INDUCTION INTO TEACHING: EXPLORATIONS INTO DEVELOPMENTAL MENTORING AND CRITICAL REFLECTION ON PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A summary submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by publication at the University of Leicester

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meetings’, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 28(3), 267-292

#7

#8

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#10

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List of additional supporting works to be found in Addendum B (separately bound)


The following two items are in press at the time of this submission:


List of Supporting Documentation in Appendix 1

Letters from Co-authors, 17 March 2008

- Dr Sue Dymoke
- Dr Tony Lawson
- Dr Tony Pell
- Ms Angela Wortley
Introduction

This selected body of work spans a twelve-year period in connection with my role within higher education in England as teacher educator. The impetus for the research described in this Summary can be described, broadly, as three-fold.

Firstly, Individual Action Planning (IAP) has been embedded in the secondary PGCE course structure at the University of Leicester for many years. It provides both a rationale and a structure for regular review and target setting by student teachers in negotiation with their tutors (#1). It had been set up at a time of emerging national education initiatives in schools, such as Records of Achievement for pupils, flexible learning for older students and recognition that the one-to-one discussion skills of teachers were central to their successful implementation (see Broadfoot, 1989). No evaluations of the impact, or perceptions of the review/target setting process by different stakeholders, had been carried out within initial teacher education, although research conducted in different educational settings (Watts, 1992, 1994) indicated that underlying processes of action planning were complex. As Head of Course between 1995 and 1998, researching the issues around IAP was both timely and important, since the course changes contingent on Circular 9/92 (DES, 1992) had to provide flexibility in the training process for individual student teachers and different school agendas, as well as ensuring that student teachers could meet the basic teaching competences to gain QTS (#2) (#3).

Secondly, the Government in England introduced new Induction arrangements (DfES, 1999) for new entrants to the teaching profession. The guidance in Circular 5/99 contained ministerial expectations both of induction to the new workplace, and professional development in relation to the competences in the first year of teaching. A further feature of these new requirements was the completion of an exit Action Plan - the Career Entry Profile (CEP). A unique research opportunity presented itself. I was able to conduct a research study at Leicester, on two consecutive cohorts of secondary NQTs, one prior to the new Induction arrangements, and one in the subsequent year, in which an individualised
programme of monitoring and support for NQTs, and an assessment of performance against Induction Standards was required in schools. As well as exploring the particular impacts of the new Induction arrangements, the study also provided opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the CEP documentation and associated tutorial process as support for early professional development (#4). The findings of this study also informed my subsequent study into NQTs’ experiences of induction in three different local authorities in 2002-3. I widened my exploration to examine whether particular institutional factors associated with initial training and the underpinning IAP rationale of course structure at Leicester might influence perceptions of the action/review process in the induction year (#9).

Thirdly, at the heart of this body of work, has been my personal interest in the multiple meanings and interpretations of mentoring and its functions and processes, which are of considerable international interest in different professional settings (Carmin, 1988; Jasper, 1995; Barondess, 1997; HEA, 1998; Freeman, 1998). The previously published works about mentoring and early teacher education at that time were largely descriptive or evaluative (Edwards, 1997; Maynard, 2000; Williams & Prestage, 2002; Harrison, 2001). For me, further questions arose about the nature and quality of the types of support within the initial training and, then, the induction of new teachers. I began to focus more specifically on the extent and nature of what I have chosen to call developmental mentoring, and the extent to which mentoring does represents the ‘complex, interactive process’ defined by Carmin (1988). This led me to devise a unique, empirical study with induction tutors (mentors), which gained external funding over a two-year period (2002-4), in order to explore how developmental mentoring by Induction tutors might be promoted through participatory action research, and used to promote critical reflective practices by NQTs in the induction year (#5, #6, #7, #9). Issues of professional autonomy, and professional values and practices, underpin institutional procedures for mentoring, appraisal and performance management (#8, #10, #11, #12). It is these core issues that are explored in these later academic and professional articles in attempts to raise the level of national and international debate about the extent to which they reflect individual or school/institutional targets and priorities.
This PhD submission presents one book chapter, one conference paper and ten academic papers as the published material to support this body of research. Within the three sections that follow, I draw together the underpinning conceptual thinking and discuss selected research outcomes in relation to new knowledge, policy and practice: (I) induction and mentoring of new teachers; (II) personal autonomy and professional development; (III) transforming mentoring dialogues to enhance critical reflective practice.

(I) Issues of Induction: tutoring and support for new teachers in schools

Background

Induction into the teaching profession refers to the specific in-service training period in which a new entrant to the profession (NQT) has an entitlement to planned initiation with the support of a designated induction tutor (mentor) as well as others in or out of the school. Concerns about teacher recruitment and retention and related conditions of service for new teachers, have meant that induction has been under scrutiny in many countries. Examples of recent policy changes are found in England (DfES, 1999), in England and Wales (see Reid, 2001), in Scotland (see Draper et al, 1997; McCrone Report, 2000; McNally, 2001), with related developments in the US (Feiman-Nemser et al, 1999; Darling Hammond, 2000).

