

The Being and The Doing of Teacher Mentoring Through the Lenses of Competency, Self-Efficacy, and Personal Lived Experience



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Abstract

At the time of writing this thesis, the recruitment and retention of teachers is of national and international concern (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2024). The reasons for this are complex and multifactorial; nevertheless, the development of early career teachers (ECTs) remains a primary focus to address this issue. As teacher mentors have a significant role to play in ECT induction and development, a better understanding of *the being* and *the doing* of teacher mentoring is needed. The aim of this research was to address this gap, using a multiple methods design employing a mixed methods approach, across three distinct phases; and for each of these phases, a methodological lens was crafted.

In Phase 1, a Delphi study ($N = 26$) harnessed the expertise of a purposively selected panel to determine the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring via the mechanism of consensus. These 44 competencies were used in Phase 2 to generate items for a novel and psychometrically robust scale ($\alpha = 0.94$), capable of measuring TMSE beliefs. Scale testing using exploratory factor analysis ($N = 239$) suggested a 16-item two-factor model provided the most parsimonious solution of the TMSE construct, with initial tests demonstrating that the scale has both convergent and divergent validity. In Phase 3, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; $N = 7$), shifted the focus from the nomothetic to the idiographic. This methodology enabled access to the *lifeworld* of teacher mentors, thereby gaining a deeper, phenomenological understanding of what it means to *be* a mentor. When the four general experiential themes unearthed by the IPA were compared to the themes, and factors uncovered during Phases 1 and 2, strong interrelationships were revealed. Theoretically and practically, the potential impact of this research is far reaching, and it has already led to new understandings of TMSE, and teacher mentor identity.

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I am sincerely grateful to my supervisors for their invaluable guidance throughout this process. I owe particular thanks to Professor Rob Klassen, whose steady support and encouragement—from the early stages at the University of York to the final stages at the University of Oxford—have been instrumental in shaping my research and sharpening my thinking. I also wish to thank Dr Poppy Nash and Professor Claire Ball-Smith at the University of York for their early supervisory input, and Dr Katharine Burn at the University of Oxford for her support in the later stages of this thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge Professor Alis Oancea and Dr Hazel Hagger, my Confirmation of Status examiners, for their incisive and constructive feedback. Their comments prompted revisions that, I believe, have significantly strengthened this work. I am truly appreciative of the time, care, and intellectual generosity each of my supervisors and examiners has offered.

Equally, I extend my thanks to the participants who took part in this three-phase study. Their openness and willingness to share their experiences were central to the development of this research, and I remain grateful for the trust they placed in me. Their support has made this work not only possible but profoundly rewarding.

To end, despite my research being rudely interrupted by “the rat” (those who know, know), I would like to thank Mr Kalyana Javangula and the team at the LGI, whose care and expertise ensured that I was able to get this thing done. As a former biology teacher, I’m fairly sure you can’t write a thesis without a heart—and I’m deeply grateful to those who helped keep mine going, both literally and figuratively. On that note, this gratitude also extends to the unwavering support of my wife, Helen, whose belief in me sustained this journey from beginning to end. I simply could not have completed it without her.

1. Introduction and Context

1.1. Main Aims of the Study

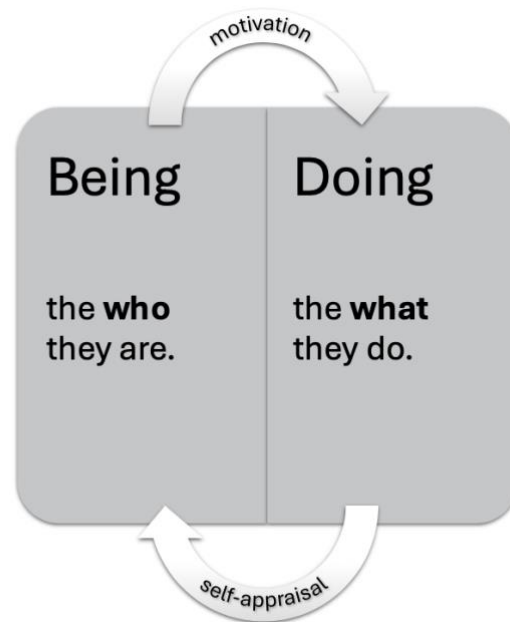
The central aim of this thesis is to explore the *being* and the *doing* of teacher mentoring from the perspective, or vantage point, of a teacher mentor. As this domain comprises a role and a process, it is both highly complex and multifaceted. The primary reason for this, is that the *being* (the role/the *who* they are) and the *doing* (the process/the *what* they do) of teacher mentoring are inextricably intertwined, with each one affecting and shaping the other (see Figure 1.1). In simple terms, who we think we are, and what we think we are capable of doing, *motivates* us to act. In turn, the outcomes from the choices we make, the actions we have taken, affect and shape how we see ourselves through a process of *self-appraisal*¹.

As what we believe we are capable of doing and being can change over time, so too can our identities. We can acquire and build new identities throughout our lives (Burke & Stets, 2023), and as our choices can show us what we could become, future “possible selves” may also be revealed to us (Bem, 1972; Markus & Nurius, 1986). For example, a teacher may not see themselves as a mentor until they take on the role and begin the process of mentoring. In the same way as the being and the doing of teacher mentoring are intertwined, so too are the being and the becoming of a teacher mentor.

¹ It is important to recognise that the process of evaluation or self-appraisal occurs *in the moment* i.e., during the event (the doing of something) - unconsciously and consciously - and also later (sometimes much later) after it e.g., during a self-reflective episode (see Bandura, 1997).

Figure 1.1

The Being and the Doing of Teacher Mentoring



Since the central aim of my exploratory research was to gain a deeper understanding of the being and the doing of this multifaceted domain, including an elucidation of the psychological factors and phenomenological essences that may be underpinning it, I decided that a focused and multidimensional approach was needed. For this reason, I selected three dimensions of teacher mentoring to focus on. These dimensions are related to each other, yet are, in their own right, distinct from one another. In Phase 1, I used the lens of teacher mentoring competency, focusing on what teacher mentors need to be able to do to be effective in their role. In Phase 2, the lens of teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE) was used to focus on the self-beliefs teacher mentors hold about their capabilities to perform the role of mentor effectively. Lastly, I used the lens of personal lived experience, to gain access to the *lifeworlds* (Husserl, 1936/1970) of the teacher mentors who contributed to Phase 3 of this study. Each lens has been used to generate findings to answer specific research questions (RQ), as presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1*Phases, Lenses, Their Associated Methodologies and Research Questions*

Phase	Lens	Methodology	Research Question (RQ)
1.	Competency	The Delphi Method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022).	RQ1.1. What skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours are required for effective teacher mentoring? * RQ1.2. Which teacher mentoring competencies are most salient? RQ1.3. Is there a relationship between the skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours required for effective teacher mentoring? *
2.	Self-Efficacy	Survey Construction (e.g., Bandura, 2006). Exploratory Factor Analysis (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).	RQ2.1. How can teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs be measured? RQ2.2. How are the items in the Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy Scale (TMSES) related to each other? *
3.	Personal Lived Experience	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1996).	RQ3.1. What is it like to be a teacher mentor (personal experiential themes)? RQ3.2. What are the general experiential themes, if any, in the data corpus as a whole?

Note. RQs labelled with an “*” have previously been published in Tickell & Klassen (2024).

1.2. A Rationale for the Research Strategy

By choosing this combination of lenses, I was able to access the *particular experiences* the participants in each phase had had of teacher mentoring. The participants in Phase 1 ($N = 26$) drew on their experiences - and therefore the expertise, knowledge, and learning they had acquired from those experiences - to collectively identify and validate the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring. In Phase 2, participants ($N = 239$) used their own experiences of teacher mentoring to complete the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES) survey, specifically designed to capture each respondent's TMSE beliefs. Then, the participants in Phase 3 of this study ($N = 7$), provided rich individual accounts of their experiences of teacher mentoring in the round.

Teacher mentoring is a complex and interconnected domain; for one to understand it, the advantages of methodological pluralism quickly become apparent. For me, as for others (e.g., Gorard, 2013; Pring, 2000), there is no paradigmatic dilemma in combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. As such, the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used to create the lenses for each phase of this study have been selected on the basis of their appropriateness, in that they have been chosen to provide answers to the specific research questions posed for each phase (Table 1.1). In addition, this mixed methods approach has enabled me to incorporate an “exploratory sequential design” element (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017): the competencies generated from the qualitative reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) in Phase 1 are used to create items for the TMSES, an instrument created using quantitative methodologies, in Phase 2.

All three of the lenses used in this study are related to each other, as they each capture different aspects of the same phenomenon, namely, the particular experience

of teacher mentoring. In a similar vein, photographers usually carry with them a combination of three zoom lenses, known colloquially as the “lens trinity,” in readiness to capture what there is to be seen. These omnidirectional lenses cover a wide range of focal lengths and fields of view: wide-angle, standard, and telephoto, each providing different views of the same subject matter. This study is, in many respects, aiming to do the same. For example, a wide-angle lens is used to view the entirety of the experiences of teacher mentoring, as shared by the participants in Phase 3. Whereas in Phase 2, a telephoto lens, with its narrower field of view, is used to focus on experiences that are sources of TMSE beliefs.

Like the lenses in a photographer’s satchel, each lens in this study can be zoomed in—on a metaphor in a transcript, on the most salient competencies, and on the item scores from the TMSES—and zoomed out. By zooming out, a wider view allows the underlying structure/s to be observed: the themes generated from the RTA, the factors from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and the experiential themes from the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The combination of qualitative and quantitative findings resulting from the use of multiple lenses, has enabled me to formulate an answer for RQ4, the overarching research question for this study: *What do the findings from this study tell us about the nature of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring?*

As the methodologies used to create the lenses for each phase are looking at different aspects of teacher mentoring and address different research questions, they are also *filtering* what can be seen; and the findings from each phase of this study stand alone in their own right. However, when it comes to determining an answer for RQ4, my research design also incorporates triangulation (see Flick, 2019). When the findings from each phase of this study were combined the commonalities were

revealed, providing a means of verifying the analyses produced from each of the phases. For example, the themes generated from the RTA in Phase 1 provide evidence to support the factor model suggested by the EFA in Phase 2 (see Tickell & Klassen, 2024; and “Chapter 8. The Overarching Discussion” of this thesis).

Even though this study has been designed to be multiperspectival, there are of course other lenses. To understand the significance of this, consider the ancient parable of the “The Blind Men and the Elephant”². In this tale, six blind men are led to an elephant and asked to describe what it is they *see*. In turn, each blind man duly provides their own description of what an elephant is, but as each man’s account is only based on the part of the elephant, they themselves have touched, their descriptions vary wildly. The description each provides does not reflect the *true* reality of what an elephant actually is, because each one is able only to tell the story of a *part*; however, for each man, it is the reality from their own, unique, yet incomplete, perspective. Likewise, for this study with only three lenses, the true nature, or *whole truth*, of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring cannot be known from this research alone, because there are other ways of seeing. Instead, this research seeks to deepen and broaden our current understandings and conceptualisations of the being and doing of teacher mentoring by drawing on participants’ *lived experiences* (direct, vicarious, and imaginal) as seen through the three lenses created for this study.

² The oldest version of this tale can be found in the Buddhist text the Titttha Sutta (c.500 BCE).

1.3. Relevance of This Research

The research I have undertaken in this study is highly relevant to teacher mentoring and teacher development, both at an individual and system level. As such, the research undertaken and presented in this thesis addresses a number of gaps in the literature. An indication of its relevance is demonstrated by the acceptance and publication of the first paper from this research, in which I shared some of the findings generated from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study (Tickell & Klassen, 2024, where I was the first author of a co-authored paper, Appendix A [author contributions are included in the “CRediT authorship statement” in Appendix A]). All three phases of this study have produced findings that have made a unique contribution to the substantial body of research that exists in this field. The research design itself brings methodological insights into how the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2011) can be used as a way of generating items for a psychometric scale, with this study, to the best of my knowledge, being potentially the first to do this for self-efficacy scale development (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

The following summary highlights the relevance of the findings generated: in Phase 1 a set of competencies have been identified that are needed for effective teacher mentoring, which could be used to support teacher mentor development and also provide theoretical insights into the nature of teacher mentoring. In Phase 2 a novel and psychometrically robust scale has been developed that is capable of measuring teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE) beliefs. Again, as in Phase 1, this instrument, following further development and testing, has both a practical, e.g., for supporting teacher mentor development, and theoretical use, e.g., identifying the psychological factors that may be underpinning the TMSE construct. In Phase 3, unique insights into the lifeworlds of a group of teacher mentors working in schools in

the North of England were revealed, and previously unknown experiential commonalities uncovered.

Together, these findings were used to gain a deeper understanding of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring, psychologically and phenomenologically, with this synthesis bringing new insights to how we conceptualise this domain. A focus on *wholes* in teacher education research, not just parts, allows us to better understand complex systems by moving us away from “reductionist perspectives” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014, p.1). Furthermore, in their paper on motivation theories, Murayama and von Keyserlingk (2025) are keen for more early career researchers to engage with theory development, instead of testing the same established theories over and over again. This study has been designed with this purpose in mind: to allow both the *parts* and the *whole* to offer a broader perspective on what teacher mentoring is, how it occurs, and why it is such a powerful tool for professional development.

Ultimately, the relevance of this research is related to how one sees the importance or relevance of teacher mentoring itself. In England, both the previous and current governments have recognised the importance of the teacher mentoring role, investing heavily in the development of new policies and frameworks to support the mentoring process for early career teachers (ECTs), and the development of the teacher mentors themselves (Department for Education [DfE], 2025a). As a country, we are not alone in this view. Globally, many also believe that teacher mentoring is vitally important for the development of ECTs, and there is much evidence to suggest that it is (e.g., Wang et al., 2025; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; Renbarger & Davis, 2019; Thomas et al., 2019).

The impact a teacher mentor has is far reaching; their work impacts their own learning, the learning and development of their mentee, and also the learning and

development for the pupils they, and their mentee, teach. Gaining a deeper understanding of how best to support professional growth for teacher mentors and, in the process, finding out what can be done to move towards more positive outcomes for mentors and their mentees, was my primary motivation for conducting this research. In this respect, this research has, firstly, a personal relevance, born out of curiosity and also out of generative concern.

Generativity, a concept theorised by the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1950/1963), "is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1963, p. 267). From an evolutionary and sociocultural perspective, humans have a vested interest in supporting the success of future generations (Baldwin, 1896). This interest arguably motivates behaviours that prepare and guide the next generation, acting as a way of passing on knowledge and learning. Generativity ensures that established social systems, social practices, roles, and hierarchies are maintained from one generation to the next (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Davies & Harré, 1990; Mead, 1934). Teacher mentoring, like many types of mentoring, can be understood as one such generative practice. In this sense, it may be the case that generativity is also a relevant motivation for those teachers who choose to mentor others (van Ginkel et al., 2016).

1.4. Teacher Mentoring in Context

Teacher mentoring is a mechanism for mediating the learning of another in a professional context (Orland-Barak, 2014; Perera et al., 2019). In England, the setting for this research, the mentoring relationship is adult to adult, with the teacher mentor playing the role of more experienced other. The mentor, usually working dyadically, has the responsibility for sharing their pedagogical and professional expertise with

their mentee (DfE, 2024a). However, other models of mentoring do exist, an example being “reverse mentoring,” which flips this more classical role. In reverse mentoring, ECTs share new theoretical learning acquired from their academic studies at university with their mentor (Foliot & Chailès, 2025). Another example, similar to this, is one that was originally conceptualised by academics and teacher practitioners working together to devise the “Oxford Internship Scheme.” This scheme launched a new model for initial teacher education in England, as a way of integrating research and school-based practice via the developing mentor-mentee relationship (Benton, 1990; Burn, 2006; Burn & Mutton, 2015).

For all of these models, the learning acquired by both mentor and mentee is gained through the experiences of teaching and mentoring within an educational setting. For a teacher new to teaching, or one that is still early in their career, there is a lot of new learning to do. Experienced teachers are in a position to use their “capital” (acquired through their own experiences; see Bourdieu, 1977) to support and guide the learning of their mentee, helping them to perform the role expected of them. Additionally, discursive dialogue between mentee and mentor helps the mentee to shape and find their teacher identity, their position, and their teacher agency (Davies & Harré, 1990; Priestley et al., 2015); and for their mentor to do the same, in terms of their teacher mentor identity, position, and agency (e.g., Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010; Ragins, 2009).

The learning taking place within a mentor-mentee relationship is bidirectional and *social* (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1997; Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1978). Humans are social animals. We learn who we are and what we can do through our interactions with others (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1997; Burke & Stets, 2023; Davies & Harré, 1990; Mead, 1934), and it is through these interactions (experiences) that we *become*. For a

teacher mentor, the process of becoming a mentor involves being a mentor: performing the role, experiencing *what it is like to be* a mentor, and learning from it. As this social and experiential learning is a continual process, so is the process of becoming based on our *social interactions*. Consequently, teacher mentoring identities will shift and change over time as mentors interact with others, constructing new stories, new autobiographies, new selves, and new possible selves (Bruner, 2004; Burke & Stets, 2023; Davies & Harré, 1990; Jarvis, 2018; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Our social interactions also affect our self-efficacy beliefs, and our self-efficacy beliefs affect *what* we choose to do (Bandura, 1997), which also shapes *who* we are (see Figure 1.1). Before I began this research, I knew, anecdotally from my own experiences as a teacher, that people (adults and children) who had self-belief in their own capabilities to achieve successful outcomes when performing a task (self-efficacy), were more likely to experience success than those who did not. I recognised how powerful perceptions of one's capabilities could be, and that those perceptions concerning our competence were influenced by how others see us and how we see ourselves. This understanding was the reason why I selected self-efficacy as a lens for this research and used Albert Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory as the main overarching theoretical framework for this study.

1.5. Thesis Overview

This multiple and mixed methods study has a complex design. As such, each of the lenses used will be given its own chapter, where findings and analyses will be presented and discussed. All of the findings will be considered together in an overarching discussion presented in Chapter 8, where the parts will be used to make sense of the whole, in respect to the dimensions of teacher mentoring investigated in

this thesis. The literature review for this thesis is presented in Chapters 2 and 3, and also as part of this chapter. A brief overview of the contents of each chapter will now be shared.

In Chapter 2, “Being a teacher mentor: Roles, relationships, and identities,” the term *mentor* is defined in terms of role, characteristics, attributes, behaviours (e.g., motivations), and identity including how teacher mentors work with other adults to build positive and productive relationships. As this chapter is centred on the *being* of teacher mentoring, the underlying biology of this “being” is also explored. As part of this exploration, personality and personality traits are given due consideration, as are emotional and self-regulation processes. In addition, the development of a teacher mentor identity is investigated, as part of a discussion centred on who we are and what we become, using two fictional teacher mentors created for this thesis: Mariam and Abeeku. These two mentors will be referenced again in Chapter 3 to illustrate aspects of the *doing* of teacher mentoring.

Chapter 3 of this thesis, “Teacher Mentoring Self-efficacy,” aims to focus on the *doing* of teacher mentoring. In this chapter, the construct and concept of agency is explored, including how this relates to the construct of self-efficacy, specifically with regard to teacher mentor agency and TMSE. The sources of self-efficacy beliefs are discussed in relation to SCT (Bandura, 1986, 1997), the main theoretical framework for this study. Additionally, with specific regard to building TMSE beliefs, the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring will be explored. To close, an argument is presented for the development of the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES), a new psychometrically robust scale capable of measuring TMSE beliefs.

In Chapter 4, “Methodology,” a detailed research strategy and design is presented for this multiple and mixed methods study. Alongside this, I state my

position as researcher within this work. For each phase of the study, an overview and comprehensive rationale for the methodologies chosen is provided. In addition, methodological details, including procedures, participant demographics, and methodological limitations, are included for each phase. In the final section, ethical considerations for this research are presented and discussed.

Chapter 5, “Phase 1 The Delphi Study: Findings and Discussion,” analyses from the RTA and those conducted as part of the Delphi, to establish consensus regarding the most salient competencies for teacher mentoring, will be shared. As the teacher mentoring competencies identified and validated by the expert panellists in Phase 1 are used to construct the items for the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES) in Phase 2, a figure is provided at the end of this chapter to add clarity for this multi-stage sequential process.

Findings pertaining to the development of the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale TMSES (Tickell & Klassen, 2024) will be shared and discussed in Chapter 6 “Phase 2 Developing the TMSES: Findings and Discussion.” This includes factor extraction, the resulting pattern matrix, tests for scale reliability and validity, and the suggested two-factor 16-item model resulting from the exploratory factor analysis. The next steps for scale development and testing will also be discussed.

In Chapter 7, “Phase 3 IPA: Findings and Discussion,” findings from the IPA conducted in the final phase of this study are shared. Personal experiential themes for each participant will be explored, alongside a detailed account of how a personal theme was developed for one of the participants. The four general experiential themes (GETs) that have been generated from this analysis will be presented, with evidence used from the participants’ accounts to justify their existence. A possible higher level of abstraction - the “SuperGET” model - is also shared at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 8, “The Overarching Discussion,” brings together the findings from each of the lenses used in this study. The commonalities between RTA themes, factors, and experiential themes will be investigated, providing the opportunity to connect the parts, to make sense of the whole. This chapter offers a synthesis of the findings from this study, drawing on theoretical underpinnings to offer possible new understandings about the nature of the doing and the being of teacher mentoring gained from this multiperspectival approach.

To end, in Chapter 9, “Conclusions,” I share a summary of the main findings by revisiting the research questions I set out to address at the start of my doctoral study. The implications and potential impact of this work will then be discussed. Lastly, the limitations of this study will be addressed, and possible directions for future research will be shared.

2. Being a Teacher Mentor: Roles, Relationships, and Identities

This chapter will be focused on what it means to *be* a teacher mentor. By exploring this domain through roles, relationships, and identities, an understanding of the *doing* of teacher mentoring will also be uncovered.

As teacher mentoring is, at its core, a type or subset of mentoring more generally, then the role of teacher mentor will have commonalities with the generic role that all mentors perform (see Clutterbuck, 2004; Hobson et al., 2016; Starr, 2021), especially if we accept the premise that the primary role of a mentor is to mediate the (professional) learning of another (Orland-Barak, 2014). For example, all mentors will need to be able to communicate effectively with their mentees and be able to establish a positive relationship with them. For this reason, this chapter will also explore the nature of mentoring more generally to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the role and work of a teacher mentor, an appreciation of their theoretical *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1936/1970), and their process of *becoming*.

However, there are times when the work of a teacher mentor is markedly different to that of a mentor from the world of industry. In these instances, specific examples will be used to explore the nature of the teacher mentoring role. For example, teacher mentors are expected to provide feedback with regard to their mentee's teaching competency, a highly domain-specific activity. In this case, the *being* of a teacher mentor is noticeably different to the being of a mentor who is not expected to have direct knowledge of their mentee's performance.

2.1. Defining: A Mentor

Humans are highly social animals (Varela, 1978/2025), and we learn from each other throughout our lives. As such, we are both the result, and constructors of, the social systems and networks we belong to (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934). One source of human learning is from a more experienced or *more knowledgeable other* (Vygotsky, 1978), a person we might commonly refer to as a mentor; however, defining this role is not a simple matter. For example, the role of mentor that people would be expected to perform in some workplaces, may encompass other roles and the activities associated with them, such as that of a teacher, or counsellor (Ragins, 2009). Consequently, many definitions for the terms “mentor” and “mentoring” exist (e.g., Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Hobson & Maxwell, 2020; Roberts, 2000; Wyre et al., 2016). Put simply, there is no consensus as to what the term mentor means, or what is specifically expected from someone performing the mentor role, because the term mentor means different things to different people (e.g., Hobson & Maxwell, 2020; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). For this reason, it is important that a grounding for the term mentor is provided, and the grounding of human mentoring lies in prehistory.

What we do know, is that the role of mentor is highly likely to have been performed since the emergence of the human species (e.g., Ackerman et al., 2002), and certainly much further back than the fabled Mentor of Greek mythology (Homer, 2023). The mythical story of Mentor, as played by the Goddess Athena, and Telemachus, is often cited as a source for the two origins of both mentor as a role, and mentoring as the process (e.g., Garvey, 2017). However, this, as we shall see, is firstly false and secondly, fraught with difficulties. For example, Colley (2002) suggests that to use this story as an analogy to represent the roles and processes associated with mentoring, could serve to promote a flawed and idealised model, establishing a canon

of mentoring that is based on “hierarchical” and “directive” devices, as opposed to models of mentoring based on “reciprocity.”

In terms of origins, if we take the view, that the role of a mentor is to provide a source of knowledge and experience for another, less wise or experienced human (e.g., Kram, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978), then Ackerman et al.’s (2002) view is correct. The role of mentor, and the process of cross-generational knowledge transfer, has been a part of humanity’s history since our very beginnings. Passing knowledge from one generation to the next is an integral part of how we learn as a species (Baldwin, 1896; Morgan, 1932), and in the animal kingdom, we are not alone in doing so either.

Several animal species share learned knowledge across the generations, and sometimes this knowledge is passed to the next generation through modelling and imitation. To illustrate this point, a joint study conducted by The Banded Mongoose Research Project in Uganda and biologists at the University of Exeter, found that banded mongoose pairs use mentoring relationships to transmit “socially learned information across generations” (Sheppard et al., 2018, p.1846). This transmission of beneficial information through activities such as communication, teaching, learning, role modelling, and imitation is known as “cultural inheritance,” or “cultural evolution” (Morgan, 1932). In this particular example, in a pair of banded mongooses, consisting of a pup and an unrelated adult from their social group, the adult acts as a role model for the pup, teaching it critical survival skills such as foraging behaviours (Sheppard et al., 2018).

In humans, our larger brain to body mass ratio has enabled us to develop and use complex language to communicate with each other (Peedicayil, 2021) through modelling, oral storytelling and later, written records. Conceivably, just like the banded mongoose, we have learnt how to survive from those who have come before us, from

our own role models and mentors. As a relatively new species, when considered against the backdrop of a geological timescale, and as Morgan (1932) theorised, cultural inheritance has played a pivotal role in our collective social histories and technological advancements in a remarkably short period of time.

Using what we have learnt from each previous generation to advance our learning in the next has catapulted us, as a species, from using stone tools to create an arrowhead, to using a computer to create this thesis, all in the space of a little under 50,000 years (Ehret, 2015). Humans learn from humans (e.g., Bandura, 1997). In this respect, mentors and mentoring have arguably had, and continue to have, a pivotal role to play in our progress.

2.2. Mentor Characteristics, Attributes, and Behaviours

2.2.1. Motivations

An important consideration when examining the aspects of the teacher mentor role is to look at what personal characteristics, attributes and behaviours are needed to perform it. This leads to a number of questions, such as is the ability to mentor another person innate, is it an evolutionarily universal human characteristic? If so, is there a certain type of person that is *naturally* better at mentoring than another? If there is, what qualities do they possess that we can attribute this success to? Conversely, are there people for whom this role is entirely unsuitable, or achievable, no matter how much training and development is provided?

Whether we have what it takes to perform the role of mentor, may be what motivates people to want to mentor. Perhaps more accurately, sometimes *what* we are, the characteristics we have, provides people with the intrinsic motivation to *want*

to do it. For example, self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) identifies the human need for “relatedness” as an intrinsic motivation for undertaking certain activities, relatedness being particularly apposite when considering the process of mentoring. In contrast, perhaps certain types of people have stronger extrinsic motivations, which may lead them to external rewards, for performing this role e.g., taking on the role of mentor may lead to improved job prospects. In the case of intrinsic motivation, the reward may be gaining enjoyment or satisfaction from completing the activity itself (Oudeyer & Kaplan, 2007).

In SDT, Ryan and Deci (2000) posit that most people’s motivations for undertaking a task or role lie somewhere on a continuum, with some people’s motivations for undertaking particular activities being a mixture of *self-determined* (intrinsic) and *nonself-determined* (extrinsic). To instantiate this, consider the following scenario:

Mariam³ is asked to mentor a trainee teacher by her line manager. Mariam has both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to perform this role: firstly, she thinks that she will enjoy the challenges that this role will bring and will get a great deal of satisfaction from doing it well (*self-determined* intrinsic) and secondly, although she was asked, she knows that, really, it is a management instruction. If she doesn’t do it, she may face hostility from her line manager.

Mariam recognises that, really, she has no real choice in the matter when it comes to undertaking this role (*nonself-determined* extrinsic). However, there is also another extrinsic motivator at play here for Mariam: she recognises that by performing the role,

³ Mariam is a fictional character created for the purposes of this thesis.

and performing it well, she could improve her chances of securing a promotion, which can be considered as an external reward (extrinsic) motivation for Mariam.

The factors that motivate people to initiate and engage in specific behaviours are complex. In fact, Reiss (2012) argues that this “dualistic theory” of motivation is not representative of its true nature. Instead, he proposes that the construct of motivation is “multifaceted,” because as there are so many human motivations, they cannot possibly be made to fit into only two categories. On this point I strongly agree with Reiss, and the multifaceted nature of human motivation will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3 of this thesis, with specific reference to the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Furthermore, Reiss (2012) makes a strong case that as all human motives ultimately arise from an internal, or intrinsic source, human motivation is “genetically multifaceted.” In other words, the construct of human motivation is a product of who we are *genotypically*, because our genes play a significant role in shaping *who* we are *phenotypically* (Turkheimer, 2000). What is ultimately motivating Mariam to undertake the mentoring role she was *offered* and to perform it, or not, to the best of her ability has at its heart, a genetic origin.

2.2.2. Mentoring is in Our DNA

That all of our behaviours must be genetic in origin is not a new idea. Turkheimer (2000) shared his three laws of behaviour genetics over a quarter of a century ago, with the first law being “all human behavioral traits are heritable” (p.160). This includes all of the behaviours that might be labelled as necessary for humans,

including for Mariam and her decision to choose to take on and perform the mentor role.

If we accept that (i) the first law posited by Turkheimer (2000) is correct; (ii) that our DNA *partly* shapes who we are; and (iii) that the ability to mentor relies on a number of behavioural traits, then there is a genetic basis for mentoring behaviours. Our genes are highly likely to be partly responsible for the decision someone makes to undertake the role of mentor and are highly likely to be partly responsible for deciding whether or not to invest the time and effort it takes to do it well.

This time and effort needed to perform the role well, to *want* to develop mastery in this domain, links back to the notion of *inherent satisfaction* (Oudeyer & Kaplan, 2007). People gain a sense of personal satisfaction, and possibly enjoyment, from knowing that they have done a job well. The need or drive to gain mastery or competency (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a motivating factor that influences our behaviour. It is central to both our self-concept and our self-efficacy beliefs (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003) and will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

However, whether all humans are equally motivated to gain competency in a specific domain, e.g., the mentoring of another, is a different matter. As we are all different people, is the ability to mentor innate, or is there a certain type of person that is more well-suited to mentoring than someone? If so, what type of person is (a) more likely to want to mentor and (b) be more effective at mentoring?

To answer these questions, we need to consider the personal characteristics (which lead to the resultant behaviours) needed to perform a mentoring role. This leads us to consider what characteristics a *mentoring type* of person would have, and also to explore the well-studied and relatively stable construct of personality (e.g.,

McCrea & Costa, 1987), and specifically the *personality traits* associated with the roles of mentor and teacher mentor.

2.2.3. The Mentoring Type

Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology (also known as Jungian psychology), proposed a personality theory (Jung, 1921/1971) that offered a unique way of conceptualising human consciousness and experience. He proposed that all humans possess a *collective unconscious* (Jung, 1969, p.20) which comprises inherited knowledge of which we are unaware. This knowledge and experience are shared from one generation to the next and expressed through *archetypes* (Jung, 1969, p.21). He considered archetypes to be *universal symbols* and manifestations of roles common to all human cultures.

In Jung's theory, the role of mentor, although not specifically named as such, may encompass more than one of his proposed archetypes. For example, the archetype of the *Sage*—a wise old woman or man, represents the mentor's transmission of knowledge and wisdom, whereas the *Mother* represents the nurturing aspect of the mentor role (see also Orland-Barak, 2014).

The term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a "pattern of behaviour." This aspect of the archetype, the purely biological one, is the proper concern of scientific psychology.

(Jung, 1949/2014, para. 1228, p.518)

As Jung proposed that all humans possess all archetypes (Roesler, 2012), and that our life experiences allow us to unlock them or become manifest of them, we could, in theory, become any *type* of human our life circumstances allow us to be. This means that all humans are potentially the mentoring type; however, our genetic uniqueness may cause a problem. Although people share a considerable amount of the same DNA, genetically they are not all the same (e.g., Varki et al., 2008). Whether everyone has all of the genes needed for limitless archetype expression, and there will likely be many genes needed to produce the phenotypic variability required, remains to be seen. It may be that not everyone has the capacity to be a mentoring (arche)type or, possibly more importantly, the desire or motivation to be that type.

That there is a certain type of person that is better suited to perform the role of sage or mentor is not such a far-fetched idea if, instead of the symbolic archetype—an abstraction—we move to the concrete by considering personality traits, specifically the traits associated with a mentor type and, more precisely, a teacher mentor type.

2.2.4. Personality: Mentoring and Teacher Mentoring Traits

Personality is a highly complex construct (e.g., Zwir et al., 2018). It comprises a range of behaviours and characteristics that form a distinctive blend for each person. In addition, as people exhibit certain behaviours and characteristics more strongly than others, these differences allow us to differentiate between people. Personality encompasses our interests, our values, the beliefs we hold about ourselves and the way we see ourselves (self-concept), the way we think about things and interpret different situations (cognitive), our emotional responses to situations, and our *traits* (McCrea & Costa, 1987).

Personality traits can be considered to be characteristics or *features of the individual* that are relatively stable over time (McCrae, 2020). Our personality traits help to determine our behaviour, and our personality traits may be correlated with other constructs such as self-efficacy (Strobel et al., 2011), and certain personality traits are also associated with each other e.g., conscientiousness and agreeableness (McCrea & Costa, 1987). In addition, our personality traits are also heritable.

Using data obtained from twin and adoption studies, Zwir et al. (2018) state that “30-60% of the phenotypic variance in personality, as assessed by a variety of instruments, is genetic in origin” (p.2295), which is also supported by Plomin (2018), who provides a figure of 40% heritability (Plomin, 2018, p.6). However, it is important to recognise that these figures for percentage heritability of personality traits are applicable to the *population* i.e., people in general, and not individuals. In terms of mentoring, some broad personality traits have been shown to be more strongly associated with this role than others, for example, “openness” (Bozionelos, 2004).

Personality is a construct that has been extensively and intensively studied (e.g., Goldberg, 1993; McCrae, 2020). As a result, there are a number of different models that have been proposed to represent the construct of human personality, and a number of different instruments have been developed to measure it, for example, the 16-factor “16 Personality Factor Questionnaire” (Cattell et al., 1970); the 6-factor “HEXACO” model (Lee & Ashton, 2004); and the 5-factor “OCEAN” or “CANOE” model, commonly known as “The Big 5” (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Two major traits, or factors, feature in all of these models, namely, *extraversion* and *neuroticism*.

The models proposed here are all hierarchical, and were generated using factor analysis, a type of multivariate analysis that will be discussed in more detail in “Chapter 4. Methodology.” In these models, named personality traits load onto the

broad overarching factors they are most closely related to. Personality traits are also broad categories, composed of numerous *facets*, each one representing a specific trait (McCrae & Costa, 1997), and the number of facets can range from 30 to 100 for each personality trait (Hughes et al., 2020). As previously stated, human personality is highly complex.

To find out if there are any personality traits strongly associated with teachers who (a) *choose* to mentor and/or (b) *choose* to perform this role to the best of their ability, we would first need to select a group of teacher mentors and use a suitable instrument to measure their personality traits, in order to determine how this sample differs from a random sample of the population.

Probably the most widely accepted model of human personality is the “The Big 5,” developed by McCrae and Costa in 1987. The factors, or broad overarching traits, of human personality in The Big 5 model are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (McCrae & Costa, 1987). A number of studies have been conducted exploring the personality traits of mentors using self-report scales based on this model, including Menges (2016), Bozionelos et al. (2014), Niehoff (2006), and some common personality traits have been found to be associated with this role. For example, in a study conducted by Bozionelos (2004), he found that the factor of *openness* was associated with mentoring, as did Niehoff (2006), who was investigating if the willingness to participate as a mentor was associated with any particular personality traits. Niehoff also found that the willingness to participate as a mentor was positively correlated with the factors of *extraversion* and *conscientiousness* (Niehoff, 2006).

Although fewer in number, some studies have been conducted to investigate if personality traits are associated with specific types of mentoring, such as teacher

mentoring. Although we could expect the skills, behaviours, attributes and competencies needed for mentoring to be similar across all domains, teacher mentoring may involve different personality traits due to the specificity of this role. For example, teacher mentors have specialist domain related knowledge, skills and practice (pedagogy), that they need to be able to share with their mentees. The studies conducted to uncover relationships between personality traits and the teacher mentor role, make use of a wide-range of methodologies, where both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been selected (e.g., Clarke et al., 2014; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005, 2010; van Ginkel et al., 2016).

In addition, some of these studies have sought to find out what personality traits are needed for effective teacher mentoring from the mentee's perspective e.g., Jones (2008). From Jones' research, a much wider range of attributes, intelligences, and personality traits that mentees considered important for their mentors to possess were identified e.g., "openness and transparency," "confidence," "assertiveness," and "empathy" (Jones, 2008). Conversely, in one small-scale study ($N = 80$), conducted by Popescu-Mitroi and Mazilescu (2014), they asked student teachers to identify the qualities, or personality traits, they thought were detrimental for the mentor role. Their findings included the terms "inequitable/unjust," "emotional," "cold/hard," "intolerant," "apathetic," "permissive," and "inflexible," which provide a different view of what personality traits are needed for effective mentoring. In this latter example, the two personality traits: "permissive" and "inflexible," appear at first to be contradictory. However, by placing the adverb *too* in front of these traits, we can make more sense of what the student teachers may have meant e.g., *too* permissive may reflect a lack of caring about their mentee's progress.

Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) found that mentors who are “equal partners” with their mentees, working in ways that suit their mentee’s preferences and personality traits, were more successful at performing the mentor role and building relationships. This view is also echoed by Connor and Pokora (2017), who identify that the ability to “work with resistance rather than try to overcome it” (p.17) offers a way of avoiding unnecessary competition. It is clear that teacher mentoring personality traits that are associated with establishing, building, and managing positive and productive mentoring relationships are of great importance. In the next section, moving from the *intrapersonal* to the *interpersonal*, will allow us to explore the teacher mentor role in the context of teacher mentoring.

2.3. The Teacher Mentor-Mentee Relationship

2.3.1. Working with Adults: Establishing and Fostering Adult-Adult Relationships

Mentoring is a composite process. As such, a teacher mentor has many different sub-roles to perform to execute their role effectively, such as teacher, advisor, guide, facilitator, coach, and counsellor (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Ragins, 2009). Each of these sub-roles may require different knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to perform it well. This makes both the role of teacher mentor *and* the process of teacher mentoring multifaceted, and for both experienced and novice mentors, it can be hard to navigate (e.g., Wyre et al., 2016).

To know which sub-role to move to and when depends on a number of variables, and to do this well takes practice and experience. For teacher mentors, this includes experience of working with other adults to support their development. I

emphasise the word adult here because working with other adults to support and facilitate their learning needs may not necessarily be something teacher mentors are well-versed in. Adult-to-adult communication and managing adult-adult relationships may well require teacher mentors to utilise a different set of different skills and behaviours (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Schwille, 2008).

One might think that as teaching and learning constitute the core responsibilities of a teaching role, teachers would be natural mentors; however, one could contend that working with children is very different to working with and mentoring adults. For example, a child may be more likely than an adult to unquestioningly accept the position of their teacher as more knowledgeable and experienced than them, and as one who holds authority over them, as they have been socialised to do this (e.g., Lortie, 1975). However, this is not to say that children will automatically do as they are told. Children do have agency, and as such, they are responsible for their own behavioural choices (e.g., Bandura, 1997).

Adult teachers on the other hand have arguably much more agency than school children. Consequently, they may be less inclined to accept an instruction on face value, and do as they have been asked, especially if it goes against their own values or beliefs. In addition, if adults do not see the benefit of completing the activity, either for themselves or for others, then they may also be less inclined to do as they have been asked (the findings in Chapter 7 provide some evidence of this in my own research). Furthermore, as potential benefits may result in rewards, in the form of prosocial and tangible career benefits for the adult mentee (e.g., Kram, 1985), adult motivations for making decisions will likely be different to those influencing the decisions made by children.

Being aware of this, will help a teacher mentor to understand how and when to switch mentoring sub-roles or identities (Ragins, 2009). There will be times when a teacher mentor may need to be more directive, managing the behaviours of the adult they are working with to steer what they are doing to align with school policy. Alternatively, there will be times when they will need to be more facilitative. By utilising a constructivist approach (Burger, 2024; Richter et al., 2013), they can encourage their mentee to build their own teacher agency, helping their mentee to find a way that works for them in the classroom, through experience and dialogue.

With this in mind, it is easy to see how the traits of openness and assertiveness (e.g., Jones, 2008) have been identified as being beneficial for teacher mentoring. As a teacher mentor will need to work with other adults who have their own ideas, and experiences, with regard to what works in the classroom (Bruner, 1996; Lortie, 1975), gaining a better understanding and appreciation of their mentee's position could help them to move towards a greater understanding of each other. This openness will also enable mentor and mentee to establish each other's role and position within the relationship, namely, their positionality, through dialogue (Davies & Harré, 1990).

2.3.2. Working with Adults: Managing Emotions

Although “affect” will be discussed in relation to social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986, 1997) later in Chapter 3, how we respond to expressed emotions, and how we regulate our own emotional responses, will influence the dynamic of a mentoring relationship. As mentoring relationships are highly interpersonal, and emotions play an influential role in mentoring relationships (Sheridan & Young, 2017), it is apposite that emotional regulation is first introduced here.

Building productive working relationships, or partnerships, requires a certain set of skills, behaviours, and competencies to facilitate this (e.g., Clutterbuck, 2004; Wyre et al., 2016). In addition, it could be argued that some of the competencies and behaviours that lead to successful relationship building, are directly linked to how well we manage, or regulate, our own emotions, and how we respond to emotional displays from others.

As emotions are a “central subsystem of personality” (Reisenzein et al., 2020, p.81), it is plausible that due to natural variation, some people are better at self-regulating their emotions than others. This includes, choosing to display or to mask their emotions, reading others’ emotional responses, and responding to others’ emotional displays in a way that could lead to a desired or beneficial outcome. However, it is important to highlight here that the desired outcome may not be desired by all parties. As different people have different motivations to act in certain ways to produce the outcome(s) they want, this is not a surprise—people play games and not all of them are altruistic in nature (e.g., Shai et al., 2022).

Teacher mentors are mentoring people who, like themselves, have chosen to undertake a highly stressful job (e.g., Klassen & Chiu, 2010). For this reason, it would be unusual for someone, especially a novice, to be able to emotionally and cognitively detach themselves from what has just happened in the classroom. To expect them to be able to objectively rationalise all aspects of their performance in their next mentor-mentee meeting, without support is unrealistic. Their teacher mentor can help them to do this—to unpick what they have done, understand what has happened, and how they feel about what has happened.

As humans tend to give greater weight to events they have perceived as negative, both cognitively and emotionally (e.g., Bandura, 1997), a teacher mentor can

help their mentee to gain an awareness of what has actually happened, by offering a perspectival view. By challenging potential blind spots in a safe way, the risk of scotomization may be mitigated. Scotomization, a mechanism by which an individual tends to disregard memories that have the potential to damage the ego, is potentially unhelpful as it may give a teacher an unrealistic view of their capabilities.

Although mentees are given much needed feedback and support to help them to emotionally self-regulate, who provides this function for teacher mentors to help them to reflect on their own performance as a *mentor* is, I think, an area in need of much development. As feedback is a form of social persuasion, its importance will be discussed further in “Chapter 3. Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy.”

2.3.3. Working with Adults: Managing Similarities and Differences

When a person observes another person perform either an action or a role, they are learning how to perform it themselves *vicariously* (Bandura et al., 1961; Bandura, 1997). The experience they have is through another, it is not direct, and as such it is imaginative in nature. For vicarious learning to be effective, these vicarious experiences need to be realistic, the observer needs to be able to see (imagine) themselves performing the action or role successfully too (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Kram, 1985; Mitchell et al., 2015). In other words, they need to think that they already have the capability to perform the role or action or think that they have the capacity to gain or develop the skills they need to succeed. In addition, some also believe that a role model performing the action is also sending the message “I can do this, so you can do it too” back to the observer (Morgenroth et al., 2015, p.467).

However, although this could be the case, I do not believe that this is always true. Some people, including teacher mentors, could prefer to be seen as having qualities that make them special, or particularly talented. Instead of sending a message out that anyone can do this, they may well want an observer, a novice, to see them as being especially gifted and/or adept: it is more “I can do this, because I am better than you.” There are many reasons as to why someone would choose to do this, for example, to match how they see themselves, confirming a preset identity standard (Burke, 2020), or to boost their own ego.

A number of studies have shown that people in work-based settings have more positive interactions with those they perceive to be more similar to them (e.g., Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010; Menges, 2016). This is known as the *similarity-attraction paradigm*, or the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971). People who share similar important attitudes and values are thought to be more attracted to each other, as they validate each other’s beliefs and behaviours. Therefore, consistent with Byrne’s (1971) similarity-attraction hypothesis, how similar a mentee *perceives* themselves to be to their mentor can influence the effectiveness of the vicarious experiences individuals have accessed.

For example, Kwan and Lopez-Real (2010) found that personality similarities create successful partnerships, facilitating co-constructed approaches to problem solving. In addition, findings from a study conducted by Menges (2016), showed that mentors and mentees who were similar in the traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness resulted in “enhanced outcomes” in terms of psychosocial support and career support. However, not everyone agrees that similarities between mentor and mentee are needed for successful interpersonal relationships.

Another line of argument is that people are more suited when personality traits, attitudes and/or expectations are complementary in nature (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2015). Interestingly, Menges (2016) also found that the *perceived* similarities between mentor and mentee may be more important in terms of improved outcomes, than actual personality trait similarities. This is further supported by a study conducted by Mitchells, et al. (2015), where they found that the perceptions mentees have of their mentors, do not always match the reality. In addition, due to changes in the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship, it might be that certain personality traits or attributes may be more beneficial/desirable at different times, i.e., as the relationship moves through different phases (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Kram, 1983, 1985; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

2.3.3.1. Teacher Mentor and Mentee Matching

Any potential benefits of mentor-mentee matching with regard to similar personality traits, attributes, characteristics, or expectations, are mainly lost in the process of teacher mentoring, as very little, if any of it occurs (e.g., Hobson & Maxwell, 2020; van Ginkel et al., 2016). In the UK, this is primarily due to the need to train, develop and induct large numbers of both ECTs and trainee teachers in a relatively short period of time. The other issue is that training and inducting a large number of beginning teachers clearly requires a large number of mentors, many of whom are not willingly volunteering to undertake this demanding and time-consuming role (e.g., Hobson & Maxwell, 2020).

In a study conducted by Hobson and Maxwell (2020), they report that many teacher mentors in England were expected to perform the role “by default” (p.192) and often have little real choice in the matter. From my own experience, as students in

their teacher training year in England are typically allocated more than one mentor, and they are more than likely to be paired with another when they secure their first teaching post, most ECTs will have had a minimum of three different mentors to work with in the space of just over a year. The logistics of matching by type, e.g., personality traits or expectations, in such a short space of time would quickly make this exercise unmanageable.

As the induction period for ECTs in England currently lasts two years (DfE, 2025a), and the expectation is that the ECT will have the same mentor for the induction period, there may well be greater benefits to matching mentor to mentee here. However, there is no guarantee that they will keep the same mentor throughout their induction period. Furthermore, although there may be some obvious benefits to matching mentors and mentees, such as supporting an ECT's acquisition of pedagogical knowledge by matching according to subject taught, there is no consensus regarding the potential benefits of matching based on teacher mentor and mentee personality traits, or their pedagogical beliefs (Sheridan & Young, 2017). As matching mentor to mentee on the basis of personality traits or expectations may prove to be difficult, working with mentor-mentee differences through a process of 'adaptive mentoring' may be a better way to establish effective interpersonal relationships, and meet the needs of the mentee instead (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; van Ginkel, Oolbekkink, et al., 2016).

2.3.3.2. Difference Can Confer an Advantage

Differences between mentor and mentee are most noticeable when it comes to the sociocultural categories of age, gender, race and culture. As to be expected, a large number of studies have been conducted to explore the relationships between

these categories of mentor-mentee difference, and the impact these differences have on the mentoring relationship (e.g., Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; van Ginkel, Oolbekkink et al., 2016).

In a similar vein to personality traits, there are advantages and disadvantages to pairing mentor and mentee on the basis of their similarities according to the groups they belong to. To illustrate this, if mentee and mentor were always matched according to gender, then males working in female dominated workplaces such as primary schools in England (DfE, 2025b) may be disadvantaged from not gaining cross-gender mentoring support. This may have both psychosocial and career development disadvantages for male mentees in a female dominated workplace (e.g., Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Likewise, females looking to secure a future leadership position, may be disadvantaged by the lack of access to cross-gender mentoring.

This may be because female teachers are less likely than males to hold leadership roles in English schools (DfE, 2022). Therefore, limiting access to mentoring from males reduces the opportunity for females to learn from, and be supported by, the majority of school leaders who happen to be male. This, in turn, may then limit the opportunities females have to move into leadership positions themselves. Conversely, same gender mentoring may provide more enjoyment, inspiration, and psychosocial support for female mentees (Blake-Beard et al., 2011), although it may provide less for males (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). However, the findings from the studies conducted here are far from conclusive, with many researchers reporting that gender differences had no effect on the effectiveness, or perceptions of effectiveness of the mentoring received at all (e.g., Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018; Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

As to be expected, as mentoring is an interpersonal relationship where a more experienced other supports the development of a novice (e.g., Blake-Beard et al., 2011), mentors tend to be older than their mentees (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018; Kram, 1983,1985). However, in teaching, this is not necessarily a given, especially when people have opted for a mid-life career change, where older mentees may find themselves being mentored by a more experienced *other* who is younger than themselves.

In England the teaching workforce is getting younger (OECD, 2019). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS; 2018) data gives a figure of 18% for the proportion of teachers aged ≥ 50 years in England, compared to the OECD average of 34%; with the average age of a teacher in England as 39 years old, compared to a figure of 44 years old for all teachers across the OECD countries participating in the survey (OECD, 2019). This loss of older teachers from the system in England, is arguably a loss of much knowledge and wisdom, and it may affect mentoring in ways as yet unknown. For example, teacher mentoring is not solely accessed when in training, nor is it only formal in nature (e.g., Hobson & Maxwell, 2020).

It is reasonable to suggest that with opportunities for informal mentoring arising all of the time in a busy school, the chance to sit down with an older and more experienced colleague for a chat over a cup of coffee, will be lost. The support offered here, may be psychosocial in nature, pedagogical advice, or even linked to career development. Either way, a less experienced and less age-diverse workforce, may not be able to provide the same level of support, which could have negative impacts on teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Similarities and differences in race and culture, and their influence on mentoring relationships, have also been investigated (e.g., Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018; Mullen & Klimatis, 2021). Again, as with both gender and age, there are both advantages and disadvantages from matching mentors and mentees with the same ethnicity or race. For example, studies looking at student-mentor relationships (e.g., Redding, 2019), have posited that same-race mentoring relationships provide mentees with a role model, or *prototype* that students can better relate to, helping them to see themselves in positions of seniority or leadership, thereby building their self-efficacy (also see Chapter 3). If the same is true of teacher mentor-mentee pairings, then there may be advantages to matching by race and ethnicity.

There is also evidence to suggest that same-race or same-ethnicity pairings are preferred by minority groups. This preference may, in part, be linked to the increased difficulties in establishing trust, as reported by people belonging to minority groups in cross-cultural mentoring partnerships (e.g., Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018; Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Johnson-Bailey, 2012). As establishing trust is thought to be an essential in developing effective and productive mentoring relationships (e.g., Kram, 1985; Mullens & Klimaitis, 2021), there is a distinct advantage for matching on the basis of racial and cultural similarities. Conversely, there are studies that demonstrate that there are disadvantages to racial matching. Banerjee-Batist et al. (2018) suggest that mentees belonging to minority groups may benefit more from access to a mentor from the same group earlier on in their career, switching to accessing mentoring from a majority group later on. This way the “power associated with majority mentors” (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2018, p. 147) can be accessed and along with it the rewards.

Although matching by racial and cultural similarity may have its merits, it is important to recognise that by matching by race, or ethnicity, alone we run the risk of

maintaining, reinforcing and replicating the stratifications we have created in our society (e.g., Johnson-Bailey, 2012), instead of doing the much harder work of “mentoring across difference” to establish “equitable cultures” (Mullens & Klimaitis, 2021, p.29). In fact, it may be better to think of matching in terms of complementarity and expectation, adapting teacher mentoring practices to accommodate and work with difference (e.g., van Ginkel et al., 2016). This was also recognised by Blake-Beard et al. (2011), who noted that the outcomes of a mentoring relationship are determined, not by the matching of race or gender alone, but by ensuring that the mentor can provide what their mentee needs. In other words, teacher mentors will need to be able to adapt and respond to their mentee’s needs as the mentoring relationship progresses (e.g., Ambrosetti et al., 2010; Kram, 1985), in order to secure a successful outcome.

2.3.4. Working with Adults: Building Rapport, Establishing Trust and the Importance of Genuine Conversations

A key element of mentoring is building rapport (e.g., Clutterbuck, 2004; Mullen, 2012; Ragins & Kram, 2008; Sanyal, 2017; Starr, 2021). As rapport is arguably a familiar concept, most people have their own working definition of what it means. For example, building rapport usually involves making others feel comfortable in your presence and connected to you. As such, rapport building can be thought of as a relational skill, and a positive attribute for forging effective interpersonal relationships (e.g., Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Starr, 2021).

Many techniques and methods can be used to build rapport with the technique of choice changing as the mentoring relationship develops (e.g., Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Mullins & Klimaitis, 2021). For example, at the start of a relationship, attentiveness and positivity may be a focus to forge a connection through attentive or

active listening. However, it is important that professional boundaries are maintained. Although a sense of friendship can develop naturally over time, Mullen & Klimaitis (2021) warn against starting a mentoring relationship as a friendship, as it may compromise the mentoring role by reducing the efficacy of modelling behaviours. In contrast, Schuck & Russell, (2005) in their self-study of practice, have used the term “critical friend” (p.107) to illustrate the important role informal teacher mentoring, and friendship, could play in teacher development.

Another example of a technique used to build rapport is that of mirroring. Mirroring, or mimicry, is where humans working in pairs, and larger social groups, copy the behaviours of each other (Hale & Hamilton, 2016; Lakin et al., 2003; Pentland, 2008). This activity has ancient evolutionary origins and appears to be common to all primates (Pentland, 2008)—the common idiom “monkey see, monkey do,” reflecting the importance of social learning in this order of mammals.

As previously stated, humans are a highly social species; it may be the case that mirroring has been naturally selected for, as it confers many advantages. For example, mirroring could help to establish strong interpersonal connections that could lead to future rewards or benefits for individuals later, such as sharing of food. Due to its importance in establishing and building interpersonal connections, mirroring is also referred to as “social glue” (Hale & Hamilton, 2016, p1), or the “chameleon effect” (Lakin et al., 2003, p.145). As it happens outside of our conscious thought processes (Lakin et al., 2003), we are not even aware that we are doing it, unless we specifically look for it, and even then, we only become aware of it after the event (Pentland, 2008).

In a study conducted by Hale and Hamilton (2016), using virtual avatars to simulate mimicry, they found that although there is some evidence to show that mimicry results in increased levels of rapport and trust, that it is not always the case.

This suggests that the relationship between mimicry (mirroring) and rapport may be more complex. Additionally, we can also consciously modify our behaviour to do more of it if we choose to do so. A reason for doing so might be to possibly improve the chances of quickly building rapport with someone. In Lakin et al.'s (2003) review of the literature on mimicry and affiliation, they found that the evidence shows that mimicking another person's behaviour does lead to increased feelings of "closeness and liking" (p.150); this social glue is literally bonding people together. Teacher mentors looking to build rapport with their mentee, may benefit from training and development focused on building these types of interpersonal skills.

Building rapport, or congruence, may also help a teacher mentor to build trust with their mentee. As trust is considered to be essential to mentoring (e.g., Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Starr, 2021), a lack of it will result in a mentoring relationship that is highly unlikely to fulfil its potential. For instance, without trust it could be very difficult for mentees and their teacher mentors to exhibit openness (e.g., Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

As it is fair to say that both teacher mentor and mentee are placing themselves in positions of vulnerability early on in the relationship, trust needs to be established relatively quickly. Building trust is essential in order to share feelings, issues and needs, honestly, and openly with each other (Starr, 2021). Without it, sharing issues which may be considered 'difficult' for both mentor and mentee to open up about, such as feelings of inadequacy, or self-doubt: "am I good enough?" will not be addressed, and this could quickly lead to teaching anxiety in the classroom. In turn, this could have a negative effect on a novice teacher by weakening their teacher self-efficacy beliefs, which may lead to reduced teaching effectiveness (e.g., Burić & Kim, 2020), and increased stress (e.g., Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

One could contend that teaching is, by its nature, both a performative role and a personal one. For both teacher mentor and mentee, observations of one another, inside and outside of the classroom, will naturally result in judgements. The opening up of oneself to judgement could be perceived as threatening (Hobson & Malderez, 2013), and this is why trust needs to be established. It is unlikely someone will discuss their perceived deficiencies with another, if they do not trust them first. Likewise, it is unlikely that someone will take on board the feedback they receive from another with regard to their weaknesses if they do not have trust in that person or their judgements; trust in a mentoring relationship works both ways. In addition, as teachers bring so much of *who* they are to the classroom, honest feedback or critique could potentially be perceived as a personal attack on *self*.

Establishing trust could help someone accept the feedback they receive on their performance, teaching, and/or mentoring because they may be more likely to see the *truth* in the message and, therefore, act positively on it (e.g., Fulham et al., 2022). As a lack of openness may limit the growth and development of both mentor and mentee, training and support should be provided for teacher mentors to enhance their skills with regard to building rapport and establishing trust.

Establishing trust is also a prerequisite for *genuine conversations* (Gadamer, 1960/2013, p.401; Sheridan & Young, 2017), a conversation where there is no designated *leader*, and with each partner taking their turn as the conversation naturally flows. The meandering nature of a genuine conversation as alluded to here, or the *natural* nature of a conversation, can be linked back to our biology. As previously outlined, during an interpersonal interaction, we very quickly establish if we like someone, or think that we could trust them. We do this by unconsciously processing their signals (displays), which can be verbal and non-verbal. At the same time, our

partner is also processing the signals they are receiving from us, which they too are unconsciously processing, to generate their responses to the signals they have received from us (Burke & Stets, 2023; Lakin et al., 2003; Pentland, 2008).

This complex interplay has its roots in our brain structure, and humans are very adept at it (Pentland, 2008). Pentland (2008) refers to these messages as “honest signals” (p.2), because we are using them to assess and evaluate the intentions, likeability and trustworthiness of the person we are communicating with. Honest signals create opportunities for genuine conversations. For instance, person X can quickly establish if person Y is being *genuine*, which can lead person X to be more open with person Y because X has established that they can trust Y. As person X is more open, person Y also opens up. The questioning that takes place during the conversation between X and Y will come from a place of genuine interest and curiosity, the aim here is not to judge.

The genuine conversation that takes place may lead to a shared understanding, possibly of the situation or problem being discussed, and possibly of each other. It does not, however, necessarily mean that an agreement must be reached through concession or compromise. Instead, Gadamer (2004), describes this shared understanding as reaching a “fusion of horizons” (p. 406). In mentoring, seeing things from another person’s perspective—working with differences to understand each other—in order to create new meaning, may help both mentor and mentee to move forward in their respective development. This view is also supported by Feiman-Nemser (2001), who posits that for teacher mentoring to be truly effective, it must involve the sharing of practice, and the *whys* and the *hows* of teaching are both of benefit.

2.3.5. Working with Adults: Not Every Teacher Mentor Sees Their Mentee's Development as Their Priority, or Their Responsibility

Although we are able to quickly establish if someone is friend or foe, trustworthy or untrustworthy (e.g., Pentland, 2008), that does not mean that we are always accurate in our reading of people. As people are able to mask their emotions during interpersonal interactions (e.g., Reisenzein et al., 2020), this makes someone's emotional responses and therefore their *true* feelings difficult to garner.

