a separate individual'. Warmth in the mentoring friendship may be expressed through facial expression and verbal and non-verbal language and communication. In the context of the professional friendship, the demonstration of warmth from the mentor to the mentee, or vice versa, may act as a form of reassurance or acceptance. The demonstration of warmth to the other person can contribute to the quality of the friendship relationship and the equalisation of the personal power bases. In this way, warmth can help to nurture the self-esteem of the receiver.

### ***viii) Honour***

This is the old-fashioned notion which involves the idea that one party would never deliberately do anything that might hurt the other. Honour is clearly linked to respect.

### ***ix) Support***

A friendship is likely to last longer depending upon the level, type and amount of support offered and received. As one of the purposes of a mentoring relationship is to help, the visibility of support is crucial. The relationship may well depend on it and be the reason for its existence and continuance.

Clutterbuck (1991) suggests that the support offered by mentors is emotional, intellectual and practical. As the relationship is a two-way process, support may be reciprocated and, thus, contribute to the longevity of the friendship.

#### ***x) Being Non-Judgemental***

As we saw, Hamilton (1993) suggested that the mentoring relationship is one of ‘non-judgemental friendship’. This implies that, if we judge our friends, we may be creating a barrier to the support and help that is needed. This is an important component of the mentoring friendship relationship, because, without it, trust could be weakened, undermined or lost.

#### ***xi) Empathy***

According to Rogers (1961), empathy is: ‘a sensitive ability to see the other’s world as he sees it’. He also suggests (1967, p. 33 that:

If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within himself the capacity to use the relationship for growth and change, and personal development will occur.

Rogers’ emphasised the need to accept another individual for whom and what they are at that moment in time. He called the ability to do this ‘unconditional acceptance of regard for the other person’.

This is a set of theoretical constructs that, together, Rogers termed ‘the person centred approach.’ His approach has been adopted as an underpinning philosophy in some fields of work with ‘friendship’ mentoring relationships, in particular, in the B.E.A.T, Project (1995). Alongside of this there some other components that are associated with friendship are implied, such as being non – judgemental and non-directive. These are also elements of acceptance assisting empathy to be more easily attained.

#### ***xii) Challenge***

Where the parties involved in the friendship feel able to challenge each other they are helping to develop a greater sense of openness, honesty, and thus trust, within the relationship. This process helps to facilitate the learning, changing and moving-on processes. Because the relationship is valued and meaningful the challenging is received in a non-threatening way.

#### ***xiii) Being Non-Directive***

It is important to recognise that neither the mentor, nor the mentee, should have power over the other in the relationship and that the mentor, or indeed the mentee, demonstrates a directive approach, as

then they are working against the process of empowerment, which is the goal of the relationship. On this basis, the friendship as a core component of mentoring enables the mentee to make her/his own decisions and to take responsibility for her/his own actions.

#### ***xiv) Loyalty***

Loyalty is often valued in relationships and is often implied within the mentoring contract. In the mentoring friendship, it refers to an allegiance to the other involved. Subsumed within this quality may be others such as dependability, reliability and trustworthiness.

#### ***xv) Advocacy***

Advocacy involves the active support of another. This should not be understood to apply only to the mentor. The two-way nature of the mentoring relationship means that the mentee may choose to reciprocate the support. The point here is that support can come in many forms, for example offering backing for a decision made, or giving encouragement to the mentor.

#### ***xvi) Congruence***

Congruence in mentoring, develops as the friendship develops. This smoothes the development of compatibility and harmony between mentor and mentee.

#### ***xvii) Understanding***

To have understanding within the friendship requires tolerance and patience. Greater understanding can be encouraged through developing empathy. In its literal interpretation, 'understanding' involves knowing and comprehending the nature or meaning of the other party. This can be made easier by the person-centred approach allowing the parties to accept each other with warmth and ease. In turn, this helps the mentor/mentee to begin to understand things from the other's perspective. Such understanding is always shaped by the person's own experience which, in itself, may be similar to, or different from, the other party's experiences.

#### ***xviii) Honesty***

Honesty allows a two-way commitment to grow, because it is essential for the development of trust. In addition, it clearly relates to openness within the relationship.

#### ***xix) Rapport***

The development of an initial rapport, and crucially its maintenance, are important for the good of a relationship. If rapport is lost, there may be no reason to continue the friendship.

Without rapport, openness, trust and other elements of the relationship may wither. Maintenance of rapport is important to the development of trust and encourages the parties to be both relaxed and responsive within the relationship. The building of rapport involves the components of trust, focus, empathy, congruence and empowerment (Clutterbuck 1991).

#### ***xx) Active Listening***

This is a particularly valued element of the professional friendship model. It is demonstrated by showing interest through the use of words and non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expression and eye contact. It is likely to be the most used and practiced activity in the relationship.

#### ***xxi) Awareness of Need***

As part of the original 'contract of friendship', the parties need to make each other aware of their needs. Each party has initially to assess whether or not these needs are likely to be fulfilled in the mentoring relationship. On this basis, the relationship may, or may not, proceed. When the needs cease to be met the relationship will wane as it loses its sense of purpose.

#### ***xxii) Shared Values***

The matching of mentors to mentees can be problematical, but, where it is possible to match their values, failure in the relationship is less likely. Shared values can be a positive motivator in the relationship, because they are likely to facilitate trust. If values are shared, empathy occurs more easily as does the encouragement of honesty and openness.

Sharing values adds to the confidence and sense of belief in one another, because sharing something, which is important to self-worth, increases perceived self-worth.

#### ***xxiii) Trust***

Trust in any relationship can be implied, but is often expected as an outcome. If trust does not develop, it is unlikely that any of the other complementary components of a professional friendship mentoring relationship will appear. Trust in this context can be taken to mean the trusting of self, as well as of others.

#### ***xxiv) Confidentiality***

Inside a formal mentoring relationship confidentiality may refer to 'institutional confidentiality', rather than the absolute confidentiality which may be expected in informal relationships. Within the formal mentoring friendship relationship, confidentiality involves trust, openness and honesty.

Its boundaries or interpretations should always be made clear at the contract-making stage. Confidentiality, as defined in the contract, should obviously not be broken, otherwise the relationship is likely to collapse.

#### ***xxv) Intuition***

Positive mentoring relationships based on friendship can develop intuitively as can other types of relationships. If this is to occur, the parties are likely to have developed the relationship to a stage where they know each other deeply and have a high degree of integrity and trust.

#### ***xxvi) Caring***

In friendships, 'caring' is the demonstration of regard, concern and consideration and is a core integral component of a good mentoring friendship relationship.

#### ***Reflections***

It is clear that these components are not discreet, but rather are highly interrelated. At the same time, not all of the components are necessarily found at the same time to be all together in each successful mentoring relationship.

However, I found that they are the components of mentoring relationships and this needs to be considered within and before a mentoring contract is drawn up. In addition, these are the factors that will affect the degree of success of in a mentoring relationship. I argue that considering the extent that these are core components of Professional Friendship provides a better understanding of mentoring relationships not only by learning mentors, but potentially more widely in the general field of mentoring.

### **3.7 More Recent Reflections on Professional Friendship**

Since undertaking my earlier research and developing the Professional Friendship concept I have continued to work in the mentoring field and been involved in research, even before undertaking this PhD. In reflecting on my experience and my reading of the literature published in the last decade, I have come to focus most heavily on that one issue mentioned above: to what the extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships?

At around the time I was developing my concept of professional friendship, Glynn Kirkam (1995, p. 76), considering my work, argued, that I, like he, emphasised the mutual benefits derived from mentoring. He quoted from my contribution to a Television programme celebrating the beginning of Adult Learners Week:



Mentoring is very much a two-way relationship. I recognise through the process that not only Stephen (the mentee) was developing confidence but so was I. The other thing that I was conscious of learning was that I was really able to develop my listening skills. Because there is a difference between listening and actively listening to what someone is saying to you, taking it on board and throwing it back to the individual. (15<sup>th</sup> May 1995, Channel 4 Television, *Consenting Adults: Making the Most of Mentoring*)

Kirkam's interest was in the need for new school leaders to develop a more enlightened view of mentoring. As such, he observed that Daresh and Playko identified: 'several fundamental differences between the role of teacher and administrator (Head teacher).' Consequently, Kirkam suggested that it was crucial to apply the same mentoring approach to both Newly Qualified Teachers and newly appointed Head Teachers. Here, Kirkam may have been suggesting that there are some common skills, such as listening and other 'interpersonal skills', involved in mentoring processes, but, if he was, then that insight remains under developed. However, his argument increasingly resonated with my lived experience of the need for common understandings of what core processes, skills and attributes may be operating.

In a similar vein, Colley (2003, p. 102) also implies that mentoring skills are commonly referred to as interpersonal and transferable, arguing that:

Employers, for example, have been willing to allow their staff time to volunteer for industrial mentoring in schools, in part because of the transferable skills it is thought to develop in mentors themselves. Gardiner (1995) produces a far longer list of benefits for mentors....in her study of the *BEAT* project, an engagement mentoring scheme for young offenders...

Cruddas (2006, p. 23) is another who sees mentoring skills as generalised, although she is more specific about the importance of friendship in the specific case of Learning Mentoring. Cruddas who presents a range of Learning Mentor case studies, argues:

The case studies in this report need to be viewed in the broader context of the range of other opportunities that schools may be developing to involve young people. In some schools, learning mentors have developed leadership roles in this area of work.

Clearly, Cruddas' case studies indicate learning mentors are undertaking a professional friendship relationship, so, I take comfort from the fact that it is not only my work which focuses on this point.

#### *Further Reflections*

Over time then, and based on both my reading and my lived experience, it became clear to me that there were common core components both of skills and attributes involved in mentoring and that these needed to be identified. More crucially, it seemed to me that my ideas about Professional Friendship being a range of core components involving skills and attributes would be seen as was a good starting point for testing this out with learning mentors. Such a test could identify how mentoring processes work and, thus, enhance the mentoring experience to help ensure that it improves the life chances of those in particular that are socially excluded. Here, the key concern of this research is to examine the extent to which the Professional Friendship is a core component of successful learning mentor relationships to help understand their case. Of course, in doing this, I also hope to suggest improvements to the concept.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I outlined my concept of Professional Friendship, showing how it was developed and relates to both the previous literature on friendship and professional friendship in mentoring and the literature that acknowledges mentoring as a relationship. I briefly described my previous work and more recent reflections on this that revolve around to what extent professional friendship is a core component of successful mentoring. In the rest of this thesis my aim is to assess the utility of the Professional Friendship components to help us understand the role of the Learning Mentor. In essence, I pose two questions.

- To what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships and which can be applied to Learning Mentors?
- How can the Professional Friendship Model be improved, given my new empirical research?

## **SECTION TWO: RESEARCH DATA ANALYSED**

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

My previous research showed that in probation and educational mentoring there is an aspect of friendship at work in these relationships. From this I constructed a concept of Professional Friendship, (Gardiner 1998, p. 77). To test this out I turn to the case of the Learning Mentor. The hypothesis for this thesis is: to what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships?

To test my hypothesis, and help address resolve the problem, I firstly undertook a literature search. I needed to know what is friendship, what is a professional friendship, and what does success in mentoring relationships look like? These are considered mainly in chapter two. . The literature search is one of five methods in my methodology design.

### **4.1 Framing the Problem**

To address this problem I considered the range of methods I might need to use for my methodology. Basically, I want to better understand of the role of Learning Mentors who are a key feature of the current educational scene, in the context of the field of mentoring. This is to benefit educators, academics, policy makers and, indeed, Learning Mentors themselves. This research intends to give them a voice, given that their role is poorly understood.

However, it is important for me to re-emphasise that I view mentoring has a range of core components (Professional Friendship) rooted in a one-to-one developmental relationship, so I cannot prioritise the view of either the Learning Mentors or the Learning Mentees. Consequently, my empirical research is designed to answer more questions to further help identify success in mentoring relationships:

- How do Learning Mentees experience and evaluate the mentoring relationship?
- How do Learning Mentors experience and evaluate the mentoring relationship?

I begin initially with a discussion of how my epistemology shapes my methodology, before turning to the other, particular methods I used and how I collected the data. Subsequently, I discuss the ethical issues involved in this research, then, finally, address the issue of reflexivity and summarise my methods.

## **4.2 From Epistemology to Methodology**

Before, outlining the research I undertook, it is important that I briefly discuss my epistemological position because this clearly influenced both the research I undertook and my interpretation of the results. In epistemological terms, I am a social constructivist. I hold the position of non-positivist, feminist, interpreter.

Unlike positivists, I don't believe that, if one uses appropriate methods effectively, researchers have a privileged access to a 'real' world. Rather, knowledge of the world is made up through social communication. As such, I acknowledge the crucial importance of the double hermeneutic. I view, that the best that a researcher can hope to achieve is her understanding (the second level of the hermeneutic) of her respondents' understandings of the world (the first level of the hermeneutic). Consequently, as a reflexive social scientist, I ask my respondents to share their subjective perspectives about the mentoring experience, which I then interpret. This position has three clear methodological implications.

- It tends to point towards qualitative data that offers a deeper understanding of both respondents' experiences and the meanings that they attach to their actions. As Burns (2000, p. 11) argues, qualitative forms of investigation tend to be based on a recognition of the importance of the subjective, experiential, 'lifeworld' of human beings. In addition, as others also argue, qualitative research is best used as a way of understanding people and their behaviour.
- It places great emphasis on reflexivity, given that I am the researcher, my understandings are likely to be partial in both senses of the word. It tends to point towards qualitative, rather than quantitative, data, because it allows for a deeper insight into respondents' understandings of the world. As Cresswell argues (2003, p.182), following Wolcott (1994):

Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data. This includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analysing data for themes or categories and finally making an interpretation or

drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned and offering further questions to be asked.

It also means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific socio-political and historical moment. One cannot escape the personal interpretation brought to qualitative data analysis.

In this case, reflexivity is even more important given my role in the study and practice of mentoring.

- The use of qualitative data means that I cannot make generalisations from my study, both because I do not have a representative sample of Learning Mentors and because I recognise that any interpretation of my data is shaped by my own understandings and experiences. In other words, I don't accept a positivist notion of objectivity.

### **4.3 Methods and Data**

When I began this research (as opposed to my previous research where I was employed by National Probation in the West Midlands), I worked as a Learning Mentor Coordinator for a large West Midlands Education Service (previously known as the Local Authority). In my work, and for this research, I had the opportunity to share in the every-day experiences of Learning Mentors, particularly those in Secondary Schools and I return to that point below. However, it also gave me privileged access to a sample. In many ways, given that I argue strongly that mentoring is a relationship, a two-way experience, it would have been best to study mentoring pairs, by observing their sessions. Unfortunately, this was not possible for obvious reasons; it would have violated the confidentiality of the relationship. Privacy is a critical aspect of the setting for mentoring and intrusion into a one-to-one mentoring session is not possible because it risks damaging trust in the relationship. Trust on the part of both parties is necessary for mentoring to be successful.

My data comes from five sources:

- A systematic literature search
- A mentee questionnaire
- Learning mentor and learning mentee Case Studies
- A set of 15 semi-structured interviews with mentors;
- My Lived Experience.

Here, I begin with a brief discussion of my broad methodological choices before discussing each of my data sources in turn.

### ***i) Initial Methodological Choices***

I chose to use both questionnaires (with learning mentees) and one-to-one, semi-structured tape recorded interviews (with learning mentors) in this research. Of course, it is common to identify the first as quantitative and the second as qualitative, but in this case at least, such a distinction seems of limited utility.

The questionnaires I used were not administered to a representative sample of either learning mentees generally, or learning mentees in the West Midlands Education Service particularly, so I could not generalise my results. However, that wasn't my aim; rather I wanted to explore how these mentees experienced the successful mentoring relationship. In fact, I used questionnaires only because there were significant practical and ethical problems involved in interviewing the younger children; issues I return to below.

This mixed-method, or triangulation, of data sources allowed me to collect information from both parties and, of course, the differences between the interpretations of the mentoring experience by mentees and mentors are of particular interest to me. Certainly, collecting data from different sources, using different techniques, adds depth to my understanding of the issues involved in mentoring (Flick, 2002, p. 265).

The first step in my research process was to establish access to members of the successful mentoring relationships. Initially, I wrote to each Head Teacher in the, then, ninety two secondary schools in the Educational Service seeking permission to carry out the study. Unfortunately, I only received two replies. Consequently, I pursued Head Teachers via telephone or face-to-face meetings. In addition, I met with their Learning Mentors to explain in greater depth what the research was about and why it was important. After several months of work, twenty-five schools agreed to participate after I ensured that schools, their staff and respondents would be anonymous. At this point the response rate of schools in the Educational Service was 27%.

The size and characteristics of the schools varied from those with a pupil role of a few hundred, in the case of the Special schools and the Primary school, to one school with approximately 1, 600 pupils. Two were special schools with pupils aged 11 to 19 years, both situated outside the central area, one to

the south and one to the north. Two other schools were single sex, girl's schools and one a single sex boy's school, where the pupils' ages ranged from 11-19. A further five schools were large inner city comprehensives with a mainly ethnic minority population, ranging between 75% -95%. Although some had a sixth form cohort, some did not. In all, five of the schools were faith-based Catholic schools located in various areas around the Service and, of the other ten schools, one was an Infant/Junior school close to the centre, eight were situated in the leafy suburbs and were grant-maintained, rather than state-maintained, schools.

## ***ii) The Mentee Questionnaire***

It did not prove possible to interview Learning Mentees for two reasons. First, and more prosaically, when student mentees were in school, they were involved in lessons in the classroom and so it was not possible to get interview time with them. Secondly, the Data Protection Act requires parental, informed consent for direct contact with students under eighteen who take part in research in a school. As such, using a questionnaire to access anonymously the experiences of Learning Mentees under the age of eighteen was a more realistic option than attempting to get written, parental, informed consent from over 200 parents for mentees to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis for this study.

In addition, in my role as Learning Mentor Coordinator, I was able to get help from Learning Mentors. They were able to access mentees outside the classroom and ask them to complete the questionnaires.

The aim of the two-part questionnaire, which is reproduced in Appendix 1 (page 219), was to gather information about how the Learning Mentee viewed her/his learning mentor. As such, I reflected on a range of possible questions designed to explore the mentees' views and, in particular, to establish whether respondents saw mentors as friends and what qualities they valued most in their mentors and saw as the most important elements of the relationship. In the second part of the questionnaire I asked the mentees about their feelings on mentoring. For example, I asked what they liked about it and to what extent, and in what way, they saw mentoring as the same as, or different from, 'friendship'. I constructed the questionnaire in order to address the question: how do mentees experience and evaluate the mentoring relationship and what factors tend to lead to successful mentoring outcomes?

For example, I asked about what learning mentees liked about mentoring and why. I also asked if it was a similar or different relationship to other types of relationships. In addition, I listed the elements of my model to establish if they perceived the mentoring relationship as including elements of a professional friendship. Then, once I had decided on the wording and what questions to include, I pre-tested the questionnaire to check whether the questions were clearly understood.



To do this I arranged a small pilot in which two teenagers who had been informally mentored to answered the questions. They suggested that I use simpler language and introduce graphics to make it easier and more interesting, to read and complete. I adjusted the questions and the format as a result of their comments and suggestions.

In the final study, the students surveyed were aged between eight to eighteen year olds. I am not aware of any pupils having difficulty in answering the questionnaire. Certainly, this was not something reported back to me by the learning mentors or teachers who distributed the questionnaires to the pupils. The actual questions asked are found below in Appendix 1.

The questionnaires were distributed to teachers and learning mentors via an internal schools' mailing system. In addition, it was posted on the Education Service website. In all, two hundred and thirteen questionnaires were returned. Two hundred and eleven of these were collected from schools in the West Midlands, while there was one internet response from a primary school in the West Midlands and one internet response from a primary school in Rotherham. Of these one hundred and nine were from male mentees (51%) and eighty five from female mentees (39%), with seventeen not completing the question about gender (10%).

### ***iii) The Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee case studies.***

I had regular contact in my day-to-day work with Learning Mentors and this allowed me to request examples of their own individual case studies. I received ten, anonymised, case studies; nine provided by the Learning Mentors and one by a Learning Mentee who forwarded it to me via their learning mentor. These case studies allow me to drill down deeper into the perceptions of the Learning Mentor role from their direct practice and they help me access how Learning Mentors experience and evaluate their mentoring relationship?

These Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee case studies came from schools where permission was given to the Learning Mentors to disclose the data. I am only able to report learning mentor gender because, in view of the schools, to disclose ethnicity and age would be unethical.

### ***iv) The Interviews with Learning Mentors***

To help me obtain high quality information, my aim was to encourage Learning Mentors to speak freely about their experiences. I wanted Learning Mentors to tell me, in their own words, what they do, so that I, and indeed they, can make sense of their own experiences of their world(s) (Bryman 2001).

I choose semi-structured interviews for this purpose and used open-ended questions to gather richer information. As such, I undertook fifteen in-depth semi-structured, tape-recorded, interviews with practicing Learning Mentors. All fifteen Learning Mentors taking part were full-time, paid professionals practicing in schools. Of that number, nine were female and six male.

One third of the Learning Mentors were from ethnic minorities and they were aged between twenty-five and sixty four years. Each interview lasted at least one hour, although some of them were longer.

The interviews focused on one main question: What factors tend to lead to successful mentoring outcomes? This single question was supplemented, when necessary, to encourage Learning Mentors to speak freely and to allow them to fully explore their perceptions of their work.

In particular, I wanted to know what, in their view, what they did that made the relationship valuable to the mentee and, if it were the case, to them also. In addition, I was keen to develop further my understanding of their role. So, when, and if, they mentioned core components involved in professional friendship, I added supplementary questions to probe that answer to better understand their use of the core components of the professional friendships.

#### ***v) My Lived Experience***

As a mentoring activist, my experience is broad and varied. For example, I have led, managed and coordinated mentoring schemes in a range of contexts, including Further Education (at Bilston College), Probation (West Midlands), Education (a large and a small Education Service in the West Midlands) and Business (The Jamie Oliver 15 Foundation). In these jobs, I have recruited, selected and trained and supported mentors. I have also been mentored and have acted and act as mentor to a number of children, young people and adults. In addition, I have studied and researched mentoring over the period since 1992. Finally, I have been what I would term an advocate practitioner in the field. In this role, I have taken part in TV and Radio programmes and have written about aspects of my work in three books on mentoring:

- 1.) Megginson, D. and Clutterbuck, D. (1995), *Mentoring in Action* (Kogan Page). This is a practical guide for managers and I contributed Chapter Two '*A Case Study. The BEAT project for young offenders in Birmingham*', Gardiner (1995, p. 44).
- 2.) Clutterbuck, D. and Ragins, B. R. (2002), *Mentoring and Diversity: An International Perspective* (Butterworth Heinemann). Here, I contributed Chapter Nine '*Organisational Case Studies- The Probation Service: a Congruent Mentoring Network*', Gardiner (2002, p. 227).

3.) Megginson, D. Clutterbuck, D. Garvey, R. Stokes, P. and Garrett-Harris, R. (2006), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *Mentoring in Action: a Practical Guide* (Kogan Page). Here I contributed Part Two: '*Organisational Cases, The Learning Mentor*' Gardiner, (2006, p. 56).

In addition, my work is referenced by a growing number in the field, for example:

- 1.) Rhodes, C. and Beneicke, S. (2002), Challenges for the management of teacher professional development in schools (Journal of In – Service Education. Coaching, Mentoring and Peer-networking).
- 2.) Colley, H. (2003), *Mentoring for Social Inclusion*, a critical approach to nurturing mentor relationships (Routledge Falmer).
- 3.) Kirkham, G. (1995), *Headlamp and the need for an enlightened view of mentoring for new school leaders*. (Journal of Educational Administration. Manchester Metropolitan University)
- 4.) Clutterbuck, D. (2004), 4<sup>th</sup> edition. *Everyone Needs a Mentor. Fostering talent in your organisation* (CIPD).
- 5.) Gardiner, C. and Gordon, V. (2000), *The Mentoring Pocketbook for National Probation*, West Midlands.

This was by invitation of the Chief Officer who provided the forward.

- 6.) Gardiner, C. (2004), *The Learning Mentor Toolkit* (Walsall Education Service). Again this was at the request of the Chief Officer.

I have also given presentations on my work at local, region, National and International Conferences. One example is: Gardiner, C. (2000), '*Mentoring in the West Midlands Probation Service and a Large West Midlands Education Service*', (paper presented at the Seventh European Mentoring Conference held in Cambridge, U.K). I am also a board member of the national charitable mentoring agency: The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, which is funded by government.

This research relates to my lived experience in two main ways. First, this work builds on my previous role as the Regional Mentoring Development Officer in the National Probation Service, West Midlands and the model of mentoring that I developed out of that work. Indeed, this earlier experience was critical in developing my concept. Second, it was rooted in my work and experience as Coordinator of a new national innovation to provide Learning Mentors in both a large and a small Education Service in a number of West Midland's schools. As such, the research allowed me to build upon and develop my understanding of mentoring.

Obviously, I gained direct ‘lived experience’ of Learning Mentors in their every-day settings whilst in my role(s) as a Learning Mentor Coordinator both at the large and the small education services in the West Midlands. Whilst in this role at the large Education Service I carried out a SWOT Analysis with Learning Mentors as found in chapter two which I used to help me better understand their role.

A SWOT analysis is an American business technique useful for analysing problems, credited to Albert Humphrey who led a research project at Stanford University in the 1960s and 1970s using the technique to analyse data from five hundred companies)

This role gave me privileged access to the perceptions of Learning Mentors, who experience ‘mentoring’, as, indeed, I still do in my everyday mentoring life. I shared the experience as their researcher, recorder and mentor. Certainly, this meant I was empathetic with Learning Mentors who act as role models to Learning Mentees and who often mirror their Learning Mentors’ observed behaviours. However, the role I play as researcher is not as a participant observer, but as a reflexive social scientist, because I recognise that I need to establish some distance from my respondents by being reflexive, an issue I return to below.

As such, throughout the whole of this enquiry this aspect of my research method is ever-present; I am constantly drawing upon my own lived experience as a Mentoring activist. My experiences clearly strongly influence my research and need to be recognised and acknowledged as a major strand of my method; they are a crucial data source. In particular, I utilised my notes and records from training sessions with Learning Mentors.

My reflections on these training sessions are used throughout the study including for the SWOT analysis. This is important because what the Learning Mentors said and did in these training sessions was shaped, at least in part, by their understanding(s) of their social world(s). Through communicating what they did to me, they were also helping to make sense of their own experiences of their world(s) (Bryman 2001).

I gathered data in the form of records of my activities with Learning Mentors, such as the SWOT analysis, case studies and evaluations. We met regularly, every second Wednesday morning, in the large Education Service. In the smaller education service, I trained and developed Learning Mentors weekly for the first academic term, again for a morning a week. This helped the whole of the Learning Mentor cohort to share a common understanding of their role, to the benefit of their Learning Mentees and their schools.

Schools received a coherent, coordinated Learning Mentor service, consistent with the requirements of the Department of Education. This was an extremely difficult task in such a large Education Service,

because, in some cases, Learning Mentors began to take up posts before the start of my employment. In my final report to the Education Service I recommended the Learning Mentor cohort divide into six cluster groups supported by one of the schools Learning Mentor in each cluster.

My intention was to create a team of six lead Learning Mentors with a lead Learning Mentor as their team Coordinator. The recommendation were approved and put into practice on my departure in 2001.

## **4.4 Ethical Issues**

A range of ethical issues are ever-present in my research. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council is established to promote best practice and ensure that the highest possible ethical standards are maintained in mentoring relationships. To me, the context of this ethical code is important as it directly relates to mentoring practice.

Of course, the code itself acknowledges the dignity of all humanity and expects those involved to conduct themselves in ways that respect diversity and promote equal opportunities.