The (then) new induction policy in England seemed to match closely two of the three principles identified by Feiman-Nemser et al (1999) in their literature review of new teacher induction, in that (1) it represented a particular stage in teacher (professional) learning, and (2) it provided for the process of socialisation both into school and the profession. However the policy in England was focussed largely on individual learning needs and did not match the third principle since it did not specify any formal programme (curriculum) for all new teachers. In terms of standard theories of learning, the underpinning assumption of the new policy was that it involved processes whereby individuals acquired particular kinds of
knowledge and skills and demonstrated corresponding and lasting behaviours. In other words, the ‘competent’ new teacher is one who can recognise the evidence needed to demonstrate competence and knows what is to be learnt. However, such an underpinning does not take account of a crucial question: what if what is being learnt (the set of competences or standards) is not a stable, defined body of knowledge and skills?

Some fundamental weaknesses in these induction processes in England (DfES 1999; DfES, 2003; TTA, 2001, 2003) thus reflect, in part, a lack of an explicit theoretical basis for teacher professional learning, as well as the speed of introduction in the absence of any detailed pilot study of effective ways for their implementation. McNally and Oberski (2003, p.60) noted that evaluative studies in both the primary and secondary sectors succeeded in refining and extending the range of questions that need attention (Tickle, 2000; Harrison, 2001; Bubb et al, 2002; Totterdell et al, 2002), and there was a wider recognition that more fundamental research is needed on Teacher Induction to understand more about new teachers’ varied needs (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001), the nature of new teacher learning (van Manen, 1995), and the professional culture ‘that favors collaboration and enquiry’ (Feiman-Nemser, 1996, p.1). In his explorations on work-based learning and organizational change in a range of professional settings, Engeström (2001) actually argues that, for important transformation of personal lives, ‘There is no competent teacher’ (p.138) - that learning is about what is not yet there.

A crucial question, in relation to these uncertainties about a theoretical basis for the particular type of induction, is ‘Who identifies the beginning teachers’ needs?’ Further, ministerial guidance at the time was unclear on whether it is the new teachers’ specific induction needs, or their wider professional needs. I explore the possible answers in Harrison et al, 2006, (#9) (p.1057), building on the work of Vonk (1993). At one end of the spectrum is a bureaucratic-managerial approach, with the new teacher as a technician, responsible for implementing a curriculum whose parameters have been imposed by an external body (currently the QCA in England and Wales). At the other end is a participant-involved approach with a new teacher who is self-directing and aided by a mentor who can reflect continuously on their own professional knowledge and repertoire of actions (Vonk, 1996, p.316). Thus there may be a mismatch, between, on the one hand, a new
teacher who is accountable to the employer in relation to meeting training standards, and one who wishes to make their own decisions about personal and professional learning, and about their pupils’ needs.

**Comparative study of NQTs’ experiences of induction, 1999-2000**

Within this growing international agenda for research and development in teacher induction, detailed studies of the impact of the changes in particular national contexts were clearly important. Thus, my comparative study (1999-2000) (Harrison, 2002, #4), tracking two cohorts of NQTs from one HEI, has contributed substantially to the knowledge base, by providing a pre- and post-study of the new induction procedures in England. In addition to considering the types of help and the changes in the support systems in their schools, and the impact of CEP and action planning on professional development, the study sought to identify factors within schools associated with ‘induction effectiveness’; and finally to provide examples of ‘best induction practice’ for use in professional training events and associated documentation. Methodologically, this (and its follow-up study, described below) focussed on individual new teachers, providing an approach for the identification of factors associated with induction, including induction systems, mentoring, support and target setting. My study revealed ‘strong and positive shifts in induction procedures’ (#4, p.270) between the two years, but that there remained considerable variability in structured professional development in the induction year, with a significant minority receiving less than their minimum entitlement to support their professional development.

In thinking about teachers’ professional learning as a process (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Little, 2002), my comparative study showed little evidence of staged progressive induction training or induction processes that produce challenge and deeper reflection on professional practice. This indicates that the focus of induction training in these schools may be located towards the technicist end of the training spectrum. This important finding is matched by later studies elsewhere, e.g. Valencic Zuljan et al (2007) in which the authors found, in their study of newly qualified teachers in Slovenia that, ‘It was rare for a (teacher) trainee to expect the mentor to encourage him/her to think reflectively.’ (p.382). In contrast to this technicist approach to teacher education during induction,
constructivist pedagogies underpin most teacher education courses where professional knowledge is created rather than received (von Glasersfeld, 1991) and where social constructivism requires professional knowledge acquisition to be mediated by discourse or dialogue, rather than directly transferred by teacher talk (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). In other words professional knowledge is explored and transformed through dialogue, rather than remembered as a uniform set of ideas. Holt-Reynolds (1998) argues further that in student-centred classrooms, participation alone does not necessarily bring about learning. Similarly it is therefore the deep vision of oneself as teacher that is needed as the professional learner. It is this that leads to professional autonomy, in which one is free to determine one's own actions.