There are many reasons for someone to hide their true feelings, and some of these reasons help people to build and foster effective interpersonal relationships. For example, a person can choose to *modulate* or regulate an emotional response to avoid upsetting someone, or someone may try to *falsify* their emotional response by feigning enjoyment. A person may even try to *qualify* their emotional response. For example, if we could access a teacher mentor's *hidden* inner dialogue after a lesson observation, it could sound something like this: "*On no! I've let my true feelings slip out. I thought your handling of that situation was terrible, and I know that you've seen me ... from your reaction ... so, I'll offer a convincing verbal explanation to counter what you think you saw instead.*" Teacher mentors with the ability to hide and display their emotions at the *right* times and respond to their mentee's emotions in the *right* way, may find it easier to build rapport and trust with that person (see Lazarus, 2006).

However, not everyone who takes on the teacher mentor role would care if their mentee was hurt or upset by the feedback they received, or even if the feedback they gave was truthful or constructive. Some teacher mentors undertaking this role have no real interest in the development of their mentee at all, and this may be due to a variety of reasons. For example, it may be that teacher mentors who have no interest in developing others, have little choice when it comes to taking on the role, or it may be

that the only interest they have in undertaking the role is to develop themselves in order to improve their own prospects.

Sometimes individuals gain personal enjoyment from being in a position of power over another, and establishing dominance may be an intrinsic motivation. Toxic mentors do exist (e.g., Sanyal, 2017; Scandura, 1998), even in educational settings. The perceptions held by the toxic teacher mentor with regard to the *new* power they have gained from their position of authority, in this hierarchical mentor-mentee relationship, may even serve to boost their own ego, negating feelings of inadequacy by enhancing their feelings of superiority (e.g., Lazarus, 2006).

Toxic mentors are a sub-category or type, of a much broader group of *dysfunctional mentors*. Whereas toxic mentors deliberately set out to intentionally cause damage, for example, by deliberately sabotaging the relationship and/or their mentee's work prospects (Clutterbuck, 2004; Eby & McManus, 2004; Kram, 1985; Scandura, 1998). Whereas other types of dysfunctional mentors may cause damage unintentionally. For instance, a mentor and mentee may have conflicting values, resulting in interpersonal difficulties that have stalled their relationship. Dysfunctional mentoring, of any type, can cause damage in a range of different ways: to the mentee, to the organisation they are working for or the setting they are working in, and sometimes even to themselves. By destroying the confidence of their mentee by being overly controlling and dominant, dysfunctional teacher mentors do not have the aim of support and development of another in mind.

Ghosh et al. (2011) describe this type of dysfunctional or negative mentoring as a form of *workplace deviance* that could lead to an "incivility spiral" (p.22) which can quickly lead to mentoring that is degenerative in nature. This idea has its foundations in Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory, where they provide a

model of how affect, moods and emotion, can influence an individual's job performance and job satisfaction. Sometimes, it may be that there are external factors at play in the workplace that are responsible for eliciting negative moods and emotions that lead to negative mentor behaviours (e.g., Ghosh et al., 2011). To illustrate this point, consider a teacher with an already high workload, who may not feel they have the capacity to undertake the teacher mentor role they have just been asked to do. This high workload may already be causing feelings of anxiety and/or anger, and these negative feelings result in negative behaviours which may be directed towards their mentee. The negative behaviours directed towards their mentee lead to increased negative affect for the mentee. This, in turn, leads to negative affect driven behaviours in the mentee, which are directed towards their mentor, which leads to increased negative effect in the mentor, and so it goes on.

Mentees can also create difficulties in the relationship, either intentionally or unintentionally. A mentee could sabotage the mentoring relationship in numerous ways, such as unintentionally by forgetting to attend meetings, or they might try to deliberately undermine their mentor's authority if they share a class: *"It's little wonder you're struggling with this 10X5, Mrs Smith [mentor] did such a poor job of explaining it to you last week."* The reasons or motivations for a mentee to act in this way are equally as varied as that for a toxic mentor, for example, jealousy, selfishness, and even Machiavellianism. Even though the mentee holds less power than the mentor (Eby & McManus, 2004), it is evident that their behaviours can still cause significant problems for the mentor, and the functionality of the mentoring relationship.

2.4. Teacher Mentor Identity

2.4.1. Identity Formation: Who We Are

As humans we each have a mental image of *who* we are. This image is based on the perceptions (thoughts) we hold about ourselves. These perceptions of self are based on a number of different factors, such as what we have come to know about ourselves and our capabilities through our experiences, our emotions, our beliefs, and our values. The understanding we have about who we are is captured by a much broader psychological construct known as “self-concept” (Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Rogers, 1963; Shavelson et al., 1976), and our self-concept has a profound effect on our identity, and how we choose to live our lives. Self-concept, like our personality traits, is influenced by both our genes and environment (e.g., Marshall et al., 2023; Turkheimer, 2000, 2019). It first starts to take shape in early childhood (e.g., Marshall et al., 2023; Piaget, 1964), where we learn who we are through the experiences we have as we grow and develop. As we interact with objects in the world, both human and non-human, we gather information about our behaviours in those interactions. By processing this information we are undertaking a continual form of self-appraisal which helps us to understand both what we are capable of and our place—or role—within the society we are part of (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Davis & Harré, 1990; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980; Wenger, 1998); it is through this, these interactions, that we each gain an understanding of our *being in the world* (Heidegger, 1927/1996).

Each of us has an identity. In fact, it would be highly unusual for us to claim that we only have just one. All humans have many identities (e.g., Burke, 2020; James, 1890; Stryker, 1980), each representing different aspects of ‘self’ or *who* we are:

someone could be a priest, a brother, a teacher, and a mentor. In terms of our identities, we are a unique blend of characters and *selves*, and as such, we are both multifaceted and multilayered. Although this is true, it is not the case that all of our identities are displayed at any one time; some of our identities sit side by side, whereas others are situated in a hierarchy, with some identities taking precedence over others (Burke, 2020). Furthermore, the environment or situation we find ourselves in may trigger, or favour, the actualisation of an identity. For example, if a soldier identifies as a chef and a fighter, in battle the fighter identity would come to the fore.

There is, additionally, a temporal aspect to identity formation: some of the identities we assume, or associate with are yet to come to pass. Markus and Nurius (1986) describe these as our future identities or “possible selves,” i.e., what we could *become*. In addition, Markus and Nurius (1986) state that some identities we have previously assumed may either be discarded or reshaped to form current identities. These past selves or past identities may still be remembered as possible selves, things we have been and possibly still could be, if the right conditions were in place.

We form our identities cognitively through the construction of schemata (Baldwin, 1906; Piaget, 1976). Schemata, or schemas, are mental structures or frameworks that help individuals organise, interpret and make sense of the vast amount of sensory information they receive. They operate as cognitive processing units that enable people to codify the experiences they have had to help them to speed up the process of self-appraisal and interpretation. When we behave in a certain way, in a specific situation, we remember what we did, what happened, and our self-appraisal of the event (Conway, 2005). When we interact with another person, we evaluate our behaviours by interpreting the responses these behaviours elicit from others: was what we did effective, and how do we know? What others think about us

matters to us and our identities, as we use this information to affirm who we are (e.g., Burke & Stets, 2023; Cooley, 1902/2017; Davies & Harré, 1990; Powers, 1973).

The new information about ourselves, gained from the experiences we have had, becomes part of our self-schemas (Markus, 1977). This is either through a process of assimilation, if the information relates to (fits) a self-schema that already exists, or through a process of accommodation, i.e., if new a new self-schema is either required or an existing self-schema requires modification (Baldwin, 1906; Piaget, 1976). For example, a teacher mentor facilitating a feedback session for the first time following a lesson observation, will gain information about how well they think the session went, and how well they think they performed. As they have been observed as a teacher themselves before, this new knowledge and understanding of self (as a mentor) may become part of an existing self-schema through a process of assimilation. By undertaking a task, we obtain a new understanding of our capabilities with regard to the successful execution of this task, and how this fits with how we see ourselves.

Our identities shape our behaviours (Burke, 2020), and our behaviours can also shape our identities (Bem, 1972); the *being* and the *doing* of teacher mentoring are inextricably interlinked. In this regard, there is a direct connection here between how developing competence—*through experience*—can shape an individual's identity, their self-concept, and also influence their self-efficacy beliefs, which will be explored further in Chapter 3.

2.4.2. The Formation of a Teacher Mentor Identity

Teacher mentors may have multiple identities they associate with at different times as part of their role (Orland-Barak, 2014; Ragins, 2009). As a mentoring relationship progresses through different stages over time (e.g., Kram, 1985), different mentoring identities may be assumed dependent on what is required *relationally* (Baldwin, 1992; Ragins, 2009). Furthermore, different teacher mentoring identities are continually being sculpted and shifted as an individual's experiences of mentoring influence how they see themselves (Burke & Stets, 2023; Stets & Burke, 2000). For example, a number of studies suggest that teacher mentor identities are shaped over time by mentoring experience, and through the development of competence (e.g., Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010; Orland-Barak, 2014).

If our behavioural response in a social interaction was effective, then we remember what we did and how it played out. How a teacher mentor sees themselves is, in part, influenced not just by self-appraisals but also how they perceive others to see them as a teacher mentor (Cooley, 1902/2017; Powers, 1973). This means that teacher mentors may also be using the “interpersonal information” they receive to construct “*relational schemas*” that will be used with self-schemas to shape their sense of self and their identity[ies]; Baldwin, 1992, p.461).

It may be the case that when a person first takes on the role of teacher mentor, they do not see themselves as a mentor and have no particular interest in mentoring. However, as they begin to mentor another, they begin to realise that this could be a possible self. This may be because they have a talent for it, and they know this from the feedback they receive from their mentee. In other words, their behaviour and their perceptions of success when executing these behaviours, is shaping their identity. As the shaping of a teacher mentor is very much a social process (e.g., Baldwin, 1992;

Bandura, 1986, 1997; Lave, 1996), it is also a process of *becoming*. Teacher mentoring identities are not static.

To put this into the context of teacher mentor identity formation, consider this example:

Abeeku⁴ has just taken on the role of teacher mentor. He has never mentored anyone before and is nervous about performing the role well. Abeeku wants to do the best job he can for his mentee, but his own experiences of being mentored were very negative, and he sees himself (identifies) as a very different person to his own mentor. He is a supportive person; however, unlike his own mentor, he perceives himself as someone who has high standards. He has just observed David, his mentee, teach a lesson, and it did not go to plan. Abeeku has identified many areas of development for David to focus on and arranges to meet with him to deliver his *verdict*. The meeting did not go well. David reacts negatively to being told what to do. He perceives Abeeku's feedback as being overly negative, heavy-handed, and judgemental, and he tells him so. After the meeting, Abeeku takes time to reflect on his approach: "Was I too direct? How could I have done things differently?"

Through the process of self-appraisal Abeeku learns something about himself. He is learning what it takes to *be* a teacher mentor, and what he needs to *do* to be effective in this role. At the same time, he is possibly using this new self-knowledge to begin the process of constructing a self-schema associated with this new role, his new teacher mentor identity (see Markus, 1977).

⁴ Abeeku is a fictional character created for the purposes of this thesis.

Abeeku now knows that a different approach to delivering feedback will be needed in order to persuade David to listen to, and act on his well-meant advice. This new learning is used to construct a schema ready for the next mentor-mentee meeting—this time to share his feedback, not to deliver a verdict. At the same time, he is also evaluating if he has what it takes to be a teacher mentor, i.e., is this a ‘possible self’ for him, and also if this role is something he *wants* to be. If the answers to these questions are affirmative, then this now moves to a process of *becoming* a teacher mentor for Abeeku (see Jarvis, 2018).

It is not unreasonable to suppose that whether someone thinks they have what it takes to be a teacher mentor depends on the perceptions they have regarding their capability to perform the role. These perceptions, or self-beliefs, can also affect a person’s motivation. For example, someone who thinks that they do not have the ability to mentor a colleague effectively may be less likely to *want* to try to do so for fear of failure (e.g., Bandura, 1991). These concepts will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter, within the context of teacher mentoring self-efficacy.

3. Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy

This chapter aims to focus on *the doing* of teacher mentoring, predominantly through the lenses of self-efficacy and competency, both of these being shaped by experience. Nevertheless, and as has been previously explicated, the doing and the being of teacher mentoring are so closely interrelated and enmeshed (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1), it would be an impossibility to separate these two conditions entirely, because one affects the other.

Self-efficacy is a key motivational construct (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). As such, an individual's perceived self-efficacy affects the choices they make, including the goals they decide to set for themselves in all areas of their lives. Consequently, there is a presumption here that individuals are freely able to choose what they do, that is to say, that as conscious (human) beings we have free will. Even though Dhalberg and Dhalberg (2020) rightly argue that “ontological questions such as this do not have to be included in every empirical investigation” (p.891), as the notion of agency is central to the intentional *doing* of teacher mentoring, and to the construct and conception of self-efficacy as explicated by Bandura (e.g., 1982, 1997), this issue will be discussed in Section 3.1.1. of this chapter.

3.1. The Choices We Make: Why We Do What we do

3.1.1. Human Agency

As human beings, it is a widely accepted belief that we are able to make decisions as to what we choose to do with our lives. As we are thought to be in control of our actions and behaviours, we are said to have agency. Bandura (1997) refers to the agency we have as “acts done intentionally” (p.3), later describing it as the “essence of humanness” itself (Bandura, 2001, p.1). This being said, whether or not we are the only animals capable of intentionality remains a point of contention.

It would appear that, as a species, we do possess advanced agentic and self-referential capacities when compared to other animals. For example, we have the ability to: (i) set long-term goals for ourselves - sometimes life-long - and construct elaborate plans with which to achieve them; (ii) make continual self-referential judgements as we execute the chain(s) of action required to achieve said goals, comparing our perceived successes and failures to what we think we are capable of, who we think we are, and/or capable of becoming; and (iii) adjusting our strategy accordingly in light of these judgements, deciding whether to continue, adapt, or to abandon courses of action, depending on how important it is for us to achieve our goals. At first glance, these capabilities seem to be very human.

Although the belief that we have agency and can choose the path our lives take is widely accepted, it is not accepted by all. It is a moot point as to just how much control, or choice, over our actions we actually have. To illustrate this, Robert Sapolsky (2023), a professor of biology and neurobiology at Stanford University, has postulated that human agency is merely a convincing illusion. Sapolsky suggests that as our choices are already predetermined by our biology and our early life

circumstances (e.g., our genes, neurobiology, upbringing etc.), we have *no* control over the decisions we make and the subsequent actions we take. Sapolsky's hardline view of determinism means that we lack free will; our destinations are pre-set and baked in, and the choices we believe we are making freely are already decided for us. Somewhat unsurprisingly, this highly contentious view with regard to human agency and free will has not gone unchallenged, for example, Mitchell (2023).

How our experiences, and our perceptions of those experiences, shape and affect how we see ourselves and the choices we make, is arguably a fundamental part of the being and doing of anything, including teacher mentoring. Given that some of the beliefs we hold about ourselves (e.g., self-efficacy) are mutable and can change over time (see Section 3.1.3 of this chapter) depending on the experiences we have had, and that the future choices we make are influenced by those changing beliefs, all of the choices we make throughout the course of our lives cannot possibly be predetermined. This is in part due to the randomness (which is presumed) of life events and their associated happenings.

For instance, sometimes what happens to us shows us something of ourselves that was hidden to us before. This leads us to a different view of *self* and our own capabilities, which will in turn affect our future choices (see Bem's, 1972, self-perception theory). Furthermore, personality may be less stable and more "malleable" than previously thought, with recent evidence suggesting that it can change across a person's lifespan (Wright et al., 2025). Changes in personality, which could hypothetically occur due exposure to random life events, may also affect self-concept and influence the choices an individual makes in the future.

Although I am open to Sapolsky's argument, in that we have far fewer choices than we think we do, for example, there is a wealth of evidence to support the

supposition that our traits, or *internalised dispositions* (Bourdieu, 1977) influence our behaviour (e.g., Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Niehoff, 2006), and that our behaviour and sense of self is modulated, controlled, and developed through our social interactions with others (e.g., Harré, 1983; Mead, 1934), I also think we do have *some* choice in the course of action we decide to take. For example, someone with a certain combination of traits may be *more likely* to take a particular course or exhibit specific behaviours when presented with a choice, but it is not a given that they will. This means that there is still room for variance, which affords us some degree of personal agency.

3.1.2. Teacher Mentor Agency

If we use Bandura's definition of agency as an *intentional act*, then agency in its most basic form is *choosing to do the doing of something*. As this doing can be related to a role to be performed, it follows that, just like self-efficacy, agency can have domain specificity. This means that teacher mentors will have beliefs about their own agency that are specifically associated with the role of teaching, and beliefs about their own agency specific to the role and act of teacher mentoring. The choices teacher mentors make for each role they perform could therefore offer a teacher mentor different forms of agency at different times, with each type of agency underpinned by the beliefs they hold about themselves and their own capabilities, their values, and their context.

Both teacher agency, and teacher mentor agency are under researched phenomena (Biesta et al., 2015), and conceptions of what, exactly, these types of agencies are vary. In the “ecological model of teacher agency” propounded by

Priestley et al. (2015), agency is not something that teachers have—it is not a property. Instead, they, like Bandura, see teacher agency as something that teachers *do*. This is also a view shared by other educational researchers, such as da Silva and Mølstad (2020), who describe teacher agency as “professional action.” Although these examples concern the agency of teachers, these ideas can easily be transferred and used to understand teacher mentor agency. Additionally, although Priestley et al. (2015) do not reference social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986), what they have proposed is very much in line with Bandura’s thinking and theorising on this matter.

By the same token, the interplay between “environmental factors,” “personal factors,” and “behaviours” in Bandura’s SCT mirrors the conceptualisation of agency as an “*emergent phenomenon*” coming from “the interaction of individual capacity with enviroining conditions” (p.22), in the ecological model Priestley et al. (2015) offer. In both of these models/theories, teacher mentor agency depends on the interplay between the environment (including context), and the beliefs teacher mentors hold about themselves (e.g., self-efficacy). Teacher mentor agency will not be realised unless the means are there for teacher mentors to mentor as they would choose to do so.

By looking back to Abeeku’s story in Chapter 2, we can begin to put this into context:

Following a confrontational and unproductive encounter with David (his mentee), Abeeku has had to re-think his approach to delivering feedback that could be perceived as “overly negative.” Lisa, the senior leader in charge of ECT induction at his school, has a somewhat laissez-faire approach when it comes to steering how mentors should manage the relationship they have with

their mentees. This means that Abeeku has the freedom - and personal agency - to decide how he will manage the conversation the next time he delivers feedback. However, as a new mentor, the belief he has in his own ability to feed back to his mentee in a non-judgemental way, is weak. Abeeku has low self-efficacy in his teacher mentoring capabilities for this particular task.

This lack of self-belief, manifests in a lack of confidence in his own ability to perform his role as a teacher mentor effectively, which affects the decision he makes next. Abeeku decides that he needs to seek help from Lisa, and he invites her to the next meeting he has with David.

Bandura (2001) categorises the agency we have into three broad types, or “modes,” namely “direct personal” (self-directed agency, acting alone), “proxy” (using others to achieve desired courses of action), and “collective” (a socially coordinated mode of agency used to achieve a common goal with a group of people). These modes of agency can be further considered and explored according to role, situation, and context. In relation to Abeeku’s situation as described above, his decision could be interpreted as (i) leading to a reduction in his direct personal agency: he avoids a one-to-one meeting with David, where he would have to lead a potentially difficult conversation; and (ii) leading to an increase in his proxy agency, as he uses Lisa to provide support, with the aim of getting David to accept his feedback.

The situation with regard to beliefs, agency, context, and action is highly complex. Bandura’s conceptualisation and categorisation of agency is not the only attempt at classification available. For example, Edwards (2005) describes another type or mode of agency, namely “relational agency,” that could be related to both of

Bandura's (2001) proxy and collective agency modes. Relational agency involves the recognition of one's capacity to ask for support, thereby incorporating the knowledge, and potentially power of "the collective into the individual" (Edwards, 2005, p.170). It follows then, that when a teacher mentor asks for help, this may also provide them with the opportunity for vicarious learning, a way of assimilating the external into the individual (see Vygotsky, 1978). Another conceptualisation of agency comes from a small-scale qualitative study ($N = 10$) conducted by Molla and Nolan (2020). They identified five types - "facets of teacher professional agency" - available, from "inquisitive agency" to "moral agency," with some situations, as with Abeeku's decision, requiring more than one type/mode of agency to be in play at any one time.

To complicate matters further, (teacher mentor) agency also has a temporal dimension (Bandura, 1997; Berliner, 2001). A teacher mentor will conceivably be making a number of decisions at any one time, which will involve decisions about performing actions in the present, based on their perceptions of what has gone before, and imagining how those decisions will play out in the future. In essence, they are self-regulating their behaviours through cognitive self-monitoring throughout any and all of the doing they choose to do (see Usher & Schunk, 2018). Furthermore, as each person is affected by the type and frequency of experiences they have during the course of their lives, their agency also changes (e.g., Bandura, 1997). Agency is not static.

In respect to teacher mentoring, as a person gains more experience of mentoring, their agency related to this domain would also be expected to change over time. Moreover, looking specifically at the mode of *personal agency*, if we accept the premise that the more experience a person has had of teacher mentoring, the more

likely it is that they will have developed expertise in this domain (e.g., Ericsson et al., 1993), will they also see an increase in respect of their agency in this domain too?

As Berliner (2001) has already made a link between the development of teacher expertise and increasing agency, then it may also be true of teacher mentoring, i.e., there may be a positive correlation. This may be because the more experience a teacher mentor has, the *more confident* they will be in their own ability to select mentoring strategies that will work for that person (their mentee), in that moment, without having to seek external guidance or support. The notion that increased confidence in a teacher mentor's ability to mentor another teacher positively correlates with the development of expertise—which occurs over time—is supported by the empirical findings from my own research on teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE), which will be shared in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

It is important to note here, that another term often used in conjunction with agency is that of autonomy. As there is no established consensus as to how to define these terms, there is understandably a definitional fuzziness or overlap between them (da Silva & Mølsted, 2020). This means that the terms agency and autonomy are often used interchangeably in the literature. However, rightly or wrongly, a review of the literature suggests that autonomy seems to be perceived as more heavily focused on the relationship between teacher/teacher mentor freedoms and external control mechanisms of the state, such as curricula and frameworks (e.g., Priestley et al., 2015), as well as control and regulation from more localised systems, for example, local authorities, and multi-academy trusts (MATs). Conversely, teacher agency appears to be more focused on perceptions of individual capacity and capabilities in situ (e.g., Molla & Nolan, 2020). To illustrate the possible interrelationship between these two terms, I offer this scenario:

Mariam, the teacher mentor introduced in Chapter 2, works in a school that is part of Green Lakes Multi-Academy Trust (GLMAT)⁵. She has recently undertaken mentor training as part of her new role, compulsory for all teacher mentors working for GLMAT. All teacher mentors and their ECTs are expected to follow a week-by-week mentoring programme, with built-in checkpoints, just to make sure that everyone is doing what they need to do to stay on track. The programme is provided by a government endorsed teacher training provider and is fully resourced. Although Mariam is initially relieved that she does not need to think about creating plans and preparing resources for her new mentoring role, she is concerned about the inflexibility of the programme. It seems to be very restrictive, and formulaic; she worries about the genericity. As a teacher of history, she feels that there is little room for her to provide the subject-specific mentoring she believes is needed.

It would be fair to say from Mariam's account, that she has low levels of autonomy as a teacher mentor at GLMAT. She is working under a regulatory framework that she has no control over; she is expected to use standardised approaches to mentoring, alongside a bank of centrally produced generic resources; and her work as a teacher mentor - measured against the rubrics of this framework - is under constant surveillance. However, what of Mariam's agency? On one hand, one could argue that Mariam also has low teacher mentor agency, in that she is unable to mentor in the way that she would like to; however, this situation may not be as clear-cut as it first seems.

⁵ Green Lakes Multi-Academy Trust is a fictional place created for the purposes of this thesis.

Although higher levels of external control could be thought to limit teacher mentor agency, Priestley et al. (2015) argue that agency might be “shaped and enhanced by policy that specifies goals *and* processes, enhancing the capability of teachers to manoeuvre between repertoires, make decisions and frame future actions” (p.19). While Priestley et al. (2015) offer no empirical evidence in support of this statement, I can rationalise that this could be the case for teacher mentors new to the role, as it would provide them with an overview of what effective mentoring can look like. However, I doubt it would hold true for those teachers and mentors with more experience and expertise. Instead, “goals and processes” that have already been defined and stipulated may lead to no real choice for teacher mentors other than to conform to these ways of *doing* that have been prescribed and/or proscribed for them. In turn, this may limit an experienced teacher mentor’s agency. This is especially true if those goals and processes are overly controlled, as is the case for Mariam, and do not align with their beliefs.

Contrariwise, there is a way that restricting choice for experienced teacher mentors, who have access to an extensive repertoire of *possibles*, could increase their agency. However, the resulting action from this increased agency would not result in a positive outcome for the system they are part of. For example, if teacher mentors are working in settings that fail to acknowledge and value their pedagogical experience and expertise, straitjacketing them into ways of doing that do not work for them, they could exercise their *personal agency* by deciding to opt out. This could be either by refusing to take on the role of teacher mentor, or by leaving the profession entirely (e.g., DfE, 2018, p.7; See et al., 2020).

3.1.3. Self-Efficacy: A Motivational Construct

Self-efficacy is an extensively tested and well-established psychological construct (Klassen et al., 2011; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). It was proposed by Albert Bandura as being central to a person's agency and motivation, and as such, it forms a key tenet of his social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1977, 1986). All four core features of agency, namely "intentionality," "forethought," "self-reactiveness," and "self-reflectiveness" (Bandura, 2001), play a role in the self-efficacy mechanism.

"Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments ..."
(Bandura, 1997, p. 3)

From Bandura's definition of self-efficacy, we can see that our self-efficacy beliefs are future oriented, as they concern what we think we are capable of achieving—or what we think we *can* do—based on what we believe we are capable of doing *now*. Additionally, what we think we can do is affected by the past experiences we have had. More accurately, our self-efficacy beliefs are based on our perceptions of personal success or failure related to the experiences we have had. Bandura (1997) posited that if someone has successfully executed the actions needed to achieve a desired outcome in the past, then - if the environmental conditions (e.g., context) stay the same - they are more likely to believe in their ability to successfully execute the actions required to achieve the same successful outcome in the future. Perceptions of success or failure, also relate to how a person sees themselves, their self-concept and identity, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, and this can involve how we think we are being perceived by others (Cooley 1902/2017; Powers, 1973). Although self-efficacy is considered to be a separate construct to self-concept (e.g., Marsh et al.,

2019), they are still closely related, due in part to the “centrality of perceived competence” (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003), that is common to both.

The sources of an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs are theorised to come from four main types of experience, which Bandura (1977, 1997) categorised as “mastery,” “vicarious,” “social persuasion,” and “affective and physiological states.” In addition, a fifth source of experience, “imaginal” has been offered by Maddux (2009); however, this could be categorised as vicarious, as the experience of future success, or failure, is *seen* by a person through their mind’s eye. Bandura referred to this type of experience as “imaginal modelling” in his seminal 1977 paper, where he provides a detailed explanation of the self-efficacy construct. He viewed this type of modelling, alongside vicarious modelling, as being less influential than a *successful performance accomplishment* (a mastery experience) in altering an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs.

Mastery experiences are types of experience that are gained directly by performing an action, or series of actions, i.e., by *doing*. As a person is performing an action, they are testing their capabilities out for themselves in the external world. Consequently, the authenticity of these direct experiences mean that these types of beliefs are considered to be the most influential in forming an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). One could argue that by performing, a person is also receiving experiential data, or input, from the other named sources of self-efficacy in real-time. For example, they may be experiencing feedback from observers, both verbally and non-verbally, with regard to their performance, which is a type of *social persuasion*. Additionally, they will be receiving feedback from their own bodies, such as elevated heart rate, and will be experiencing conscious changes in their mental state, resulting in emotional reactions. For example, fear or joy, which relates to *affective and physiological states*. Each of the sources of self-efficacy will be

addressed and explored in more detail in relation to how they affect and shape teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs in Section 3.3.1. of this chapter.

The cumulative nature of mastery experiences (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016) may be why these types of experiences are the most influential in affecting an individual's self-efficacy beliefs. A person will be receiving a vast amount of information about their performance that will need to be cognised by their self-system in real-time, creating memories that can be processed further at a later time, such as during reflective episodes. These periods (episodes) of real-time and reflective cognition may serve to strengthen or amplify memories with regard to their *working selves* (their self-judgements of their own capabilities) and enable relational judgements to be made about themselves against the autobiographical knowledge they hold within their self-memory system (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000; Conway, 2005).

Autobiographical memory and self-concept are thought to be closely related (Ernst & Rathbone, 2019; James, 1890). New experiences, and how they are perceived, can result in memories about the working self that influence a person's autobiographical memory, and therefore the way people conceptualise who they think they are, and who they think they could be (Bem, 1972; Conway, 2005; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In common parlance, what we do is what we become; *the doing is the being*.

It follows then, that as self-efficacy beliefs are part of the self-system and are closely related to self-concept (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh et al., 2019), especially with regard to perceptions of competence, they are also interconnected with our self-memory system. We remember our successes and failures, and how we process these memories affects the future decisions and goals we make (see Bandura, 1997). As the relationship between autobiographical memory and the self is theorised to be

bidirectional (Ernst & Rathbone, 2019), our self-efficacy beliefs influence our autobiographical memory. What we think we can and cannot do influences the stories we hold and tell (declarative aspects) about ourselves, which affects how we see ourselves.

In this way, it can be argued that self-efficacy beliefs have the power to shape an individual's identity(/ies), influencing the possible selves that they think they could be (Conway, 2005; Markus & Nurius, 1986). This, in turn, affects our future behaviours through the choices we make and the goals we set for ourselves (see Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). Our self-judgements and perceptions of our successes and our failures have the power to strengthen or undermine our self-efficacy beliefs, motivating us to continue to pursue a goal, or to abandon it. Furthermore, our actions influence how we see ourselves, which also affects the future direction or path we decide to take. *The doing affects the being (identity), and the being affects the doing* (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1).

Indubitably, the beliefs we have in our capability to execute the behaviours required to achieve a successful outcome very much depends on the goal. A person might have strong self-belief in their ability to ride a unicycle, yet weaker self-belief in their ability to speak in public, as both of these activities require very different skill sets. Consequently, our self-efficacy beliefs are considered to be domain specific (Bandura, 1997). Some domains can be much more closely related than unicycling and public speaking, for example, teaching and teacher mentoring, yet an individual's self-efficacy beliefs may still vary (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

Arguably, the strength of an individual's self-efficacy beliefs has far reaching consequences for the decisions we make, the paths we choose, and the goals we decide to set for ourselves. For this reason, self-efficacy is considered to be one of the

“most influential ... self-reflective judgements” of our self-system (Usher & Schunk, 2018, p.20). That self-efficacy is affected by the experiences an individual has, both positively and negatively, is of interest to anyone who is looking to gain a deeper understanding of human motivation, learning, and development. The advantages of strengthening a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs are numerous and well-evidenced (e.g., Klassen & Tze, 2014; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016) and range from increasing teaching effectiveness (Burić & Kim, 2020), to increasing job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). However, the advantages conferred from strengthening a teacher mentor's self-efficacy beliefs in this domain are far less well understood, and as such, is an area for future research (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

3.1.3.1. Other Motivational Theories and Constructs

Although self-efficacy is offered as a key motivational construct (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 202; Usher & Schunk, 2018), it is not the only one (Anderman, 2020; Murayama & von Keyserlingk, 2025). As already discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, social-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), proposes that all human beings are motivated by the need to fulfil three basic needs, which are *relatedness*, *competency*, and *autonomy*. As such, there are notable similarities between SCT and SDT. This is especially true when considering the driver of competency development and self-efficacy. However, I would argue that there is a slight shift of focus between SCT and SDT. Bandura's SCT (1986, 1997) is more concerned with how individuals self-regulate their behaviours to achieve their goals, e.g., through reinforcement (leading to mastery), and modelling (vicarious learning).

The expectancy-value theory of motivation offered by Wigfield and Eccles (2000), offers a different view of what motivates us to act in a certain way. They

postulated that achievement related choices are motivated by a combination of an individual's "expectations for success" and their personal evaluation of a task's "subjective task value." Later developing their theory to emphasise the *situated* aspect of an individual's expectancy-value evaluations, namely, social context (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). There is considerable overlap here between SCT and the expectancy-value theory, as a person's *expectation for success* in a specified activity will be directly related to the beliefs they have in their own capabilities to achieve a successful outcome, i.e., their self-efficacy beliefs.

As Wigfield and Eccles's (2000) theory also suggests that human beings are motivated by the "task value" they have assigned to a particular endeavour, whether or not a person chooses to do something depends on the task value they have attached to it. Furthermore, in their model, they propose that the value an individual assigns to achieving success in a task, or future goal, has four types of value judgements associated with it: "attainment value," "intrinsic value," "utility value," and "cost value." This means that as the evaluation of the task value is multifactorial, an individual will be weighing up the *overall* value benefits and drawbacks before choosing to do something. In other words, a person's final decision as to whether they choose to do something, is influenced by more than just their self-efficacy beliefs alone.

This theory also overlaps with SDT, in terms of our intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. For example, the deciding factor as to whether or not it was worth it for Mariam to take on the teacher mentor role in Chapter 2, was driven by her evaluation of its value. For Mariam, the value of achieving success as a teacher mentor could lead to improved career prospects in the future, so it had high task value for her as an extrinsic motivator (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In addition, another motivational construct, “outcome expectancy,” was theorised by Bandura as sitting alongside, but separate to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). This construct provides another cognitive mechanism for motivation to action. This time though, the choices an individual makes are couched in terms of how likely they believe it would be for them to achieve success when deciding on a future goal, which may be based on factors external to them that they have no control over. A teacher mentor who does not believe that they stand much of a chance of success when mentoring a particularly challenging (for them) ECT, may be unlikely to invest the effort needed to develop their own skills, if they think that it is a “lost cause” before they even begin.

Bandura’s ideas here build on the work and thinking of Julian Rotter (Zee & Koomen, 2016). In his social learning theory (Rotter, 1954, 1966), Rotter, alongside his own ideas about expectancies, proposed that an individual’s belief in their ability to influence events also determined whether or not they would be motivated to act. Rotter termed this as the individual’s “locus of control” (Rotter, 1966). Individuals who believe that their own actions affect their outcomes, either positively or negatively, are said to have an *internal locus of control*. Whereas individuals who think they have no control over what happens (the outcome), attributing their success or failure to fate, luck, or other uncontrollable external factors, are said to have an *external locus of control*.

Abeeku’s actions earlier in this chapter, could indicate that he has an internal locus of control when it comes to teacher mentoring. In this case, the action Abeeku took in asking Lisa for help is an example of a *person-environment transaction* (see Bandura, 1997). By asking Lisa for help (an action), his *expectation* is that he will learn from this, ultimately improving his ability to manage difficult conversations in the future (the outcome). If Abeeku perceives the outcome of the meeting with David and Lisa to

be successful, this will serve as a *positive reinforcement* for this type of behaviour (Bandura, 1997; Rotter, 1954, 1966). This means that asking for help from others may well be something Abeeku will choose to do again (conative). This is because he has learnt (cognitive) that his decision to ask Lisa (conative), and his resultant action (behaviour), has led to a beneficial outcome. By executing the same conative behaviour, he would strongly expect there to be a beneficial outcome in the future, and it is the cognitive expectation of success which will motivate him to ask a more experienced other for help (see Shell, 2023). The interaction of personal and environmental factors to generate behavioural responses is complex and is represented by Bandura's model of "triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1986, 1997) which will be discussed later.

Building on the work of Rotter, Bandura theorised that outcome expectancies and self-efficacy beliefs were different constructs (Bandura, 1977, 1986). For example, a teacher mentor could believe that whether or not a student teacher passes or fails their practicum, is solely due to the attitudinal dispositions of their student (external locus of control), yet they may still be extremely confident in their abilities to mentor effectively (strong self-efficacy beliefs). However, which construct takes precedence—what is the most influential motivational driver of someone's behaviour? Bandura argued that outcome expectancies are less influential than self-efficacy beliefs when it comes to driving an individual's choices. He rationalised that someone who does not believe that they have the ability to perform a specified behaviour successfully is unlikely to action this behaviour, even if they know (believe) that doing so would result in a successful outcome (Bandura, 1997).

As there are so many different theories and constructs offered to explain what motivates us to behave in the way that we do, motivation can be thought of as being

“multifaceted” (Reiss, 2012). However, given the overlapping nature of some of the theories offered (and there are many more motivational theories than I have shared here), does this lead to unnecessary confusion? Anderman (2020) thinks that it might, and questions the utility of having so many, seemingly competing, theories for practicing teachers and educational policymakers alike. In part, this view is echoed by Murayama and von Keyserlingk (2025), who also make the claim that while there are many theories and constructs offered to explain human motivation, these lack detail regarding their “causal mechanisms.”

Murayama and von Keyserlingk (2025) go on to make a fair, and in my view justifiable, call for more research on theoretical development, instead of just repeatedly testing the dominant theories that have already been tested many times before. To illustrate this point, they make the claim that there is currently no “detailed mechanism” offered to explain how our cognitively generated self-efficacy beliefs are “translated” into behaviours. They are not alone in this view, with Zheng and Meister (2025) identifying the need for more research with regard to understanding the “cognitive architecture” of our “inner brains,” to elucidate how our thinking affects our behaviour. If we know more about the *how*, we gain a deeper understanding of our *doing*, our *being*, and our *becoming*, and this includes the doing, the being, and the becoming of teacher mentoring.

3.2. Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Regulation, and Teacher Mentoring

Bandura’s ideas and theories concerning human motivation and behaviour did not spontaneously emerge, they evolved over time (Anderman, 2020; Shell, 2023; Zee & Koomen, 2016). From his social learning theory (SLT) in 1977 (Bandura, 1977), to

his social cognitive theory (SCT) in 1986 (Bandura, 1986), Bandura's work has provided us with a model that can be used to explain a teacher mentor's psychosocial functioning.

Living in an environment that is subject to constant change, the importance of our ability to self-regulate our behaviour should not be underestimated (Usher & Schunk, 2018; Zimmerman, 2000). It could be said that self-regulation is key for both our survival as a species and for the individual and collective successes we experience, with regard to the goals we set for ourselves, as we live our lives. We set goals for ourselves for a variety of reasons, many are related to achieving a possible identity or *ideal-self* (e.g., Burke, 2020), whereas others are linked to achieving success in a particular task (Bandura, 1991; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), or even for fulfilling a basic need, such as achieving a sense of belonging or relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

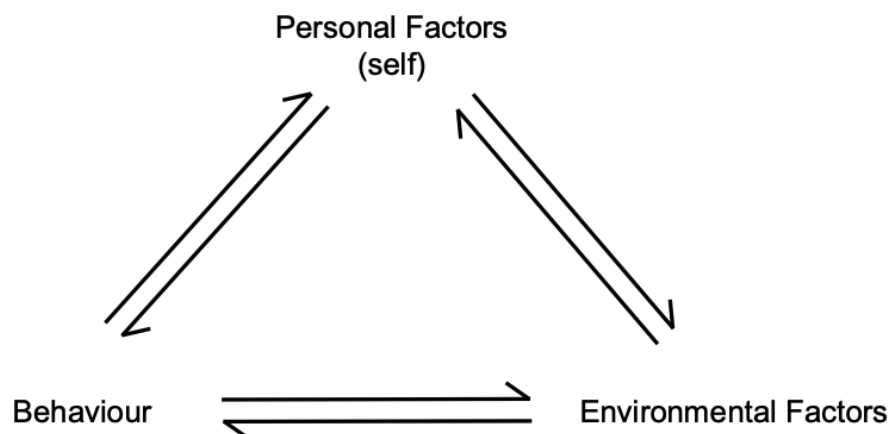
As has been previously discussed, the goals we set for ourselves reflect our agency. They are based on the perceptions we hold about ourselves, about who we think we are, or who we think we could be; what we think we are capable of; and also, what we value and what matters to us the most. Whatever the goal, effective self-regulation, as part of our self-system, is central to achieving it; consequently, self-regulation of behaviour is also central to SCT (Bandura, 1997).

It is through a process of continual self-monitoring (appraisal), which occurs pre-, during, and post-task, that a teacher mentor will adjust their behaviour(s). The self-referential judgements they make throughout this process help them to decide whether to continue the course of action needed to achieve a goal, to modify it, or even to abandon it. As they execute the behaviours needed to achieve success, they interact with their environment, and their environment interacts with them.

Bandura presented the interrelationship of personal factors, environmental factors, and behaviour as his model of “triadic reciprocal causation” (1986, 1997), a visual representation of which is provided in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Bandura’s Model of Triadic Reciprocal Causation



Notes. “Personal Factors” are cognitive e.g., self-efficacy beliefs, memory, self-concept; affective; and biological. Adapted from “*Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*” by A. Bandura, 1986, p.24. Copyright 2016 by the American Psychological Association.

The claim for reciprocal causation represented by this model, has been extensively studied and well-tested in a range of different contexts over many years (see Schunk & Usher, 2019), including teaching and teacher education (e.g., Klassen et al., 2011; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Täschner et al., 2024; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Zee & Koomen, 2016). As such, a large body of research evidence in support of SCT has been established, comprising thousands of peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters. Consequently, I will not be offering to provide further justification for its validity here; however, I will be using it to explore how the personal,

environmental, and behavioural factors of a teacher mentor's *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1936/1970) interact.

In this model (see Fig. 3.), that each factor affects each other *bidirectionally* leads to a highly complex picture in terms of affects, effects, and outcomes. This is especially true, if we consider the multifactorial nature of the interplay between person, environment and behaviour. Just as there are many environmental factors for a teacher mentor, including type of school, resource availability, and their mentee, there are also many personal factors. As previously stated, a teacher mentor is much more than their self-efficacy beliefs alone. For example, a teacher mentor's self-concept, self-esteem, emotions, and personality traits, all influence their behaviour. Furthermore, one type of interaction does not necessarily have one clear - or final - outcome, as outcomes themselves have the potential to further affect multiple personal factors, environmental factors, and behaviours.

To instantiate this point, consider Mariam's experiences as a teacher mentor at GLMAT.

Mariam chooses to mentor "The Green Lakes Way."

The GLMAT way of mentoring is an *environmental factor* for Mariam. Her conative *behaviour*, the decision to mentor "The Green Lakes Way," was made entirely of her own volition; however, it was affected by the interplay between the environment and Mariam's *personal factors*. The possible reasons for this choice are as follows: Mariam (i) sees herself as a future leader, a possible identity for her, and a key element of her *self-concept*; (ii) has strong *self-efficacy* beliefs in her ability to mentor effectively, regardless of process; and (iii)

knows (believes) that this level of compliance is expected of her if she wants to succeed and earn respect from senior leaders at GLMAT. In this case, Mariam also *knows* that this is how the world works, and she knows this from past experience. She is relying on her *self-memory system* (a personal factor) to make predictions about what could happen to her future prospects if she refused to comply.

The decision Mariam makes could affect a range of *environmental factors* through her executed *behaviours*. For example, it will develop her mentee and help to embed the prescribed GLMAT mentoring processes further into the culture of the school. It may also affect a number of *personal factors* which are affected by the interaction with the *environment* mediated by her *behaviour*: mentoring her ECT (*an environmental factor*) has strengthened Mariam's teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs. She begins to re-think if leadership is the right route for her and begins to imagine a different possible self. A change in her feelings of self-worth (*personal*), resulting from the success she has experienced as a mentor (*environment and behaviour*), also influences her decision (*behaviour*) to put herself forward for a coordinator role in her department (*an environmental factor*).

The model of triadic reciprocal causation in in Figure 3.1 is grounded in the social. The example offered here, for Mariam, is related to just one initial decision, with the resulting complexity deliberately kept to a minimum. The number and types of possible human interactions that are represented in a school-based context add to the entanglement of factorial interactions, making it difficult to predict outcomes from conative behaviours. As such, attempting to completely separate the three vertices of this model, namely personal factors, behaviour, and environmental factors from each

other would be a fruitless task. However, in the following two subsections, I have selected salient examples of personal and environmental factors that have particular relevance to teacher mentoring in order to explore their interrelationships further.

3.2.1. Personal Factors

A large number of personal factors are at work in shaping our cognitive processes, and conative behaviours. However, not all of these factors are given the same weight in terms of their importance when it comes to steering the course of action we decide to take. The personal factor that is the most influential in affecting our behaviour varies from situation to situation, and from person to person. It is the interplay between the factors themselves, alongside the personal-environmental transactions, that affect our resultant thoughts and behaviours, or more accurately, it is our *perceptions* of them (see Powers, 1973).

Our behaviours are influenced by *what* we are, our biology (see Chapter 2), and *who* we are: how we see ourselves, through our self-concept and our identities (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986; Rogers, 1963). The *who* we are is fashioned through our social interactions, and by all of the experiences we have (e.g., Burke, 2020; Mead, 1934). All of which are stored as memories, and some of these are autobiographical (e.g., Conway, 2005). These memories allow us to meld the full gamut of our experiences and inferences to construct our self-stories, and also to predict what might happen if we behave in a certain way, at a certain time, thereby motivating us, or not, to initiate a course of action or to determine a future goal. Behaviour is also affected by our personal and moral values, which can shape the intrinsic and extrinsic value we place on undertaking specific tasks, or performing certain roles according to the

situation/context (e.g., Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). In addition, affective factors, such as our feelings, emotions, and moods, have a strong influence on our behaviour, and also influence our feelings of self-worth, or self-esteem (Frijda, 1986).

This, however, is by no means an exhaustive list. As each of these factors represents a possible lens that could be used to explore the domain of teacher mentoring, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover them all. Nevertheless, although the lens I have chosen is self-efficacy, a separate construct to the personal factors given above, it does not just *sit there* inside our self-system in isolation. Instead, a teacher mentor's self-efficacy beliefs and identities are formed by their multifarious experiences as wholes. Particularly pertinent to the domain of teacher mentoring, and a named source of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), are the affective responses and physiological states associated with a teacher mentor's experiences.

3.2.1.1. The Emotional Labour of Teaching and Teacher Mentoring

Emotions are an example of a personal affective factor that influence an individual's behaviour, and their social environment. Emotions have valence, they can be interpreted as being positive or negative, and they also have intensity. For example, someone can experience a negative emotion such as disgust mildly or strongly. Additionally, it is thought that emotions are elicited by events that are of significance for the person experiencing them (Frijda, 1986). In this respect, emotions are highly subjective experiences; a situation that results in ire for one person could result in amusement for another. Although there is no firm agreement on how emotions are generated, many people think that emotions result from an individual's

cognitive appraisals of the situations they face, with “situations” here representing events that are actual or imagined (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Schools are full of people. Every person in a school has their own thoughts, goals, and agency, and all are performing their role(s), within an established social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1977). This means that there is the opportunity for teacher mentors to engage in hundreds of person-to-person interactions every single day. As each and every social interaction has the potential to lead to a whole range of emotional experiences and responses, it is little wonder then that teaching, and teacher mentoring have been described by some as an emotional undertaking (e.g., Hobson, 2016; Law, 2013; Mullen, 2012; Sutton et al., 2009).

For these reasons, we can think of schools and other similar educational settings as potential sites for “hot cognition” (Abelson, 1963/2004). These are places where the thoughts and decisions made by agents are heavily influenced by their emotions. As teaching and teacher mentoring are arguably relational endeavours, every interaction has the potential for agreement or conflict, especially when one considers the power imbalances at play: from adult (teacher) to child (pupil) and from adult experienced other (mentor) to adult novice (mentee). It is also plausible that numerous daily events evoke mixed emotional responses. In the blink of an eye, a teacher mentor could be expressing joy by laughing at a joke shared by their mentee about a pupil and then feel angry when they think the same joke has gone too far. However, what they feel may not necessarily be expressed or communicated as anger (see Reisenzein et al., 2020). In such moments, they are able to moderate or regulate their emotional response, especially if they think that their mentee has not realised their error of judgement in their retelling of the story. In this respect, effective self-

regulation of emotion is a priority for teachers and teacher mentors alike (e.g., Sutton et al., 2009).

In addition to their role as a teacher, teacher mentors are managing, or mediating, a special type of relationship, the professional learning of a colleague (Orland-Barak, 2014). This means that they are having to navigate and manage both adult agency, and adult emotion, which adds a further layer of complexity. Over the course of a mentor-mentee relationship, Hareli and Rafaeli (2008) posit that mentors and their mentees will be placed in an “emotional cycle.” A teacher mentor’s expressed emotions (*behaviour*) will be influencing the emotions of their mentee (*a social environmental factor*), with the emotional responses of their mentee influencing and affecting their behaviours.

Emotions can be contagious and, as discussed in Chapter 2, this can help us to build rapport (Hale & Hamilton, 2016). In the example above, a teacher mentor may have set themselves a goal (*a personal factor*) to be more empathetic and compassionate in order to try and build a positive relationship with their mentee. By hiding an anger response or signal (see Chapter 2) through a process of “cognitive reappraisal” (Burger, 2024), they may believe that they are better placed to build trust. This call for *emotionally intelligent* mentoring has been echoed by a number of researchers (e.g., Law, 2013; Ragins & Kram, 2008; Sutton et al., 2009) as it has many advantages, such as for building and maintaining positive relationships, and to help teachers and teacher mentors to realise their goals.

3.2.1.2. *The Relationship Between Emotion and Self-Efficacy*

As emotional responses have the potential to influence someone’s beliefs about their own competency with regard to executing a task, for example, anger could

accompany failure, or joy could accompany success, we can begin to understand how emotions might influence an individual's self-efficacy beliefs. A number of studies have demonstrated that there is a link between emotional response and teacher self-efficacy (TSE), both of which are personal factors in SCT (e.g., Buonomo et al., 2019; Lauermann & Butler, 2021). For example, a longitudinal study ($N = 3010$) conducted by Burić et al. (2020), found that higher TSE scores predicted greater levels of positive emotions, whereas higher levels of negative emotions predicted weaker TSE beliefs.

Burić et al. (2020) suggest that the provision of a “competent” teacher mentor could help mitigate the potentially deleterious effect negative emotions may have on TSE. For example, a teacher mentor could help their mentee to understand their emotional responses and how to self-regulate them through a process of cognitive reappraisal. Furthermore, as effective mentoring could serve to strengthen TSE through mastery and feedback, this could lead to increased positive affect, potentially resulting in increased enjoyment, enthusiasm, and job satisfaction (Moè & Katz, 2022). Additionally, stronger TSE beliefs coupled with better emotional regulation, could help teachers to develop resilience, helping them to cope better with the high-stress environment of a school (Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

Having said that, there is currently a dearth of empirical research available with regard to how emotional responses affect TMSE beliefs. This may in part be due to a lack of a suitable instrument with which to measure TMSE. The development of the TMSES, a significant part of the work presented in this thesis, may help to address this issue, leading to a stronger sense of how TSE, TMSE, and emotional responses are related.

3.2.2. Environmental Factors

Like personal factors, there are a large number of possible environmental factors in the lifeworld of a teacher mentor. Environmental factors can be abiotic (physical), such as school buildings, or biotic (living), such as the people working, learning, and interacting within them. That these factors are not static and vary over time adds to the complexity of possible interactions and resultant outcomes. As the social environment plays a “critical role” in SCT (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020. p.1), a focus on vicarious learning would be an apposite area to explore, as this is also a source of self-efficacy beliefs in Bandura’s theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997).

The role a teacher mentor assumes, and the behaviours they choose to execute to perform that role, depends on the expectations attached to that role (Stryker, 1980). These expectations are derived from the social interactions a teacher mentor will have had—throughout their lives and through the interactions they have when performing the role itself (e.g., Burke & Stets, 2023; Lortie, 1975). For example, a teacher taking on the mentor role will gain knowledge of mentoring expectations with regard to role, actions, and positionality through discourse (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990). This will take place through the social interactions they have with their mentee, and also with other colleagues.

In this way, social structures, including workplace culture, and the meanings of what teacher mentoring is and what teacher mentors do, can be transferred from one generation to the next (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934). In addition, teacher mentors will have gained an understanding of what mentors do and what mentoring is, including the expectations attached to this role, through *observing* what mentors do (see Bandura, 1997). Teacher mentors will be using models to gain experience of teaching and teacher mentoring *vicariously*. All of these experiences, and their

perceptions of them, are also changing them as they become a teacher mentor. Their experiences will be shaping their *being* and their doing, and therefore their teacher mentor identity (Ragins, 2009); “crafting identities is a social process” (Lave, 1996, p.157).

This vicarious learning, or learning through observation, may have happened when they were a novice teacher themselves, and possibly even as a pupil (Lortie, 1975). Furthermore, as mentoring is a broader domain than just teacher mentoring, there may have been models of mentoring that a teacher mentor will have encountered outside of a school. These models may also have shaped their ideas of what a mentor is or does. Even though the mentoring has taken place in another domain, there are commonalities with regard to the competencies required for effective mentoring across domains. For example, arguably all types of mentoring require the competencies needed for building and maintaining relationships. The nature of these commonalities and differences will be explored further in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

At the same time as people are experiencing mentoring vicariously, people are continually evaluating themselves against the model they are observing. By judging their own perceived capabilities with regard to successful task completion compared to the performance of another, they are using this information to decide on a course of action related to how they see themselves: how this relates to their own personal standards, capabilities, and teacher mentor identity (Bandura, 1997; Cooley, 1902/2017). For a teacher mentor, in the same way as it would for a teacher, this will have an impact on their domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs. If a teacher believes that they can see themselves successfully mentoring another teacher from the models (role and/or process) they have encountered, then this may serve to strengthen their TMSE beliefs (Bandura, 1997). In addition, they may also be more likely to be

motivated to expend the time and effort needed to gain competency (through performance accomplishments) in this domain (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

If a teacher mentor's strengthened self-efficacy beliefs motivate them to set a goal to develop their competency in teacher mentoring, then this may strengthen their TMSE beliefs even further. This in turn will affect, arguably, the most important social environmental factor in a mentoring relationship, their mentee.

3.3. Building Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy (TMSE) Beliefs

A teacher mentor's primary role—as a mentor—is to provide support for their mentee. The type of support they are able to offer their mentee varies according to the situation, and it also depends on the mentor themselves. Their actual competence and the perceptions they have regarding their own competence or capabilities, in both mentoring and teaching, matters because this can affect what they do (Bandura, 1997)—their TMSE beliefs can affect the choices they make. These choices then influence a number of factors, or outputs, that are of relevance to the teacher mentor and their mentee, such as the teacher mentor's overall effectiveness; their desire to keep trying to do their best, persevering in spite of the barriers they may face; and also their ability to manage stress (see Bandura, 1997; Burić & Kim, 2020; Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

As stronger TMSE is likely to have positive effects on these factors, it is advantageous for a teacher mentor to want to strengthen them. For example, increased effectiveness may have positive effects for the teacher mentor by fulfilling their need to develop competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and also for their mentee, who will receive improved mentoring. However, the best way to strengthen a teacher

mentors TMSE beliefs remains an area for further research and development (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

3.3.1. Sources of TMSE

As proposed by Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, TMSE is built by the *doing* of teacher mentoring, with experiences acquired by teacher mentors both directly and vicariously. By sharing their expertise and facilitating opportunities for their mentees to develop their teaching competencies, teacher mentors are not only helping their mentees strengthen their teaching self-efficacy (TSE), but they are also acquiring and developing competencies of their own with regard to both teacher mentoring and teaching. Although teaching and teacher mentoring are different domains, each requiring different skills, there is some commonality (e.g., Schwille, 2008; Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

All of the experiences gained from the act of mentoring have the potential to affect a teacher mentor's TMSE and TSE beliefs. For example, as teacher mentors are teachers too, they are expected to be able to provide a model for their mentees with regard to what "good" or "effective" teaching is, and what a teacher's role is (e.g., Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wang et al., 2025), so by mentoring a novice, teacher mentors are further developing their own teaching competencies (e.g., Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Simpson et al., 2007). In turn, this may be affecting (e.g., strengthening) their self-efficacy beliefs in both domains (see Wang et al., 2025).

As the sources of self-efficacy beliefs are thought to be common for all domains (Bandura, 1997), the sources for building TMSE will be the same as those used by a

mentor to build their mentees TSE (Perera et al., 2019), and examples of how TMSE beliefs can be strengthened and weakened through affective and vicarious experiences have been explored previously. However, TMSE beliefs can also be influenced by experiences related to mastery and social persuasion, which will now be discussed.

A teacher mentor will be developing mastery of teacher mentoring by performing the role i.e., *doing* what is expected of them and *doing* what they think they need to do to affirm any identity standards they have that are associated with this role (Burke & Stets, 2023; Mead, 1934). Additionally, a teacher mentor may be judging the effectiveness of their own performance as a mentor through their mentee's outcomes, their successes or their failures. Theoretically (Bandura, 1997), if their mentee is developing into a competent and committed teacher, then a teacher mentor may infer that their mentee's success is attributable to their own effectiveness as a mentor. As this inference functions as a self-referential judgement to evaluate their own mentoring adequacy or effectiveness, it should therefore theoretically serve to strengthen their TMSE.

Through this metacognitive activity, a teacher mentor will decide on their next course of action. Using Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997), if a teacher mentor has low TMSE, it might be the case that they would attribute a lack of success or a mentoring failure to a lack of ability. Conversely, a teacher mentor with stronger TMSE beliefs may be more likely to attribute a lack of success to a lack of effort on their part. As a result of this, a teacher mentor with stronger TMSE beliefs will keep trying to improve, because they believe they are capable of success, they just need to try harder next time. Whereas a mentor with weaker TMSE would be more likely to abandon any efforts to improve their mentoring skills, as they do not believe

they would ever realise success. Looking at it this way, it is clear to see why investing in mentor development designed to strengthen a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs would be beneficial.

Self-appraisals of the effectiveness of their own mentoring via the successes of their mentee, may also serve as a source of social persuasion for teacher mentors. Especially if these appraisals are verified by other sources valued by the teacher mentor. Positive feedback received from the pupils taught by their mentee, or from a senior leader with responsibility for ECT induction, such as an induction tutor (DfE, 2025c), could lead to the strengthening of a teacher mentor's TMSE. Furthermore, although direct feedback regarding their capability as a teacher mentor might be hard to come by, it is not impossible if an additional observer or person is present, for example in a mentor-mentee meeting (see Abeeku's experiences shared in Section 3.1.2. of this chapter).

3.3.2. Teacher Mentoring Competencies

As TMSE beliefs are generated from teacher mentors' perceptions of their capabilities to perform the role successfully (Bandura, 1977), the first step in understanding the nature of the TMSE construct is to establish what teacher mentors are expected to be able to do. By *do*, I am specifically referring to the competencies teacher mentors need to perform their role effectively. As a teacher mentor is thought to play a vital role in teacher preparation and induction, there have been numerous studies conducted attempting to address this problem, and a number of meta-analyses, literature reviews, and syntheses have been generated using those studies,

for example, by Aspfors and Fransson (2015), Ellis et al. (2020), and Wang et al. (2025).

That the teacher mentoring competencies identified from these studies are not all the same, gives a strong indication of how difficult it is to establish a common set of competencies from the literature. There are numerous reasons why establishing a set of competencies is difficult. For example, what teacher mentors are expected to be able to do is context dependent, meaning the expectations of a teacher mentor in China may be different to a teacher based in England (e.g., Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ellis et al., 2020; Wang, 2001). Additionally, as some teachers work in highly specialised settings such as “special schools,” they may require specialist skills and knowledge to perform their role.

Due to this diversity of contexts, one reason for a lack of consensus with regard to the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring is definitional. This is one of the primary reasons why the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975) was selected for Phase 1 of this research, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Another reason is that the nature of teacher mentoring itself remains a contested area. For example, it is far from clear if there is a difference between the competencies needed for coaching and for mentoring (e.g., Lofthouse, 2019). In addition, there is no agreement as to what *exactly* a competency is either (e.g., Hoffmann, 1999; Woodruffe, 1993). This is because the term competency is *multifaceted* and therefore has different meanings for different purposes (e.g., Boyatzis, 2008; Hoffmann, 1999).