Here, the Mentor has primary responsibility under this code to provide the best possible service and to act in such a way as not to cause any harm to Mentees as clients or to sponsors. This commits the Mentor to function from a position of dignity, autonomy and personal responsibility. The code covers:

- Competence
- Context
- Boundary management
- Integrity
- Professionalism.

Breaches of this code will automatically require the member to follow the appropriate procedures. However, my own mentoring experience tells me there are wider issues that should be included in this code. For example, guidelines are needed on:

- Confidentiality
- Disclosure
- Values
- Goodness and rightness
- Justice and fairness
- Trust
- Truth telling/honesty

For a broader perspective, I followed the British Sociological Association's (BSA) ethical guidelines in this research.

Consequently, I have taken responsibility for both safeguarding the proper interests of the schools, Learning Mentors and Learning Mentees and reporting the findings accurately and truthfully. In doing this I have taken into account the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act and copyright and libel laws. I have chosen techniques for undertaking my research which are appropriate and clear about the limits of my involvement with this study. Prior to undertaking this study, I have taken into consideration issues of safety at the design and conduct stage of this project in order to reduce risks, including to myself.

Again, in line with guidance, I have taken responsibility to ensure the physical, social and psychological well-being of the participants in my research, so that they have not been adversely affected by it. I have used my integrity and trust to dispel perceived disparities of power and status by ensuring the participants have given informed consent freely to me.

All participants had the right to refuse to take part or object and the purpose for which the data would be used was made clear in discussion with participants.

In particular, I ensured they understood their rights under the relevant legislation. All of the participants in the tape-recorded interviews were also offered feedback and, in some cases, this was requested. However, at all times I was tasked with retaining and protecting confidentiality and anonymity, which I did.

From my social constructivist position, all researchers are partial, in that they have a particular knowledge and interpret their results in ways that reflect their own experience. In my case, my own lived experience as a mentor adds another level, given I am studying mentors. As such, for me, reflexivity is a crucial research tool, given my epistemological position, my own experiences and my research questions.

## **4.5 Reflexivity**

In this research anonymity and confidentiality, especially in regard to schools, the Learning Mentors and the Learning Mentees, are key concerns. At the request of the school and/or the individual Learning mentors, I have guaranteed anonymity to those parties taking part to ensure that it is not

possible to link any Learning Mentor to a particular school. In addition, it is not possible to recognise any of the respondents, either from the Learning Mentee questionnaires or the Learning Mentor interviews. To maintain the anonymity of that school, I coded each school numerically. I also allocated a number, rather than an alias, to each Learning Mentor I interviewed. In addition, Learning Mentors were asked not to use the names of their Learning Mentees when speaking on the tapes.

Throughout my work life I have immersed myself in the field of mentoring. Of course, the depth of understanding I gained is extremely useful and is reflected throughout this thesis. However, it also means that my experiences have affected my research interpretations. As such, I needed both to reflect on the research process (Travers 2001) and to assess how far, and in what way, my interpretations of the data were affected by my experiences.

The basic dilemma is clear here. My own experience makes it easier for me to understand the complex activities involved in mentoring. However, at the same time, that experience affects my interpretations of my respondents' experiences. There is no easy way out of this dilemma. All I can do is acknowledge the problem and be reflexive throughout the research process. I will return to this issue after I have presented the data to address the question; how might my experiences have affected my interpretation?

## **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I designed and considered the use of the following sources of data:

- The systematic literature search
- The learning mentee questionnaires
- The learning mentor and learning mentee case studies
- The learning mentor interviews
- My lived experience

I used the methods, to link the literature search to my theoretical construct of professional friendship. Then, I gained access to successful mentoring relationships and tested out to what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships with Learning Mentors in semi-structured interviews at their schools. I further tested the perceptions of Learning Mentees via

questionnaires and I used case studies of relationships and my lived experience and use of reflexivity to help me validate the case. In this chapter I also considered ethical issues.

In the following two chapters, Five and Six, I present that collected data and consider to what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **TESTING THE UTILITY OF THE CONCEPT, PART 1**

The aim of Chapters Five and Six is to assess the utility of the concepts' core components of professional friendship in mentoring relationships. For this, I use three sources of data: first, the responses to the questionnaire completed by a group of Learning Mentees; second, the more detailed case studies of one to one mentoring relationships, also drawn from the schools in the Midlands where I undertook the research; and, finally, the qualitative data from fifteen semi-structured interviews with practicing Learning Mentors. More broadly, here, as throughout this thesis, I draw upon my own literature search and experience of mentoring. In particular, I have come to focus most heavily on one issue, the extent to which professional friendship utilizes a set of core components in the mentoring relationships of the Learning Mentors and Learning Mentees.

Chapter five is divided into two substantive sections. In the first section, I report the results of the questionnaire administered to Learning Mentees and in the second section I examine the case studies.

#### **5.1 The Learning Mentee Survey**

As I explained in the previous chapter, because access to Learning Mentee views is difficult, I have used a questionnaire, rather than interviews or observation. In this first section, I report the results from this questionnaire administered to Learning Mentees. The survey was designed to collect Learning Mentees' learning mentoring experiences and, particularly, to explore their perceptions of the role of the Learning Mentor in schools. My broad aim was to see whether the core components Professional Friendship have resonance with the experiences of my respondents.

The Learning Mentees' questionnaire included both closed and open questions. (The actual questions asked are included in Appendix 1). Here, I outline the Learning Mentees responses to the close-ended questions before turning to their responses to the open-ended questions.

### **i) *The Closed Questions***

Given that the issue of age (as well as other) imbalances between mentors and mentees has been raised in the literature (see Chapter 1), I was interested to identify the age of mentors and mentees.

As such, all the Learning Mentees were originally asked to give their own age as well as that of their Learning Mentor in the questionnaire. However, some Learning Mentees may not have known the age of their Learning Mentor and others simply recorded on the questionnaire that their mentor was 'older'.

Unsurprisingly, I found no mentees who were the same age or older than their mentor. This is because the Learning Mentor role is new to schools and requires a paid adult professional to undertake the role. However, in other mentoring situations, it is possible to find peer mentoring where mentors as peers may be of a similar age and sometimes where the mentees are older than their mentors. Where the Learning Mentee gave the age of the Learning Mentor, it ranges from twenty years old to fifty-six years old.

Most Learning Mentees were between 12 and 16 years old, as Table 5.1 indicates:

**Table 5.1: Age of Learning Mentees**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of Learning Mentees</b>
10yrs	1
11yrs	3
12yrs	46
13yrs	56
14yrs	44
15yrs	45
16yrs	20
17yrs	1
18yrs	1

These findings seem to reflect the operation of a traditional model of mentoring in which the mentor is viewed as older and wiser than their mentee, (see, Shea, 1992).

At the same time, one hundred and twenty one of my respondents were males and ninety two females. However, it was clearly a weakness of the questionnaire design that it did not allow me to collect cross-gender or cross-ethnic data.

With hindsight, this is unfortunate, given that gender and ethnicity influence all aspects of the Learning Mentoring relationship and this information may have offered me a range of different and important insights. Nevertheless, I have indicated the gender of both Learning Mentors and Learning Mentees in the case studies that follow in section two of this chapter.

The close-ended questions took the form of tick box responses and are found in Appendix 1 in section three of the survey questionnaire.

The first asked, ‘Do you think your mentor is your friend’? with a yes or no response request. Of the recorded responses, one hundred and twenty mentees responded ‘yes’, with only eleven responding ‘no’. As such, 56% of the learning mentees responding to the survey saw their learning mentor as a ‘friend’, while only 5% of the respondents specifically did not see their mentor as a friend. To me, this is convincing evidence that, for most Learning Mentees, learning mentoring involves friendship, as indeed do other forms of mentoring. It also suggests the putative utility of Professional Friendship as a range of core components of successful mentoring relationships.

The questionnaire also included a tick box table for the Learning Mentees to complete which allowed them to rank a number of statements about their Learning Mentors. Table 5.2 below reports these findings.

**Table 5.2:** Rank ordering of the most important Core Components of Professional Friendship in the view of the Learning Mentees

Characteristic	Rank Order
My mentor cares	1 <sup>st</sup>
My mentor gets on with me	2 <sup>nd</sup>
My mentor is honest	3 <sup>rd</sup>
My mentor respects me	4 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor listens to me	5 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor is supportive	6 <sup>th</sup>
I trust my mentor	7 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor is reliable	8 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor helps me to understand	9 <sup>th</sup>

My mentor is loyal	10 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor helps me to change	11 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor is encouraging	12 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor understands me	13 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor allows me to make up my own mind	14 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor is usually right	14 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor does the right thing	15 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor trusts me	16 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor shares feelings and ideas	=17 <sup>th</sup>
My mentor speaks up for me	=17 <sup>th</sup>

These core components reported by Learning Mentees as most important are clearly crucial to successful, good quality learning mentoring relationships. Interestingly, many are on the list of core components in my Professional Friendship concept that stresses:

- Reliability
- Respect
- Openness – without this there is no honesty
- Support
- Loyalty
- Understanding
- Listening
- Trust
- Caring

As Table 5.2 indicates, Learning Mentees indicated ‘caring’ as the most important component of their learning mentor relationship and this ‘caring’ is a, if not the crucial component of ‘professional friendship’ as I have emphasised previously in my published journal article (Gardiner 1998).

Meggison and Clutterbuck refer to this as ‘mutuality’ (1995, p. 36). In their view it involves offering the opportunity to evaluate critically intuitive processes. In particular, when a ‘mentor’ (in the general sense) explains their own thinking to their mentee (this can be in any mentoring setting). Meggison and Clutterbuck argue that this is the articulation of subconscious processes which are open to both of them for joint and self-reflection. In my assessment, if a Learning Mentor shows that s/he is demonstrating ‘caring’ in a mentoring relationship, then the very act of it (caring) works to encourage

and motivate their Learning Mentee. This, in turn, acts as a motivational factor to take notice of the conversations with her/his Learning Mentor for the sake of the relationship's stability and development.

So, unless the Learning Mentor cares for the Learning Mentee, mentoring is less likely to operate effectively and be successful. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995, p. 37) go on to argue that 'satisfaction in seeing someone else grow' is a principal benefit that the mentors take from a 'mutual mentoring' relationship. In their view, this is a 'psychosocial gratification' that is reinforced if the mentee acknowledges the debt (to the mentor). This is a two-way process, which is highly likely to involve caring and emotional labour (Hochschild 1979). On the part of the mentor, this gratification they receive acts as a motivational tool to further succeed with their mentee into the future relationship.

These results from my Learning Mentee survey strengthen my argument that these are transferable processes that can be transferred across into different mentoring settings. Taking the example of caring as the most important factor to be present in the Learning Mentee relationship with their Learning Mentor, there are clear benefits to both, particularly resulting from their engagement with this psychosocial process. This reinforces Megginson and Clutterbuck's findings that mentoring is mutually beneficial. This research indicates that these benefits occur regardless of where the mentoring takes place, especially as there were no practicing Learning Mentors when Megginson and Clutterbuck undertook their research.

This means that the Learning Mentor is showing a sense of regard, concern and consideration for their learning mentee. This core component of caring is an integral aspect of mentoring relationship. Consequently, I argue that a number of qualities related to caring are at play in successful good quality mentoring friendship relationships.

When I initially developed my concept of professional friendship as a range of core components in successful mentoring relationships, I saw 'caring' as simply one component of a mentoring relationship and not as the single most important component. However, my Learning Mentee research data indicates to me that, for the mentees, the fact that the Learning Mentor is a person in a school who 'cares' about the Mentee is clearly more important than I had initially considered.

The second most important component identified by Learning Mentees is having someone in school that 'gets on' with them.

This is a core component of mentoring that, on reflection, I took for granted, and saw as implicit, within my initial Professional Friendship construct.

I included it in the Learning Mentee questionnaire because a teenager suggested it to me whilst I was piloting the questions. In this research I found it to be the second most important Learning Mentor characteristic in the Learning Mentees view, which indicates that the Learning Mentor's ability to 'get on' with the Learning Mentee is highly valued by, and is important to, the Learning Mentees. As such, it is a critical core component of a Learning Mentor relationship, and possibly of any mentor, to be able to 'get on' with their (learning) mentee. More broadly, I argue that, caring is a transferable core component of successful mentoring relationships and so also is the ability to 'get on' together as (learning) mentor and (learning) mentee.

The third most important core component identified and ranked by Learning Mentees is honesty and that again is a crucial core component of successful mentoring. In, my experience, successful mentoring always involves honesty and this resonates with the Learning Mentee's replies.

'Honesty' clearly acts as a motivational factor in a developing mentoring relationship. For example, were the Learning Mentor to be dishonest, this is likely to cause the Learning Mentee to be unsure of whether or not to trust her/his Mentor. Again, this can be destabilising and can damage a developing relationship. In my experience, all healthy mentoring relationships depend on honesty to help the two-way commitment grow strongly enough to encourage trusting in the relationship. Trust of course relies heavily on the honesty within all good mentoring relationships. Certainly, any types of successful, good quality relationships can be said to be among these core components (honesty and trust). As such, the quality of the relationship is likely to be influenced by the level of honesty and, thus, the trusting of those involved in the relationship.

The fourth most important core component identified in the mentee questionnaire is respect. Again, this is also stressed as important in my work. Respect in friendship is about treating or regarding the other with sense of esteem and honour (Gardiner, 1998. p. 79). In a professional friendship mentoring relationship, I claim that respect requires the giver to be an active listener who uses non-verbal signalling. I describe the act of respect in mentoring as involving showing interest in the mentee and using facial expressions. Respect requires a special form of listening. Reflecting on this result in the light of my experience, it seems useful to include the term of 'respectful listening' (Shea, 1992) in the range of core components of Professional Friendship. I view, respectful listening is a term which more closely describes what the mentee means by gaining the respect of the mentor in their relationship.

The Learning Mentees ranked listening as the fifth most important core component of their learning mentoring relationship.

These five core components of caring, getting on, honesty, respect and listening are clearly interrelated and are crucial success in the relationship between Learning Mentor and the Learning Mentee. Certainly, they are the core components Learning Mentors use in their relationships with Learning Mentees.

As Table 5.2 shows, there are a range of other core components Learning Mentors use which are seen by Learning Mentees as less important, but, nonetheless, of value to them, perhaps particularly, support, trust and reliability. As regards support, the crucial question involves the amount and type offered and received. In particular, it is important that support from the Learning Mentor as emotional labour to their mentee is visible. Trust is a component built up from some of the other components of professional friendship previously identified, such as caring, getting on and sharing. In addition, I identify that 'reliability' helps the trust to develop and strengthen. Overall, in a two-way mentoring relationship, success depends on each person playing their part in carrying out these critical relationship core components in order to assist the mentoring relationship's development.

### ***ii) The Open-ended Questions from the Learning Mentee Survey***

My questionnaire includes a number of open-ended questions. These were designed to further tap the learning mentees' attitudes to their Learning Mentors. The first of the open-ended questions asked about what the mentee liked about mentoring and why. Some of their replies are worth quoting and discussing at some length. As such, I focus particularly on five responses that are especially revealing.

#### ***Example One***

In response to the question, what do you like about mentoring and why, this Learning Mentee confirms that, to her, the most important characteristic of her relationship with her learning mentor is caring:

What I like about mentoring is you can tell the side of your story, express your feelings and it will all be private. What I also like is the mentor, she's the best, she can help you, and she makes you believe in yourself; she also builds up your confidence. She helps me a lot and, if you ask her to find out something, the answers always yes, she never says 'oh, I might be busy.' You can tell her anything you want. When you're talking to her you feel

free, like you can say what you want. She makes me feel comfortable and relaxed. She cares.

#### *Interpretation*

The Learning Mentee's response suggests that her learning mentor is (unconsciously) utilising some aspects of my professional friendship model. In particular, the learning mentee states explicitly that her Learning Mentor 'cares' and, as I have emphasised, in my model, the caring aspect of the relationship is integral to all good mentoring friendship relationships.

There are other crucial aspects at work in this particular learning mentee's response. Take, for example, where the mentee says: 'you can tell the side of your story'. This suggests to me that the learning mentor was 'listening' with 'respect' and, most probably, demonstrating this with her body language and non-verbal communication.

Another example of an implicit aspect is where the mentee says s/he can 'express your feelings and it will be in private'; here the issue of confidentiality is clearly understood by both parties and has a place in the relationship, as well as in my model.

Finally, the Learning Mentee emphasises 'what I also like about the (learning) Mentor is, she's the best', which indicates to me that the mentor is showing her genuineness, given that the mentee also emphasises that: 'you can tell her anything you want. When you're talking to her you feel free'. In addition, the mentor's genuineness is reflected when the mentee states: 'she makes you feel comfortable and relaxed'.

#### *Example Two*

This mentee response to the same question is also interesting, focusing as it does on honesty within the learning mentor relationship:

She's honest, never speaks or tells anything about me. Doesn't shout at me and understands what I'm like.

#### *Interpretation*

Here, the learning mentee explicitly states that their mentor is honest and respects her confidentiality. In my view, this comment also implicitly speaks to the fact that this relationship involves caring.



### *Example Three*

In this example the learning mentee refers to the learning mentoring relationship:

I like it because I can discuss things with her and make targets. I also like it because I can talk to her in confidence

### *Interpretation*

Again, confidentiality is important in this relationship, as is the freedom to discuss things. To me, this indicates that this is a special type of friendship relationship in which confidentiality is particularly valued; in which the mentee can share things with the mentor that she is not able to not openly share with friends, family or teachers.

### *Example Four*

What I like about my mentor is that I can trust him and he's reliable and he helps me to get motivated

### *Interpretation*

In this example, there are clearly three very important characteristics of the professional friendship model. The survey indicates that, to the Learning Mentees, the Learning Mentor role involves trust and reliability. In my experience and in my model, these are crucial characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship, a relationship that is better able to grow and strengthen. In addition, and importantly, the Learning Mentee here refers to the helping aspect of the relationship.

### *Example Five*

It is good because it helps you with what you need help with. It has helped me improve my writing and spelling and made me feel better in myself.

### *Interpretation*

In this Learning Mentee's response, helping is seen as a crucial part of the mentoring relationship. To me, this reply implies the Learning Mentee has raised self-esteem resulting from the relationship. Where this is the case, the mentee is better able to create and respond to new life chances as they become available. In my view, help (as in this case) given in mentoring is utilised for learning and

change. Certainly, in my experience, this is likely to lead to better life chances, as seen in Steven's case dealt with in Chapter Two (p. 85).

Attainment, in particular improved writing and spelling, has resulted from the learning in Steven's case and such improvement may act to motivate both learning mentee and learning mentor to continue to develop the relationship.

Several other open-ended question replies refer to the helping aspect of the relationship, including:

- I like it in mentoring because I like to tell someone about what my problems are because it helps me get through it.
- He helps me when he has time, when I have been misbehaving; he helps me calm down `when I am stressed.
- It can help you get on with school work and improve your effort and concentration in general
- Mentoring helps me to find my weaknesses and, when I find them; I can do something about it that can help me get less homework stamps and more merits.
- Mrs B is kind, helpful and friendly
- They help you when you need it, they talk to you like you're an adult but show you the way to do things right.
- "It is someone I can share my feelings with because I don't really have anyone I can talk to other than my friends and they can't really help."

### Reflection

Further reflecting on the responses indicates to me that my model has utility in helping us understand successful learning mentoring. Certainly, it is clear that many of these mentees felt that they gained a range of benefits from the mentoring process, in my view, in large part because their mentors used the range of skills identified in my model.

The success of, and benefits from, the relationship, in the mentees' view, includes gaining greater confidence. For example:

- I like the fact that I have got a lot more confidence than I used to in year seven.
- I like that it's gave me more confidence and that I actually want to work harder

Interestingly, this implies that the Learning Mentor has an ability to calm stressed mentees; an attribute I have not included in my model.

However, other mentees remark on the fact that mentoring gave them a chance to express their feelings:

- 'I like that I can speak my feelings, I can also be more relaxed.'
- 'She doesn't criticise me and she is the best mentor I could ever have'.

In my view, reflecting on this, the Learning Mentor is, in effect, operating in a way consistent with my model by being non-judgmental.

Another open-ended question I put to the Learning Mentees was: What don't you like about mentoring and why? I have grouped the responses below:

- i) Some respondents' saw mentoring as interfering with their school life in various ways, arguing:
  - a) 'It takes up lesson time – so we get even more behind with work or coursework.'
  - b) 'Sometimes other girls ask me where have I been and I don't like to say where I have been sometimes it's a bit embarrassing!'
  - c) 'I miss my lesson and have to catch up in my own time.'
  - d) 'Sometimes, I like it but mostly I don't because she is a teacher and sometimes I think she might be talking about me and I don't like that.'
  - e) 'I miss lessons every week and it's usually my favourite subject.'
  - f) 'It's a waste of time because she hardly ever comes and, when she does, we don't really do anything.'
  - g) 'A lot of people think it's a joke because we come out of lessons to speak to the mentor.'
- ii) Some respondents emphasised the lack of time for mentoring:

- a) 'I don't like it when the time flies by or we don't get the mentoring all the time. I also don't like it when people or teachers shout while I'm at mentoring, it makes me mad.'
  - b) 'I like everything about mentoring, except there are not enough sessions.'
  - c) 'It's too short.'
  - d) 'Occasionally, he does not have the time to see me, as he has to see other people.'
- iii) Some respondents saw mentoring sessions as uninteresting or involving extra work:
- a) 'Boring and more work to do'
  - b) 'I think sometimes it can be a bit boring, but it's worth it because I'm getting better.'
  - c) 'It reminds me how much work I've got to do, as she is trying to help me complete coursework and get it in.'
- iv) Some respondents focussed upon the poor learning mentor/mentee match:
- a) 'They don't know everything about you.'
  - b) 'The things I don't like about my mentor is she can be a bit bossy and babyish, act a bit stupid like a kid.'
  - c) 'Sometimes I am shy and can't think of anything to say to her, so I get embarrassed.'

## Reflection

The Learning Mentee responses to this question indicate to me that they are mainly involved in less successful relationships. In addition, the responses fall into a number of groups that reflect the reasons for such a failure. For example, if a Learning mentor/mentee match is unsuitable for the learning mentee, they might find the sessions boring or not be able to get on with their learning mentor.

The responses to the question also indicate that the learning mentee could be matched with a learning mentor who does not care, or who does not trust their mentee. The mentor may be unreliable in the view of the mentee if s/he does not attend sessions regularly. This finding suggests to me that many of the attributes of successful mentoring relationships utilise interrelated characteristics and that some are more important than others.

However, as the characteristics are closely related, the actual quality of the learning mentoring relationship may be affected by which of the interrelated aspects of the characteristics the mentees value most.

The next open-ended question in the survey was: Do you think mentoring is the same or different to your friendships? Again the answers were grouped appropriately below:

Those respondents who saw them as the same argued:

- a) 'Mentoring is a kind of friendship where you can be more honest about what is happening.'
- b) 'It's the same because there's someone to rely on.'
- c) 'It's like he is another friend, he understands. He doesn't have a go at you, but he does give good advice.'
- d) 'Mentoring is the same as having a friend.'
- e) 'Because D (the mentor) knows more and, to me, she is my friend anyway.'
- f) 'It's like telling a friend, but they help you more.'
- g) 'Mentoring is the same to a friendship, because they are reliable. It is different to a friendship, because you don't go to their house.'
- h) 'Yeah, I think it is the same, because I can tell the mentor things that I would tell my friends and I can trust him.'

Those respondents who saw them as different argued:

- a) 'It's not, because you can talk to your mentor about things you can't tell your friends.'
- b) 'It is different because they always help.'
- c) 'It is different to a friendship with other people, because whatever you say you know it will not go out of the four walls you are sitting in.'
- d) 'Well, for me, it's different because sometimes when I tell my friends that I like school, they do understand, but they don't tell me what I should do, but my mentor does, but when I'm telling my parent things then it's the same.'
- e) 'You can speak to them about anything and some of your friends can spread it.'
- f) 'I can tell my mentor about anything and I know they won't say anything.'
- g) 'It is different as I can open up to K, knowing he won't disclose information.'
- h) 'It's a lot different than your friends, because you can't tell them everything.'
- i) 'They talk to you like you are a young adult, which is what I am.'
- j) 'Because I can open up to B and keeping it confidential.'
- k) 'It is different to my friendship because my mentor won't judge me like friends can.'
- l) 'Because working with a mentor is one to one talking. It's not discussing anywhere else and they also help you.'

- m) 'Different to speak with her than with a friend because we can speak our mind and she tells us the truth.'
- n) 'Because my friends can't give me advice as wise as my mentor, because she is older and wiser.'

### Reflection

Again, it is clear that learning mentees view aspects of a professional friendship model as integral to their learning mentoring relationships. Clearly, they view their mentor as a type of friend. However, it is also evident from this research that learning mentoring, like other mentoring relationships, is a personal experience. Friendship is a concept that is developed from personal experiences and obviously depends upon the interpretation of the individual. Mentoring similarly is interpreted in the context of the individual experiences of the mentees. It is a very personal experience. The common attributes of successful learning mentoring relationships are recognisable from this research and, in my view, reflect a generic framework for successful mentoring. The utility of the professional friendship model is certainly evident in the views of the mentees surveyed.

Finally, I asked the mentees to comment freely about their mentor. I have grouped the responses by linking them to my model of professional friendship. In addition, I have included helping as a 'given' of all mentoring and learning mentoring activity:

#### i) Helping

- She is kind, understanding and helpful
- I like having a mentor, I think it is a good idea and helps me
- She is understanding and a great help, she gives the support I need
- She is my favourite person at school, she always helps me, she helps me carry out my good ideas, she deserves a medal for all the hard work she has done
- She is lovely and helpful

#### ii) Respect

- I feel that my mentor is easy to talk to and I can express myself properly. She trusts me and respects me

#### iii) Honesty

- (I like) her honesty

iv) Trust

- He's very confident and trustworthy

v) Listens

- She listens and is honest
- He's good to talk to and he listens to me
- She is nice and she listens to me

vi) Understanding

- She is kind and understanding

vii) Support

- She is very friendly, funny, supportive and she could put on a serious face and she is also understanding

viii) Sharing

- He tells me anything, so I share my ideas out with him too

At the same time, there were other general comments:

- She's decent and a nice person. I get along with her, but these questions were a bit hard to answer because I haven't known her long.
- She's quiet (just like me)
- I like her, because she is different to the teachers, even though she is as old as them.
- I haven't really got any comments about my mentor, all I can say is she's the best mentor, she's brilliant, she makes me feel free and relaxed.
- I would pass her on to my friends if they had a problem.
- I like her, she is cool.

- I think that it's very good they've started to do this, because I would not usually talk to anyone about finding my work or things hard.
- She is very good and every school should have one like her.

### Summary

It is perhaps unsurprising that fifty five percent of the learning mentees (120) viewed their mentor as a friend; five percent (11) did not and 40% (86) did not respond to the question. These findings concur with my earlier research (Gardiner 1996) which indicated that 'friendship' is important in mentee/learning mentor relationships. To me, these learning mentee/learning mentor relationships reflect a type of friendship that contains, to a greater or lesser degree, elements identified within the professional friendship-mentoring model.

Both the closed-ended and open-ended questions in the mentee questionnaires indicated that an idea of friendship, indeed professional friendship, is at the core of successful learning mentoring relationships. Indeed, the mentee responses indicate that, when certain aspects of the relationship are missing, it is less likely that change or learning will occur. In my view these aspects are interrelated and vital to all types of successful mentoring.

## 5.2 The Individual Case Studies 1-10

These case studies came from schools returning mentee questionnaires. I invited the learning mentor in these schools to send in their own, more detailed, case study of their individual learning mentor/learning mentee relationship experiences. They reflect the fact that each learning mentor relationship is unique and the nature of that relationship depends upon both of the participants' interpretations of their role in it. The important point here is that the data from these case studies differs from that provided by the interview data, because these case studies report on specific one – to-one individualised cases, while the interviews focused more on a single theme of success in relationships.