In summary, my research (#4) revealed that the value of the CEP as a support for induction and professional learning remained in doubt on several fronts. First, the nature of professional support appeared largely for those NQTs with particular needs or inadequacies - it seemed largely to be a deficit model, rather than one which could provide for structured developmental learning. Second, the absence of deeper critical reflection on practice during induction is an area that deserves further investigation and support. This highlighted for me the need in my future research to establish particular professional learning situations that might be linked to critical reflection on practice as part of an important developmental stage in professional learning. This would have to involve an important methodological shift from my previous focus on the individual teacher to one which examines elements of the expert teacher/ new teacher relationships at various stages of professional development.

This study has highlighted broad positive indicators of ‘induction effectiveness’ for these English NQTs: the school’s overall concern with promoting their professional development, with an induction programme in place and a mentor to observe the NQT’s teaching. The CEP was given a moderate rating overall. These findings were in line with other national studies at the time (Totterdell et al, 2002) and lead us towards recognising the value to be placed on a developmental set of mentoring functions rather than the deficit model of mentoring. My use of indicators of induction effectiveness was developed further in my next study.
Study of NQTs in three local authorities, 2002-2003

The conditions that promote best practice in the mentoring of new teachers were explored in a more detailed analysis of induction practice, in which I compared: (1) questionnaire responses by new teachers in three education authorities at the start and end of their induction year, and (2) semi-structured interviews with sub-samples of new teachers. These questionnaire data distinguished three ‘teacher types’ on the basis of their induction and mentoring experiences (#9, p.1060). Based on data derived from the NQTs’ perceptions and in relation to these ‘types’, I explored, similarities and differences in how mentoring functions were distributed in schools, how mentoring relationships helped to empower new teachers, and the value placed on the review/target setting processes (underpinning the CEP) by new teachers and their mentors.

The analyses revealed few variables that discriminated between those NQTs who had trained on the Leicester PGCE (with its embedded action planning) and those trained elsewhere (where action planning may or may not have been embedded), and, where these differences did occur, they were generally not retained later in the induction year (#9, p.1059). My overall conclusion was that induction in England provides a functional model which seems to militate against rather than foster critical reflection on practice by an individual new teacher. Best practice in ‘developmental’ mentoring relationships for NQTs (#9, p.1057) involved both challenge and risk-taking within supportive school environments, where there were clear induction systems in place, and where there was a strong school ethos in relation to professional development. These findings concur with those of Daloz (1986), cited in Elliott and Calderhead (1993), that, for quality learning by trainee teachers to take place, two aspects are equally important. One is the support of the mentor and the challenges that the mentor poses to the trainee. A second is that mentors, too, need support and attention in the process of their training to be mentors (see also Williams & Prestage, 2002). Valencic Zuljan and Vorinc (2007) - who cite my work (#9) - also conclude that mentor training should be experiential, that mentors should get the chance to experiment actively, and to exchange views and experiences with their peers. Thus the mentor for a new teacher appears to be Janus-like, simultaneously facing both the individual
teacher with her particular interpersonal and pedagogical needs, as well as the wider needs and demands of the professional community in which the mentor and the NQT are situated (#9, p.1056).

(II) Developing personal autonomy as a model of professional learning and development

*Individual action planning and issues of accountability*

The largely deficit model of induction found in England stresses the importance of individual needs and support in relation to national professional standards, with a requirement for regular classroom observations and reviews. There is an assumption within all the policy documents that the focus of training is meeting the Induction Standards and that this in turn leads to better understanding and evaluation of the teaching process. The relatively low value placed on the CEP (#4, #9) suggests to me that it is a paper-driven vehicle used for purposes of accountability, rather than as a vehicle used to promote professional learning and progression through reflective practices and targeted individual training.

The functional model of induction referred to in the previous section is in direct contrast to the social constructivist nature of initial teacher education at Leicester in the early 1990s. This tension is highlighted also in my earlier writing and thinking about the underlying principles of Partnership at the School of Education (Harrison, 1995) (#1); (Harrison & Gaunt, 1994). In these articles the process of individual action planning and target setting was seen as closely aligned to the appraisal process and the 'continuity of professional development' (#1, pp.34-35), as well as to collaborative approaches with other teachers and university tutors for 'joint planning, joint evaluation and .... curriculum development' (p.35). In what was then a new era of imposed training competences and a national training agenda, I provided a pragmatic commentary about the likely emphasis of tutoring roles on monitoring the training standards and training tutors in schools (p.39).
A whole course review of IAP, which I conducted in 1995-6, using a questionnaire survey of all school tutors and student teachers, allowed exploration of their understandings of IAP tutorial meetings, and perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of the IAP process. In Harrison (1997) (#2), I explore the tension between IAP as a ‘control’ and IAP as ‘personal responsibility’. If IAP is to be used to support the management of learning in its widest sense for life-long learning, then, I argued, ‘the balance of input from the co-tutor and the student teacher in the early tutorials is crucial if the student teacher is to “own” the process.’ (#2, p.373). In other words, the student teacher needs to demonstrate their capacity to develop their own pedagogical knowledge, skills and identity through a variety of processes with more expert (knowledgeable) teachers. Issues of ownership therefore become part of the pedagogical problem to be addressed by developmental mentoring.