For the Delphi study conducted in Phase 1, I have used the definition for a competency as provided by Strebler et al. (1997) “competencies are the skills, knowledge, experience, attributes and behaviours that an individual needs to perform a job effectively” (p.19). This also concurs with Boyatzis’ (2008) definition of a

competency “as a capability or ability. It is a set of related but different sets of behavior organized around an underlying construct, which we call the intent” (p.6). The underlying construct for this research being teacher mentoring, and the intent being to mentor another teacher effectively.

The set of teacher mentoring competencies established in Phase 1 of this research will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. This will be in relation to those competencies identified for effective teacher mentoring in the literature, and the mentoring competencies that are thought to be common to the domain of mentoring as a whole, such as effective communication skills (e.g., Clutterbuck, 2004, 2017). The fact that competency is not static and can be developed (Berliner, 2001, 2004; Boyatzis, 2008) is fundamentally important to the building of TMSE. To ascertain if TMSE beliefs are being strengthened through teacher mentor development, an instrument is needed to measure them.

3.4. Measuring TMSE Beliefs: The Need for a New Scale

Although well-tested and established scales for measuring teacher self-efficacy (TSE) exist, they are not capable of measuring an individual's TMSE beliefs. This is because instruments that measure TSE, such as the “Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale” (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and the “Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale” (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), contain items that have been developed to capture self-efficacy beliefs related to teaching, and not teacher mentoring. In other words, TSE scales lack *content validity* when it comes to capturing TMSE, because self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific (Bandura, 2006, 1997). As teacher mentoring

is a different domain to teaching, an instrument specifically designed to measure TMSE is therefore required.

Before the paper resulting from the research conducted in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study was published (Tickell & Klassen, 2024), a search of the literature to look for scales capable of measuring TMSE found very little, and what was available was limited. For example, a Mentor Self-Efficacy (MES) scale was developed by Riggs (2000) for teacher mentors working with student teachers based at California State University, twenty-five years ago. However, there were no psychometric data available for this scale. Furthermore, the items in the MES were mixed, with some measuring self-efficacy beliefs and others outcome expectancies. In addition, as the items had been created for a specific place and time, they were somewhat dated. For example, items in three of the four “skill areas” in the MES were described by Riggs’ as being derived from “current literature on mentoring (Field, 1994; Enz, 1992)” (Riggs, 2000, p.7), which is now over thirty years ago. The MES also contained items that were vague or oddly phrased, e.g., “I can use my knowledge of the development nature of teaching in my support of beginning teachers” (Riggs, 2000, p.12).

Other than a study by Lejonberg and Christophersen (2015) there was little else published on the development of a scale capable of capturing TMSE beliefs. In their paper, Lejonberg and Christophersen (2015) shared four items to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy that they had developed based on the work of Jones (1986). As there was no detail shared about how each of the items was developed, it is unclear how the items were assessed for validity. Moreover, as Jones’ research was conducted in a very general field concerning “newcomers” starting work in organisations relating to business and finance, not teaching, a lack of content validity could prove to be an issue. It is also highly unlikely that the domain of teacher

mentoring self-efficacy can be evaluated and understood with only four items with which to measure it. In fact, many more items are needed for the process of scale development for reasons that will be shared in the next chapter, "Chapter 4.

Methodology."

From the findings of this literature search, it was clear to me that there was a definite need to develop a new instrument capable of evaluating TMSE beliefs. Furthermore, by undertaking the work of developing the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES), I also knew that I would be gaining a better theoretical understanding of the possible factors that could be underpinning this construct.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

To deepen my understanding of the *being* and *doing* of teacher mentoring, the primary goal of this research, I needed to plan an approach that would enable me to fully explore this area. To do this, I opted for a multiple methods design, employing a mixed-methods approach (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) to provide three different *lenses* that I could use to investigate and explore the multifaceted domain of teacher mentoring. To craft the lenses, I selected the quantitative and qualitative methodologies that allowed me to best address my research questions. The rationale for their selection will be provided in Sections 4.5 to 4.7 of this chapter.

This blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches has provided me with the means to test my findings for credibility and validity, via a process of “mutual verification” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, the qualitative findings from Phase 1 of my research were used to validate the quantitative findings from Phase 2 of my research, and vice versa (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

By combining the qualitative and quantitative findings from each part of this three-phase study, I have been able to “tell a story” with the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) and also seek to advance theoretical understandings through synthesis. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches has, I believe, resulted in a far better, deeper, and richer understanding of the research problem as a *whole*. As previously explained in Chapter 1, teacher mentoring is both a role and a process; the doing of teacher mentoring and the being of being a teacher mentor are entangled and cannot be fully separated. This means that one methodological

approach alone is unlikely to illuminate the multi-layered and multifaceted nature of the domain of teacher mentoring.

4.2 Research Design and Approach

To gain a richer understanding of the domain of teacher mentoring, I employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach when designing and executing this three-phase study. Using an approach to interpretation known as the “hermeneutic circle” (e.g., see George, 2021; Heidegger, 1927/1996), I used the findings from each part (the phases), to gain a better understanding of the whole (the domain). Using this new understanding of the whole, and taking it back to the parts, also served to deepen my understanding of them. In this way, I have gained a more profound and augmented understanding of what *being* a teacher mentor is like, what the *doing* of teacher mentoring entails, and how both the being and the doing are related to each other.

The process of going back and forth from part to whole has taken many iterations. I think now, having completed my research, that this interpretive and iterative process is far better represented by a spiral than a circle. Each time a new understanding was arrived at, I travelled *deeper* into the underlying structure of the domain of teacher mentoring. Although I believe it has been successful, using this approach to gain understanding is complicated by the need for presuppositions.

When I designed my research plan, I quickly realised that in order to fully understand what teacher mentors need to *do*, I need to know what it is like to *be* a teacher mentor. Furthermore, to fully understand what it means for someone to be a teacher mentor, I needed to know what teacher mentors need to be able to do, and this is because people *are* what they do (e.g., see Bem’s, 1972, self-perception theory;

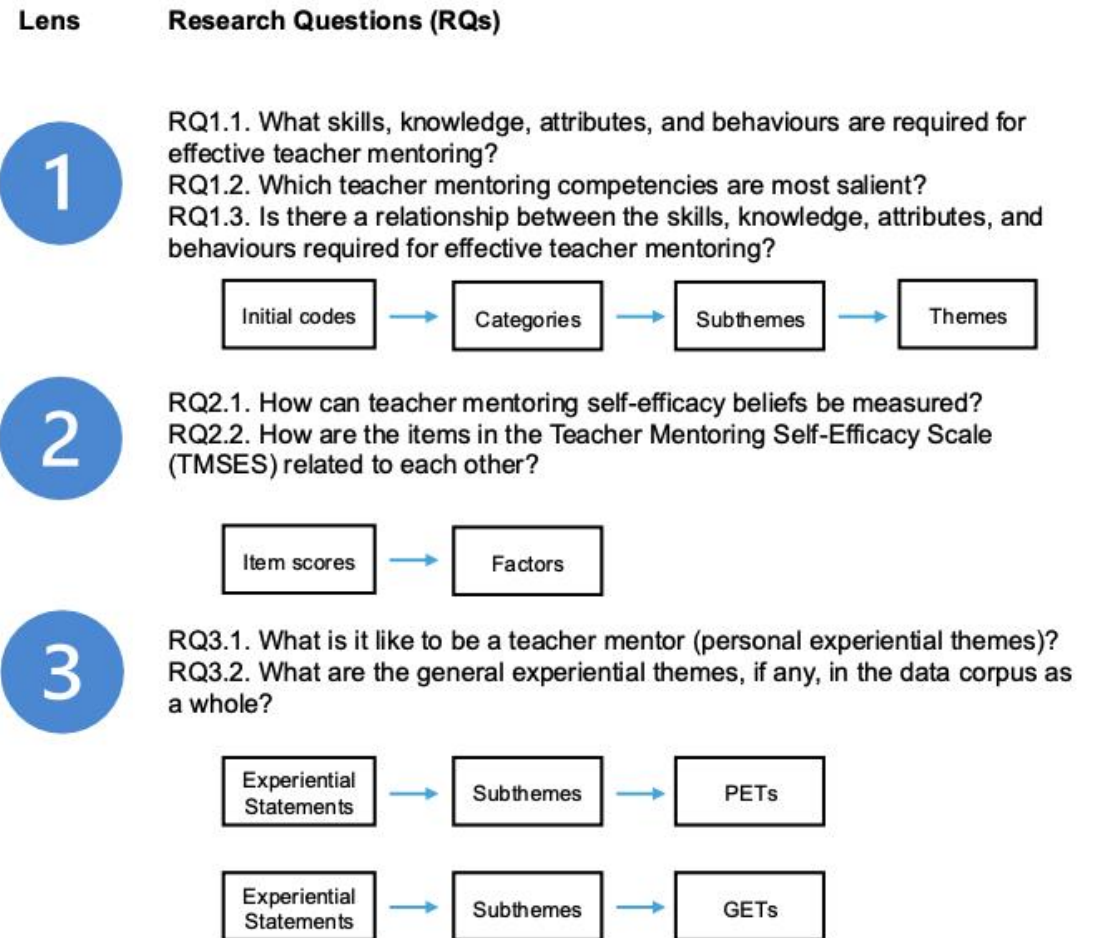
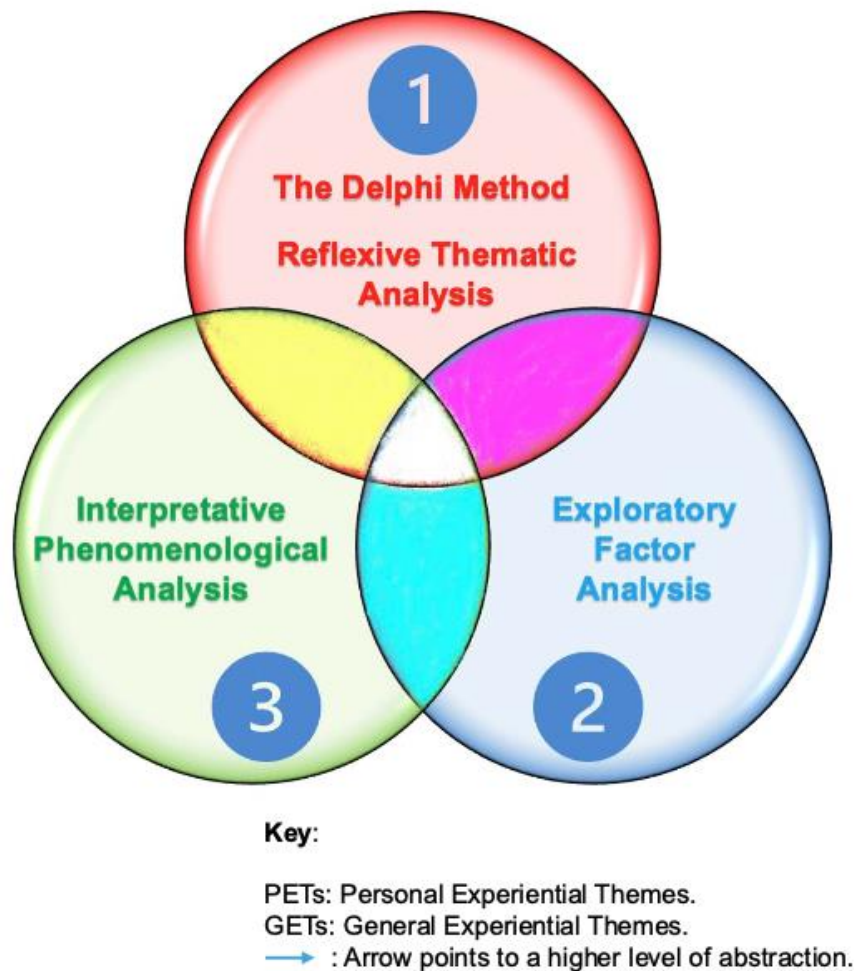
and also Mead, 1934). As this interpretive approach enabled me to go back and forth across the entire data corpus, I was able to resolve this issue by applying the understanding gained from one phase, to deepen my understanding of another. Though, for Phase 3, there is an important caveat. The data analysis for this phase had to be completed before I could apply any understanding/ meaning making from Phases 1 and 2. This is due to a methodological restriction that will be explicated in Section 4.7 of this chapter.

4.3. Research Questions

Although the research questions (RQs) for this study have been previously shared in Table 1.1., it is fitting to include them again here. In Figure 4.1, the RQs associated with each of the three lenses in this study relate to what has been revealed (seen) about the nature of the domain of teacher mentoring through them. The process of analysis from the lowest to the highest levels of abstraction, is also provided to illustrate the relationships between the findings for each phase.

Figure 4.1

An Overview of the Research Design



Each of the methodologies used in each phase will be addressed in detail within their own section in this chapter. However, I will provide a brief overview here of what each lens is attempting to focus on.

In Phase 1 the Delphi method, a mixed method approach, was used in conjunction with a reflexive thematic analysis (a qualitative methodology), to identify the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring. In this way, Phase 1 was primarily focused on the *doing* of teacher mentoring, but it did cover some aspects of the being e.g., some competencies were related to teacher mentor attitudinal dispositions.

Phase 2 was involved with constructing and developing the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES), using quantitative methods. By measuring the teacher mentor self-efficacy (TMSE) beliefs of the survey respondents, Phase 2 was focused on the *doing* and the *being* of teacher mentoring (as explained in “Chapter 3. Teacher Mentoring Self-efficacy”: self-efficacy, a psychological construct, concerns the beliefs people hold about themselves with regard to their ability to complete a given task successfully. Furthermore, it is expected that the beliefs of the respondents completing the survey will have been influenced by mentoring experiences they have had in the past).

In Phase 3, an interpretative phenomenological analysis, a qualitative methodology, was used to focus on the lived experiences of teacher mentors. In this way, Phase 3 was primarily concerned with *being* a teacher mentor which, for the mentors interviewed, also involved *doing*. In addition, each participant’s account of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring provided insights into the process of their *becoming* a teacher mentor.

The answers to the fourth research question—*What do the findings from this study tell us about the nature of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring?*—concern the findings as a *whole* and can be deduced from the commonalities between the three sets of findings, i.e., the intersections of the Venn diagram used in Figure 4.1., and the differences between the sets. The answers to this question will be discussed in “Chapter 8. The Overarching Discussion” of this thesis.

4.4. The Researcher’s Position

Having spent a significant amount of my life working, in one way or another, in the education sector - from being a pupil, to becoming a teacher, to helping others to become teachers - I recognise that I am bringing a significant amount of knowledge and understanding of this field to my own research. In this respect, I have an emic perspective: I understand the “teaching culture” I am researching from the inside. However, I am also aware that this understanding is predominantly built on foundations constructed from a western cultural perspective. I understand the “rules of the game” (see Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934) that have been inculcated by *my* culture, *my* socialisation, and *my* history. These, in turn, have shaped my personal beliefs and values that serve to influence how I choose to play the game. From my own unique vantage point, my “horizon of understanding” (Gadamer, 1960/2013) has been shaped by a societal culture that tends to focus on the individualistic—a way of establishing autonomy, self-reliance, growth, and personal development through the setting of individual goals—compared to the collectivist approach often seen in eastern cultures (Suh & Lee, 2020). The cultural landscape changes the rules.

As I cannot completely detach myself from my research, understanding both who and what I am is essential in order to understand the choices I have made in this study. My choice to focus on TMSE beliefs and to use social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986) as an overarching theoretical framework, reflects how important I think self-efficacy is as a motivational construct for professional growth. As SCT is also a theory very much centred on the social, as discussed in Chapter 3, it also reflects my understanding of how humans learn and how they come to understand who they are (see Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934).

I know, and I have learnt, from my own experiences that self-belief in one's own capabilities is an important factor for success. I also believe that professional mentoring of another colleague is a powerful tool for facilitating a teacher's learning and development (as do many others e.g., Hobson et al., 2016; Lofthouse, 2019; Orland-Barak, 2014). Unsurprisingly then, my own knowledge, expertise, and understanding have informed my thinking with regard to both my research design and analytical choices. I have drawn on my knowledge and expertise of the domain of teacher mentoring at all stages of this study, from using the findings from the RTA to generate teacher mentoring competency statements, to making decisions in the moment during the interviews conducted in Phase 3. For example, knowing when to ask another question to probe for meaning, what question to ask, and how to frame it presupposes that a knowledgeable other is present to act as questioner. As I cannot detach myself from the process of analysis completely, it is important that I provide justifications for the decisions I have made, which will be explicated later in this chapter.

Decisions regarding the methodologies and approaches used to address these research questions have been made on the basis of *fitness for purpose*

(Gorard, 2013). However, I am not naive enough to think that my own philosophical stance has not influenced the methodological choices I have made, or the direction I have chosen to travel. In brief, my paradigm, or “worldview” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), would be pragmatist. I have used a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to address the research questions, which have taken precedence over my own epistemological and ontological positions.

This means that I have moved epistemologically from positivism, e.g., scale development and the measurement of TMSE beliefs in Phase 2, to interpretivism, e.g., the IPA in Phase 3. I have used a mixture of inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning to analyse and make meaning from my findings in order to generate the types of knowledge necessary to answer my research questions. It was also important for me to produce something of practical use, e.g, the TMSES.

The theoretical lenses and frameworks I have used throughout this thesis are varied and numerous. One reason for this is that the analysis in Phase 3 is inductive. Theories and frameworks are used after the process of analysis to make sense of the findings. With an IPA the theories and theoretical frameworks needed are only known a posteriori. However, theories from the social and psychological sciences have been used to guide the research in Phases 1 and 2, for example, Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1986; 1997). Additionally, in Phase 3, the research was steered by three approaches, namely phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, and they will be discussed further in Section 4.7 of this chapter.

4.5. Phase 1 The Delphi Study

4.5.1. Overview and Rationale

The Delphi method, also known as the Delphi technique, uses expert knowledge to address a predefined problem or research question using the mechanism of consensus (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2011; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). It was first developed by The RAND corporation in the 1950s as a military forecasting tool (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963); however, the developers soon recognised its potential for other uses, such as policy design and evaluating complex societal issues (Landeta, 2006; Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2011).

The first step in a Delphi study is to invite respondents with specialised knowledge, or expertise, in the field of interest, to join an “expert panel” (Baker et al., 2006; Devaney & Henchion, 2018; Okoli and Pawlowski, 2004). These experts are then consulted on the problem under investigation via a series of iterative questionnaires, known as “rounds.” Researcher analyses from each previous round are then fed back into the next. Group responses and researcher analyses shared with the panel comprise a mixture of univariate statistics alongside the results of any qualitative analyses that have been conducted (e.g., Hsu & Sandford, 2007). As such, this methodology straddles the qualitative-quantitative divide and is considered to be a mixed method approach (Iqbal & Papon-Young, 2009). Sharing the findings with the panellists at the beginning of each new round is a key feature of this methodology (Devaney & Henchion, 2018), and respondent feedback is used systematically to shape and develop the questions used in subsequent rounds. This process continues until a consensus is reached.

However, it is important to recognise that as there is no agreement on how best to determine consensus (Birko et al., 2015; Hasson et al., 2000; Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Waggoner et al., 2006), a Delphi could run on ad infinitum. It is therefore prudent to determine when to draw a Delphi to its close a priori in order to mitigate survey fatigue and stay within any time and/or budgetary constraints (Hasson et al., 2000). A Delphi comprising two to four rounds of questionnaire is thought to be enough to achieve consensus, and most Delphi studies are within this range (e.g., Gargon et al., 2019; Hasson et al., 2000; Rowe & Wright, 2001).

Another distinguishing feature of this methodology is that panellists remain anonymous to each other throughout the process; however, they are not anonymous to the researcher (Hasson et al., 2000; Rowe & Wright, 2001). Anonymity confers some major advantages in a Delphi, such as giving all voices the chance to be heard, and an equal weighting (Landeta, 2006). In a group situation, the advantages of the oft quoted idiom that “two heads are better than one,” or the “n + 1 principle” (Rowe et al., 1991) can be negated if the more influential, dominant, or vocal members of the group are allowed to dominate, or influence others (e.g., Hussler et al., 2011; Rowe & Wright, 2001). This may be especially true if panellists have vested interests in the outcomes (Hussler et al., 2011; Rowe et al., 1991). It follows then that the anonymity provided by the Delphi method should lead to better representation of expert opinion.

The Delphi method is well-tested and has been successfully used across a wide range of disciplines and applications (Landeta, 2006; Linstone and Turoff, 2011; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). From policy development (de Loe, 1995), to medicine (Ibrahim et al., 2023) and to tourism (Vaghaslo et al., 2023). The Delphi method has also been widely used in education (Green, 2014) in a variety of

different ways: critical decision making (Clayton, 1997), determining teaching standards (van der Schaaf & Stokking, 2011), and validating effective communication skills (Mercer-Mapstone & Kuchel, 2017). Moreover, Delphis have been used in numerous studies to reach a consensus for definitions of terms (e.g., Vogel et al., 2019) and to establish the skills and competencies needed to perform a role or activity successfully (e.g., Neuer Colburn et al., 2016; Wester & Borders, 2014).

Although a literature review was considered as a way of identifying and generating a set of mentoring competencies, this was rejected due to two main reasons. Firstly, as the terms “teacher mentor” and “teacher mentoring” have a multitude of meanings (e.g., Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021) their usage in the literature is far too varied to establish a common meaning or definition. Secondly, to further compound the problem, there is no agreement as to what a competency is (e.g., Hoffmann, 1999). To ameliorate this, the Delphi method was chosen as a way of (i) establishing a consensus, as to what teacher mentors need to do to be effective in their role, and (ii) use the “mechanism of consensus” to address any definitional issues by making the Delphi panellists the “definers” (Tickell & Klassen, 2024). To this end, the Delphi method was chosen to achieve the primary goal for Phase 1 of this research, which was to establish a consensus regarding the competencies teacher mentors need to perform their role effectively.

4.5.2. Delphi Panellists

4.5.2.1. *Selection of Panellists*

Many researchers regard the convening of an expert panel as being a critical first step for a Delphi study (Baker et al., 2006; Devaney & Henchion, 2018; Hsu & Sandford, 2007). The primary reason for this being that the quality of the output is determined by the quality of the input. However, what confers “expert” status is often vague and imprecise (Mullen, 2003; Sackman, 1975; Waggoner et al., 2016), leaving it to the researcher to define what this term means for themselves (Baker et al., 2006; Devaney & Henchion, 2018; Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009).

In this study, participants were selected using purposive sampling (e.g., Coolican, 2019), and a figure of ≥ 5 years’ experience in the field of teacher mentoring was chosen as the cut-off point for inclusion (Tickell & Klassen, 2024). This threshold was chosen, as it was felt that people with a minimum of five years in this field would be “informed individuals” (Linstone & Turoff, 1975) who would have the requisite expertise and specialist knowledge needed to contribute (e.g., Hasson et al., 2000; Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Accessing expertise from knowledgeable others in the field of teacher mentoring was of critical importance, as it affects the credibility of the data, and hence the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). For example, the aim of this Delphi study was to generate and agree on the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring. These competencies needed to be valid and representative of the teacher mentoring domain in order to construct items for the TMSE scale (TMSES), and this requires specialist knowledge. Simply put, the items needed to be representative of the domain for construct validity (DeVellis, 2017). In

this study, the validity of the TMSES, i.e., its ability to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs, is directly affected by the quality of data obtained from the Delphi (DeVellis, 2017; Neuer Colburn et al., 2016; Van der Schaaf & Stokking, 2011).

Although for this Delphi panel, homogeneity has been sought on the basis of expertise (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004), some heterogeneity in panels may confer advantages. By allowing researchers access to different perspectives (Devaney & Henchion, 2018; Hsu & Sandford, 2007), and to “disparate domain knowledge” (Rowe & Wright, 2001), the competencies generated from this Delphi will represent items that are more likely to be covering all aspects of the domain of interest (Bandura, 1997, 2006; DeVellis, 2017; Nunnally, 1978). For example, all experts selected for this study are knowledgeable in the field of teacher mentoring; however, they have each gained experience of this domain from a combination of different contexts and positions (see Figure 2.2), e.g., direct experience of mentoring, system leadership, academia, and government advisory roles. This diversity and breadth are highly beneficial for developing self-efficacy scales (Bandura, 2006) as it offers representativeness.

Potential panellists for this Delphi study were identified using a range of criteria (Tickell & Klassen, 2024), some of which have been used in other Delphi studies, for example, conducting a literature review to identify prominent academics in the field (Robertson et al., 2017), and directly approaching those known to the researcher (Baker et al., 2006). Information readily available in the public domain, such as lists of teaching school hubs (“school-led centres of excellence for teacher and leadership training and development”; DfE, 2021a), and universities, also provided suggestions for possible panellists to contact. At the end of this process, 74 individuals, who were all based in the UK, were shortlisted and invited to join the

panel. Of these, 31 initially accepted the invitation, with 5 withdrawing at a later stage, resulting in a group of 26 expert panellists.

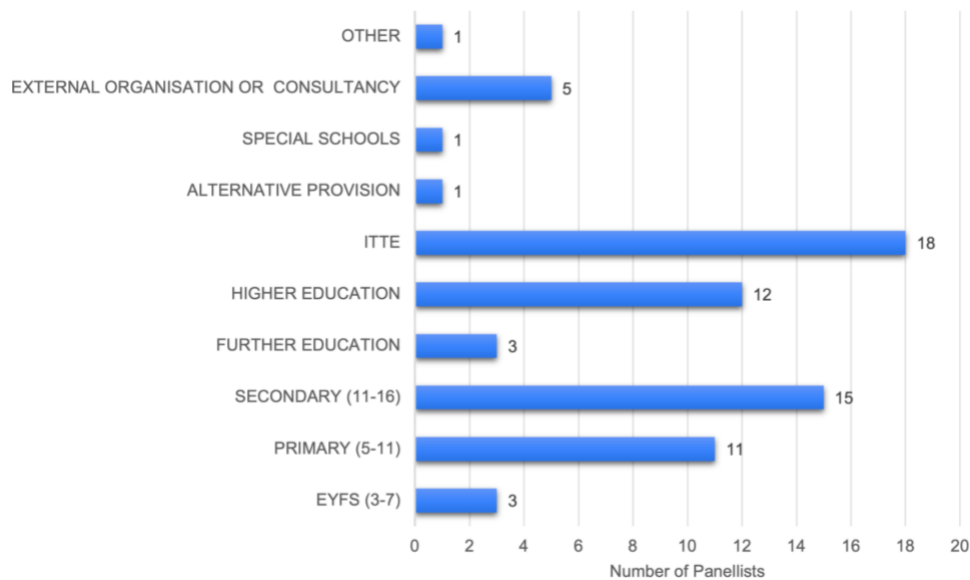
As there are no clear rules regarding panel size for conducting a Delphi, panels can range in size from seven to one thousand (Mullen, 2003). Although recommendations as to panel size do exist in the literature, Waggoner et al. (2016) suggests 6 to 11 panellists, Rowe and Wright (2001) say 5 to 20, and Clayton (1997) proposes 15 to 30; as can be seen, these are highly variable. However, as Powell (2003) contends that *representativeness*, or the qualities that each expert brings to the Delphi, is far more important than the number of panellists taking part, the representativeness of the panel in this Delphi study is a veritable strength (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

4.5.2.2. Delphi Panel Demographics

The panel for this Delphi study comprised 26 individuals (age $M = 51.3$ years, $SD = 5.93$), who had significant experience in the domain of teacher mentoring, $M = 16.46$ years ($SD = 7.64$). From the panellists' responses, 83.3% identified as female, 12.5% as male, with 4.2% choosing not to disclose their gender, 83.3% held qualified teacher status (QTS), and 65.4% identified as White British. Panellist experience was drawn from a range of contexts, see Figure 4.2., with 41.7% of panellists having gained additional experience of this field from international settings, and 29.2% holding a qualification in mentoring and/or coaching.

Figure 4.2

Delphi Panellists' Experiences of Teacher Mentoring (N = 26)



Note. ITTE = Initial Teacher Training and Education; EYFS = Early Years Foundation Stage.

I cannot provide detailed information regarding the experiences of each of the Delphi panellists, as this may compromise their anonymity. However, to illustrate the panellists' experiences collectively, Figure 4.2 provides aggregate categories of their experiences to illustrate their representativeness. All five phases of education in England are represented, from early years to higher education (DfE, 2012), as are special schools and sites of alternative provision. In addition, as 92% of panellists were able to draw on experiences of teacher mentoring in ≥ 2 of the categories, nearly all of the panellists had experience of teacher mentoring in more than one phase.

The full breadth of the panellists' experience is too extensive to list here; however, a small selection is provided below to give a flavour of the variety of their experiences:

“My PhD involved researching mentors and the impact they have on student teacher development”; “I have been [redacted] for [School Centred Initial Teacher Training] SCITT trainees and have led the mentor support for both primary and secondary trainees”; “I have been involved in formal and informal coaching and mentoring throughout my career in [Higher Education] HE”; “I am ... also an approved mentor for apprenticeship candidates”; “I am also involved in a number of [government] policy initiatives that focus on mentoring.”

4.5.3. Procedure

As advised by the literature, if a Delphi is to run smoothly it is essential to have a clear timeline and structure in place for communication before the study begins (e.g. Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Alongside this, it is important to check if processes and systems are fit for purpose, that the questions and instructions put to the panellists are relevant and unambiguous, and to check if there are any “readability” issues (Clibbens et al., 2012; Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009).

To address this, a small pilot study was conducted ($N = 5$) before running the Delphi. The people used for the pilot were known to me and were considered to have the expertise needed to provide meaningful feedback. Using the contributions from the pilot study, minor amendments were made to the R1 questionnaire before it was distributed to the panel. As no amendments were made to the proposed timeline, a three round Delphi was run over a four-month period, as initially planned.

4.5.3.1. Procedural Decisions and Rationale

1. Three rounds of questionnaire were chosen as three rounds are often considered to be enough for a Delphi (e.g. Van der Shaaf & Stokking, 2011), with most suggesting anywhere between two and four rounds being sufficient to achieve consensus (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).
2. The timeframe was selected for manageability, giving panellists the time they needed to contribute, whilst maintaining momentum between rounds to secure high response rates (Clibbens et al., 2012).
3. The time taken to complete each round was also considered, with no round designed to take longer than 45 minutes to encourage questionnaire completion (Birko et al., 2015).
4. Qualtrics, a secure online surveying tool, was used to disseminate the questionnaires and collect participant responses. This method was chosen because it was deemed to be more efficient than postal questionnaires (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Iqbal & Papon-Young, 2009), allowed responses to be collected anonymously, and provided easier access to survey data while working under the “lockdown” restrictions imposed on panellists during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. To maintain participant engagement, email was used to communicate with panellists between rounds and to send follow-up emails to non-responders. Ensuring high response rates are maintained is important for improving both credibility and validity of a Delphi study (Beretta, 1996), which can be challenging if using online survey tools alone (Devaney & Henchion, 2018).

4.5.3.2. Round One (R1)

All panellists were sent a link to the R1 questionnaire, with clear completion instructions. Consent to take part in the study was also obtained at this stage (Appendix B). The questionnaire for R1 comprised a set of open-ended questions to identify the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes necessary for effective teacher mentoring (Tickell & Klassen, 2024). Open-ended questions for R1 are often preferred for Delphi studies (e.g. Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009; Mullen, 2003; Rowe & Wright, 2001) as they allow experts to have the freedom and opportunity to express their opinions and share their knowledge (Hasson et al., 2000), free of researcher constraint and/or influence.

To enhance methodological robustness, Iqbal & Pison-Young (2009) advise the use of additional methodological tools when conducting a Delphi. With this in mind, R1 responses were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022), the results of which are discussed in depth in Chapter 5 of this thesis. RTA was chosen for this study as it is a well-tested method for qualitative data analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2023), and it provides a clear framework that could be used to analyse the large amount of data anticipated from the open-ended questions used in R1.

Qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 was used to analyse the data for the RTA, alongside a more traditional paper method, with the first step being to code the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022; Saldaña, 2016). After the initial codes were identified, they were used to produce categories and themes, with a competency statement created for each category (see Tables 5.2 to 5.5). As this RTA used an inductive approach to data analysis, no theoretical frameworks were applied a priori.

4.5.3.2.1. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as an Embedded Method

Although RTA is not the primary method used in Phase 2, how it was used in this study is still of significance. As it was the mechanism for producing the competency statements used in subsequent rounds of this Delphi, and to produce the items for the TMSES, transparency regarding how the RTA was conducted is, in my view, essential.

When conducting an RTA, Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022, 2023), credited for developing this method, make a number of critical points, namely (i) there is no one “standardised” way of conducting an RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2023), and in this regard, RTA’s flexibility needs to be viewed as an advantage; (ii) that *the researcher brings themselves to the data*—the process of data analysis may be inductive, but it is unavoidably abductive in nature too. That the researcher is a key part of the analysis should be acknowledged (e.g., Tickell & Klassen, 2024; and also see Chapter 1 of this thesis). Moreover, that this can be viewed as a strength, and not as a limitation, is important; (iii) researchers should aim to avoid “positivism creep” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.7), in that a reflexive qualitative researcher should, over time, become less inclined to feel the need to quantify what they do. For example, producing tables containing code frequencies to justify the themes generated is unnecessary. Instead, researchers should be using qualitative reasoning to provide the justification for theme construction.

The process of RTA is far from linear; an RTA is very much iterative in nature. Braun and Clarke (2022) make it clear that researchers will move back and forward from themes to codes (and to the original source material) many times during the course of an RTA, using their new understandings (inferences) to refine themes and subthemes (categories). As previously stated, although an inductive approach was

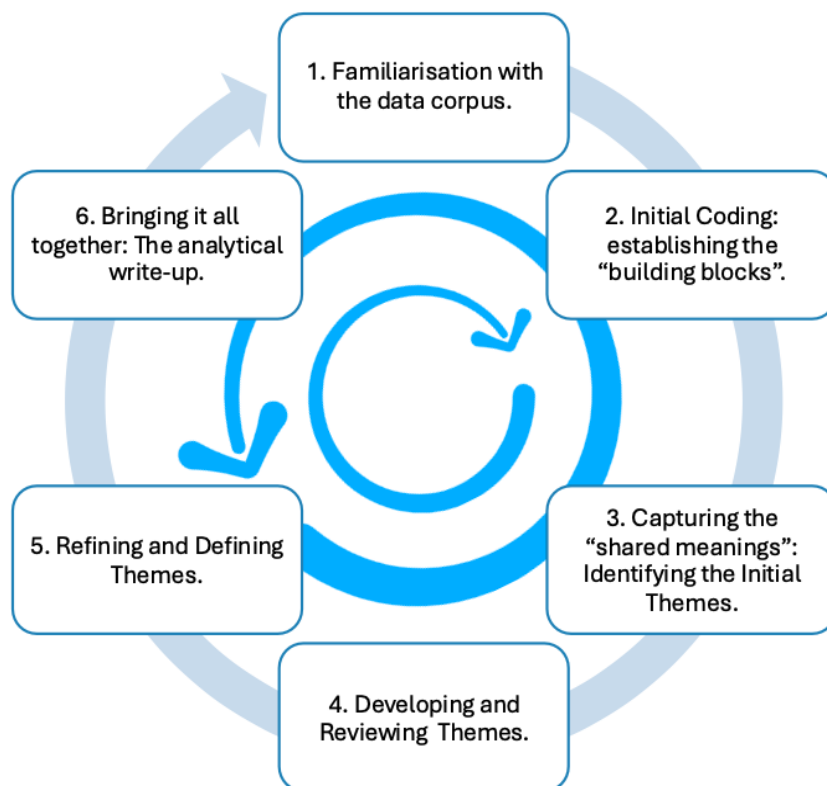
taken to the data analysis for this RTA, I am aware that I, as the researcher, carry theories, frameworks, and ideas about the world with me, and that I most certainly have used that understanding to help me to analyse the data from R1 of the Delphi.

The process used for the RTA conducted as part of this study is shown below. Using two methods - electronic and hard-copy - to analyse the participants' responses from R1 enabled me to gain a better understanding of the data corpus as a whole. In this study, to conduct the analysis, I followed the steps in Figure 4.3, and the guidance and steering given by Braun and Clarke (2022, 2023). As such, the process of analysis took many iterations, going from codes to categories to themes, refining and redefining along the way.

Due to the flexibility of this method, I feel that it is important that researchers share what they have done to code the data. As this step is arguably the most important step in this process, because the initial codes are used to generate the categories (subthemes) and the themes, full transparency is required to establish credibility and trustworthiness in the analyses presented (e.g., Tracy, 2010). Step two of the process in Figure 4.3, "Initial Coding: Establishing the 'building blocks'" was steered by Saldaña's (2016) guidance, which really helped me to demystify this operation. Saldaña (2016) defines a code as a "researcher-generated construct" that is often a "short word or phrase." A researcher uses this to encapsulate the essence of the word, or "portion of language" that they have found to be saying something of relevance or importance (p.4).

Figure 4.3

Conducting an RTA: An Illustration of Braun and Clarke's Six Phase Analytical Process



(Figure 4.3 has been created using a textual description provided by Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.6.)

There is a lot of room here for trying out codes to see if they fit. Going back to them again and modifying them if it is found that they need to be changed, or even omitted, was exactly what I did. As I was coding using two methods, this gave me the confidence to go back and change things. I felt that I was more able to freely experiment, as I had the previous iteration in front of me and could also see any emerging patterns. This process of “codifying” (Saldaña, 2016, p.9) enabled me to categorise the codes to generate themes.

By looking for convergences, divergences, patterns of meaning in the data etc., I was able to group and reorganise the initial codes to develop the categories, and from these, again by grouping according to shared qualities or features, the themes (steps 3-5 of the six-part process in Figure 4.3). Themes are higher level abstractions that, in a way, offer up a salient explanation for the data corpus that has been analysed; categorisation and theming, is as Saldaña (2016) puts it, a “move towards consolidated meaning” (p.10).

As outlined previously, as a researcher my coding and theming judgements are also guided by the beliefs, filters, and lenses that I have (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Saldaña, 2016). This means that my coding and categorisation leading from this are influenced by who I am, and what I think I know. However, in this RTA, I used no other lenses with which to view and analyse the data. All panellist input was anonymised before coding took place, so I was not, to the best of my knowledge, influenced by other factors, for example, gender, age, identity etc., when it came to coding the data corpus. The findings from this RTA are shared and discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, which is the final step in Figure 4.3. Chapter 5 will also explain how the 48 competency statements were constructed at the end of R1, as the findings from the RTA will need to be known in order to understand this process.

4.5.3.3. Round Two (R2)

In round 2 (R2), the findings and competencies (48) generated from the RTA were shared with the panellists. Panellists were invited to rate each competency using a Likert scale, from 1 *unimportant* to 5 *very important*, in relation to their importance for effective teacher mentoring. To mitigate against researcher bias, the teacher mentoring competencies had been randomised prior to sending out the R2

questionnaire. Rating items is a common feature of Delphi studies, typically taking place in the second round (e.g. Camargo et al., 2018; Neuer Colburn et al., 2016). At the end of the rating activity, panellists were also given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the clarity of each competency, and to identify any competencies that may have been overlooked.

At the end of R2, panellist responses were analysed, and a range of univariate statistical tests were performed (see Tables 5.2 to 5.5). As the aim of the rating exercise was to identify the most important competencies for effective teacher mentoring, a competency was determined to be important if it achieved a $\geq 80\%$ consensus rating of ≥ 4 (de Loe, 1995) and/or $M = \geq 4.25$ (Morrison & Greenhaw, 2018).

4.5.3.4. Round Three (R3)

The analyses from R2 were shared with panellists in round 3 (R3). The ten competencies that did not meet the cut-off criteria for importance from R2 were re-rated by the panellists in R3, using the same 1 to 5 Likert scale as R2 (see Table 5.6), a similar approach to that taken by Camargo et al. (2018). Panellists were then asked to comment on two competencies that had received polarised responses. Polarised responses occur when item ratings reflect disagreement, they can be informative and need to be investigated further (de Loe, 1995; Rowe et al., 2005).

Panellist feedback from R2 also suggested that it was important that competency statements reflect that the impetus for action rests with the mentee, not the mentor. After review, four competency statements were identified where a change of wording may be required. Panellists were then asked to choose their preferred wording for these competencies. As the competencies would be used to

construct items for the TMSES the wording of competencies or terms is important, and they needed to be clear and unambiguous (Neuer Colborn et al., 2016; Rowe & Wright, 2001).

The final task asked of the panel in R3 was to complete a ranking exercise, another common feature of a Delphi study (Holey et al., 2007). All competencies were grouped according to their theme, with panellists asked to select the three most important competencies under each theme. All responses from R3 were then analysed to create a final list of 44 competencies which were used to construct the TMSES scale items.

4.5.4. Methodological Limitations

As there is such a wide variation as to how Delphi studies can or should be conducted, this flexibility invariably leads to questions regarding validity. Some of the major criticisms of the Delphi method are directly related to the lack of clarity when it comes to determining what exactly an expert is, and the criteria used for selecting them (Baker et al., 2006; Goodman, 1987; Sackman, 1975). Furthermore, not all researchers agree that experts are needed (Sackman, 1975). As experts may “suffer from self-serving bias in their judgements” (Hussler et al., 2011), it may be that using experts could actually result in less accurate outcomes.

The anonymity afforded by the Delphi method can also have its limitations. For example, if panellists are not meeting in person, then people may be less invested in the process. This may result in lower response rates (Gargon et al., 2019), which may in turn affect credibility and validity. A lack of personal investment

in the Delphi could also compromise the “richness” of the data collected (Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009).

In addition, the embedded RTA used in R2 comes with two main limitations. The first is that it is unlikely that two researchers, given the same data corpus, will arrive at the same analytical outcomes. However, this is only a problem if it is viewed as one, e.g., Braun and Clarke (2022) do not view researcher subjectivity as a “problem to be managed or controlled” (p.8). The second is that avoiding “positivism creep,” as advised by Braun and Clarke (2022, p.7), is made difficult by the quantitative nature of R2 and R3 of the Delphi, for example, in the competency rating exercise. However, if the two processes are kept separate, which they were in this study, then this should not be an issue.

Lastly, conducting a Delphi can be time consuming, both in terms of survey administration and data analysis (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009; Rowe & Wright, 2001). This makes it less attractive as a methodology due to increased costs, especially if a Delphi is poorly managed.

4.6. Phase 2 Constructing the Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy Scale (TMSES)

4.6.1. Overview and Rationale

As the principles of scale development are discussed in “Chapter 3 Teacher Mentoring Self-efficacy,” they will not be covered again here. However, the “three basic steps” to scale development, namely “item generation, theoretical analysis and psychometric analysis,” will be discussed here, as each step is pertinent to the development of the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES) in relation to the

methods used and the approaches taken (Morgado et al., 2017). Each of these steps will be discussed in its own right within this chapter: step one item generation, and step two theoretical analysis are part of “4.6.2. Survey Construction,” with step three psychometric analysis covered in “4.6.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis.”

In terms of psychometric scale development, the three steps above are accepted as the standard way of producing an instrument capable of measuring a psychological construct, such as an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs (e.g. DeVellis, 2017; Morgado et al., 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). As such, the rationale for using them to produce the TMSES is supported by an extensive body of literature on this subject.

4.6.2. Survey Construction

4.6.2.1. Item Generation

In order to obtain accurate and meaningful outputs from a factor analysis, step three in the scale development sequence above, the input data needs to be valid. Bearing this in mind, the selection and construction of the variables or items chosen to investigate the construct of interest is likely to be the most important decision a researcher must make (Goldberg & Velicer, 2006).

In this phase, the competencies developed using the Delphi study in Phase 1 were used to generate (step one in the scale development process) and construct the items for the TMSE survey. Firstly, as the competencies were generated by a panel of experts with extensive and broad expertise in teacher mentoring, this should mean that, hypothetically, the competencies are likely to be valid representations of the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring. A test for this *theoretical*

validity, i.e., step two in the scale development process, was achieved using the Delphi method. As every round of the Delphi provided the mechanism for validation through the use of “expert judges” (Morgado et al., 2017), expert panellists were used to theoretically validate the teacher mentoring competencies presented to them. This also included the validation of this researcher’s judgements regarding those competencies, as recommended by the literature (see DeVellis, 2017; Morgado et al., 2017).

Secondly, a valid scale should provide respondents with the opportunity to record their self-perceptions regarding their own capabilities, across the full spectrum of activities, behaviours, and competencies expected of an effective teacher mentor (Messick, 1995; Wright, 2017). As such, the items generated should be designed to tap into all possible aspects/facets of the construct. For example, there are numerous elements to effective teacher mentoring, from the knowledge needed to advise a mentee to the behaviours needed to build a successful relationship with them (e.g., Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Richter et al., 2013; Schwille, 2008). Due to the breadth of expertise present in the Delphi panel for this study, it is likely that the competencies generated by the Delphi are representative of the teacher mentoring construct as a whole, which is of paramount importance for self-efficacy scale development (Bandura, 2006; DeVellis, 2017; Goldberg & Velicer, 2006; Nunnally, 1978). However, it is important to recognise, that although the competencies will be representative, they cannot be expected to cover all facets of this domain:

“it is useful to think of the items on a particular test as being a sample from a hypothetical infinite population or universe of items measuring the same trait.”
(Nunnally, 1978, p.11)

As content underrepresentation poses a serious risk to validity (Messick, 1995), in order to create a valid scale to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs, items will need to be included to tap into all of these aspects. Although it is considered better to be more inclusive in terms of selecting items to include at the start of scale development (Comrey & Lee, 1992; DeVellis, 2017), on the flip side of the coin, recognising that any scale one creates cannot possibly contain all conceivable test items that measure the domain of interest is of equal importance. Content overrepresentation is also undesirable and can lead to “construct-irrelevant variance” (Downing, 2002; Messick, 1995), which in turn leads to measurement errors. For example, as domains other than the construct of interest are being investigated, this could lead to either inflated or reduced factor scores for respondents when the scale is applied (Downing, 2002; Messick, 1995). Although having said this, for scale development overrepresentation is considered to be more desirable than underrepresentation (Comrey & Lee, 1992; DeVellis, 2017), as underrepresentation can pose the greater risk to scale validity (Messick, 1995).

4.6.2.2. Item Construction

At the end of R3 of the Delphi, the final set of 44 competencies that were generated (Appendix C) were converted into items designed to measure teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE) beliefs. To support this process, Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy scale development guidelines were used, alongside models provided by well-established and heavily tested self-efficacy scales that have been developed by others e.g. the “Norwegian Teacher Self-efficacy Scale” (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) and the “Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The items in these scales, and Bandura's (2006) exemplars, place the emphasis on *can do*: a predictive, or future, measure of the belief someone holds in their capability to perform a task or activity successfully, based on *present* judgements of their own "operative capabilities" (p. 312). In other words, these items are *not* providing a measure of a respondent's beliefs relating to their "potential capabilities" (p. 312), nor are they capturing "statements of intention," or their beliefs regarding "outcome expectancies" (pp.308-309). In response to this, all scale items constructed for the TMSES had the stem "*How confident are you that you can ...*" preceding each item statement.

Item statements were directly translated from each competency statement, each of these having the stem, "*An effective teacher mentor is able to ...*" This resulted in the construction of 44 items for the TMSES. All resultant TMSES items were then reviewed to ensure that they were still grammatically correct after the new stem had been added. For example, for the item "How confident are you that you can ... challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?" the word *your* (a second-person pronoun) was previously *their* (a third-person pronoun) in the competency statement.

How respondents would be asked to rate their confidence in their ability to perform a task successfully was the next consideration. Following recommendations from the literature (Bandura, 2006; Gorsuch, 1997), a Likert scale of 0 *not confident at all* to 10 *highly confident* was applied to each item. The justification for this being, as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) requires interval data and Likert scales are not interval scales, it is advisable to increase the number of points on the scale to eleven, thereby enabling the Likert scale to be "treated as a continuous measure" (Wu & Leung, 2017).

4.6.2.3. Survey Creation

The TMSES survey was created with Qualtrics, a secure web-based surveying tool, using the 44 items constructed from the competency statements. In addition to these 44 items, an additional six items were included from two other well-tested scales, measuring related but different constructs. The three items used from the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the three items used from the Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS; Klassen et al., 2013) are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Items from the Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS) and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Used as Checks for Convergent and Discriminant Validity for the TMSES

Scale	Item
ETS	I love teaching.
ETS	At school, I value the relationships I build with my colleagues.
ETS	In class, I am empathetic towards my students.
TSES	How confident are you that you can get students to believe they can do well in their work?
TSES	How confident are you that you can use a variety of assessment strategies?
TSES	How confident are you that you can control disruptive behaviour in your setting e.g. in the classroom?

These items were selected as they were the items with the highest factor loadings from each respective scale. The wording for the items taken from the TSES were modified slightly to fit with the stem, and the 0 to 10 rating system used for the TMSES survey. The items from the ETS were rated using a Likert scale of 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). These six items were included in the survey to provide checks for convergent and discriminant validity (DeVellis, 2017). The number of items used from these scales was kept to a minimum to attempt to reduce survey fatigue, thereby encouraging survey completion.

A small pilot study was conducted ($N = 10$) before the survey was disseminated to check for any issues regarding item readability, and to gain feedback with regard to “survey-feel” from a respondent’s perspective. Tester feedback received was positive, and a suggestion to add a progress bar to improve survey completion rates was acted upon prior to survey launch.

4.6.2.4. Survey Dissemination

Using publicly available email addresses, prospective participants were contacted to take part in the TMSE survey. For example, emails were sent out to universities working with student teachers and ECTs, as they would have direct contact with the target respondents, i.e., teacher mentors. In addition, the 87 national teaching school hubs were contacted and encouraged to share the survey link with their schools. Alongside this, the survey link was shared through social media channels on the 27th of October 2021 to coincide with “National Mentoring Day.” A blog was also written for the NELT teaching school hub, to advertise the survey and to share the findings from the Delphi conducted in phase one.

Consent to take part in this study was gained at the start of the survey (see Appendix D) and participant responses were fully anonymised at the point of data collection. No pecuniary incentive was offered to participants who agreed to participate in this research. To capture the number of responses required for the EFA, the TMSES survey remained open for three months.

When it comes to establishing scale validity, sampling considerations, in terms of the quality of the analyses generated from the EFA and their replicability, are of primary concern. As such, it was important that the respondents (the sample) were representative of the population of teacher mentors. To achieve this, the survey was open to anyone who identified as having current or past experience of teacher mentoring, covering all areas of the sector (see Figure 2.4). It is important that “sampling from the population of possible subjects” (Velicer & Fava, 1998) takes place, because the respondents’ data should reflect the full spectrum of teacher mentor experiences and beliefs, if the scale is to be used to measure the TMSE beliefs of the teacher mentor community (DeVellis, 2017). In essence, heterogeneity is very much advocated for scale development (Gorsuch, 1997; Yong & Pearce, 2013). Additionally, respondents were asked to confirm that they had had experience of teacher mentoring at the start of the survey, to minimise the risk of people completing the survey who had not met the selection criterion.

4.6.3. Survey Respondents and Demographics

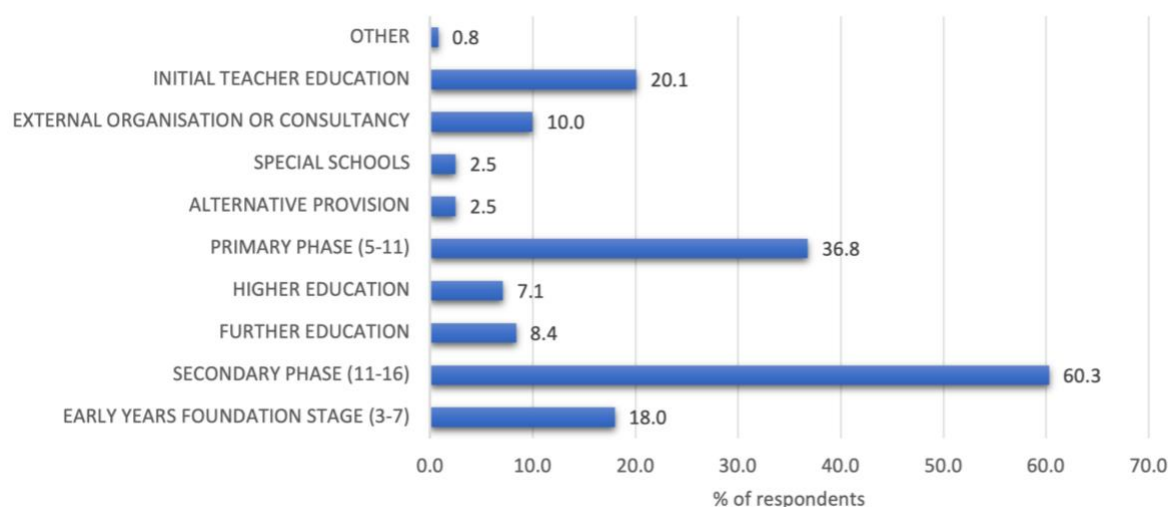
By the time the survey closed, a total of 297 respondents had attempted the survey, with 239 completing the survey in full. Respondents’ ages ranged from 24 to 66 years ($M = 42.4$ years, $SD = 10.44$), with 72.9% identifying as White British,

77.8% identifying as female, and 20.5% as male. Additionally, 99.2% of the respondents completing the survey were situated in the UK, with 98.3% holding qualified teacher status (QTS).

In terms of experience of teacher mentoring, there was a wide range, with 7.1% of respondents having less than one year, to 5.9% of respondents having over twenty-five years ($M = 9.81$ years, $SD = 7.87$). Respondents had gained experience of teacher mentoring from a broad range of settings and contexts, from alternative provision to higher education. The distribution of experience is shown in Figure 4.4. It is also important to note that just under half of all respondents (44.8%) had gained experience in two or more contexts.

Figure 4.4

TMSE Survey Respondents' Experiences of Teacher Mentoring (N = 239)



As can be seen from the data in this section, the heterogeneity recommended for scale development (e.g., DeVellis, 2017; Gorsuch, 1997; Velicer & Fava, 1998) has been achieved. To avoid any statistical issues resulting from missing data, only fully completed surveys were used for the EFA (see Goldberg & Velicer, 2006).

(N.B. all data in this section are from Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

4.6.4. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a widely used statistical method for multivariate analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2017; Oller, 2014). Its origins go back to 1904 and the work of Charles Spearman. Spearman was a British psychologist, who developed the method of factor analysis while working on his theory of intelligence (Spearman, 1904). Spearman hypothesised that a *hidden* underlying, or latent, factor was responsible for people's performance across a range of cognitive tasks. To look for this factor, he developed this statistical method to help him to analyse the correlations in his data, and to help him provide an explanation for the patterns he observed.

The method of exploratory factor analysis was further expanded in the 1930s by Thurstone, who, disagreeing with Spearman in regard to his theory for a single factor controlling intelligence, developed multiple factor analysis (Thurstone, 1931). The method of EFA was further advanced by Cattell (1940s-1970s) who developed other statistical analyses, as part of his research into personality factors, such as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; e.g., Cattell, 1978), which is used to test the hypothesised factor structure models generated by EFA. Computational advances

have led to further developments, not least of which is the speed at which factor analyses can now be completed. For example, Kaiser and Rice's computer algorithm developed for EFA, known as the "Little Jiffy" method (1974), led to major advances in this regard.

EFA is a common starting point for "psychometric analysis," which is step three of the scale development process, as delineated by Morgado et al. (2017). This is particularly true for self-efficacy scale development, and a number of self-efficacy scales have been developed using this method, e.g., Riggs et al. (2018), De Coninck et al. (2020). And this is also the reason why I have chosen to use EFA to develop the TMSES.

Although this method is regarded as quantitative, the number of choices that need to be made by the researcher have led some to describe it as "both an art and a science" (Osborne et al., 2011). As there are so many methodological decisions to be made, there is no definitive guide for conducting an EFA. As such, the quality of the decisions made is extremely important (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), and the rationale behind those decisions needs to be fully justified. If decisions made are poor, this has ramifications on the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data (DeVellis, 2017), meaning that any factor models arising from the analysis may be fatally flawed.

4.6.4.1. Type of Factor Extraction

There are a number of different methods used to extract factors in an EFA, e.g., principal components analysis (PCA), principal axis factoring (PAF), alpha factoring, maximum likelihood (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Although PCA is the most

commonly used extraction method for EFA (Osborne et al., 2011), PAF was chosen for the EFA conducted in this study.

The justifications for selecting PAF as the extraction method were that it is the most widely used technique for *common factor analysis* (Child, 2006), which is needed to identify the latent variables underlying a construct. This is in direct contrast to PCA, which is a component analysis technique, considered by some not to be a method of factor analysis at all (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Osborne et al., 2011). As such, it may even be “theoretically inappropriate” for EFA (Gorsuch, 1997). On the other hand, some argue that the choice of extraction method is not really that important, in that the analyses obtained from PCA and PAF using the same data set would be roughly the same (Arrindell & van der Ende, 1985; Goldberg & Velicer, 2006; Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988).

4.6.4.2. *Type of Rotation*

After factors have been extracted, they are rotated to better fit the data (e.g., Coolican, 2019), enabling “clusters of variables” (items) that associate or correlate more strongly with each other to be positioned nearest to, or intersected by, the factor they load most strongly onto. This changing of vantage point improves interpretability (DeVellis, 2017), making it easier to see any underlying patterns in the data (Field, 2017; Yong & Pearce, 2013), thereby enabling a “simple structure” to be elucidated (Gorsuch, 1997). This rotation is achieved mathematically using algorithms that maximise the loadings of the variables, or items, onto one factor while minimising the loadings of these variables on the other factors (Field, 2017).

There are two types of factor rotation, orthogonal and oblique, and an essential decision to make at the start of an EFA is which one of these to choose

(Schmitt & Sass, 2011). The most popular choice of rotation type in factor analysis is orthogonal. However, this type of rotation is not necessarily the *best* option; its popularity may well be due to having outputs that are considered to be easier to interpret (Osborne et al., 2011).

For this EFA, oblique rotation was selected primarily because this allows factors to correlate (Field, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). This is important, as theoretically it is highly unlikely that any latent factors underlying the psychological construct of teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs would be entirely independent of each other (Coolican, 2019; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2017). In addition, Goldberg and Velicer (2006) posit that an oblique rotation provides a “better fit of a more simple structure,” and Fabrigar et al. (1999) suggest oblique rotations provide a more realistic representation of how latent factors are likely to be related to each other. It could be argued that if the factors are in fact related to each other, then choosing an orthogonal rotation would result in loss of data which may be of critical value in terms of producing an accurate model (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Wright (2017) also suggests that there would be nothing to lose by choosing oblique over orthogonal as “oblique rotation algorithms ... do not preclude an orthogonal solution from emerging” (p.15).

The method of oblique rotation to use is also a key consideration. There is no hard or fast rule with regard as to which method - Direct Oblimin or Promax - is best, as they all produce roughly the same results (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Direct Oblimin was chosen as the method for this EFA as the data set used (responses obtained from 239 participants) was not considered to be “very large,” therefore no advantage would have been gained from using Promax (Field, 2017). The SPSS Statistics default value of zero for delta was also selected as advised by Costello and Osborne

(2005), allowing any factors extracted to be “fairly highly correlated” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

4.6.4.3. Sample Size

Determining a priori the sample size needed to conduct a meaningful EFA is a difficult task, as there is a lack of agreement as to what this number should be (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). Although many researchers in this field agree that the larger the number of respondents the better (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Osborne et al., 2011), this relatively simplistic view may not necessarily be the case (e.g., Cudeck & Odell, 1994; Mundfrom et al., 2005; Nunnally, 1978). Values for a recommended sample size (N) to perform factor analysis vary, with some suggesting that a minimum sample size of 300 is more than adequate to produce stable solutions (Gorsuch, 1997), whereas others state a figure of over 1,000 is necessary (Mundfrom et al., 2005). A “rough guide” to sampling adequacy has been provided by Comrey and Lee (1992) who rate sample sizes as “50 - very poor; 100 - poor; 200 - fair; 300 - good; 500 - very good and 1000 - excellent” (p. 200). Whereas others suggest that an $N:p$ (sample size to number of variables to be analysed) ratio should be employed instead (Osborne et al., 2011).