### *Case Study 1*

In this case study the learning mentee was a Pakistani, female, year eleven student who was referred to the female learning mentor in the school because of a series of issues. She lacked organisational and communication skills and motivation. In addition, there were problems at home and the girl needed emotional support, confidence building, help with anger management and additional support to improve both peer relationships and relationships with teachers. She was also a bullying perpetrator.



*The learning mentor reports:*

When I first met this girl, she had many problems: poor attendance, low self-esteem, behaviour problems and was conscious of her weight and eating problems. Tackling her attendance was a team effort between me, the mentee and her mother.

Communication with the mother has been invaluable as she was unaware of many of her daughter's problems – we had a definite improvement. There was an improvement in her behaviour-this was mainly down to our mentoring sessions and also classroom support with organising and managing her course work, this helped to build up her confidence. I tried to tackle her eating problem by gently educating her on the importance of good regular food -as opposed to snack foods such as chocolates, crisps. Although mentoring can be very challenging at times, I have found that it can also be very rewarding.

**Reflections:**

In this case study the utility of my model seems clear, because here the learning mentoring includes the use of respect, trust, caring, listening, supporting, reliability, non-judgemental action, understanding, honesty and awareness of need. To me, these are interrelated elements which contribute to the learning mentee's feeling of raised self-esteem, allowing her to gain confidence from the relationship in order for her to learn and to change, so that she can develop better relationships with family and peers.

***Case Study 2***

This student learning mentee was a female in year 13 who was distressed by the fact that she was to get married and, so, could not go on to university as she had planned. Her parents had arranged the marriage and the student felt that she could not go against her parents' wishes. Her learning mentor is a female.

*The learning mentor reports:*

There were several issues here that I did not feel qualified to tackle, but her poor communication skills made referral difficult. To further complicate things, the student was solely responsible for her younger siblings after school, making it difficult for her to attend the citizens' advice bureau or a counselling organisation, without her family being

aware of it. I eventually referred her to an Asian women's centre, as the trained counsellors there offer advice in six community languages and a crèche facility is available whilst consultations are in progress.

#### Reflections:

In my view, the use of elements of my professional friendship model by the learning mentor in this case is limited by the fact that her role mainly involves referring the learning mentee on to a specialist organisation for relevant help. This is sometimes outside of a learning mentor role.

#### ***Case Study 3***

In this case study the female learning mentor was mentoring a female learning mentee who was a sixth form student in year twelve who had referred herself to the learning mentor.

#### *The learning mentor reports:*

She was very concerned about falling behind with her studies and felt that she was under pressure to achieve high grades. Although she was academically bright, she was very unorganised and felt increasingly overwhelmed by the demands of her coursework, coupled with the part time job she had begun in order to save for university. By time-tabling her academic and job commitments along with adequate leisure time, the student felt empowered and no longer felt guilty for enjoying free time when her allotted work was completed for the day. A mediation session was arranged with her parents in order that they could be made aware of the arrangement. This negated any parental pressure to do more work than has been allocated. A weekly review ensures that the student stays on-track with the work plan and amendments can be made more quickly if she falls behind.

#### Reflections:

Again in my view, the utility of my model is limited in relation to this case study because here the academic pressures on the learning mentee to be a high achiever dominated the mentoring process. As such, the learning mentor's role in this case

study was, almost exclusively, to help the learning mentee gain best educational advantage. However, even in this case, we can see aspects of listening, respecting and helping involved in the relationship.

#### ***Case Study 4***

The female learning mentor in this case study was mentoring a male learning mentee who was in year ten. The student had recently moved from Wales to the school in the Midland area and having problems both at home and school.

#### ***The learning mentor reports:***

His parents had divorced and he had settled in the West Midlands with his father and step-mum. His mother had set up a new family unit and the student felt he had become unwelcome living with her. The main problem seemed to be that the student blamed the marriage break-up on his father's girlfriend who was only five years older than him. This led to tension at home and the student did not respect the authority of his step-mum and argued with her constantly. His father worked long hours and was often absent during these disputes. The student also had problems with absenteeism and was beginning to get behind in his schoolwork, even though he was academically bright. Through a series of discussions, together in conjunction with his parents, we worked out strategies that would lead to a more harmonious home-life and which keep the student out of trouble at school. We time-tabled a schoolwork plan to be completed at the homework help club run by the local community library in order that he might catch up with his studies and also spend less time at home when his father was at work. The student also enrolled at cadets in order that he might build upon his interests outside the home and make new friends in the area. We also made arrangements so that the student and his father could spend one evening a week as quality time thereby easing the jealousy that was aimed at the step-mum.

#### **Reflections:**

The utility of a generic mentoring model such as professional friendship is clear in this case study. For example, the learning mentor is evidently helping the learning mentee to change through caring and through his understanding of the complex situation. As such, the learning mentor needs to have built up respect and trust and reliability by listening with confidentiality, as the mentee's life at this point is chaotic. The learning mentee needed to get to know the mentor over time to be able to help him

develop better family relationships as this is not an overnight process. In addition, the learning mentor would be helping the mentee to understand the position of the other parties by showing empathy, honesty and warmth. If the mentor had failed to care, a successful outcome would have been less likely.

### ***Case Study 5***

Here the learning mentee being mentored by the school's female learning mentor was a female student in year nine.

#### *The learning mentee reports:*

It's good to talk! Having a mentor has helped me to deal with my problems one at a time, rather than sitting at home crying about all of them. Mentoring has done a great deal for me. I have re-gained some of my confidence. In my old school there were no people to talk to. My problems would just mount up and most teachers were unwilling to help if anything they would take the side of the bullies (just because they were smarter than me). So, by the time I move to secondary school I felt very bad about myself. In secondary school things were made worse. Everyone was bigger and tougher. So, the first few years of secondary school were miserable. When I heard about the mentors, I thought they were going to be two more people in the school telling everyone to ignore their problems and "They will soon find someone else to pick on." Problems are like boils! You can't get rid of them by waiting for them to go away. You have to bust them! Luckily for me, my mentor is not like a teacher. We both try to work out the problem. Not all my problems will go away, but at least now I don't have to deal with them alone.

My mentor is very nice. I think mentors should be nice and have plenty of time for everyone. I see my mentor as being an adult friend who helps me and takes time to listen to me that is good. I like having someone to talk to. I also like having someone around to help me find information for school projects or study guides for tests! I believe in myself more than ever now. Things have improved a lot and now I can concentrate on my work (so I must be getting smarter!). I am moving to another school because I'm moving house, I'll miss my mentor. The qualities of my mentor are that she is helpful, always has time to talk and helps me deal with my problems.

Reflections:

Crucially, in this learning mentee case study, the mentee indicates how mentoring benefits her. It is evident that the outcome is regained confidence and a sense of self-belief. The mentee lists those attributes of the mentor that she sees as important:

- Friendship
- Helping
- Listening
- Guiding

Again, these are aspects of a professional friendship, indicating: a) that the learning mentor role involves professional friendship; and b) this is a successful relationship because the outcome has the potential to lead to new life changes. In particular, this occurs because the learning mentee suggests that she is better able to solve problems.

### ***Case Study 6***

This learning mentor relationship involves a learning mentee who is a male student, aged thirteen, in year nine of a special school. The learning mentor is male.

#### *The learning mentor reports:*

The mentee suffers from a medical condition known as AD/HD and was referred to the learning mentor due to poor organisational skills, problems at home, poor communication skills, anger management issues, emotional support, school phobia, lack of confidence, poor peer relationships, poor teacher relationships and lack of assertiveness. I arranged to have him reassessed, as a result he is now taking medication (for the control of the medical condition) and his exclusion rate has fallen. He still has a lot of learned behaviour but I can now talk to him for longer than a couple of minutes.

#### **Reflections:**

In this case study, the learning mentor role appears highly complex. However, helping in this case involved medical intervention instigated by the learning mentor. In my view, this relationship is at an early stage and, as it develops, it will require other types of intervention from the learning mentor. Having stabilised the learning mentee's medical condition, it may be appropriate to begin developing a professional friendship type of relationship to help with the complex issues to be addressed to further help this learning mentee.

### ***Case Study 7***

This mentoring case involves a male learning mentor and a learning mentee who is a male student in year ten at a special school.

#### *The learning mentor reports:*

During year nine, this student had severe behavioural problems and was excluded on numerous occasions. He could not manage to complete a full school day and, as a result, only attending school in the mornings. He now attends full days, his behaviour has been transformed and he has yet to be excluded. I do not know how we ever managed without a learning mentor.

#### Reflections:

In this case study the learning mentor role appears complex and multifaceted. However, their role does appear to be instrumental in the stabilisation of their mentee's education. As such this learning mentor would have developed a rapport, probably based on trust. This sense of trust would be gained through the learning mentor's approach toward honesty, empathy, respect and listening etc. Without these aspects within the relationship, effective communication is unlikely with this young person. Undoubtedly, there would be other unsuccessful relationships between the mentee and teachers, peers and possibly family as they are responding in this negative manner to their educational environment.

### ***Case Study 8***

In this case study the relationship was between a female learning mentor and a female learning mentee student who is in year six.

#### *The learning mentor reports:*

I have been working with this pupil on an intensive learning mentor programme for six weeks. The pupil was referred to me by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the class teacher, as the child was exhibiting a violent temper, which had lead to inappropriate behaviour, both in the classroom and in the playground. She was involved in arguments and fights in school most weeks and often appeared withdrawn and unhappy. In my initial

consultation with the child, she spoke of “an angry feeling inside” which she said that she was constantly aware of. She said that this often distracted her from her work and made her want to be alone, rather than playing with her friends.

She said that she often felt as though she was “not coping” with her emotions, which were making her feel “very unhappy”. She said that she really enjoyed coming to school and often felt that she did not want to go home.

When we discussed the cause of her anger, it appeared that it originated from the child’s relationship with her fourteen year old sister, as the child felt bullied and physically threatened by the older sibling. The child was also very worried about her mother, who was also verbally and physically attacked by the older child. For this reason, the child had not discussed the impact of the sister’s behaviour with her mother, as she did not want to distress and worry her mother further. Whilst acknowledging the reasons for her anger, the pupil accepted responsibility for the negative effect that this was having on her own behaviour and relationships at school. She recognised that she wanted help in changing her responses to others. She set herself a behavioural target, focussing on coping strategies to help control her responses to others. I embarked on an anger management programme with the pupil using “A solution Based Approach to Anger Management with Children.” She also set herself small academic targets for numeracy and literacy, which I supported her with through the use of a diary.

The child felt able to begin talking to her mother about her feelings and a meeting between the mother and me enabled more information to be shared. Her mother reports feeling more able to cope herself, through an increase in support from Social Services. Mentoring for this pupil continues to date, but significant signs of improvement have been noted in the pupil’s attitude to herself and others. On more than two occasions in recent weeks she has not reacted physically to provocation. She wrote in a recent R.E lesson that “what changed my life was when I have been talking to (learning mentor) and it has helped me a lot but it also helps my mom. It makes me feel more grown up.

#### Reflections:

In this case study, the learning mentor role involved, mediation, anger management and speaking and listening. If the young learning mentee were to understand the value of the learning mentor’s input, then, I would argue, that they are most likely to be using aspects of the professional friendship model

in common with the previous case study examples. In particular, respectful listening by the learning mentor involving non-verbal communication to show interest, regard and concern would be involved. This indicates to the learning mentee that the learning mentor cares enough to undertake family mediation, involving negotiation and counselling skills, and anger management, which involves relaxation techniques. These focussed activities require time to be taken and the learning mentee to be treated respectfully if they are to make a positive and life changing response.

The relationship clearly involves the learning mentor teaching the learning mentee how to learn and how to change and these are also key aspects of the one-to-one mentoring activity. Again, my view is that this is a complex situation requiring the learning mentor to demonstrate a range of skills and attributes in an appropriate way to enable change to occur, as is the case here.

### ***Case Study 9***

This case study differs from the others because this female learning mentor begins with a description of her role. She begins by broadly discussing the role before turning to the case study:

As yet, there is no official definition of the job of learning mentor, thus my duties and responsibilities have been developed to meet the specific needs of (School). I need to:

- Identify barriers to learning
- Remove barriers to learning
- Liaise with pupils, parents, outside agencies
- Work with Secondary Schools to aid smooth pupil transition from year six to seven.
- Enable all pupils to have access to a learning mentor through an open door policy
- Provide guidance, set targets with pupils and review progress, revise targets where necessary
- Build self confidence and self esteem
- Motivate and recognise progress
- Keep relevant staff, parents and the mentees informed at each stage of the mentoring process
- Organise a school council, with a focus on playground behaviour, peer mediation and community links
- Undertake action research to develop insights into issues such as pupil lateness, absenteeism and self-esteem.



This involves a range of different types/levels of response:

*Intensive:* Educational support within the classroom (hours negotiated with the class teacher) combined with individual pastoral support outside the classroom for three hours plus per week.

*Moderate:* Educational support plus two hours plus of individual or small group pastoral support

*Specific:* Short term project for one or two terms only

*Intermittent:* This refers to pupils who have already received mentoring, but where it is felt that support should not be entirely withdrawn.

The process of referral can be of different sorts:

*a) Staff Referral:* If a member of staff is concerned about a pupil in their class for educational and/or behavioural reasons, they may discuss their concerns with the learning mentors. It is worth noting that the focus of the learning mentors is not intended to be pupils already on the special needs register, although exceptional cases may be justified.

*b) Dinner Supervisor Referral:* If there is a persistent problem in the playground or dining hall or a serious situation arises, the Dinner Supervisors may decide that the intervention of the learning mentor is required.

*c) Parent Referral:* Parents have the option to speak with the learning mentor about any concerns that they may have with their child. Learning mentors also have access to a range of addresses and telephone numbers of outside agencies that parents might find helpful.

*d) Pupil Self-Referral:* All pupils have access to speak with a learning mentor during a designated lunch time (There is a formal procedure for making appointments of which pupils are aware).

The mentoring process involves a number of stages:

*a) To obtain a base-line assessment of mentee*

- Discuss the referral with the class teacher

- Interview the pupil on a one to one basis and agree on areas for improvement i.e. academic, social skills, study skills, etc
- Read pupil records to ascertain a greater understanding of the student within a wider context.
- Where necessary, arrange a meeting with the parents or carers.
- Where necessary, inform the child protection officer of any issues
- Where necessary, observe pupil behaviour in the classroom and the playground.
- Record observations and discuss outcomes

*b) To monitor progress and effectiveness of the mentoring*

- Formulate a personal action plan or learning agenda with the pupil
- Monitor progress and attainment of targets within a six-week review schedule
- Alter targets and/or frequency of mentoring according to progress
- Keep class teacher and parents updated on attainment and alteration
- of the targets

In this individual case study the female learning mentor is supporting a female learning mentee who is a year eleven pupil, referred because of exam anxiety and school phobia, who needs confidence building and peer and teacher relationship support.

*The Learning Mentor Reports:*

She is intelligent, but is under-achieving due to her lack of attendance. She is the oldest of a large family. Her mother is a single parent who asks her to look after the younger children. I have looked at her subjects and she has dropped out of two of them, PE and music, so that she can concentrate on the others. I have obtained a place in a young women's hostel for her to live in during the week. I have arranged for her to have extra maths lessons in the evening. I see her on a regular basis. Because of my other ideas in school, I am the Behaviour Coordinator and school Counsellor; I am only able to mentor a small amount of pupils. A more structured mentoring system is to be set up in the summer term that will involve new mentors.

**Reflections:**

Here, the learning mentor makes clear her specific role in the context of her own school. This context may differ from school to school, as different learning mentors have different skill bases and

individual schools see their priorities for the role as different. However, in this case, it offers a unique insight into this particular learning mentor's role.

The description of her role includes her involvement in the design, development and operation of those systematic systems that are needed to make clear the role for others to better understand. This clarifying of her role, in my view, is helpful to other members of staff, because it is so different, yet complimentary, and new to the school.

This approach helps learning mentees better understand that this is a different type of relationship in school to others involving the dinner staff or teacher etc.

In schools it is important to recognise that there are a growing number of different types of interventions undertaken with an individual pupil and the evaluation of those interventions requires clear understandings on various levels. For example, it is important to recognise how the role of learning mentors differs, how various external organisations operate and the extent to which parents are involved.

This learning mentor role involves behaviour management and counselling. Here, there is the potential for creating confusion about what the learning mentor role is actually meant to be. As such, within this role there is again a risk of possible conflicting perception on the part of learning mentees. In this particular instance, the learning mentor risks being seen in school as different things to different people, and to some all things to all people. This can only serve to confuse learning mentees. In my view this learning mentor is juggling too many balls to be effective in her role in the medium to longer term.

### ***Case Study 10***

This case study involves a male learning mentor and a male learning mentee aged fifteen in year eleven referred for help with: organisational skills; motivation; concentration; communication skills; anger management; emotional support; confidence building; and improving relationships with peers and teachers.

#### ***The learning mentor reports:***

This young man has not been into school for two and a half weeks because he has been bullied; the school dealt with it, but not to his satisfaction. His mum has been into school, but nothing was resolved. They were taking legal action against the school. He had

difficulty in relating to his peer group; he felt much more mature and ‘worldly wise’ in comparison to them. In his interaction with adults he was very much trying to impress and show how grown up he was.

Underneath all this, he was an insecure young man, with low self-esteem and afraid of failure. His GCSE mock exams were due and other issues were a screen, (a ready made excuse), if his results were poor. He is now in school and his attendance is excellent; his self-confidence is beginning to grow. All children are different and each brings a varied challenge. When you see an improvement the reward makes the job worthwhile and reinforces my belief that mentoring can make a difference.

#### Reflections:

The learning mentor role in this case involves giving the learning mentee reassurances to help raise his self-esteem, given that the young person appears to be preparing so well for failure, which, thus, may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, if the learning mentor utilises aspects of my model that are seen to help the relationship succeed, then the learning mentee is more likely to want to succeed, not only for themselves, but also for others. A number of the model’s elements will help this process, particularly: caring; listening honestly; respect; and, in the particular case of the learning mentee questionnaire, being able to get on.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In these case studies I found that nine of the ten relationships involved learning mentors with learning mentees of the same gender. So, six female learning mentors had female learning mentees, while three male mentors had male mentees and only one relationship was cross-gender, involving a female learning mentor and male learning mentee. In my view, there at least two reasons to explain this pattern. First, female learning mentors are more commonly recruited than males.

Certainly, in my experience, I found that approximately eighty five percent of all the learning mentors recruited are female. Second, for reasons of child protection and personal safety, schools frequently chose same sex relationships, viewing them as more healthy, especially as a learning mentor is a strong role model. However, there is another, more pragmatic, reason, given that, as the learning mentor coordinator, I found certain individual learning mentors more highly motivated in providing documentation. It is of course obvious that successful relationships are more likely to be recorded and thus forwarded to management, than those that fail.

My aim in presenting this range of data is to provide a fully rounded picture of the learning mentor role, allowing their voice, as well as that of the learning mentee, to be heard. I have recorded the learning mentor perception of the views of their learning mentees in relation to their mentoring activity. In my view, the case study data presented above confirms that each relationship is unique. However, it also suggests that individual, flexible, responses to what are sometimes complex issues are required of the learning mentor. In my view, learning mentors show their own traits at the same time as they are mentoring and some of them are revealed in these case studies. For example, they show persistence, reliability and tenacity in the face of a range of barriers to learning mentee success. The case studies were submitted to me by learning mentors willing to record their experiences. They are broadly typical of successful relationships and they suggest that aspects of my model are being utilised.

In particular, these case studies suggest that the following characteristics of my model are being utilised:

- respect
- trust
- caring
- listening
- supporting
- reliability
- non-judgemental action
- understanding
- awareness of need
- helping
- confidentiality
- warmth
- friendship
- guiding
- rapport
- honesty
- empathy
- communication
- non-verbal communication

- showing interest, regard and concern
- counselling
- being able to ‘get on’.

In addition, these particular case studies indicate that, even in the less successful mentoring relationships, aspects of my model can be found, although, in those circumstances, fewer aspects are used. In the next chapter, I turn to the data from the extended, semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews with learning mentors in schools.

# CHAPTER 6

## TESTING THE UTILITY OF THE CONCEPT, PART 2

### 6.1 The Learning Mentor Interviews

In this chapter I turn to the tape-recorded, semi-structured, interviews with learning mentors. My aim again is to show that my model helps me better understand the learning mentor role. More specifically, I argue that this research shows that more of my model's characteristics are identifiable in successful learning mentoring relationships than in those that are less successful. As such, my model helps me identify successful relationships and this helps me to better understand the learning mentor role. Their key role is to raise standards in schools by enhancing the life chances of their learning mentees through their mentoring relationships. In my view, if my model is utilised by mentors, it increases the likelihood that the mentoring relationship will be successful. Learning mentors are helping their mentees to learn and to change by bringing about new life chances in a range of aspects, including increasing exam grades.

These in-depth interviews were undertaken with the permission of the learning mentor and their school; neither is identified for reasons of confidentiality. I begin the interviews with a single, simple, open-ended, question asking about how learning mentors viewed success in their relationships. In addition, I use a range of supplementary open and semi-structured questions to delve more deeply:

- How would you describe your role as a Learning Mentor?
- What do you see as important in mentoring?
- When do you know you have been successful in that relationship?

I found from these interviews that the vast majority of learning mentors operated as professional friends and, where their practice reflected aspects of the professional friendship model, they viewed their mentoring relationship as more successful. Indeed, I would argue that the greater the numbers of elements of the professional friendship model reflected in their mentoring practice, the more successful was that mentoring relationship.

## 6.2 Interviews 1- 15

### Interview One

I begin with this first interview that I present in entirety, because, interestingly, the Learning Mentor has a unique role. This Learning Mentor is a female Caucasian in her early thirties who provides one-to-one mentoring to a number of Learning Mentees from range of schools who have been excluded from their school. As such, this Learning Mentor specialising in behavioural support has a much broader view of how different schools operate approaches to behaviour than other Learning Mentors operating in a single institution.

Before employment as a Learning Mentor, this respondent was a litigation solicitor for fifteen years. Learning Mentees were referred to her from a range of different schools whilst they were awaiting an alternative educational provision. Exclusion from their current school occurred for a variety of reasons, including poor behaviour.

Presenting the whole of interview allows me to delve down deeply enabling me to better reflect on her particular Learning Mentor role. My reflections on her role help me understand to what extent her uses of core components of professional friendship are operating. I began by asking what she viewed as 'success' in her relationships.

#### *Learning Mentor:*

I think it's about them receiving respect because I think they've not had very much of that and it's about somebody who has actually got time for them.

You have actually got time to sit down and it can take an hour for them to tell you something. You've actually got that hour, and again that's not often the case in their lives. People haven't really got time for them, and to actually listen to what they're saying. They just dismiss them. They've quite often been dismissed; I think that a lot of my pupils have because they're exclusion. It's something I always talk about with them and they nearly always get very bitter about it. They don't feel that they're listened to. They don't feel they're given a proper chance to put forward their point of view. They feel that they weren't given the opportunity to give their side of the story and that the other people were more at fault than they were. Perhaps this has been a continuous, long-term thing?



Where perhaps, they've been bullied and when they eventually turn on the bully, they get excluded for it? That sort of thing. So, they might have the opportunity to talk about that, but then what is good about the relationship is it's different to other relationships they've had. They often say that it's different.

***Question:***

In what way?

***Learning Mentor:***

Well I am quite different I suppose, to the other people they've met because you know, I suppose, I am quite posh to them; you know, I am quite posh. I'm not a teacher, so I'm not shouting at them. I am not telling them what to do. I can have a laugh with them, they know we can. I can laugh at things that really an adult shouldn't really laugh at with them, although I don't normally laugh at them. They can tell me anything at all and I am not going to tell or judge them on that, and they know that after a length of time. It's quite a nice relationship. I just think that you know I call them 'my kids'. You shouldn't really do that. My 'student's', they just like to talk and just be able to sit down and tell you something and not be criticised and judged about it. That they are accepted for what they said, and that's a really important part of mentoring. You know you're not judging them all the time or criticizing them. Then what else? Now again, looking at my forms that the students gave back to me. Something I was really surprised to see but which came out on a few of the forms was that they said I did not share my ideas with them. I didn't always share my ideas with them but there were sometimes rather than often or always. I was really surprised about that and I was thinking about it, but I know that I don't, but I think I do that consciously because what I didn't want to do was sit down with my students and start giving my values and my opinions. It was really important to me that I didn't do that because I could do that quite easily actually, but it was really important to me that I didn't do that. So when we sit down, I always try to listen to their opinions and you know sometimes I think I would perhaps give a bit of my own, but on the whole I want to concentrate on their opinions and their views, and then I know all that I do is suggest solutions to them because what I would suggest might not suit them, and it might not be their solution. So what I try to do is, rather than give them my ideas, and my solutions, is, I try and encourage them to think of their own ideas and solutions, which again, I mean through the forms that we filled out. The assessment forms. I think they were not quite used to that because they're used to being told what to do. Their parents quite often do and their teachers have always told them,

‘they’re being excluded’, they don’t know why quite often, and it’s a little bit disconcerting for them I think. When you say well what do you actually think, you know, what you think and what I think, that’s why that comment has come true because for the first time they’ve never been actually told that they’ve got to think about it, but actually, I think that’s probably a good thing because they are that bit older. If they were maybe, but if you were mentoring perhaps in the primary sector, you might give more of yourself and guide them more but when they are verging on adulthood you’ve got to be a little bit careful about that I think and I really get them to think for themselves and I find that they say “oh I think that’s a really good idea” you know and really encourage them, support them and perhaps, if what they say isn’t right, you could question that a bit and eventually get them to think in a positive way. So more of a guidance role rather than giving a huge amount of input, and always being positive. I think this is important with the students. They’ve had enough negatives and I think it’s good to be always really positive, giving praise for the small little achievements they make. If they turn up on time to the appointment with me, I am absolutely made up and I say “wow that is fantastic” you know, because they are on time. So, I mean, that’s one small thing, but then they know we set targets and we talk about things they’re going to try and do between now and the next time we meet, and if they’ve actually done it, you know, that’s a real thing for you to know and celebrate. A big thing to them it seems is, a small thing to us. Perhaps I should say it the other way round, what might seem a tiny thing to me, actually is, a big achievement to them.

You have to remember that and I think they like that, they like getting praised. Well don’t we all? So that’s another. I think that’s another part of being a mentor, you have to really concentrate on the positives and give the praise where it’s due, using their scale of things not our scale of things.

***Question:***

How would you do that?

***Learning Mentor:***

Well if you look at what they’ve achieved, what, have they achieved? In many cases it’s really, precious little. You know, they’ve not achieved anything. In some cases they’ve achieved getting through junior school. They’ve been, you know, gone from one to another. They’ve not so much survived senior school as they’ve not got any exams. They’re not doing any GCSE’s. They’re not likely to have any qualifications.

You know a lot of them really have never achieved anything and they feel you know, their self-esteem is really dented and they feel that in some cases, pretty useless I think, and they're always in that habit of none achieving, because nobody expects them to achieve. They don't expect themselves to achieve. Their parents are often very critical of them. Tell them, they are useless. They are rubbish. You know, the teacher's, they often have bad stories to tell about them at school. Who treated them very disrespectfully, you know, it's a lot of negatives for a young person to have all that.