In Harrison and Lawson (1997) (#3), we provided evidence that the ‘embedded use of IAPs became the solution to the logistical and pedagogical problems faced by the university and school tutors’ (p.73). In Lawson and Harrison (1999) [see Addendum B(1)] we used these same findings to explore degrees of ‘empowerment’ and of disaffection with ‘authoritarian and unequal relationships’ between student teacher and tutor (p.99). The notion of ‘taking control over one’s learning’ (p.99) appeared to us to be central to the success of communicating with tutors and the learning of problem-solving skills. Different pedagogical identities also seem to be emerging in relation to the IAP and the standards agenda. We used the term ‘directed autonomy’ to provide the situations where individuals are empowered to make choices, but have a direction in which they have to travel (Lawson, Harrison & Cavendish 2004, p.102) {see Addendum B(2)}.

Developing professional autonomy?
As shown in my earlier study (#4), there was little evidence in 2002 that NQTs in England receive ‘staged progressive induction training or induction processes that produce deeper challenge and deeper reflection on professional practice’ (p.255). In a later analysis of some interview data I derived from a small qualitative study of mentors and beginning teachers in their second year of teaching (June 2004), I
was able to consider how the key ‘actors’ in these schools perceive and experience their school support/mentoring systems for (i) performance management, and (ii) appraisal (Dymoke & Harrison, 2006, #10). Performance-led school managerial systems seemed to over-ride any systems of appraisal which might support personal and professional targets, leaving new teachers relatively unsupported in relation to their personal career aspirations. Put more starkly, these support systems in schools did not seem to encourage the new teacher to become self-monitoring and critically reflective practitioners in the widest professional sense. As we found with the association of self-surveillance and IAP in initial training (Lawson, Harrison & Cavendish 2004), there is a similar issue in connection with appraisal processes for more experienced new teachers: that is, the extent to which personal autonomy and empowerment is possible in a technicist regime, since ‘reflection becomes self measurement and self evaluation against the (teaching) standards’ (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006, p.128).

Meanwhile, the DfES (2002) introduced new ITT/Induction Standards for the award of qualified teacher status, which replaced the earlier Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998) and Circular 5/99 (DfES 1999). The first of these new Standards was Professional Values and Practice. One of the eight elements of Standard One (1.7), against which student teachers were to be judged/assessed in order to qualify, focussed specifically on student teachers’ powers of self-evaluation and their improvement of their teaching, by evaluating it, learning from effective practice of others and from evidence. It expected them to be motivated and to take increasing responsibility for their own professional development.

In 2005 there appeared to be no published evaluations of how teachers or trainees were responding to the assessment of Standard One in England. I conducted a small-scale exploratory study within my own institution, as a course review, drawing on analyses of three years’ of written assessment data for three cohorts of secondary PGCE students, as well as individual semi-structured interviews with student teachers and their school tutors and mentors, in six schools. I examined:

- How the subject tutor /coordinating tutor /student teacher regarded Standard One
• What help student teachers were given to meet Standard One overall, and in relation to component parts
• How Standard One was assessed and graded by the subject tutor.

The methodology described in Harrison (2006) (#11) is focussed on the individual teacher and on accessing modes of assessments by school tutors against Standard One. As well as discussing the likely influences of different curriculum areas and the opportunities they may provide for different student teachers to score highly in Standard One, I examined component 1.7 in some detail (#11, p.447-448). Most of the difficulty that teachers have in assessing this (and other) component(s) hinges on their choice and range of evidence. They rely almost entirely on global professional insights to identify the overall grade or level of achievement by the student teacher. Most of the assessment commentary was descriptive and lacked expression of judgement on how well the student was performing. Figure 5 (#11, p.450) shows how person-related components of Standard One might be segregated from task-related components and attempts to provide a framework for collecting different types of evidence for assessing different types of components. This acknowledges that professional learning (and its assessment) has to encompass a level of self-awareness (vision) of oneself as a teacher (see also Farr Darling, 2001; Flores, 2001). I conclude, in Harrison, 2007 (#12) (p.339), that Standard One offered opportunity for the use of critical reflection on practice to be used to clarify values that lie at the heart of successful professional teaching practices. It might also be argued that, nevertheless, it remains part of a disciplinary regime in relation to a body of professional knowledge described in terms of competences and Standards.

Clearly much more work is needed to provide the sort of professional communities that permit ‘reflection, enquiry and debate’ (#12, p.339). In a politically driven, professional climate that gives little opportunity to value either sustained critical reflection, or a teacher’s capacity to draw on and use research critically, what can be done to promote a greater recognition that ‘learning from evidence’ requires ‘a range of qualities ... including intellectual independence and critical engagement with evidence’ (QAA, 2000, p.5, cited by Menter et al, 2004)? As I have shown in #11 and #12, there is a major challenge to help mentors open up
these types of discourses and to counter the notion of professional development as a mere technical process or mastery of professional competences, but see it rather as a notion that can embrace the ‘reflective practitioner’.

**Experiential learning and situated learning**

The disjunction which my induction studies exposed between given criteria for ‘effective induction’ and the social constructivist approaches adopted in teacher education courses in professional learning, has revealed the domination of early professional learning by external, imposed, political and performance-related agendas. Rogers (1969) and Rogers and Freiberg (1994) distinguish experiential learning in that it acknowledges the needs and wants of the learner. It provides for personal change and growth by recognising the importance of personal relevance of the subject matter to be learnt and the potency of self-initiated learning. Thus, by acknowledging professional growth as a form of learning, the processes by which teachers grow professionally, and the conditions that support and promote that growth can be explored.