Costello and Osborne’s (2005) research indicates that higher N to p ratios produce more trustworthy factor solutions, although there is no accepted consensus here either. For example, Nunnally (1978) recommends an $N:p$ of 10:1, whereas Arrindell and van der Ende (1985), found that the N to p ratio made very little, if any, difference to factor solution stability. A recommended value for N , should one exist, also depends on other study specific conditions, e.g. level of communalities, factor loadings, and the variables-to-factors ratio (Mundfrom et al., 2005). As these values

are only known after an analysis has been conducted, this is of limited use to the researcher at the planning stage of their investigations; however, it could be employed in terms of supporting and justifying conclusions and for evaluating the strength of their findings. For example, MacCallum et al. (1999) found that if communalities are consistently > 0.6 - considered to be a high value - then N could be much lower than 100, although this itself depends on how “well-determined” the factors extracted are. This position is supported by Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988), who found that if a factor has four or more loadings of > 0.6 , then it is reliable regardless of the sample size. In other words, an EFA solution obtained from a relatively small sample, could still produce a meaningful suggested factor structure should these conditions with regard to communalities and factor loadings be met.

In terms of this study, having weighed up all of the evidence, and considering that the total number of items to be used for the EFA was 44, obtaining 300 responses was considered to be a sensible initial target. This figure was based on Comrey and Lee’s (1992) guide to sample size and it also fulfils the $N:p$ ratio requirement of 5:1 as suggested by Hatcher and Stepanski (1994), which would require a sample size of 220 for an item pool of 44 to meet the conditions for sampling adequacy. As 239 respondents completed the TMSES survey in full, the sample size was deemed to have met the guidelines for EFA.

4.6.4.4. Procedure

All survey responses for the EFA were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Firstly, a PAF extraction with direct oblimin was run with delta set to a default value of “0” (justifications for all of these values and decisions have been provided in Sections 4.6.4.1 to 4.6.4.3.).

Secondly, Cattell's scree test (Cattell, 1966) in conjunction with Kaiser's criterion (Kaiser, 1960), were used to determine the number of factors to extract. In the initial run, this meant that the default setting in IBM SPSS was used to extract factors with eigenvalues >1.0 . Following this, and in order to establish the most parsimonious factor model, a number of possible factor solutions were then investigated (see Field, 2017; Gorsuch, 1997). For each solution investigated, items needed to meet the factor loading criterion of ≥ 0.40 (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988) to be retained. In addition, any items that were found to be cross-loaded onto two or more factors with a loading of ≥ 0.32 were considered to be "strongly loaded" (Costello & Osborne, 2005) and were removed from the analysis.

(N.B. all data in this section are from Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

4.6.5. Methodological Limitations

The validity of the findings in any EFA may be compromised by the use of self-report scales, such as the TMSES survey (e.g., Morgado et al., 2017). This may be due to the possibility of participant biases, such as response bias or social desirability bias, where a respondent may select a response they think the researcher may want to see (Coolican, 2019). Other factors, such as a person's mood when they complete the scale, or even their personality type (McCrae & Costa, 1987), may also influence their responses.

While these factors cannot easily be changed, or controlled, they need to be taken into account. This is especially so when analysing the data and drawing conclusions with regard to the confidence one has in the factor models suggested by

the EFA analysis. In this regard, in terms of the EFA conducted for this study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) would be an appropriate next step to test the validity of the hypothesised two-factor model produced by the EFA (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

Another methodological limitation may have been unintentionally caused by excluding the incomplete survey responses from the EFA. Although the reason I had for doing this is justified (see Section 4.6.4), there is a risk that by excluding these data I may be inadvertently excluding a certain type or category of respondent, which could affect the validity of the factor model suggested by the EFA.

Lastly, as previously stated, statistically Likert scales are not interval scales, and as interval data is required for EFA, some statisticians argue that data from these scales should not be used for EFA at all (Wu & Leung, 2017). However, a study conducted by Leung (2011) demonstrates that the statistical problems caused by using the ordinal data these scales produce can be mitigated by increasing the number of points on the scale, with 0-10 Likert scales providing the most satisfactory outcomes—which was the primary reason why I selected an 11-point scale for this study.

4.7. Phase 3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

4.7.1 Overview and Rationale

In this third and final phase of my research, I wanted to focus on the experience of being a teacher mentor in the round and view the experience of teacher mentoring through an idiographic lens. In this way, I was looking to add both

new depth and breadth to my understanding of this domain. Firstly, exploring the uniqueness of each account, and then later using the data corpus as a whole to identify convergences and divergences, helped me to understand the nature of the domain of teacher mentoring in a phenomenological sense. To find out what it was like to be a teacher mentor, it was also imperative that the accounts of these experiences should be first-hand, from the teacher mentors themselves. Essentially, I wanted a methodology that enabled me to access, and enter, the lifeworld (Husserl, 1936/1970) of a teacher mentor.

Although the term lifeworld is not precisely defined by Husserl (Kraus, 2015), definitions of it have been provided by other phenomenologists. For example, Dodd (2015) states that a person's lifeworld "denotes the immediate, everyday, concrete whole of the subjectively experienced world." The lifeworld then is a person's perception of their world, how they see themselves in it, and how they are as part of it; a person's lifeworld is how they experience the world in everyday life. A lifeworld is both perspectival and subjective.

As interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a methodology that has been designed to "explore lived experience" (Smith et al., 2022), this appeared to be an ideal choice for gaining access to the lifeworld, and hence lived experience, of teacher mentors. In addition, as I sought a methodology with a focus on the idiographic, with particular reference to *how* an individual perceives their experiences and how they have interpreted what has happened to them (or will happen to them), the psychological foundation of IPA (e.g., Smith, 1996) was also appealing. Furthermore, as IPA has roots in hermeneutics: the study of interpretation (George, 2021) and phenomenology (Smith et al., 2022), I recognised that it would provide me

with a mechanism for getting to the heart of those experiences, to the phenomenon of what it is like to be a teacher mentor.

Although other methods exist for gaining first-hand accounts of experiences, such as narrative (e.g., Bruner, 2004) and case studies (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989), the double hermeneutic in IPA (Smith et al., 2022) is another key feature that sets it apart. This interpretive approach leads a researcher to make meaning from a participant's meaning making. IPA is *explicitly* investigative, interrogatory, and more focused on the individual's account of their experiences. The analysis in an IPA is very much driven by the emic (insider) perspective, balanced by the etic perspective of the researcher. As using dual interpretative lenses should, in theory, lead to a more profound understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, I thought that IPA would be well suited for the purpose of this study.

Teacher mentoring is a relational act; teacher mentors do not exist, act, or come to be in isolation, they are part of their (life)world, and they are shaped by it (e.g., Heidegger, 1927/1996; Mead, 1934; Merleau-Ponty, 1968). As a result, the interactions between teacher mentors and their mentees provide experiences that will be highly varied and personal. They will also invariably involve conversations related to judgement, and those types of interactions can often trigger "hot cognition" (Abelson, 1963/2004). This type of cognition is where a person's thought processes are influenced by their emotions. Smith et al. (2022) suggest that experiences that trigger "hot cognition" are particularly suitable for IPA, due to the richness of the accounts provided. As schools can be (i) highly emotionally charged and pressurised environments, and (ii) places where performative judgements against prescribed, and proscribed, standards are the norm, this is another reason why IPA is

particularly suitable for this study. The experiences shared by the participants in this IPA should be particularly rich.

4.7.2. The Theoretical Foundations of IPA

4.7.2.1. Phenomenology

Phenomenology, a branch of philosophy developed by Edmund Husserl (1936/1970), is widely understood as the study of *things* (phenomena). These are things as they appear to us, how we experience them, and the meaning we give to them (e.g., Dahlberg, 2006). A phenomenologist aims to *describe* these things as they are, or as they are given to us. By examining lived experiences from a “first-person” perspective, phenomenology provides us with a way to study and explore various phenomena associated with the human mode of *being*, or Dasein (Heidegger, 1927/1996), for example, what it is like to be a teacher mentor, or what is like to feel empathy (e.g., Stein’s *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, 1917/1964).

IPA utilises Husserl’s approach of epoché or bracketing-off, the first part of Husserl’s method of eidetic reduction. This method is used to try and identify the *essence* (the essential structure) of the thing (phenomena) under investigation (e.g., Dahlberg, 2006). It is necessary for the phenomenologist to “bracket-off” their presuppositions or fore-conceptions in order to “go back to the things themselves” (Husserl, 2001, p.168). This allows the researcher to see the things (i.e., the participants’ experiences) as they are given, and not as the researcher thinks they should be seen or understood.

As there are many different schools of phenomenology that all have different emphases, and Smith et al. (2022) provide a detailed explanation of how different

philosophers have influenced IPA. However, it seems that IPA is predominantly influenced by the work and thinking of Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1927/1996), and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960/2013), with Heidegger and Gadamer providing the link from the phenomenological approach to the hermeneutic (e.g. Smith et al., 2022).

4.7.2.2. *Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics, in contrast to phenomenology, “is the study of interpretation” (George, 2021). To interpret something is to understand it in a particular way. In IPA, the researcher is firstly interpreting and understanding the experience in the way it is given (shared) by the participant. This means that the researcher is aiming to understand the experience from the participant’s perspective, “to stand in their shoes” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). In this way, an IPA focuses first and foremost on the emic (insider) perspective, which is the driving force for this analysis.

What follows next in an IPA is to use the etic (outsider) perspective of the researcher to interpret the participants' meaning making, e.g., by asking questions of the data (the participants' transcripts). This type of interpretation is known as a *double hermeneutic*, as two lenses of interpretation have been used. As the researcher makes meaning from the participant’s meaning making (their given experiences), they may also apply theory to try and explain the findings from the analysis (Smith et al., 2022).

With regard to the act of interpretation, both Heidegger (1927/1996) and Gadamer dispute the need for bracketing off (epoché), as they view it as an impossible task. For example: “The interpretation of something as something is essentially grounded in fore having, fore sight, and fore conception. Interpretation is never a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given” (Heidegger,

1996, p.151). In other words, a person cannot interpret anything unless they access (use) what they already know, because the very act of understanding something demands that we use what we know.

4.7.2.3. *Idiography*

IPA is a methodology that is fully committed to an idiographic approach (e.g., Nizza et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). In an IPA, each participant is considered as a separate case within its own right, with the overall analysis proceeding on a case-by-case basis. In this way, the focus is on the “particular rather than the universal” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

As the depth of the analysis in an IPA is more important than the breadth, smaller sample sizes are the norm (Smith et al., 2022). Each participant’s account is subjected to a detailed and in-depth analysis focused on understanding (through interpretation) the uniqueness of the experiences provided. This produces a *rich* analysis replete with *thick* layers of detail, for every case. Conducting an IPA is therefore a time-consuming process, even when judged against other qualitative methodologies (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith et al., 2022).

Once each case has been analysed, a researcher can then look across the whole of the data corpus to draw out any patterns (themes). However, it is important to recognise that these patterns, or generalisations, are only pertinent to the analysis conducted in a particular study, i.e., IPA does not claim generalisability any further than this. (Smith et al., 2022).

4.7.3. Procedures

4.7.3.1. IPA Participants

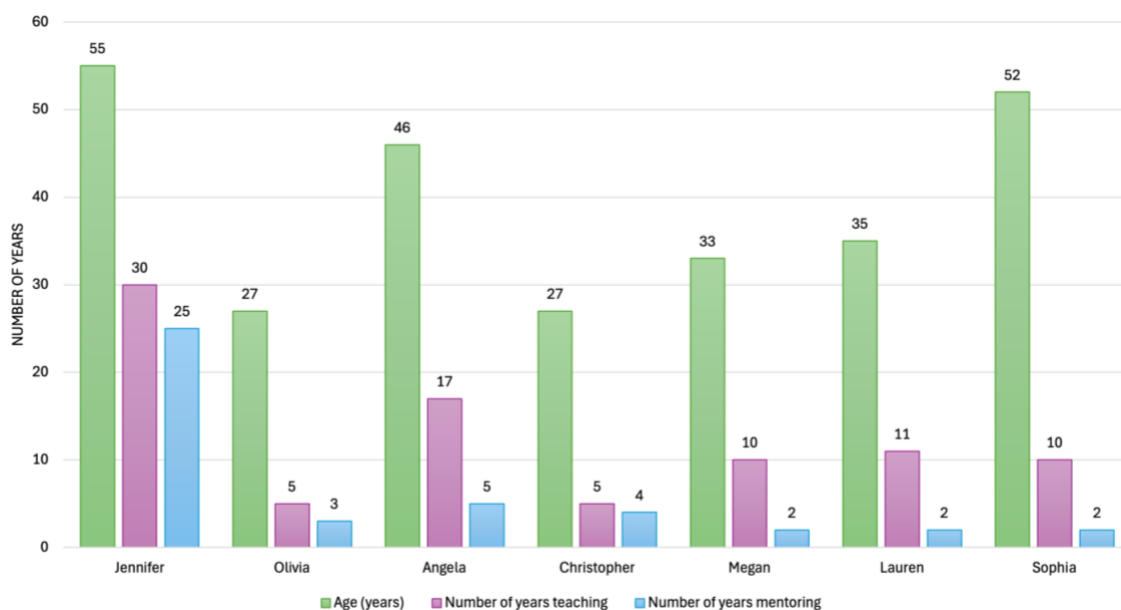
For this IPA, 7 teacher mentors ($N = 7$) were invited to share their experiences of being a teacher mentor with this researcher via a 90-minute interview. Suitable participants were recruited for this study by email. An invitation to take part in this research was sent out (on my behalf) by a large university ITTE provider based in West Yorkshire. The recipients of the email were all teacher mentors who were currently working with the university to mentor students on their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Additionally, participants were recruited through a personal contact known to the researcher, who was working with and coaching a small number of teacher mentors who they thought may be interested in taking part in this study. These mentors were duly contacted, with three teacher mentors ($n = 3$) accepting the invitation to take part (participant information and consent form for the IPA is included as Appendix E).

Since IPA requires participants to have homogeneity in the domain or area of interest (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith et al., 2022), purposive sampling (e.g., Coolican, 2019) was used for selecting the participants for this study. Considering the overarching research objective for this phase is to gain an understanding of what it is like to be a teacher mentor, the only selection criterion used was that all of the teacher mentors selected needed to have had experience of teacher mentoring. This means that within the sample, and as to be expected in any study of this type, there is also heterogeneity. Differences between participants include age, gender, and the extent of their experience of teacher mentoring. One way of measuring the extent of

teacher mentoring experience participants have had is to consider how long each participant has spent being a teacher mentor, which is shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5

Experience Comparison for IPA Participants (N = 7): Life, Teaching, and Teacher Mentoring



The experience of teacher mentoring for this sample, using a traditional one-to-one model (see Chapter 1 of this thesis), varies from 2 years to 25 years, with a median value of 3 years' experience. However, this experience of teacher mentoring is part of a much wider range of possible experiences the participants in this study may have had of this domain. For instance, the participants, who are now teacher mentors, are likely to have been mentored themselves. In addition, the experience of teacher mentoring is likely to overlap with other areas of their lives where (i) they have acted as a mentor in another role, such as to their pupils as a teacher; and/or

(ii) received mentoring from a non-work-related source. As a person's concept of self, their identity, is influenced and shaped by the experiences they have had (see Chapter 2 of this thesis), then their way of being a teacher mentor may also be influenced by activities in domains closely related to teacher mentoring.

As IPA studies are focused on the idiographic, a small sample size is recommended due to the amount of data generated from the in-depth nature of this analysis (Smith et al., 2022). As such, the size of this study is comparable with those seen in other published IPAs (e.g., Dwyer et al., 2019; Wagstaff et al., 2014).

The data has been completely anonymised for this analysis, with each participant initially assigned a number 1 to 7 and then, later, a name. Names were chosen instead of numbers for the participants, as numbers may serve to “de-personalise” the data corpus (Heaton, 2022). As taking the human away from a piece of research designed to explore the humanness of experience is a retrograde move, the change from number to name was, I felt, of importance. Furthermore, how participants are named may also be of consequence. For example, Wang et al. (2024) have posited that researchers need to take more care when assigning fictitious names to their research participants because they may be inadvertently attaching meaning, and identities, to the names that they choose.

To address this, each participant in this study was assigned their name using ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2024). To do this, the decade of each participant's birth was used alongside the prompt: “*Provide the top 10 <female/male> names from the UK in the period <insert range>.*” The first name was then selected from the list generated by ChatGPT to represent each participant (unless it matched the first name in the list from the previous search, then the second name was chosen, and so

on). Although, I have no idea how accurate ChatGPT has been regarding the name generation for each decade, it has served a useful purpose.

4.7.3.2. *Semi-Structured Interviews*

A small pilot study ($N = 3$) was carried out before the interviews took place using contacts known to the researcher, who had both experience of teacher mentoring and of conducting interviews. Feedback received from all interviewees was positive. They thought the questions used were appropriate and that they were open enough to give participants the space to share their experiences freely. As such, no changes were made to either the questions or the interview format. The pilot interviews did, however, provide me with a useful opportunity for practice, especially in terms of timing and use of prompts.

Prior to their interview, participants were given the option of a face-to-face meeting in person, or via a video call using either Microsoft Teams™ or Zoom™. Olivia, Angela, and Christopher met with me in person, with Jennifer, Megan, Lauren, and Sophia opting for a video call. Participants were provided with a participant information sheet prior to the interview, and consent from all participants was gained before the interviews took place (Appendix E).

All participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview approach, as recommended for researchers new to IPA by Smith et al. (2022). In total, 12 open questions were planned for each 90-minute interview, along with ideas for prompts and probes (Appendix F). The questions, or *openers*, were designed to allow participants the freedom and space to share their experiences without being led by me, the interviewer, e.g., “**Tell me** about your first experience of teacher mentoring.” A completely “open style” interview was not chosen because the domain of teacher

mentoring is expansive. As being a teacher mentor involves both role and process, conducting a 90-minute interview without any questions to frame it may lead to an outcome that is either too nebulous, and therefore removed from the area of interest, or too short to be of use.

Although the interviews were semi-structured, there was a considerable amount of flexibility in that (i) not all questions had to be asked; (ii) questions could be rephrased as needed; (iii) questions did not need to be asked in order; and (iv) supplementary questions could be posed should the participants' responses call for it. In other words, there was room for the interview to flow. To aid this process of flow, a short period of time was allocated at the start of each interview (before the interview proper began, and before the recording started) for a "getting to know you" style conversation to facilitate the process of rapport building (e.g., Starr, 2021).

This "coaching style" of interviewing, as advocated by Smith et al. (2022), is designed to allow the participants to *open up* and share their world and their meaning making with the interviewer. To do this, they first need to feel at ease and comfortable with the process, and with the person conducting the interview (Starr, 2021). Although Smith et al. (2022) are keen to stress that there should be no attempt at analysis at the interview stage, an *alertness* to what the interviewee is saying is encouraged in order to provide the probes and prompts in the right places to get to the root of the experiences shared (e.g., Law, 2013; Starr, 2021). Although I would argue that this alertness, or active listening, is in itself an analytical process, I made every attempt not to apply any theory to try to analyse what the participants were sharing with me during their interviews.

4.7.3.3. Transcription

All participant interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. This stage of the process was time consuming, as each interview was first transcribed, and then listened to again twice, with each participant's transcript in front of me. This was to check for any errors, and also to fully listen to each participant's account, giving priority to their words. In this way, I was able to familiarise myself with each participant's narrative and gain a better (deeper) understanding of what they were saying. Alongside this, I made notes to place any thoughts I had that involved fore-conceptions, *outside* of this interpretive act, as advised by Smith et al., (2022). In this way, I was bracketing them off, to help me (i) "step into the participants' shoes" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p.366), and (ii) gain evidence of each participant's meaning-making before attempting to make meaning from it myself. Just how successful bracketing off is an approach in IPA will be discussed later in Section "4.7.5 Methodological Limitations."

4.7.4. Data Analysis

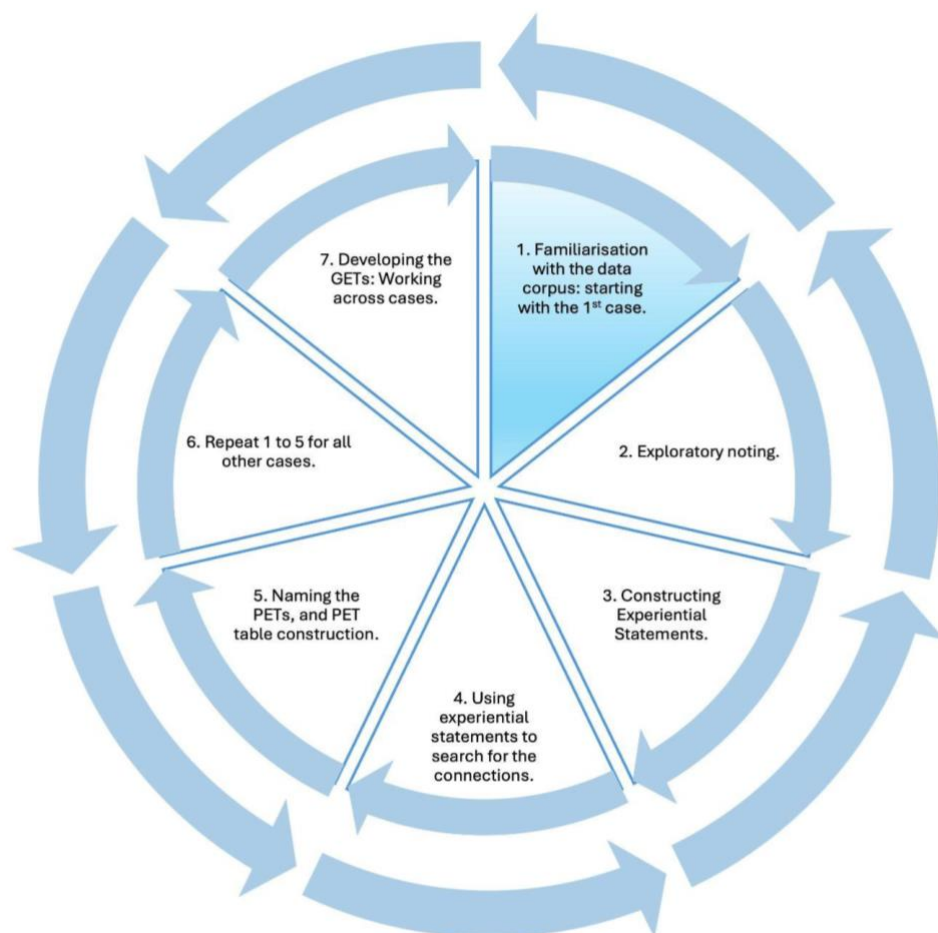
Figure 4.6. provides an overview of the analytical process used in an IPA. In this study, this process was followed from step one to step five for each participant (case). Each case was explored and analysed in its own right before moving onto the next case. As the analytical process is line-by-line, and highly iterative, it leads to "active engagement with the data" (Smith et al., 2022, p.78), which is necessary to access and enter each participant's lifeworld.

Immersion in each script enabled me to gain an understanding of each person's account "in the round." I used this understanding of the whole (narrative) to

better understand each part (statements, utterances), enabling me to construct experiential statements that captured each participant's shared experiences, and their understanding of those experiences. Over the course of the analysis, this summative gain in understanding of each part was transferred back to the whole, to augment and enhance my understanding of each participant's lifeworld.

Figure 4.6

Conducting an IPA: Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2022) Seven-Step Process



(Figure 4.6 has been created using a textual description provided by Smith et al., 2022, pp.78-104.)

4.7.4.1. Generating Personal Experiential Themes (PETs)

Step one of the analytical process for an IPA involved a process of *reading and re-reading* the transcript, in order to familiarise myself with the case to be analysed, which was then followed with, and alongside step two. Step two involved a process of *exploratory noting*, where an exploration of the language the participant used was conducted, alongside noting anything of interest that arose from the transcript. While exploring how each participant understands, or attaches meaning to the experiences they are sharing, I aimed to maintain an “open mind,” as required by the methodology (Smith et al., 2022, p.79); and I used the process of exploratory note taking to speculate about the participant’s meaning-making. How each participant made use of language and semantics, for example, word choices, use of metaphor, and contextual framing, was also considered. This is important, as how participants use language tells the researcher how they (the participant) make sense of their experiences. Furthermore, it also tells the researcher how they are choosing to share their sense making of their experiences. In addition, researcher notes at this exploratory stage can be interrogative, asking questions of the data, and the participants’ meaning making. Smith et al. (2022) describe this process as “conceptual annotating,” with the aim for the researcher of “creating a dialogue with the data” (p.84).

In step three, *experiential statements* were constructed that offered succinct and pithy condensates of the experiences shared by the participants. Working from the exploratory notes constructed in step two, these statements were designed to stay close to the participant’s own accounts of their experiences. The aim of constructing experiential statements is to reduce the detail of the experiences shared but to retain the essence of them. According to the method provided by Smith et al.

(2022), staying “local” (p.90) to the text: the words of the participants, can mean that fragments of the transcripts may be used to construct experiential statements alongside the exploratory notes. In response to this, the participant’s words were used in some of the experiential statements constructed in this analysis. There are no rules regarding the number of experiential statements to be constructed, and experiential statements can be used more than once, e.g., if a participant returns to the experience again within their account.

Throughout steps one to three, the bracketing off of researcher fore-conceptions is encouraged (Smith et al., 2022). Consequently, I also attempted to use this approach as I analysed the transcripts. Staying close to the participants’ words and avoiding the temptation to begin to offer explanations (using theory) for what has been interpreted, was my primary concern here.

In step four, connections were made across the experiential statements constructed in step three. Similar experiential statements, those reflecting the same conceptual quality, were clustered together to create *personal experiential themes* (PETs). Within these larger clusters, smaller clusters of experiential statements that reflected certain aspects, or facets of each PET, were also grouped together into *subthemes*.

From step four onwards, I was actively engaged in making meaning from the participant’s meaning making. This *double hermeneutic* enables a researcher to interpret how the participant perceives the phenomenon, while also examining it from their own vantage point, to make sense of the participant’s meaning making (Wagstaff et al., 2014). The use of the double hermeneutic enabled me, the researcher, to question what the participant was sharing, affording me the

opportunity to look deeper into it, and possibly challenge it (their inferences), thereby uncovering hidden meaning (Smith, 2011a; Smith et al., 2022).

It is typically at this stage of the analysis that *gems* may be uncovered (Smith, 2011a). These gems are generally “short utterances” (Smith, 2011a; Smith et al., 2022) that a participant shares that serve to ‘illuminate the whole’, giving new meaning to the participant’s narrative and providing powerful insights related to the experiences shared for the researcher conducting the analysis. Smith (2011a) groups gems into three categories: shining, suggestive, and secret, with the amount of *digging* or “detective work” needed to uncover them, and their meaning increasing as one moves through this categorical order.

Smith et al. (2022) are keen to stress that the process of connection forming and clustering in step four is highly creative. As the clustering process will mean a lot of movement or reorganising of experiential statements as the researcher makes meaning from the participant’s meaning making, their preference is for a researcher to do this *physically*, i.e., using a hard copy of each transcript and a pair of scissors. They do not think that the computer software programmes and packages which are commonly used to analyse qualitative data, give enough flexibility for the pattern forming that is needed for clustering to happen. Although I agreed that a package such as NVivo was too “linear” for this process (following my own experience of using it in Phase 1 of this research), I also thought that physically cutting up hundreds of experiential statements would also pose its own problems, not least of which being the space needed to arrange them.

Instead, for the purposes of clustering, and therefore for PET generation, I used an electronic expandable whiteboard tool called Freeform™. This simple tool enabled me to see all of a participant's experiential statements easily within one

space, allowing me to (i) freely rearrange them; (ii) create a copy of each rearrangement (so that I could track my thinking, i.e., my sense making); and (iii) find specific experiential statements easily by using a keyword search.

In step five, the participant's PETs were named to reflect each PET's characteristics, and a PET table was constructed for each PET (an example is included as Appendix G). Each PET table contains the PET's subthemes, the experiential statements used to generate the subthemes, and quotes from the participant's transcripts that were used to create (prompt) the experiential statements. This tabulation provides evidence that the highest levels of abstraction, the PETs, are grounded in data. That is to say, the participant quotations allow us to "go back to the things themselves" (Husserl, 2001, p.168). Demonstrating this level of transparency provides greater credibility and trustworthiness in the outcomes of this qualitative analysis (e.g., Tracy, 2010).

4.7.4.2. Cross-Case Analysis: Developing General Experiential Themes

Step seven of this IPA took place after all of the cases had been analysed. It involved exploring the data corpus as a whole, looking for patterns of commonality and difference. By using Freeform™, I was able to colour code each participant's account, adding all of their PETs, subthemes, and their associated experiential statements, into one whiteboard space. This enabled me to (i) see the big picture and (ii) cluster statements far more easily than using pieces of paper.

Once clusters started to be generated from the data present on the Freeform™ board, these were shaped into general experiential themes (GETs), and within them clusters of statements were formed, which were the GET subthemes. Like the PET subthemes, the GET subthemes represent different aspects or facets

of each GET. During clustering, I recognised that the participants' experiences, now aggregated into their respective GETs, could be placed into two much broader groups, which I termed *SuperGETs*. Although each GET still had a clear central organising concept or quality, there appeared to be a higher—or deeper—level of categorisation (abstraction) present.

4.7.4.3. Writing up the Analysis

The resulting tables of GETs and their subthemes are shared and discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis. Like the PET tables, participant quotations are used as part of the analysis presented in this chapter, providing evidence that the GETs too are generated from the participant's narratives and are also grounded in data. In the analysis, each direct quotation used, i.e., from a participant's transcript, will be quoted with a line reference in parentheses, and each experiential statement will be quoted with its page number reference in parentheses.

It is important to note that there is a certain “art” to the write-up of an IPA, which is acknowledged by Smith et al. (2022) and others (e.g., Nizza et al., 2021; Wagstaff et al., 2014). The analysis presented needs to be engaging, have nuance, and explain how each of the GETs were determined (see Smith 2011b; and Nizza et al., 2021). Smith et al. (2022) also advise that a discussion is provided that is separate from the analysis, in which theory is used to discuss the findings and offer explanations for them. In the analysis provided in Chapter 7 of this thesis, a section entitled “GET in the Round” has been included at the end of every GET analysis for this purpose. Additionally, SuperGETs and their defining characteristics will be discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.

4.7.5. Methodological Limitations

One limitation to this methodology that has been raised by a number of prominent phenomenologists (e.g., Giorgi, 2010; van Manen, 2017; Zahavi, 2019), is that IPA, although claimed to be phenomenological by Smith et al. (2022) is not in fact a phenomenological analysis. A main criticism of IPA from these academics seems to lie with the use of “bracketing off,” which is considered by most to be unnecessary. For example, Zahavi (2019) recommends that the use of this technique should be avoided by the qualitative researcher, as there is no need for it.

Smith has written a number of rebuttals in response to these criticisms (e.g. Smith, 2018), with Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2022) maintaining that IPA does have phenomenological foundations and stays true to them. As the scope and nature of this argument goes way beyond the remit of this research, it is important to stay mindful of the fact that adjustments may need to be made to the process of analysis in order for the findings to be accepted as phenomenological by some phenomenologists.

An additional issue, particularly pertinent to IPA, is that some people are just not very good at articulating their memories or communicating details regarding their experiences with another person. As this study used people—teacher mentors, who spend a good proportion of their professional lives communicating concepts and experiences to children and to adults—this particular concern may not be of relevance. However, as only a single interview was conducted, it may be that a better understanding of the participants’ experiences may have been gained if there had been more time for the participants to share those experiences.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was applied for and granted for all three phases of this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to taking part in this research, and all relevant forms have been included as appendices to this thesis (see Appendices B, D, E). Data has been handled according to university policy, and all participants were informed of their right to withdraw their data at any time. In addition, all participant responses for this research were anonymised at the point of collection.

The survey and interview questions chosen were not designed to collect data that would be considered to pose harm to the participants. As all data was collected from adults over the age of 21, they were not considered to belong to a vulnerable group. However, I remained sensitive to this. For example, in Phase 3 I was mindful, during the interviews, to watch for any signs of stress or distress, of which I found there to be none. In Phase 3, one interviewee for the IPA study requested to have her camera turned off during her Zoom™ call, as she felt more comfortable with this, and this request was accommodated. Lastly, no pecuniary incentives were offered to participants for their contributions for any phase of this research.

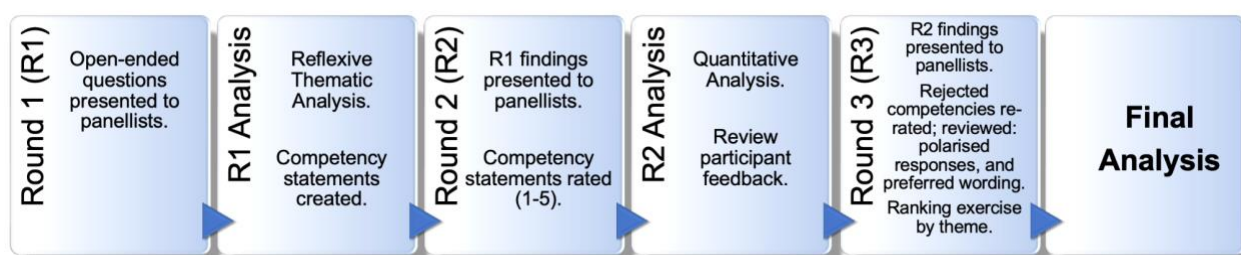
Chapter 5. Phase One: The Delphi Study - Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, I will be presenting the findings from the Delphi study conducted in Phase 1. The discussion will be threaded through the data and analyses presented, with a separate section at the end of the chapter allowing space for a “panoptic discussion.” This section aims to tie together all of the findings revealed using this lens, which predominantly focuses on the *doing* of teacher mentoring. By placing these new understandings in context, this section offers a wider view of the development of teacher mentoring competency.

Due to the iterative nature of this methodology, some aspects pertinent to the methods used will also need to be shared to make sense of the analyses presented. In addition, to aid clarity and flow, I will be presenting my findings in this chapter by Delphi round. Figure 5.1 provides a useful overview of how the Delphi study was conducted in this phase.

Figure 5.1

An Overview of the Delphi Study



It is important to re-emphasise here that the Delphi methodology used for this phase is mixed methods. Although the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) conducted in round one as part of the Delphi is purely qualitative, results tables containing quantitative data will be shared to present the findings from rounds two and three of this Delphi study.

5.1. Round 1

5.1.1. Panellist Responses

As shared previously in Chapter 4, before sending out the first-round survey to panellists, a small pilot study ($N = 5$) was conducted. The feedback received from the participants in the pilot study, which is a type of finding, led me to make minor changes to the survey which improved clarity. For example, participants in the pilot thought it important to make it clear to the Delphi panellists that they could refer to any documentation or frameworks that they use or have used, when completing the round one (R1) survey, i.e., it was not a test of memory. In response to this feedback, the following text was included:

“There are many different frameworks used for coaching and mentoring. If you find it helpful, please draw on these, alongside any other documents or research that you think are relevant when completing this questionnaire.”

In addition, the participants in the pilot study identified that to ask participants for the *knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviours* needed for effective mentoring could lead to definitional confusion, as these common terms have a multitude of meanings. Additionally, by placing knowledge needed first, panellists may think that I am

preferencing knowledge over the other categories. In response to this helpful feedback, the following text was included:

“The headings used below are there to act as prompts and have not been placed in any order of importance. The meaning of each of the headings is open to interpretation and may vary depending on your experience and context.”

In this respect, I also included an additional question in the survey: “Do you broadly agree with these categories?” As predicted, some panellists did identify potential problems with the use of these terms. I included this question to give panellists a space to voice their concerns regarding how their contributions might be used. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the use of such performative terms, that could later be used to establish performance standards or metrics, is not without controversy (e.g., Furlong, 2013; Oancea, 2014).

In addition, a “catch-all” was included in the survey, an additional box for panellists to identify any competencies they felt did not fit in any of these categories. As I was not intending to create a set of competencies using any of these headings, it was of no detriment to my plan for data analysis. For example, if participant X classified active listening as a skill, and panellist Y classified it as a behaviour, it would not matter. As everyone has their own working definitions of these contested terms, the strength of the Delphi method is that *“the panellists are the definers”* (Tickell & Klassen, 2024, p.3).

Providing these headings served as prompts to encourage panellists to think about all of the things that teacher mentors might need to do to be effective in their role, without over-steering. With no definitions imposed by me, I was drawing on the

panellists' expertise, not my own, which was the reason why they were purposively selected for this Delphi study.

By giving them ownership of their responses, with the aim of collecting *rich* data that captures the *thickness* of their experience (Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009), the rationale for providing prompts via these headings worked well. The data collected from the panellists at the start of the RTA generated 209 initial codes, 57 categories, and four themes. By the end of this iterative open-coding process, the number of codes and categories were reduced to **205 initial codes** and **48 categories**, with the **four themes** generated at the start further defined.

The survey sent to the panellists for R1 is included as Appendix H.

5.1.2. Initial Codes

The 205 initial codes identified at the end of the open-coding process were generated from the panellists' responses to a set of open-ended questions, as advised by the literature (e.g., Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009). These open-ended questions: "*what knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviours should effective teacher mentors have?*" enabled me to gather both (a) data that captures the "qualitative richness of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p.31), and (b) data that I believe is representative of the teacher mentoring domain, for the reasons previously provided in Chapter 4. As there was no external steering as to what panellists should or could include, their broad expertise, which offers "representativeness," could be freely shared. Furthermore, as the research methodology selected was inductive, the codes, categories, and themes generated from the analysis were derived from the

participants' responses. I was not attempting to find codes to match up with themes, because these were not defined a priori, nor did I apply a theoretical framework to the data analysis.

In other words, panellists were able to draw upon any of the knowledge and understandings they held about this domain without externally imposed constraints from the researcher. Additionally, that the data gathered is representative of the domain of teacher mentoring is also very important for psychometric scale development (Bandura, 2006; DeVellis, 2017; Nunnally, 1978), which will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, the responses gathered cannot possibly be expected to represent *all* that is known about what is needed for effective teacher mentoring.

The large number (205) of initial codes for this RTA reflects my style of coding, my engagement with the data, and also my interpretations regarding the meanings and patterns generated from this analysis. This large number is also in line with other Delphi studies that have been conducted to establish the competencies or skills required to perform a specific role, e.g., Westers and Borders (2014), Neuer Colburn et al. (2016). As I wanted to capture the detail, and the nuance, from the data collected from the panellists to understand the nature of this construct, I decided to code as a “splitter” (Saldaña, 2016, p.24). I also knew that this level of detail was needed to construct the competencies that would be used for item construction to develop the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES). Furthermore, if the individual competencies generated from this phase were too broad, they may be unhelpful for those who may have practical use for them, e.g., for teacher mentors as a self-development tool, or for providers of training and development programmes for teacher mentors.

During the coding process, the data corpus was revisited many times to refine and rethink my coding. A codebook (Appendix I) was kept throughout this process, where I recorded my thinking and decision making about the initial codes generated from this data. A snapshot of the codebook is provided in Figure 5.2, where the “name” represents the initial code generated from the analyses, presented alongside its description in the codebook. As coding is a heuristic approach to problem solving, where sense or meaning is made from qualitative data sets by breaking the data down into smaller parts, it represents *my* thinking and *my* interpretation.

Although it is not expected that someone given the same data set would produce exactly the same outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022), it was still extremely useful to talk through my ideas, rationale, and decision making with my supervisor during this time. Apropos of this, codebooks are working documents that are constructed and used throughout the process of an RTA that can help frame discussions, representing the reflexive approach taken to data analysis using this methodology. In addition, there are no hard and fast rules with regard to what is expected in the way of recording one’s thinking. For a researcher using RTA, the important part is not what is recorded. Instead, it is the “reflective and thoughtful engagement” with both “their data” and the “analytic process” that counts (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p.594).

Figure 5.2

An Example of Coding Taken From the Codebook

Name	Description
Step back	ability to let trainee make mistakes; create safe space; mentees 'feel confident to try; practice which pushes the boundaries of their current capability'
Support	provider of ...; ...to develop learning opportunities ;...develop their practice ;...to work independently; ...development - autonomy; ... development of professional identity linked to being a team player; ...and champion the trainee - teaching is hard
Teach mentee	acts as a teacher regardless of age/stage
Tough conversations	provide constructive challenge

In an RTA it is common for the initial codes generated to belong to more than one category (subtheme; e.g., Saldaña, 2016). In Figure 5.2 the initial code “support” belongs to multiple categories because there are many ways for a teacher mentor to offer support to their mentee. For example, it is present in the categories *Advocate for trainee* and *Teacher development needs*. This *fuzziness* is to be expected when categorising data using an RTA, especially in the social and psychological sciences (e.g., Maxwell, 1992; Ragin, 2000; Saladaña, 2016). Boundaries from one category or theme to the next cannot be cleanly demarcated, because it is the “norm” for codes, categories, and themes to share commonalities. This is because social and psychological constructs are often interrelated (Field, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2022) encourage researchers to become “comfortable with (this) uncertainty” (p.11).

To stay true to the “qualitative philosophy” of the RTA methodology as conceptualised by its developers, Braun and Clarke (2022), I am deliberately choosing not to share data produced by NVivo regarding the frequency of these initial codes across the data set. For RTA, a positivistic approach to data

interpretation is contrary to everything that this methodology stands for ontologically. Quantifying qualitative data in order to make statements with regard to its credibility (validity) is unnecessary.

A code may only be seen once across a data corpus yet still tell us something important about the subject under investigation. In fact, some believe that by focusing on code frequencies the *true* meanings - the patterns in the data - may be obscured or stay hidden (see Braun & Clarke, 2022), because the very act of counting can lead us to focus on the *wrong* things. I think that using a paper-based method, alongside NVivo, to code, categorise and theme helped me to approach the process of data analysis more creatively, and reflexively. For example, when categorising and theming, it was simply easier to physically move record cards around, which also helped me to see the patterns in the data. I strongly believe this approach paid dividends in regard to identifying the commonalities (categories and themes) underpinning the domain of teacher mentoring, simply because in my experience it encouraged greater reflexivity.

However, when I was conducting the analysis, it was impossible, and possibly disingenuous, to avoid noticing that some initial codes appeared more strongly than others. A particularly noticeable and apposite case for this study being the code “modelling,” as modelling is a type of experience that is thought to be a source of self-efficacy beliefs. (Bandura, 1997; and see Chapter 3). This code, and other instances like it, will be considered later in Section “5.5. Taking a closer look at the competencies.”

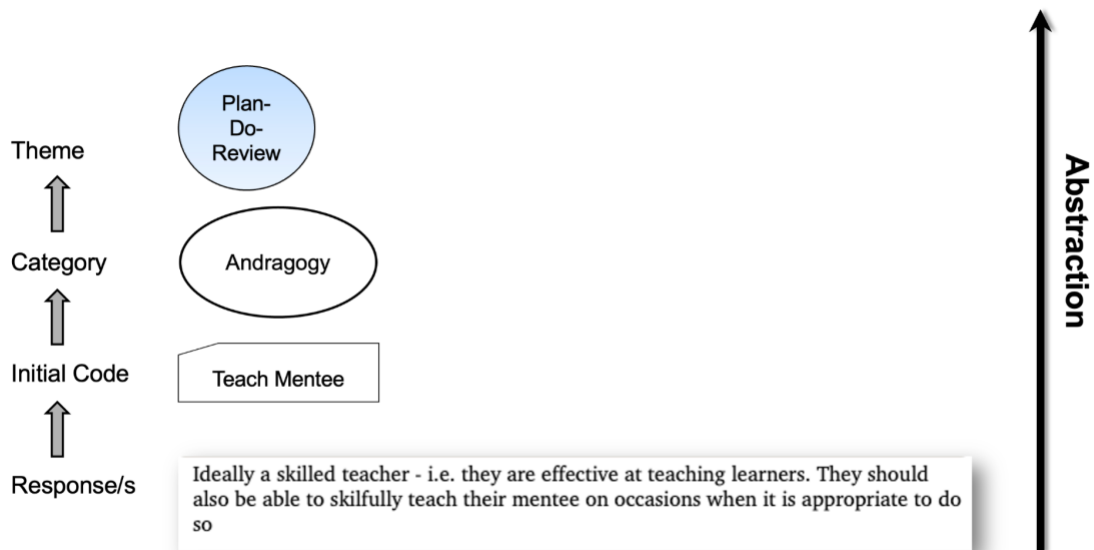
5.1.3. Categories and Themes

As the initial codes in these analyses were generated, they were clustered on the basis of their commonalities into the “central organising concepts” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.269) of categories and themes. As more codes were added, and refined, so too were new connections, and new meanings were made from these resulting patterns. The path from panellist response to theme, the highest level of abstraction in this RTA, is illustrated in Figure 5.3. As can be seen from the figure, the initial code is capturing the essence or quality of this portion of a panellist’s response: 29 words now represented by two, “Teach Mentee.” As the panellist thinks that the teacher mentor will have to be able to teach their mentee, who is an adult, this initial code is common to the category *Andragogy*.

The name of this category, like all categories and themes in this study, means something: it represents the theories and practices associated with and of adult education (see Knowles et al., 1973/2015). Andragogy is much broader than teaching alone, and as teaching itself is a highly complex activity (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2014), it has both breadth and depth. This complexity means that teaching comprises a large number of constituent parts (e.g., knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviours), and for each of these parts there is an initial code. Consequently, the total number of initial codes that belong to this category is 50. Andragogy in turn, belongs to the much broader theme of *Plan-Do-Review*, which comprises many categories, all of which have homogeneity with respect to the *central organising concept* of this theme, which will be shared later in this subsection.

Figure 5.3

The Path from a Panellist's Response to a Theme

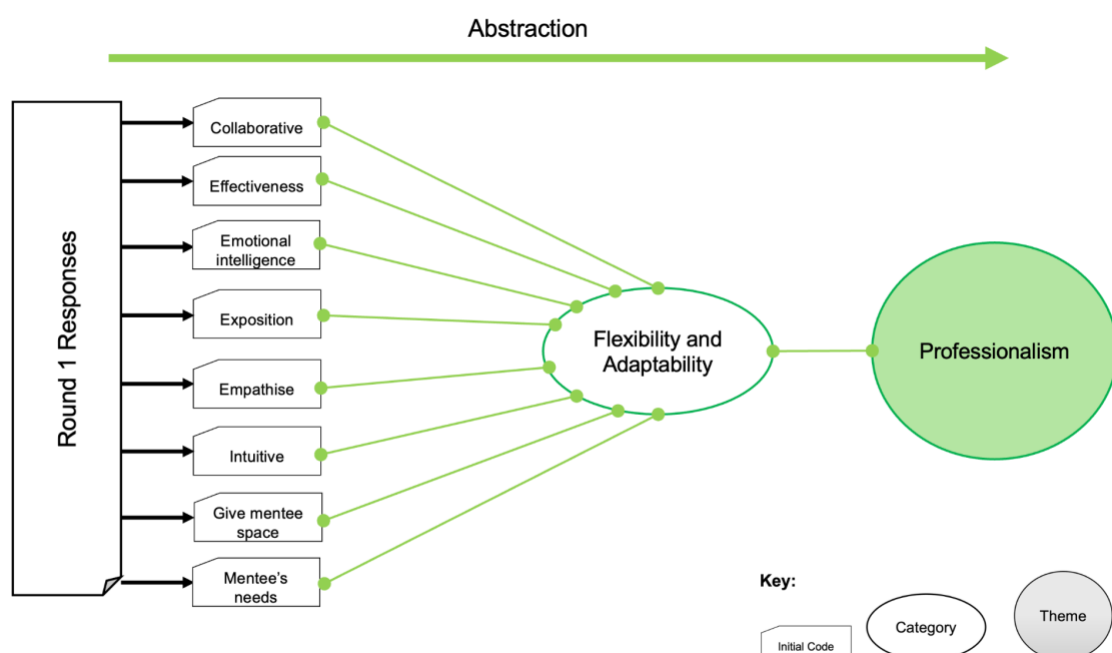


As the number of initial codes belonging to the category *Andragogy* is so large, by looking at a category with far fewer initial codes it becomes easier to conceptualise the process of moving from response to theme. In Figure 5.4, the category *Flexibility and Adaptability* comprises eight initial codes and belongs to the theme *Professionalism*. As one moves from left to right, the abstraction increases and the level of detail decreases; the lens for this phase must first zoom in to see the *detail* in the panellists' responses. We need this detail to understand what the panellists think teacher mentors need to be able to *do*—by executing a specific behaviour, such as the ability to flex to meet their “mentee’s needs”; and/or *be*—by identifying an attribute, such as “intuition,” in order to be effective. This detail is used to generate the codes, categories, and themes, to see the pattern/s by then zooming

out. The themes presented in this analysis, although abstract, are all grounded in the raw and “noisy” data provided by the panellists.

Figure 5.4

The Initial Codes Belonging to the Category Flexibility and Adaptability



Just as there is fuzziness resulting from the sharing of initial codes between categories, there is also some fuzziness with regard to the themes themselves. For example, this theme, *Professionalism*, like *Plan-Do-Review*, has a unique central organising concept, in that it is distinct from other themes; however, it has two categories in common with *Plan-Do-Review*, and one in common with the theme *Teacher Practitioner*, as shared in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5

Themes and Their Categories

Plan-Do-Review	Professionalism	Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence	Teacher Practitioner
• Critical reflection • Problem solver • Questioner • Scaffolded support • Andragogy • Devise interventions • Facilitate dialogue • Constructive challenge • Build autonomy • Construct learning opportunities • Goal setting • Constructive feedback • Deconstruct (high quality) practice • Focus on key developmental areas	• High expectations • Bigger picture • Advocate for profession • Connection builder • Commitment to mentor role • Flexibility and adaptability • Advocate for mentee • Genuine interest • School context • Objectivity • Teacher Development • IT Skills	• Respectful and considerate • Communication skills • Is self-aware • Relationship Builder • Non-judgemental • Emotional intelligence • Open-mindedness • Change management • Empathetic	• Researcher-practitioner • Behaviour management • Expert teacher • Subject knowledge • Pedagogical knowledge • Modelling – pedagogical • Curriculum
Plan-Do-Review & Professionalism Assess mentee progress; Programme or pathway Professionalism & Teacher Practitioner Learner Teacher Practitioner & Plan-Do-Review CM Tools and Strategies Teacher Practitioner & Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence Barriers to learning - learners Inter and Intrapersonal intelligence & Plan-Do-Review Barriers to learning - mentee			

Notes. Categories belonging to more than one theme are included in the lower box alongside the themes they belong to; categories highlighted grey were rejected by panellists in Round 2 of the Delphi.

As can be seen in Figure 5.5, there are six categories that are shared between themes. As each of these categories has one or more aspects in common with each of the themes they belong to, there is overlap. This, in turn, leads to fuzziness as to where the boundaries or dividing lines between the themes are. The central concept or quality that is unique to each of the four themes in this RTA is

shared in Table 5.1. From these descriptors, it is clear that each theme is distinctive, with the categories comprising each theme reflecting that distinctiveness, i.e., all of the categories belonging to a theme have a level of homogeneity. However, some aspects of the doing and the being of teacher mentoring, such as “modelling,” as shared by the panellists, can be found across all of the themes. The difference being the type of modelling needed: role modelling as part of the theme *Professionalism* is of a different type or quality to the pedagogical modelling categorised in the theme *Teacher Practitioner*. This level of relationality is to be expected, given that the initial codes, categories, and themes generated in this particular study pertain to the domain of teacher mentoring.

Table 5.1

Overview of Themes and Theme Descriptors Generated From the Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Theme	Description
Plan-Do-Review	Leading and facilitating the process of reflection. Based on mentee’s experience, pedagogical practice, performance and expectations.
Professionalism	Role modelling - explicitly and/or implicitly - the professional behaviours/skills expected and sharing knowledge about the field*. <i>*This takes place within a specific context/setting, changing according to mentee’s needs and/or place on their pathway.</i>
Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence	Building and maintaining professional and productive relationships.
Teacher Practitioner	Mentor as teacher; holder of pedagogical knowledge and expertise; adviser; modeller and researcher.

Note. This modified table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0

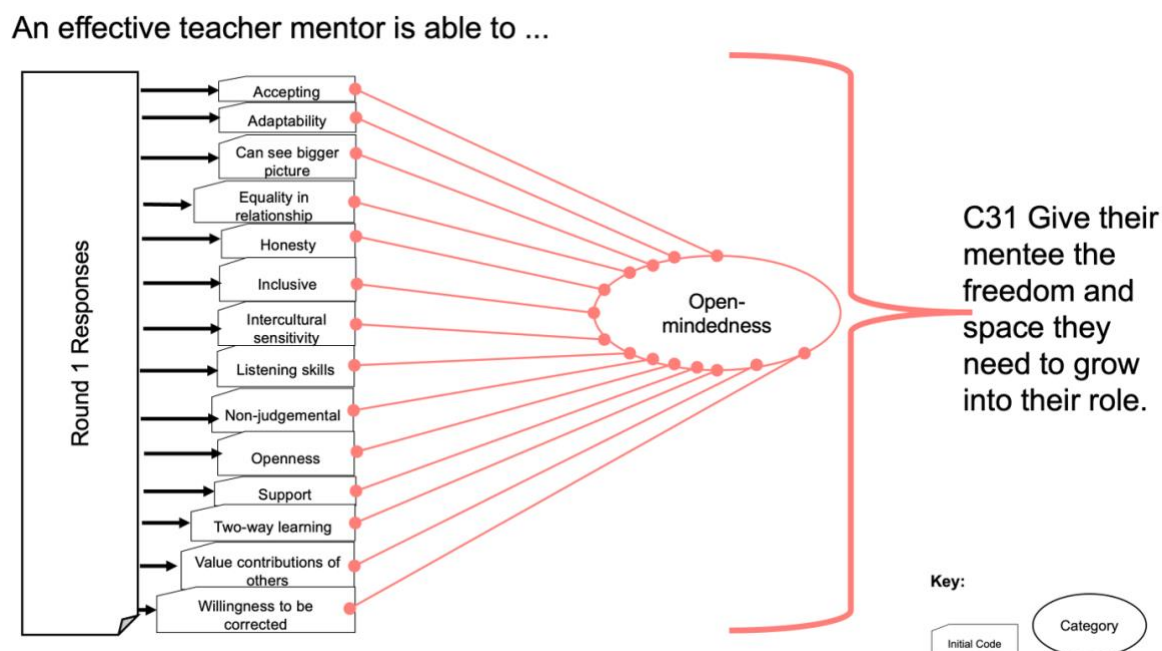
5.1.4. Construction of the Teacher Mentoring Competency Statements

The 48 categories generated from the panellists' responses from R1 of the Delphi, were then used to construct the 48 teacher mentoring competencies that would be used in round two (R2), and round three (R3). A competency statement was generated for each category, with each competency statement produced reflecting the central concept/qualities of each category and all of the initial codes that comprise it. This process is illustrated in Figure 5.6, for competency statement C31, that has been constructed for the category *Open-mindedness*. The competency aims to capture the central organising concept - the *quality* - of this cluster, with enough flex to accommodate the facets of this category: the meanings behind the initial codes that comprise it, and therefore the participants' responses that underpin it. For example, in order to "Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role," teacher mentors need⁶ "openness" to be able to accommodate their mentee's needs. Additionally, by taking a "non-judgemental" approach to provide "support" that is "accepting" of difference, they are demonstrating that they "value the contributions of others."

⁶ These inferences are based on the panellists' thoughts, suggestions, and views as shared in R1.

Figure 5.6

Developing a Competency Statement for the Category Open-Mindedness



As previously discussed in Chapter 3, there is no consensus with regard to what a competency is (e.g., Hoffmann, 1999). To help me construct this set of teacher mentoring competencies, I used the definition provided by Strebler et al. (1997). This definition also aligns with the definition provided by The Oxford English Dictionary (2025), in which a competency is defined as: “a skill or ability; (now) esp. a professional skill or practical aptitude considered necessary to perform a particular job or role.” In addition, as I knew that I would be using these competency statements to generate items capable of measuring TMSE beliefs, I also consulted Bandura’s (2006) self-efficacy scale development guidelines to support this process. Once finalised, and checked, all 48 competency statements were then used to construct the round two (R2) survey.

It is, however, important to highlight here that although the list of competencies is representative of the domain of teacher mentoring, it is not exhaustive (as discussed previously). Also, I recognise that because there were no theoretical frameworks or codebooks applied or determined a priori, this inductive analysis relies on what I bring to the analysis. The inferences I make with regard to what is salient and what is not will, in part, also be based on my own experiences and their associated inferences and understandings, which are of my making. This means that the analysis, and competency construction in this RTA is also an *abductive* process; the competencies I present here are *best guesses* of the most likely meaning behind the initial codes, categories, and themes, based on what I know from experience. If someone else were to use the same data set to conduct another RTA, then it would be unlikely (a) that they would produce the same analyses from the RTA, and (b) the same set of competencies. This is expected of this methodology, and not only is it accepted, but this creative difference is also embraced (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

5.2. Round 2 (R2)

Before I share and discuss the findings from R2 of this Delphi, I need to first address a potential conundrum resulting from my chosen research strategy. Embedding an RTA, or for that matter any type of qualitative thematic analysis, in a mixed methods Delphi study, even though common (e.g., Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Westers & Borders, 2014), may be viewed as contentious. This meeting of methodological paradigms has the potential to create a quandary. While an RTA does not contend to offer up a single definitive answer to a problem, nor does it seek

to do so (Braun and Clarke, 2022), a Delphi study, in many respects, does as it aims to establish a consensus as to what the *best* answer to a problem is (e.g., Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). For example, in my study, the answer the Delphi is (t)asked to provide is to identify and establish the most salient competencies required for effective teacher mentoring.

This issue, however, is resolvable. Although I asked panellists for their input with regard to the importance of the competencies generated from the analysis conducted at the end of R1, I was not asking them to come to a consensus with regard to a possible domain structure. For example, by analysing the pattern/s resulting from the codes, categories, and themes generated from this analysis, i.e., the part of the RTA that is employing inductive reasoning.

5.2.1. Rating of Competency Statements

The set of 48 teacher mentoring competencies generated from R1 were rated by the panellists in R2 using the Likert scale in Figure 5.7, where 1 represents *unimportant* and 5 represents *very important*. These ratings were analysed to produce a range of univariate statistics, with the mean values and % consensus ratings for each competency shared in Tables 5.2 to 5.5. The data presented in these tables represents the data after all analyses were completed and includes the final % consensus ratings and mean values for the 10 competencies that were re-rated in round three (R3).

Figure 5.7

Response Options for a Competency Statement in the R2 of the Delphi

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

Of the 48 competencies rated by the panellists, 38 met the cut-off criteria for salience as determined by group consensus: if a competency achieved a rating of ≥ 4 from $\geq 80\%$ of the panellists and/or a M value of ≥ 4.25 , it was deemed to be important for effective teacher mentoring. However, as nearly all of the competencies achieved a M value of ≥ 3 , panellist consensus determined that they were all at least “moderately important” for teacher mentoring. The only exception to this being C36 “Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively” ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.943$, $Mdn = 3$, $Mo = 2$). To check that the competencies that had been rejected by the panellists in R2 should be discarded, panellists were asked to re-rate them again in R3 (this data will be shared in Section 5.3).

The 10 competencies that were rejected, C19, C43, C18, C3, C7, C14, C37, C45, C11, and C36, belonged to the themes *Plan-Do-Review*, *Teacher Practitioner*, and *Professionalism*. As all competencies belonging to the theme *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence* met the cut-off, this could provide an early indication of how important the competencies belonging to this set (theme) are for teacher mentoring.

Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Belonging to the Theme Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence Generated From the RTA in Phase 1

Competency description			%		
<i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>		n	consensus ≥ 4	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
C44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38
C5	Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners.	20	95.0	4.60	0.75
C9	Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee's perspective.	20	95.0	4.55	0.60
C8	Operate in an empathetic way, responding to mentee needs with kindness.	20	95.0	4.50	0.61
C34	Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.	18	94.5	4.50	0.62
C15	Demonstrate emotional intelligence in their thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship.	20	90.0	4.55	0.69
C17	Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor.	20	90.0	4.20	0.77
C29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development.	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C30	Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C24	Help their mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84
C31	Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84

Notes. "C" denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3. C34 also belongs to the theme *Plan-Do-Review* and C30 also belongs to the theme *Teacher Practitioner*. This table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0

Table 5.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Belonging to the Theme Plan-Do-Review Generated From the RTA in Phase 1

Competency description <i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>		n	% consensus ≥ 4	M	SD
C35	Support and encourage their mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement.	18	100.0	4.78	0.43
C20	Deconstruct practice with their mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why.	18	100.0	4.72	0.46
C39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques to check understanding and promote thinking.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51
C2	Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way.	20	95.0	4.65	0.59
C37*	Devise effective interventions to address their mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth.	18	94.5	4.61	0.61
C34	Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.	18	94.5	4.50	0.62
C40	Meet the needs of adult learners.	18	94.5	4.28	0.75
C33	Work with their mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals.	18	94.4	4.56	0.62
C19*	Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme pathway requirements.	18	88.9	4.39	1.04
C23	Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of their mentee, giving them the space they need to develop their practice.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70
C1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps.	20	85.0	4.45	1.29
C6	Provide scaffolded support to enable their mentee to make good progress.	20	85.0	4.30	0.98
C12	Co-construct solutions to complex problems with their mentee.	20	85.0	4.25	0.97
C16	Encourage their mentee to be a self-directed learner.	20	85.0	4.15	0.99
C14*	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.	18	83.3	4.17	0.71
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C18*	Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.	18	77.8	4.22	0.94

Notes. "C" denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; shaded rows show the competencies that were omitted from item construction for the TMSE survey. C14 and C22 also belong to the theme *Professionalism*, C34 also belongs to the theme *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence* and C48 also belongs to the theme *Teacher Practitioner*. *This table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0*

Table 5.4

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Belonging to the Theme Professionalism Generated From the RTA in Phase 1

Competency description			%		
<i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>		n	consensus ≥ 4	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
C41	Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee’s development.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38
C27	Remain objective and fair when working with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.67	0.49
C43*	Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them.	18	100.0	4.22	0.43
C42	Help their mentee to navigate and understand the context of their setting.	18	94.5	4.33	0.59
C21	Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet their mentee’s needs.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C38	Demonstrate commitment to their role and responsibilities.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C7*	Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting e.g. observing the teaching of other practitioners.	18	94.4	4.39	0.61
C10	Display high expectations for their mentee.	20	90.0	4.25	0.64
C3*	Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70
C26	Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.	18	83.4	4.39	0.78
C32	Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession.	18	83.3	4.22	0.73
C14*	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee’s programme/pathway.	18	83.3	4.17	0.71
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C11*	Signpost their mentee to different development opportunities that may lead to career progression.	18	50.0	3.61	0.70
C36*	Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.	18	33.3	3.17	0.79

Notes. "C" denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; shaded rows show the competencies that were omitted from item construction for the TMSE survey. C14 and C22 also belong to the theme *Plan-Do-Review* and C26 also belongs to the theme *Teacher Practitioner*. This table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0

Table 5.5

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Belonging to the Theme Teacher Practitioner Generated From the RTA in Phase 1

Competency description		n	% consensus ≥ 4	M	SD
<i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>					
C46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for their mentee, to help them to develop their practice.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51
C25	Provide support for their mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively in their setting.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning.	20	90.0	4.15	0.75
C30	Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee.	18	88.9	4.17	0.79
C47	Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions.	18	88.8	4.28	0.83
C13	Model effective practice including planning, teaching and assessment.	20	85.0	4.20	0.83
C26	Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.	18	83.4	4.39	0.78
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C45*	Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.	18	61.1	3.89	1.08

Notes. “C” denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; shaded rows show the competencies that were omitted from item construction for the TMSE survey. C26 also belongs to the theme *Professionalism*, C30 also belongs to the theme *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence* and C48 also belongs to the theme *Plan-Do-Review*. This modified table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0

Of the eight competencies that achieved 100% consensus that they were either *important* or *very important* for effective teacher mentoring, the two achieving the highest mean values ($M = 4.83$), C44 “Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee” and C41 “Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee’s development,” represent the categories *Relationship Builder* and *Genuine Interest*.

The survey sent to the panellists for R2 is included as Appendix J.

5.3. Round 3 (R3) and Final Analyses

5.3.1. Re-rating Competencies

For the reasons previously explicated in Chapter 4 Section 4.6.2.1, it is important to know which of the competencies are the most salient for effective teacher mentoring to avoid the risks to content validity associated with over and underrepresentation. As I knew I would be using the competencies generated from Phase 1 to create items for the TMSES in Phase 2, I needed to be sure that the teacher mentoring competencies I used to create these items were representative of the domain.

As overrepresentation is generally considered to be the better option (e.g., DeVellis, 2017), the 10 rejected competencies were re-rated on the same 1 to 5 Likert scale as used in R2 (see Figure 5.7). The data from this re-rating task are shared in Table 5.6. Following the re-rating, the panellists’ scores reflected an increase in importance for effective teacher mentoring for all retained competencies.

For some this increase was noticeable, using the data for % consensus ≥ 4 : C37 “Devise effective interventions ...” increased by 22.3%, and C43 “Be a strong advocate ...” increased by 22.2%. Only four of the 10 competencies that did not meet the retention criteria in R2 were rejected in R3, namely, C18, C45, C11, and C36. However, just because these competencies have been rejected by the panel does not mean that they are not needed for teacher mentoring. This is especially true for C36, where teacher mentors will be expected to have a certain level of proficiency in information technology (IT) to perform their role. For example, they may need to use a provider’s platform to gain access to materials to support both their own and their mentee’s development.

The re-rating exercise also flags up another potential issue, in that competency C18 “Prioritise the right areas for mentee development,” was one that I identified as needing a possible re-wording following the panellists feedback in R2. If this competency had been phrased in the way preferred by the panellists in R3, i.e., “Help their mentee to prioritise the right areas for their development,” maybe it would have met the criteria for retention in R2. However, I decided to reject this competency because it is covered by other competencies in the set. For example, it is partly covered by C1, because mentors help their mentees to prioritise the right areas for development by “providing constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee’s progress and performance”; and also, C20, because a mentor will help their mentee to identify the “right areas” by “deconstructing their practice.” In other words, C18 probably has redundancy, so it should be rejected. This is because, for scale development, carrying forward competencies that are too similar to each other can cause problems later with regard to multicollinearity (see Field, 2017).

This, however, is a good illustration of the number of researcher degrees of freedom the Delphi offers, which for some is an advantage (e.g., Iqbal & Papon-Young, 2009), yet for others poses a threat to validity (e.g., Sackman, 1975). With a Delphi study, researcher judgement is used to make final decisions with regard to how the Delphi shall be run. For example, what the level of consensus is, who the “experts” will be, how many rounds to use, and for this study, which teacher mentoring competencies will be carried forward to the next phase of this research. As long as a decision is justified by the researcher, then a Delphi has many advantages to offer due to its flexibility.

Following the re-rating exercise, a final set of 44 teacher mentoring competencies were taken forward to Phase 2.

Table 5.6

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Rejected in R2 and Re-rated in R3 of the Delphi

Competency description		n	%	n	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>		R2	consensus ≥ 4 R2	R3	consensus ≥ 4 R3	R3	R3
C19	Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings ...	18	77.8	18	88.9	4.39	1.10
C43	Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting ...	18	77.8	18	100.0	4.22	0.96
C18	Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.	18	77.7	18	77.8	4.22	1.02
C3	Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.	20	75.0	18	88.9	4.39	0.93
C7	Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting ...	20	75.0	18	94.4	4.39	0.83
C14	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee ...	20	75.0	18	83.3	4.17	1.24
C37	Devise effective interventions ...	18	72.2	18	94.5	4.61	1.25
C45	Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.	18	66.6	18	61.1	3.89	0.76
C11	Signpost their mentee to different development opportunities ...	20	65.0	18	50.0	3.61	0.75
C36	Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.	18	27.8	18	33.3	3.17	0.94

Notes. “C” denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; red shading: competency does not meet conditions for retention of 80% consensus ≥ 4 and/or $M = \geq 4.25$.

5.3.2. Polarised Responses

From the analysis conducted at the end of R2, two competencies, C1 and C22, were identified as having the property of polarity, i.e., there was strong disagreement amongst the panellists with regard to the importance of these competencies for effective teacher mentoring. As can be seen in Table 5.7, these competencies both have a variance of ≥ 1.5 , a figure suggested by de Loe (1995) as indicating that there is a strong difference of opinion, due to the wide dispersion of data from the mean. In addition, although both of these competencies have met the inclusion criteria of 80% consensus ≥ 4 , competency C22 “Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria” did not achieve a mean of ≥ 4.25 for importance for effective teacher mentoring. Panellists’ responses when asked for feedback with regard to these two competencies in R3, helped me to understand the reason as to why there was such a strong difference in opinion.

Competency C1 “Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee’s progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps,” was a competency that had been reviewed after R2 and identified as one that may need re-wording. Originally, for the ratings task in R2, the way C1 was worded could have suggested that mentors would be taking the lead instead of their mentees. As the panellists preferred the new wording, this may be the reason why it initially received mixed rating scores from the panellists.

Another reason, as suggested by the panellists responding to my query, may be that as both of these competencies relate in some way to the act of assessment through teaching “performance,” then this aspect of the role involving judgements of a performative nature, could be viewed as sitting juxtaposed to what some panellists

see mentoring as being. For some, the nature of the role is not and should not be that of an assessor or judge e.g.,

“The principles of mentoring are not linked to judgement.”

A panellist's response, from R3.

As this view is also reflected by the panellists' high rating of competency C29 “Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development” ($M = 4.44$), it is an indication that this may be a reason that can help to explain this difference of opinion.

The type of mentoring expected of teacher mentors can differ depending on role expectations, which may also result in difference of understanding. Some of the panellists may be looking at the role solely in terms of support for a student on a university programme, e.g.,

“Mentors should provide formative assessment as they are with the trainees on a daily basis. But summative should be in conjunction with their course tutor, so the assessment for QTS is a joint decision.”

A panellist's response, from R3.

Whereas others might be thinking about the role in terms of providing support solely for an ECT, e.g.,

“There are meant to be distinct roles - a mentor and an Induction Tutor who works with an appropriate body. The latter have the assessment role.”

A panellist's response, from R3.

The change in expectations and responsibilities linked to the teacher mentor role has been the result of the roll out of the new early career framework (ECF) in

England in 2019, which has been revised again to become the initial teacher training and early career framework (ITTECF; DfE, 2024b). This has, I feel, caused some confusion. Under these frameworks, the responsibility for “formal” assessment lies with a newly created role, the “Induction Tutor.” However, some teacher mentors may still be responsible for assessing trainee teachers using university-based rubrics if they are mentoring students. The current responsibilities for teacher mentors who are mentoring an ECT as part of their early career teacher entitlement (ECTE; DfE, 2025d) state that mentors have no responsibility for assessment. Nevertheless, as one of a mentor’s responsibilities is to “provide feedback” on their mentee’s practice and progress (DfE, 2025e), although teacher mentors are not expected to grade or formally assess their mentee’s progress, they are still assessing them. For example, it might be that this assessment is formative in nature, as recognised by two panellists in R3, e.g.,

“Assessment against performance criteria is relevant if it is a discursive activity. If it is directly related to constructive and meaningful feedback not separate from it, then it has relevance as a mentoring function. If not, it is part of the assessment function which changes the relationship between mentor and mentee.”

A panellist’s response, from R3.

“Constructive feedback and development targets for growth are vital. This needs to be qualitative not quantitative - perhaps this was the criticism of the performance criteria [*sic.*] statement.”

A panellist’s response, from R3.

Logically, without this type of assessment, mentors of ECTs would not be able to provide the feedback that they are expected to as part of their mentoring role.

Although there is a difference of opinion, especially with regard to competency C22,

these two statements were retained following review, as I felt that they could still be important given the mixed feedback from the panellists.

Table 5.7

Descriptive Statistics for the Competencies Receiving Polarised Responses in R2 of the Delphi

Competency	n	% consensus ≥ 4 R2	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Variance	Median	Mode
C1	20	85.0	4.45	1.30	1.63	5	5
C22	18	83.3	3.89	1.41	1.99	4	4

Notes. “C” denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; some of the data in this table has been previously published in Tickell & Klassen, CC BY 4.0.

5.3.3. Preferred Wording

The competency C1 categorised as a polarised response (Table 5.7) was also identified as needing rewording, alongside C18, C20, and C33, following feedback from panellists’ in R2. The reason for these changes was to move the responsibility for action to the mentee instead of the mentor. An example is provided for C33:

Please indicate your preferred wording from the choices given below.

An effective teacher mentor is able to

- ☐ Work with their mentee to set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals.
- ☐ Work with their mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals.

In nearly all cases ($\geq 89\%$), the panellists preferred the alternative wording for all of the competencies. In the example provided for C33, this is highlighted in green. As a result of this, all four of these competency statements were amended to reflect these changes (see Tables 5.2 to 5.5). It was clear from the panellist responses for this task, that they thought it was essential for the mentee to take the lead role when it came to their own development. This was also reflected in their R1 responses, e.g., “step-back” is an initial code that forms part of the category *Build Autonomy*, which belongs to the theme *Plan-Do-Review*.

5.3.4. Ranking by Theme

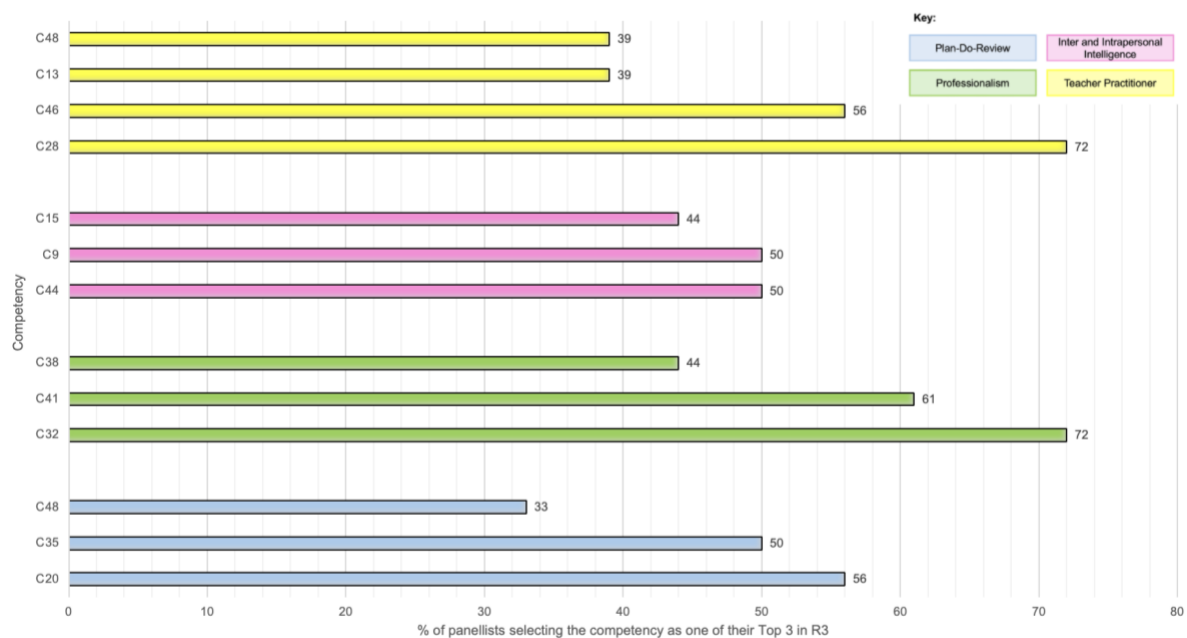
A ranking exercise was used in R3 as an alternative way to determine competency salience. Panellists identified their “top three” competencies in terms of importance for effective teacher mentoring by theme, and these results are shared in Figure 5.8. There is an additional competency included in the theme *Teacher Practitioner*, as both competencies C13 and C48 received the same ranking. The top-ranking competency for *Teacher Practitioner* was C28 “Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee”; for *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence*: C44 “Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee,” and C9 “Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee’s perspective”; for *Professionalism*: C32 “Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession”; and for *Plan-Do-Review*: C20 “Deconstruct practice with their mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn’t and identify possible reasons why.”

Of these, C28 ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.79$) and C32 ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.73$) showed the biggest change in terms of their importance for effective teacher mentoring from the ratings task in R2. This provides some evidence as to why a change of approach for assessing the importance of a competency may prove to be a good strategy for Delphi studies, and that this may be especially true for ones where participants are asked to rate a large list of competencies. It may be that a ranking task is more focused, instead of rating a long list of competencies using the same scale.

Competencies C41, C44, C35, and C20 were identified as the most important competencies for effective teacher mentoring in both the top three ranking task and the rating task, with all of these competencies featuring in the top five competencies overall with regard to their mean rating. Although I recognise that the panellists' in R3 were provided with the univariate statistical data from the rating exercise in R2, and they could have referred to this before making their ranking choices, I think that it is unlikely they did. This is because the competencies in the ranking exercise were presented in a randomised order under the themes they belonged to, and the ratings data was not presented by theme. As it would have taken additional time and effort to attempt to replicate the findings shared from the ratings exercise, this, in my opinion, makes it improbable.

Figure 5.8

Ranking Task: Identifying the Top Three Teacher Mentoring Competencies by Theme (n = 18)



5.4. Response Rates

For Delphi studies, one issue that can potentially pose a risk to the validity and credibility of the findings produced are low response rates, due to factors such as panellist attrition and survey fatigue (e.g., Gargon et al., 2019; Hsu & Sandford, 2007). For this study, maximising response rates was one of the reasons why I decided to run the Delphi over three rounds instead of four. I also selected a timeframe of four months to run the Delphi to establish momentum, e.g., if the time between rounds was too long, then panellists may have lost interest and dropped out.

Another factor that is pertinent to this study and response rates in general, is that this Delphi was conducted from February to May 2021, which was during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. For many people, this was a time of worry, stress and upheaval. In England, social distancing measures were in place, meaning that many people spent longer in their homes (Office for National Statistics, 2021). As people were spending longer at home, it has been suggested that they were sent greater numbers of online surveys to complete during this time, which may, in turn, have contributed to increased levels of survey fatigue (e.g., de Koning et al., 2021).

Given these extenuating factors, the response rates I achieved for this Delphi were pleasing and were in line with those achieved for other three-round Delphi studies (Gargon et al., 2019). In R1, 23 panellists contributed to the findings, resulting in a response rate of 88.5%; with 20 panellists contributing to R2, resulting in a response rate of 76.9%; and in R3, 18 panellists took part, resulting in a response rate of 69.2% (this data has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen, 2024). The high response rates achieved in this Delphi study serve to increase trustworthiness (credibility) and validity of the findings presented here (Beretta, 1996; Gargon et al., 2019). This gives me increased confidence that the competencies produced from this research are representative of the *doing* - and the *being* - of teacher mentoring and provide a comprehensive set of competencies needed by a teacher mentor to perform their role effectively.

The survey sent to the panellists for R3 is included as Appendix K.

5.5. Taking a Closer Look at the Competencies

As the final set of teacher mentoring competencies comprises 44 statements, there are far too many to discuss in detail here. Instead, a selection of salient examples has been chosen to explore in more detail. These categories, competencies, and initial codes were selected on the basis of their importance to the panellists, and also for their wider importance (e.g., theoretically), to both the process (the *doing*) and role (the *being*) of teacher mentoring. For example, as five of the 44 competencies feature modelling, I judged it to be of importance. Likewise, as “openness” is a personality trait identified as being strongly associated with mentoring (e.g., Bozionelos, 2004; Niehoff, 2006), this was also identified as being germane to the discussion.

5.5.1. Swapping Hats

Figure 5.9

Swapping Hats: A Panellist's Response From R1 of the Delphi

They show a range of mentoring behaviours according to person and situation: e.g. role model, coach, supporter, networker, co-enquirer, sounding board, advisor etc - so they can tailor and customise the mentoring support to meet the needs of the mentee.

The panellist's response provided in Figure 5.9, reflects the diversity of the role that the final set of competencies generated from this study covers. For example, different knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attributes will be required of an

“advisor” compared to that of a “co-enquirer” (e.g., see competencies C46 and C26 in Table 5.5, belonging the theme *Teacher Practitioner*). That the teacher mentor role is multifaceted and comprises many other roles, echoes the thoughts of many others, as previously discussed in Chapter 2. In other words, a teacher mentor has to wear many hats, and not only that, but they also need to know when to swap them.

As different mentoring competencies may be required at different points in the relationship (e.g., Kram, 1985), moving from advisor to co-enquirer may be a shift that happens from the start of the relationship to the end. For example, a novice is likely to require more guidance and instruction from their mentor when they first start to teach, whereas towards the end, after they have gained more experience of teaching, they start to find out who they are as a teacher, and the relationship shifts to one of co-construction. Furthermore, as teacher mentoring experience increases, this may alter the mentor’s behaviour and needs too. For example, as they gain competence a teacher mentor may become more interested in developing their own mentoring skills.

One role a teacher mentor may need to be able to perform, as identified by the panellist in Figure 5.9, is that of “coach.” Coaching, as an activity, featured strongly in the panellists’ responses in R1, yet there was a distinct uncertainty around what this term meant.

Figure 5.10

*Examples of Panellists' Responses for the Category Coaching and Mentoring (CM)
Tools and Strategies*

Knowledge of coaching and mentoring, so they understand the process they are in and can adapt

Understanding of coaching models and tools

The panellists' responses selected in Figure 5.10 illustrate this vagueness (which gives a flavour of the data used to generate the initial codes that comprise this category). This, in turn, is reflected by the competency statement generated from it: C48 "Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process." That this competency is open to interpretation was a deliberate choice on my part, as it reflects the panellists' responses in that there is a lack of clarity as to where the boundary between coaching and mentoring lies. Instead, it is left for the user of the competency themselves to define. Interestingly, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) does not attempt to differentiate coaching from mentoring in their framework either (EMCC, 2024).

If coaching and mentoring are indeed separate constructs or serve as an example of a "jangle fallacy," is the work of another thesis. I am broaching this issue here because it is of relevance to this thesis in terms of what a teacher mentor working in England is expected to do as part of their role. A good example of this is the relatively recent move towards the use of "instructional coaching" in the English

school system. Again this term has multiple meanings (Daly et al., 2023), from a granular technician approach that attempts to codify teaching using a step-by-step model, which demands a certain amount of fidelity to it, e.g., if you do A *in this way* then you *will* get outcome Z, thereby placing the mentor as the “expert” and outcome Z most likely representing the surety of improved pupil attainments; to a more constructivist approach where understandings are co-constructed, through the use of research evidence to support the development of improved pedagogical practices (e.g., Knight, 2018). Although each teacher mentor may have a clear idea in their own mind of what coaching means to them, and hold a working knowledge of this meaning, that may not be the same for everyone. Arguably, this causes a problem when it comes to determining exactly what a teacher mentor needs to do to be effective.

For some panellists in R1, clarity with regard to where the boundaries of the mentoring role lie is needed (see Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11

Boundaries: A Panellist’s Response from R1 of the Delphi

They signpost - the mentor is not responsible for all aspects of the mentee's learning and development so it is important they know the boundaries of their role and where to direct the mentee so they can get additional help.

Concern with regard to where the boundaries lie is not just one for coach and mentor but also for other roles a teacher mentor is expected to perform. As mentors also serve a psychosocial function (Kram, 1985), one such role is the role of supporter in a pastoral sense which some may term “counsellor” (e.g., Ambrosetti & Dekkers,

2010; Roberts, 2000). For a teacher mentor, the issue here is related to where the line is drawn. For some, the term counsellor may have therapeutic connotations. As such, a teacher mentor could be uncomfortable with overstepping their remit and risk straying too far into unfamiliar territory. It may therefore be important for mentors to know what is expected of them, and also to know what they are capable of. Identification of their own personal limits, and setting and maintaining their own personal boundaries, may also be equally important. Even though teacher mentors are working with adults they still have a duty of care towards them and to themselves.

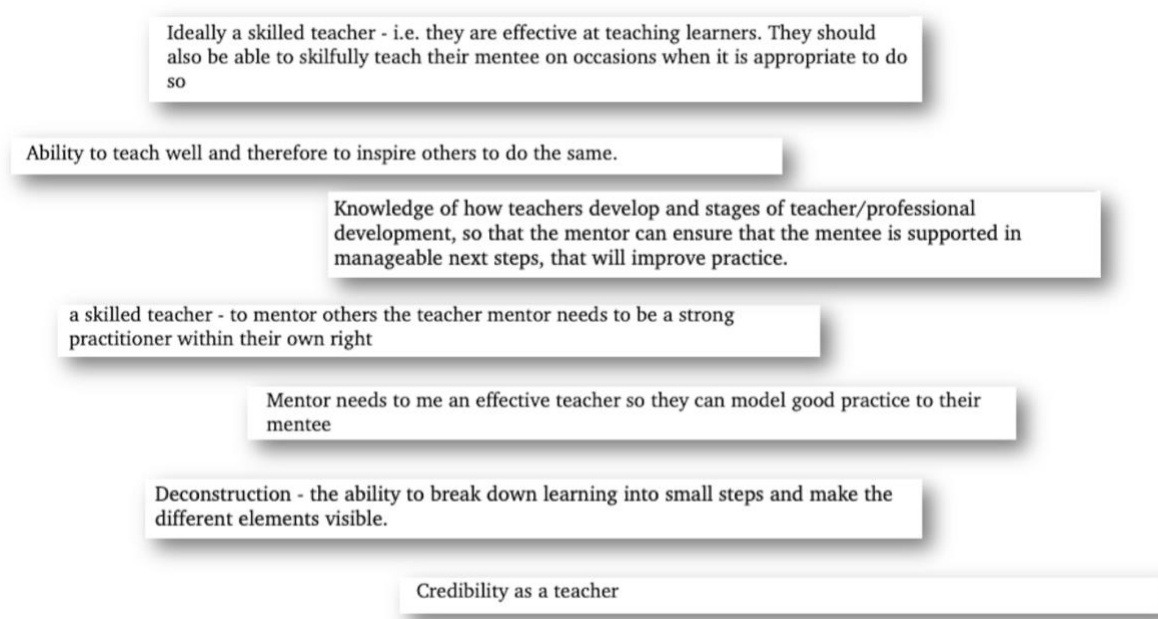
In this regard, and as identified by the panellist in Figure 5.11, knowing when to reach out to others for help or when to direct their mentee elsewhere, is also an essential competency for effective mentoring. This is reflected in some of the competencies established from this study, e.g., C7 “Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting ...” (belonging to the theme *Professionalism*). To help facilitate this process, other models of mentoring may be used, such as mosaic mentoring (Mullen, 2012). Mosaic mentoring contrasts with the one-to-one mentoring model that has gained prevalence in England, in that it offers mentees access to many different mentors, each with different strengths, experiences, and perspectives. However, this requires that the teacher mentor has a knowledge of who to approach for what; teacher mentors can also be thought of as networkers if they have the capital, and the desire to do so (Figure 5.10).

5.5.2. Expert Teacher

One self-evident hat that a teacher mentor wears is that of teacher. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, mentor as teacher is not a new idea (e.g., Roberts, 2000). If we conceptualise a teacher as a wiser and more experienced other who is capable of passing on their knowledge and learning to a less experienced other, such as a novice, through social interaction (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978), then teacher mentors are fulfilling the role of teacher for their adult mentee, as well as for their students. For the panellists taking part in this Delphi, their view is that for a teacher mentor to be an effective mentor, they also need to be a “skilled” and “effective” teacher (see Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12

A Selection of Panellists’ Responses for the Category Expert Teacher



In the Delphi study, 90% of the panellists thought that competency C4 “Teach effectively and have positive impact on learning” ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.75$), was either *important* or *very important* for effective teaching mentoring. Some of the reasons as to why this might be the case are shared in Figure 5.12. One reason offered is that teacher mentors need to have “credibility.” There are numerous reasons as to why this could matter, e.g., it may be harder for a mentee to accept critical feedback from their mentor if they do not think their mentor is capable of following their own advice; alternatively, a teacher mentor needs to be seen as credible, in order to “inspire others” (Figure 5.12).

The panellists’ responses here also reflect the views of a number of studies that identify the need for teaching expertise for the provision of effective teacher mentoring, e.g., Aspfors and Fransson (2015), Ellis et al. (2020), Wang et al. (2025). A primary reason for this, offered by the panellists in Figure 5.12, and also supported by theory (e.g., Bandura et al., 1961; Bandura, 1997) could be that a mentee will spend a long-time learning from their mentor vicariously. Therefore, for a trainee to gain an understanding of the art and craft of teaching they need an “excellent” model to learn from (Figure 5.13), and their mentor needs to be able to “model good practice” (Figure 5.12) in a number of different ways.

Figure 5.13

A Selection of Panellists' Responses for the Categories Modelling – Pedagogical and Advocate for the Profession

Modelling excellence - mentees need a role model (this has a caveat that it should be about helping the mentee find their own way)

Knowledge of learning theories, so they can model how the theory is used in practice, e.g. we look at Rosenshine and want our mentors to be able to model each aspect so the trainees can see the link between theory and practice.

Ability to deconstruct their own and others' practice, to model and explain planning and teaching processes in order to understand 'hidden' knowledge and understanding underpinning teaching practice.

They are inquisitive and curious - mentoring is about learning, so mentors should role model how to be an effective lifelong learner and it shows they have interest in the mentee, which helps them to feel valued.

Ability to manage challenging behaviours and teach children appropriate learning behaviours to model for mentees.

Ability to maintain an attractive learning environment as a model for others to aspire to.

As stated in the introduction to this section, modelling features explicitly in five of the competencies the Delphi panellists thought were necessary for effective teacher mentoring, namely, C28, C13, C26, C32, and C48—and implicitly in a number of other competencies, e.g., C46 “Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance ...”; C5 “Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners.” In all, it is clear that the panellists think that the ability to model how to *be* (role modelling) and what to *do* (pedagogical modelling) as a teacher, is of critical importance, and arguably a mentor can only do that effectively if they can teach well.

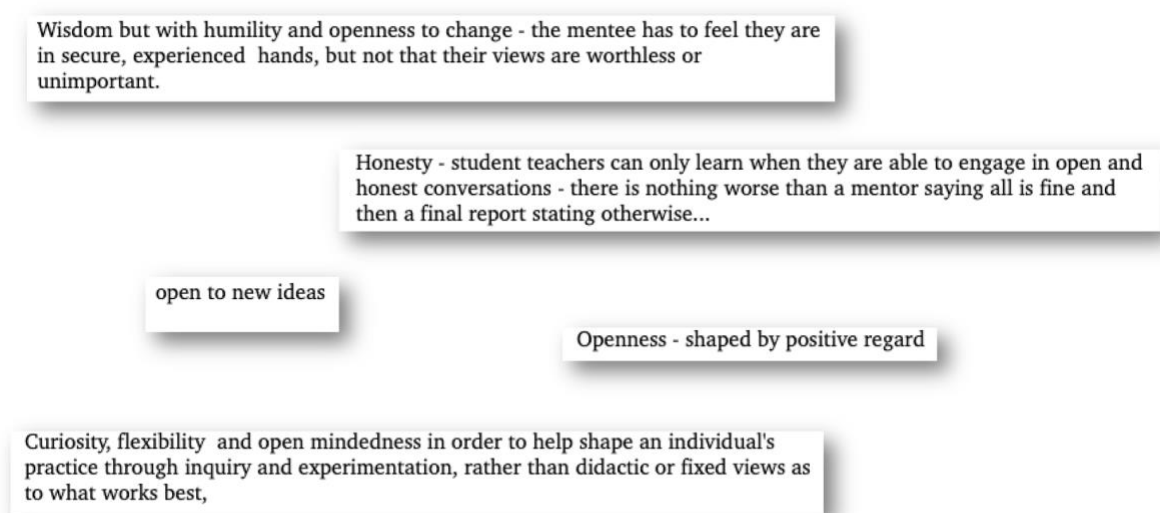
As suggested by one of the panellists in Figure 5.13, the vicarious learning experiences accessed through mentor modelling, give the mentee access to “hidden knowledge.” This tacit knowledge about how a mentor teaches is knowledge that has become part of their being. It is a knowledge that has been gained through experience and is a form of *practical wisdom* - knowing what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, in order to achieve the desired outcome - and this wisdom has been derived from learning (see Bandura, 1997). Over time, this knowledge may become hidden even from them, the holder of it; as Polanyi (1966/2009) observed, “we know more than we can tell” (p.4).

For a teacher mentor, it is through the act of modelling (doing) that all of the *little things* that they do, that they know, become manifest. The things that they cannot articulate can now be *seen* and therefore experienced by their mentee. It may be that the mentee - a novice - does not realise or appreciate the significance of all of those little things they have seen until much later because they are yet to understand their significance, which they themselves have to learn from the doing, just like their mentor before them.

For a teacher mentor to model something, they have to be prepared to *let their mentee in*. To let someone see how they do things in their classroom, is to potentially open themselves up for scrutiny, and possibly criticism. To do this requires *openness*, a trait that has been identified as being desirable for both mentor and mentee (e.g., Bozionelos, 2004). The panellists in this Delphi study also identified openness as an attribute that is essential for effective mentoring, and some of their responses are presented in Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14

A Selection of Panellist Responses for the Initial Code Openness



As can be seen from the panellist responses in Figure 5.14, with openness comes “honesty.” A teacher mentor does not have all of the answers, they need to be “open to new ideas” and open to “change.” A teacher mentor is offering their mentee a *safe space*, a shared space, where they and their views will be treated with respect. A space shaped by “positive regard.” It is through this honesty that trust can be established, and a relationship can be built, thereby enabling the mentee “to find their own way” (Figure 5.13).

5.6. Panoptic Discussion: Phase 1

5.6.1. Summary of Findings: An Overview

All of the teacher mentoring competencies identified and validated in this Delphi study potentially have a two-way effect. As the competencies teacher mentors are expected to perform are predominantly related to developing the teaching competency of their mentee, proficiency in mentoring will likely have a positive impact for the mentee, and also for the mentor themselves. For the mentee and for the mentor, gaining competency in teaching and mentoring is derived from the *doing* of that activity, and through this doing, gaining *experience* of it. A teacher mentor helps their mentee to gain competency in teaching by providing their mentee, either directly or indirectly, with the experiences they need to develop their teaching proficiency. This will be achieved in a number of ways, e.g., by providing their mentee with scaffolded support (see competency C6), or by offering their mentee constructive challenge designed to help them to critically reflect on their practice (see competencies C2 and C20). It is through the *doing* of this that the teacher mentor will be developing their own competency in teacher mentoring.

The types of experiences needed to gain proficiency in teacher mentoring can be similar to the kinds of experiences needed to gain proficiency in teaching; however, they are *not* exactly the same. Different competencies, requiring different experiences, are needed for effective mentoring (e.g., Ellis et al., 2020; Schwille, 2008; Wang et al., 2025). As these experiences are, in the main, sources of self-efficacy beliefs (as previously discussed in Chapter 3), by *successfully* demonstrating the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring, theoretically, teacher mentors will also be strengthening their TMSE beliefs. In

addition, it may be that through the act of mentoring they are also strengthening their own teacher self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs. The perceptions a teacher mentor holds about their capabilities to perform the role of mentor effectively, is directly related to how they perceive their competence in this domain. As such, the set of teacher mentoring competencies established in this study has uses that are both practical and research-oriented. For example, a teacher mentor could use these competencies to structure and guide their own development, and these competencies have already been used to develop the TMSES (Tickell & Klassen, 2024; and see Chapter 6 of this thesis).

5.6.2. The Need for Competency

For humans, even though the need to develop competency has been identified as a motivator for action (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1985), it can also be viewed as a contentious and often charged term (e.g., Strebler et al., 1997; Woodruffe, 1993). The dictionary definition of a competency as provided earlier in this chapter, will not be one that is accepted by all. As soon as the term competency is used or even suggested in a work-based environment, many people, including teachers, will likely view this term with suspicion, specifically with regard to the motivations behind the use of said competencies. For example, if competencies are used as a performance measure - an expectation - then they can also be used as tools for external control.

This external control can be local, such as within a school setting, or further afield, through governmental influence and the application of frameworks and policy. In a field as politically and ideologically diverse as education, this can be highly

problematic (e.g., Furlong, 2013; Oancea, 2014), especially with regard to what is considered to be acceptable, or “good” practice, and what is not. Take for example the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2011/2021b), a document that came into being in England under a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2011, ready for national roll out in September 2012. This document sets out a set of eight relatively broad teaching standards, and an additional list of standards that relate to a teacher’s expected personal and professional conduct. All teachers in England are expected to meet these standards, and it has seen little in the way of revision for the past 14 years.

However, just because these standards have been in operation for a relatively long time, does not mean that these standards are without issue. For example, the third bullet point under standard three (DfE 2011/2021, p.11) stipulates that teachers should use “standard English.” On the face of it, this does not sound unreasonable; if we want pupils to have “high standards of literacy,” then modelling how to write and speak English “correctly” could be viewed as an appropriate strategy. However, the use of this terminology may have other ramifications. Donnelly et al., (2019) suggest that this standard is a form of control that suppresses and “stigmatises” certain groups of teachers working in the school system, especially those teachers with strong regional accents and those from working-class backgrounds.

The term “standard English” is open to interpretation. It functions as a form of *linguistic capital*, a type of capital that affords individuals positional power within the social structures and systems they belong to through the use of language (Bourdieu, 1992). According to Bourdieu’s (1992) theorising, teachers working in schools, educational institutions, and the wider education sector are pressured to conform, to use the language expected of them or accept that they will never gain that power.

They are required to adjust their way of being, and their way of using language, to match the *norms* or standards that are propagated by the system; and this includes the way that they use that language, *their* language. This pressure to conform, to fit the “teaching type,” comes from other colleagues; schools can be stultifying places, even for adults. Moreover, beginning teachers who resist being controlled in this way, can face continued negativity and hostility from their mentors during feedback (Donnelly et al., 2019; and also see the findings presented in Chapter 7 of this thesis).

Prescribing what and how something should be done is an exercise of control that goes far beyond the control of the *self*, but the self still matters. Bandura’s social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986), takes this interplay of the person (the self), the environment (social), and their behaviour/s into account (see Figure 3.1). Even in constrictive social structures, people still have choices, and the decisions people make are guided by their beliefs. Even without government intervention or interference, the *social control* is still there, in the fabric, at work maintaining the structures and systems in place, either overtly or covertly (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1975/2020; Mead, 1934). Furthermore, it follows that as teacher mentors are active agents for this social control, their position has power. This means that what teacher mentors *do* is a socio-political concern.

In many respects, controlling what teacher mentors do, controls what their mentees do; however, this control has been a long time in the making. From our early schooldays we learn what teachers are and what they do through observation (e.g., Lortie, 1975). A student teacher thinks they know what teaching is, and what teachers do long before they step foot in a classroom as that “person at the front”; and I think the same applies to the process of mentoring, although mentoring is a much broader activity than teacher mentoring alone. The point here being that

humans use models to learn from (e.g., Bandura et al., 1961), and once those schemata are created, it can be difficult to shift someone's way of thinking, possibly due to the "folk pedagogies" about teaching they already hold (Bruner, 1996, p.44).

The simple fact of the matter is to do something well, people first have to want to do it because people "do not passively absorb ready-made standards" (Bandura, 1991, p.254). They have to make the standards their own. It is conceivable that the same applies to teacher mentors, they have to want to do it, they need to see themselves as it and think that they *can* do it (self-efficacy), to invest the time and energy needed to develop their practice. In England, for mentors of students undertaking an initial teacher training and education (ITTE) qualification, there is a much lesser-known set of non-statutory standards for mentors of ITTE students, the "National Standards for School-based Initial Teacher Training Mentors (DfE, 2016)." These four standards set out what teacher mentors should be doing as part of their role when mentoring a student or trainee teacher. There is little in the way of explanation as to how these standards were arrived at, and this document is, in my opinion, very thin. It was critiqued by Lee and Brook (2019), who also found it lacking with, in their view, the standards "providing a comparatively limited account of the role of the mentor" (p.121). As such, they question this document's usefulness. This, coupled with the fact that these standards are non-statutory, may explain the lack of awareness and/or interest in them.

The set of competencies shared here, in this research, are most definitely not a set of standards or rules to follow. Instead, they are a set of things—out of a "universe" of possible things (Nunnally, 1978)—that teacher mentors need to be able to do to be effective in their role, as determined and validated by the Delphi panellists. They are not presented as tools for control. Instead, they are offered as

something that might help a teacher mentor to develop their skills. For a teacher mentor to do this, they first need to know what effective teacher mentoring entails to begin to understand what it is they might need to *do* to *be*(come) an effective teacher mentor.

It is through performance accomplishments—derived from *experiences* of teacher mentoring—that a teacher mentor can build competency, strengthen self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1997), and develop expertise (e.g., Berliner, 2004). As it is plausible that teacher mentoring competence is needed to provide high-quality mentoring for mentees, it is important that teacher mentors are given the experiences they need to develop their competency and expertise through the *doing* of mentoring. If high-quality mentoring results in high-quality teaching—needed by pupils to achieve successful outcomes—then understanding how best to support teacher mentors to develop their competency is essential.

5.7. Teacher Mentoring Competency Comparisons

A large number of studies have been conducted to determine the competencies a teacher mentor needs to perform their role. These studies have been conducted in a variety of different ways, and from a number of different perspectives, e.g., from the perspective of the mentee, in terms of what they want from a mentor (e.g., Popescu-Mitroi & Mazilescu, 2014); cross-culturally (e.g., Wang's [2001] study comparing teacher mentors from China, England and the United States of America [USA]); from a mentor's vantage point (e.g., Stanulis et al., 2019); for a specific subject area (e.g., physical education, McCaughtry et al., 2005); and from studies with multiple specificities (e.g., Jones' [2008] study exploring the

mentoring competencies needed in higher education from a mentee's perspective). In addition, alongside these studies sit a number of literature and systematic reviews using these studies e.g., Orland-Barak (2014), Aspfors & Fransson (2015), Ellis et al. (2020), Wang et al. (2025).

Due to this diversity, it is no surprise that there is no accepted consensus as to what competencies are needed for effective teacher mentoring. This is because it all depends on the context the mentoring is taking place in; teacher mentoring has “ontological specificity” (Pennanen et al., 2016). For example, in Zhang, Qian and Walker's (2024) recent paper, they explain how “master teacher studios” are used in China to support a model of teacher development and training that is teacher-led by “master teachers.” This model is heavily focused on the development of “professional capital.” In these studios, the emphasis is placed on the professional growth of a novice teacher through the development of interpersonal relationships and cooperation. This is a concept known as “guanxi,” which in Chinese culture is “deeply rooted in Confucian values” (Zhang et al., 2024, p.135).

As the culture in England is very different to that of China, the models used for ECT development in English schools are equally divergent. Consequently, the competencies needed by a “master teacher” may well be distinct from the competencies needed by a teacher mentor working in England. However, that is not to say there will not be commonalities between these two contexts. Some of the skills needed by the “master teachers” in China and the teacher mentors in England will be the same, because, fundamentally, the act of mentoring someone will be the same. What these commonalities are may be can be guessed at by exploring sets of generic mentoring competencies e.g., “Clutterbuck's Ten” (Clutterbuck, 2004), or those offered by the EMCC (EMCC, 2024). That these two sets of generic mentoring

competencies are, for all intents and purposes, providing the same information, tells us something about what all mentors, regardless of specificity, need to be able to do to be effective in their role.

Generic mentoring competencies are useful, but they tend to be very broad umbrella terms, e.g., “relationship management,” “communication,” “conceptualising” (Clutterbuck, 2004, p.51), that comprise many separate finer-grained behaviours and skills needed to demonstrate them. For example, nearly all of the 48 of the teacher mentoring competencies identified in this study comfortably fit within the ten competencies identified as being needed for effective mentoring by Clutterbuck (2004), the exception being C22. As this competency involves the “assessment” of a mentee using “performance criteria,” it is an outlier when it comes to mentoring and is an activity that is not usually expected of a mentor working in other fields (e.g., Kram, 1985).

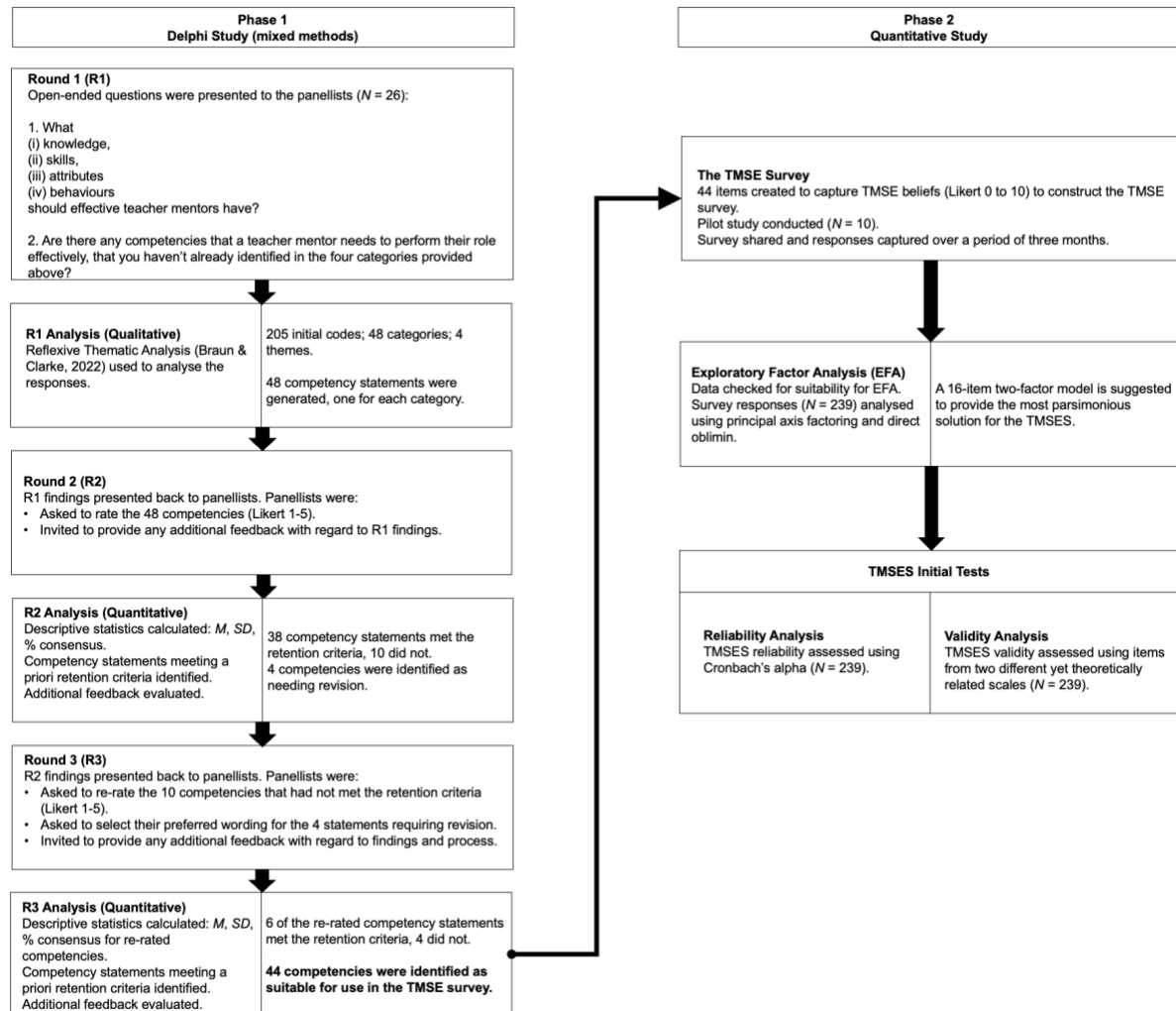
The broadness associated with generic competencies leads to flexibility as they are open to individual interpretation. This has its advantages: they can be used by everyone, and its disadvantages: these generic mentoring competencies lack nuance and domain specificity, which may limit their usefulness. As teacher mentoring is a work situated process, designed to facilitate the learning of another teacher within an educational setting (e.g., Burger, 2024; Orland-Barak, 2014), the *specific* skills and knowledge required to do this needs to be reflected in competency generation. In turn, this specificity will also help us to better understand the nature of the teacher mentoring domain.

5.8. From Phase 1 to Phase 2: A Sequential Design

Although the findings presented in this chapter provide unique insights into the competencies required by teacher mentors, the 44 teacher mentoring competencies generated from this Delphi study were also used to create items to develop the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES). The development of which will be discussed in the next chapter. As the Delphi and TMSES development contain a considerable number of steps, Figure 5.15 provides an overview of how Phases 1 and 2 fit together.

Figure 5.15

The Connection Between Phase 1 and Phase 2: An Overview of the Steps Taken



Note. This figure has been previously published in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

Chapter 6. Phase Two: Developing the TMSES - Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, I will be presenting the findings from Phase 2 of my research using the lens of teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE). As this lens focuses on teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs, it will be focusing on both the *being* and the *doing* of teacher mentoring. As previously explicated in Chapter 3, *what we do is affected by what we believe*; and in this study these beliefs are self-beliefs—beliefs we have in our own capabilities to produce a successful outcome from a specified course of action (Bandura, 1997). Secondly, *what we believe about ourselves is affected by what we have done* (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1). What we do, and specifically our appraisals of what we have done: the self-referential judgments we make with regard to our perceived successes and failures, are made in relation to how we see ourselves in relation to our identity standards. Furthermore, as these self-appraisals are also made in relation to the achievements, successes or failures of others, we use social comparisons to inform our self-beliefs.

Like the previous chapter, all of the findings that have been revealed using this lens will be shared and discussed. Although the discussion will be woven through this sharing, there will be space at the end of the chapter for a “panoptic discussion,” where the wider view will be considered. As with the Delphi and the RTA in Phase 1, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is iterative in nature. This means that certain aspects of the methods used will need to be re-shared to make sense of the findings here, and to give this account cogence and flow. Additionally, it is useful to note that the analyses and findings in this chapter draw on data from the 239 respondents with experience of teacher mentoring who completed the TMSE survey (see Sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.3).

6.1. A Note on Scale Development

The methodological decisions and considerations that I have made and taken into account have been previously discussed in detail in “Chapter 4. Methodology”; however, it is important to reaffirm a number of key points regarding these decisions before I share the findings from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The first point I would like to reiterate is that before conducting an EFA, a researcher must first make a large number of methodological decisions in order to ensure that the data obtained, and any conclusions subsequently drawn from it, have validity (e.g., DeVellis, 2017; Field, 2017). Often these decisions, or judgements, are highly subjective. As there is no definitive guide for how to conduct the “ideal” EFA due to the wide range of possible investigative permutations and parameters, the quality of the decisions made is extremely important (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

At this point, it is worthwhile to note that EFA is exploratory and is normally considered to be the first step in the scale development process (e.g., Yong & Pearce, 2013). As such, it is considered to be a *theory-generating* rather than a *theory-testing* methodology (e.g., Fabrigar et al., 1999; Stevens, 2002). In order to test the hypotheses and models generated from an EFA, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is often used and is generally considered to be the next step in terms of scale development (Fabrigar et al., 1999). CFA is used to statistically test the hypotheses and models generated from an EFA and it provides some statistical proof of the latent factors uncovered by an EFA (e.g., Gorsuch, 1997; Schmitt et al., 2018). However, although these latent factors may appear to have verisimilitude, in actuality the definitive proof sought of their existence may never be truly realised (Preacher et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is much research to suggest that the more degrees of freedom a researcher has the greater the chance of them finding false-positives

(e.g., Simmons et al., 2011), and in this study the considerable number of choices I have made as researcher could inadvertently lead to the identification of latent factors which in reality do not underpin the construct. These limitations will be explored further in the Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 towards the end of this chapter.

6.2. Findings From the TMSES Survey

6.2.1. Item Construction

Arguably, the most important decision a researcher makes in scale development concerns the construction and selection of the variables, or items, used to investigate the construct of interest (Goldberg & Velicer, 2006). For example, if the items chosen for a scale lack content validity, then the data captured by the scale will tell us nothing meaningful about the construct under investigation. As the old adage goes, “garbage in, garbage out.”

As the teacher mentoring competencies used to generate the items for the TMSES had been previously validated via the mechanism of consensus by the panellists in the Delphi study, I felt confident that they were suitable and of sufficiently high-quality to capture TMSE beliefs. As a result of this, all 44 competencies that met the cut-off for salience were used to generate the items for the TMSE survey. As previously explained in Chapter 4, at this stage of scale development, all of the competencies were used because content underrepresentation risks compromising scale validity (Messick, 1995; also see Section 4.6.2.1.). An example of an item, created using the method stated in Section

4.6.2.2., is shared in Figure 6.1. A full list of all of the items generated for the TMSES survey can be found in Appendix L.

Figure 6.1

Response Options for an Item in the TMSES

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

As Figure 6.1 shows, each item in the TMSE survey was rated on a 0 to 10 scale, with the stem “How confident are you that you *can* ...” indicating the nature of self-efficacy beliefs, i.e., they are based on what a respondent believes about their own capability to execute a given task or action successfully when they provide their response (Bandura, 2006, 1997; also see Section 4.6.2.2). In addition, the additional three items included in the TMSES survey from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) were amended to match this stem (see Table 4.1), whereas the original items were used from the Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS). No changes were made to the survey items following feedback from the respondents in the pilot study ($N = 10$) prior to launch (data regarding the respondents who completed the TMSES survey, has been previously shared in Section 4.4.4).

6.2.2. Appropriateness of Data for EFA

Before embarking on the process of conducting an EFA, it is important to check that the data collected is suitable for analysis using this multivariate technique. The tests conducted on the data collected from the 239 respondents completing the questionnaire are described below.

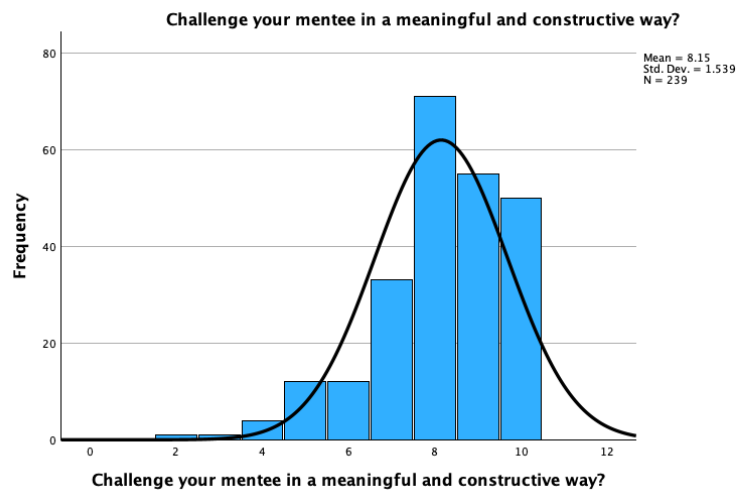
6.2.2.1. *Normality Checks*

Normal distribution of participant responses is required for data to be considered suitable for factor analysis (e.g., Goldberg & Velicer, 2006; Schmitt et al., 2018). Although there is no definite rule with regard to the values of skewness and kurtosis that are considered to be acceptable, Hair et al. (2010) posit that data is distributed normally if skewness is between -2.0 to +2.0. These cut-off values are supported by Curran et al. (1996), who also give normality thresholds of -7.0 to +7.0 for kurtosis. Kline (2016), however, argues for a -3.0 to +3.0 range of acceptability for skewness and suggests that any values < 10.0 for kurtosis are acceptable for data to be considered to meet the normality requirements for EFA.

Having reviewed the data obtained from participants in this study, distribution of item scores show a negative skew for all items but the values obtained for skewness and kurtosis are well within the acceptable ranges outlined above. All values for skewness fell between -2.0 and +2.0 and all values for kurtosis were contained within the -7.0 to +7.0 cut-off. For example, for the item “Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way,” skewness was -0.98 ± 0.16 (*SE*), kurtosis 1.12 ± 0.31 (*SE*), with a range of 8 (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2

Histogram for I2 “How confident are you that you can challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?” (N = 239)



Normality check data for the 16-items retained in the TMSES is presented in Table 6.1 (normality check data for all 44 items is included as Appendix M).

Table 6.1*Normality Checks for the 16 Items in the TMSES (N = 239)*

Item	<i>“How confident are you that you can ...”</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mo</i>	<i>Skew</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>Range</i>
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback ...	8.56	1.27	9	9	-1.28	3.57	8
2	Challenge your mentee...	8.15	1.54	8	8	-0.98	1.12	8
20	Deconstruct practice ...	8.50	1.34	9	9	-1.33	3.67	8
14	Devise a plan for development ...	8.24	1.41	8	8	-1.05	1.97	8
6	Provide scaffolded support	8.38	1.35	8	8	-1.08	2.28	7
28	Link educational theory to practice...	7.92	1.67	8	9	-0.73	0.05	7
39	Use a range of questioning strategies...	8.27	1.36	8	8	-0.79	0.84	7
44	Use effective interpersonal skills ...	9.15	0.99	9	10	-1.17	1.10	5
48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models ...	7.92	1.62	8	8	-0.78	0.80	9
46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge	8.41	1.42	9	10	-0.97	1.25	7
47	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge ...	8.50	1.34	9	9	-1.01	1.24	7
4	Teach effectively ...	8.82	1.11	9	9	-1.06	1.10	5
29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach	8.58	1.31	9	10	-0.74	-0.08	5
27	Remain objective and fair ...	8.77	1.18	9	9a	-0.93	0.45	5
43	Be a strong advocate for your mentee...	9.05	1.07	9	10	-1.17	1.13	5
9	Listen actively ...	8.76	1.18	9	10	-0.61	-0.40	5

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Note. As the sample size is the same across all items in this data set ($N = 239$), all items have the same *SE* for Skewness (*Skew*) = 0.16, and *SE* for Kurtosis = 0.31.

6.2.2.2. Tests for Sampling Adequacy

Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(946) = 8282.91$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the variables are sufficiently correlated for factor analysis. In addition, the value obtained for the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) test score was .954, well above the .60 required, as suggested by Coolican (2019). As this value is considered to be "marvellous" (Kaiser & Rice, 1974), this indicates that the data obtained from the TMSES survey is highly suitable for EFA.

6.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

This section will first outline the findings from the initial run, which I have termed the "initial factor solution." To make sense of this multi-step iterative process, I will provide details with regard to the decisions I made following this first initial run, illustrated with examples of my findings. I will then present the "final factor solution" with the findings from this run, which suggests that a 16-item two-factor model offers the most parsimonious solution for the TMSE construct (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

6.3.1. Initial Factor Solution

6.3.1.1. Correlations

As the data collected passed the sampling adequacy checks given above, participant responses were analysed using principal axis factoring (PAF) with Direct Oblimin (oblique rotation). IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was used to conduct the PAF, with delta set to the default value of 0 for the factor rotation. In addition, small coefficients were suppressed ($\leq .50$) to enable better interpretability of the solutions

generated, as advised by the literature (e.g., Field, 2017). All further methodological details and my justifications regarding the choices made can be found in Chapter 4.

After an initial solution was obtained, the correlation matrix (R-matrix) was inspected. Using the criteria suggested by Field (2017), any values for the Pearson correlation coefficients $< .30$ or $> .80$, between pairs of items in this matrix were identified, reviewed and considered for removal. Consequently, all items with weak and strong correlations were highlighted in the correlation matrix for the initial run. An example of this is provided in Figure 6.3. In this figure, blue shading highlights the correlations $\leq .30$.

Figure 6.3

Using the Correlation Matrix to Identify Items for Review and Possible Removal

	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	Prepare your mentee for their role within the current educational landscape?	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?
Provide constructive and	1.00			
Challenge your mentee	.77	1.00		
Prepare your mentee for	.60	.56	1.00	
Teach effectively and	.46	.43	.44	1.00
Behave in a respectful	.29	.24	.22	.28
Provide scaffolded	.71	.64	.54	.56
Facilitate access to wider	.28	.21	.31	.23
Operate in an	.29	.26	.24	.30
Listen actively in order to	.40	.35	.39	.36
Display high	.51	.52	.37	.50
Co-construct solutions to	.61	.57	.42	.43
Model effective practice,	.44	.42	.42	.66
Devise a plan for	.65	.64	.59	.53
Demonstrate emotional	.51	.48	.41	.42

There were 14 items (I) in total that had weaker correlations, all of which had ≤ 3 , bar I4 “Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?” which had 6, and the additional three items highlighted in Figure 6.3, namely, I5 “Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards your mentee, colleagues and learners?” which had a total of 12 weaker correlations; I7 “Facilitate access to wider expertise within your setting for your mentee, e.g., to observe other practitioners teach?” had 33; and I8 “Operate in an empathetic way, responding to your mentee’s needs with kindness?” had 12. The four items highlighted above were each reviewed in turn and considered for removal. For example, I7, although weakly correlated with the other items in the set, did load onto a factor (F) in the initial solution, as can be seen in Table 6.2, with a factor loading of .41 on F5.