So, for example, for getting a College place you know, you can actually say 'well you've done really well to get this College place, and your studying something you'll really enjoy and that can lead on to more'. So I just treat those as achievements, the facts they've made, sometimes making a decision is an achievement, you know. I've had kids who've got a couple of things to think about, maybe they will go on to a Training Provider, maybe they will go to a College place and we really talk through what's going to be best for them but when they make a decision that is a real achievement. You see that's great. You know when you've made that decision, you've looked at all the options and that was a really hard decision but you've made it and I think actually, you made the right decision. So, well done! So, I mean that you know, it's a tiny thing but that made them think, 'great I made a decision' and that happens quite a lot actually. We do know a decision is a big thing to them and especially if it's a good one where they've looked at all the pros and cons and decided what to do. I think that's great, and then you'll know if they are attending. I mean for us, that's actually of course you know, our kids are attending and that's nothing, but actually for them that's a huge achievement because they're not good attendees. They haven't been in the class and so if my students have you know been attending regularly, I think that is fantastic you know you've done really well; you know if they get in on time it's well done.

***Question:***

What do you think is really 'key' for them in the relationship?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think they have to trust you, but they also have to be able to rely on you. It's slightly different. Trust you, in as much as you understand each other and we set boundaries out very clearly first time we meet and we restate it, but what they tell me is if you know in most cases that it's a sort of child protection issue it is going to not be confidential. So I don't go talking about it even to their parents or to their teachers.

It's confidential, and you build that up slowly, but also if I agree to do something, even if it's 'well I'll look into that for you' and then next time we will talk about it. I can't forget I've said that otherwise we might not have a record of it. So, I have to make a note of everything that I've agreed to do and I always keep every interview. I keep a separate list for myself of what I've agreed to do and I diarize that to do it.

You know, that's all part of my method of working, but you know one thing that is really important is that if you agree to do something even a small thing like getting a number for them, speaking to somebody for them, and getting them some information that you don't forget it and you do it because again, they are used to people letting them down, and as a mentor you really can't let them down. You really have to deliver. So, yeah, I think, both of those things are really important. Trust, but also, they can depend on you to do what you say you will do.

***Question:***

Sounds like expectations are quite high here? Are they high for each other? You know, for you as the mentor and your expectations for a mentee? Are they realistic expectations or are they just that you, have high expectations of each other?

***Learning Mentor:***

Can I say I have no expectations of my mentee? Absolutely not, that might sound really strange, really negative but actually it's not if they do something then that is an achievement. I go in with no expectations. Don't forget, my pupils are permanently excluded always, and I think they are not expecting anything. Every little thing that they achieve is a huge achievement and it's beyond what I expected. No, I can't really fail, and then, I don't think they start off with high expectations from me because I am just another 'one', you know, they've had loads of people but I hope that as our relationship progresses their expectations of me grows. I really hope it does because that would indicate I am delivering in some way and that they can trust me to deliver. You know, I hope that that's the way the relationship goes. Yeah, so, that they do have high expectations and I've added up to that, but I don't have high expectations of them. Sometimes, I really get a great surprise.

***Question:***

Would you describe your relationship as 'surrogate parent'? What sort of role modelling is going on?

***Learning Mentor:***

It probably does actually, between my students; I have a lot of students. I've got over 50 and they all come from different circumstances. So sometimes, I am aware that I am mothering them a bit. I am sometimes aware of that, particularly, I had a boy whose mother rejected him and had thrown him out and he was homeless. He was looking rough, and well, I sorted out his flat. So now he's living in a flat. Whenever I see him he usually gets me breakfast, I say, 'Are you getting your washing done?' I am thinking maybe I should not be so mothering, but then I think he appreciates it. I don't think he minds you know, and that's a natural thing for me and it is you know.

It's a relationship at the end of the day and so sometimes there's that mothering going on. I would say mostly it's a friendship but the friendship sort of with boundaries if you like, so it's a friendship but it's going somewhere. It's not just for the sake of it, and we both understand that but we can still be like friends but there is a structure.

Sometimes I think, if one of my boys is suspicious of me because he thinks I am a social worker and that is because the first time I met him I asked who he lives with and if he had brothers and sisters, and I think a Social Worker was asking that the first time she met him. So, he was convinced I was a Social Worker and he told his teacher that, and the teacher told me and so we had a bit of a laugh about that and so you know, sometimes there is a bit of suspicion but I think as the relationship progresses you can get over all of that. What else, I think sometimes, I feel you wonder what impact you're making. I'll give you an example, sometimes it's easier, one of the boys, well a lot of my boys are involved with crime but one of them in particular had got a long record, everything really, burglaries, carrying weapons, the lot. We sat in the car and we were talking about it and I said you know, how do you feel about this life of crime, you can see where it's going to lead you know, you're going to have this long criminal conviction and you know you still might turn it around but if you carry on down this road you can end up in prison and in and out of prison. Oh well, yeah, he said and that's fine, that's what I expect. So how do you feel about that, losing your life and you know, going down this road? Oh, I'm fine with that and at the time I thought really it's hard with this child to make any impact because actually the decisions have been made. He is quite happy with those decisions.

I mean, he is quite accepting as to what is going to happen, but then later on I thought, well no. I think any little bit of input you give helps and I see him quite regularly and its fine.

### *Interpretation*

In this case study the learning mentor offers many reference points to my model. For example, she discusses the issue of 'respect' in the relationship and states there is a need to 'give time' to the learning mentee. Certainly, she explains the need for the learning mentor to 'listen' and be 'listened to'. All of these are aspects of my professional friendship model. In addition, they were identified as important by the learning mentees in the survey data.

In addition, she emphasises that this is a relationship that is different to other types. Here, I think she means that it is a special type of relationship, one in which, as she points out, she is not going to tell the mentee what to do, i.e. will 'not be directive' or judgemental toward the learning mentee. Rather, she contends that she is there to 'listen' to the learning mentee's opinions and suggest solutions.

She also sees another key aspect of her role as encouraging the Learning Mentee to think of their own ideas and their own solutions. She makes it clear that she is there to 'guide' and 'encourage' them to think for herself. Again, these are core components of my interpretation of a professional friendship. The learning mentor also reiterates that there is a need to really 'encourage' and 'support' the learning mentee viewing herself in a guidance role, one where she is being positive and gives praise.

She views the purpose of her role as assisting the learning mentee in making decisions. In addition, she expects her learning mentees to 'trust' and 'rely' on her and emphasises that they need to 'understand' each other. Interestingly, the learning mentor views boundaries and confidentiality as important. Critically, she views this as a friendship, explaining that it's a friendship that is going somewhere.

Certainly, in this case it is absolutely clear that the learning mentor is operating as a professional friend and is utilising key elements of my model. Interestingly, her view of success in the relationship involves giving and receiving respect. As we saw, this also ranks highly, in fact fourth, on the learning mentee questionnaire survey. In my view, there is a clear link here between what learning mentees (from the questionnaire) and learning mentors (from the case study) view as important. This indicates to me that mentoring provides a mutually beneficial relationship and clearly these elements contribute to its success.

## **Interview Two**

In this and all of the other case studies I focus on extracts rather than reproducing the whole interview(s). In this second case study, the Learning Mentor is male, in his mid-twenties and of Pakistani origin. His mentoring relationships are mainly with Pakistani male Learning Mentees. The school in which he works is an inner city Secondary school in a large Midlands area. I asked him what he saw as ‘success’ in his mentoring relationship?

### ***Learning Mentor:***

There are quite a few things. One thing is when you organise a meeting for them (mentee) for the next week and they do attend. When you get to meet someone they get to open up and tell me what their family situation is like. How many brothers and sisters they have and all that tends to come out within the second session but sometimes it doesn't, but I think the most important thing is the actual relationship opening up. That the other person is always relaxed and comfortable. They normally do open up. We do set targets and when they do come back, the relationship building is important. Reliability and honesty is too and they know that they can trust me.

### ***Question:***

What is your view of the attributes of a ‘good Learning Mentor’?

### ***Learning Mentor:***

A Learning Mentor is a ‘mentor’ that the ‘mentee’ feels completely relaxed with; someone a mentee can actually feel open to tell anything to the mentor. The attributes are ‘trustworthy’ and ‘enthusiastic’. To the mentee it is important that the mentor is eager to see them and they can ‘sense it’. ‘Honesty’, I am honest but sometimes I do tell little lies now and again but it is not to say that it is to deceive. It's just to get more information, honesty is important. They know I am as well! I am quite free with them. Committed, you've got to be very ‘committed to build a relationship’; commitment is very important, a ‘good timekeeper’. It's O.K if the mentee is late to see the mentor but the mentor should always be there first. If the relationship is not there from the start, then I can't see any point in progressing, nothing is going to be achieved.

### ***Question:***

What are the core components of the relationship that are important to the mentee?

***Learning Mentor:***

Perhaps committed to build a relationship', commitment is very important, 'good timekeeper'. It's and they do know that. They do say to me, it's not going any further, they do even say, "Are you a friend of the teachers?" At first they think they are being punished by seeing a mentor but by two sessions at the most they can see the reason why they have come to see me and it makes them feel important that they are being sent to see someone who isn't a teacher, but they don't see that straightaway.

***Question:***

What values are important?

***Learning Mentor:***

Respect for others, the importance of a good family, nice friends, not associating with the wrong kind.

***Question:***

Are you teaching them values?

***Learning Mentor:***

All I'm doing is showing them different options – at the end of the day it doesn't matter what age, it can be down to them for them to do this and to do that. So, for example, someone who is missing lessons and I would point out the importance of their lessons and whether they decide to listen or not, it's up to them. I'm not going to tell them. All I'm doing is showing them the options and directing them in the right way, but I'm not pushing them in that way

***Question:***

It sounds as though you do quite a lot of the talking?

***Learning Mentor:***

No, I'm more of a listener than a talker. Its just people do tend to tell me their problems and whatever, so I'm more of a listener than a talker and all the young people do talk a lot, so I would say I do about 40% talking and 60% listening.

***Question:***

How is it different to other sorts of relationships?



***Learning Mentor:***

Compare mentoring to friendship. Now with friendship, with a friend, I am sure I would be open with them and I'm sure the friend would be open with me, but with mentoring, I'm someone who they look up to and someone who I feel they could learn from and hope that the mentee can guide me, different paths to take. I see a mentor as a more experienced person, more experienced in life. I'm not saying he has to be older, I'm sure a younger person could be a mentor to an older person in talking about the mentor's experiences, which could help develop the relationship.

***Question:***

Do you always mentor boys?

***Learning Mentor:***

It's always boys. I think the reason for that is the school where I work. There are only a few Learning Mentors and they have done an audit of who could most benefit from seeing a mentor and the boys come up top of the list. I can relate to boys a lot more than girls.

This is because I know where they are coming from. It's only been 10 or 15 years ago that I was in school myself, so I can relate to them, and they can see that. Some of the boys but sometimes they do say that they can't fully relax, as they are not used to opening up to females, but I think that's more to do with the individual.

***Question:***

So do you think that your role-modelling behaviours for them, acting as a role model?

***Learning Mentor:***

I'm acting as a mentor and a role model, not just as a role model – a mentor. I don't think they necessarily think I wish I could be like the Learning Mentor.

***Question:***

Is there anything else that you want to say about the activity in mentoring,

***Learning Mentor:***

I think the most important thing that works is the relationship building. No-ones mentioned that the fact all these young people I mentor are boys, that's not to say that I could not mentor a girl in exactly the same way, if I can get on with the young person and the young person can get on with me then I would mentor any young person, whether they are male or female, who feel comfortable in my presence to talk about how they are feeling or talk about their whole life and if that works that is the most important thing.

***Question:***

Is the choice left to them?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes it is, but I will try to, like I said I wouldn't push them, but I would try to encourage them to make the right choice, but its not pressure, I would give the right choice, making more emphasis than the bad and just hope they go for the right option.

***Question:***

Have your mentees all been from the same cultural background as yourself?

***Learning Mentor:***

They've been Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Yemeni.

***Interpretation:***

During this interview the Learning Mentor identifies a number of the core components of the professional friendship concept and sees these as making important contributions to his mentoring relationships. He emphasises being reliable, honest, trustworthy, enthusiastic and committed to building the relationship. In addition, he felt it important for mentees to feel 'relaxed' and 'at ease' with him. In my view, being at ease implies that you can 'get on' together. Again, to me, he emphasises the need for an empathetic understanding of his mentees, having a sense of 'intuitively knowing' his mentees needs and feelings. As he describes his role, he is operating as a Professional Friend. He also sets targets and shows the mentees that there are different options to take, allowing them to choose. He emphasises that the relationship-building leads to a successful relationship. He encourages Learning Mentees to open up and this in itself is a way of encouraging the relationship to develop. Again, this indicates successful mentoring involves professional friendship. In addition, in his view, talking about the Learning Mentor's experiences develop the relationship.

In particular, he has an ability to relate to his mentees, showing that he is actively encouraging success in his relationships. Indeed, he has a clear understanding of his mentees needs and feelings. The Learning Mentor is eager to see the Learning Mentees who can 'sense it'. Sometimes, they will talk about feelings and is a good timekeeper and role model.

Again core components are being utilised extensively here. In particular, the Learning Mentor identifies a number of these are contributing to his successful mentoring relationships. He places emphasis on his own ability to be reliable, honest, trustworthy, enthusiastic and committed to building the relationship. He felt it important for Learning Mentees to feel 'relaxed' and 'at ease' with him. In my view, being at ease implies being able to 'get on' together. Indeed, in the interview he referred to the fact that the young person can get on with him and he also felt it important that he can 'get on' with them.

The Learning Mentor emphasises a number of other points to indicate the importance of the mentoring. For example, he repeated that, in his view, it was the relationship-building which led to a successful relationship. He was able to encourage Learning Mentees to open up and this was a way of encouraging the relationship to develop. Another example is that talking about the mentor's experiences seemed to help develop the professional friendship relationship.

In particular, his ability to relate to mentees suggests an empathetic understanding of them, even a sense of 'intuitive knowingness' of what they are feeling. He notes that, to the mentee, the mentor is eager to see them and can 'sense it'. On a more pragmatic note, he sets targets, shows them different options to take, listen, have respect for them and is a good timekeeper and role model. Further emphasis is placed on confidentiality and the importance of the fact that the learning mentor role is not that of a disciplinarian.

Certainly, in describing his role, he appears is operating as a professional friend, emphasising that he is encouraging success in his relationships. To me, he has a clear understanding of his mentees needs and feelings.

### **Interview Three**

This Learning Mentor is a European, white, female due to retire from her current role in school within the next twelve months. Her Learning Mentees are both male and female. This particular Learning Mentor worked previously in her school as a teacher and Head of Year with pastoral responsibilities. The Learning Mentor views her mentoring relationships as 'reciprocal', benefiting her at least as much as her mentees. She undertook the Learning Mentor, five-day, National training programme.

She also attended local development sessions and networking meetings organised and run by myself in which she was a very active participant. In her own view, the role become to her a 'way of life'. I asked her how she viewed success in mentoring:

***Learning Mentor:***

I think that for me, it's the relationships with the students. To build up a relationship of trust where they feel they can come to me if they have problems. They can ask me to deal with it with teaching staff that I have done. There are two boys particularly that the relationship has worked with. Two year eleven boys, they both were exhibiting numerous problems in year ten and these are boys that I now see everyday so the fact of seeing them shows success. Sometimes we talk about nothing; we don't necessarily talk about work or school. Sometimes they will talk to me, about feelings that they have, problems that they have or how good they feel and it's the relationship where they think of me as somebody they can trust and they can come and talk to me and that I found is very useful, and for me, in a way, having come from a pastoral background as a Head of Year. I find that mentoring is everything that you want it to do as a Pastoral Head and having the time to be able to do it, that's why I love it, I really enjoy what I am doing.

***Question:***

Is it a two way process?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes it is. I think first of all the mentor has got to have respect for the child and has got to feel that there is trust and that there are certain things that you will say and the child will or the mentee will respect that and I found that if I have divulged information at the time then that has not being spread around and it has not been that the child and has gone and said oh yes Mrs x has told me this or that and I think it has to be a two way street. If you do not respect the people that you are working with then I think you're on a hiding to nothing. That you've got to enjoy seeing them and not think oh dear it's not such and such that I'm seeing.

So yes, I think it does work both ways and I feel that I have developed a lot in the last year. My own skills and listening skills, and actually finding out more about the pupils and some of the things maybe as a teacher you don't have time to delve into. They will come and they will talk to you about all sorts. The only difficulty I've had sometimes and this is with S and he has been seen by B and is receiving some psychiatric help as well.

I sometimes feel I am a bit out of my depth but what I do then is I talk to the Senior Social Worker. S knows that I do that so I am not doing it behind his back. I am telling him what's what and she gives me the sort of help and guidance and whatever but I do let S know that I am talking to somebody else because I am concerned and he accepts it and is fine with it.

***Question:***

When you say, that you use the word 'concerned' are you talking about a relationship that involves caring?

***Learning Mentor:***

Oh absolutely, I think. Well I don't know what it's like in teaching but I certainly think for mentors you've got to care. You've got to want to do the job. You've got to want to make some kind of a difference to these students and I know that I've got two phone calls from parents today saying you used to see my child, you haven't seen them for a while because things have gone ok but I am worried about him. Can you pick them up again? I think yes, you've got to care, you cannot treat it completely dispassionately, you can't say oh yes, mentoring is a job nine to three or whatever. You've got to want the well being, you've got to want them to be successful and that's not necessarily academically successful but they have got to feel good about themselves.

They have got to feel valued and if academic success comes in as well that's a great bonus but it's the whole child. You can make some sort of a difference just by being there, just by listening, just by letting them talk to you.

***Question:***

What part does friendship play do you think?

***Learning Mentor:***

Between mentor and mentee I think if you were to say to pupils, I work with you for you to see me as a friend, I feel they would say yes because they feel that they can trust me. You build up a different sort of relationship and I think, yes the mentee has got to be able to say yeah, this is somebody I trust. This is somebody I respect, this person is my friend. So I think it's part of the development of the whole person.

***Question:***

If we can say there are elements that represent success what are they?

***Learning Mentor:***

One of the things that I was noticing was that some of the students that were being referred seemed to have got tremendous emotional difficulties. There is one boy referred to me by the School Nurse as having an obsessive disorder and everything has got to be right for him and so I've picked him up. Another parent has phoned to say they are worried about him, I am taking him to the Doctor next week but can we pick him up again and talk to him and I think there is a sort of overlap of counsellor and mentor. I've never actually been on a counselling course and I think that's something for my own development. I should like to do. The one thing that I do find as a mentor is sometimes I get quite lonely I would find it useful, I think, if I have more contact with the other mentors. I enjoy the third Monday sessions because you get to meet people you're going to be able to talk issues through with, but for me this is the twilight of my career. I don't know how far away my retirement is but this is wonderful. I really enjoyed working with the kids, working with them on a one to one and I also get some self referrals. They come to me.

I think first of all I am a more caring person. I think that I feel by working with them in the way I have done certainly over the last two years that I actually feel my own feelings towards the kids are better and more caring and I think as well, that in talking to them about the positive things that you can achieve, that you are able, that you must get rid of these negative thoughts, that is having an effect on me as well and so instead of thinking I can't do all this because I got this and that, it's a case of yes, you can. Sit down organise, prioritize get it done. So, I am actually becoming a little more organized myself because that's what I am trying to do with the kids is to get them to organize and to set themselves goals and I am finding that those are having an effect on me as well. I actually feel I am a better person. Yeah, I do, I actually do since mentoring and all the things that have happened and whatever I actually feel, I am a better person then I was 18 months ago.

***Question:***

Anything you want to add?

***Learning Mentor:***

I know not all mentors work in the same way but for me it has to be the personal approach. I could not do it any other way. I find as well that I am picking up all sorts of things.

I mean I took a student to hospital yesterday; she's been drinking with her friends and they had gone an hour earlier because she been drinking and taken some pills and the hospital were concerned and we ended up actually talking to a man who was suffering from liver failure and was dying because of the amount that he drank and I found that a little hairy but never the less very useful and hopefully a sixteen year old will listen to what you say to them.

***Question:***

Do you think the experience of mentoring has made you, a better person?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think I'm calmer and more understanding, instead of if there is a problem and instead of shouting and jumping up and down. I now find that I sit down, talk quietly, whereas 18 months ago, I would have been yelling from here to kingdom come and I find that generally, I am calmer and that it's good you done this and all the rest, it's like yeah, 'lets sit down and talk about it'. Sometimes, I shout but then very much as a controlled thing.

It's almost as if a student expects it and you can say to them 'sit down', I am not shouting,

I am not jumping up and down because that's not going to get us anywhere and so I feel that perhaps I am a little more understanding.

At home as well, I found that out because I've got two teenagers and so I am trying that with them and I find that just think the whole experience and what I do is like that.

***Interpretation:***

This Learning Mentor clearly sees mentoring as a relationship, based upon trust in which mentees felt free to talk about feelings. In my view, this learning mentor had a deep understanding of mentoring. Her pastoral background seemed to fit well with the role which she really enjoyed. She found that her mentoring role required her to give mentees respect and trust. In addition, she felt that the role made her a more caring person. What she found concurs with the views of the mentees completing the questionnaire. They also valued caring, respect and trust as important factors.

These are processes that are at the core of a reciprocal mentoring relationship. Again, this is another Learning Mentor who believes that it is the relationship that makes a difference to the Learning Mentee. Overall, the first three interviews make clear that the most important aspect of the Learning Mentor's role is that there is a relationship with individual learning mentees.

However, as we have seen previously, this type of relationship is different to others. These mentors are acting as professional friends, exhibiting most of the core components identified by me. My concept also suggests that the role of Learning Mentor involves mentoring in its broadest, generalised, sense. In particular, it involves building up a relationship of trust and this is a core component common to all types of mentoring.

The Learning Mentor continually deals with problems involving feelings. These mentors are clear that mentoring is a relationship involving respect as well as trust. Again, this is an essential core component of mentoring and a crucial feature of my concept. However, this particular Learning Mentor identifies the relationship is a two-way street which involving listening skills and showing concern about the mentee. She argues that Learning Mentors have got to care and caring was valued by all the learning mentees and, indeed, by the mentors in my previous research in the National Probation.

In addition, this Learning Mentor emphasises that you have got to want the mentee to be successful and to feel good about himself or herself as a 'whole person'. In addition, she believes that mentoring contributes to the development of the whole person and that there is an overlap with mentoring of counselling. She also wants her mentees to see her as a friend.

So, she takes a personal approach to support and giving backup. In her view, she is somebody who can help them to overcome their problems sometimes just by talking and listening.

All of this is consistent with the findings from the mentee questionnaires and from my previous National Probation research that led to the development of the professional friendship conceptual construction. I view these core components are at play in all the professional friendships of mentors.

One of the most striking features of this interview is the self development which the Learning Mentor has undergone as a result of her role This Learning Mentor recognises that she is a more caring person as a result of her mentoring experience. In particular, she has become more open and honest towards her mentees; some of whom self refer. She is also better able to organise and sets own goals. In her own view, she is actually a better person, calmer and more understanding.

So, instead of shouting and jumping up and down, she finds that she can sit down and talk quietly. This emphasis on the self development involved in mentoring for mentors is consistent with the findings of my earlier research on the B.E.A.T Project (1995) mentors.



## **Interview Four**

This Learning Mentor is an African-Caribbean female in her early forties. She currently works in a secondary school, although previously she worked in a primary school. In her case, mentoring relationships include mentoring parents of the pupils she mentors at her school. She says about success in her role:

### ***Learning Mentor:***

Well, I think, I measure success at the end of the mentoring period. After the review I discuss it with the pupil, the mentee and with the teachers and they are saying they recognise the change. I also recognise the changes in the mentees myself and it shows on the records I made and the notes that I make weekly. Also by asking the mentee how they feel about the process. Whether they feel they've benefited. I also have the parents in, because the parents have been involved with the initial process. They also put down what they'd like their child to get out of the mentoring process. So we've a measure at the end, when we review it, the parents said, 'well yes, I think that my child has benefited from the mentoring programme.' I think it is successful because I am working with the pupils on a one to one basis. I am able to build a relationship with the pupil, with the mentee because the room that I use is not as a classroom. I've deliberately made the room a friendlier environment. The mentee's, get an appointment card. They know when, well they don't really know when they see me because I know what my work load is like, so they don't have a prior meeting.

I go through my week and I know when I can fit them in but I always see the teacher before hand and find out whether it's ok to take that pupil out (of lesson). If it's ok, I go in the beginning of the lesson so it's not disruptive to the rest of the class before the mentee starts working. It's a half an hour session minimum each time I see the mentee but if there have been any problems have occurred between the last appointment and this, and then it could be a longer session because apart from what I am looking at, which is their targets of the pervious week, I also bring in what's happened in school. Sometimes the teachers give me feedback and say, well this has happened, or that, so as they are on a mentoring programme I feel it's my duty to discuss things with them so that they know that I am keeping close ears with the teachers and I can bring that into the mentoring programme. So if they are messing up, I know that they are messing up, but I also know conversely when they are doing well because the teachers say so and so are doing well and I give them that feedback. So I think it's important that they have a positive and negative feedback so they know as well that I do not just focus in on the negatives.

I will give them praise when it's due and if they achieve their agreed target, I also give them praise. If they are only been able to achieve one, we discuss why the others were unachievable. Sometimes they are the same targets for the following week. The other reason why success happens I think, is when the pupil has got a target, they know what they are working towards.

I've got the assessments from all the teachers that teach them and I give them that information. I would give them a flavour of what the staff is saying about them and in some lessons you know some subjects are going to be good because they got a good relationship with that teacher. I am giving parents advice on parenting skills because sometimes their parenting skills have broken down with their own child. They are at a loss because sometimes the problems the mentee has in school, is the same type of problem the parent is having at home with their child. So, I suggest some strategies that could be used at home. Sometimes the parents feel totally desperate, they've given up on that child and I encourage them that they can't give up on their own child because if they give up who else is there for that child. But sometimes it's because they've got a lot of other responsibilities and you know their child's education is a moment in time they have to be put on the back burner, because they have got other priorities and I understand that but I encourage them when their child is failing in school and perhaps if they gave a more positive input to their child's education, their child might do much better in school.

I was mentoring with the parents because, when I was working with them, I was getting them to understand the educational system better. I did that by organising curriculum meetings to tell them what was going on and what was taught and helping them to build a better relationship with the teacher. They now understand the systems; they feel confident about approaching the teachers.

They (parents) approach the teachers and the child starts doing really well in school. So, I think they always felt comfortable in coming to me and sometimes if they had problems I would see them on a one to one basis

***Question:***

Do you think your role is caring for children in a parenting sense?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think the mentor-mentee relationship is a special, a unique relationship which is not the same as a teacher-pupil relationship. The pupils know that I am not a teacher; they know the relationship that I have with them is different because I am not just talking to them solely about educational issues. I bring in their personal issues. I suppose I get down to the nitty gritty of why they're not succeeding in at school and I am honest. I am friendly, I am open, I am warm towards the pupils, and I think it helps to have a good relationship in order that the pupils can talk and can trust you. I don't shout at them because I don't feel that would help them. I talk to them just like how I am talking to you now in a very calm manner. I think my relationship as a mentor with my mentee isn't a power relationship.

I am a professional and an adult working with a pupil in the school but I see it more as an equal type of relationship because sometimes when I am talking to the mentee's, I bring some of my personal experiences and talk about what happened when I was at school. You know, you don't have to like all the teacher's but it's not about liking the teachers, it's about their learning and I think it makes them realize that you know you're just the same, you perhaps had a hard time as well in school you know.

It didn't put me off, you still got on, did something, achieved something in the system. You know what it's all about and sometimes when the parents are unhappy about things, they do phone me up and ask me what their child isn't doing, blah blah or my child is doing this. So I've also got that relationship going on with the parent as well and it's not always about the negative with their child. I do give them the positive. I think it has to be a balance.

***Question:***

Why do you think your relationship is successful?

***Learning Mentor:***

Well, from what some of the mentees have said to me, they like coming to see me because they feel I listen to them and to what they've got to say.