Kolb’s experiential learning theory (1984) offers a model for supporting teachers’ understanding of learning in relation to the IAP process, offering a potential bridge for the gap between person-centred learning in which the learner has control over the nature of learning and its direction (full autonomy), and the particular stage of professional development between novice and expert (van Manen, 1977), in which the new teacher is located (with differing levels of dependency on others, and with no, or only partial, autonomy). I have therefore focused, in my subsequent action research (section III), on Kolb’s four-stage cycle of learning, to explore how it can be used as a support to mentoring to underpin the action planning cycle (i.e. review progress /target set /identify strategy / experiment). The cycle takes account of immediate concrete experiences (1); provides a basis for reflective observations and reflections (2). These are distilled into abstract concepts (3), and provide for further actions which can be actively tested through experimentation (4).

Thus, in moving the research lens from the restrictive learning associated with induction competences towards a more expansive view of professional learning
within a professional relationship with a mentor and within a learning community or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), there has been a substantive methodological shift in my work. The gaps in understanding that I exposed between constructivist and technicist approaches in early teacher education, and the lack of acknowledgement in policy directives of the importance of experiential learning and situated learning, indicated the need for a more sophisticated investigative approach. It was clearly important to consider mentoring as a social process and to examine the types of mentoring ‘conversations’ that were taking place between the NQT and their allotted mentor (subject induction tutor).

(III) Transforming mentoring dialogues through the use of reflective practice strategies

The particular processes which support new teacher learning have been highlighted in a number of related studies; for example, Williams and Prestage (2000, p.46) draw our attention to the possible use of different forms of language by mentors in their work with NQTs. My empirical action research in the Esme Fairbairn Foundation funded Project explored the impact of three termly intervention (training) meetings with the target induction tutors and the impact of the use of specific reflective practice strategies in the professional review meetings (professional dialogues). Firstly, this research plugs an important gap which I have already identified in the previous section: that we need research to provide evidence of critical reflection on practice in mentoring dialogues, or ‘learning conversations’ (GTCE, 2004). As Principal Investigator, I had the opportunity to explore in detail these practitioners’ interpretations in practice of the somewhat unspecified meanings within existing ministerial guidance and government documentary support for induction (DfES, 1999; TTA, 2001) in connection with the mentoring role of the designated induction tutor. Research literature was suggesting the importance of constructive challenge, indicating that not all mentors are aware of the importance of getting new teachers to engage in critical reflection on practice - in other words knowing more about ‘why’ they might be doing something, as well as ‘what’ and ‘how’ it might be done (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Edwards & Collinson, 1996).
Secondly, despite the large and important literature advocating constructivist discourses of practice in teacher education, little was/is known about how these discourses actually work in pedagogical practice (Smerdon et al, 1999) or in academic settings (Kroll, 2004) for either mentors or mentees. In addition, apart from Alger’s (2006) more recent work using case analysis and interviews with student teachers, there were few studies of mentors’ actual work in learning conversations, and no empirical study of an intervention and assessment of its impact on subsequent mentoring dialogues. Colley (2002) confirmed this in her study of the literature about mentoring, and noted that despite its popularity mentoring had not been matched by similar progress in its conceptualisation. She pointed to the lack of criticism and suggested, ‘a research agenda for more detailed empirical investigation of mentoring in the field of teacher education’ (p.258). My research project was clearly timely and ahead of the game in this respect.

Finally, as my earlier work on induction (see Harrison, 2001, and #4, p.266) revealed, a largely deficit model of mentoring was the dominant one - one that assumes an already competent new teacher where any mentoring support was to plug deficits in performance. I wished to explore the ways in which mentoring might be transformed to view the newly qualified teacher as a novice, part way along the continuum of competence and operating within a highly skilled and complex profession in which it takes many years to reach full competence. This would accord well with the socio-cultural learning theories of providing expert support through ‘low risk’ activities (Lave & Wenger 1991; Lave 1993) and altering the types of support to promote greater professional independence. It would also accord with views of Vonk (1996) and Tickle (1993, 1996) who claimed that only through guidance towards deeper reflection can a new teacher be moved towards greater focus on pupils’ learning and less on their own performance.