In conjunction with the correlation matrix, factor loadings (Table 6.2) were used to guide my decision making as to what items to retain and which ones to remove. In the case of I7, as a factor loading of $> .40$ is thought to indicate a “typical lower limit” for cut-off (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988, p.266), even though I7 was weakly correlated with the other items in this set, I decided to retain this item in the second run because it could be important. Additionally, as I knew that “providing access to suitable models to facilitate vicarious learning opportunities for their mentee” is supported by theory e.g., SCT (Bandura, 1997), this also played a part in my decision making.

Table 6.2*Pattern Matrix for the Initial Solution Generated From the EFA (N = 239)*

Item	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>'How confident are you that you can ...'</i>						
Help your mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully?	.79					
Support your mentee to address their own barriers to learning?	.64					
Support your mentee to remove barriers to learning for learners/pupils?	.61					
Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of your mentee, giving them the space the need to develop their practice?	.59					
Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet your mentee's needs?	.56					
Work with your mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals?	.54					
Give your mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role?	.50					
Help your mentee to navigate and understand the context of your setting?	.45					
Prepare your mentee for their role within the current educational landscape?	.33					
Encourage your mentee to be a self-directed learner?	.33					.31
Provide support for your mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively?	.31					
Operate in an empathetic way, responding to your mentee's needs with kindness?		.78				
Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?		.65				
Demonstrate emotional intelligence in your thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship?		.54				
Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards your mentee, colleagues and learners?		.53				
Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?		.46				
Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in your mentee's development?		.42				
Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying your own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor?	.31	.33				
Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?			.62			
Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?			.58			
Meet the needs of adult learners?			.37			.34
Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession?				.66		
Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?				.64		
Demonstrate a commitment to your role and responsibilities?				.62		
Model effective practice, including planning, teaching and assessment?				.44	.43	

Item	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>'How confident are you that you can ...'</i>						
Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?				.40		
Display high expectations for your mentee?		.35		.38		
Facilitate access to wider expertise within your setting for your mentee e.g. to observe other practitioners teach?					.41	
Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?						.79
Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?						.72
Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?						.60
Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?						.55
Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?						.54
Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?						.54
Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?						.50
Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?						.48
Support and encourage your mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement?	.41					.44
Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?						.44
Devise effective interventions to address your mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth?			.36			.43
Learn with your mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner?						.38
Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria?	.34					.37
Co-construct solutions to complex problems with your mentee?	.33					.35
Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme/pathway requirements?	.34					.34
Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?						.32

^a Rotation converged in 28 iterations.

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

As there were no item pairs with correlations $\geq .80$ in the correlation matrix, this provided a good indication that extreme multicollinearity had been avoided (Field, 2017; Yong & Pearce, 2013). In addition, there were a large number of correlations that were $\geq .30$ thereby strongly indicating that the items were measuring different aspects of the same construct (DeVellis, 2017; Field, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

An additional check was also made after the initial run, by examining the diagonal and off-diagonal correlations in the anti-image matrix. As the values obtained for all diagonal correlations were $> .50$ and the off-diagonal correlations were small, this indicated that the shared variance between the items could be explained by common factors. This meant that no items needed to be considered for deletion following this check (e.g., Field, 2017). Furthermore, after all items with correlation values $\leq .30$ had been reviewed as recommended by the literature (e.g., Coolican, 2019; Field, 2017), no items were removed on the basis of their correlation coefficients alone following the initial run.

6.3.1.2. Factors

6.3.1.2.1. Factor Extraction

In the initial run, Kaiser's criterion (Kaiser, 1960), the default setting in IBM SPSS Statistics, was used to extract factors with eigenvalues > 1.0 . A scree plot (Cattell, 1966) was then generated using this data. A total of 6 factors were extracted in the initial solution, accounting for 66.08% of the total variance, which is presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3

Total Variance Explained for the Initial Factor Solution Generated by the EFA
(N = 239)

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	21.30	48.40	48.40	20.92	47.55	47.55	16.05
2	2.29	5.20	53.60	1.90	4.31	51.86	9.90
3	1.71	3.90	57.50	1.31	2.98	54.84	7.15
4	1.42	3.22	60.72	1.03	2.35	57.19	11.48
5	1.26	2.87	63.59	0.83	1.89	59.08	3.27
6	1.09	2.49	66.08	0.69	1.58	60.65	14.26
7	0.98	2.23	68.32				
8	0.88	1.99	70.31				
9	0.79	1.80	72.11				
10	0.77	1.75	73.86				

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

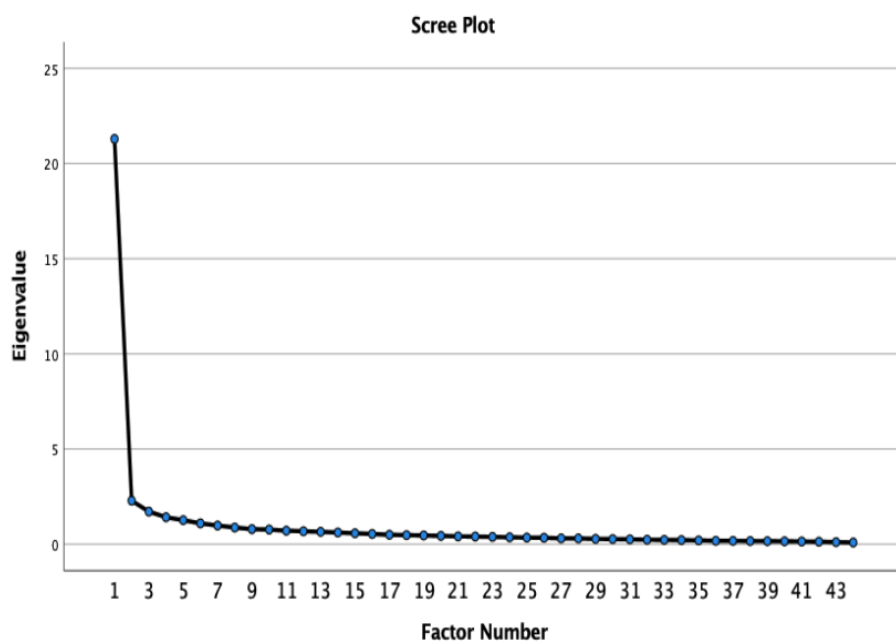
Note. This is the data for the first 10 factors. As only small increments are seen in the cumulative % for each factor after the first 10, the reporting of this data is superfluous to requirements. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

As Kaiser's criterion is considered to be too generous by some, leading to over-retention of factors (DeVellis, 2017; Goldberg & Velicer, 2006; Zwick & Velicer, 1986), the scree test was used alongside this test to inform the decision as to how many factors should be retained. The scree test is often considered to be the “best choice” for determining the number of factors to retain (Costello & Osborne, 2005) and is considered to provide “generally accurate” results with regard to factor retention, compared to Kaiser’s criterion (Zwick & Velicer, 1986). Furthermore, having a sample size greater than 200 increases the reliability of the scree test (Stevens, 2002), indicating that it is a suitable test to use with this data set ($N = 239$) in order to determine the number of factors to retain.

The scree test consists of a plot of each eigenvalue against the factor it is associated with (Cattell, 1966). The number of factors to be retained can be determined by identifying the point of inflexion, also known as the “elbow,” where the gradient of the line changes dramatically. All factors to the left of the inflection point, or above the elbow, should be retained and all factors afterwards—referred to as the “scree”—should be discarded (Cattell, 1966; Coolican, 2019; Field, 2017). It is common for the first factor to account for the majority of the variance (Cattell, 1966), with the first factor in this data set accounting for 48.40% of the total variance in the initial run, the gradient produced is indeed redolent of a cliff face as can be seen in the scree plot in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4

Scree Plot for the Initial Factor Solution (N = 239)



From the scree plot obtained from the initial factor solution (Figure 6.4), even though there is a noticeably steep drop between factor one and factor two,

suggesting that only one factor may need to be retained, it is still not completely clear that this is the case. The primary reason for this is that a factor model should explain *at least* 50% of the total variance (e.g., Field, 2017), and, at 48.40%, the one-factor model suggested by the scree plot in Figure 6.4 does not. This meant that there was a serious risk of underfactoring if I had only used the data from the scree plot to decide as to the number of factors to extract. The reasoning is that this would have resulted in a model that did not represent the TMSE construct, as separate factors - if present - would have remained hidden in the one factor extracted (e.g., Preacher et al., 2013). Likewise, if I had only used Kaiser's criterion to decide on the number of factors to extract, there would be a risk of overfactoring, which poses a risk to model fit, stability, and interpretability (e.g., Schmitt et al., 2018).

As both under- and overfactoring have serious ramifications for construct validity, deciding on the number of factors to extract is therefore of critical importance. As the scree test and Kaiser's criterion offered very different solutions, I decided to investigate the factor models produced using a range of fixed factor extractions, namely, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. As any one of these could be capable of providing a possible factor model for the TMSE construct, it was important that all possible options were explored. Each potential solution suggested from these factor extractions was assessed for stability using factor loadings, total variance, and correlation data. In addition, communalities were also used to help me to assess the adequacy of the factor model, and to identify items which may require removal after review.

6.3.1.2.2. Model Stability

One critical concern for researchers conducting an EFA, is the stability of the factor model suggested by the extraction method. For a factor to be retained, it is suggested that at least three variables (items) should load “strongly” onto it (e.g., Child, 2006; Coolican, 2019; Field, 2017). However, as there is no consensus as to what value indicates a strong factor loading, it is far from clear as to what the cut-off point should be. For example, many researchers choose to interpret item loadings between .30 to .40 as being significant (Cudeck & O’Dell, 1994; Hatcher & Stepanski, 1994; Schmitt & Sass, 2011), with Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) specifying a loading of .32 to be used as a minimum cut-off point for factor retention (p.509), and Goldberg and Velicer (2006) giving a figure for high factor loadings as $\geq .50$ (p.5).

The reason why there is so much ambiguity around this decision is explained by Cudeck and O’Dell (1994), who argue that the “true” value for item loading significance is dependent on other factors that are study specific, such as size of sample and rotation method used. This view is shared by Stevens (2002), who advises that this criterion needs to be considered in relation to the sample size, e.g., for larger samples lower loadings may be acceptable.

Having reviewed the literature, the criterion used in this analysis for a strong or salient factor loading for item retention was a loading of $\geq .40$, which indicates a “typical lower limit” for cut-off as given by Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988, p.266). Having examined all loadings in the pattern matrix generated from the initial run (Table 6.3), four factors had $\geq$ three items with loadings $\geq .40$. Items with weaker loadings, in this case $< .40$, were deleted and removed from the analysis alongside any items that were cross-loaded, which is to say any items that loaded strongly on

two or more factors with a loading of $\geq .32$ (Costello & Osborne, 2005). An example of a cross-loading item can be seen in Table 6.2, where I40 “Meet the needs of adult learners” has a loading of .37 on F3 and .34 on F6, with both $< .40$, indicating weaker loadings.

Before making a final decision as to whether or not to delete cross-loading items, they were reviewed to assess their theoretical and/or practical importance to teacher mentoring. For example, for the cross-loading item I40 “Meet the needs of adult learners,” as a teacher mentor could meet the needs of their adult mentee by demonstrating the rest of the competencies in the set, this item was considered to be redundant and was subsequently deleted after the initial round. Another cross-loading item was I13 “Model effective practice....” Again, although theoretically this competency is likely to be of importance to the act of mentoring (e.g., self-efficacy and SCT [Bandura, 1997]), this competency was deleted as arguably modelling effective practice is part of I4 “Teach effectively ...,” potentially indicating redundancy.

These examples are illustrative of the types of judgement calls that were made throughout this iterative process of item review, which is also possibly why EFA is described by some as an “art” (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). It is also important to recognise what I - as the researcher - brought to the analyses presented in this chapter, in terms of both my knowledge and understanding of teacher mentoring. An EFA is not completely objective. This will be discussed later in Section 6.3.5, when alternative factor models for the TMSE construct will be explored.

In summary, this means that although the six-factor model suggested by the initial factor solution explains 66.08% of the total variance (Table 6.3), the factor

loadings in the pattern matrix (Table 6.2) suggest that this six-factor model is unstable and therefore offers a poor representation of the TMSE construct.

6.3.1.2.3. Model Structure

The factor correlation matrix for the initial factor solution (Table 6.4), also provided me with important information regarding the relationships between the factors (F) in the six-factor model generated in the initial run. This data indicated that F1 and F6 were the most strongly correlated, followed by F1 and F4, whereas there were very weak or negligible correlations between F3 and F5, F4 and F5, F1 and F5, and F5 and F6 (when using values for weak and strong correlations as suggested by Field, 2017). Theoretically, as I would have expected the factors in a model representing the TMSE construct to be moderately to strongly correlated (see Section 4.6.5.2 in Chapter 4), this told me that a six-factor solution did not offer a good fit for this data, giving me further cause to reject the six-factor model generated in the initial run.

Table 6.4*Factor Correlation Matrix Generated from the Initial Factor Solution (N = 239)*

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1.00					
2	.49	1.00				
3	.41	.31	1.00			
4	.51	.41	.41	1.00		
5	.22	.24	.09	.19	1.00	
6	.62	.33	.29	.48	.22	1.00

Notes. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method; Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

The final check made in terms of evaluating the model structure and suitability of the six-factor model was to inspect the communalities. The extracted communalities for this model were generally high, with a mean value across all items of .61, i.e., 61% of each variable's (item's) variance is explained by the six factors extracted in the initial run. However, this does not provide evidence regarding the goodness of fit of this factor model—how well the entire factor model represents the data. As there were no items with low communalities $\leq .20$ (Child, 2006), no items were removed from the analysis following this check.

6.3.1.3. *Item Deletion and Retention*

After all data obtained from the initial run had been reviewed and evaluated, a total of nine items were identified for deletion: I37 “Devise effective interventions to address your mentee’s weaknesses ...”; I40 “Meet the needs of adult learners”; I22 “Accurately and fairly assess progress ...”; I19 “Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings ...”; I17 “Demonstrate self-awareness ...”; I16 “Encourage your mentee to be a self-directed learner ...”; I13 “Model effective practice ...”; I12 “Co-construct solutions ...”; and I10 “Display high expectations for your mentee ...”. Using the 35 items retained after the initial run, the PAF was run again for a second time. Again, six factors were extracted to see if the item deletions had made a difference to factor stability, and they had not.

After reviewing the data again following this second run, using the same processes as outlined for the initial run, three more items were identified for removal: I35 “Support and encourage your mentee to be critically reflective ...”; I37 “Devise effective interventions ...”; I41 “Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest ...”, leaving a total of 32 items to take forward into the third run.

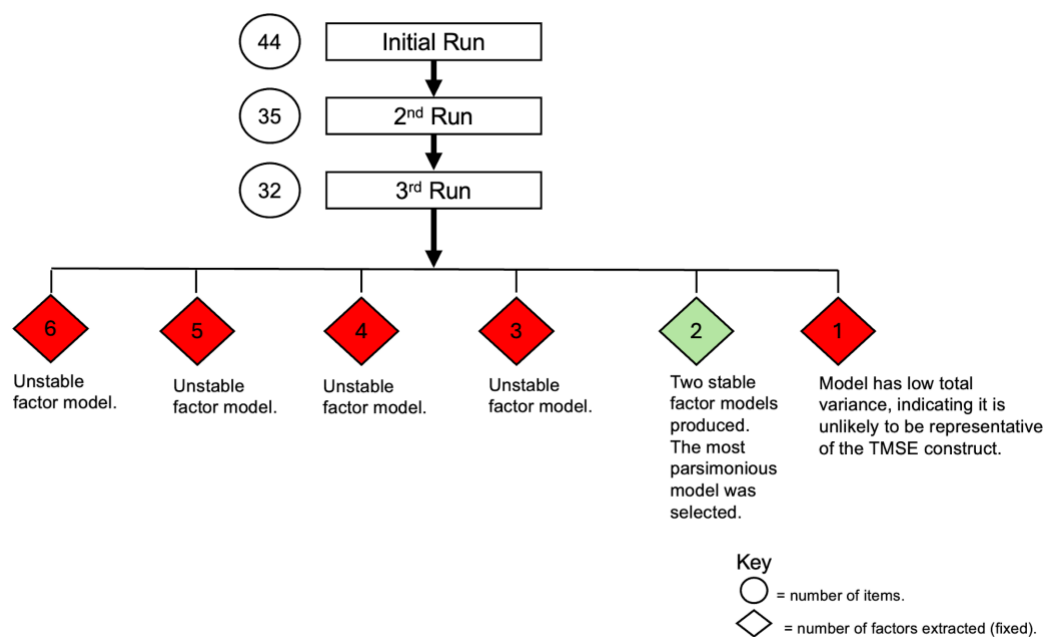
Using these items, six-factor, five-factor, and one-factor extractions were attempted in the third run, none of which resulted in a stable solution. The six-factor extraction was still unstable, with only two items strongly loading on each of the factors F2, F3, and F4, and with no items strongly loading onto F6. The five-factor extraction also proved to be unstable, with only one item loading strongly on F3 and only two loading strongly on F4; and the one-factor extraction was rejected at this stage because it told me little about the structure of the TMSE construct, as it did not meet the threshold value (50%) for total variance.

6.3.2. The Third Run Onwards with Four-Factor, Three-Factor, and Two-Factor Extractions

The 32 items that met the retention criteria from the initial and second runs were used to investigate the factor models generated from four-factor, three-factor, and two-factor extractions. This process is summarised in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5

Factor Models Resulting From Fixed Factor Extractions (N = 239)



Notes. Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation Method: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation.

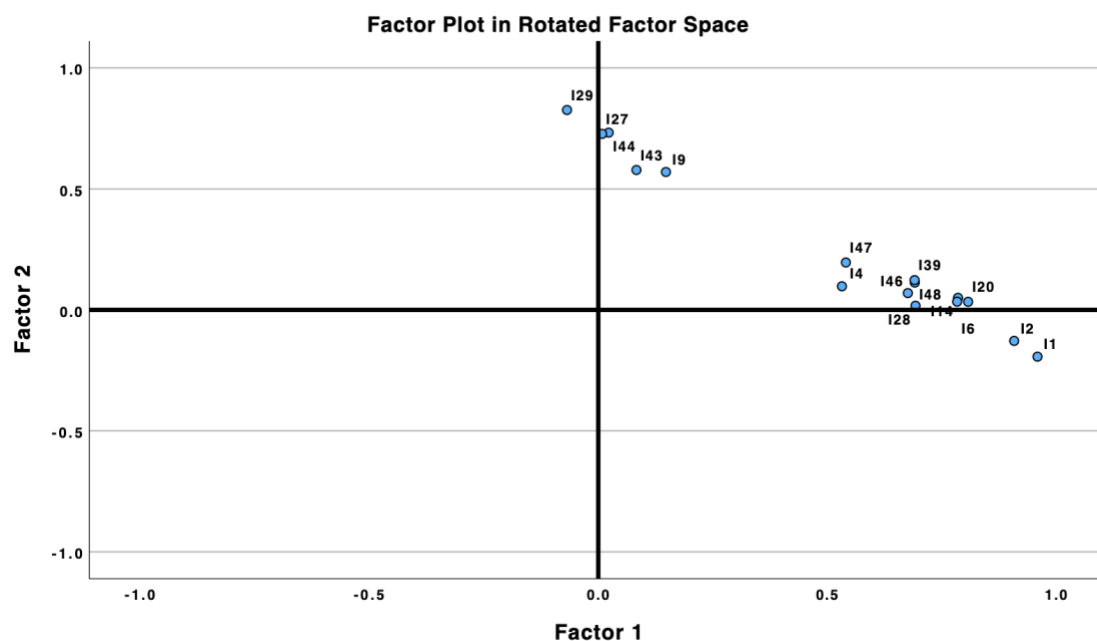
Each fixed extraction resulted in different outcomes, as the loadings for the items were different for each extraction in the third run. As this meant that different items could be deleted, e.g., due to weak correlations, weak loadings, and cross-loadings, for each fixed-factor extraction, each extraction was allowed to follow its own path.

6.3.3. Final Factor Solution

At the end of this iterative process, a 16-item two-factor model produced from the two-factor extraction provided the most parsimonious solution. As both factors in this model are clearly defined, with no cross-loading items, the structure is “clean” and theoretically interpretable. This can be seen in the pattern matrix in Table 6.5., with the clustering of variables possibly better visualised by looking at the factor plot in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6

Factor Plot for the 16-Item Two-Factor Model Produced From the EFA (N = 239)



Notes. Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring; Rotation Method: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Each plot represents an item.

Table 6.5*Pattern Matrix Produced From the EFA Suggests a Two-Factor Structure (N = 239)*

Item	Item description	Factor	
		1	2
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?	.96	
2	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	.91	
20	Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?	.81	
14	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?	.79	
6	Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?	.78	
28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?	.69	
48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?	.69	
39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?	.69	
46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?	.68	
47	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?	.54	
4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?	.53	
29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?		.83
44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?		.73
27	Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?		.73
43	Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?		.58
9	Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?		.57

Notes. Extracted using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF); rotation method used: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization; rotation converged in 4 iterations. This table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

6.3.3.1. Total Variance

As this 16-item two-factor solution also explains 61.70% of the total variance, which is well above the 50% required (Field, 2017), it suggests that the extracted factors account for a substantial proportion of variability in the data, as can be seen in Table 6.6. This also suggests that this model may be a “good fit,” as the two-factor model looks to be capturing the underlying structure. However, following item removal, factor one is now explaining more of the total variance in the model (51.87%) than it did in the initial solution (48.40%).

Table 6.6

Total Variance Explained for the Final Two-Factor Solution Generated by the EFA (N = 239)

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	8.30	51.87	51.87	7.88	49.26	49.26	7.55
2	1.57	9.83	61.70	1.14	7.12	56.38	5.48
3	0.96	6.01	67.71				
4	0.74	4.60	72.31				
5	0.62	3.89	76.20				
6	0.55	3.45	79.65				
7	0.47	2.97	82.62				
8	0.46	2.88	85.50				
9	0.40	2.52	88.02				
10	0.36	2.28	90.30				
11	0.33	2.06	92.36				
12	0.32	1.97	94.33				
13	0.30	1.85	96.18				
14	0.23	1.43	97.61				
15	0.19	1.22	98.83				
16	0.19	1.17	100.00				

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.
Note. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

6.3.3.2. *Correlation Matrices*

The correlation matrix was also examined for the final solution, which can be seen in Table 6.7. No correlations were $\geq .80$ and few pairs of items had correlations $\leq .30$, again, as with the initial solution, the majority were $\geq .30$. By the end of the EFA many of the items that had larger numbers of weak correlations: I5, I7, and I8, had been removed. The only item remaining from this group was I4 “Teach effectively ...,” now with only two coefficients $\leq .30$. In addition, as the determinant of the correlation matrix was 2.65×10^{-5} , greater than the required 1×10^{-5} as recommended by Field (2017), this indicated that there was no issue with multicollinearity. Furthermore, having examined the reproduced correlation matrix there were 28 (23.0%) nonredundant residuals with absolute values $> .05$. As these residuals represent the differences between the observed values (contained within the correlation matrix) and the values generated from the model, smaller residuals indicate that the model is a better fit (Field, 2017). And, as much less than 50% of the residuals were $> .05$, this indicates that the proposed model is a “good fit” (Yong & Pearce, 2013, p.90).

6.3.3.3. *Communalities*

Next, the communalities were reviewed for the 16-item two-factor model, which can be seen in Table 6.8. As high communalities can indicate that the factor model fits the data well (e.g., Stevens, 2002), and many items have communalities that are high for this 16-item two-factor model, e.g., I1, I2, I20, it is not true of all items. For example, I4 “Teach effectively ...” is poorly explained by the factors,

Table 6.7*Correlation Matrix for the Final Factor Solution (N = 239)*

Item	I1	I2	I28	I39	I48	I14	I46	I20	I6	I47	I4	I44	I9	I43	I29	I27
I1	1.00															
I2	.77	1.00														
I28	.57	.61	1.00													
I39	.63	.61	.59	1.00												
I48	.58	.62	.54	.69	1.00											
I14	.65	.64	.57	.61	.64	1.00										
I46	.54	.57	.67	.54	.59	.58	1.00									
I20	.72	.68	.53	.65	.59	.67	.58	1.00								
I6	.71	.64	.44	.57	.59	.75	.52	.73	1.00							
I47	.50	.54	.51	.57	.55	.51	.53	.53	.49	1.00						
I4	.46	.43	.41	.40	.44	.53	.46	.50	.56	.45	1.00					
I44	.32	.36	.34	.43	.37	.45	.43	.43	.40	.41	.39	1.00				
I9	.40	.35	.25	.36	.43	.48	.33	.51	.55	.40	.36	.51	1.00			
I43	.36	.37	.24	.44	.39	.34	.30	.42	.41	.34	.28	.55	.45	1.00		
I29	.29	.32	.42	.42	.42	.40	.39	.39	.37	.39	.31	.55	.53	.45	1.00	
I27	.31	.38	.42	.44	.43	.40	.38	.38	.35	.44	.27	.52	.46	.44	.63	1.00

Note. A cell shaded light blue indicates the value is between .301 and .35; a cell shaded mid-blue indicates the value is $\leq .30$

Table 6.8*Communalities for the Final Two-Factor Solution Generated From the EFA (N = 239)*

Item	Item description: <i>How confident are you that you can ...</i>	Initial	Extraction
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance ...?	.71	.72
2	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	.69	.69
28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?	.62	.50
39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee ...?	.64	.60
48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques ...?	.61	.59
14	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee ...?	.68	.67
46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support ...?	.58	.52
20	Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't ...?	.69	.69
6	Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?	.73	.65
47	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, ...?	.48	.47
4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?	.40	.36
44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship ...?	.52	.56
9	Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?	.51	.46
43	Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?	.42	.40
29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?	.53	.61
27	Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?	.50	.54

Note. Extracted using Principal Axis Factoring.

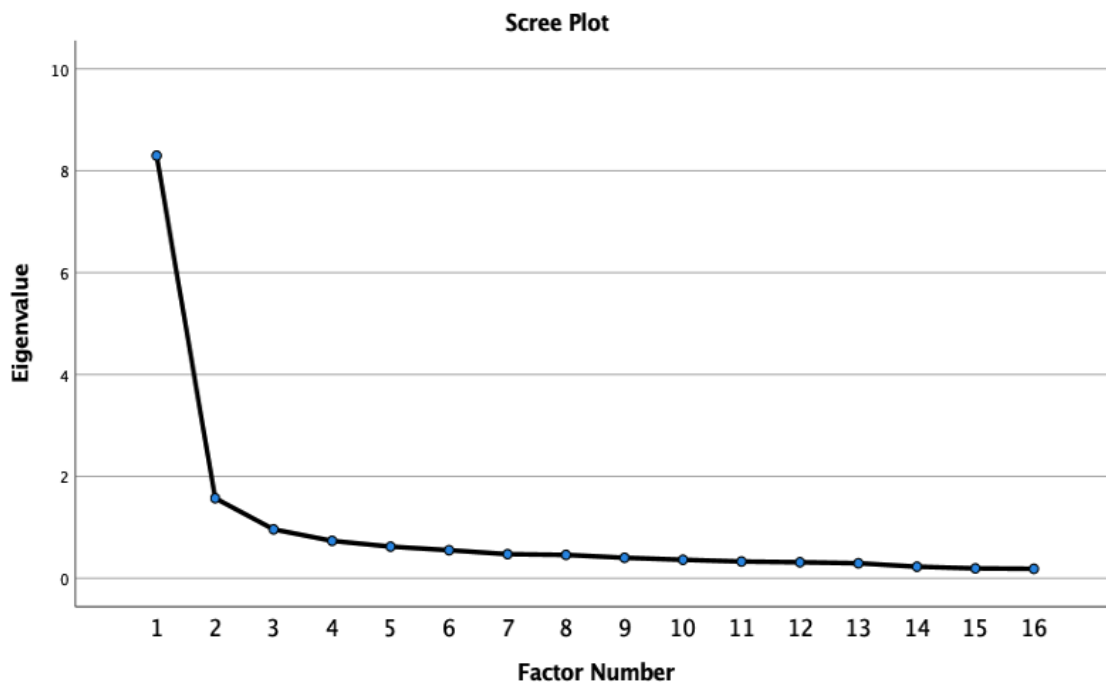
as after extraction only 36% (.36) of its variance is captured. However, as the communality for I4 is larger than the suggested figure for removal of $\leq .20$ by Child (2006), and it has a strong loading of .53 on F1 in the pattern matrix (Table 6.5), there may still be good reason to retain this item. Especially when one considers its significance for teacher mentoring and TMSE beliefs: an effective teacher should be able to provide their mentee with high-quality pedagogical modelling, and learning from modelling is a source of TSE for their mentee (Bandura, 1997). However, as teaching and teacher mentoring are thought to require different competencies (knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attributes; see Schwille, 2008), this competency may not affect a teacher mentor's beliefs in their ability to mentor as strongly as it would affect their TSE.

6.3.3.4. Factor Loadings

Reviewing the factor loadings in the pattern matrix (Table 6.5) shows that 11 items load onto the first factor, which I have termed F1, and five items load onto the second factor, termed F2. Each factor has greater than the minimum critical value of three variables (items), as recommended by Velicer and Fava (1998), and both factors have five or more items loading with values $> .50$, indicating that each factor is “solid” or strong (Costello & Osborne, 2005), as both factors are well-defined. Further evidence to support the two-factor model is provided from the scree plot generated for the final solution in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7

Scree Plot for the Final Factor Solution (N = 239)



Although there is still a clear elbow at factor two, where the scree begins is still ambiguous; however, it appears to provide a much clearer indication here that the scree comes after factor 2, when compared to the scree plot for the initial solution (Figure 6.4). For the final factor solution, this looks to happen at factor three or four, providing further support for the two-factor model as suggested by the final factor solution (also see Yong & Pearce, 2013).

Even though both of the factors in this model appear to be well defined, further testing will be needed to establish if this 16-item two-factor model is representative of the construct. One reason for this, as previously explained, is that there is no real consensus as to what a strong factor loading is. For example, looking at the item loadings on F2 in the pattern matrix (Table 6.5), I can see that it is just shy of the suggested figure for factor reliability as proposed by Guadagnoli and Velicer (1998) of

≥ 4 loadings at $> .60$. Although I still have some confidence in the proposed model, as the loadings are all $> .50$ which are still considered to be strong (e.g., Costello & Osborne, 2005), as the loadings do not quite reach the suggested figure of $> .60$, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be needed to test this model. Furthermore, and as to be expected, as both of the factors in this model are moderately to strongly correlated as can be seen in Table 6.9, it is important to be sure that the factors are indeed representing different aspects of the TMSE construct. However, and in support of the two-factor model, F1 and F2 are not so strongly correlated ($> .80$) that it indicates they are measuring the same thing, there is a difference there. Moreover, if the nature of the items loading onto each factor is given due consideration, as will be discussed in Section 6.3.4, then it becomes apparent that, theoretically, there is a difference between the types of items loading strongly onto F1 and F2.

Table 6.9

Factor Correlation Matrix Generated From the EFA for the Final Two-Factor Solution (N = 239)

Factor	1	2
1	1.00	.65
2	.65	1.00

Notes. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Another way to conceptualise the structure of the TMSE construct and investigate the veracity of the 16-item two-factor model suggested by the EFA, is to examine the structure matrix (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10*Structure Matrix Produced From the EFA (N = 239)*

Item	Item description	Factor	
		1	2
	<i>How confident are you that you can ...</i>		
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?	.83	.43
20	Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?	.83	.56
2	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	.83	.46
14	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?	.82	.56
6	Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?	.81	.54
39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?	.77	.57
48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?	.76	.56
46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?	.72	.51
28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?	.70	.47
47	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?	.67	.55
4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?	.60	.44
29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?	.47	.78
44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?	.50	.75
27	Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?	.48	.73
9	Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?	.52	.67
43	Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?	.50	.63

Notes. Extracted using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF); rotation method used: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

The structure matrix shows the correlations between the observed variables - the items in the TMSES - and the extracted factors. The correlations in the structure matrix (Table 6.10) show that all of the items loading onto F1 have stronger relationships with this factor compared to F2, and that all of the items loading onto F2 have stronger relationships with this factor compared to F1.

When the data from the pattern matrix, communalities, and structure matrix are used together it allows a more nuanced understanding of what the relationships between items (variables) and factors are. For example, looking again at I4 “Teach effectively...,” even though only 36% of this item’s variance is explained by the extracted factors (Table 6.8, communalities) it still has a moderate to strong relationship with F1 with a correlation of .60 (Table 6.10, structure matrix), and is moderately to strongly associated with F1 with a unique loading of .53 (Table 6.5, pattern matrix). This gives me more confidence that I4 belongs in the TMSE scale, because even though F1 only explains $(0.53)^2 \times 100 = 28.1\%$ of this item’s variance, I4 is still moderately to strongly correlated with it (.60).

6.3.3.5. Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the reliability of the 16-item TMSES, and also its subscales. The reason for this choice is that this measure is likely the most widely used in the social sciences, particularly in relation to EFA and scale development (e.g., DeVellis, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). As can be seen in Table 6.11, all alphas were high with values $\geq .70$. These data indicate that the TMSES and its subscales have internal consistency, or reliability (e.g., Nunnally, 1978), providing evidence that items in the TMSES are likely measuring the same construct. In addition, the high alphas for each of the subscales suggest that each

subscale is measuring a different aspect of the TMSES construct, i.e., the items in subscale F1 have a shared quality, or homogeneity, as do the items in subscale F2.

Table 6.11

Reliability Statistics for the TMSES (N = 239)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
TMSES	0.94	16
F1	0.94	11
F2	0.84	5

Note. The data in this table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

As the high alphas achieved for the TMSES and its subscales are considered to be good (0.84) to excellent (0.94) (e.g., Field, 2017; Nunnally, 1978), the TMSES looks to have promise as a reliable instrument for measuring a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs and is a candidate for further scale development. In this EFA, as no items were added or deleted from the TMSES to improve reliability of this scale, no ethically questionable attempts at "alpha hacking" were performed. In addition, although an alpha of 0.94 is considered to be excellent, it is just within acceptable tolerance, as alphas can also be too high, which may indicate item redundancy (e.g., Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Furthermore, as the TMSES is not excessively lengthy at 16-items this does not inadvertently inflate alpha values either (e.g., Peterson, 1994).

6.3.3.6. *Convergent and Divergent Validity*

The validity of the TMSES was also investigated, with tests for convergent and divergent validity conducted as previously described in Chapter 4. The three items

selected from the “Engaged Teachers Scale” (ETS; Klassen et al., 2013) were used to test for divergent validity, and the three items taken from the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) were used to test for convergent validity (see Table 4.1 for item details). The results from both of these tests can be seen in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12

Bivariate Correlations Between TSES and ETS Items and the TMSES (N = 239)

	TSES_3 items	TMSES Factor 1	TMSES Factor 2	TMSES all items
ETS_3 items	.42**	.51**	.44**	.53**
TSES_3 items	1	.61**	.51**	.63**

Note. ** $p < .001$; ETS is the Engaged Teachers Scale; TSES is the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. This table has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

The ETS and TSES scales were chosen on the basis of their similarity (convergent validity) and difference (divergent validity) to the construct of TMSE. For example, as teaching is an important part of a teacher mentor's role, a teacher mentor's effectiveness as a teacher may affect their mentoring effectiveness (e.g., Goldhaber et al., 2020; Roehrig et al., 2008). Consequently, a teacher mentor's self-beliefs with regard to their teaching capabilities (their TSE beliefs) may influence their perceptions with regard to their capability to mentor another colleague to teach effectively (their TMSE beliefs). Teacher engagement, on the other hand, is possibly less likely to influence TMSE as it is theoretically different from the construct of self-efficacy. That being said, there is some evidence to suggest that TSE is related to teacher engagement (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Given this, as I expected the items from the TMSES to be more strongly correlated with the items from the TSES than the items from the ETS, the bivariate correlations in Table 6.12 provided evidence that this was the case. A weaker correlation is seen between the ETS items and the TMSES ($r = .53$), compared to the correlation between the TSES items and TMSES ($r = .63$). Furthermore, these levels of correlation between the TMSES and the TSES, and the TMSES and the ETS, were both $< .80$, indicating that the TMSES is likely to be measuring a different construct to the TSES and the ETS. Therefore, these data provide evidence that the TMSES has both divergent and convergent validity.

It is also important to note here there that there is a stronger bivariate correlation between the items from the TSES and the items from F1 of the TMSES ($r = .61$) compared to the items from the TSES and the items from F2 ($r = .51$), which provides further evidence that the different factors in the TMSES have different qualities. Furthermore, as TSE may be related to teacher engagement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014), the stronger correlation between the items in the ETS and the items in F1 of the TMSES ($r = .51$), compared to the correlation between the ETS items and the items in F2 of the TMSES ($r = .44$), also strengthens this claim. This will be discussed further in the next section, where the qualities of the factors in the TMSES will be explicated.

6.3.4. Naming Factors

The EFA used in Phase 3 of this research has helped to uncover, or extract, two latent factors that look to be explaining the patterns of correlations among the manifest variables: the TMSES survey responses, collected for this study. As

expected, the factors F1 and F2 are interrelated (see Table 6.9) and this correlation is moderate to strong. This indicates that the factors overlap conceptually, even though there still appears to be a difference between them. One way of understanding what the difference between both of these factors might be is to take a closer look at the qualities of the items that load most strongly onto them. From this understanding, “meaningful” names for the factors can then be assigned (e.g., Oller, 2014).

In this study, the items loading onto F1 and F2 appear to be different in terms of their overall central quality or nature. The items strongly loading onto F1 in the pattern matrix (Table 6.5) are associated with the act of teaching, specifically relating to the TMSE beliefs teacher mentors have with regard to their capabilities to provide and facilitate experiences needed for their mentee to gain teaching competency. For example, the item that loads most strongly onto F1 is I1 “(How confident are you that you can ...) Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee’s progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?” (.96). This item is related to a teacher mentor’s ability to provide feedback designed to facilitate their mentee’s development as a teacher through the identification and setting of “next steps,” a collaborative goal-setting exercise. For a teacher mentor, the ability to demonstrate this competency also depends on their knowledge and experience of teaching. For example, for feedback to be meaningful they need to know what effective teaching is or think (believe) that they know what it is.

For F2, the items that load strongly onto this factor are all related to a teacher mentor’s beliefs about their ability to form and maintain relationships with their mentee. The strongest loading item on F2 is I29 “(How confident are you that you can ...) Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?” (.83). As a non-judgemental approach can help to build trust (e.g., Hobson, 2016), and trust is needed

to build and maintain a professional relationship (e.g., Kram, 1985), this item provides a coherent account of this factor's central quality. For example, if we consider the item that loads the least strongly onto this factor, I9 "(How confident are you that you can ...) Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?" (.57)—again, by "actively listening" to their mentee they will be demonstrating that they value what their mentee has to say, which is crucial for strong relationship building in a mentoring relationship (e.g., Clutterbuck, 2004). Furthermore, the ability to "understand" from another's perspective reflects the attribute of empathy, considered to be a key interpersonal skill required for effective teacher mentoring (e.g., Mackie, 2018).

As many believe that the names of the factors uncovered by an EFA should reflect their central or overarching quality (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), F1 was named as *Pedagogical Practices* and F2 as *Professional Relationships* (Tickell & Klassen, 2024). However, even though these factors have been assigned names, and there is much evidence here to support the 16-item two-factor model presented here, there is still a certain fuzziness to this naming process because the "boundaries of psychological constructs [themselves] are inherently fuzzy" (Ziegler et al., 2015, p.1). For example, all of the items that load cleanly onto each factor in the pattern matrix (Table 6.5) are still correlated with both factors, as can be seen in the structure matrix (Table 6.10), i.e., there is still a relationship there.

To illustrate this, consider the item I2 "Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?" I2 loads very strongly onto *Pedagogical Practices* (.91), and arguably performing this competency successfully requires a knowledge and understanding of what good teaching is because for a "challenge" to be considered to be "meaningful and constructive," it needs to be informed. I2 therefore fits well with the

central quality of this factor. However, it also has a moderate correlation with *Professional Relationships*, with a structure coefficient of .46 as shown in Table 6.10. Theoretically this makes sense, as for a challenge to be perceived as “constructive” by a mentee and not as personally critical or overly harsh, the mentor will need to have established a level of trust in their relationship with their mentee that enables this level of honesty.

It is this level of relatedness between the factors that causes the fuzziness. Furthermore, it is also true that the same sort of fuzziness exists between self-efficacy and other psychological constructs, e.g., self-concept (Marsh et al., 2019; Ziegler et al., 2015). There will be a level of relatedness, as items that have been designed to capture beliefs in one construct will still be capable of capturing the beliefs in another if there are similarities between the domains, such as teaching and teacher mentoring (see Table 6.12).

The factors presented here in this study are abstractions, not tangible entities (e.g., Kline, 2016); factors represent statistical patterns in shared variance that are present in the TMSES survey responses—the observed variables—that are thought to capture the respondents’ TMSE beliefs. In other words, the factors presented here, namely *Pedagogical Practices* and *Professional Relationships*, are not measured directly; they are inferred from the statistical relationships between these variables in *this* data set and represent the common themes or dimensions that may be underlying the TMSE construct. It is therefore important that reification of the factors presented here should be avoided (Hesse-Biber, 2015; Kline, 2016). Instead, the 16-item two-factor model generated from this EFA is offering parsimony: a much simpler explanation of the complex interrelationships between the observed variables in this

data set, variables that have been specifically designed to explore the TMSE construct.

6.3.5 Other Models

The 16-item two-factor model presented in this chapter is not the only model that could be constructed from the data obtained from the TMSES survey. For example, if I had felt particularly strongly that a specific item should be retained, as it had either practical or theoretical importance to the resultant scale, then as long as it did not adversely affect stability of the resultant model then it could have been included. The number of researcher degrees of freedom in an EFA allows the researcher to adopt an exploratory approach. As such, I also experimented with the data to investigate other possible solutions.

One exploratory test conducted using the 16-item two-factor model was to remove the item with the lowest loading (.53) on *Pedagogical Practices* (F1), which was the item I4 “Teach effectively ...” to see what effect it would have. With I4 removed, the structure remained the same (two-factor). However, the total variance explained by this model increased slightly to 63.33%; loadings for items I20 (.80), I14 (.77), I6 (.76), I46 (.67), and I47 (.53) all decreased slightly; and there were slight increases in loadings for items I44 (.74) and I9 (.58) on *Professional Relationships* (F2). As the weaker loadings on F1 fractionally reduced the stability of the model, and I considered the ability to be able to teach effectively was probably important to teacher mentoring in terms of modelling (e.g., Bandura, 1997), I4 was still retained. It follows then, that in this study, a 15-item two-factor model could also provide a possible solution.

Another consideration is that the model presented here, in this study, is for this data set. With a different population (of teacher mentors) at a different time (e.g., the data for this study was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic), different models may result from an EFA, representing different patterns in the underlying data. For this reason, it is widely recognised that replicating the findings from any EFA is very difficult to do (e.g., Yong & Pearce, 2013). Instead of attempting to replicate the findings of an EFA, another way of assessing the veracity of the models generated from an EFA is to test them using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which is a possible next step for the 16-item two-factor model generated from this phase of my research.

Possibly the most important question for a CFA to answer for the model generated from this study concerns the number of factors, i.e., is the TMSE construct best represented by a two-factor model or a one-factor model? Even though I have presented a range of evidence in support of a two-factor model, I still cannot be sure that it is. This is because it is possible that the factors I have identified as *Pedagogical Practices* (F1) and *Professional Relationships* (F2) are not measuring what I think they are. Just because I have given them different names does not mean they are *actually* measuring different things. The naming of factors brings risks, not only of reification, but also of creating jangle fallacies (e.g., Kline, 2016), which is why further testing using a CFA, to confirm or reject the factor model generated by the EFA in this study, is an important next step in the scale development process.

One reason why this 16-item two-factor model could be a 16-item one-factor model is related to the issue of item difficulty. In the set of 44 items used for the TMSES survey, it is likely that there will be items that represent teacher mentoring competencies that are more difficult to achieve than others, both at an individual and

population level. This difference in difficulty is thought to cause problems for factor analysis. Ferguson (1941) found that when there was “a greater difference in difficulty between two items then there was a smaller correlation between them” (p.326). This means that increased difficulty will be represented as additional factors in any resultant factor model, even if all of the items are capturing the same thing (Duncan, 1984), which for this study is the respondents’ TMSE beliefs. This means that the items loading onto the second factor in the TMSES may not be representing any “real” difference at all; there may not be a second latent factor.

To address this, further statistical analysis that does take into account item difficulty could be conducted, for example, a Rasch analysis. A Rasch analysis is a common approach to take following a factor analysis where sets of items are believed to have mixed difficulty levels (e.g., Boateng et al., 2018). In this study, it could be used to check for unidimensionality of the subscales *Pedagogical Practices* and *Professional Relationships*, and also for item fit, thereby providing another way of testing the 16-item two-factor solution generated from this EFA.

6.4. Panoptic Discussion: Phase 2

6.4.1. Summary of Findings: An Overview

The research undertaken in this phase has been, at its heart, exploratory. The primary aim of this study was to develop and deepen existing theoretical understandings of the teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE) construct. This has been achieved by developing a novel and psychometrically robust instrument that is capable of measuring TMSE, the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES;

Tickell & Klassen, 2024). As the aim of this work was theory development and not theory-testing per se, EFA was selected as a methodology specifically for that reason, *to explore*—to explore the beliefs teacher mentors hold about their capabilities to mentor another teacher successfully, in order to try and understand how these beliefs are related to each other. The findings generated from this research have addressed a number of gaps in a much under researched area (as previously discussed in Chapter 3), and, as such, in a small way, have afforded new insights into the *being* and the *doing* of teacher mentoring through the lens of teacher mentoring self-efficacy.

6.4.2. TMSE Beliefs and Their Relationship with Experience

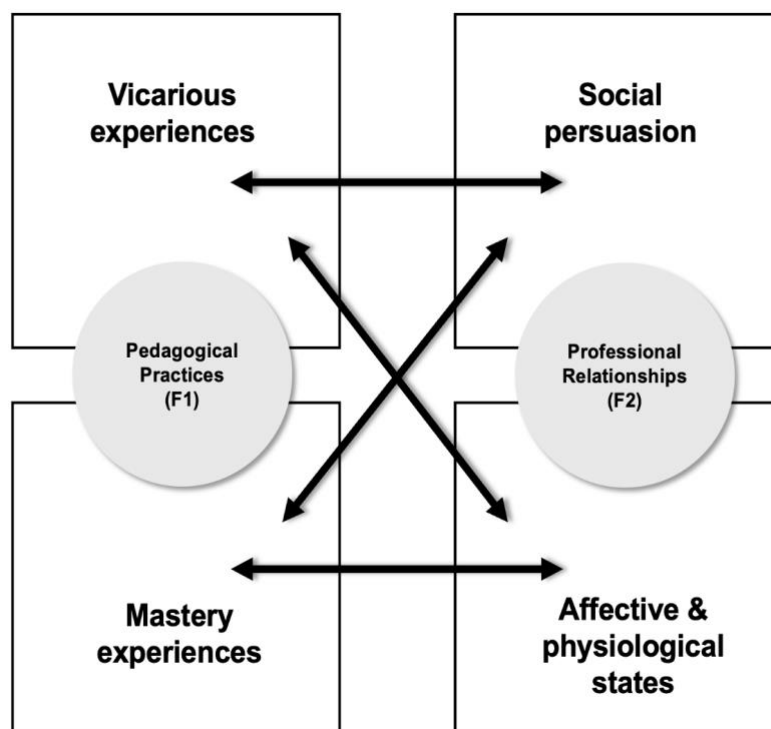
Although TMSE beliefs reflect the perceptions teacher mentors have of their own capabilities with regard to successfully mentoring another teacher, they are not in themselves measures of a teacher mentor's competence. A teacher mentor might believe that they have effective interpersonal skills and that they are capable of using them to build a professional relationship with their mentee (e.g., item I44), but this does not mean that they do have these skills. A teacher mentor could score highly for every single item on the TMSES, but this does not necessarily equate to their performance as a teacher mentor in the field. However, what we believe about what we can and cannot do, is extremely important in terms of motivating us to do what we do, how we do it, and how much energy we invest in getting better at it. In other words, the self-efficacy beliefs a teacher mentor has with regard to their mentoring capabilities will be highly likely to influence their overall effectiveness as a teacher mentor (see Bandura, 1997; and Chapter 3). In many respects, it is therefore advantageous for

teacher mentors, for their mentees, and for the pupils both they and their mentees teach, for teacher mentors to work towards strengthening their self-efficacy beliefs in this domain; and to strengthen one's self-efficacy beliefs requires *experience* (Bandura, 1997).

The TMSE beliefs of the mentors captured by the self-report measures in the TMSE survey have, like all self-efficacy beliefs, been shaped from the experiences they have had. The relationships between the latent factors uncovered by this research and the sources of TMSE are illustrated in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8

The Relationship Between the Latent Factors Uncovered by the EFA (N = 239) and the Sources of Teacher Mentoring Self-Efficacy Beliefs



Note. This modified figure has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

As self-efficacy beliefs are thought to be domain specific (Bandura, 1997), the sources of the respondents' TMSE beliefs in this study, will have come from the experiences they have had - either directly or vicariously - related to their role as a teacher mentor. However, as teacher mentoring is a hybrid activity, it requires knowledge and skills related to both teaching and mentoring. This means that the sources of a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs are wider than those derived from the experiences of teacher mentoring, conducted as a stand-alone discrete activity. For example, there is strong evidence to suggest from this study that TSE and TMSE beliefs are correlated (see Table 6.11). Therefore, it would be highly likely that a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs will also be affected by the experiences they have had as a teacher, and maybe also as a pupil (e.g., Lortie, 1975). In addition, as the generic skills and competencies any mentor needs to perform their role overlap with the specific competencies required of a teacher mentor e.g., I44 "Use effective interpersonal skills ..." (see Chapter 5), this means that wider experiences of mentoring (and teaching), will likely inform the self-efficacy beliefs they have about their ability to mentor another adult effectively in their teacher mentor role.

Although self-efficacy beliefs have a *central* domain specificity, like the latent factors uncovered in this study have a central quality, there is still a fuzziness to them: where does one domain end and another domain start? If in the process of teacher mentoring—a workplace specific activity—we view teacher as mediator (e.g., Orland-Barak, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978) then we could rightly argue that mentoring is a form of teaching. It is therefore unsurprising that the constructs of TSE and TMSE are related. Furthermore, teaching as an activity, as an experience, stretches far beyond the walls of the classroom. Learning from a more knowledgeable other, in all manner of contexts

and domains, has been critical for our survival as a species (see the arguments presented in Chapter 2). All of our experiences influence and affect how we see ourselves, and shape *who* we are. I would strongly argue that the lines between roles, identities, sources of self-efficacy beliefs, and latent factors are not as clean and well-defined as sometimes the literature portrays them to be.

In Figure 6.8, the four sources of TMSE, just like the items that comprise the latent factors and the latent factors themselves, are all interrelated. An experience may be more strongly related to a particular source of TMSE beliefs, but it will still be related to the other sources. Therefore, although I have positioned the factors *Pedagogical Practices* (F1) closer to mastery and vicarious experiences, and *Professional Relationships* (F2) closer to affective and physiological states and social persuasion, there is a looseness to this positioning, it is an approximation, a form of *best fit*: the items in F1 are *more likely to be associated with* these sources of TMSE, and likewise for F2.

To illustrate this point, consider I28 “Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching... .” The modelling of something by a teacher mentor for their mentee is achieved by *doing*, and doing is a type of performance accomplishment. Therefore, I28, which loads strongly (.69) onto *Pedagogical Practices* (F1) is a belief *predominantly centred* on whether or not a teacher mentor thinks they have the ability to provide a mastery experience for their mentee using modelling. However, there is more than one source of self-efficacy influencing this self-belief. For example, a teacher mentor new to the role may never have had direct experience of modelling for another colleague before, but they will still have a self-belief about whether or not they will be able to do this successfully.

This means that the self-efficacy belief they have about their ability to achieve success or not has to come from somewhere. That it is based on something means that it is based on learning from other experiences they have had, for example, through vicarious experiences as a mentee themselves. The point I am making here is that although mastery or *direct* experiences are thought to be the most influential in shaping an individual's self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), it is difficult to completely isolate them in this way because even those direct experiences will be connected to other experiences, e.g., experiences they have had as a teacher or as a pupil (see “assimilation” and Piaget (1976) in Chapter 2). In this way, the sources of teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs are themselves “fuzzy concepts” (Ziegler et al., 2015).

6.4.3. How TMSE Beliefs Change Over Time

By using the data collected from the respondents in the TMSES survey, I was also able to gain an initial understanding of how the experience of teacher mentoring affects TMSE beliefs over time. As all respondents were asked to record how many years of teacher mentoring experience they had at the start of the survey, I was able to use this and their summed total score from their TMSES survey responses to create the chart in Figure 6.9.

Although there is some controversy regarding the use of factor scores following an EFA in the social sciences (DiStefano et al., 2009), I am not attempting to calculate the scores for the two latent factors uncovered by this EFA⁷. Instead, I am using the “sum-score” method for the *whole scale*, which is considered to be an acceptable and

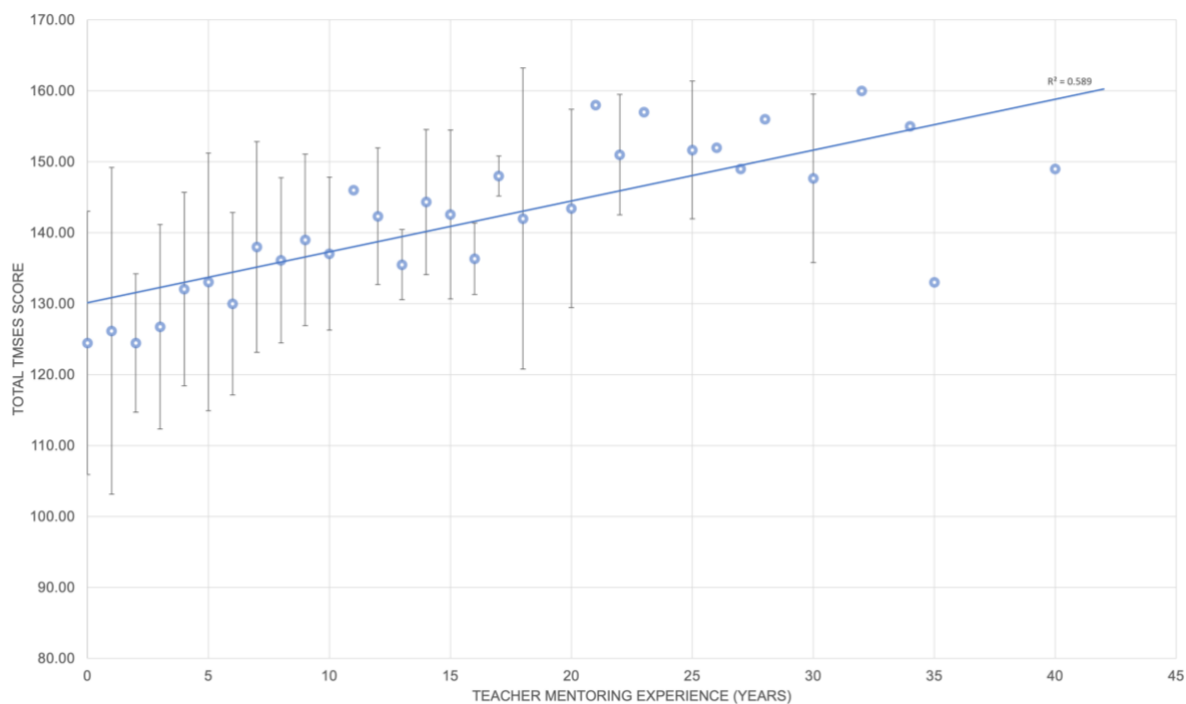
⁷ This is simply because further testing, e.g., CFA, will be needed to confirm the proposed two-factor model before I can investigate the effect of a named variable on each of the factor scores. Without this any conclusions drawn would be meaningless.

simple approach to explore relationships with other variables following an EFA (e.g., Comrey & Lee, 1992; DiStefano et al., 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

As this simple and non-refined method gives an equal weighting to all items regardless of their factor loading, the observed relationship between number of years of teacher mentoring experience and total TMSES score in Figure 6.9 is presented as a “broad brush stroke,” as capturing a possible relationship that needs further investigation. If we accept the premise that experience increases over time, then the relationship between teacher mentoring experience and TMSE demonstrates a positive correlation ($R^2 = 0.59$), that is, the more years of teacher mentoring experience a respondent has the higher their total score on the TMSES.

Figure 6.9

Relationship Between Teacher Mentoring Experience and TMSE (n = 236)



Note. The sample size is less than 239 as three respondents to the TMSES survey provided either a vague number for the number of years of teacher mentoring experience, e.g., 20+ or none. Consequently, their total TMSES scores were not used to produce this chart.

Firstly, it is important to recognise that this positive correlation reflects the self-efficacy beliefs of the teacher mentors completing the TMSES survey in this study, a much larger sample would be needed in order to make a generalised claim about TMSE beliefs and experience. Secondly, although this data shows that experience increases the respondents' confidence in their own capabilities to mentor another teacher effectively, it does not show that an increase in teacher mentoring experience (years) increases teacher mentoring competency. As stated previously, what someone believes about themselves does not always reflect the external reality. Although experience increases over time, the personal growth, development, and teacher mentoring competency resulting from those experiences may not show the same linear relationship.

6.4.4. The Relationship Between TMSE and TSE

As the constructs of TMSE and TSE are related due to the commonalities between the role of teacher and the role of mentor (e.g., Perera et al., 2019), then the relationship between TMSE and TSE is one of significant interest. It is definitely one that needs to be explored further and therefore offers a future use for the TMSES developed through this research. For example, if a teacher mentor has strong TMSE beliefs, will this: (a) also strengthen their TSE beliefs and (b) strengthen their mentee's TSE beliefs? As stronger TSE beliefs confer numerous advantages, such as increased teaching effectiveness (e.g., Burić & Kim, 2020; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016), having a better understanding of the relationship between TMSE and TSE could lead to advancements in both teacher and teacher mentor education and development. As a

myriad of questions could be investigated using the TMSES, it has the potential to be an extremely useful scale.

One area that would be of particular interest, especially as we are currently facing a national and global crisis in terms of teacher recruitment and retention (McLean & Worth, 2025; OECD, 2024), is to look at how taking on the role of teacher mentor may lead to increased job satisfaction (Renbarger & Davis, 2019) and possibly reduce the rate of teacher attrition (Madigan & Kim, 2021). As the data from this study shows that TMSE appears to increase over time, then maybe by taking on the role of a teacher mentor the dip in TSE seen in the later stage (24 years plus) of a teacher's career (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) may be reduced or even reversed. The reasoning behind this thinking is supported by research conducted by Perera et al. (2019). They found that as teacher mentoring provides teachers with learning opportunities and experiences that are capable of shaping their "role specific self-efficacy beliefs" (p.189), teachers who had taken on the role of a mentor were less likely to be profiled as "Highly-Inefficacious" (p.197) as a teacher, compared to teachers who had not taken on this role. As increased TSE has been shown to have positive effects on teacher retention and well-being (e.g., Zee & Koomen, 2016), if taking on the role of mentor boosts a teacher mentor's TSE then the advantages of mentoring, for both mentor and system, become clear.

For a teacher taking on the mentoring role, the new experiences and the opportunity for self-reflective engagement with their own teaching practice, may give them a much-needed learning boost. As mentoring is, at its heart, a *social act of learning* (see Figure 3.1 Bandura's model of triadic reciprocal causation, 1986; Lave & Wenger, 1991), this may also serve to increase engagement, enjoyment and job satisfaction for experienced teachers at a time in their career (24 years plus) when

they may be experiencing a decline in teacher motivation (Day & Gu, 2007).

Furthermore, as mentoring meets the three fundamental human needs of developing competency, seeking relatedness, and striving for autonomy, as identified in Deci and Ryan's (1985) social determination theory (SDT), there are distinct advantages for teachers to access development opportunities such as mentoring to meet these needs.

By taking on a new role as a teacher mentor, a teacher will almost certainly be exposed to new challenges. As these challenges may serve to strengthen or weaken their TMSE beliefs, and possibly TSE beliefs, this challenge needs to happen in the *right way* to make positive outcomes more likely. For example, if all of the tasks/activities a teacher mentor was expected to perform were too easy, then it might have little to no effect on their TMSE beliefs (see Bandura, 1997). For someone looking to develop their competence in mentoring, it is plausible that they need to feel a sense of achievement from that success. Often, it is a sense of achievement that makes a task worthwhile, and that requires there to be a certain level of challenge. Conversely, if a task or activity is too difficult, then a teacher mentor may be more likely to give up unless they receive some additional support or guidance.