I give them constructive feedback, I also give them strategies in order to help them in the classroom and what I am really doing with them is their homework, revising for their SATs and so on. They feel that what I give them is different to what they are getting or not getting from the teachers. But, I just think the nature of my role is that I have got time. Half an hour minimum to talk to a child on a one to one basis on a weekly basis I think is really good.

I've had the time to build a relationship with the mentees and because they feel that they can trust me and my relationship is different because they know they can come and see me whenever they are feeling overwhelmed or they've got a problem. I never say to them 'go away, I've got no time'. I think my role is as a professional in a school. I can go and talk to the Head of Year or to the teacher concerned and say what this pupil has said.

*Interpretation:*

In interview four, the Learning Mentor viewed her role as involving contact with the parents, teachers and the 'whole child'. In her view, the impact of her mentoring is holistic and based on 'helping'. In addition, she emphasises that mentoring offers the Learning Mentee support both at home and school.

The Learning Mentor's approach is more likely to break down communication barriers between Learning Mentees, their families, teachers, peers and the school because of her holistic approach. Sometimes, removing barriers to learning involves recognising that parents can be a barrier to the Learning Mentee's progress. However, if the Learning Mentor befriends and mentors the parents, then this has a positive effect and can lift and remove the barriers to development in school and out.

This Learning Mentor shows that the role can involve mentoring both Learning Mentees and a range of adults. This emphasises that their role is not only complex and multifaceted, but also involves transferable skills.

As an example, in the interview she has emphasised that she is honest, friendly, open and warm. She takes a professional approach to her work as an adult in a school. She sets targets, gives praise, working on a one to one basis in a friendly environment. She is managing change and offering some strategies to encourage Learning Mentees to succeed. To summarise, she views her Learning Mentoring relationship as a unique relationship which she has helped to build in order that the pupils can talk to her and trust her. She doesn't shout at them as she feels that would not help them. In her view, the relationships have also changed her as she is now very calm. Her relationships are now more open, involving an exchange of information. She brings to them some of her personal experiences and talks about what happened to her when she was at school. She views her mentoring relationships as being about learning, listening, giving constructive feedback and strategies for homework, revision and so on. In particular, the relationship is about giving time to build a relationship of trust.

## **Interview five**

The Learning Mentor is a Caucasian female in her thirties. She is a qualified primary school teacher appointed on secondment to the role of learning mentor in a Church of England primary school. Her mentees are in year six and are ten and eleven year olds, both boys and girls. I asked her why she felt mentoring was successful:

### ***Learning Mentor:***

I think the two main aspects to that they are I feel first and foremost giving a child some time. I get them to feel valued and a bit special perhaps. I feel that's very important just in itself. Also having the time for someone to talk, if they need to, having that access availability is crucial. I feel the second strand is allowing children to have a voice to express emotion that perhaps they weren't even aware that they were experiencing. I think once you can start talking about your feelings you can then start understanding where they come from, how you can cope with some of the things that are perhaps a negative to you that they could be experiencing. Just helping children see the effect that their behaviour has on themselves and on other people, and working towards positive choices to change the areas that they're not happy with and to work on their strengths.

### ***Question:***

Do you offer them an alternative behaviour?

### ***Learning Mentor:***

Yes we talk about role modelling. Perhaps a silly example but an example I will use, one particular mentee of mine kept getting into trouble because he kept standing on his teachers feet and knocking into her and it was absolutely driving the teacher crazy. We actually talked about having an invisible friend in front of him and perhaps, "if I am your teacher, come up to me with your work and show me were your going to stop so your invisible friend isn't getting squashed". It sounds silly; the boy is actually six years old but it was an area that was causing his teacher friction, he was getting into trouble for it and it was indicative of a lot of behaviour from him. He was very unaware of his physical presence or physical awareness.

I think it needs lots of reinforcement because you're trying to change something that's been ingrained to the extent that he is not aware of what he is doing, but I think if you know the

smart targets have to be specific, achievable, manageable and constant reinforcement and praise when he succeeds and do most things. I think gradually it becomes less of a conscious thing that he has to think about more of a change of behaviour.

***Question:***

What other types of things help?

***Learning Mentor:***

Trust, honesty, being able to be open, being able to know that I believe in the mentee and vice versa so if there is a mistake or if they do something they regret afterwards well ok you know we'll try again, we'll do something different. I think as far as the relationship goes, I need to be careful that they don't become over dependent. I need to think carefully about an exiting procedure and how once that relationship is established and the child is progressing satisfactorily and achieving the targets set for them that they know that I am still there for them but gradually bit by bit you know they need to be independent of me as a mentor to them.

***Question:***

What sort of skills would you say?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think the ability to be an active listener, to be able to, to listen carefully without interrupting but being able to absorb what's being said, the ability to communicate with the person to affirm you understand what they are saying, the ability to see a variety of approaches and strategies that somebody might be able to use to get them through a situation that they find difficult. I also think probably being quite non-judgemental. I mean I know that's a really difficult thing to say, but I think you know not to see things in black and white, not right and wrong. It's different choices that people make and it's healthy that people do. I am very interested to receive more information myself, I feel that I can see where I would like to go, and I'd like the sort of reinforcement and additional knowledge to help me get there, I am really talking about counselling skills, about greater strategies, things like anger management.

A lot of the things I am doing at the moment I am doing through past experience that I had myself and also through, I was going to say common sense, like I got a feeling of what I need to be doing, so I think just for me to have a greater perspective.

I've read books and you know talked to various people but I think I just have a bigger perspective of counselling and various behaviour strategies that would be useful to me and I would find that very interesting as well. I think learning mentoring is a great job that I am very privileged to do. Genuinely, I have a real value and am able to have a real impact on children in school.

*Interpretation:*

This Learning Mentor saw success as involving giving the mentee time to encourage them to feel valued and a bit special. Certainly, she considered it important to use the time to allow the mentee to talk and to give them access to her.

The second priority for success is allowing Learning Mentees to have a voice to express their emotion; even if they are unaware they are doing so. In the Learning Mentor's view, once you can start talking about your feelings you can then start understanding them. To me, this implies that the Learning Mentor is interested in her Learning Mentees enough to care about them. This may be something that the Learning Mentees are not receiving to the same extent from others, such as parents, teachers, peers etc. Giving time certainly implies that there is something special and valued in the relationship. Again, giving a 'voice' involves the Learning Mentor being prepared to actively listen carefully enough to hear the Learning Mentees' views and respect them.

In addition, the Learning Mentor sees it as crucial that, by her doing this, her mentees' emotional intelligence is more likely to grow, helping him/her to develop greater understanding of his/her own feelings. For this reason, the Learning Mentor is bringing counselling skills in other mentoring. She is using behaviour strategies and anger management techniques to help and support her Learning Mentees. This indicates to me that this Learning Mentor's role involves being non-judgemental and an active listener. I view, this Learning Mentor is able to listen carefully without interrupting and to absorb what's being said by the Learning Mentee while also being able to communicate that she has an understanding of what the mentee is saying.

In addition to this, the mentor is demonstrating the ability to see a variety of approaches and strategies to help her mentee. It seems to me that, in this case, the Learning Mentor's role involves trust, honesty, being able to be open, being able to believe in the mentee and clearly trying to help change to occur. The strategies she uses to achieve this involve setting smart targets and role modelling.

## **Interview Six**

The learning mentor is a white male in his forties who works in a Catholic secondary school. Again, my question was: what do you think is success in mentoring?

### ***Learning Mentor:***

I don't think you can generalize it. I think what I've learnt is that success to me personally is measured in different ways with different mentees. I went in with an agenda of being advised from the Head. I've got to stick to year eleven because they're crucial. As it's turned out, I majored on year seven and eight because they are difficult years. There is a lot of bullying going on so I have taken a lot of time out to develop myself especially to year seven because to me success would be to be a comfort, be a bolt hole, a hide away to one year seven who's been bullied in the past, bullied in the playground talking about what's going on, maybe visiting his parents which I've done and then he knows there is somebody on his side in school in this new building that he goes to everyday. So that to me, I already feels good about the fact that I know a lot of year sevens come to me at dinner times and break time to get out of the playground to get out of the rush and tumble of school life and have times, that to me is success with the year seven. With the year eights, they're getting a bit naughty. They're a very bad group, very bad setting year eights. Success to me is having meetings with certain year eight pupils.

Watching them in class, watching them perform in form, monitoring their behaviour, making notes and then getting them back in my office and talking things through, pointing things out to them, setting targets and seeing it work. It doesn't always work. Mentoring, doesn't always work. But I do know when it does work it's on different levels.

You can't actually put a hand on it as it comes in at different levels. I have to go and see parents and the parents then have a word with the child. The child comes back to me the next day and says "yeah I realize now what I've done wrong". That's your age. Year nine's I haven't had a great deal of bad behaviour in year nines. I think I've encouraged a lot of people who are at the top of the class.

### ***Question:***

This idea of friendship in the relationship, does that matter?



***Learning Mentor:***

Well, I think I have got to be a friend first and foremost. For my talk when I get a pupil in for the first time is, I spell out the confidentiality and I really do hammer home these points. I am not a teacher, these four walls are confidential and I think I have to lie down the real good things about mentoring and then it may take a couple or three meetings before they actually come out and they treat me as a friend. An example yesterday, a guy called X. He's got trouble at home; he's been in big trouble in school. He smokes a lot and he actually opened up to me yesterday and he started smiling and started talking about things. X is in year ten and I saw him yesterday. He's got problems with behaviour in classrooms. He gets sent out. He asked me to help him stop smoking. It took a lot of talking to him; I got a lot of stuff out of him. Before yesterday he felt comfortable with me, he felt comfortable enough with me to say please don't tell anybody but I fancy this girl in year eleven.

He told me everything and he said you're not going to tell anybody are you and I said no I am not going to tell anybody, I am your friend. He said yes, I know you are and that sent me home with a great big smile because I thought again, that's what I'm aiming for. I am aiming to be looked at as a friend because they can come to me with any problem. If people see me as a father figure, as a brother what have you, an uncle I don't know, I don't mind. As long as they come and they can talk and off load that's the main thing.

***Question:***

Tell me about the relationship, what does it involve when you're developing a relationship with your mentee's.

***Learning Mentor:***

My attitude is that whatever I do with a child from the first meeting, I send a card to them in the register and that child receives the card, that's the beginning of a relationship with the child. From that point on I have to be seen to be totally reliable. I have to be available for him. Not only when the time on the card says but I've got to do my very best to fit him in if he wants to see me at the drop of a hat without an appointment. I've got to be reliable when I am speaking to him.

I got to be reliable right down to the detail of eye contact; I've got to be reliable in my attention to him. Every impression I give to that child has got to be positive. It's got to be reliable. When the phone goes I don't answer it, when somebody knocks at the door I don't

answer it. I've got to be reliable to my attention to that child so after a couple of meetings, he knows I am interested in him. Whatever I do, if I go and speak to a teacher on his behalf about a certain matter, I have to show him that I am making a note or her that I am making a note. I will go and see that teacher and I go back to the pupil with a response as promised. So that pupil builds up a good impression of friendship of somebody perhaps who has never done that before gone to such detail. If I say I will speak to his mum and I not talk about such and such thing, I definitely won't and then the further down the line we get the more dependable he sees me and it's a bit of everything. It's a bit of a father, it's a bit of a brother it's a bit of everything really but it's a unique relationship. I can't actually say what it is. It's something I wish I had when I was a child, but I do put myself out for the mentee's and I know it's difficult. I know sometimes I do have to say I am sorry; I haven't got time now because I am seeing another pupil. Even that shows a degree of responsibility.

***Question:***

Do they think that you believe in them?

***Learning Mentor:***

Oh yes, I have to believe in every child. I do believe in every child and when they tell me something even if it sounds crazy, even if it sounds irrational, even if it's a fabrication of the truth I have to believe in them because then if I find out they were lying then I am the line in regards to the truth. I can again take their hand as it were in conversation and lead them around to looking at their statement and then reevaluate what they said to me. So there again, over a period of time they can have be totally comfortable because they know it's confidential. They know all that I say is true. I am keeping to my word and then they tend to put themselves out for me.

***Question:***

Do you think the relationship is about caring?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes, it's definitely caring and caring comes into part of the whole thing because if a mentor is not putting himself out for the mentee there is no caring there. I went, I took a year seven home to his mum and dad to get his P.E kit because if he turned up to P.E that afternoon then

he would have got into trouble and he talked it over with me. He didn't actually ask me, I suggested it.

So I took him home and while I was there I spoke to his mum and dad for five minutes and he saw that I cared about him because I was praising him in front of his mum and dad. So that little episode helped him practically and I hope I helped him domestically.

***Question:***

And finally, how has this role had an impact on you as a person?

***Learning Mentor:***

It's totally blown away anything I've ever done before. This is the best job I've had and it's the happiest I've ever been and I've been around in various parts of Industry and Education before. I had a bad experience in my previous school. It took me about a couple of months at least to realize I was trusted in this job and when I knew now that my Head teacher now trusted me to do anything, it made my shoulders even broader and my chest stood out even more because the confidence I've got in my school is great and it's great to know that I get positive feedback from the teachers and the Head. It's a lovely comfortable school.

I drive a minibus, because it's going to help the school for a day out or something and I don't see that as a big deal. I just find I am part of a family and anything I can do to have an input in that family in the course of the day in the school I don't care if it's not on my contract of employment, I'll do it because it's for the good of the school and it's for the good of the children and I feel part of the family. My self-esteem has gone up. I try to get people's self esteem up when they come to see me. I try to increase their self-esteem, my self-esteem has gone up and I want to do more in the school. I've got to do mediation. I keep doing ok it's going to go from strength to strength. So to answer to your question, it's done me the power of good being a learning mentor.

***Interpretation:***

This Learning Mentor views each mentee relationship as 'unique' (Clutterbuck 2001). In addition, he sees that success involves different things in relation to each individual relationship.

Similarly to others, he views 'time' as critical to successful relationships. Consequently, this Learning Mentor uses behavioural modification techniques to help mentees learn and change. He also helps support the mentee's parents to better support their child.

Here, he is utilising a holistic approach to support the Learning Mentee in the context of their family. This approach supports the Learning Mentee inside and outside of school. To me, in this case, the Learning Mentor role is one of traditional mentoring, as described by Shea (1992) who views mentoring as multifaceted and complex.

Once again, this suggests that the Learning Mentor role involves a common core of components (professional friendship) that is transferable from one relationship to another and from one type of mentoring to another. In this case, the Learning Mentor is mentoring parents in a similar manner to the way he is mentoring the student. He views his success as involving creating a form of comfort, or a bolthole: a hide away from the bully.

Certainly, his role involves encouragement and friendship. Of course, this is within a context of confidentiality that encourages the Learning Mentee to open up and talk about things knowing that his/her Learning Mentor is totally reliable and available for them, not only in prearranged sessions, but also without an appointment. Interestingly, the Learning Mentor is reflexive, suggesting, for example, that every impression given to the Learning Mentee should be positive, even down to the detail of ensuring eye contact to reinforce the fact that the mentor is paying giving attention to the mentee. Here, the mentor is emphasising the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship.

The Learning Mentor must ensure that that the Learning Mentee knows that he is interested in him/her as this is the key to building up a good relationship based on friendship. The Learning Mentor also benefited from the mentoring experience.

In his view, an important aspect of the relationship is that he is trusted in this job, by his employer as well as his mentees, so that, as he put it, this meant his 'shoulders (were) even broader and my chest stood out' with the confidence it bestowed in him. Feeling such trust made him also feel part of the (school) family, which, in turn, raised his own self-esteem. Learning from this experience, the learning aims to get people's self esteem up when they come to see him.

### **Interview Seven**

The Learning Mentor, is a committed Christian and in her early forties. She is a white, European, female. Before taking up the post of Learning Mentor, she was a secondary school teacher.

In addition, she is a qualified student counsellor. In her current role, she is working as a Learning Mentor in a high performing secondary school. I asked her to describe success in her mentoring relationships.

***Learning Mentor:***

I think 'relationship' is the key word as far as I'm concerned and if I am honest it works in terms of how secure and how honest the relationship is that I build up with young people. Success can then be measured by how much movement they are able to make because of the relationship in which somebody really believes in them, and encourages them to move on. There are some relationships I would say are successful, but it may be they have not moved on.

***Question:***

Do you want to give me an example?

***Learning Mentor:***

I've got one or two. I'm working with at the moment whose behaviour in class is very poor in one or two subjects. Also their behaviour in the school community is very poor out of lessons and very disruptive and so on. In fact, this morning I discovered that one girl has received another day of being put in isolation from other students because of another incident she's been involved in. When we met this week, I was challenging her quite hard about what she was doing because of some of her behaviour, and the relationship I have with her has had lots of ups and downs because she has a very volatile character. This gets her into big trouble, but I still regard it as a successful relationship, because it has endured. We have worked together now for about 15 months and in that time, she has got very angry with me and tried to opt out but she then came back and I feel it's the quality of the relationship we have established that has enabled her to come back, even though sometimes she is angry with me, or she has done something daft and wants to tell me about it.

***Question:***

Tell me about your relationship

***Learning Mentor:***

I think she knows that I like her and she gets a lot of messages that other people don't. I have had to make it very explicit that the reason that I'm challenging is because I care about what's happening. There's a very interpersonal commitment, I think, that actually makes it strong.

I think the fact that she has undivided attention from me when we meet is really important and I think at some deep level, she does believe that I have her best interests at heart. In fact, she made a fairly serious suicide threat during last year and I told her I would have to act upon it, because I believed what she was telling me.

***Question:***

Would you describe yourself in a particular role?

***Learning Mentor:***

It's probably closer to 'friend' than the others and yet it's clearly adult/teenager. I think it's more adult/friend really.

***Question:***

And what's that friendship relationship built on?

***Learning Mentor:***

Trust is fundamental to any relationship I think. It's about clear a commitment – about giving time – about that time being devoted to you, this is your time. I think it's a knowledge that they have access to me at other times in an emergency and that's not been abused, but it has happened that in a crisis they will come and find me. They know I have a room that's available to them at lunchtimes if they want to come, so there's access and yet, they have their own half-hour slot each week that's theirs. I think there's a level of self-disclosure.

***Question:***

So are you actually teaching them ways of changing things?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes, I think so, ways of knowing they have a choice first of all, I think often, they don't see themselves as having any choice about how they behave, or what reactions they have, so my first aim would be yes, discovering that you are making choices all the time and knowing that you have choices you can make and then, quite often it's about brainstorming and finding new ways of being, that they feel they could own, so it's not me telling them, "you should behave like this" it's "what are the options?" "which one could you do?" "What could you experiment with?" "Could you take a risk with trying something different?" Then looking at the implications of that internally, socially, in your peer group, in the classroom, around the school or in the family sometimes.

***Question:***

So what would they say they have learned from you?

***Learning Mentor:***

I'd hope there would be something about not about being victims, but about their experience and how they could take a risk and that even though that's a big part of going into your teens; it's also a big part going on into your 40's.

***Interpretation:***

This Learning Mentor believes that her success is based on the nature of her mentoring 'relationship'. As such, most important to her is how honest the relationship is and how the Learning Mentor builds it up with young people. She contends that success can be measured by how much movement the Learning Mentee makes because of that relationship and how much the mentor believes in the Learning Mentee. Clearly, it is critical in her view to encourage the Learning Mentees to move on. However, it is also crucial that she cares about what is happening. In particular, she argues that there is a very interpersonal commitment within her relationships. She emphasises this because she thinks that it is the reason the relationships are so strong. Indeed, by giving undivided attention to her Learning Mentees, she is showing them they are really important and this builds commitment between them.

The Learning Mentor goes further, stressing that, at a deeper level, she believes she has the Learning Mentees best interests at heart. In my view, this strong sense of purpose and belief is rooted in her own personal religious beliefs and values.

During her interview, she acknowledged that she believes what her Learning Mentees tell her. She argues that, although the relationship is between an adult and a teenager, it is probably closer to a friendship.

In addition, trust is seen as fundamental to this, and indeed any, relationship. In particular, it's clearly about commitment and especially about the mentor devoting time to the Learning Mentee. The Learning Mentor is sincere and keen to ensure that her mentees have access to her at other times than formal sessions, particularly if there is an emergency.

In summary, this Learning Mentor is operating a professional friendship using a number of core components, including: suspension of judgement; a sense of humour; trust; confidentiality; empathy; and encouragement. As such, my concept helps me to better understand the role of Learning Mentors.

### **Interview Eight**

This white, European, male, Learning Mentor is in his early thirties and works part-time as a Learning Mentor in a secondary school. In addition, he works part-time for a voluntary sector organisation working with secondary age students who have been excluded from schools. I asked him how he viewed success in his relationships:

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

From my perspective it would be positive remarks from teachers, about improvement in their attitude or work, and also a smile on the Mentee's face wanting to do it, rather than being forced to do it. That's how I would measure my success.

#### ***Question:***

What is it that puts a smile on the Mentee's face?

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

Knowing they've achieved something, feeling confident that they have done it themselves, rather than been forced to do it and sometimes, self-realisation with some of the older kids. They've always thought they couldn't do it, or that's how they are expected to behave, but sometimes even if it's for a short minute, when they do something different, they find it quite odd and amusing.



For instance, I was in a maths lesson with a lad and he looked down at his book and said, “I don’t do this much work” and he had done two pages of maths, and I think it was the only two pages he had done all year and he was quite surprised with how much work he had done.

***Question:***

What happens when you meet him and you are in a mentoring situation?

***Learning Mentor:***

I ask him what he wants to talk about – if he’s got any problems and try and work out those problems, give him other options to achieve the results, rather than going down the road that he may have done previously, sort of change in tact for him and that’s a very difficult job, but when they do realise that they can do it, its quite satisfying.

***Question:***

Do you think you are teaching him anything?

***Learning Mentor:***

Social skills and personal interaction skills, I think that’s the main thing. Personally, if they’ve got that the rest can follow, rather than on the educational side of it. How to think about their actions, think about how they perceive the situation and how they behave.

***Question:***

What do you think matters to your Mentees in your relationship with them?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think they need to trust, you need to be reliable, and that matters to them and honest as well. Especially some of the younger ones, they tend to go into “I’m not telling the truth, I’ll spin a story” and as the relationship develops they’ll start that and then they’ll say, “Oh I’ll just tell you the truth.” So, if I’m being truthful with them, they’re reflecting that back on me. It’s quite interesting, but what makes it difficult you only get little glimpses of it. Its not like a magic wand, the changes are so subtle that you go home at the end of the day thinking, “oh, what a terrible day”, but if you really reflect deeper on it, you then think “well he did say that.” As I was saying earlier, you put such a lot of energy into it and you get such a little bit back, that’s what makes it tiring. You are not getting the energy back.

***Question:***

What skills are you using in your mentoring relationships?

***Learning Mentor:***

I'm a very adaptable person myself, I can adapt to a large variety of situations and I try and teach the Mentees "adaptability".

It can bring skills, rather than just going to get what you want, how you want it, manipulate yourself to get the best out. . I'd like to say I'm a very reliable person, I don't like letting people down, so I do get frustrated with them if I ask them to do something and its within their realms to do it and they are capable of doing it, if they don't do it, I do get frustrated with them, and they pick that up from me and I let them know I'm frustrated. I know you need to be positive all the time, but I think a healthy challenge benefits and it gives them. Structure as well, as boundaries and structure, rather than just going off like loose cannons, saying, "yeah you can do that, `that's ok, we'll support you, we won't say anything bad about that. I believe if you challenge healthily and not detrimental, don't put people down by challenging. They get that structure and framework and I feel that a lot of them haven't got that.

***Question:***

Do they think of you as a friend?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes, especially the ones that I've been seeing for a while, yes it is more of a friendship and when that friendship starts, the trust begins to develop and the friendship develops. Yes – it's a very slow process, I've found. This learning mentor emphasises that he is helping the learning mentees by being reliable, which he realises is very important to those learning mentees. The importance of such reliability was also clear from the mentees' questionnaire responses discussed in Chapter Four. Indeed, I would argue that reliability is a characteristic found commonly in all successful mentoring relationships and is a generic characteristic of all good mentoring.

***Interpretation:***

This Learning Mentor also argues that it is important that both mentor and mentee in a successful relationship need to be honest and truthful. In addition, the Learning Mentor recognises that there are other core components in a successful professional friendship mentoring relationship, such as the need to really reflect and work out problems by looking at the options.

Whilst the changes in the mentee, and indeed in the relationship, are often subtle, there are, nonetheless, changes occurring and, in my view, recognition of change is a key indicator of a successful relationship. The Learning Mentor emphasises that successful mentors need to be adaptable and to recognise that they can be taught by the Learning Mentees. He argues that his role involves encouraging and motivating his mentees to help them do well and sees gaining feedback from teachers as an important way of gauging the relationship's success.

He appears to be well understood by the teachers with whom he works and his relationship with them is good enough for him to receive their feedback. By involving teacher's feedback, the teacher and the learning mentor are able to see the benefits the mentee of their collaboration.

This also suggests that it is important for Learning Mentors to work closely with colleagues, otherwise they may sometimes feel isolated or marginalized in a school, especially if they are the only Learning Mentor employed there.

The value of the friendship with the mentee which starts when the trust begins to develop between them is emphasised by this Learning Mentor who is teaching both social skills and personal interaction skills. This skills teaching is undertaken in a structured environment where the mentor is being positive all the time, but still challenges the mentee in a healthy way.

### **Interview Nine**

The Learning Mentor is an African-Caribbean male in his late thirties working in an inner city school on the edge of the city centre. The school draws 90% of its students from ethnic minorities and a high proportion of teachers and other support staff are also from minority ethnic backgrounds. The Learning Mentor previously worked in schools in London as a Learning Mentor and has extensive knowledge and experience from that previous work. He was asked to explain success within his mentoring relationships:

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

I do role-modelling to show the child how obstinate or disruptive they are because they can't see it. It doesn't always work the first time, you have to keep on repeating it, and it's an ongoing thing. I feel that kids have to know that there's going to be sanctions to whatever crime or whatever they got up to, there's got to be a comeback, so we may have clear guidelines. I don't make the school rules, but I help implement them along the right lines.

There are rules for everybody in every walk of life and this is what a lot of kids through the work I do with them help me get across. Young J was a classic in that case because he wasn't afraid to admit that he had behavioural problems, but at least he doesn't have to sing it from the rooftops that he's not that important, because he is realising how he ought to be behaving more appropriately and in order to do that you've got to give them strategies, plans – you can't just keep talking, you've got to show them other alternatives, but if they are still not then hitting the target, then you would have to say "I'm going to get your parents involved" and they are a bold link in any mentoring that you do.

Once they are on board, they are singing from the same song sheet as yourself and it's a like a 3 way thing – parent-child, parent-child. Learning can't take place if you have an attitude towards maybe a member of staff – we've got to break that barrier first before any learning." Then, back to the beginning again – its time – it all takes time and I think "tongue-in cheek" I think today its your own personality – I can't write down my work with some of these kids, but they respect me and they know me.

***Question:***

What do you think you are teaching them?

***Learning Mentor:***

To be respectful, be respectful to themselves, teaching them why it's hard outside, why they've got to have these social skills.

I'm not talking about academic skills, but social skills to get them ready for the big world, because unlike when they do get into the big world, I'm teaching them that people are going to be patient with you, there's going to be stumbling blocks, they're going to face discrimination, sexism, so I think part of my work is teaching them.

***Question:***

What really matters in mentoring?

***Learning Mentor:***

Believing in what you are doing because there are some days, you go home you despair, you think, “I’m not making any progress with this child “ You come back the next day and you think, “still despair – lets persevere, keep going” and then it may not even have the school environment, you can be walking through the city centre and that pupil, with his parent, will shout out, “hello,” and so respectfully then because they have realised I’m normal, I’m not just the mentor in school, I’m also the same person outside and they are a lot more confident when they come back to school. The first conversation they have with you, “Oh I saw you Sir up town” and I didn’t ignore them or blank them out. That then has broken down something how they may have seen me initially.