The research design of my Esmee Fairbairn Foundation Project provided a unique way of examining the interplay of the sequential learning conversations between mentor and NQT, in that:
• it used a participatory action research format with target subject induction tutors. The methodology also raised potent questions (summarised in Harrison et al., 2005a, #5) about ownership of project materials, and opened up the unanticipated need and usefulness of our own reflection on practice as researcher-participants, while at the same time trying to make sense of the research process on which we had embarked;

• it provided a selection of Reflective Practice Strategies, based on Kolb’s learning cycle, to be used as the basis of the mentoring dialogues (#5, pp.88-89) in a series of review meetings; this provided for a developmental model of mentoring;

• it interwove staged data collection (i.e. extracts of audio and video recordings, and their transcripts, of mentoring dialogues at key stages of the induction year) so they could form the basis of the next intervention meeting for the induction tutors;

• it used an established technique in cognitive psychology and education research of ‘stimulated recall’ (Gass & Mackey 2000) within the new context of mentor training (#5, pp.96-98) to form a novel training video, which was used in the second intervention meeting during the Project. The technique uses verbal reporting which is retrospective. Stimulated recalls are used to explore the learner’s (here, the mentor’s) thought processes or strategies, by asking the mentor to reflect on their thoughts after they carried out a task (here, their use of a particular strategy such as a type of question or prompt). Stimulated recalls are carried out with the use of some support (here, an audio-recording of themselves speaking). Thus, by hearing or seeing the stimuli they are asked, through a series of questions by the researcher, to recall their motivation and thought processes during the original event.

An important finding for our own action research was that ‘the use of “stimulated recall” as a vehicle for drawing out an articulation of practice by an induction tutor provided a powerful tool for encouraging the sharing of practice and an exploration of the justification of different ways of working in mentor meetings with new teachers.’ (Harrison, Lawson and Wortley, 2005b, #6, p.286).
This process also encouraged the sharing of good practice and provided for an exploration in the second intervention meeting of the justification of different ways of working in mentor meetings with new teachers.

More than this, the design of the project provided scope for critical reflection on practice by the mentors themselves and aimed to support a shift away from technicist approaches to teaching and learning towards a model of developmental mentoring. Thus the choice of the participatory action research approach itself came at an important stage in my research journey in that it drew together methodology, theory and practice, allowing the key concepts of critical reflective practice and a constructivist approach to professional learning to be explored.

What was of particular interest to me in professional learning had less to do with what reflection is, or might be, in relation to learning, but more to do with how it can be best supported so it leads to deeper learning and more critical reflective practices. In other words, ‘What can reflective thought do?’ Thus, the methods adopted for the analyses of the recorded mentoring dialogues are also distinctive. In #6, pp.274-277, I present the rationale and basis of the strategy used to recognise passages in the dialogue as involving ‘de-constructing’ or ‘constructing’ practice, by both mentor and new teacher. Through a coding process and an examination of the types of questions (i.e. prompts) adopted (see #6, Figure 3, p.276), I was able to examine the impact of the adoption (or not) of a particular Reflective Practice Strategy on the resulting mentoring dialogue. Harrison et al (2005) (#6) includes several illuminative case studies of mentors to illustrate their attempts to use the provided strategies and indicate if and how they impacted on the development of different forms of reflective practice by the new teachers. Thus this longitudinal study of the learning conversations of mentors provides empirical evidence of conversational frameworks that support and challenge (Connolly & Clandinin, 1990) and of reflection on theory-practice relationships (Kemmis, 1985; Schön, 1987; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999) which play a part in bring about deeper levels of critical reflection on practice.

The results of this research as outlined in Harrison, Lawson and Wortley (2005c) (#7) are relevant to wider professional /academic audiences, encompassing
educators in medical, clinical and social work as well as teacher education. It illustrates my developing understanding of what critical reflection on practice might mean in relation to critical thinking, drawing on Maudsley and Scriven’s (2000) work in medical and clinical training contexts in which they argue that ‘reflective practice unites discussion of critical thinking with experiential learning’ (p.539). I develop the discussion with an exploration of critical reflective practice that takes account of ‘deconstructing practice’. I argue that it bears similarities to ‘retrospective reflection’ (Loughran, 1996) in that it might involve a detailed conversation with the mentor encouraging the mentee to describe and /or explain what happened, or, in a more collegial partnership, to jointly analyse and evaluate what has happened. For the purpose of my analyses I distinguished this notion of ‘de-construction’ from ‘constructing practice’ (Loughran, 1996, refers to this as ‘anticipatory reflection’) to show that critical reflection on practice also involves deliberating about alternatives, both in the planning and in the anticipating of the experiences that may happen as a result of the planning. These distinctions allowed me to categorise the conversational parts, for both mentor and mentee, in order to explore the shifts in the percentages of passages in which each de-constructs and constructs practice (see, for example, Tables 3 and 4, in #7, pp.432-433).

I was able to show through the case study analyses that the adoption of particular reflective practices and the associated types of prompts are clearly linked to changes in ways of working by both mentor and mentee. These (my newer) definitions of de-construction and construction of practice have led to a contrasting conclusion to that of Handal (1991) in which he claims that most (experienced) teachers spend most of their time planning and acting (i.e. constructing) their practice, and less time on observation and retrospective reflection (i.e de-constructing practice). Certainly the early learning conversations in our early mentor - mentee recordings do not align with his observations of most teachers’ actual practice.

As part of the analysis in this project, I also developed a new practical and analytical tool - a mentoring framework - which is embedded in the complex area of critical thinking. In applying these five ‘styles’ to the transcripts over time, I
attempt to distinguish a sequential development in the different forms of pedagogical mentoring for each mentor. These are described more fully in #7, p.425. I planned to try and locate the different types of mentor-mentee interactions within this framework for the purpose of further analysis and discussion. The next paragraph provides an overview of the rationale for the different parts of the mentoring framework.