To ensure that the right level of challenge is provided for a teacher mentor, it may be that a "Vygotskian approach" (Warford, 2011) to mentor development provides the answer. In Warford's (2011) paper concerning teacher education and development, he argues that looking to find and work within a "zone of proximal teacher development" (ZPTD) could provide teachers with the best opportunities for professional growth. The ZPTD being the place where the tasks are just beyond the teacher's current capabilities, thereby providing the challenge needed but not too much that a teacher would see success as unachievable (Vygotsky, 1978; Warford,

2011). Theoretically, this type of approach could work well to strengthen TSE and, if employed for teacher mentor development, could serve to strengthen TMSE as well. For example, instead of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teacher mentor development, the high levels of personalisation afforded by working within their zone of proximal teacher mentor development (ZPTMD) could provide teacher mentors with a level of challenge that is optimal for their professional learning and growth. In this respect, there is a strong argument here for providing mentoring support for the mentors themselves.

7. Phase Three: IPA - Findings and Discussion

7.1. From the Particular to the Universal

The lens for the third and final phase of this research is focused on the *being* of teacher mentoring, as shared through the perspectival accounts of seven teacher mentors who generously volunteered their time to take part in this study. Their stories have helped me to understand what it is like to be a teacher mentor, both for them individually and collectively across the group.

As *being* a teacher mentor involves the *doing* of teacher mentoring, this interplay is reflected in their narratives; the being and the doing for the participants in this study are inseparable (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1). Throughout this analysis, the participants' experiences and their interpretations of them are shared through numerous examples of their actions and interactions, offering unique insights into their processes of meaning-making. At the end of the chapter, space will be given for a “panoptic discussion,” which will afford a wider view of the findings as seen through this lens.

7.1.1. Participant Lifeworlds

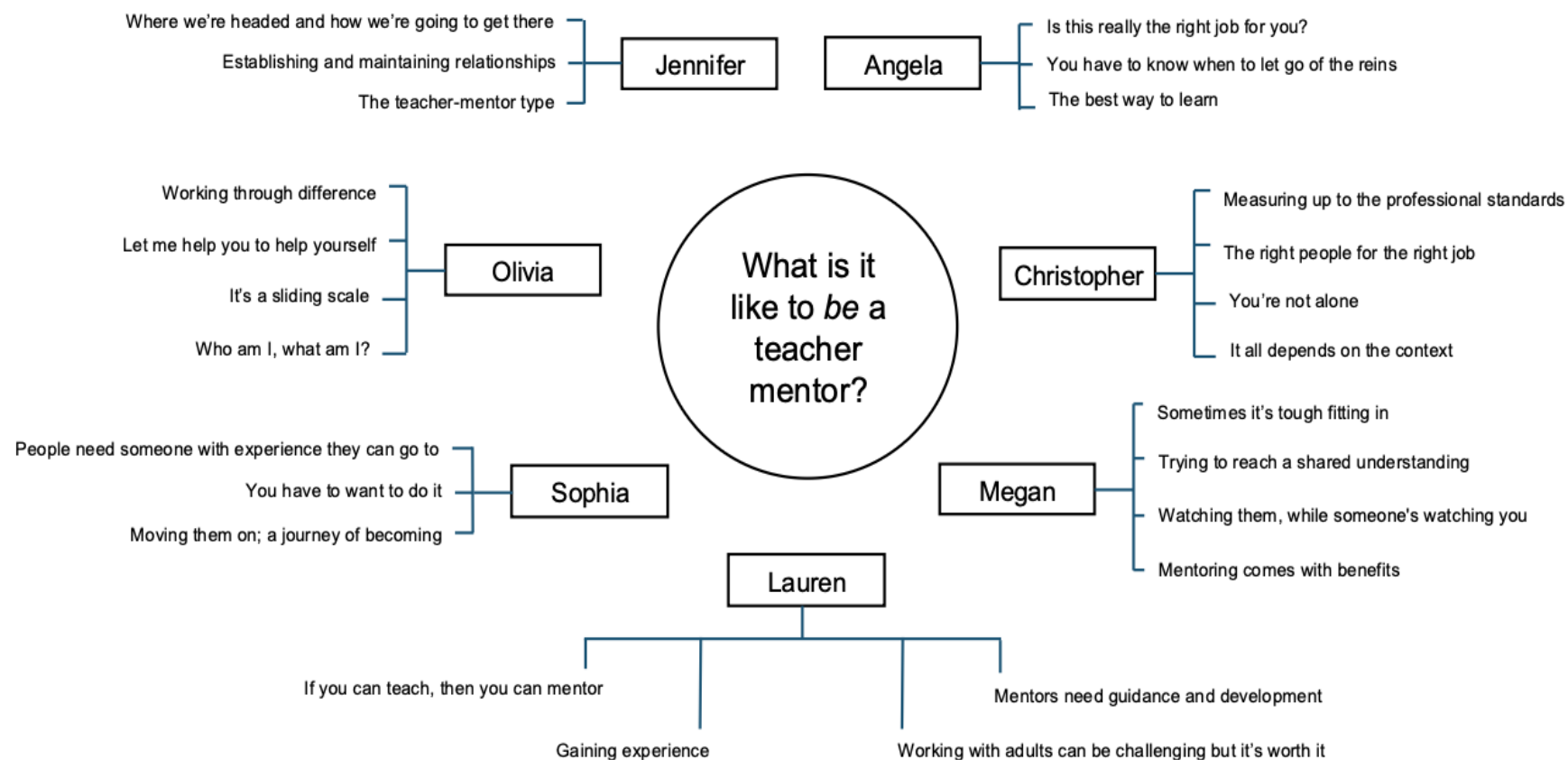
As described in “Chapter 4 Methodology,” interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is primarily concerned with gaining access to participants' experiences (Smith et al., 2022), and through this, capturing an understanding of each participant's *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1936/1970). In IPA, this case-by-case analytical approach happens before attempting to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation across the data corpus or “in the round” (see Smith et al., 2022). Therefore, in this

study, what it means to *be* a teacher mentor has first been addressed at the level of the individual.

Each participant's account has been analysed case-by-case, with the resultant personal experiential themes (PETs) and their associated subthemes reflecting each participant's interpretations of their experiences, and my own interpretations of their meaning making. Consequently, each participant's PETs are unique to them, with each set of PETs representing a lifeworld that *belongs* to them as teacher mentors. Each participant's PETs are displayed in Figure 7.1, and for transparency and completeness, the subthemes associated with each participant's set of PETs have also been included as Appendix N. Simply by looking at the titles of the PETs displayed in Figure 7.1, it can clearly be seen that there are similarities and differences between participants. For example, Megan's *Mentoring comes with benefits* and Lauren's *Working with adults can be challenging but it's worth it*, both indicate that teacher mentoring offers advantages.

Figure 7.1

Personal Experiential Themes by Participant



The data corpus and interpretive analyses behind each PET is substantial: (i) each PET is comprised of a number of subthemes that share a certain quality or flavour, i.e., they have homogeneity; yet, (ii) each subtheme is unique enough to stand as a subtheme in its own right; and, (iii) each subtheme comprises a number of experiential statements that share a certain quality; yet, (iv) each experiential statement is unique enough to stand as an experiential statement in its own right, because each experiential statement, (v) reflects a specific aspect of the participant's experience. Participant quotations are used to provide first-level evidence of their experiences; all statements, subthemes, and PETs are grounded in the data. The data corpus provides substantial evidence to justify the clustering or grouping of experiential statements to form the PETs and subthemes shared in Figure 7.1.

In qualitative studies, it is important that time is taken to show that the analyses presented and the inferences made are credible, trustworthy, and plausible. This approach is recommended as a way of demonstrating validity in studies that cannot (easily) be replicated (Maxwell, 1992). For example, in studies like IPA where the focus is on the idiographic, it is highly unlikely that identical accounts of a participant's experience of teacher mentoring would be obtained because people are different. As transparency in terms of the process of data analysis is recommended, I feel that it is useful and apposite to provide an illustration of what a PET and its component subthemes *looks* like, and how a PET has been generated from a participant's account (see Section 7.1.3). This approach, as recommended by Mays and Pope (1995), will enable the reader to "appreciate the truth of the account," as it serves as a partial test of validity for this study, and as a test of the quality of the research presented. Moreover, the reader gains access to the "rich rigour" of the analytical process (Tracy, 2010).

7.1.2. Introducing the Participants

Although the aim of an IPA is to elucidate the general themes within the data corpus, how we get to the general from the particular is important—and in an IPA, to start with the particular is to start with the people. This section provides a series of distillates that represent each participant's story, each offering a flavour of their teacher mentoring lifeworlds. These distillates are not summaries or overviews of the individual PETs (the parts). Instead, they aim to capture the pervading essence of the experiences shared by each of the teacher mentors in this study. The emphasis here is on the wholeness of each of the accounts, the gestalt.

Note. The PETs and their subthemes for each participant can be found in Appendix N. Quotations, if used, will be given a line reference number from the original transcript in parentheses, for an experiential statement or subtheme then a page reference number will be stated.

7.1.2.1. *Jennifer*

I interviewed Jennifer over a Zoom call. She had just retired that summer from a thirty-year career spent teaching English in secondary schools in the North of England. That all of these schools served catchment areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation was for her a deeply personal and deliberate choice. During the process of introducing ourselves, and before I hit the record button, she shared that she was happy to be retired and glad to be “out of it,” because of how much you have to give to it. However, near the end of the interview she returned to this thread again; Jennifer had lost something from being out of a school environment. That “something” was teacher mentoring because it gave back to her: “it’s the only part of the job that I miss” (1154-1155).

Although this loss was only explicitly stated at the end, it was woven throughout her narrative. Listening to Jennifer tell me about her experiences of teacher mentoring was to share her joy and her sense of “real pride” (383) in the job she had done. Celebrating the successes of her mentees mattered a great deal to her, especially the ones who she thought had done well career-wise: “I mean you know, he’s a headteacher now ...” (146). Nevertheless, she still found managing adult-adult relationships challenging. Though for her, this challenge had a different quality to the challenge that comes with managing a relationship between teacher and pupil (child). The challenge for Jennifer was finding the balance between giving her mentees the freedom they needed and providing the guidance and direction that she believed would make the journey from novice to competent teacher easier for them: “they need to feel your wisdom” (350-351), a practical wisdom she had gained through experience. She knew she could help them, because *Good mentors [know how to] move them on* (p.30).

7.1.2.2. Lauren

Lauren and I met over Zoom at a time when the number of Covid-19 cases had reached a zenith. Visiting schools was understandably difficult due to the constraints and safeguards in place, so virtual meetings provided an excellent workaround. In hindsight, I think this may also have helped her to share her story. Lauren’s description of herself: “I’m quite an introverted sort of a shy person I guess” (272-276) offers up a partial explanation of why this might be the case, and she chose not to have her camera on during the interview. While this was of course absolutely fine, it was also very difficult to judge when she had finished speaking without interrupting her train of thought, as she thought very deeply about what she had to say.

Eleven years into a relatively nomadic career as a primary school teacher in West Yorkshire, including stints of supply work, Lauren had seen a lot and had also learnt a lot, especially about herself. Taking on the role of a teacher mentor over the past two-years has given Lauren experiences that have pushed her out of her comfort zone, her “wheelhouse” (272). Mentoring has given Lauren confidence. Confidence to work with other adults, when she finds adults to be “quite intimidating” (281). However, she knew that she needed to gain experience of working with them (adults) if she was going to get better at it, to be able to have those challenging conversations, where she has to “tell” someone “a lot older” (249-250) than her what to do.

There was a lot of self-development happening for Lauren through mentoring that she was tapping into, especially the chance to learn from her mentees. She shared that she wanted to do the best job of mentoring that she could. Lauren knew that she could teach, so she also knew that she had the capability to mentor: “It’s exactly the same as teaching ... you give them what they need” (134-136).

7.1.2.3. *Olivia*

Olivia was working as a recently qualified English teacher in a mid-sized state secondary school on the edge of a major city in West Yorkshire. At the time of my visit, pupil and staff absence were at record highs due to the pandemic and Olivia, new to the school, new to her management role, and relatively new to mentoring, had found the transition challenging: *it was a crazy year, and it was hard* (p.3), “we were just trying to get through the week” (696).

She had entered the profession through a fast-track route with a national training provider, with a particular focus on preparing trainees for leadership positions within schools serving areas of high deprivation, just like the school Olivia had chosen

to work in. That someone should choose to teach for “the right reasons” (934) meant a great deal to her. It was certainly why she had chosen teaching as a career.

Overall, Olivia came across strongly as a *fixer* (subtheme): as she saw herself as a *good teacher*, she knew what good teaching was, so she knew that she could help her mentees to *find the key thing [the ‘fatal flaw’ that’s holding them back or making it “crumble”] and fix it* (p.4, p.10, p.19, p.23, p.34). For Olivia success is all in the planning and preparation and it is also about self-belief. People need to believe that they can change and make progress because everyone and anyone can “get better” (841), and she can help them with that, to *find the[ir] joy* (subtheme). She knows she can. However, as a new mentor Olivia was struggling to get the balance right and there was self-doubt there: *It worries her that she’s too controlling. Mentees need to be able to figure it out for themselves* (p.41).

7.1.2.4. Megan

I met with Megan online at the end of a busy Monday. Megan, an experienced Reception teacher, was working at a slightly smaller than average Church of England primary school serving a city suburb ranked as having one of the highest levels of deprivation in England. Although there were definite challenges there: *teaching is hard* (subtheme), Megan still *thought that teaching was the best job ever* (p.21).

As Megan had been working at this school for eight years, she had a deep sense of connection with the community, the pupils, and her colleagues. She became interested in mentoring after stepping in to help an ECT who was struggling and found that she really enjoyed it. Since then, she has had nothing but good experiences of mentoring, which contrasted sharply with her own experiences of being mentored. It was through those negative experiences: “you get so squashed” (410), that Megan

learnt what kind of mentor, and teacher, she wanted to be. Through mentoring, Megan wanted to make sure that the people she mentored were allowed to be themselves: “you’ve got to be your actual authentic self” (361), and she was not in the business of making “carbon copies” (360) or “robot teachers” (652).

However, she was also aware that there was a balance to be had with this freedom, as *standards need[ed] to be met* (p.7). Although she thought that handing over control to her mentees was risky, because they will both face judgement regarding their competency, it was worth it: *Megan sees her role as an enabler of positivity, rather than a box-ticker and a hoop jumper* (p.17). For Megan the point of mentoring is to reach a shared understanding with regard to what works best. For her it was important for her mentees to *find their own style* (p.17) which requires *openness* (subtheme) and the ability to *listen to understand* (subtheme), sometimes over “a cup of tea and a biscuit” (519), because *She wants her students to feel happy, and their children to feel loved* (p.21).

7.1.2.5. Christopher

When I interviewed Christopher, he was working at a mid-sized 11-18 secondary school in South Yorkshire. He was five years into his teaching career, head of chemistry, whole school lead for mentor development, and the school’s induction tutor. Christopher’s grandfather had been a headteacher, which had first inspired him to be a teacher, and he had ambitions for senior leadership himself.

Although he recognised the importance of mentoring, he did not think that mentoring was right for everyone: *There’s a certain kind of person who’s interested in people development* (p.35). Christopher saw himself as this type of person, describing himself as a *developmental kind of mentor* (p.15). For Christopher, mentoring was not

a *one-size fits all* approach (p.49), even though he thought that it was appropriate, at times, to show his mentees how something should be done. In this respect, he placed high value on instructional coaching as its “explicit” (258) nature appealed to him.

He believed that an explicit approach may help mentors to meet a key responsibility, to ensure that high standards were maintained. That there needed to be a test, a rigorous benchmark for teachers to meet, was of fundamental importance to him; ECT programmes were not just about *putting bodies in classrooms* (p.40). As Christopher believed that judgement led to development: *There has to be judgement, without judgements how can you improve?* (p.26), assessing if someone was meeting the professional standards was “absolutely non-negotiable” (496). However, he recognised that with this judgement comes support: “my top priority is that nobody leaves school feeling rubbish” (477), and Christopher saw mentoring as offering value to someone as a way of combatting loneliness: teaching can be “a very isolating profession” (1154). He strongly believed that both mentor and mentee were uniquely positioned to support each other, providing the opportunity for adult-to-adult interaction for a teacher (mentor) that otherwise may not have been there without it.

7.1.2.6. Sophia

Sophia was a career changer, a later entrant to the teaching profession. She had previously worked in publishing and about 11 years ago decided that she would like to try her hand at teaching. When we met via a Zoom call, as a self-described “pedagogical person” (313), she had not regretted her decision. Although she has been mentoring for only two-years, Sophia has enjoyed the challenge this role has provided. Additionally, as a “reflective teacher” (9), she has welcomed the opportunity

to look inwards toward her own practice, and she told me that mentoring is definitely something she will continue to do.

Even though she acknowledged that she was “not the fount of all knowledge” (566), she was still *further along the journey than her mentees* (p.18). This gave her the experience to facilitate conversations, formal and informal, to give her mentees the *critical nudge* (p.10) they needed *to move them on* (p.8, p.10). Her experience also helped her to cultivate exploratory conversations with her mentees centred on becoming: *The ideas about what kind of teacher they want to be will change as they become the teacher that they are ...* (p.30). Like herself, she knew that her mentees would come to understand who they were as teachers from the many (teacher) models that they met on their own journeys: “I think you model yourself on..., not necessarily one teacher” (730-731).

To be an effective mentor, the critical thing for Sophia was that someone has to be able to teach, to have pedagogical ability: *some have the knowledge but can't teach for toffee* (p.18). Although she thought she could teach, she was not so sure about her own capabilities when it came to mentoring. This was because she felt there was a lack of clarity with regard to the expectations of the mentor role, which led to a sense of frustration.

7.1.2.7. Angela

When I met Angela, she was working at a primary school situated in a large market town within the metropolitan borough of a major city in West Yorkshire. Although we had arranged to meet after she had finished teaching for the day, her classroom was still a busy place. It was clear to me that although she viewed teaching as a “hard job” (335) and *was not all she had hoped it to be* (p.4), she was still deeply

committed to it, and also to the children that she taught. Having taught for 17 years she was a highly experienced practitioner, and although she had only mentored for five years in total, she had been mentoring other practitioners on and off five years after qualifying herself.

Angela's own experiences of being mentored were mixed: "very shouty, quite old school" (718) compared to "she had the time and the patience ... the positivity that I needed, the power for me to ... believe" (725-726). These experiences informed Angela's own approach to mentoring, and she thought that *she had what it takes to be a good mentor* (subtheme), because she was "available, supportive, and fair" (636-637). She saw her role as providing her mentees with "the tools" (305) they needed, then allowing them the space to experiment to find what works for them: *now you're ready, you're free to play around* (p.33). One of the key tools Angela identified as being needed by her mentees was the ability to plan. Modelled first, which made her "step up a gear" (447), and then this responsibility passed on to her mentees because they needed to do the thinking. If things did not go to plan that did not worry Angela, as failure offered an opportunity for learning and a chance to build resilience: *they've got to be able to take it on the chin to move forwards* (p.15). She saw it as her duty to prepare her mentees for just how tough teaching can be.

7.1.3. Development of a Personal Experiential Theme

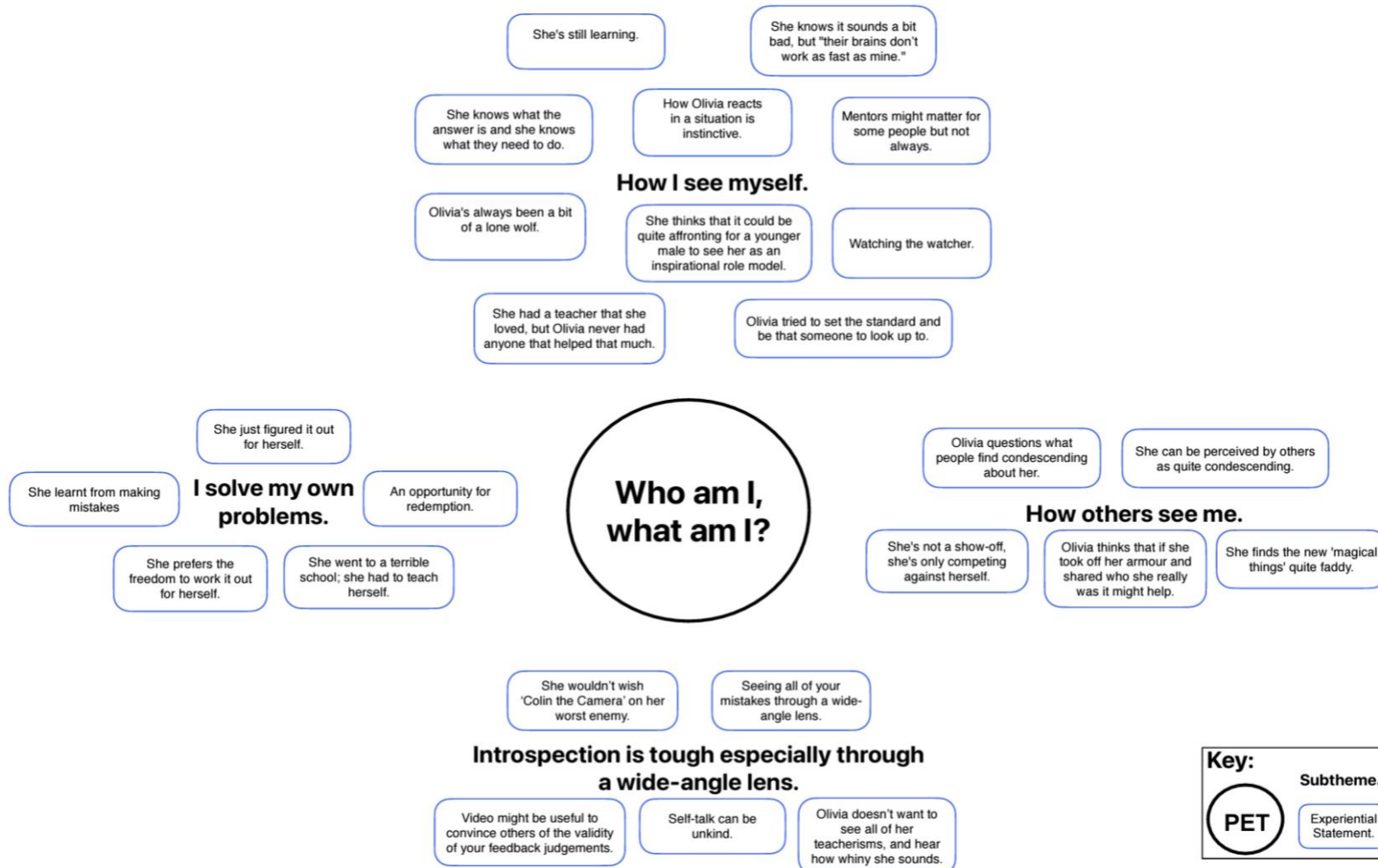
As I do not have the space in this thesis to demonstrate how each and every PET was generated, I have selected an exemplar. The exemplar I have chosen is the PET *Who am I, what am I?* from Olivia's account. I have selected it because it

contains some interesting features, including a *gem*, which will be unearthed later in the general experiential theme (GET) *Being There*.

Figure 7.2 illustrates how the experiential themes generated from Olivia's account are clustered into subthemes. As subthemes share core qualities or properties, they have homogeneity. Looking more closely at the experiential statements used to generate the subthemes, a small number of them look to be very similar, yet they are separate statements because they capture subtly different aspects of Olivia's experience. To illustrate what I mean by this, by looking at the subtheme *How others see me*, two of the experiential statements here have a similar property linked to Olivia's perceived behaviour of "condescension." However, they are different experiences. One reflects a self-awareness of how others perceive her: *She can be perceived by others as quite condescending*, and the other reflects her questioning - introspectively - *what people find condescending about her*. These experiential statements look at a first glance to be similar, but they are capturing different experiences for Olivia.

Figure 7.2

Olivia's PET Who am I, What am I?



All of the subthemes here have been grouped together to form this particular PET because they have homogeneity. However, it is important to note that although subthemes and PETs share core commonalities, or qualities, they may also demonstrate divergence or polarity. For example, looking at the subtheme *Introspection is tough especially through a wide-angle lens*, it becomes clear that although Olivia *wouldn't wish Colin the Camera' on her worst enemy*, she does think that *Video might be useful to convince others of the validity of your [my] feedback judgements*. At one end of the spectrum, using a camera is a definite no-go; at the other it would be a yes, if it helps people to accept the feedback offered. In the experiential statement above, I have included “my” in square brackets because this goes some way to explaining why Olivia thinks this way. This experiential statement illustrates how the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1927/1996) is used in IPA, which I will now explicate here.

From the transcript overall (the whole), there is a sense that Olivia is aware of how her newness as a teacher, her age, and her gender affect the way others perceive her and the feedback (judgements) she provides. From her account, I learnt that Olivia thinks that you need to be a good teacher to be an effective mentor, and that gaining the knowledge of what makes good teaching comes with experience. Although she sees herself as a ‘good’ teacher, Olivia knows that she is young(er) and therefore relatively inexperienced compared to other colleagues. This means that there is a risk that her judgements may be challenged by someone more experienced than herself.

The whole helps us to gain a *new* understanding of why Olivia would give credence to the argument for using “Colin the Camera” (1196), i.e., the part, when she herself “hated it” (1202). Even though Olivia knows that the feedback Colin provides

offers a view of the self that one (she) would rather avoid e.g., “I just don’t want to hear my voice, I’ll, or if I do, I’ll listen to [it] back and be like: God, you sound so whiny” (1221-1222), she can still justify its use. For Olivia, the justification for using video technology may be two-fold. Firstly, it could be that she is justifying its use as an evidence-producing tool to convince someone who is more experienced than her that her judgements are valid. Secondly, if Olivia is using a tool to provide feedback that is for “the right reasons” (934), e.g., to improve someone’s teaching: “You want to be good at this because you want to help kids, I think would be my number one” (936-937), then for her the ends justify the means.

These hypothesised justifications enable me to introduce another lens that I will use in all of the analyses presented in this chapter and that is theory. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a methodology that employs inductive reasoning, with a focus on the idiographic (Smith et al., 2022). It also uses the approach bracketing of one’s preconceptions or fore-structures (epoché), the first step of a phenomenological reduction, as advocated by Husserl (1936/1970). As explained in “Chapter 4 Methodology,” this means that no theoretical frameworks should be applied to the data corpus a priori. It is only after the analysis has been completed that theory, or a theoretical framework(s), can be used to offer either (i) an explanation for the experiences, and the inferences drawn from them, or (ii) a different way of understanding the patterns observed in the data and analyses, possibly to develop theory from it (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the next section, Leon Festinger’s “Theory of Cognitive Dissonance” (1957) can be used to partly explain why Olivia would use video feedback, when *she wouldn’t wish it on her worst enemy*.

7.1.3.1. *Olivia is a Good Teacher*

From the inferences I have drawn from Olivia's account and if these inferences from my meaning making hold true, then she knows that others may perceive her lack of experience in the classroom as a threat to the validity of her judgements. If we follow Husserl's (1936/1970) proposal for phenomenologists to "go back to the things themselves," and go back to Olivia's first-hand account of her experiences and the meaning she has made from them, I can begin to interpret how Olivia perceives *herself*, including how she understands her identity as a teacher:

I think that being a good teacher is about being able to see things. I think through the last couple of years, and I've, I've done my NPQ⁸, and I just feel that I can see things so much more clearly.

(Olivia, 163-165)

Olivia thinks that "being a good teacher is about being able to see things" (premise one), as Olivia is *a teacher who thinks that she can see things (much more clearly) now* (premise two), she sees herself as a *good teacher* (conclusion). This syllogism is an example of deductive reasoning (see Aristotle's Logic in Striker, 2020) and is used to validate the inference I made in the previous section, namely, "Although she sees herself as a 'good' teacher." Nowhere in her narrative does Olivia *explicitly* state that she thinks or believes that she is a "good teacher"; however, I believe she does, based on what she has shared. It is also important to note that this truth is Olivia's truth and not a general claim. Whether teachers who are able to *see things* (more clearly) are better than those that cannot requires further evidence.

⁸ National Professional Qualification

As Olivia sees herself as a “good teacher” there is a risk to her concept of self, to her teacher identity, especially if her judgements as a mentor are challenged by a more experienced colleague. If this hypothetical (imagined) challenge to Olivia’s judgement has been made by a more experienced teacher than Olivia, who thinks that: “the fundamental knowledge of, of what makes good teaching... I think that comes through experience” (169-170), there is a risk that their judgement could usurp her own. This challenge poses a risk to the way she sees herself. Her teacher identity, and her beliefs about her teacher mentor efficacy, could be jeopardised. This could lead to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). For instance, if a more experienced teacher says Olivia is wrong then Olivia might not be the “good teacher” she thinks she is.

To mitigate this risk requires action; people can either change their behaviour, to reduce dissonance and maintain congruence, or they can change their attitude (Festinger, 1957). To mitigate this potential risk, and avoid the risk of dissonance, she justifies the use of “Colin the Camera” because she *knows* that the video evidence will add validity to their (her) judgements; after all, they will be (she will be) making those judgements for all “the right reasons” (934). This demonstrates that Olivia is willing to change her attitude, her position on using video feedback, in order to achieve congruence.

In this particular example: *Video might be useful to convince others of the validity of your [my] feedback judgements*, Olivia is sharing and making sense of a possible future experience from the perspective of another. Through this, I am trying to make sense of how she can justify this contradiction using inference, deduction, and abduction, to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to *be* a teacher mentor for Olivia. To try and understand why she thinks that using video technology could be

useful, even though she herself “hated it” (1202), I needed to go back to the whole account, “back to the things themselves” (Husserl, 1936/1970), to make sense of the part. Ultimately, from Olivia’s account of her experiences, I inferred that doing the best for the pupils she teaches is at the heart of everything she does. This also provides a strong justification for the use of video feedback in (her future) teacher mentoring.

There are many other examples of participants re-imagining and hypothesising about themselves and others within the data corpus, including exploring what future or possible selves (see Markus & Nurius, 1986) might do in an imagined future scenario. Additionally, all participants switched their pronouns, e.g., from “I” to “you,” “we,” and “they,” at different points within their narratives, for a variety of different reasons (Orvell et al., 2022). The experiences humans have are complex, and IPA is a very useful approach for understanding them because it is itself iterative and layered. The process of analysis in an IPA study goes back and forth from whole to part, it is far from linear.

7.2. Development of General Experiential Themes

In this study, general experiential themes (GETs) and their associated subthemes were generated in much the same way as the PETs. This time, however, the entire data corpus was used, including the participants’ transcripts, exploratory notes, experiential statements, and PETs. From this evidence base, the commonalities were identified. From these commonalities, four GETs were generated: *Controlled Freedom*, *Working With Difference*, *Being There*, and *Role Models*. Each of the GETs comprise either three or four subthemes, and the evidence used to generate each GET and their subthemes will be adduced in Sections 7.3 to 7.6, where each GET will be considered separately.

In the process of GET development, a significant amount of time was taken to re-familiarise myself with all of the participants' narrative accounts. This time considering everything as one whole and creating new understanding and meaning from the parts. The parts here are represented by experiential statements, subthemes, PETs, and inferences taken from each of the participants' accounts.

This was followed by revisiting each account, rethinking my previous meaning making (inferences) with what I had inferred from the data corpus as a whole. I then used this new understanding to identify the commonalities (and differences) in each account using the participants' experiential statements in order to generate, or "pull-out," the GET subthemes. Subthemes comprising experiential statements reflecting the same qualities were clustered together and used to identify the threads that traverse and connect the entire data corpus to get to the highest level of abstraction in an IPA, the overarching themes of the GETs. Continually revisiting and relating these new understandings from the whole to its parts, and from the parts to the whole, again demonstrates IPAs commitment to the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1927/1996).

Data illustrating the representativeness of each GET is presented in Table 7.1. As can be seen from the data, all of the GETs have a high degree of prevalence. However, not all of the GETs are present in all of the PETs, and for some GETs all of the subthemes associated with the GETs may not feature in all participant accounts. For example, the GET *Role Models* features in all four of Christopher's PETs, yet *Yes, I have more experience than you...*, a subtheme of this GET, does not. For transparency, the PETs represented by each GET - by participant - are provided in Appendix O.

Table 7.1*Representativeness of Each GET*

GET	Total number of PETs represented by each GET	GETs represented by the participant's account ($\sqrt{[\text{total number of PETs}]}$)						
		J	O	A	C	M	L	S
Controlled Freedom	23	✓(3)	✓(4)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(4)	✓(3)
Working With Difference	20	✓(3)	✓(4)	✓(2)	✓(4)	✓(2)	✓(3)	✓(2)
Being There	18	✓(2)	✓(2)	✓(3)	✓(2)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)
Role Models	23	✓(3)	✓(4)	✓(3)	✓(4)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)

Note. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia.

It is important to recognise, with regard to GETs, their subthemes, and their prevalence, that it should not be unusual to find that GETs have such high levels of prevalence for a number of reasons. Firstly, this is because in qualitative analysis, a “fuzziness” of GET (theme) boundaries is to be expected (Maxwell, 1992) due to the fuzziness associated with the definitions of the concepts, or constructs, encountered in the social sciences (Ziegler et al., 2015). Furthermore, this is particularly true in the case of some psychological constructs (Marsh et al., 2019). This means that if the definitional conditions are unclear, then there is always going to be a level of subjectivity when it comes to assigning a specific experiential statement to a specific GET. Secondly, just as the GETs and their associated subthemes have a level of relatedness, so will each GET to every other GET. Although these relationships (correlations) are not as *strong* as the correlations seen between the subthemes comprising a GET, there is still a level of relatedness there. Thirdly, if GETs are indeed phenomenological essences (Husserl, 1936/1970), then it is little wonder that their

presence is felt so strongly throughout the data corpus. This is because *it needs to be* for it to be an essence (Dahlberg, 2006; Husserl, 1936/1970). This will be discussed further in “Section 7.7. Summary of Findings.”

As the GETs presented are grounded in evidence, each participant's accounts of their experiences, their inferences, and my (the researcher's) inferences, will be used to expound an argument for their existence. As Smith (2011b) advises, evidence from at least three accounts should be used to provide credibility and validity for each GET, giving weight to the supposition that the theme is indeed a general one. Accordingly, the expositions provided for each GET in this analysis use evidence from at least three accounts. However, not all of the evidence available to provide validity will be used, as there is simply too much of it. Instead, the most salient quotes, statements, subthemes, PETs, and inferences have been selected from each participant's account. In this way, this “thick description” offers credibility to the analyses presented (Tracy, 2010) and enables me - the researcher - to construct a narrative that provides both insight, cohesion, and momentum (Nizza et al., 2021). As with the PETs, there are convergences and divergences within each GET and these will be discussed and explored as part of the unfolding narrative.

7.3. GET 1 Controlled Freedom

The antonymic name of this GET has been chosen to reflect the polarity or tension within it. There is a strong message that comes through all of the participants' accounts, that there is a need, or desire, for them to provide mentoring that encourages their mentees to build their teacher agency and tread their own path, e.g., “I said I want you to tell me about your ethos, what sort of teacher do you want to be?”

(Sophia, 519-520). However, their advocacy for freedom of expression sits alongside a knowledge – that may in part be tacit – that they, and their mentees, will be judged against a set of written (explicit) and unwritten (implicit) standards for teachers, or acceptable norms. This means that they know that the freedom they want, or hope, for their mentees comes with limits. Possible freedoms need to be controlled and sometimes curtailed “and I have found that quite difficult, but I have had to say: you cannot do that, you, you cannot teach like that” (Lauren, 191-192). This dissonance creates a tension, cognitively within themselves and within the GET and its subthemes.

Table 7.2

GET 1 Controlled Freedom: Subthemes and Their Prevalence

GET 1 Subtheme	GET subtheme present in participant's account (✓)						
	J	O	A	C	M	L	S
Navigating the journey; setting the course and controlling the tempo.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building autonomy and teacher agency.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintaining (high) standards, not everyone's right for the job.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Respecting knowledge and experience.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

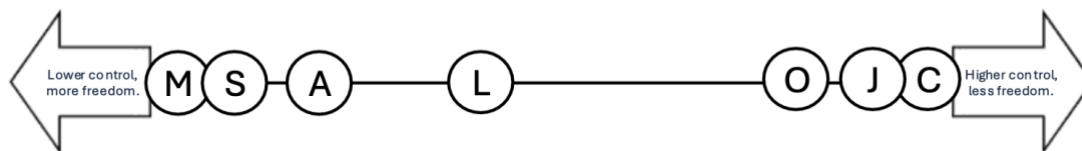
Note. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia.

From analysing each participant's account “in the round,” some have exercised, or have wanted to exercise, higher levels of control as part of their mentoring experiences compared to others. To give an illustration of where each participant sits, I

have compared them relatively to each other on a hypothetical “Control-Freedom line.” Figure 7.3 provides a comparative judgement of each participant’s mentoring style, or *modus operandi*, as shared by them (their meaning making) and my – the researcher’s – interpretation of their inferences with regard to their thoughts on control versus freedom, across their entire account.

Figure 7.3

Comparison of Participants’ Levels of Overall Desire to Control on a Control-Freedom Line



Key:



= Participant

J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia.

7.3.1. Navigating the Journey; Setting the Course and Controlling the Tempo

Teacher mentors have a considerable amount of control over how they prepare their mentees for their role as a teacher. They control their mentee’s pedagogical diet, what to show them, how much, and when. As they also control the direction of travel, with the aim of *moving them on* (Sophia, p.7; Jennifer, p.30, p.35), mentors influence the tempo. How quickly a mentee moves from A to B is, in part, controlled by their mentor. The speed of progression is based on the judgements they make in relation to their mentee’s capabilities and progress. However, mentors do not have absolute

control over the journey taken. For example, the pathway a mentee is on may directly influence the course the mentor takes:

She would watch me once a half term, or we had a mentor meeting, but she wasn't really that involved in my teaching day to day. I just sort of made the mistakes on my own, got it wrong, embarrassed myself, figured it out, which I appreciate more, I think. I think when I watch PGCE students watch me watching every move that they make, I think, I think that's hard. I appreciated having the space to work it out myself.

(Olivia, 10-15)

The memories of Olivia's own experience of being mentored indicate that she preferred to be alone, to choose her own path, making her own mistakes, out of sight of the judgemental eyes of another adult. Perhaps this was because she was fearful of being judged negatively, something which she would have found publicly "embarrassing." Further on in her account, letting someone see the *real* Olivia does not seem to come easily for her and, as a consequence of this, she uses "armour" to hide herself. Additionally, armour protects and deters as well: *Yeah, it's my armour. Maybe my armour is to be a bit condescending <laughs>* (533). The feeling of embarrassment could well still be there for her when she makes a mistake, without an external observer present. However, a private *shaming* seems to be much easier for her to stomach because *she* has control over that. Handing over control to someone else would have exposed Olivia to risk, i.e., the risk of damage to her self-concept, as the reality may not be congruent with how she sees herself.

Olivia is empathetic and appreciates that her students may be experiencing what she would have hated. As they, her mentees, will be watching her watch them, we need to consider what Olivia thinks they are watching her for. I think that it is likely to be for signs of judgement in real time and having to respond positively to that; and

for Olivia, what to make of those facial and bodily judgements, unspoken signs, is “hard.” This moment of introspection led to a realisation for Olivia that she herself may be overly controlling. Is she giving her mentees something that she would not have wanted for herself? “That’s what I worry about, is, I couldn’t have become me without having to figure it out on my own” (1344-1345). This generates a pull, and possibly anxiety, for her when she is thinking about *who* she is and how she is bringing herself to her mentoring role.

Jennifer’s subtheme *Mentors lead the way as guide and navigator*, demonstrates how she has also controlled the journeys of her mentees: “I could have just let him drift on, both of them, I could have let them drift on, because they were okay” (178-179). The use of the metaphor “drift on” implies that they were moving, carried by an undercurrent generated passively by the start-to-finish line nature of teacher induction programmes, but possibly not as quickly as she would have liked and in the way – direction – Jennifer would have preferred: “but right now I don’t want to go round in circles anymore” (1034). She sees it as her responsibility to change that: “I sort of steered it a little bit and say [sic.]: right, this is, this is where we [are] focusing on, what do you want me to drop in on, what do you want me to see?” (189-190).

Conversely, Sophia does not want to speed up the journey for one of her mentees, who was “just itching to get teaching” (16), and she wants to slow it down. The frustration for Sophia, who identifies as a “pedagogical person” (313), is that her mentee could not see the power of taking things slowly for the purposes of reflection:

right, I've seen your lesson let's have a chat about it, let's talk about it, let's think about how we're going to improve for the next one, what's our next focus going to be? Ummm, he tended to want those to be quite short and sweet actually.

(Sophia, 222-225)

As she is “quite reflective of myself” (Sophia, 281), this tension is expressed as frustration in her account of her relationship with her male mentee, who she saw as being “a different personality.” Although there is some overlap here with this GET and GET 2 *Working With Difference*, it is important to recognise that *who* the mentor is working with can also act as an influence when navigating the journey.

7.3.2. Building Autonomy and Teacher Agency

On all of the journeys alluded to, or directly referenced by the participants, there will be a point when it is time for them to step away, to let their mentee teach and teach by themselves. For Angela *Letting go of the reins* (p.7) was a metaphor she used to illustrate the control she has over what happens in her classroom:

I have quite a firm belief that all teachers are megalomaniacs <slight pause> because you're in your own bubble in your own classroom. In a way ...we're all control freaks ummm but it was so..., that was a really interesting experience for me learning to just do that, because if you don't let go of the reins then people will never learn, so that was a massive learning curve for me.

(Angela, 196-203)

Using this metaphor, Angela is showing us how she sees herself as a teacher in her classroom. The person who is in charge of holding “the reins” is the one who is controlling the horse. As horses have energy and agency, the person holding the reins is very much in charge of channelling that energy and driving the horse in the right

direction. The person who is holding the reins in her classroom is Angela. She found the handover to her mentee difficult: “it was trying for me to release control of everything” (195), possibly because it meant that she was no longer in control of what was happening, yet she knew she had to do it. She had to do it to give her mentee the opportunity to experience what controlling the horse felt like, even though this was risky for Angela as this was her first experience of mentoring and she was “really quite nervy” (188) and her class “was a little lively” (191). However, Angela knew that it was not enough to just to know what teaching looks like; someone had to *feel* it to learn it, and to *be* it. By doing this, Angela is helping to build her mentee’s teacher agency; only the rider has control of the horse, not the bystander. Learning works both ways here, and the act of “letting go,” I think, has also taught Angela something about herself and her own capability as a mentor.

This experience of relinquishing control is shared by Megan:

there’s a bunch of little thugs on that front table, I love them, they are my boys ... and a couple of times one or two of them said something: I was just like: stop it ..., you know you give them the look? And I had to say to <name redacted> you know ... I can’t, I can’t be doing that with those children, because we already have that relationship, and next time, I’m not going to rein them in...I’m just going to sit away from them, so they forget I’m there.

(Megan, 894-903)

Here, Megan shares that she found it hard to hand over control of “my [her] boys.” She “loves them” yet knows that they could pose a challenge for someone else: “I think it’s quite hard to walk into a classroom of year three’s ... which <name redacted> did, and to get that into place” (892-893). That place being the one in charge, they need to be holding “the reins,” holding them (her boys) back, not Megan. She knows that she has to let her mentee “rein them in” to get the *feel* of them, to directly experience this.

Again, as with Angela, it is not enough for her mentee just to watch. If her mentee is to have the opportunity to form positive relationships, Megan needs to hand over control and “sit away.” The “forgetting” that she is there, and watching another form a relationship with her boys could be felt as a loss for Megan. This could be meant in more than one sense, a personally possessive one, and also one where her boys risk veering off course, if their reins are too loose or too tight.

7.3.3. Maintaining (High) Standards: Not Everyone’s Right for the Job

Megan’s and Angela’s reluctance to *let go of the reins*, may be due, in part, to fear of coming back to a situation where they will have to reestablish control: “then obviously once the students finish the placement, you’ve got to pull your class back ... whether you like it or not” (Angela, 209-210), i.e., they and their competence as a teacher, and as a mentor, will be tested. In addition, they know that as they are responsible for their pupils, they will also be judged on the progress their pupils make; performative judgement is not reserved solely for their mentee. This means that the pressure is on them to ensure that their mentees are maintaining the standards they would expect: *Day to day she’s checking in, to make sure they’re doing what they need to do to meet the standards* (Megan, p.7).

For Christopher, maintaining high standards is something that features heavily in his account, and he sees judgement as a key responsibility and aspect of the teacher mentor role that should not be avoided. His PETs *Measuring up to the professional standards*, *The right people for the right job*, and their subthemes (Appendix N) illustrate how centrally Christopher situates mentors as gatekeepers for the teaching profession. Jennifer’s and Angela’s accounts support this stance, with

both expressing the view that not everyone is cut out for teaching, e.g., *Is this really the right job for you?* (Angela's PET, Appendix N).

Christopher does not see judgement as a negative:

It's something like the openness of, actually, I want the judgement, because without the judgement how am I going to improve? And I think it's just how that is structured and set up probably from the outset so it's not something ... to be feared.

(Christopher, 850-852)

For Christopher, judgement leads to growth, and it is important to be "open" about it. In order to set appropriate targets and to monitor a mentee's progress, he highlights that specific knowledge is needed to mentor a teacher effectively: "I would say having an understanding of ..., first of all the framework of what they're trying to mentor or coach against, so they've got some idea of what the end goals look like" (338-339). In this respect, he favours an approach to teacher mentoring that is "very explicit" (208) and granular: *I really like the model of instructional coaching* (p.7), mentees can be 'taught' the "techniques" (347), needed to reach the "end goal" (164). For Christopher, effective teaching can be achieved by simply following the "steps" (241). Teaching is a process where *all the steps need to be followed* (p.8) and that cannot be "watered down" (234).

For some of the participants this compliance comes at a price. Developing teacher agency is something Megan sees as essential:

you want that individual to be exactly who they are just with some ... support, to be the best version of that, not to kind of break them and re-mould them into this like robot teacher, because I don't think we need any more of those.

(Megan 650-652).

The use of the term “robot” implies that Megan sees her work as a teacher mentor as being more than the ‘technical’; the gestalt of teaching for her is much more than the parts of an automated process. It could be that she believes a focus on “re-moulding” them, the peg, to fit a standardised teacher-shaped hole removes the *feeling* human from the process. For Megan, Angela, Jennifer, Sophia, and Lauren, individuality should not be sacrificed. For example, “They need to be working towards finding their own style” (Jennifer, 405) or *We’ll end up with an army of non-questioning tick boxers* (Angela, p.28); however, as Lauren recognises: *at the end of the day, a judgement still needs to be made* (Lauren, subtheme, Appendix N).

7.3.4. Respecting Knowledge and Experience

In the same way that Christopher, Jennifer, and Angela think not everyone is suitable for teaching, all interviewees thought that not everyone is suitable to be a teacher mentor. For example, all of the mentors in this study thought teacher mentors need knowledge and experience of the classroom. This view, that teacher mentors need to be experienced and effective teachers, is echoed by Olivia and Jennifer: “I do think you’ve got to be good at what you do because ultimately you are working with people to be a good classroom practitioner” (Jennifer, 873-874). However, for Christopher the ability to teach effectively does not necessarily equate to number of years spent in the classroom: “there are some ECTs who I’d say are great teachers for being in the second year of their career, and those people would be ideal to mentor people coming into the profession” (394-395). He believes that most teachers could mentor as long as they have the “basics absolutely nailed down” (399-400).

As part of Christopher's wider role, he leads and coordinates the training of mentors and induction tutors in his school. For him, respect is not an automatic given on the basis of teaching longevity alone and as *Less experienced teachers are more receptive to learning how to be a mentor* (p.11), he perceives younger teachers as easier for him to train, and possibly to manage. This view is partly shared by Olivia: "I think I'd struggle to mentor someone who <slight pause> was kind of stuck in their ways ... which you don't tend to get with younger teachers" (959-961). As more experienced teachers tend to be older than those with less experience, Christopher will have to potentially manage mentors older and more experienced than himself. As these mentors may not be as receptive, accepting, or respectful of his way of doing things, Christopher would be placing himself in a position of vulnerability and could face challenge. His competency could be put to the test.

This lack of respect for the mentor's knowledge and experience of the classroom has also been felt by Lauren:

we've had many conversations about advice and ... some advice she will take ... if she agrees with the advice, if she can see the benefit of the advice then she will take it ... and ... umm like almost if she can't, or she thinks that you're wrong or she thinks it won't work, she won't do it.

(Lauren, 329-332)

Here Lauren is describing her experiences of working with an ECT who has entered teaching as a mature student: "she's been a solicitor for twenty-five years and she sort of talks to me as if I'm, we're in a courtroom sometimes" (623-624), with the inference here being that Lauren feels that she is "on trial." Although Lauren has more experience of teaching than her mentee, she does not think she is given the respect she deserves. From Lauren's perspective, her mentee's work and life experience

appear to bring an increased confidence, or adult agency, to their interactions that she finds “difficult” (191) to manage.

That Lauren may have expected her mentee to simply accede to “the advice” (330) she has provided may demonstrate some naivety on Lauren’s part, especially when earlier this may have been referred to as “telling” (270) another adult what to do. From her account it appears that Lauren thinks that advising and telling someone what to do is the same: “the nature of advice is well I’m telling you” (337-338). Speaking to another adult using imperatives as “advice” creates the potential for conflict. As the other adult could see this – and may feel cornered or threatened – they may respond aggressively, especially if they feel that the advice is unjustified. Probing a little more deeply, Lauren then shared that she *avoids interacting with people [adults] if she can* (p.16) because she finds other adults “quite intimidating” (281).

Going back to Lauren's account, to try and make sense of why she would want to be a mentor, it could be feasible that Lauren is choosing to put herself in a position of vulnerability to develop her own competency when it comes to interacting with adults: “I think yeah, from that ... difficult conversation I think <slight pause> I think I would ... be more confident actually to ...umm .. to have those conversations in the future” (367-373). For Lauren, gaining experience of doing something she finds extremely challenging such as “telling” (270) another adult what to do, as it is not in her “wheelhouse” (272), she could be strengthening her self-perception of what she believes she is capable of. By mentoring, Lauren could be testing her ability to manage adult-adult interactions in a relatively safe space.

7.3.5. GET 1 in the Round

Controlled Freedom is such a powerfully pervasive experiential theme that it saturates all of the participant's accounts, and by this I mean that it is both *in* it and *of* it. That its presence can be felt in all of Jennifer's, Angela's, Olivia's, Lauren's, and Sophia's PETs gives an indication of how much importance is placed on the process of successfully inducting a novice into the teaching profession. It also reflects how it is an essential part (or a possible *essence* [Husserl, 1936/1970]) of every participant's being when in the role of being a teacher mentor or *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1996).

In this respect, teacher mentors bear a heavy responsibility. To varying degrees (see Figure 7.3), the mentors in this study want(ed) to give their mentees the space to “experiment” (e.g., Lauren, p.6), to find their own way of being a teacher. The very last thing some of the mentors shared they would want to do is to create “carbon-copies” (Jennifer, p.13; Lauren, p.5), although creating a “mini-me” could be perceived as a compliment, especially if the mentor in question was considered to be a great teacher (Jennifer, p.35). Conversely, there are restrictions on the amount of freedom mentors can give their mentees. To restrict someone's freedom requires the mechanism of control.

As they control the freedoms of their mentees, mentors are themselves controlled. The freedom to provide a space for building teacher autonomy is limited by a number of factors. One being the external constraints of the social systems and structures teacher mentors are a part of and contribute to, they – the mentors – are both *in* it and *of* it; they are “the flesh of the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). The other limitation being the personal factors—cognitive, personal, and biological—of the teacher mentors themselves. For example, they may have a combination of

personality traits that increases their desire to control others (see “Chapter 2. The Teacher Mentor Role”).

In Bandura’s model of triadic reciprocal causation, the central part of his social cognitive theory (SCT; 1986), we see how human behaviour is influenced by, and influences, personal and environmental factors (see “Chapter 3. Teacher Mentor Self-efficacy”). In this model, although humans have the agency to act, and agency here “refers to acts done intentionally” (Bandura, 1997, p.3), they may not choose to do so. An example of an environmental influence that may serve to increase a mentor’s controlling behaviours, is the need for them to prepare mentees to meet the Teacher’s Standards (DfE, 2021). In order to do this, they need to prepare them to teach in a standardised way to ensure compliance. Jennifer, the most experienced mentor in this study, thinks that *who is in control is a matter of perspective* (subtheme, Appendix N). Jennifer *lets them [her mentees] think that they’ve taken control* (p.6), but *Ultimately, Jennifer, the mentor is in charge* (p.7). However, the control Jennifer has over what happens in her classroom is not absolute. It is limited by the system, the societal structures she is part of and contributes towards maintaining (Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1975/2020; Lortie, 1975).

7.4. GET 2 Working with Difference

This GET is also concerned with exercising control; however, the control here is of a different quality, and it is used in a different way. This GET centres on the mentor’s control of the working relationship through the lens of *difference*. As this GET features in all participants’ accounts it is clearly highly prevalent. There is some overlap with the GET *Role Models*, but it has a different nature, as *Role Models* uses the lens of *similarity* instead.

Table 7.3*GET 2 Working With Difference: Subthemes and Their Prevalence*

GET 2 Subtheme	GET subtheme present in participant's account (✓)						
	J	O	A	C	M	L	S
You have to work with what you've got.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Managing the adult-adult relationship dynamic.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Different eyes offer a different perspective.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia

7.4.1. You Have to Work with What You've Got

As there are many possible differences between mentors and their mentees, such as gender, age, and personality, all of the mentors in this study know what it is like to work with difference, to work with “what you've got.” Their accounts reflect a wide range of experiences, and these experiences are taken from different positions, for instance, a mentor has also been a mentee.

When working with difference, Sophia had to “tailor” (240) the support she gave her mentees. She knew that an off-the-rack approach would not work because mentees do not come in standard sizes: “to make certain you're giving them what they need even if they don't see that they need it, you still need to be giving them that in order to move them on” (241-242). The use of “moving on” lets us see how much importance she places on providing support for her mentees that matches their needs. Without this, their journey would be impeded and then maybe her competency as a mentor would be questioned. That she has helped her mentee to make progress is important to her. It is a motivator for Sophia because she wants to demonstrate that

she has competency in both teaching and mentoring, and she wants people to know that she can do a good job of both: *Her mentee made massive progress, and her link tutor was overjoyed* (p.7).

Jennifer also thinks that a *personalised approach to mentoring* (p.12) is needed. To give her mentees what they need, she lets them see lots of different classroom practice to build a repertoire that is selected by them and matched to their own personal preferences: *Magpieing what attracts them and matching it to what they need* (subtheme, Appendix N). I have termed this approach “Magpieing,” as these corvids also select things they desire, and these things are not necessarily things that they need. By enabling her mentees to work with *who* they are, which is working with what *they* have got, or believe they have, she is giving her mentees more ownership (control) of their own development.

Conversely, not all mentors want to work with what they have got. They can try to change the person, or they can reject them:

She would sit and she'd make ... facial expressions ... it sounds really weird <laughs and coughs> like she was almost in a wind tunnel, her face would move that quickly and she'd physically like cringe ... when you did things it, it would make you so uncomf.., unbelievably uncomfortable.

(Megan, 266-276)

Here Megan is sharing her own experience of being mentored, describing her reaction to her mentors' reactions: watching her, watching her. A little later in Megan's account, it becomes clearer what Megan perceived as the key difference between her and her mentor was: “if you don't ... dress how I would dress, and you don't speak how I would speak ... it was going to be wrong” (342-343). Megan's placement was in an “outstanding school” (249) in a leafy-lane catchment. Megan did not feel that she could

be herself there, and neither, from Megan's perspective, did her mentor. The account Megan provides of her experience shows a different kind of gatekeeping to the one discussed in GET 1, and although she does not name it directly, it is there, underneath. This could reflect a difference of social class, which led to a feeling of Megan being "so squashed" (410) by her mentor, that she was unable to belong.

7.4.2. Managing the Adult-Adult Relationship Dynamic

As the mentee, Megan had to work with what she had in this situation too. She felt that she was made to fulfil unreasonable demands because her mentor held the control: "I was vulnerable like she was wr..writing all my reports every week" (378-379). As Megan's mentor held a position of power over Megan, *to pass or to fail* (p.12), she felt as if she had no choice but to manage (suppress) her feelings and acquiesce to her mentor's unreasonable – in Megan's eyes – demands.

From Megan's account, this experience has affected her deeply and appears to have influenced the type of mentor she is and wants to be: "I would never want to have anybody feel like how I felt" (401-402). Megan chooses an approach with her own mentees which appears to be much more open: "I definitely don't know everything there is to know" (516). Megan lets her mentees know that there are other ways, not just her way. Her way is to reduce the power differential in the adult-adult relationships she manages. She wants her mentees to feel comfortable with her, and with the situation: "I try and not make it all too formal. Like mentor meetings, it can be just a cup of tea and a biscuit" (518-519); Megan wants them to feel like they belong.

Gender difference can also make the management of adult-adult relationships difficult. Jennifer's first experience of mentoring as a young teacher was not something

she had specifically chosen to do. Her first mentee, a male who “wasn’t much younger” (51) than Jennifer, proved to be a “challenging” (54) initiation test, which she later described as “a baptism of fire” (73). The metaphor Jennifer uses here to describe this experience is a powerful one. Fire is destructive; it burns, and when we are humiliated or angry, so do we.

The challenge she had then is the same as the challenges she faced later (as a much more experienced mentor) when managing relationships with male mentees. For her, it was about “getting him [them] to...listen” (73). When they would not listen, Jennifer *had to* do something to make them:

like I say, I’ve raised my voice. I’ve had to and then felt terrible about it. But then they have come back and apologised ...and [I] said, you know, I shouldn’t have to raise my voice, you should be, you’ve got to listen to what I’m saying, because we’re going round and round in circles here.

(Jennifer, 926-931)

When people need their point to be heard, they often raise their voice to try assert their dominance. That Jennifer has occasionally had to do this with her male mentees may reflect that she feels they are not respectful of her expertise, and her position, due to her gender: they “don’t have that sort of humility” (54), compared to the females she has mentored. Her male mentees are not prepared to accept what she tells them, even though Jennifer thinks that they should. Although she does not use the word arrogant, the evidence of what she thinks of them is there, e.g., “what he didn’t know wasn’t worth knowing really” (68). To mitigate the risk of not being listened to as a woman, her approach to mentoring male mentees is different: “when I go back to the males, it needs to be firm” (362). She felt that she needed to “raise her voice” to (re)gain control to “move them on” (p.30; p.35).

The inclusion of “they came back to her and apologised” is important. As Jennifer does not see herself as someone who would do this with (to) another adult: “I’m not the kind of person that feels that I ever need to raise my voice” (966-967), when she has raised it, she has justified that “terrible” behaviour using their apology. If they have apologised, then maybe they accept the blame. Jennifer was right to raise her voice, because they *made her* do it, so she *had to* do something, as she knows that *Jennifer’s way of doing things gets results* (p.5; p.8). By interpreting the experience in this way, she is possibly reducing her cognitive dissonance.

7.4.3. Different Eyes Offer a Different Perspective

Although a mentor’s feedback or advice offers mentees the chance to see things through different eyes, it is not always gratefully received or accepted—Jennifer, Lauren, and Sophia have all shared experiences where this has been the case. The possible reasons for mentees not accepting or acting on the feedback they receive from their mentors are numerous. However, in this regard, the attribute of openness could be seen as a desirable trait for a mentee, and it has been identified as a key quality for mentees by all of the mentors in this study. Christopher thinks that *The best mentees are more open* (p.54) and therefore *more honest about their areas for development* (p.23), and Megan thinks that *Her student’s openness has helped her to be self-reflective* (p.3). That openness is a desirable trait is indicative of how they see their own role in facilitating their mentees’ growth and development. The mentors in this study want their mentees to be receptive to the feedback they provide in order for them to be the best teacher that they can be. There is a real authenticity here, and

throughout all of the accounts, what connects them is that they, the mentors, are genuinely trying to provide the best help and support that they can.