***Question:***

Is there anything you want to add?

***Learning Mentor:***

Why wasn’t mentoring around 20 odd years ago when I was at school? I tell you what, I think I would be Prime Minister of this country now, if I’d had a mentor, tongue in cheek of course, again, I think personally, I have picked the vocation of my life, I spent 17 years in an office, only came into education 8 years ago, and I feel that the job that I am currently doing – “somebody up there” made this for me.

***Question:***

So what affect has that had on your life then?

***Learning Mentor:***

On my life? Oh it’s like a drug. It’s like an infectious drug – I absolutely love this job. Ok you have days when you are stressed and you try to burn the candle at both ends, but I’d do it for nothing, on the mentoring side. I absolutely love this job.

***Interpretation:***

Interestingly, this learning mentor’s role involves him utilising many of the core components of the professional friend. As an example, he emphasises the necessity of getting on with Learning Mentees well enough to enable them to show respect.

Here, the Learning Mentor is letting his Learning Mentees get to know him well enough to offer respect back, a process which Clutterbuck (1995) terms mutuality. The Learning Mentor in this case is socialising his Learning Mentees through talking, active listening and reflecting.

He clearly believes in what he is doing and describes his relationships as involving him in understanding his mentees. He believes he can ‘instantly’ see what information he requires from them, with little, if any, need for debate or discussion. In my view, he understands young people well enough to know, intuitively, what they are feeling and if they are being honest and truthful. In return, he gives high levels of respect and trust to his mentees. In addition, he clearly understands mentoring activities and emphasises the need to encourage his Learning Mentees to use him as a role model. He acts as a positive role model for them and uses role-play to teach them alternative ways of behaving. Learning Mentors teach techniques to Learning Mentees in order to help them conduct themselves better in the classroom by rehearsing these ‘good’ behaviours to create a good impression. Goffman (1959) describes this process as ‘impression management’.

### **Interview Ten**

This Learning Mentors’ background is in marketing and she has a dual post, as Learning Mentor and school librarian. She does this in an inner city secondary school.

She is a Caucasian female in her early thirties. When I interviewed her, I asked for her view of what could be regarded as ‘success’ in her mentoring relationships:

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

How do you quantify success? On a personal level I would categorise success as firstly when one of my Learning Mentee's comes to me voluntarily when they are having a problem that might be not when we have scheduled a meeting that something has happened and I am the first point of call. I think that shows that I have built up a relationship with them. Also when they listen to me because some of these kids have not got a role model at home.

The moms or female members of family predominantly in the Asian families are not well respected and for year 11 lads to listen to me as a female and take my advice on board, that’s quite good. Successful relationships? You can look at things like academic success of attendance success and those that are stipulated in a target that we establish between us on the initial meeting, but it’s more than that. It’s about walking down the corridor and the kids saying, “Safe, how’s it going” and being invited to parties and the Youth Club next door by some of the Year 11 and sixth formers saying “yeah you can come along”.

One of the sixth form young ladies got married and had her reception here and myself and my husband came to that, so it's being accepted not on a student - teacher level but more as a friend.

***Question:***

What do you think their perception of you is?

***Learning Mentor:***

Initially a lot of them are very wary of me, children of that age don't like to feel different like being taken out of curriculum lessons and spending time with Mrs X. I mean that's not too good, but after a while I think they consider it quality time. Once they get to know me, if for some reason I can't be there at that point in time I know a lot of them are disappointed. We build up a relationship that is not just academic it's also social; some of the kids have problems with integrating with other children the same age. It is fundamental things like learning to share, learning to take turns, learning to be socially aware and a member of the community. Some children don't access this in any other way.

***Question:***

What types of role model are you?

***Learning Mentor:***

They look to me for guidance but I don't think they see me as a teacher. They ask my advice but they don't always take it and I think they feel free to choose whether to take what I am offering. I think a lot of them see me as a friend.

***Question:***

What do you think you are teaching them?

***Learning Mentor:***

Probably strategies to deal with things. I am not teaching them to love maths but I am teaching them ways of getting their lessons done, getting an education and getting out of here. I am teaching them that sometimes you need to look at things in a different way and sometimes you have to go with the system or else otherwise you are not going to get anywhere. I think a lot of the kids respect me. In fact, most of the kids respect me and I think that is to do with the fact that I respect them as well, I have never shouted at a child and I don't intend to.

I have felt like it but I will just walk away and come back when I can be more positive. So I think a lot of them will see me as being helpful without being threatening.

***Question:***

Do they see you as a personal friend?

***Learning Mentor:***

That's difficult. I am in a unique situation because I only live two miles from the school. A lot of the children shop in the same place as I do, I've got four children of my own and they are best friends with a lot of children at this school. So maybe I am not as removed as a lot of the teachers. I think that helps me to understand their problems and their perspective.

***Question:***

Do you think your job is caring?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yes. They want some one who will sit and listen and be there. At home as they are told do, a lot of them work in family shops or restaurants in the area. They have to get home, get changed and get to the Mosque and it's quite a structured way of life. Then they come to school and they want a release. They want to socialise as it's their only socialisation with their friends.

***Question:***

Are you working with them on how to change?

***Learning Mentor:***

I work with the Learning Mentee's on a series of targets, some academic, some social and some about taking responsibly for themselves.

I don't see it's my place to change their behaviour I try and show them different choices and encourage them to perhaps adapt to different choices rather than change themselves.

***Question:***

Are you teaching them how to think?



***Learning Mentor:***

Yes I am teaching them strategies, different ways of looking at and responding to problems, perhaps ways that in the long run keep them in school, keep their learning going. I try and build up trust, they can talk to me and I will not take that information anywhere else. They can tell me about trouble with their boyfriend or the fact that their sister is being bitchy or their mom won't listen to them. I think its little things like that, you need that to start off with and sometimes they test you by telling you something and wait for you to let them down and if you don't then they will go that step further. I try and encourage trust because I find I am giving a little bit of myself in return for a little bit of them.

***Question:***

Has becoming a learning mentor had an impact on you personally?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think so, yes it's affected me by wanting more of myself, it's made me give myself targets and know that I can improve as a person; I am doing it every day with these children so what is my excuse.

***Question:***

How do you know it's you that has made a difference?

***Learning Mentor:***

Because I have been told by my Mentees.

***Interpretation:***

The learning mentor in this case operates as a professional friend and utilises a number of core components that are crucial within my construct:

- Building a relationship
- Listening
- Being a role model
- Being a friend
- Giving guidance
- Allowing mutual respect
- Providing help
- Encouraging

Indeed, in this case, the Learning Mentor views her mentoring relationships as successful if, and when, her Learning Mentees opt to come voluntarily to see her with their problems, making her their first port of call. Again, this suggests that she has built a good relationship. The relationship is a positive, respectful and understanding one. In the view of this Learning Mentor, this is especially so, if, and when, Learning Mentees view her as 'safe'. This is taken by her to be an accolade, usually reserved for peers, not adults. The Learning Mentor has a certain type of relationship that involves friendship. In her own words, she describes this as, a 'safe' relationship indicating her Learning Mentees respect her. The Learning Mentor also emphasises the need to act as a role model for teaching listening skills, particular where there are breakdowns of communication in the family. As such, she emphasises how she feels 'quite good' when a year eleven-year-old boy listened to her enough to take the advice she gives him.

### **Interview Eleven**

This Learning Mentor is also a teacher. She gave up some of the teaching responsibilities to take up her new role as a Learning Mentor. She works in an inner city, Catholic, secondary school. She is of African-Caribbean heritage and in her forties. In response to the question about what is 'success' in mentoring she suggests:

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

It's definitely the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, that both of them have to want it. Both the mentor and the mentee need to be clear about what it is that's needed and how they are going to work together.

The mentor is often put in a position where they have to advocate for the people or even mediate and there is various difficulties surrounding that in a school situation and how teachers view the mentor's in that role. The relationship and what makes that successful between the mentor and the mentee is, an on going thing that builds on each time that they meet. If the mentor can be positive and non-judgemental and I've got that with a question mark because I feel although we are non-judgemental, we still have to challenge the pupil in terms of the kinds of behaviour. If it's a behaviour thing that they're showing and so to be able to challenge them without them feeling that they're being put down, yeah.

#### ***Question:***

Tell me a bit more about this concept of friend.

***Learning Mentor:***

If you're a friend to somebody then you care about them and you draw along side them and you spend time with them and so in those ways there are mentors that do that and they get to know the children. They get to know details about their home life and who they mix with and what they think about so and so and what they think about this teacher and that teacher and the children are able to say what they think and how they feel, which is something that you do with a friend. What our mentee's find is that depending on the kind of pupil they are, they can say yeah my mentor is my friend and other's will say well my mentor is not my friend, my peers are. They mean because you can't tell them everything and the mentee's actually feel that there is a line that's drawn between what you tell somebody who's your peer, the kind of information that you share such as maybe their views on these things.

You draw the line between that kind of friendship relationship and a friendship relationship with an adult who at the same time is trying to get you to change. With friends you try to I think, you try to accept them as they are and you put up with their little ways and so on. They are your friend, with the mentor there are certain things that they have to point out from a different kind of perspective, where the mentor is different, as I was trying to encapsulate it, it's different because it's not so much what they think about you, if I am the mentee, thinking about the mentor as a friend, then for me, the mentor is trying to change me where as I don't think my friend is trying to change me. I don't think my peer is trying to change me, or maybe it's for a different purpose. Yeah a mentor wants me to improve so it's in the context of education in school.

The mentor wants me to behave, wants me to work harder, those kinds of things because I need to think about what I am going to be like.

What I am going to have when I have left school, where as my mate, if my mate wants to change me, it's certainly better for my mate than I suppose for better for me. I think that's all in the age difference though.

***Question:***

Would there be role modelling going on?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think role modelling is happening whether the mentor is aware of it or not, and you can be a good role model or not as the case may be. One would hope any mentor is a good role model.

Our mentors are aware that they are role models from the outset. I think the mentors are in a very flexible role and they are depending on how sensitive they are.

***Question:***

What really matters between the mentor and the mentee that makes this relationship significant and important?

***Learning Mentor:***

The mentee having an adult who is prepared to listen to them, who allows them to say how they feel, and is supportive and somebody who is being positive in the way they are dealing with you despite what you might be throwing up at them. That is so important to young people that they are accepted whatever they are like.

***Question:***

Has being a mentor has made any difference to you?

***Learning Mentor:***

Certainly in terms of knowing more about how people react, how people relate to each other. In terms of mentoring in it's self, I think it's developed my own confidence and I think I am mentoring adults as well as children you know. Some of the teachers have come to me for help. They say, "You know I need mentoring" and so it's developing skills that are used not in just the context of mentor - pupil you know mentor - mentee who is a pupil but in other none teacher situations as well, so it becomes a way of life. It's definitely the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. But, both of them have to want it. Both the mentor and the mentee need to be clear about what it is and how they are going to work together. You see mentors are put in a position where they are going to have to (be an) advocate for the mentee.

Even mediate and there are difficulties surrounding that situation, about how the teachers view the mentor in the role. What makes the relationship successful between the mentor and the mentee is that they build on each time that they meet and if the mentor is non-judgemental but they do have to challenge the behaviour, if it's a behaviour thing, and so it's them feeling that you can challenge them without them feeling they are being put down. I feel that I mentor naturally. The difficulty is if the pupils perceive me as a mentor because I am the only one who is a teacher, so I say "I've got my 'mentor hat' on now" and I am able to switch quite quickly because I find it so easy.

***Question:***

Do you think as a mentor when you are teaching them?

***Learning Mentor:***

All the time! When I'm teaching and mentoring I am thinking of encouraging the child.

***Interpretation:***

The Learning Mentor in this case again operates as a professional friend, displaying a number of core components that are crucial within my construct. Indeed, she states that, at the beginning, in the boundary setting stage, it is crucial that the mentor and mentee establish how they intend to work together in their relationship. At this stage, she offers to act as an advocate for the Learning Mentees, suggesting she will even mediate between parties to gain as favourable an outcome as possible for the Learning Mentee. She is also clear about the on-going nature of the relationship, which builds over time. I have listed a set of core components she identifies in the interview which reflect her use of the professional friendship relationship:

- Being positive
- Being non-judgemental
- Being prepared to challenge
- Caring
- Giving time
- Being a friend
- Assisting the learning mentee to change
- Unconditional acceptance
- Acting as a role model

- Being supportive
- Listening

This Learning Mentor is very clear about her mentoring role, seeing mentoring as a 'relationship'. She emphasises that both the mentor and mentee need to know exactly what is expected of the relationship and to recognise that it is a voluntary activity. She emphasises that mentors are advocates for the mentee, as there may be complex issues requiring a non-judgemental approach from her. In addition, she sees encouraging the mentee as particularly important in her role. Encouraging, advocating and being non-judgemental are core aspects of my professional friendship concept.

This indicates to me that she knows from her own practice what successful mentoring involves. She seems to understand the professional friendship relationship very clearly, even indicating the need for a contract by emphasising that expectations must be clear and explained in the relationship. In her experience, the voluntary nature of the mentoring relationship appears crucial to the commitment of both Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee. Certainly, the freedom to take part appears to be valued by both parties and this was also reflected in the mentee questionnaire data.

This Learning Mentor believes it is her role to assist Learning Mentees to improve both behaviour and academic attainment by helping them to work harder. This requires her to be flexible and to enable Learning Mentees to say how they feel. In terms of mentoring in itself however, the Learning Mentor discloses that it has developed her own confidence, particularly now when she is mentoring adults as well as children.

## **Interview Twelve**

This Learning Mentor is a mature, white, male in his thirties who is working in a special school with children who have a range of special educational needs. His perceptions of 'success' in mentoring include:

### ***Learning Mentor:***

Positive change I think. Change that's for the better that enables the mentee to move on and overcome whatever barrier is in front of them. So I would say positive change.

***Question:***

Do you want to explain that?

***Learning Mentor:***

For instance, if we are looking at attendance with a student and they were attending one or two days a week and after a period of time they are attending five days a week that's a positive change.

***Question:***

How might mentoring bring about that change?

***Learning Mentor:***

I've listened to them and built up a good relationship built upon trust. Any problems that they have had I've tried to help them with. So it could be a problem with a particular day of the week. For instance, I am working with a student at the moment where attendance was a major problem and it turns out basically the lad's depressed, so we have encouraged him and mum to go to the GP to get treatment for that but he is now in five days a week. Not always on time but he is in five days a week. We were getting two days a week before. Just through the building of a relationship and having someone to talk to. For him to be able to come to me and just have a moan and tell me how it's been, so it's actually listening to exactly what he is saying.

***Question:***

What do you think he's learnt from that experience?

***Learning Mentor:***

He's learned that by talking and trying to trust people he can move forward and he knows that I can't wave any magic wands but I can be there for him and offer him support. I think he has possibly learned to trust. Well, I am sure he's learned to trust because I am almost a hundred percent sure he trusts me. Whether he trusted people before I am not sure. I don't know how much I mean. That's something I could evaluate at a later date. I am not sure how much trust he had in other people. I know there were problems at home. I think he has not got many people to talk to. So I think he's learned to talk. I think that's one thing that he's actually learned, to talk instead of just internalizing whatever he's got going on.

He has actually learned to talk about it. So whether he needs to trust at all or learn to trust I am not sure. I suppose, I think that's quite interesting.

***Question:***

Would you or he use the word friend or friendship to describe your relationship?

***Learning Mentor:***

Yeah, I mean in terms of it's a friendship. He's not a friend in the context of I go out with him socializing but in terms of how we are in the relationship in school, then yeah. It's a very friendly relationship and so I would think he would regard me as a friend, I'd like to think so.

***Interpretation:***

Again, as in previous cases, this male Learning Mentor indicates that success in his mentoring relationships involves positive change. In his view, change can help his Learning Mentees to overcome any barrier. He views listening as a way to help them build up a good relationship. He sees himself as responsive to the needs of the Learning Mentees and tries to help them with any problems they may have. Having a good relationship with mentees in school is very important in his view. As such, he sees his relationships in school as special because both parties significantly value them.

I view, that he operates a professional friendship with his Learning Mentees. Positive change is integral to his view of the relationship, involving listening and building up a good relationship built upon trust. He also sees helping the mentees as important. Similarly, to him, it is crucial to encourage his mentees and talk about issues openly. Certainly, this Learning Mentor agrees that good mentoring involves a very friendly relationship in which he is regarded by his Learning Mentees as a type of friend.

**Interview Thirteen**

The Learning Mentor in this interview is an ex-police officer and is a white female in her forties who works in a secondary school on the edge of the inner area. Her view of success in mentoring is:



***Learning Mentor:***

I think it is important that you have a good relationship and that relationship is probably respects you or whatever as opposed to a friend that you are going to go out with at night or that sort of relationship I think, it needs to be you know, a relationship based on trust. I think trust is really important. I think the mentee needs to trust the mentor in terms of in a sense of putting their life in that other persons hands because you know as a mentor you've got a responsibility to send this young person on the right path or the correct path as such and I think that the mentee has to trust that you are going to do the best that you can do for their own personal development or whatever it is your working on. I think you know there needs to be a certain amount of respect there you know mutual respect.

I think the mentor has a role to play in terms of being a role model. Seeing that student and you know, the mentor, needs to be the person who acts the sorts of behaviours that they see, that they would like to see in their mentees as such and you know that mentee can actually use their mentor as a role model. As a figure to look up to, as somebody they would like to emulate as such. I think the mentor, has a responsibility to carry out what they say they are going to do because if they say they are going to do because if you say you're going to do something for a student and you have not done it, you know in terms of getting bits and pieces for them to assist them with their GCSE's or whatever you're helping them with. If you say, you're going to do something then I think it's important that you do it.

I think that's a base for a good mentoring relationship. I think that you know you've got to as a mentor, you've got to actually have students, the children's best interest at heart and I think you have to actually have to, 'like children'. I think that you know what I mean. I am a teacher in one sense and I when I think about my teacher training, I never say in an interview that you actually like kids and when I came to this interview as a mentor I said, you know that's one of the things that I said. You know that I really enjoy working with kids and that's why I want to be a mentor. I don't think you can in the mentoring relationship that we are talking about I don't think you can be a mentor if you don't like kids. I think as in general it's good for kids generally in whatever situation.

I think also on the part of the mentor I think, if you've had certain experiences then that's good as well because you know for a pregnant schoolgirl you know being very isolated with brother's and being through a lot of personal experiences myself as a single parent, as a mother with teenage kids.

I've 'been there and done that' and those sorts of horrors does not come as a shock to me these days you know you're out of it and down to experience. I think because some of these student who are referred to me as mentees I think if you've been down the same run of the mill as a student, then sometimes and you have come out of it if you know what I mean. Then sometimes you can give students good advice.

I think it's good if you've got either an understanding of or awareness of or belong to the same culture as a child as well and I don't necessarily mean culture just as colour you know, an Asian person or a black person you know, if you are just living in the community that the children are living in and understanding the dynamics of that community and knowing how it works, you know as well as them. I think, from a young person's point of view, they would see the mentor as being a 'safe' person that isn't by the having faith in their language that they use now, but 'faith' being someone who is always consistent, is there for them whenever.

The relationship has to be based on honesty and trustworthiness and this is something when I meet my mentees for the first time that we always talk about. And so I think that right from early on they need to know that these things are important in their relationship, particularly, the honesty and trustworthiness for it to be 'successful' and then the relationship can grow and flourish. Sometimes in the relationship through being very honest, things may be said by both the learning mentor and learning mentee that are not always going to be pleasing for that other person. I think a big issue for young people is the fact that, when they have this relationship with an adult, from my point of view there isn't a teacher. They (the Learning Mentor) are accepted by them whatever they do, wherever they come from and whatever they are about is that they are accepted and if things do go wrong we need to reflect over what has gone wrong and what we can do to put it right and move forward.

#### *Interpretation:*

The Learning Mentor indicates that a good relationship involves a friendship, the type of friendship in which you are respected, rather than the type of friendship whose purpose is merely socialising. In her view, this particular type of friendship relationship is crucially based on trust. Trust here, as in the professional friendship is highly valued; a finding also reflected in the Learning Menthe surveys.

This Learning Mentor understands the weight of responsibility they carry in relation to the Learning Mantes who may be putting their future into the mentor's hands because they are so trusted as to put them on the right path.

The Learning Mentor also seems to understand that this type of friendship relationship involves mutuality. However, in their view, the Learning Mentor also has a role to play as a role model, by assisting the Learning Mentee to better manage and change behaviours. Additionally, the Learning Mentor is viewed as a figure to look up to, as somebody the mentee would like to be like. In this interview, the Learning Mentor describes how the boundaries in mentoring can have an effect on the contract that she negotiates with her Learning Mentees. She suggests that this is undertaken at the beginning of the relationship before relationship building starts. As such, she is emphasising that the mentoring contract establishes boundaries, so that the learning mentee has a good understanding of what are the realistic expectations of the relationship. This certainly concurs with my view and Clutterbuck's (2001) view that mentoring is a 'relationship'.

The Learning Mentor emphasises her 'faith' in the mentee and indicating that she will 'always be there' for her mentees. In addition, she emphasises the need to be 'consistent', with support, encouragement and caring etc; particularly because consistency isn't always forthcoming from others i.e. teachers, parents or peers. Overall, it is clear that this mentor utilises many aspects of professional friendship core components. In particular she states:

The relationship has to be based on honesty and trustworthiness and this is something when I meet my mentees for the first time that we always talk about and so I think that right from early on they need to know that these things are important in their relationship particularly, the honesty and trustworthiness for it to be 'successful' and then the relationship can grow and flourish.

#### **Interview Fourteen**

This African- Caribbean female is in her late thirties and is at the same school as the Learning Mentor in interview thirteen. On the question of success, she states:

##### ***Learning Mentor:***

I think from a young person's point of view, they would see the mentor as being a safe person. 'Safe' is being someone that is always consistent, is there for them whenever. The relationship has to be based on honesty and trustworthiness. This is something when I meet my mentees for the first time we always talk about.

So I think that right from early on they need to know that these things are important in their the relationship will grow and flourish and sometimes in the relationship from being very honest, things can be said by both the mentor and the mentee that are not going always to be very pleasing for the other person. I think, a big issue for the young person is when they have this relationship with an adult from my point of view, who is not a teacher that you're accepted by them for whatever they do, wherever they come from and whatever they are about, they are accepted and if things do go wrong then we need to reflect on why they go wrong and what we can do to put it right and move forward It's not easy always trying to be positive and one of the things I was thinking about when I walked over here I came past several pupils in the playground and I always look at them and I always make eye contact with them and I always nod and smile and say 'hello'.

Now these children I don't know all of them in a school this size but it's healthy and it's good and it's positive because they will say, "I don't know her but she looked and she smiled". Some of them might think I am mad but gradually as they get to know me I've heard them say "who is that?" who is she?" so there are lots of issues I feel have a positive effect for these young people.

***Question:***

Would you call it a friendship?

***Learning Mentor:***

Absolutely, yeah.

***Question:***

How would you describe it as a friendship?

***Learning Mentor:***

I am friends with all of them. Some I was friends with some early on, others took longer. But it is a friendship and it's unique and it's individual and it's very special and I think it's very important to them but also for me as a person and as a mentor. It features very much in life, in my life and profession so it is a friendship.

***Question:***

Why do you think that's important to your mentee that they see you as a friend?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think really it's when you're a young person about eleven to sixteen; the majority of friends are young people their own age. Their peers are of their age group and older friends there are not so many of them about and it's good and healthy for them to realize that older people can be their friends, they can advise them and support them and be there for them because the majority of older people in their lives are their parents, are their relations are their teachers are their workers and a lot of these people have specific tasks to do in life.

We all have a role as a parent and it is as a parent and whilst I might be my daughters' mentor, I might not do it as successfully as somebody who was estranged from the family and has nothing to do in our life. So I think a lot of the young peoples' perceptions of friendships are from within their own age band and people that are older than them are normally people with jobs to do. Who would have a friend who's forty-four when you're thirteen? Not many people!

***Question:***

When you use the word friendship or friend, what is do you mean though?

***Learning Mentor:***

I see them around school and I say hi and they say hi to me which friends would do when they meet one another. I ask them if they've got and sweets or if they are eating crisps if there is any chance I can have one. Usually they offer me one. We'll share a joke. They will tell me what's upset them that day. They will tell me what they watched at night. They feel content with that. They feel happy with that relationship. They feel safe, they know that I am their friend and that I respect them and in turn they respect me.

***Question:***

What do you think differentiates a mentor from a friend?

***Learning Mentor:***

I think that it might be a bit different with me. They would be with their friends and they would 'blaze' each other and perhaps be quite cutting. They would not do that to me because we have respect for each other and I think they would think it isn't fair. 'I should not treat her this way because she would not treat me that way'.

So a friend is as close as you're likely to get. So whilst they have their own relationship with their peers, which is very individual, the relationship they would have with me, perhaps they would treat me differently, they would have some reservations of giving me the full picture. So I think the friendship that we have by myself as a mentor and them as a mentee is a very special friendship because it's unique and it's special and it's one I want. They need and accept me because deep down they know it's good for them because this person is a safe person because they are an effective listener, they don't judge them they accept them and we move forward in our friendship.

***Question:***

Do you think sharing your experiences with your mentees is important in developing the relationship?

***Learning Mentor:***

I have done it on a number of occasions and I tell them when we have our first meeting together I introduce myself. I talk about myself and I tell them where I am from, from my past. However, it has had adverse effects because one of my mentees at another school was mortified at the fact that I had been a police officer and was adamant that in my spare time when I had finished my day's work that I was out in the evening looking for him.

Now he did not tell me this, the person that told me this was his mother and this is where I think parents play a very strong part because I think they need to know such a lot about their child at school and how they perform and how they react and how they are as young people. That is why I think the relationship that we have as mentors with the parents are very important. I think that the mentor is like the A to Z road map. The mentee is there walking along the road and the mentor is a sort of sign-post showing them where the roads are and showing them the quickest route so that they get to the right destination, I suppose.

***Interpretation:***

This Learning Mentor actually identifies her mentoring relationships as a 'close friendship'. Again, this has resonance with the ideas of some major mentoring authors (especially Shea 1992et.al.). In addition, she uses a powerful metaphor to describe her learning mentor role, which she says is like an A – Z road map for life. She views her relationships as journeys.

As such, she sees her mentoring as a 'way of life,' in which she, the Learning Mentor, is providing a signpost for the Learning Mentee to progress through:

To the Learning Mentees, she is seen as being a safe person. 'Safe' is a youth euphemism which means you are someone who is always there for them, consistently whenever needed.

However, the Learning Mentor sees her mentoring role as undertaking a relationship based on honesty and trustworthiness. Of course, this is another example of the Learning Mentor role as a professional friend. For the Learning Mentee this means that they accept the Learning Mentor for what it is that they do within their role. The Learning Mentor role is to help when things go wrong and create new life chances by giving Learning Mentees other options. These processes do, of course, rely heavily on the reflections of the Learning Mentor and the Learning Mentees; reflection on why they go wrong and what we can do to put it right and move forward positively. The Learning Mentor intervention clearly involves friendship in a relationship, which is unique and individual and very special, particularly to the Learning Mentor in this interview and to others as previously identified.

This Learning Mentor also views the relationship as very important, not only to the Learning Mentees, but also to the mentor, both as a person and as a mentor. In describing her role, she emphasises that she advises, supports and is simply there for the Learning Mentees. They share a joke and the mentee tells the Learning Mentor what's upset them that day. In short, the Learning Mentor feels content with her role. She is happy with the relationships and the Learning Mentees feel safe, knowing their Learning Mentor is their friend who respects them and, in turn, is respected. Again, this Learning Mentor, like others, thinks that the friendship that they have with her mentees is a very special friendship because it's unique and one that clearly the Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee want to have.