In presenting my framework of five mentoring styles, based on ‘telling’, ‘coaching’, ‘guiding’, ‘enquiry’ learning, and critically ‘reflecting’ on practice, I am acknowledging that experiential learning involves informal as well as formal learning within professional settings. This novel framework has developed from my reading about the different types of theorising that professionals use in the workplace (e.g. Argyris & Schön, 1974):

- In ‘telling’ and ‘coaching’, there is either provision of information by the mentor to enable learning from mistakes and success, or a modelling of expertise by the mentor, with both having an expectation that the new teacher will respond to such specialist expertise to acquire new knowledge (and which can construed as types of formal learning).
- In ‘guiding’ there is more opportunity for the mentor to raise awareness and encourage new teachers to develop their own strategies and solutions (these are context-dependent, and can be construed as situated, informal learning).
- Higher levels of reflective practice are based on more systematic reflection on action with others over longer time periods (Griffiths & Tann, 1992) - and I refer to this type of ‘enquiry’ mentoring as one which is rooted in ‘enquiry-based’ reflective practice.
- The fifth style ‘reflecting’ involves meta-cognition. It allowed me to explore the potential of reflective practice strategies to increase the mentor’s repertoire of approaches in order to encourage the new teacher to move from self-awareness towards greater self-development. In other words, I seek evidence of earlier reflective thinking that is now being subjected to further critical analysis by the NQT. Barnett’s work (1997) is also helpful in recognising critical thinking as a component of a ‘critical stance’ - an acquired disposition towards all knowledge.
and action. He talks about becoming a ‘critical being’, who has a critical viewpoint and is willing to take on that view. The rationale for separating this mentoring style ‘reflecting’ within my framework is explored more fully in #6, pp.274-276.

My current understanding is that deep reflection, or higher levels of reflection, is similar to critical thinking - that it is thinking about self and personal actions and associated with the need to arrive at a conclusion or judgement. The journey to becoming a critical thinker in professional settings depends on new teachers developing contextual knowledge - knowledge which is constructed and understood in relation to available evidence in a given context (Baxter Magolda, 1994; Kember, 1997). The mentoring styles that are needed to support this part of the journey were rarely demonstrated in our analyses. This corroborates in part McIntyre’s (1993) suggestion that the limited experience that most trainees have (of classroom practice) may limit their reflective practice, and extends this explanation to those NQTs who are still operating towards the novice end of the novice-expert continuum. My research-based ideas on the potential for adopting different mentoring styles to encourage critical reflective practice are developed further in my more recent joint writing about new teacher educators (Harrison & Yaffe, in press, 2008 [see Addendum (B4)]. My ideas for raising beginning teachers’ awareness of what critical reflective practice is and how it can be developed are presented in my own first chapter (Harrison, in press, 2008 [see Addendum B(3)].

**Implications and future developments**

Judging the impact of one’s academic research work on professional and academic communities of practice is always a challenging task. At a national policy level, the action research I have carried out using my framework for mentoring styles, and showing how developmental mentoring can be used to enhance critical reflective practices by NQTs, is significant and important in that it reveals weaknesses in the DfES materials entitled *National Framework of Mentoring and Coaching* (DfES /CUREE 2004-5). By including active ‘coaching’ as part of my
framework for mentoring styles, and therefore not considering coaching as a separate process, I have acknowledged both the person-centredness of the coaching process and the ultimate goals of both mentoring and coaching for greater professional autonomy. Curiously, in their comparison of Mentoring and Coaching these DfES/CUREE materials do acknowledge that mentoring and coaching have much in common and their tabulations of the necessary mentoring and coaching skills show so many commonalities that they fail to convince that coaching should be treated as a separate activity. As illustration of this overlap, in the section on skills for mentoring and coaching:

Mentees, ‘respond proactively to models of expertise’;
Coachees, ‘respond proactively to specialist expertise’.

Such differences may well be largely a matter of semantics. On the other hand it is likely there may be different views of the transmission of knowledge/facilitation of learning attached to the DfES conceptions for each role - with coaching relying on a cognitivist view, and mentoring relying on a constructivist view of learning and teaching.

In terms of professional and academic practice in induction and mentoring, I have contributed to, and extended, a previously-low knowledge base about constructivist discourse of practice in teacher education. My research writing on induction practices has contributed to the national and international debates about the theoretical basis for good induction practices, strengthening the case for additional support for effective mentor development and support, and placing the emphasis strongly on providing increasing ‘autonomy’ for new teachers.

I have explored the efficacy of mentoring as a form of teaching ‘thinking’. Thus by focussing on process of developmental mentoring in terms of the different styles of mentoring, it is clear that mentoring conversations can shift from a teacher-led situation in which the mentor sets the problem, shows the new teacher how to solve it or provides model answers as feedback. These different styles of mentoring do reflect different forms of ‘pedagogical mentoring’, and are clearly aligned to the particular professional developmental stage of the new teacher, as well as the mentoring skills on offer. More case studies and in-depth analyses of the pedagogical identities of mentors are now needed. Power and control in the
discourse between mentor and new teacher also require more exploration. Accessing the mentoring conversations is problematic in very early stages of professional development, when the new teacher is failing or struggling to gain professional competency. We need to know more about the social, cultural and material barriers to professional learning.