### **Interview Fifteen**

This white male is in his late forties and works at a high performing school. It is just on the edge of the inner city with high levels of student mobility. The student intake is from all areas across the city. The learning mentor says about success:

#### ***Learning Mentor:***

My mentoring has been focused on the two groups. They are focused on attainment and a realization of the best of their abilities to work to, but it brings in practices about attendance and all those sorts of things. So trust and confidentiality absolutely fundamental. Sometimes the success comes with taking an issue on their behalf somewhere or sometimes setting up a meeting where they met the teacher one to one so you can set it up, you don't have to be there. You haven't got to hold their hand all the time.

Other times though yes, it was just sort of you know, if you feel better talking about it fine but let me know if I need some positive action for you and then have follow ups.

***Question:***

Are these not things that parents would do?

***Learning Mentor:***

I suppose in an ideal world but some of my group come from split families, single parents. A number of them are the leader of the family. I'll share with you if you're interested where the female pupil really took the place of the mother who was struggling and gave masses of problems which we were able to help with some of them in a practical way. I think sometimes it's just being aware of what some of the issues are. I think the mentoring gives a chance for those young people because there are barriers to success isn't there? It gives a chance for those to do come out and I try to help resolve the problems. This is a very able young lady and the other deflection she has is she is a beautiful, beautiful singer and she is genuinely being pushed by an uncle in terms of recording. A bit like this pop stars' programme. There was a 'never mind the work thing', pressure on her but I think she just needed some space and felt confident in telling me what was wrong, what her concerns were and they would all be barriers to her achieving anything never mind the infamous A-Cs! I think sometimes it just being aware of what some of the issues are and it's the mentoring scheme I think that gives a chance for those where there are barriers to success.

Should I tell you about her? The head sees every pupil individually for ten minutes and it's to ask how things are going, how do you see things, can we help and how do you see the future? From that, I think eighteen months ago he gave me my first group of about fifteen students. This young lady was seen in year ten to be having everything going for her. Not just academically, musically, drama, art and a great performer. Afro Caribbean girl, lovely personality but they began to see that she was slipping, she was missing lessons and she got away with it because of her personality, because she was just natural, naturally nice. I am older than most of their parents, I am probably older than some of their grandparents. Anyway her dad had left the family and gone back to the West Indies with massive amounts of debts. She was very close to both her parents, she couldn't handle it. Mum could not handle the situation because of the massive debts apart from the emotional thing, and there were three younger children. So the pupil became the breadwinner basically.



How do you become a breadwinner when you go to school, by working five nights a week as a waitress and all weekends? So she starts talking about it to me to tell me. I had to find out about her background.

She gave me the story didn't she, but the story didn't add up and eventually after a few discussions she told me in confidence what the full situation was and that she had a number of things. She was frightened to ask for any reduced hours because she thought she would lose the job. If she had less money she could not give as much to her mum. I met her mum and it's difficult for her.

It's the most difficult conversation I had with a parent because most of the conversations with parents are very positive. They, in the main have not got a lot of education themselves and it hadn't done much for them. With her mum the difficulty was, I think the discussion was different. She told me exactly what the situation was and it was exactly what I had been told. So what happened was I went to see the hotel manager and explained that she was coming up to a very critical time of her studies, it was so important to her revision but she had already slipped back so she needed a bit more. She was frightened of losing the job. He was fine and she then had one free day in the weekend and two free days during the week. He hardly dropped her money so that was good. I got in touch with the benefits department and they checked with the citizens' advice and benefits agency and sorted one or two things out. But we are talking big debts here, by now dad was coming backwards and forwards and that was becoming even more unsettling.

I was seeing the Learning Mentee sometimes every morning first thing. Just to see how things were. The other thing I found out from another pupil was she was walking to work which is about four miles. I asked her about that and she was obviously embarrassed, I went to see the head teacher and she knew this and the school funds paid for a bus pass for her. That was a great relief for her because she did not have to worry about paying for busses and then I finished up with her talking positively about herself, getting her head down to work. She was bright enough and would take five nights and do it in two so she had always got that done. She wanted to go into some sort of legal secretary work. I got in touch with the local College, sorted the busses and she comes in to the end of her first year, well three quarters of her first year and drops in occasionally to say hello.

I did very well with her I mean she did well. And in that one I think there were a number of successes, being able to verify the story, making a relationship with the mother in difficult embarrassing circumstances really. Lots of things about that this was successful but very much helped by the framework of the school and the ethos of the school. I think she just had some space and felt confident in telling me what was wrong and what her concerns were and what those concerns would be barriers to her achieving anything.

*Interpretation:*

In my view, this Learning Mentor is following a traditional model of mentoring where the older, wiser, mentor advises, guides and gives practical help and support. This interview gives me insights into the role of the Learning Mentor to help me better understand their role and assess their utility of my construct. For example, the Learning Mentor operates as a professional friend to the extent that trust and confidentiality are absolutely fundamental to his mentoring relationships' success.

He sees his role as helping simply by talking about issues and just being aware of what these issues are. Knowing this allows him to take positive action. In his view, the mentoring gives a chance to young people to overcome the barriers they face. In particular, this Learning Mentor views it important to make a relationship with the mother to better understand his Learning Mentees' situation.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The key concern of this research is to examine to what extent is the Professional Friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships? I used this hypothesis to help understand the case of Learning Mentors. Overall the results of this case study research confirm that the model is useful here. This confirms my previous research, reported in Chapter Two, undertaken in the Probation Service and an educational programme running in Doncaster. The utility of the concept is to understand the role of the learning mentor which is made clear from the individual case studies. Indeed, this research confirms that there is a set of core components in successful mentoring relationships and this is called professional friendship. However, these results also enable me to modify my original thinking to improve it and that is a focus of the next chapter.

## **SECTION 3: ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIP**

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter presents the conclusions of the thesis. It has four sections: section one shows how my professional friendship model outlined in Chapter Two allows us to understand the learning mentors case better; section two asks to what extent is professional friendship a core component of successful mentoring relationships; section three focuses on how the model may be improved and compares the new model with the original one; and, finally, in section four, I emphasise that research on other mentoring cases is important to establish if this model is applicable elsewhere.

Certainly, government policy in 1999 (DfEE Excellence in Cities, p.19) intended that the Learning Mentor role act as an interface between School and the family and not as a 'quick fix', with the Learning Mentor as a 'trouble-shooter'. However, from my own lived experience, I found some schools in the Midlands, both Secondary and Primary, failed to utilise the learning mentor role fully, preferring to interpret the role as one of 'classroom assistant' or 'teaching assistant'. I found that this view restricted the effectiveness of their role and meant that only patchy provision was available to pupils and students. In addition, my experience indicated that learning mentees were sometimes confused about why they were seeing a learning mentor. This suggested there was a poor and incomplete, understanding of their role by schools. As such, the main aim of this thesis was to better understand the role of Learning Mentors, utilising, and in the process testing, the professional friendship model.

I used three main sources of primary data: mentee questionnaires; case studies of particular mentoring relationships; and, perhaps most importantly, individual tape-recorded interviews with 15 learning mentors. In addition, I reviewed all the literature available on Learning Mentors and I have drawn from my own life experience as a mentoring professional.

### **7.1 Summarising the Results**

In this section I show how my Professional Friendship Model, outlined in Chapter Two, allows us to understand the role of learning mentors better than other approaches. Whilst it is clear that their role is complex, it certainly includes one to one mentoring, to a greater or lesser extent dependent on the particular school's interpretation of its own priorities for the role.

There are other types of activities undertaken by learning mentors and these involve them working with groups of learning mentees undertaking things such as sports, anger management and breakfast club etc; again these are activities that the school decides upon. Returning to the core mentoring activity that learning mentors refer to and describe in the case studies, these indicate my model is useful because the core components of mentoring relationships identified in the model are clearly evident in the data presented in Chapters Five and Six.

My research, particularly because it uses a variety of methods, provides much information about the learning mentor's role. I have data from mentees and mentors, as well as a number of detailed case studies of individual mentoring relationships. Each data source provides valuable evidence which supports the utility of my model. In addition, there are no alternative models which focus so directly on what makes a mentoring friendship relationship successful, in removing barriers to learning for learning mentees, families and schools.

Here, I provide an overview of the results from each of the data sources used in this thesis in turn, focusing on how they have led me to assess, and indeed reassess, my model. I begin with the findings from the learning mentee questionnaire.

***i) What the Learning Mentee Questionnaires tell us about the Role of the Learning Mentor***

The mentees' questionnaires data indicates that my mentee respondents viewed the learning mentor as a person who 'cares'. From their perspective, this was the most important aspect of their mentoring relationship (83.7%). In my model (Gardiner 1998, p.77), I identified 'caring' as one aspect of a 'professional friendship'. In my view, this special friendship, underpinning the mentoring relationship, involves reciprocal caring. This means showing a sense of regard, concern and consideration to each other, which is integral to a good mentoring friendship relationship. However, subsequently, I developed my initial model (1998), viewing 'caring' as an important, but certainly not the most important, aspect of professional friendship.

In addition, in the mentees' view, the second most important aspect of the learning mentors role is having someone in school who 'gets on' with them (82.4%). This factor was not included in my original model, but clearly needs to be included in an improved model.

While my original model failed to identify 'getting on' as a key variable, during my pre-testing, it became clear that this was an important question to add and so it proved.

The third most important aspect of the mentoring relationship which the mentees valued was ‘honesty’ (80.5%), which is clearly a successful aspect of a mentoring friendship relationship. Certainly, honesty contributes to a healthy relationship and its success depends on it. Relationships in which the mentee views her/his mentor as less than honest are unlikely to be successful. In my view, all types of relationships, whether in personal and/or work life, are affected by the levels of honesty in them. In addition, I would argue that honesty encourages a successful relationship to grow and develop. In my view, honesty is important in relationships because it helps to build up the type of reciprocal relationship that Clutterbuck calls mutuality of learning (Clutterbuck 2004, p.12). Honesty is the result of developed rapport and trust which are also crucial in all types of mentoring relationships. As such, in my original model, I viewed honesty as particularly necessary for a good quality mentoring friendship relationship, as it helps a two-way commitment to grow and develop into trust. Openness is another aspect encouraged by honesty and, again, good relationships can be characterised by it. I see rapport and trust as dependent on honesty that is on-going. In addition, I would argue that reliability is more likely to develop where this honesty is evident and on-going. To me, the results from the mentees’ questionnaires show that, as my model suggests, honesty contributes to building both rapport and the trust that follows.

The mentees’ responses show that, in successful relationships, their Learning Mentor respects them (80%) and listens to them (79.6%). My model suggests that respect in friendship involves treating each other with deference, esteem and honour. More particularly in the context of mentoring, it means being an active listener, using non-verbal communication and signals. As such, my model views listening as a holistic act involving ‘active listening’. This means that the mentor shows interest and listens, in part through the use of facial expressions, gestures and body language. Indeed, in my view, it is the most frequently used skill in professional friendship. Non-verbal communication is a very important part of any relationship, given that talking is a relatively small part of communication. I move now to the learning mentor case study data.

### ***ii) The Role of the Learning Mentor in the Mentoring Relationship***

As I indicated above, the views of head teachers about learning mentors would be limited, whereas my data allows for a richer and more detailed understanding of the learning mentors role.

The key conclusion I would draw about the learning mentors role from my research is that learning mentors adapt their role and their relationships with their mentees to the needs of their learning mentees, taking account of the range of constraints within their local context.

Head teachers do not always have direct contact with learning mentors, who are often line-managed by others. Inevitably, given that the needs of mentees are complex, my research found that, for some learning mentors, the main focus of their role is beyond the school, with outside agencies and family members, as well as their mentee. From my case studies, it is clear that learning mentees are referred to learning mentors by a number of sources, such as teachers, outside agencies, parents, as well as often self-referring. Referrals to learning mentors occur for a number of reasons, including:

- Poor motivation
- Lack of organisation
- Poor communication
- Problems at home
- Anger management
- Emotional support
- Bullying – perpetrator/victim
- Poor peer relationships
- Poor teacher relationships
- Low self esteem
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of assertiveness
- Poor attendance
- Falling behind at school with work
- Under pressure to achieve
- School phobia
- Severe behavioural problems
- Violent temper
- Inappropriate behaviour
- ADHD
- Exam anxiety
- Poor concentration

In general terms, individual mentees often have many problems and are referred to a learning mentor for help because others are unclear what to do or what help to provide. Indeed, some pupils are referred on to a more specialised agency, which is usually located outside of the school, for example, Social Services, Counselling Services or the Youth Offending Service. The (poor) behaviour of the learning mentees was the single most common reason for this type of external specialist involvement.

To me, this suggests that the learning mentor role is differently applied, poorly understood and sometimes misinterpreted in different schools or settings; it was not meant to be solely, or largely, about controlling student behaviour. The predominance of referrals for behavioural reasons suggests that the learning mentor's role is often constrained. For example, because of the extensive focus on behavioural issues, the learning mentor is unable to view the child holistically in the context of her/his family, school, community and society. Nor is the learning mentor equipped and trained as a behavioural specialist.

The Professional Friendship model also has applicability in this case. It seems to me that, if the model were applied as an earlier intervention, then this would help to reduce, or prevent, lower level behavioural problems. It could also be utilised if communication is breaking down, or has broken down, between peers, teacher, parents etc. Overall, if learning mentors use the Professional Friendship model, this may help to avoid intervention later and prevent problems that result from the failure to appreciate the complexities of the problem, a failure that compounds the problems, making them worse. I argue that the learning mentor's role is better understood if my model is utilised as it identified the core components of successful mentoring relationships. I now turn to the tape - recorded interviews with the learning mentors.

### ***iii) How the Tape Recorded Interviews help me better understand the Learning Mentor Role***

The semi-structured taped interviews indicate that successful learning mentoring relationships involve many of the core components of the Professional Friendship. From the data gathered in the interviews, it is clear that this type of friendship relationship involves a series of skills and attributes:

#### *Skills*

- Active listening
- Organisation
- Team working
- Teaching
- tutoring
- Counselling
- Negotiation
- Coaching
- Advocacy
- Problem solving
- Decision making



- Reflection and review
- Constructive feedback
- Interpersonal skills
- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Getting on with people
- In some cases – mediation
- Guidance
- Questioning
- Focussing
- Goal setting
- Challenging
- Non-directive
- Advising
- Encouraging
- Motivating
- Setting boundaries
- Clarifying
- Praising

*1) Attributes*

- Reliability
- Openness
- Sharing
- Respect
- Genuineness
- Friendly
- Supportive
- Understanding
- Honest
- Intuitive
- Trusting
- Caring
- Warmth
- Humour

- Non-judgemental
- Honour
- Acceptance
- Loyalty
- Congruence
- Rapport
- Love
- Seeing the big picture – holistic
- Flexibility
- Empathetic

As such, this data indicates that learning mentors are operating in a way that involves them using a wide range of the skills and attributes identified in my model. Indeed, the data shows that the role of the learning mentor requires an extensive range of complex skills and attributes. In my view, a combination of skills and attributes are needed for successful learning mentoring/professional friendships. Indeed, to an extent, these need to develop alongside the relationship as it requires them to; especially as developing learning in the relationship offers the best chance of growth and development occurring from it. In addition, this provides the very best opportunity for the relationship to continue to be successful, as the clear benefits from the learning become visible to both learning mentee and learning mentor. I would also emphasise that the skills and attributes utilised by learning mentors in their mentoring relationships are clearly encouraging successful learning outcomes for both mentees and mentors. In the next and final part of this chapter I briefly examine how these finding might benefit mentees, mentors and the schools.

#### ***iv) Benefits***

My essential argument here is that this research identifies the key core components of successful learning mentoring relationships.

Here, I examine the benefits to mentees, mentors and the schools from a successful learning mentoring relationship based on utilising the Professional friendship.

#### ***Benefits for learning mentees***

- a) access to a learning mentor i.e. freedom to choose
- b) time to talk
- c) have a voice

- e) experiencing a positive reciprocal relationship
- f) relationship focussed on solutions
- g) Achieving the targets
- h) Receiving praise regularly
- i) more able to make decisions
- j) higher attendance at school
- k) being trusted
- l) sharing experiences safely
- m) Boys in particular seem to benefit most from a learning mentor
- n) family support
- o) better organisational skills
- p) better time management skills
- q) better developed thinking

#### *Benefits for learning mentors*

- a) gaining the respect of the learning mentee
- b) achieving targets set
- c) Sharing experiences

#### *Benefits for the school*

- a) a point of contact for parents
- b) more positive relationships
- c) achieving higher standards of attendance and A\*-Cs
- d) positive role modelling

Now, I turn to the second section of this chapter where I suggest that there is strong evidence that the core components present in professional friendship may apply to all types of mentoring.

## **7.2 The Professional Friendship Revisited**

### ***i) What we have learned about Professional Friendship in this Study***

In this section, I discuss what has been learned in this thesis and how this will enable schools to use mentoring more effectively.

As I emphasised in Chapter 2, I carried out previous research into the BEAT programme and the Doncaster Business Education Partnership mentoring programme, where I found that a Professional Friendship helped me understand the mentoring relationship in these programmes and, in particular, what made them successful. I tested the utility of the model for understanding the relationship between learning mentors and learning mentees in this research and the findings, seen in the context of my previous research, suggest to me that there is some generality of elements in these mentoring relationships which my model identifies. However, this research also indicates that my original thinking had some weaknesses and next I re-visit that original thinking in the light of what I have learned from my research here in order to modify, and improve it.

### ***ii) Enhancing Professional Friendship***

As I have emphasised, the mentees studied here see a successful learning mentor relationship as one in which the mentor ‘cares’, ‘gets on with them’, is honest, respects them, listens to them and is supportive. In addition, learning mentees see the relationship as based on trust, reliability and understanding. These findings clearly indicate to me that Learning Mentor relationships involve generalised aspects of friendship. As such, the most important aspects of the ‘professional friendship’ model are broadly confirmed and this research suggests that the Professional Friendship is a utility in interpreting and understanding better the role of learning mentors.

However, this research suggests that the professional friendship may be further developed in order to make it more useful in relation to learning mentors. In particular, my research leads me to focus more specifically on what learning mentees see as important aspects of their successful mentoring relationships to develop an improved concept. This will help schools to make better and more effective use of the mentoring undertaken by learning mentors making clearer what is involved.

### ***iii) What Else has been Learned?***

This research indicates that core components identified are particularly valued by learning mentees: reliability (the eighth most important quality) and respect (fourth). In addition, the component of openness in my research clearly links to the majority of other core components of professional friendship emphasised by the mentees: caring (first); honesty (third); listening (fifth); support (sixth); trust (seventh); loyalty (tenth); and understanding (thirteenth). Openness in their case particularly relates to honesty, as, without openness, honesty is unlikely and, as we saw, honesty was particularly important to Learning Mentees.

### **7.3 An Enhanced Concept?**

In this section I indicate how the construct can be enhanced and improved, focusing particularly on the differences between the Learning Mentor usage and the original one. In essence, my argument is that it is possible to add some of the insights taken from this research in order to improve it and make it more useful to those involved in the mentoring relationship. At the same time however, I would contend that, although the improvements to this model have been generated as a result of research into Learning Mentors, the professional friendship which is represented by a range of core components in mentoring has potential for broader application to other forms of mentoring.

#### ***i) Mentoring as a Contracted Relationship***

It is certainly a 'given' that all mentoring relationships involve a contract, whether it is recorded, verbal or tacit. Further to this, commitment to a mentoring contract, and thus the relationship, is more likely when the parties involved negotiate what the contract contains to a greater or lesser extent. This process of negotiation and agreement promotes each party's ownership of the final contract. The process is described in most of the mentoring literature as 'setting up the ground rules or boundaries'. In this vein, the contract between learning mentor and learning mentee covers the purpose of the relationship and the goals that the mentoring sets out to achieve. As such, the mentoring contract may involve more people than just the learning mentee and learning mentor, because, in their particular case, the parent or/and teacher may be involved due to the target-setting element, given the educational context. However, as in other cases, this contract still relates to personal, academic, ethical, moral and social boundaries within their relationship (Gardiner 1998, p.77). At different stages of the relationship, the contract will be revisited, reviewed and amended. As mentoring is about learning and change, then this contract is critical to the developmental processes which involve the learning mentee moving on, in particular academically.

The processes involved in a professional friendship/learning mentee/learning mentor contract are likely to be facilitated by the learning mentor and the learner in their two-way activity. However, the learning mentor model differs from the original mentoring model because the contract will be subject to the school's agreement and negotiation. This will involve the parents and, to a lesser extent, teachers, as well as the learning mentor's direct line manager.

Next, I compare and contrast the characteristics of my original concept and the new, improved version developed as a result of this research and I would suggest that mostly the elements in this improvement are similar.

## *ii) The Features of the New Concept*

### **Reliability**

In this adapted Professional Friendship relationship, it is important to emphasise that, for the development of it, it is crucial that both the learning mentor and the learning mentee expect, and receive, a reliable response from each other. Reliability is an important building block in gaining and developing trust in the relationship. Goal setting may involve taking small specific steps and using targets negotiated with the involvement of parents and/or teachers. This approach is intended to encourage reliability in the relationship to grow. For the learning mentor and their learning mentee this gives clarity of purpose to the relationship, for example, to gain higher GCSE grades, and it builds on the expectations of all involved. These expectations also help to create the support the learning mentee requires to achieve her/his end goal. Certainly, reliability between the mentor and the mentee in my view offers an opportunity for both learning mentor and the learning mentee to feel confident and comfortable with the relationship. Indeed, this may encourage in the learning mentee (and indeed the learning mentor) a stronger sense of ‘self’ confidence and greater self-competence.

### **Honesty**

Honesty is a feature of both the old and the new core components of professional friendship in mentoring. Indeed, honesty is very often expected of a Learning Mentor by their Learning Mentee, as this research clearly shows. Often, in the beginning of this relationship, learning mentor and learning mentee approach their relationship in a spirit of unconditional regard for each other; so, they bring ‘all that they are’ to the ‘here and now’ of the situation. This is clearly true in the case of earning mentoring and mentoring more broadly. As such, successful mentoring relationships involves sincerity and mutual honesty that helps a two-way commitment to grow. This research indicates that honesty between Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee encourages trust and is more likely to encourage openness. These elements of sincerity, trust and openness are part of a tacit understanding in mentoring relationships which help to build success. Certainly it is the view of the Learning Mentees, that successful mentoring relationships involve honesty and, as was the case in my original concept, this involves an open dialogue between mentor and mentee.

### **Openness**

Here, openness’ is the same value as I emphasised in the original concept of core components; openness to ‘learning’ and to ‘change’ is crucial in a mentoring relationship. In relation to learning, the learning mentor/professional friendship relationship encourages ‘holistic learning’ which can be easily adapted to include aspects of academic and social and emotional learning.

In this way, the relationship provides a holistic perspective allowing for a greater developmental impact on Learning Mentees. Here, again, learning is mutual, involving both the Learning Mentor and the Learning Mentee, as it was in the original construct. This openness to learning serves to increase self and social awareness.

In addition, learning how to change may be facilitated by the same process. In the school where a Learning Mentor works with a Learning Mentee, the methods employed by them may include role modelling and role/real play as suggested in the previous concept. This gives the Learning Mentee the chance to practice the changes that are needed in a 'safe' environment, before returning to the classroom, etc. Thus, learning how to do better in school for a Learning Mentee may again involve learning about 'self' and personal development/growth which is a recognised outcome of the learning process and, by necessity, involves change, because it brings about 'new states of the person' (Rogers, 1967, p.276) Rogers argues that: 'I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behaviour is self-discovered, self-appointed learning.' In my view, for this to happen the learning mentor and learning mentee must ensure 'openness' in their relationship. To me, such social learning is an implicit outcome of this process.

### **Caring**

'The Conscientious Mentor' (Gardiner 1996, p. 116) can be any type of mentor, e.g. a Learning Mentor, a Criminal Justice Mentor, a Community Mentor or a Business Mentor, who operates as a Professional Friend. In my previous research, a 'Conscientious Mentor' demonstrates by his/her words and actions that s/he 'cares' about her/his mentee. Mentoring relationships may be entered into for a range of motives. In a learning mentor/professional friendship, my research shows that 'caring' is valued by the learning mentees and it is about the learning mentor showing regard, valuing, being concerned and showing consideration. Based on my lived experience and this empirical research, these are core components integral to good Learning Mentor practice. By holding a regard for each other in the relationship, each person may gain a sense and feeling of reward from it. To give regard requires paying attention to the other and is closely linked to esteem, affection and respect. Where these are elements of the relationship, and are visible to the Learning Mentor and the Learning Mentee, this research suggests that things become easier for them to relate to one another, as does showing concern, and even admiration, for the other. It is not inevitable that those who become Learning Mentors have a positive regard for, and cares for, others, but this is important.

This emerged strongly from the tape-recorded interviews with Learning Mentors.

Certainly, this Learning Mentoring research suggests that, without the core components of professional friendship in mentoring relationships, success is less likely because the relationship is less valued by the Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee.

### **Respect**

In the original thinking, respect was viewed as involving treating the other person with deference, esteem and honour.

On the basis of my research, and my practical experience, there appears often to be a mutual and courteous regard for one another between Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee. As such, I would argue that they are also likely to be showing deference, esteem and honour and this suggests that they are prepared to be compliant with the wishes of the other (within limits) person in the Learning Mentor/Mentee Professional Friendship. This process encourages each to grow (together) and to change without fear. The parties feel safe in the relationship and this helps Learning Mentor and Learning Mentee gain greater confidence in their relationship. Clearly, this leads to greater self-confidence and a high self-esteem. As such, and in line with the original core components of professional friendship, this is a process that enables each party to show great respect or high regard and, in some cases, may even indicate admiration or affection for the other person (in the form of 'caring').

In the original concept, I argue that these processes encourage responsibility and the possibility of relating to others more easily, thus ensuring better communication (Pahl, 2000). There is no reason to suggest this is not transferable to the Learning Mentor's role. Relating to the Learning Mentor well, or better, means that the Learning Mentee is more likely to take notice of, and pay attention to, the actions and words of the Learning Mentor. At the same time, if the Learning Mentee believes he/she is regarded with esteem, affection and respect, then he/she will be more likely to act in a more responsible manner, so as not to damage that perception. As a result of receiving respect, each party in the relationship will feel valued, useful and satisfied with that relationship. As previously emphasised, having regard from the other in turn raises self-esteem. Holding the mentor in the highest respect in a professional friendship/learning mentee manner demonstrates consideration of the other.

This is visible in their relationship when they are observed in the school playground or in the corridor paying attention to one another; this may be through their active listening and non-verbal signalling (Hochschild, 1979). In addition, if regard is verbalised in public, through their greetings etc., such mutual respect may lead to a sense of 'belief' in the other person (by both mentor and mentee).



### **Genuineness**

In my original concept, I followed Rogers (1967, p.4), who developed 'Client Centred Counselling' theory, to help me view the professional friendship relationship as a special type of relationship. Rogers emphasised that, importantly, personal growth is a crucial aspect of this special kind of human relationship. In his view, the type of helping relationship involved in one-to-one mentoring is characterised by what he calls 'genuineness' (Rogers, 1967, p.47). He takes this to mean a transparency of approach to the relationship by the parties. In this way, he argues that s/he is in a relationship where 'my real feelings' are displayed. In the context of the core components of professional friendship, his work suggests that it is crucial to show the Learning Mentor/Learning Mentee that you 'really' can be who you are in the Learning Mentor relationship in an 'authentic' way. Learning Mentors broadly have this special type of relationship because theirs is a 'friendship for a purpose', meaning it aims to encourage a 'new state of being' for the Learning Mentees. To do this both parties remove their masks to be who they really are; to learn for themselves what /who they really are and understand the changes necessary for them to make if s/he is to further grow and develop. My research argues that, in successful mentoring relationships, the Learning Mentee seeks to emulate the Learning Mentor's (good) qualities and recognise their own practices in the practices of the other person. These findings appear to confirm the original core components of professional friendship.

### **Warmth**

When Rogers (1967, p 38) talks of 'warmth' in a relationship he calls for an acceptance of prizing the other person as a separate individual. Here, warmth particularly involves facial expression, and both verbal and non-verbal communication from the other. Such warmth is also a form of reassurance. Without the warmth in the relationship, both parties are likely to feel less valued and, therefore, less responsive to change. Warmth is important as a general sub-core component of the professional friendship which in mentoring can help nurture self-esteem.

### **Shared Experiences**

This aspect of the core components is confirmed by this research. By sharing human experiences in the Learning Mentoring relationship, mentor and mentee are being authentic and, in my view, this means that development is more likely to occur. The original model emphasises that disclosing personal information helps to develop rapport and trust in the relationship.

### **Honour**

Honour is an old-fashioned notion. In the context of the core components of Professional Friendship it denotes a mentor who avoids hurting her/his mentee.

This concept, which appears confirmed in the Learning Mentor case, implies that the mentor's intentions are honourable (s/he is trying to do the right thing). However, this does suggest a strong expectation of respect, as 'honour' is linked to respect and, in this case, the intention is to avoid causing pain by creating suspicion or mistrust.

This is particularly evident in the case of the Learning Mentoring relationship if the Learning Mentee is self-referred. Here, the Learning Mentee is more likely to behave in a honourable way toward her/his Learning Mentor as s/he has the freedom to make a choice. On the other hand, if a pupil is sent to the Learning Mentor for mentoring, this may be a relationship less likely to succeed.

### **Ethicacy**

This is in the revised, Learning Mentor concept (not built into the original) it indicates that the Learning Mentor is always striving to do the right thing.

### **Support**

In the original Professional Friendship construct, support from the mentor to mentee is seen as essential and this holds for the role of the Learning Mentor. Indeed, the Learning Mentee depends on the support that the Learning Mentor is prepared to give. A successful relationship will involve giving the level, type and amount of support that is identified and needed. As such, the main purpose of 'mentoring' is to 'help' and giving support is an important way of assisting. It is also important that this support is highly visible. Each relationship depends upon support if it is to continue. In the case of the learning mentor/learning mentee relationship, the types and the breadth of support needed are many and complex. They may include the involvement of external agencies and other agencies/individuals, as and when needed. As professional friendship is a two-way process, support is to be reciprocated.

### **Being Non-Judgemental**

Hamilton (1993, p. 26) argued that the mentoring relationship involves the mentor being a 'non-judgemental friend'. This implies a certain type of friendship, one which is different from personal friendship. When a personal friend makes judgements this involves a different process to making judgements in a mentoring friendship. Indeed, a non-judgemental friend is professional friend. As such, this provides an objective friendship, one with a degree of distance that is greater than the closeness between personal friends.

If we judge our personal friends, this can create a barrier to the support and help that the Learning Mentee seeks. In the context of a professional friendship mentoring relationship being non-judgemental means to suspend judgements. The Learning Mentor is a Professional and this means s/he is expected to bring a certain level of 'objectivity' to the relationship. By being objective and standing back from the other person's situation, the Learning Mentor has learned to put the best interests of the Learning Mentee first.

Again, without the suspension of judgement, trust may be jeopardised, weakened or undermined and this could damage, or even break, the relationship. This encourages the Learning Mentor to operate in a climate of 'no blame' toward the Learning Mentees behaviour. This non-judgemental aspect of professional friendship is a generalised activity applicable across all types of mentoring. However, such a non-judgemental stance is easier in less structured situations. So, Learning Mentors are constrained by educational legislation and can create a potential for tension in the professional friendship between the line between objectivity and subjectivity.

### **Empathy**

In my original model I followed Rogers (1967, p. 38) who stressed the importance of the mentor being sensitive to the other's world, a quality I described as empathy.

Rogers argues this makes it possible for us to accept one another as unique individuals for who and what they are at that moment. He further argues that the approach can form the basis of a certain type of relationship which helps develop self-awareness. His approach to helping an individual grow and develop he calls "unconditional acceptance/regard". In my original work with Probation mentors this was in evidence with their mentees (BEAT 1995, p 44-57). Again, I argue this is a general feature of mentoring which we can see also applies in the case of Learning Mentors. My interviews with Learning Mentors clearly demonstrates that they view empathy, and showing understanding toward their Learning Mentee, as important. These Learning Mentors were not judging or directing their Learning Mentee in their relationship and, indeed, to do so would, almost inevitably, act as a barrier to developing empathy.

### **Shared Values**

The original concept suggested that mentor and mentee need to have shared values, because this may help in defining the goals and setting the targets and helping the mentor and mentee to share a common understanding of why the relationship is needed.

For example, this may help the mentor to show the mentee a fuller understanding of what it means to do the right thing and to distinguish what are the differences between the 'right' and the 'wrong' thing, as well as acknowledging the consequences of the latter. In particular, doing the wrong thing could encourage people to make judgements and, if they are in positions of power, this may lead to premature assumptions about individuals. By understanding the mentees values, the mentor is in a stronger position to assess her/his intentions. Interesting, there is no evidence of shared values from my data from the Learning Mentoring interviews, so this feature of may not be generalised.

### **Challenging**

In the original thinking, the reason for including challenging is that, in certain situations, when a mentee feels safe with the relationship, the mentor may assess that challenging can help to develop openness, honesty and greater trust in the mentee. The process also helps to facilitate learning, change and moving-on for the benefit of the Learning Mentee. In a professional friendship relationship, when the parties feel valued, then challenging may be a meaningful activity if offered in a non-threatening way. Again, I would suggest this is found in most mentoring activity; certainly it is also present in the Learning Mentoring Professional Friendship relationships.

### **Being Non-directive**

All good mentoring relationships are 'unpowered'; that is to say, neither party holds a position of power over the other (Allan 1996). This is a helpful feature of the core components of professional friendship relationships and, as such, a common aspect of good mentoring. In a relationship, the parties are free to be who they are within their mentoring sessions and, for a Learning Mentor in a school, this type of relationship will be supportive. This is because the Learning Mentor, whilst not a disciplinarian, may sometimes need to challenge of the Learning Mentees behaviour and here the Learning Mentor is in loco parentice role. Of course, such a challenge is intended to effect the necessary changes to behaviour without the esteem of the Learning Mentee being lowered. It is worth bearing in mind that, if the Learning Mentor takes a 'directive' approach, s/he is more likely to undermine their relationship as this will work against any progress made to that date. It will also militate against the goal of empowering the Learning Mentee. The point is to move the Learning Mentee towards taking responsibility for his/her own actions, as, by doing so, decision making and problem solving become easier for them. The model of empowerment in mentoring which Gardiner (1995) cites in *Mentoring in Action* (Megginson and Clutterbuck, p. 77) views the process of empowerment in mentoring relationships as a continuum where thinking skills are developed as a result of the mentee-centred mentoring relationship.

There is no reason to suggest this is not the same for the Learning Mentees case. Again, this seems to be a crucial feature of a successful professional friendship in mentoring.

### **Loyalty**

Loyalty is a valued aspect of professional friendship in the original research. It is useful when advocacy is required on behalf of a mentee. Again, this is very applicable in the case of the Learning Mentor and loyalty also implies qualities such as dependability, reliability and trustworthiness. The Learning Mentee questionnaire data indicates that this is valued by Learning Mentees in their Learning Mentor Professional Friendships.

### **Advocacy**

Advocacy was a useful core component aspect of the original professional friendship concept, but is clearly less necessary in Learning Mentor Professional Friendship relationships where referrals from to Learning Mentor are more likely than advocacy. As such, this is clearly not necessarily a general feature of good mentoring.

### **Harmony**

This word has a number of meanings. Indeed, the New Collins Thesaurus (1985, p. 309) offers a range of synonyms which include:

accord, agreement, amicability, amity, compatibility, concord, conformity, consensus, cooperation, friendship, good will, like-mindedness, peace, rapport, sympathy, unanimity, understanding, unity...

As such, some of the essential core components of professional friendship mentoring relationships are implied within this one word. It is important to the Learning Mentor and their Learning Mentee as it is in Probation mentoring relationships, where they strive within their relationship to gain maximum benefits from the harmony that they can achieve.

### **Understanding**

Understanding is a key core component of my original construct. It is closely linked to empathy and is essential to all mentoring relationships. Indeed, it is evident in the Learning Mentors' interviews. It helps the Learning Mentor to consider the best approach for their mentee's learning and development, because understanding the other person's perspective is important to assess the strategies needed for their change.

As such, understanding encourages a positive regard for the mentee, especially as it can help the Learning Mentor to better develop their rapport. Again, it is clearly a general aspect of good mentoring as well as the professional friendship as this research shows.

### **Rapport**

In mentoring relationships, rapport helps at the beginning to move the relationship forward. As such, it helps the maintenance and stability of the relationship. In the original Professional Friendship core components, I claim that, when rapport breaks down, the relationship may be lost.

This is because other core components of professional friendship are linked to it and which are essential for the relationship's survival and success. This insight is confirmed by my data here and, thus, appears that it could be a generic feature of mentoring. Without rapport, openness, trust, empathy, honesty and understanding which are essential elements may wither. Rapport is needed to develop and maintain trust.

It also encourages the parties to relax with each other and, thus, be responsive to the needs of each other in the relationship. To me, rapport building involves respect (mutual), trust, focus, empathy, and which lead, ultimately, to congruence and empowerment.

### **Active Listening**

Active listening provides signals in mentoring relationships that suggest the mentor and the mentee are paying attention in their relationship. I particularly valued this in my Professional Friendship ideal because it shows that the mentor/mentee is interested enough to use eye contact to signal non-verbal approval (Pahl 2000).

I argue this is important in all mentoring. Indeed, active listening/respectful listening is a multi-faceted activity and may involve the use of words, non-verbal communication (through body language), facial expression and eye contact. It is clear Learning Mentors use it in their relationship, although I couldn't observe it directly, given the confidentiality issues discussed in Chapter 3. Shea terms this type of listening in mentoring relationships as respectful listening (Shea 1992, p. 46).

### **Awareness of Need**

At the contracting stage of formal mentoring relationships the boundaries and targets are established. At this point the mentees' relationship needs are assessed and identified. The role of the mentor, and this is clearly true of the Learning Mentor, is to support those needs. To support these needs, Mentors are likely to require further assistance as, and when, needed and, for this, may refer to other agencies or individuals to gain relevant information and help.

As the needs reduce, or they are no longer required, this signals that the Learning Mentee has become more self-sufficient and the professional friendship mentoring relationship is no longer needed.

### **Trust**

Trust and trusting is a core component of my professional friendship and is found in all good mentoring (Clutterbuck 1991 et.,al.) as it is one of the cornerstones of all types of mentoring relationships. Certainly, the absence of trust may act as a barrier to the learning and change process in which the Learning Mentee/Mentor engage. It forms the foundation and platform for success in relationships.

Without trust, the mentee may feel that their relationship is unstable, and possibly unpredictable. Trust is particularly important to younger children in a school setting because they find that consistency of trust is beneficial and encourages self-esteem. Trust is a building-block towards holding the Learning Mentee in regard and with care. In the professional friendship relationship, a positive regard enables individuals to feel secure and safe within their mentoring relationship. If trust fails to develop, the relationship is less likely to be successful. Within the Learning Mentor/Learning Mentee educational setting, the trust given and received is a two-way process.

However, in this context, it refers to trusting of self and well as to trusting others. The care in these relationships is of an objective caring because it puts the best interests of the other first and before considerations of self-interest.

### **Confidentiality**

This issue plays differently than is the case in my earlier work. In my original thinking I viewed confidentiality in formal mentoring systems such as the National Probation Service, to mean institutional confidentiality. This is, in contrast to the 'absolute confidentiality', involved in the relationship between Doctor and Patient.

To hold absolute confidentiality outside of the formal system, for example, in an informal mentoring relationship, would involve undertaking a risk assessment. If the relationship boundaries are not clearly defined, there may be misunderstandings, which could lead to serious consequences. Where the focus is upon institutional confidentiality, it is still likely that trust, openness and honesty will be engendered through the transparency of a mutual agreement. If the boundaries and interpretations of confidentiality are made clear at the contract setting stage, they are more likely to hold. As such, while confidentiality is crucial to all mentoring relationships, it needs to be interpreted differently in differing mentoring contexts. In the case of learning mentoring, it means not always having to 'tell' someone unless, due to the Every Child Matters, agenda there are issues of child protection. In this case the legislation must be followed.

### **Intuition**

I argue in the original construction that positive mentoring relationships based on friendship may develop intuitively. However, this does not seem to be so relevant for Learning Mentors and, so, is not necessarily present nor a generic feature of good mentoring.

### **Congruence**

Congruence is the outcome of a positive, successful, professional friendship relationship (Clutterbuck, 1991).

It is a core component of professional friendship helping maintain a mentoring contract over time in a harmonious way. The presence of congruence encourages growth and development for mentors and mentees. Again, there is no direct data from the Learning Mentor using this term. However, it is reasonable to take this to mean compatibility as a feature of most successful mentoring relationships and this is intended to include Learning Mentoring.

### **Willingness to Learn**

In the Professional Friendship, the relationship involves a certain type of friendship whose purpose is to encourage learning and change. Of course, the learning involved may be informal and/or unstructured, or even accidental.

This aspect of the Professional Friendship is clearly evident in my research here. The school setting in which learning mentors are found is characterised by formal, structured learning associated with the National Curriculum, which is supported by Learning Mentors. However, the interviews here suggest that the mentoring they undertake is holistic, which means that the relationships necessarily involve other, less formal, modes of learning. For example Learning Mentees learn via emulating the Learning Mentor's behaviour. The Learning Mentor role here may be to act as a (learning) process facilitator for the mentee.

### **Willingness to Change**

The main purpose of the mentoring activity is to help and support change. Willingness to change on the part of any mentee is critical to the relationship success. In my original thinking, I argued that this core component of professional friendship is important because the relationship's success depends on the mentorings' purpose. However, this study of Learning Mentors suggests that the role of mentoring activity is not always so clear. As this thesis shows, the Learning Mentor's role is sometimes misunderstood by schools, in part because of a lack of role clarity. I view, a willingness to change is important to all types of mentoring, thus, suggesting it be implicit in professional friendship.



Indeed, both the mentors in my original study and the Learning Mentors here are concerned that effective learning and change happen as a result of their active involvement with the mentee in their mentoring relationship.

### **Being Reflexive**

Reflecting on experiences in the mentoring relationship is helpful for recalling the learning undertaken. This applies to all types of mentoring and is especially clear in the case of the Learning Mentor, as their role includes raising academic achievements as well social learning. For mentees, being reflexive encourages and enables the development of self-awareness, which, in turn, can lead to greater decision making and problem solving skills. This results in ‘empowerment’ and is often the end goal of the mentoring relationship. Certainly, it indicates a movement toward a greater level of self-reliance which helps develop self-directed learning. To me, this again is a general feature of good mentoring.

### **Exposure**

In the Professional Friendship model, the mentor’s willingness to expose the mentee to their network of contacts, connections and associates helps facilitate learning and change to move them on to achieve their goals. This may have general mentoring application potential, but was not evident in my research on learning mentoring.

### **Time**

Time spent together in a mentoring session is crucial and this applies to all types of mentoring. Mentors take the time to be there for their mentee and this may require a flexible approach to the contract boundaries.

Assessing this new adaptation for Learning Mentors shows me that we have learned from the original research from the Probation Service and this allows me to consider the impact of it on Learning Mentors. The impact of this research on Learning Mentor practice is that it is intended to encourage their professional confidence and competence in their role giving them the opportunity to help schools and staff better clarify their role. For schools this means Learning Mentors can impact more highly on raising standards of attendance and attainment for students whilst giving them more opportunities to gain better life chances, social inclusion and social mobility. As the Learning Mentor cohort in my study was diverse, the research indicates that impact on their practice also includes that they make a

contribution to social cohesion. This may not have been full understood by schools previously. My study indicates that it is a step towards a possible mentoring model.

I shall now show how Table 3.1 is revised to reflect the Learning Mentor role in relation to Professional Friendship and to other types of helping roles.

**Table 7.1:** Comparing the Core Components of Professional Friendship to a range of other helping roles including Learning Mentoring

<b>Attribute/ Skill</b>	<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Counselling</b>	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Tutoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Professional Friendship</b>	<b>Learning Mentoring</b>
<b>Listening</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Sharing Experience</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Openness</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
<b>Respect</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
<b>Genuineness</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
<b>Warmth</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Honour</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Support</b>	✓				✓	✓	✓
<b>Non- Judgemental</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Empathy</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Acceptance</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Guidance</b>				✓		✓	✓

<b>Feedback</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Questioning</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Focusing</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Goal-Setting</b>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Challenging</b>	✓				✓	✓	✓
<b>Non-Directive</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓
<b>Loyalty</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Advocacy</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Congruence</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Understanding</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Honesty</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Rapport</b>	✓				✓	✓	✓
<b>Awareness of Need</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Shared Values</b>						✓	
<b>Trust</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Confidentiality</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓
<b>Intuition</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Love</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Advising</b>	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓

<b>Encouraging</b>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Motivating</b>	✓				✓	✓	✓
<b>Accountability</b>	✓						
<b>Clear Boundaries</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Reliable</b>	✓					✓	✓
<b>Clarifying Aims</b>	✓		✓				✓
<b>Review/ Summarising</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Praise</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Negotiate</b>	✓	✓				✓	✓

This Table, which is developed from the original concept utilises data from Learning Mentor tapes and helps me to show that the common set of core components utilised by Learning Mentors in particular and other types of mentors more generally. These core components were identified by my previous research with the Probation Service and in that analysis I found a friendship relationship operating. On the basis of these current findings, I argue that all mentoring relationships possibly could be characterised as based on a professional, not a personal, friendship. This point is developed below.

Table 7.2 below indicates that friendship is common to all mentoring by further comparing the Learning Mentor data with that in the original research (as in Table 3.2) to show that the Learning Mentor role does indeed involve friendship elements.

*Table 7.2: A Comparison of Friendship Types with Learning Mentoring and Formal Mentoring.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Personal Friendship</b>	<b>Professional Friendship</b>	<b>Formal Mentoring</b>	<b>Learning Mentoring</b>
<b>Reliable</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Shares Feeling/Ideas</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Respects Me</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>They Are Supportive</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Is Loyal To Me</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Understands Me</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Honest</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Listens To Me</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>I Trust Them</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>They Trust Me</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Cares</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Helps Me To Change</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Is Usually Right</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Allows Me To Make Up My Own Mind</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Helps Me Understand Things</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Is Encouraging</b>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Gets On With Me</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Speaks Up For Me</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Does The Right Thing</b>		✓	✓	✓

In the Table 7.2 above, I used data from Learning Mentees and that range of friendship skills identified in Learning Mentor interviews to show that they are applying friendship elements in their relationships (see Learning Mentor interviews Chapter 6).

Analysing these findings now suggests a step towards a possible mentoring model. Below, the table compares Learning Mentoring to Professional Friendship to show the core components utilised.

**Table 7.3: Learning Mentor Professional Friendship: A Step Towards a Possible Mentoring Model?**

<b>Attribute/ Skill</b>	<b>Learning Mentoring</b>	<b>Professional Friendship</b>	<b>General Mentoring</b>
<b>Listening</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Sharing Experience</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Openness</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Respect</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Genuineness</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Warmth</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Honour</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Support</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Non-Judgemental</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Empathy</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Acceptance</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Guidance</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Feedback</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Questioning</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Focussing</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Goal-setting</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Challenging</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Non-directive</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Loyalty</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Advocacy</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Congruence</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Understanding</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Honesty</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Rapport</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Awareness of need</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Trust</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Confidentiality</b>	✓	✓	✓

<b>Intuition</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Love</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Advising</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Encouraging</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Motivation</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Accountability</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Clear boundaries</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Reliable</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Clarifying aims</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Reviewing/summarising</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Praise</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Negotiate</b>	✓	✓	✓

This final table indicates a common set of core components utilised by both Learning Mentors and other types of mentors in their mentoring relationship(s). The Table shows that these are all rooted in a type of friendship that I define as Professional Friendship. This data suggests to me that successful/good quality mentoring involves a professional friendship mentoring relationship, rather than a 'personal' friendship, mentoring relationship. I reiterate it also means that this is a step toward a general mentoring model.

Overall, the data analysed indicates more than my previous work did about the nature of the mentoring relationship processes. I developed the original concept of professional friendship that did not include any mentee data from Probation Service research. The revised concept now incorporates the following additional core components:

- Mentee willingness to learn
- Mentee willingness to change
- Giving time to mentees
- Encouraging mentees to be reflective
- Mentees provided with new opportunities/life chances
- Flexibility to meet different needs of mentees

I next move to the final section of the chapter which considers suggestions for further study in this area.

## **7.4 Recommendations for Further Study**

Further research on other cases is now needed to confirm whether the Professional Friendship is towards a model. I see mentoring is a relationship whose purpose is to encourage learning, providing a learning experience for mentor and mentee to develop and change.

In my view, Professional Friendship has potential to provide a better understanding of mentoring, and thus to improve it. Certainly, there is a need for a model that may be used to underpin professional practice in the field.

Here, I emphasise that mentoring relationship processes involve transferable skills that can potentially be used in different types of settings in the mentoring field and this needs to be investigated further. Indeed, this research confirms that Learning Mentors are utilising a range of core components identified in my original research. These general features denoting success and can be utilised by other types of mentors. However, further research on other types of mentoring, for example, in business, the legal sphere or health, would help confirm whether, or not, my Professional Friendship concept can transfer further.

In my view, additional study is needed in this area to deepen and broaden understandings. I don't want the study of mentoring to become overly academic, because there would be a clear risk that it would become divorced from mentoring practice. Rather, for me, what mentoring now needs is for more practitioners to undertake mentoring research to help examine, develop and improve the model offered here through action learning approaches. Practitioner's contributions are rooted in their lived experiences and such research provides a rich data source for developing our understanding of mentoring, and thus improving general mentoring practice.

Additionally, it is important that my work, and the developments of it which others may make in the future, helps policy makers and others better understand the role of Learning Mentors in education, and, indeed, to what extent that it is in common to the role of mentors in other fields. This is crucial



because mentoring offers new life chances to mentees and I developed the Professional Friendship concept in order to help improve mentoring practice in a way that no alternative model has done to date. I view these core components of Professional Friendship are vital to successful mentoring relationships.

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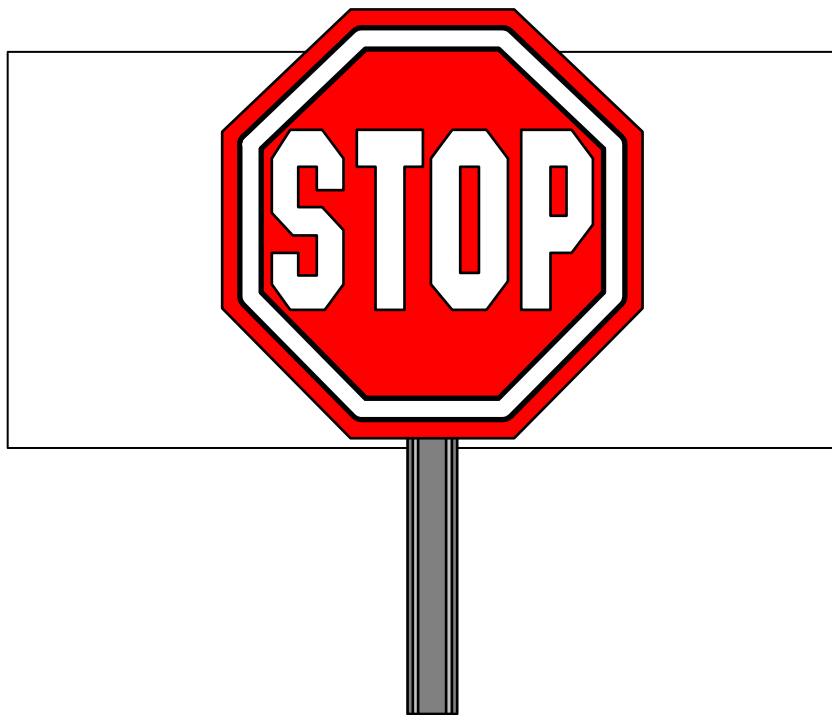
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**APPENDIX 1:**  
**THE MENTEE QUESTIONNAIRE**

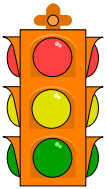


**PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE  
IT WILL HELP US TO HELP YOU!**

**SOME OF THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL COME ACROSS YOU MIGHT JUST HAVE TO TICK A BOX, OTHERS YOU HAVE TO WRITE SMALL ANSWERS, SENTENCES OR CIRCLE A WORD.**

**NB. PLEASE NOTE THAT WHAT EVER YOU WRITE WILL BE ANONYMOUS AND WILL NOT BE PASSED ON.**

**PART ONE: GETTING TO KNOW YOU, THIS PART IS ABOUT YOU. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WRITE OR CIRCLE THE ANSWER**



**SO, HERE WE GO.....**

**WHAT ARE YOU?**

**MALE/FEMALE**

**(CIRCLE APPROPRIATE)**

**AGE.....**

**SCHOOL OR OTHER ORGANISATION.....**

.....

**WHAT AGE IS YOUR MENTOR? .....**

**SAME AGE / YOUNGER / TEENAGER / OLDER**

**(CIRCLE APPROPRIATE)**

**PART 2: FEELINGS ABOUT MENTORING.**

**THIS IS ABOUT HOW GOOD YOU FEEL THE SCHEME IS, JUST WRITE IN THE SPACE BELOW THE QUESTIONS.**



**WRITE IN THIS SPACE TO SAY WHAT YOU LIKE  
ABOUT MENTORING AND WHY-**



**WRITE IN THIS SPACE WHAT YOU DON'T  
LIKE ABOUT MENTORING AND WHY-**



**WRITE IN THIS SPACE WHY YOU THINK MENTORING IS THE SAME OR DIFFERENT  
TO YOUR FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE-**

**PART 3: THIS PART IS ABOUT- YOU AND YOUR MENTOR. JUST CIRCLE THE FIRST  
ANSWER. TICK THE BOX FOR HOW IMPORTANT THE QUESTIONS ARE TO YOU.**

**DO YOU THINK YOUR MENTOR IS YOUR FRIEND?**

**YES/NO**

VERY   SOMETIMES   NEVER

MY MENTOR IS HONEST.....

MY MENTOR IS

RELIABLE.....

MY MENTOR LISTENS TO

ME.....

MY MENTOR SHARES

(FEELINGS, IDEAS, E.T.C).....

MY MENTOR RESPECTS

ME.....

MY MENTOR

CARES.....

MY MENTOR HELPS ME TO CHANGE .....

MY MENTOR IS LOYAL TO

ME.....

I TRUST MY

MENTOR.....

MY MENTOR TRUSTS ME.

MY MENTOR IS

SUPPORTIVE.....

MY MENTOR IS USUALLY RIGHT.....

MY MENTOR UNDERSTANDS

ME.....

MY MENTOR LETS ME MAKE

UP MY OWN MIND.....

MY MENTOR HELPS ME TO

UNDERSTAND THINGS.....

MY MENTOR IS

ENCOURAGING.....

MY MENTOR SPEAKS UP FOR

ME.....

MY MENTOR ALWAYS DOES

**THE RIGHT  
THING.....  
MY MENTOR GETS ON WELL WITH ME.....  
PART 4: THE END, THIS IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE.  
JUST WRITE WHAT YOU FEEL!**

***WRITE ANY COMMENTS YOU HAVE ABOUT YOUR MENTOR-***

***WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE? -***

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART**