Summary

My studies into the new induction arrangements for NQTs in the secondary sector in England demonstrate and confirm strong and positive changes in induction procedures in schools, but reveal variability in the provision of structured professional development for newly qualified teachers. The focus of new teacher education during the induction period is positioned largely towards meeting specific training standards or competences, rather than allowing for individual decision making about one’s own personal or professional learning.

The relatively low value placed during Induction on the individual action planning processes which are embedded within the rationale for the Career Entry Profile confirm that the nature of support for NQTs is concerned largely with their immediate needs or inadequacies. This is in contrast to initial teacher education courses that are rooted in constructivist pedagogies. This conclusion reveals the tension, for new teachers in the new workplace and their mentors, between a mainly deficit model of teacher induction which was being driven by the national policy and standards agenda, and any recognition that professional knowledge needs to be explored and transformed through dialogue. My findings indicate that best practice in developmental mentoring for new teachers is limited and involves both risk and challenge within supportive school environments with clear induction systems in place and a strong school ethos to support professional development overall.

For new teachers in their second year of teaching, performance-led managerial systems seem to over-ride systems of appraisal that might support personal and professional targets, or self-monitoring and critical reflection on practice. This
finding confirms my earlier evaluations of the use of Individual Action Planning in initial teacher education: that ownership by the teacher of the process itself is crucial to its success in professional learning.

*Standard One, Professional Values and Practice,* offered the opportunity to student teachers to provide evidence of critical reflection on practice which could be used to clarify values that lie at the heart of good professional practice. My evaluation study of how teachers and student teachers regarded *Standard One,* and how teachers support and assess student teachers in their development in this area, shows the lack of understanding of the person-related dimensions and missed opportunities for using *Standard One* to promote critical reflection on practice to clarify values.

In order to find out more about professional learning situations that supported critical reflection on practice, my empirical action research with subject induction tutors (mentors) reveals that, by providing targeted mentor development and support, including the use of ‘stimulated recall’ and specific strategies to bring about reflective practice, for some mentors and NQTs these resulted in shifts for both parties, from largely deconstructing of practice (mostly centred on ‘feedback’ on observed lessons) towards greater construction of practice and deeper levels of critical thinking. The traditional observation/feedback mode of mentoring is not linked with developing construction of further practice. In highlighting the importance of constructive challenge in mentoring dialogues, I provide evidence of mentoring processes that can transform the type of mentoring of NQTs from one of addressing ‘deficit’ to one of facilitating increasing competence, and for mentoring strategies that increase the challenge in induction from low risk to higher risk activity by the new teacher.

For purposes of mentor development and support, mentoring is therefore conceived of as a variety of mentoring styles, involving different (progressive) forms of ‘teaching thinking’, from ‘no thinking’ (Telling), towards explicit modelling of ways of thinking (Coaching), to scaffolding the new teacher’s attempts to understand their practice (Guiding, Enquiring), and finally to encourage reflection on the thinking processes involved (Reflecting). The quality
of the mentoring dialogue is clearly a powerful tool in professional learning in bringing about a shift from dependence, through inter-dependence, to greater autonomy in the new teacher’s ways of professional learning, as well as providing some reciprocal benefits to the mentor.

References

Those highlighted in grey are presented in Addendum A as the Published Works for this thesis.

Those marked ** are presented in Addendum B as Additional Supporting Materials for this thesis.


Appendix 1

Signed letters from co-authors
17 March 2008

Dear Jenny

In reference to your request, I can confirm that, in the case of:


that you were primarily responsible for the overall project management and the theoretical input and literature review for this journal article, and that I contributed to the data collection, analyses and the first draft of this article.

In the case of:


that you were primarily responsible for the overall project management and enlarged literature review and final version of this journal article, and that we collaborated equally on the overall data collection and analyses, and the theoretical input and literature review for the first draft of this journal article.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sue Dymoke
Dear Jenny

In reference to your request, I can confirm that, in the case of:

**#3**

we collaborated on the literature review and final version of the journal article, and that you were responsible for the project design, management of the data collection and the analyses.

In the case of:

**#5**

**#6**

**#7**

that you were primarily responsible for the overall project management and data analyses, together with the theoretical inputs, literature reviews and final versions of these three journals articles, and that I contributed to the design and running of the Intervention Meetings and to related discussion of data used in these meetings.

Yours sincerely

Dr Tony Lawson
17 March 2008

Dear Jenny

In reference to your request, I can confirm that, in the case of:

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that you were primarily responsible for the overall project management and the theoretical input, literature review, overall analyses and conclusions for this journal article, and that I contributed substantially to the statistical analyses and discussions of the quantitative data as an external consultant to the project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Tony Pell
Dear Jenny

In reference to your request, I can confirm that, in the case of:

#5


#6


#7


that you were primarily responsible for the overall project management and data analyses, together with the theoretical input and literature review for these three journal articles, and that I contributed to the intervention Meetings and related discussion of data used in these meetings.

Yours sincerely

Ms Angela Wortley