For feedback to be accepted, Olivia tries to establish a shared understanding during her feedback conversations: “I think I’ve always been able to <slight pause> start with the positives, you know I often start with: well, what would your reflections be? And then see which ones match mine” (601-603). This approach is also strongly shared by Megan, Sophia, Lauren, and Jennifer. That mentors need to *listen* to their mentees to share – to understand each other’s perspective – in order to get to a point where they can reach an agreement on what should happen to “move them on” (Jennifer, p.30) seems to be of paramount importance. This experience is present in all of the mentors' accounts.

By enabling a mentee to share their reflections first, mentors may also show that they are respectful of their mentee’s reflections on their experiences. Additionally, this respectfulness and openness may serve to build trust by allowing mentees to be “honest” (Jennifer, 10). In part, Christopher agrees: *Trust is built from the responses received* (p.54); however, as Christopher positions the mentor as having the most experience, the more senior position, and therefore the final say, he thinks that a mentee should *respect [accept] their [the mentor’s] judgements* (p.27), a position also shared by Olivia and Jennifer. For Christopher, a compromise or reaching a shared understanding is not necessarily needed if the mentor wields the “stick” (p.38). The person who makes the judgements, which in teaching are often highly subjective, decides the outcome.

7.4.4. GET 2 in the Round

In this GET, there is a tension when mentors have to work with people with different opinions or viewpoints to themselves. In many of the accounts there is evidence of a struggle, with the language used indicating a battle or a face-off, e.g., “loggerheads” (Olivia, 422). For others there is “frustration” (Sophia, 53) because they could not get their mentee to see things from their point of view. The mentors in this study identify openness as being a positive trait they look for in mentees. The main reason for this choice seems to be related to a receptiveness to feedback. In addition, Jennifer and Megan explicitly identify openness as a trait they believe good mentors should have, a quality that is also implicitly reflected in the narratives of the other participants in this study.

Having said that, just because someone thinks that they are open does not necessarily mean that they are. The accounts of mentors’ experiences of working with difference in this study invite a series of questions: just how open to difference are the mentors, how different are their mentees allowed to be, and what is happening here in these interactions? The conversations between mentor and mentee are seemingly not what Gadamer (2013) envisaged in his idea about a “fusion of horizons.” In this study, although the participants’ accounts of their experiences provide examples of conversations where mentees and mentors are allowed, and encouraged, to share their thoughts and reflections, it does not look, at least from this researcher’s perspective, to be an opportunity for “genuine conversation” (Gadamer, 2013, p.401).

As in GET 1, the mentors in this study are working with their mentees to help them to meet the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2021b). This means that only so much difference will, or can, be tolerated. Just how much difference depends on the mentor the mentee is working with. All mentors in this study have shared that they know what

effective teaching is, and most explicitly identify as being “good teachers.” Throughout their accounts, it is clear that they think they know how to use this knowledge and understanding to help their mentees to be effective teachers too. To support their mentees to become more effective, mentors use feedback. As this feedback will be designed to help their mentee to gain competency and to meet the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2021b), it is inevitable that mentor feedback is judgemental. This means that the opportunity for “genuine conversation” may be minimised during mentor-mentee conversations, due to the performative nature of teaching.

If we accept that judgements are inevitable, then their inevitability creates a tension that is present for all of the mentors, because all mentors in this study identify as being open. To alleviate the tension (dissonance) between wanting to be open and knowing that they still have to provide feedback that could be interpreted as a judgement, a few have explicitly expressed that they try to take a non-judgemental approach instead (e.g., Olivia). However, most seem to have ignored it. This blindness, to *who* they think they are and what they are actually doing could be there for a reason. It possibly masks the incongruence they may otherwise have felt. Furthermore, the experiences they share of being open and inviting openness, are possibly selected and interpreted in such a way (by themselves, of themselves) as to confirm the identity they associate with. This well-studied tendency or behaviour is known as confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998).

7.5. GET 3 Being There

This GET is associated with the need for the human-to-human contact that a mentor-mentee relationship can provide, e.g., *Being seen to be there for her mentees is important to her* (Jennifer, p.11). For example, a mentor is someone for a mentee to go to who will be there for them, when, or if, they need them. Although the prevalence of this GET is high and features in all participant accounts, it is less widely distributed than GETs 1 and 2 and therefore represented by fewer PETs (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.4

GET 3 Being There: Subthemes and Their Prevalence

GET 3 Subtheme	GET subtheme present in participant's account (✓)						
	J	O	A	C	M	L	S
Getting the balance right.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A designated person to go to, just for you.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
It's a mutually beneficial relationship.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia.

7.5.1. Getting the Balance Right

When it comes to “being there” for their mentees, getting the balance right could apply to a number of different criteria for the mentors in this study. One aspect that some mentors think needs to be balanced is that of closeness. Sophia found that she could give more to the mentee she shared a class with, compared to the mentee who was based in a classroom with another colleague: “they get a much richer experience

with you” (250-251). However, she also recognises that this closeness might be “too much” (251) for some mentees. By this she could be referring to the intensity of the relationship, and possibly over-management of the mentee’s activities. Megan agrees that being too close can be problematic: “watching everything you do might be a bit much” (1318-1319), and she also *preferred not being in the same classroom as her mentee, even though it could forfeit a stronger relationship* (p.41). Although some closeness as a need is echoed by all mentors in this study, it is not the same as being someone’s friend, e.g., “I don’t need their friendship” (Jennifer, 297-298). That the mentor-mentee relationship is a professional one, yet it can still be friendly, is a view shared by all.

Another aspect to balance could be the difference between “enjoying it more” (Olivia, 874), and “setting them up to fail” (Lauren, 736). For Angela and Jennifer, it is important that they show their mentees what teaching is really like. They both think that mentees need to experience the best and the worst aspects of the job, or they will not be prepared for the reality of it when they have to teach on their own. Angela uses the same metaphor used by Jennifer in GET 2, “a baptism of fire” (Angela, 556), to describe her own experience of induction as a student teacher. The metaphor is used by Angela in the same way as Jennifer, to represent an initiation; however, this time this metaphor may be used to represent the fierceness and hotness, or even pain, that she felt as a new teacher: “bang, in, get on with it” (551).

Angela thinks that she *supports the student in the best way she can* (p.13), so it would seem that she is not looking to *sugar-coat the pill* (subtheme, Appendix N) to cause anguish. She appears to be doing this because she thinks by not doing it, it would be more painful and shocking for her mentee in the long run: *The reality could smack you in the face* (p.15):

you will forever feel guilty, guilty that you're not being a good enough teacher, guilty that you're not being a good enough parent, good enough partner, good enough whatever, you will feel like Bilbo Baggins, like butter err spread over too much bread umm ... and I think that, that is the realism of it. It's a very hard job to do well and still feel like you are able to manage [a] family full-time at home. It's hard.

(Angela, 368-372)

The simile Angela uses here “like butter spread over too much bread,” illuminates and brings new meaning to the rest of her account. The switch to “you,” from “I,” provides a different perspective, as it takes her further from me, the interviewer (Orvell et al., 2022). By doing this, Angela is able to share and unload her thoughts relating to experiences that she may find too personally unsettling or emotional. The use of “you” possibly allows her to detach from (her)self; maybe it is Angela that feels forever guilty that she is not good enough. It could be Angela that has spread herself too thin. By using a “tough love” (300) approach, she is preparing them for a profession where *Experience isn't valued (in this industry)* (p.28).

7.5.2. A Designated Person to Go to, Just for You

Aside from closeness, having access to someone within a school setting as a beginning teacher is felt to be of utmost importance by the mentors in this study. Christopher and Jennifer think that because teaching can be very isolating “when you're on your own in a classroom” (Jennifer, 1128-1130), not having access to adult-adult contact and conversation adds extra challenge to an already “difficult enough job” (Jennifer, 1128). For Sophia and Lauren, it is important that the person a mentee can go to is assigned to that role, as it needs to be part of a formalised process.

Additionally, Christopher, Jennifer, Olivia, Sophia, Megan explicitly identify that the mentors selected to take on the role have to want to mentor; they have to show commitment to the role they are taking on, not have it “inflicted on them” (Megan, 1282).

On the other hand, not all of the mentors felt that they needed a mentor themselves, like Olivia: “I’ve always been a bit of a lone wolf, I just sort of do my own thing” (691). The metaphor of a “lone wolf” reflects that Olivia thinks that she prefers to do things alone, or by herself, and the experiences she provides in her account demonstrate this. However, in all of the experiences Olivia has shared where she has had to rely on her own tenacity, resolve, and problem-solving skills, she has not directly chosen them herself. Every time, she alone (from Olivia’s perspective) has had to make the best of the circumstances she has found herself in. From taking on a new role with new mentoring responsibilities, all at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; to the recent death of her mother; to having no real experiences of being mentored herself as a student teacher, Olivia reflects (through it all) that she has had to: “just figure it out myself” (20-21).

Further along in the interview, she shared her experience of being a pupil at school:

I went to a terrible school. My dad was a teacher; he put me there on purpose because he thought it would be character building. You can see my whole life. My teachers did not help me, I taught myself. It’s all coming together now.
(Olivia, 1452-1454).

Just like the situations Olivia found herself in before sharing this memory, Olivia did not choose to be in a situation where she had to “teach herself,” yet she did it anyway. As she is recounting and reflecting on her experiences, the penny starts to drop for

her: “It’s all coming together now.” By doing this, she is spotting the patterns in her own story. She is making new meaning through the opportunity this interview has afforded, and Olivia is apperceptively connecting the parts to the whole. It could be that Olivia is offering her pupils: “for the kids in the class who are really bright and are bored, I was you and I don’t want you to be bored” (1473-1474), and her mentees: “I think that I’ve always wanted a mentor that I could look up to” (1465), the teacher and the mentor that she never had.

Taking this new understanding of the whole and relating it back to the part: “I’ve always been a bit of a lone wolf” can help deepen our understanding of its meaning. It may be that Olivia, the “wolf,” has tended to find herself *alone*, particularly in times of adversity. Having found that she has the capabilities needed to meet the challenges she has faced, and having experienced some level of success, it could be that she has associated herself with an identity that best represents this i.e., a “lone wolf,” to make sense of all of her experiences.

7.5.3. It’s a Mutually Beneficial Relationship

All of the mentors in this study identified that mentoring has positive benefits for both mentee and mentor. Some examples of these potential benefits have been shared previously, such as Lauren has gained in confidence when it comes to managing relationships with adults through her experiences as a mentor (p.12), and Christopher thinks that it provides a much needed opportunity for adult-adult interaction: “you know there are some days I, apart from saying ‘hello’ to people on reception in and out, don’t really speak to other adults” (1155-1156).

For Jennifer, who had just retired after a life's work in teaching before I interviewed her, *Mentoring is the only part of the job she misses* (p.36). Jennifer could have gone *up the SLT [leadership] route* (p.10), but she chose not to. Instead, she chose to focus on developing other teachers and *found her niche in mentoring* (p.36). In the interview, she shared that she missed the feeling of "pride" (1160) that she had felt when "they'd [her mentees] succeeded" (1160), and that this was different from how she felt when the children she has taught had done well in exams:

How is it different? (Me, 1164)

Because it's a sort of, it's it's, you feel that <slight pause> you've succeeded as a, as a good teacher because they've developed through your sort of coaching, your mentoring, your observations and your, your guidance really. And I always feel like, especially with the younger female ones that I've felt like they've been like, not my children but that I've had, absolutely had their best interests at heart. I want them to do well. And that I've felt like I've, I've you know, I've provided the teaching profession with some bloody good teachers from mentoring.

(Jennifer 1166-1172)

For Jennifer then, success and "pride" her mentees felt when they succeeded was also her success; she felt it vicariously. Maybe, the pride was "especially" strong with her "younger female" mentees because it was easier for her to see herself and her influence *in* them, not just on them, because of the similarity in gender. Although she does not position them as her "children," by offering it, it is evidence that she has given this connection consideration. It may reflect that she sees herself as someone who is capable of nurturing another, which is a behaviour that is shared by mothering and mentoring.

Her mentees' successes provided Jennifer with the affirmation that she was both a competent teacher, and a competent mentor. For her it possibly gives her confirmation that she was right to choose this pathway over leadership. That she has made a positive contribution to the profession, and to education as a whole, through her work may also provide her with a sense of accomplishment. It is clear from Jennifer's account that the benefits of mentoring have been mutual.

Throughout the participants' narratives, a range of other benefits have been shared. Megan has greatly appreciated the opportunity to have a capable mentee, "such a fantastic asset" (113), to share "the load" (111) with her. This sharing could mean workload, and the emotional burden that Megan carries as a teacher; and for Olivia, there is a benefit for pupils too: "the kids are getting a good deal" (1541), which is an incredibly strong motivator for her. However, on the other hand there are some caveats. Sometimes the benefits for the mentor are only as good as the mentee they have. For example, if mentees are not acting on the feedback provided, this can lead to a feeling of resentment, e.g., *If her mentee can't be bothered, why should Lauren?* (Lauren, p.31). In addition, Christopher thinks that unless there are external motivators for mentors then it is unlikely that people will want to spend the time and effort investing in it to get better at it: "If I'm completely honest, the reason some people won't be super-invested, is that developing those skills won't get them a promotion" (p.33). That is to say, mentoring is not always going to be perceived as beneficial for both parties.

7.5.4. GET 3 in the Round

As we are a highly social species, one of our basic psychological needs is that of relatedness (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lave, 1996). The need to feel a connection with other human beings can also be thought of as the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Having a person there that is both willing and experienced enough to help and guide either a novice or an experienced teacher (e.g., who has “lost their way a little bit” [Jennifer, p.20]) was deemed to be necessary by all of the mentors in this study.

Place, time, and context are also important factors when it comes to “being there” for another person. For this study, that place happens to be within a school or an educational setting. We can think of these settings as “communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), where support and learning happen at many different levels. A sense of relatedness and belongingness for someone can be found more widely than the one-to-one mentor-mentor relationship.

The mentor-mentee relationship provides both partners in this dyad with the opportunity to gain relatedness or a sense of belonging. Sometimes this feeling of relatedness is stronger between some people than others, which will affect people’s perceptions of whether another person is there for them or not. Jennifer feels a stronger sense of connection, or relatedness, with her younger female mentees that can be partially understood using Edith Stein’s (1917/1970) theory *a phenomenology of empathy*. Stein’s theory explicates how people “intentionally experience” the life of another through “empathetic understanding” (Szanto & Moran, 2024).

Although Stein (1917/1970) postulates that empathy is something that is of itself a *sui generis*, this does not mean that it is not related to anything else. Empathy is an experiential phenomenon that is created by a person – the empathiser – through a

complex and multi-layered process. The empathiser uses information gathered from their senses to try to understand and make sense of what is being presented to them. Using these perceptions, an understanding is explicated by the empathiser, using the experience(s) of the other (cognitive). This perceptual analysis allows the empathiser to “feel alongside the person” (Svenaeus, 2016) the information is being given from. The empathiser can use their imagination, including imaginations of future selves and events, to create a first-person emotional (affective) experience for themselves. An example of this first-person experience for the empathiser could be what it would be like to feel *this* alongside the person, an experience which they can later reflect upon (Stein, 1917/1970; Szanto & Moran, 2024).

Jennifer’s sense of connection with her younger female mentees may be stronger because she is more easily able to empathise with them, cognitively and affectively, as she herself has been a young female teacher (also see Byrne’s (1971) similarity attraction hypothesis). In addition, empathetic experiences may be enhanced due to the effects of mirroring (see Chapter 2), or “inner imitation” (Riess, 2017), which may be easier to achieve if both individuals within a mentoring dyad are of the same gender. As Riess (2017) states that people are “evolutionarily wired to recognise and respond to differences,” which trigger “subconscious fears,” this could offer an explanation as to why the connection between Jennifer and her male mentees (see the GET *Working With Difference*) is not as positive. These ideas concerning similarity and difference will be explored further in GET 4 *Role Models*.

7.6. GET 4 Role models

As with all of the GETs preceding it, this GET too has a high level of prevalence in the participants' accounts. Like GET 1, it features in many PETs and appears to be highly significant for the teacher mentors in this study. From analysing the participants' experiences, it can be seen that modelling is happening in a variety of different ways and has wider benefits than just for training novices how to teach. In addition, this GET shares some aspects with GET 3 *Being There* and GET 2 *Working With Difference*, in terms of relatedness, connection, and relationship building.

Table 7.5

GET 4 Role Models: Subthemes and Their Prevalence

GET 1 Subtheme	GET subtheme present in participant's account (✓)						
	J	O	A	C	M	L	S
Explicitly and implicitly preparing novices for the teaching profession.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A role model to suit you.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yes, I have more experience than you, but I still don't know everything.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia.

7.6.1. Explicitly and Implicitly Preparing Novices for the Teaching Profession

Sophia, Lauren, Jennifer, Angela, Megan, and Olivia think that teaching is a “hard job.” One reason given for this is its complexity, for instance: “teaching is a hundred million things” (Olivia, 1084). All participants shared experiences where they

had helped and supported their mentees to cope with this complexity and gain teaching competency. For example, Angela tries not to overload her mentees with a long list of things to develop or improve: “just sticking with three objectives, three things to think about afterwards” (242); and Lauren shared how she used a scaffolded approach to support her mentee to gain independence:

I knew that when she stood up, she was really well prepared because we’d talked every lesson through, and the more good lessons she taught the more confident she got, and the less support I gave her and eventually she did just start planning on her own, and it was actually planning on her own.

(Lauren, 127-130).

Lauren has seen that her mentoring has had a positive impact on the outcomes for her mentee. There is also a hint that there is a surprise in that for her, with regard to her own capability to mentor effectively. The use of “it was actually” is offered as a convincer; it is as if she is trying to persuade herself, through verbalising, that she can do this, that Lauren is *allowed* to see herself as an effective mentor. An acceptance of this success may also serve to boost Lauren’s own confidence in her mentoring abilities, and she may have an implicit understanding of this: *Now Lauren knows what worked and what doesn’t, the next time she mentors someone she’ll be more effective* (p.37).

Lauren is not the only mentor to use successes to build confidence. All of the accounts contain reflections on experiences where mentors have used activities to build a mentee’s confidence where they felt it was appropriate. These activities tend to have a common theme, in that they have been chosen by the mentors to develop their mentee’s mastery. Additionally, in Christopher’s account, he has also selected

activities for the mentors he manages, designed to develop their mastery in instructional coaching (p.9).

Vicarious learning offered another convergence in the participants' accounts. All mentors used opportunities for vicarious learning, encouraging their mentees to observe a range of practices and techniques. Furthermore, they also shared experiences of watching their mentees teach in the same way that they, as teachers themselves, are watched. However, Lauren thinks that there is an element of unfairness here for trainee teachers and ECTs: *She doesn't think it's fair that students are judged against the standards when teachers aren't* (p.34). As Lauren's school is moving away from a judgemental observation culture, there is a real tension there for her. She is being expected to judge a trainee's teaching against a set of standards when she herself is no longer being judged in this way, i.e., she does not perceive it to be fair.

In this respect, the method of preparing their mentees for the reality of what life will be like for them in the classroom seems to Lauren "a bit harsh" (1091). As Lauren cannot change the systems used, she manages and lessens the dissonance she feels by justifying the activity: "I do think that's really difficult, but I also think at some point somebody has to say whether they're good enough to teach or not" (1097-1098). This gatekeeping aspect of making sure that someone is "good enough to teach" has a stronger pull than unfairness for Lauren, and it possibly reflects the control that the system has on the amount of freedom available for mentors.

7.6.2. A Role Model to Suit You

All of the mentors in this study shared experiences of being mentored or accessing mentoring at some stage during their careers. Megan's first mentor was

someone who made her feel uncomfortable, and unhappy, whereas her mentor as a newly qualified teacher was “fiery...terrifying...and wonderful” (309-310). Olivia’s leadership mentor “helps her” to move her out of her “circle of thoughts” (985) and to see things from another person’s perspective. It is evident from the participants’ accounts, explicitly and implicitly, that their own experiences of being mentored have shown them what sort of mentor they want to be, or not to be. For example, Angela had a mentor that seemed uninterested and detached, with a *Goodbye and see you later!* (p.21) attitude, which did not work for Angela at all. She thinks that this has shown her what she does not want to be, and for her own mentees *Angela’s there for them* (p.10).

Jennifer and Sophia both echo this and extend it by exploring how mentors can help to shape their mentees in terms of their *teacher identity* (Jennifer, p.17).

If I go back to... ITT ... my mentor on my longer placement was very scatty and uner..<stumbles> unorganised, borderline unprofessional in some of the things which they did, and I could not mentor in that way whatsoever, but maybe that also shapes you as well.

(Christopher, 539-542)

Having a “scatty mentor” for Christopher did not work, because throughout his account, it is clear that Christopher is far from “scatty.” He likes to be organised and prepared; for him, “professionalism is non-negotiable” (p.16). Although whether or not this mentor has “shaped him,” and his identity, is less clear.

That teacher mentors are role models for their mentees, both professionally and pedagogically, is shared and understood by all participants in this study. A factor that influenced the mentors’ perceptions of how effective this modelling is, is the similarity between mentor and mentee. Olivia, Sophia, Megan, and Jennifer have all expressed

versions of the view that for mentoring: *It's so much easier when you can see yourself in someone else* (Olivia, subtheme, Appendix N). Having an awareness of this has influenced Jennifer's actions as a mentor. Jennifer recognised that her male mentee needed to be able to see himself "in it" for vicarious learning to be effective, *for observation to work* (p.16). To accommodate this, Jennifer arranged for her mentee to watch a male teacher. However, Jennifer realised in the following discussion with her mentee that a similarity in gender alone may not be enough for someone to see themselves.

Although this was the case for Jennifer and pedagogical modelling, Sophia, Olivia, and Jennifer have all shared experiences of finding it easier to work with female mentees compared to males. It may be the case that as they can see themselves in them, they can relate to them more easily, e.g., "I think she enjoys the same things about teaching as I do" (Olivia, 1371-1372). Perhaps, for these mentors, gender similarity plays a more important role when it comes to establishing a connection, interpreting another's actions, and empathising with their mentees.

7.6.3. Yes, I Have More Experience Than You, but I Still Don't Know Everything

Positioning themselves as learners is a common experience that is found within all of the participants' accounts. They are, in effect, modelling the behaviours they want to see in their mentees.

you have to have the capacity [to be] prepared to learn ...if you can't, you can't tell the kids every day's a school day and you know you're learning all the time, if you're not prepared to do the same yourself.

(Angela, 1084-1086)

By being open to learning, Angela is also modelling the behaviours she would expect to see in her pupils. She possibly thinks that it is hypocritical for a mentor to expect their mentees and pupils to learn when they are not prepared to do so themselves. She perceives this as being a “very rigid way of thinking” (1092), thereby limiting someone’s potential for growth. This is also an important theme for Jennifer, who *sees herself as a learner* (p.21; p.37): “And to think: right, I might not be <slight pause> I might not know exactly what I’m doing now but I’m going to learn with them” (1198-1199). This experience could reflect her honesty and openness, in that she is not scared to share with her mentees that she does not know (the answer), but she is willing to learn. That this learning for her is happening “with them” may reflect a non-hierarchical attitude to learning Jennifer either has or thinks is important to have. In terms of learning, she is positioning herself as an equal with her mentees.

Sophia, who identifies as a *reflective teacher* (p.1), recognises that she is not the “fount of [all] knowledge” (566), a metaphor similarly used by Megan to describe her own position as a learner.

you reflect more on what you’re doing, so like you’ll say to a student afterwards: and when I did this, that was because of that, and I do this because it helps with that, and you’ve never even thought about it for years, like: why do I do that when they’re talking to a buddy on the carpet?

(Sophia, 1156-1159)

During the interview, Sophia reflects on these experiences of sharing and articulating her thinking with her mentee. She infers that by doing this, she is “see[ing] through a different set of eyes” (1170). The eyes are still Sophia’s, but now she is seeing herself and her teaching; her gaze has been directed inwards. For Sophia, the reflective conversations she has with her mentees helps her to uncover the tacit knowledge she

holds about herself and her own teaching. The conversations that she has with her mentees give Sophia the time and space for self-reflection. That Sophia thinks that *Without a conversation there would be no movement* (subtheme, Appendix N) indicates that for her, mentoring is more than moving just her mentee on. Sophia sees movement and growth for herself too; she is on the same journey as her mentee—she is just “someone who’s further along” (567).

7.6.4. GET 4 in the Round

Throughout all of the accounts, the mentors interviewed for this research have commented on, and shared their experiences of, the power and pervasiveness of role models in teacher mentoring. Using the accounts of their experiences, it is clear that all mentors believe that role models are of primary importance for human learning. Lauren’s subtheme *Mentors are role models for the teachers, and teachers are role models for the children* (Lauren, Appendix N), neatly encapsulates how the roles we perform, and societal structures we are part of and contribute to, are maintained and propagated.

Through the processes of social interaction, we learn how things work in our society. We come to understand *who* we are, including the roles we occupy (Mead, 1934), *who* we could be (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986), and *who* we are allowed to be. We also learn *who* holds the power, and how this power can be used (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice can be used to understand how a formalised educational setting, such as a school, uses role models to maintain the status quo.

Teacher mentors are usually experienced teachers in a school who have specialist knowledge, skills, and access to the resources and tools needed to engage

effectively within these settings. They possess capital. They contribute to, and are influenced by, the complex and stratified social arena within the school, and the capital they possess gives them power. For example, the power to influence, the power to climb, and the power to induct and inculcate others, such as novices, in the ways of the school, by teaching them the “rules of the game” (Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934).

This includes teaching them – novices/mentees – about the acceptable norms and assumptions in place within a school (doxa), that a novice, or newcomer to the school, would otherwise be unaware of. Teacher mentors are modelling pedagogy, but they are also modelling what it means to *be* a teacher (the experiences of which were all shared by the mentors in this analysis). In this way, mentoring is used to maintain the structure of this complex social matrix through modelling and gatekeeping; mentors are controlling the actions of their mentees through social learning (Bandura, 1986). Even though mentees have their own (adult) agency and are able to make their own decisions (see Chapter 3), in the hierarchical and structured environs of a school, they do not have unlimited choice—they still have to follow the rules.

Interestingly, although the mentors in this study may have had implicit or tacit awareness of this, for example Jennifer, the only mentor to talk about it directly was Christopher. His pragmatic approach to the facts of the matter: the hierarchy is there, a power imbalance is inevitable, so it is better to be “open” and “honest” about it, have enabled him to justify the “inevitable” judgements that go with it.

When mentoring novices, the internalised dispositions (habitus) of the mentors are important. As some mentors in this study have identified: *a willingness to mentor needs to be there* (Sophia’s subtheme, and PET, Appendix N), as this will likely influence the effectiveness of the mentoring, and therefore modelling, available. Additionally, people’s traits, beliefs, and values will also arguably influence the

decisions they make. A motivational belief, such as self-efficacy, will influence the course of action a person will take to achieve a specified goal (Bandura, 1997). For example, a mentor with strong self-efficacy beliefs in teacher mentoring may be more likely to persist with mentoring a mentee who is not as committed as they should be to the goal of gaining competency in teaching (see Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, this drive, or motivation, to help their mentee to gain proficiency may be positively influenced by their own desire to attain competency in mentoring themselves (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

7.7. Panoptic Discussion: Phase 3

7.7.1. Summary of Findings: An Overview

All of the GETs in this analysis featured so strongly in each of the participants' accounts that in many respects there was no need to search for them because they were not hidden. As such, they represent the “essential characteristics” of the phenomenon (Dahlberg, 2006, p.11): *what it is like to be a teacher mentor*, for all of the participants in this study. In fact, there were only three cases where subthemes belonging to a GET were not strongly felt: Megan and Sophia, did not have the subtheme *respecting knowledge and experience* from GET 1 in their accounts, and Angela's account did not contain evidence of *you've got to work with what you've got*, a subtheme of GET 2.

The GETs, namely *Controlled Freedom*, *Working With Difference*, *Being There*, and *Role Models*, are also correlated with each other. Furthermore, there are a number of cases within the data corpus where an experience recounted by a participant contains elements of more than one GET. To illustrate what I mean by this,

consider this statement taken from Jennifer's account: "I had to raise my voice" (926). This has been used in this analysis to provide evidence for GET 2 *Working With Difference*; however, it is also related to GET 1 *Controlled Freedom*. Arguably, she is raising her voice in an attempt to control her mentee's behaviour—she is attempting to control his freedom to do things as he wants to do, because she wants him to do it in a certain way, possibly her way.

As the participants' experiences are multi-faceted and layered, the meaning making that takes place, after (and possibly during) the experiences the participants have had, or are imagining they will have, is also complex. This is to say that participants, like all humans, will use a diverse array of internalised schemata (see Chapter 2; Mead, 1934; Piaget, 1964) to make sense of what has happened to them, or what they think will happen (to them) the next time they repeat the experience. As explicated earlier in this chapter in Section 3.2, GET boundaries are fuzzy.

7.7.2. Reflexivity

Throughout the analytical process, I have tried to maintain the spirit of bracketing as advocated by Smith et al. (2022). However, it is incredibly difficult to do this as it would be done by a phenomenologist, due to the method used for the analysis in an IPA. To make meaning from anything is an act of interpretation, and one cannot do this without accessing pre-existing knowledge and understanding. This, in turn, inescapably involves accessing our fore-conceptions and presuppositions.

This is doubly difficult in an IPA because the researcher, the analytical agent, has conducted the interview. This means that I have memories of how each person behaved in the interview, the interviews I was analysing in real-time. To make sense of

what the participants were saying at the time, I needed to meaning-make *in situ*, using what I know (from life experience, from what I was seeing in front of me, what I was hearing etc.) to make sense of what the participants were saying to me. I needed to do this to be sure (a) I was listening to understand, and (b) to be able to ask relevant and timely questions to probe more deeply. It is impossible to do this unless the researcher is accessing their own memories and cognitive schema, which will “contain” fore-conceptions and presuppositions.

The memories I made and retained from the interview process were with me as I listened to the audio recordings, created the transcripts, and conducted the analysis of those transcripts. This means that my analysis will have been influenced by what I learnt from the interview process, whether I attempt to bracket it off or not. In fact, the act of bracketing itself actually brings those memories to the front of our minds, and by thinking about something, we start to look for it. This effect is known as the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon, a well-known frequency illusion bias. To mitigate this risk, I used a spaced-approach to transcript analysis, leaving a block of time in between the analysis of each participant's script to try and avoid looking for the same subthemes and themes. The uniqueness of the PETs and their subthemes, provide some evidence that this strategy was successful.

7.7.3. General Experiential Themes, Essences, and SuperGETs

As explained in “Chapter 4 Methodology,” interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), has phenomenological foundations (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 2022). The research question I wanted this phase of my research to address was: “what is it like to *be* a teacher mentor?” and I believe that the IPA conducted has provided an

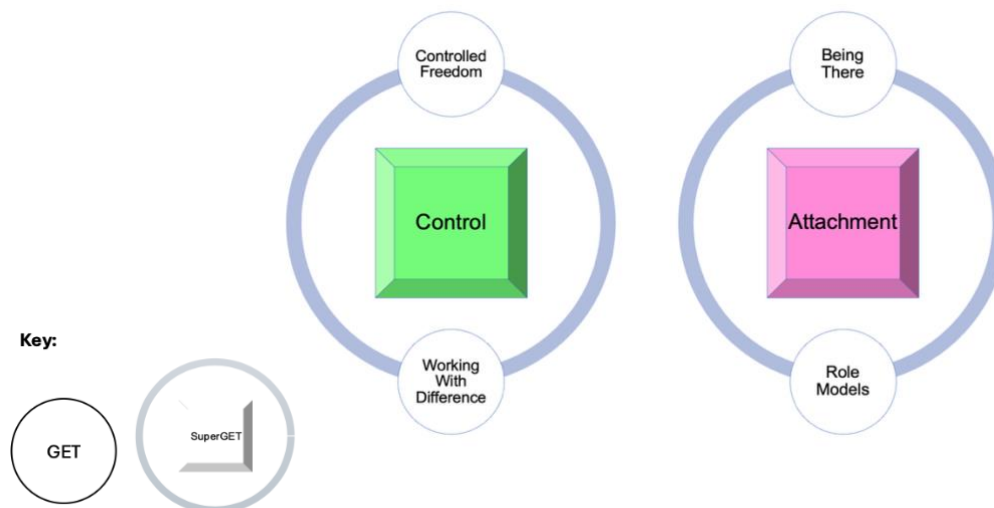
initial answer to this question. The four general experiential themes (GETs) that have been generated from this analysis do reflect the common experiences involved in being a mentor, and what it means to be a mentor for the participants in this study. However, as this methodology lays claim to be phenomenological, are these GETs the phenomenological essences (Heidegger, 1996; Husserl, 1936/1970) of the phenomenon “what it is like to be a teacher mentor?”

As an essence is “what makes the phenomenon to be that very phenomenon” (Dahlberg, 2006, p.11), if we took one of the GETs away, would the phenomenon of *what it is like to be a teacher mentor* still be there, would it be that same “thing”? From the participant’s accounts, as all four of the GETs are so strongly present, they would appear to be essential structures for this phenomenon in *this study*. If one of the GETs were to be taken away, then it would not be that thing for the mentors in this study. However, to find out if these GETs represent the essences of *what it is like to be a teacher mentor* more widely requires further investigation, and this will be discussed later in Chapter 9.

I think that in an IPA study it could be that the level of analysis does not go far, or deep, enough to classify GETs as phenomenological essences. Although I believe I have demonstrated the four GETs generated through this analysis have enough heterogeneity to stand as individual themes in their own right, and all are needed for *being* a teacher mentor, a deeper phenomenological analysis is needed to prove this. Furthermore, I think there may be a level of abstraction higher than the GETs, as shown in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4

Hypothesised Super General Experiential Themes (SuperGETs) and Their GETs



The super general experiential themes (SuperGETs) in Figure 7.4 are **Control**, which is *in* and *of* the experiences captured and represented by the GETs *Controlled Freedom* and *Working With Difference*; and **Attachment**, which is *in* and *of* the experiences captured and represented by the GETs *Being There* and *Role Models*. These two SuperGETs are higher-level categorisations of the experiences shared by the participants in this study.

Although the central qualities of the GETs themselves have already been explicated in considerable detail and depth in this chapter, it is important to summarise how each SuperGET represents the commonalities of the experiences captured by the GETs that comprise them. This means that, just like the GETs themselves, there are convergences and divergences within each SuperGET; the participants' experiences have valence.

The SuperGET *Control* has been named to represent participants' experiences—and, by extension, my own sense-making regarding how each of the participants had made sense of their experiences (the double hermeneutic of IPA)—that reflect perceived control of self and others (i.e., the environment), exercised through thought (cognitive and conative) and behaviour (action), as conceptualised within Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory.

In comparison, the SuperGET *Attachment* has been named to represent participants' experiences that reflect perceived attachments between self and others and, as with *Control*, exercised through thought and behaviour. I use the term attachment here in a prosocial and relational sense, and not in reference to attachment theory. In this context, *Attachment* represents a central quality of participant experience related to social interactions and the connections (e.g., affective) established through these interactions. For example, attachments can be perceived in terms of similarity and difference, which are important in role modelling and in building relationships (e.g., see Sections 2.3 and 2.4), as well as in empathetic responses and identity formation.

The thinking behind this model, and what the SuperGETs could represent, will be discussed further in “Chapter 8. The Overarching Discussion.”

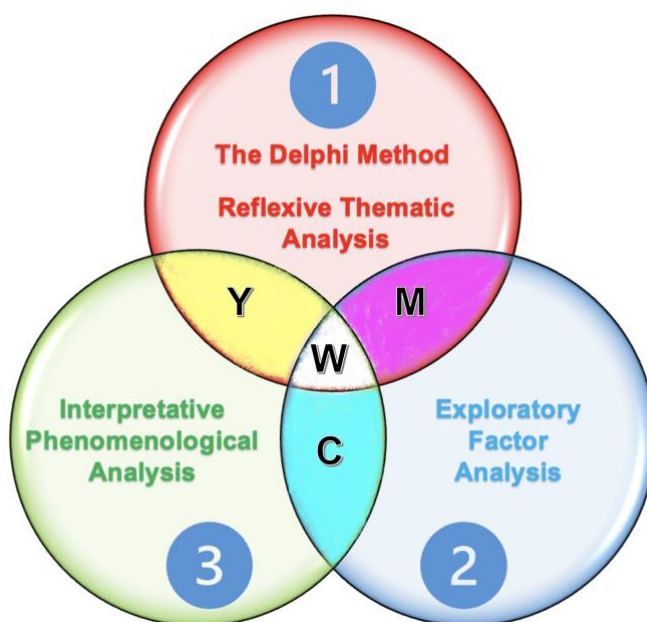
Chapter 8. The Overarching Discussion

8.1. The Three Lenses

The three lenses used for this research in Figure 8.1 were designed to capture different dimensions of the experiences related to the being and doing of teacher mentoring. As each lens was crafted by the methodologies used in each phase, the experiences *seen* through each of the lenses had different qualities.

Figure 8.1

The Three Lenses and Their Intersections



Although each lens has generated a set of findings that have led to new understandings of the being and doing of teacher mentoring, these understandings have been specific to each of the dimensions investigated. By combining these

findings—by using the parts to make sense of the whole—a more comprehensive understanding of the complex domain of teacher mentoring can be established. The intersections: Y, C, M, and W in Figure 8.1 represent the combinations available, and it is through these combinations that new meaning can be made through synthesis.

The methodologies used for each phase have shaped and *coloured* the lenses used in this study; they are acting as *filters*. Lens one filtered out the most salient competencies needed for teacher mentoring, lens two filtered the respondents' TMSE beliefs, and lens three filtered the participants' experiences that were explicitly related to the domain of teacher mentoring. In Figure 8.1 this is represented using colour.

In additive light mixing, combining the primary colours red, green, and blue results in the creation of new secondary colours: when red and green light are combined, we see yellow (Y); when red and blue are combined, we see magenta (M); and combining green and blue light gives cyan (C). Relating this to this study, consider intersection Y in Figure 8.1. When the *primary* findings from the red lens of Phase 1 are combined with the *primary* findings from the green lens of Phase 3, the opportunity to establish a *secondary* – and therefore “new” – understanding presents itself, which is represented by intersection Y. In this example, by doing this it becomes possible to ascertain how the themes and teacher mentoring competencies generated in Phase 1 manifest in the teacher mentoring lifeworlds of the participants in Phase 3. By combining all three primary sets of findings, represented by the intersection W, there is further potential to uncover new theoretical insights into the domain of teacher mentoring.

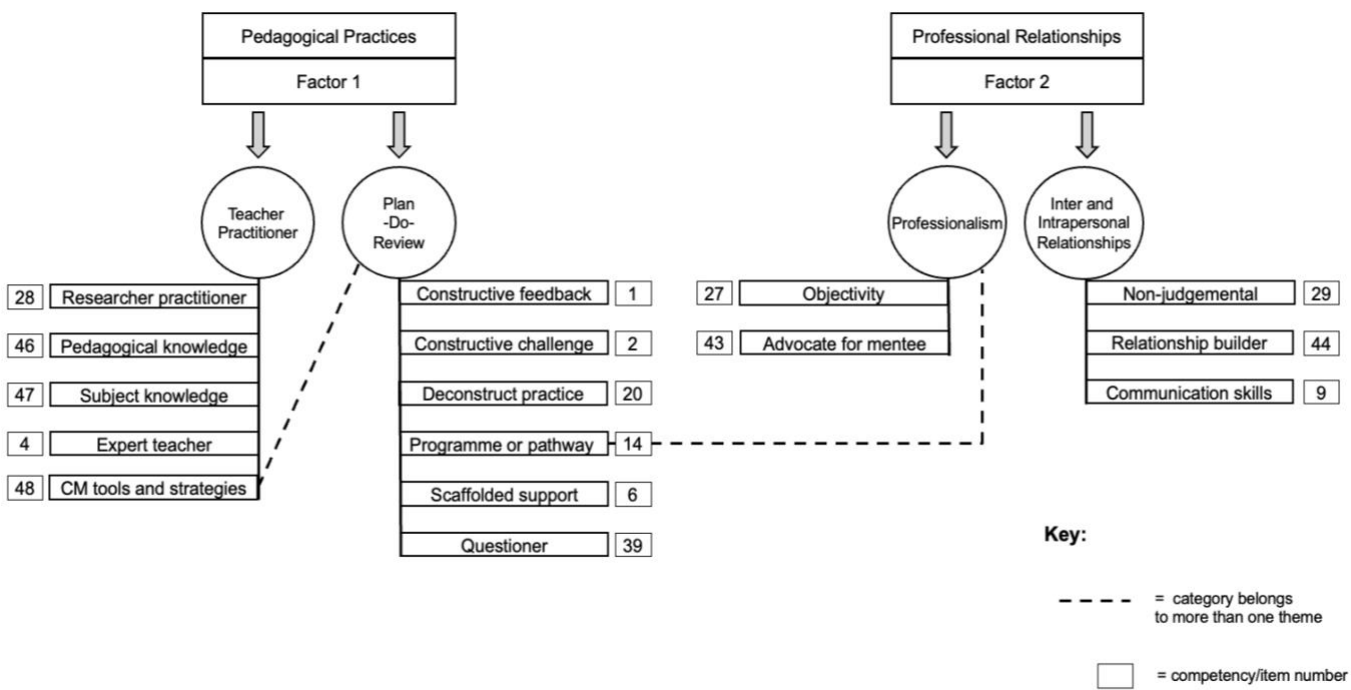
8.2. Lens Combinations

8.2.1. Intersection M

When the themes generated from the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) and the factors generated from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) are compared, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between them (Tickell & Klassen, 2024). This relationship is summarised in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2

RTA Themes and EFA Factors: A Comparison



Note. This modified figure has been shared previously in Tickell & Klassen (2024), CC BY 4.0.

In Figure 8.2 the themes, *Teacher Practitioner*, *Plan-Do-Review*, *Professionalism*, and *Inter and Intrapersonal Relationships* are associated with a particular factor on the basis of their categories (see Figure 5.5 in Chapter 5). For example, the category *Constructive Feedback* belongs to the theme *Plan-Do-Review* and was used to create competency C1. The competency C1 was then used to create item I1, which loaded very strongly (.96) onto the factor *Pedagogical Practices* in the EFA (see Table 6.5).

The interrelationships between the factors and the themes in Figure 8.2 demonstrate a *cleanness*, in that each theme is associated with one factor. For example, the themes *Professionalism* and *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence* are *only* related to the factor *Pedagogical Practices*. The sole example of fuzziness in this model concerns the category Programme or Pathway. This category belongs to two themes, namely *Plan-Do-Review* and *Professionalism* (see Figure 5.5), with each of these themes associated with a different factor. In addition, whereas there is a cross-over for the category *CM tools and strategies*, this does not cause the same issue for the model structure in Figure 8.2. This is because the association between the two themes occurs within one factor.

The model generated by combining the findings from lens one and lens two in intersection M has theoretical significance due to this cleanness. The RTA themes provide further support for the two-factor model suggested by the EFA, and the two-factor model gives credibility to the four-theme model generated from the RTA. As both sets of findings in intersection M validate each other (e.g., Flick, 2019), this strengthens the argument presented for the 16-item two-factor solution suggested by the EFA to explain the underlying structure of the TMSE construct. However, it is important to recognise that the model presented in Figure 8.2 also seems to suggest

that there may be a higher level of abstraction for the four-theme model of teacher mentoring competency as presented in Chapter 5 of this thesis. The combining of the findings from lens one and lens two has provided a new insight which has led me to a deeper understanding.

Further support for the model presented in Figure 8.2 is provided by comparing this with the model relating the factors to their sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Figure 6.8). For example, the themes *Plan-Do-Review* and *Teacher Practitioner*, both of which are associated with the factor *Pedagogical Practices*, predominantly include categories that have generated competencies that are, to a large extent, related to a mentor's ability to support their mentee to develop their teaching competence and confidence via vicarious and mastery experiences. Salient examples of these competencies include the ability to: provide their mentee with support (e.g., C25, C47); give guidance (e.g., C12, C46); demonstrate how to teach using pedagogical modelling (e.g., C28, C13); and help their mentee with goal setting (e.g., C33; see Tables 5.2 to 5.5). In addition, as the descriptions for the central organising concepts of the four themes (see Table 5.1) tally with the rationale provided for the factor names (see Section 6.3.4), this provides further evidence to support the relationship between factors and RTA themes as presented in Figure 8.2.

8.2.2. Intersection Y

By combining the findings from lens one and lens three, I was able to see how the teacher mentoring competencies and RTA themes presented themselves, if at all, in the participants' accounts in Phase 3. As lens three was focused on the idiographic, I firstly reviewed each participant's narrative, using their personal experiential themes

(PETs), subthemes (ST), and experiential statements (ES), to look for evidence of the competencies. Although not every participant made explicit reference to every single competency in the set, all individual accounts referred to the majority of the 44 competencies identified by the Delphi panellists as being important for effective teacher mentoring. For example: *You should be protecting them, not throwing them under the bus* (Christopher, ES, p.30) provides evidence of competency C43 “Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them”; and: *I’m happy you know what you’re doing, I’m going to back off now* (Angela, ES, p.33) provides evidence of competency C6 “Provide scaffolded support to enable their mentee to make good progress.”

One of the difficulties I found with looking for evidence of individual competencies within each participant’s account was that often the narratives provided evidence that could be interpreted in many different ways. This is because narratives are “noisy.” Often there is no clear demarcation separating one “thing” clearly and cleanly from the next. That is to say, that there is a significant amount of fuzziness in the raw data of a transcript. Although the construction of ESs helps to crystallise the meaning, these statements are still very often chimeric blends of competencies. For instance, *Subject knowledge and experience are important for mentoring, but the ability to distil it even more so* (Sophia, ES, p.10) could reflect parts of C47 “Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge ...”; C46 “Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required...”; and C44 “Use effective interpersonal skills ...,” and this is not an exhaustive list for this particular ES.

As the boundaries between the competencies are themselves fuzzy due to their interrelatedness (see Chapter 5), instead of trying to focus on the detail, *zooming out* may be a better option. This has the potential to reveal any underlying patterns and

relationships that might be there but are hidden by the noisiness of the data. By zooming out lens one to a higher level of abstraction, I was able to look for the RTA themes (see Table 5.1 for the theme descriptors) in the participants' narratives. When I did this, I found that all four RTA themes were strongly present in all accounts. A selection of salient examples of these occurrences is presented in Table 8.1.

Even the competencies that did not make the cut-off for inclusion, i.e., the four competencies that were rejected at the end of round three (R3), namely, C18, C45, C11, and C36 still featured. For example, the lowest scoring competency from the Delphi ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.79$) C36 "Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively" was present in Megan's, Angela's, and Sophia's accounts: *Sometimes the online system doesn't work for her, but she's found a way around it* (Megan, ES, p. 31).

By then zooming out lens three, the four general experiential themes (GETs) *Controlled Freedom*, *Working With Difference*, *Being There*, and *Role Models* unearthed by the IPA provided a view of the underlying patterns of the experiences associated with teacher mentoring across the participants' accounts. When these GETs were compared to the four themes generated by the RTA, the relationships were evident. Furthermore, there were some notable similarities between the central organising concepts or qualities of these two types of themes (these qualities have been previously shared and discussed in detail in chapters 5 and 7).

Table 8.1

RTA Themes and Examples of Their Occurrence in Participants' Accounts from the IPA (N = 7)

RTA Theme	Evidence of RTA Theme: PET/subtheme (ST)/experiential statement (ES).
PDR	J: Jennifer uses successes as developmental devices (ES). O: Failing to plan is planning to fail (ST). A: We learn from planning, so leaving it too late for students to learn from this is a big concern for me (ES). C: Look at their development against the standards (ES). M: Watching them, while someone's watching you (PET). L: The best use of her skills is to spot the underlying struggles and then offer her support (ES). S: He recognised that he had to adjust his approach to teach the year ones (ES).
Prof.	J: She had the highest hopes for her young female mentees (ES). O: Olivia tried to set the standard and be that someone to look up to (ES). A: It's important to be realistic about how hard this job is (ES). C: Mentors have tacit knowledge they find hard to articulate (ES). M: Megan thinks that mentors shouldn't be putting adults down (ES). L: A knowledge of your school context helps to point your mentee in the right direction (ES) S: Sophia sees it as part of her role to prepare her mentees for the commitment ahead.
II&I	J: Working with what you've got (ST). O: We're cheese and wine, different but complementary (ES). A: Talk to them. Find out what your mentee is like as a person (ES). C: Inflexibility can cause problems. Reframing and repositioning can help to resolve them (ES). M: Mentors should be open to listening (ES). L: Interacting with adults can lead to confrontation and conflict (ST). S: The constant closeness could be too much for some (ES).
TP	J: Expert teachers make it look easy, but it isn't you can't just step into Jennifer's shoes (ES). O: Through modelling and scaffolding, you're ready to be me now (ES). A: I'll give you the bones of it, but what are you going to do to meet the needs of all of the children in this class (ES)? C: We use the summary reports generated from the EEF, they're a brilliant resource (ES). M: What a teacher does needs to be focused on the child (ES). L: Mentors need to be able to model what good teaching looks like for their mentee (ES). S: She modelled planning with her mentees, guiding them through the process (ES).

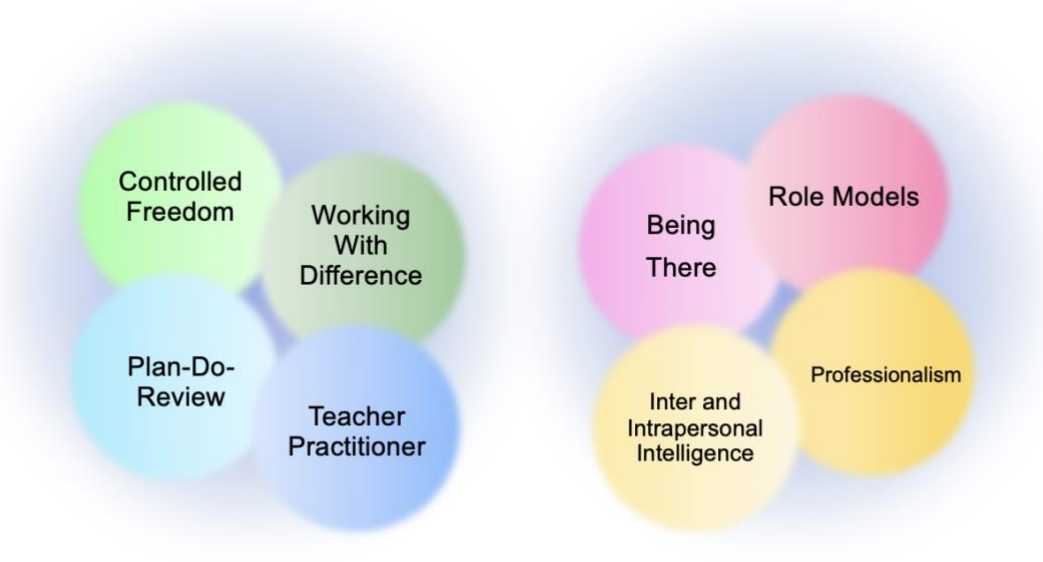
Notes. J = Jennifer; O = Olivia; A = Angela; C = Christopher; M = Megan; L = Lauren; S = Sophia; RTA themes descriptors have been shared previously in Table 5.1; PDR = *Plan-Do-Review*; Prof. = *Professionalism*; II&I = *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence*; TP = *Teacher Practitioner*.

Even though there were clear commonalities between GETs and RTA themes, there was no simple direct relationship between each individual GET and each individual RTA theme, in that one GET did not map *cleanly* onto one RTA theme. For example, the RTA theme “Professionalism: Role modelling - explicitly and/or implicitly - the professional behaviours/skills expected and sharing knowledge about the field” (see Table 5.1 for RTA theme descriptors), although strongly related to GET 4 *Role Models* is still, in part, related to the qualities associated with GET 3 *Being There* (see Section 7.5). This is because “relatedness,” a key quality of GET 3, is thought to be needed for role modelling to be effective (Bandura, 1997).

However, when the GETs and RTA themes were considered as broader abstractions or sets, (i) the GETs *Controlled Freedom* and *Working With Difference* had stronger relationships with the RTA themes *Plan-Do-Review* and *Teacher Practitioner* than they did with the RTA themes *Being There* and *Role Models*; and (ii) the GETs *Being There* and *Role Models* had stronger affinity with the themes *Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence* and *Professionalism* than they did with the RTA themes *Plan-Do-Review* and *Teacher Practitioner*. This relationship can be seen in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3

Relationship Between GETs and RTA Themes



By zooming out lens three even further, the highest level of abstraction is achieved with this lens, and the two SuperGETs *Control* and *Attachment* (see Figure 7.4) come into view. These SuperGETs are related to the two clusters of RTA themes and GETs in Figure 8.3. This relationship will be expounded in Section “8.2.4. Intersection W.”

8.2.3. Intersection C

Combining lenses two and three affords an opportunity to see if the TMSE beliefs related to each of the 16 TMSE items feature in the participants’ accounts. However, this, like looking for the competencies, was difficult to do. Firstly, this is

because most participants would be unlikely to directly reference the 16-items as they are worded, and secondly, participants may not explicitly verbalise statements of self-belief in their mentoring capabilities⁹. Theoretically, as self-efficacy beliefs are centred on perceptions of competence (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003), and each item in the TMSES is directly related to the teacher mentoring competency statement it was created from, I can deduce that if there is evidence of a competency in a participant's account, then there has to be some type of self-belief associated with it, even if that belief is unknown to the participant, that is to say, it is held unconsciously. This is because, theoretically, there is a high likelihood that people will still have beliefs about their capabilities to perform a task successfully, even if they do not explicitly state them (see Bandura, 1997).

If we accept this, it follows that that as there is evidence of *all* of the competencies across the participants' accounts in Phase 3, there must be evidence of TMSE beliefs related to *all* of the TMSE items in the scale, because all of the 16-items in the TMSES were derived from this set of teacher mentoring competencies. However, I still do not know this for certain, as these beliefs are not explicitly stated. The participants' self-efficacy beliefs specifically related to the items in the TMSES are obscured and are hidden from view.

That being said, participants' accounts did include examples where they directly expressed self-belief in their own capabilities to mentor someone effectively: *I can put a positive spin on things, but I won't sugar coat the pill* (Angela, ES, p.10); "I would like

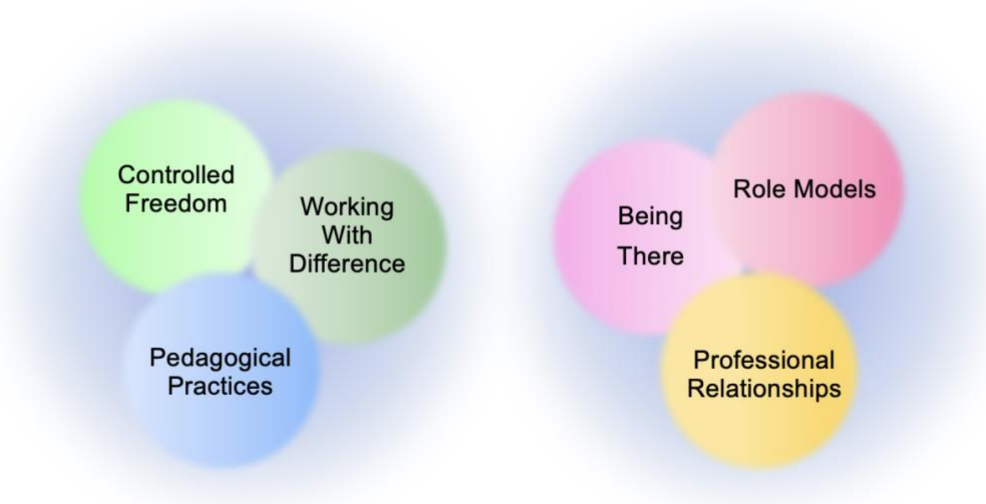
⁹ It is important to note here, that although an instrument capable of measuring TMSE beliefs had been developed in Phase 2, this scale could not be used with the participants in Phase 3, due to the methodological constraints imposed by an IPA study. As theoretical frameworks cannot be applied a priori in IPA, I could not have asked participants to complete the TMSES before their interview, as it may have influenced their responses. Furthermore, if I had asked them to provide responses for the TMSES after their interview it may have unconsciously influenced my questioning during the interview itself and may also have steered my interpretation of their narratives.

to think if ... I do again at some point [mentor someone] in the future that I would do it more successfully” (Lauren, 1183-1184); *you need to be a good teacher to be a good mentor, and she’s a good teacher* (Megan, ES, p.23); *I’ve got what it takes* (Christopher, ST); “I’ve you know, I’ve provided the teaching profession with some bloody good teachers from mentoring” (Jennifer, 1171-1172); *She’s not sure if she should be more demanding but she’s learning from experience* (Sophia, ES, p.14); “I tried to be that for my mentees, to kind of set the standard or be someone that you’d want to eventually teach like” (Olivia, 152-153).

If we zoom out using lens two, the highest level of abstraction from the EFA is reached and the two factors *Pedagogical Practices* and *Professional Relationships* come into view. This view, when coupled with the view from zooming out lens one, allowed me to understand how factors and GETs were related to each other. To do this, as with the relationships between factors and RTA themes and RTA themes and GETS, I used the descriptors for the central organising concepts of these sets. When I did this, it became clear that *Pedagogical Practices* was more closely associated with GET 1 *Controlled Freedom* and GET 2 *Working With Difference*, whereas *Professional Relationships* was more closely associated with GET 3 *Being There* and GET 4 *Role Models*. This relationship can be seen in Figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4

Relationship Between Factors and GETs



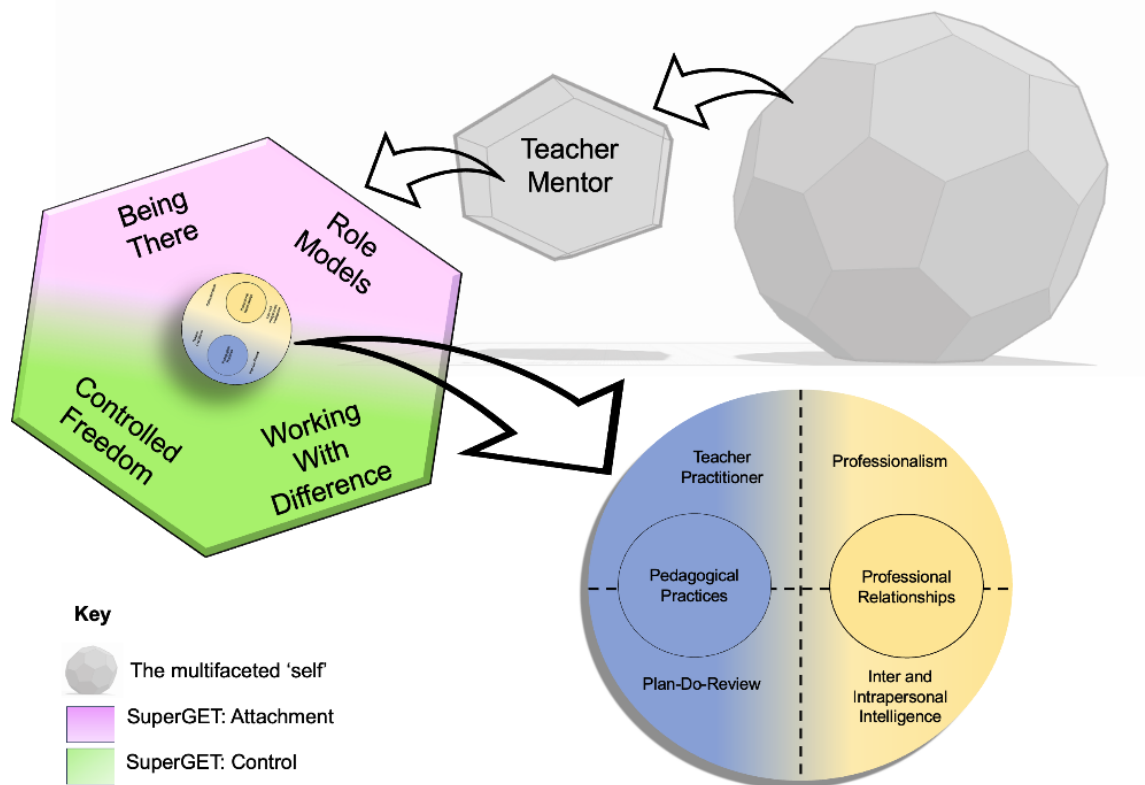
As with the relationship between RTA themes and GETs in intersection Y, zooming out lens three again reveals the SuperGETs. The SuperGET *Attachment* is more closely associated with the cluster of factors and themes on the right of Figure 8.4, with the SuperGET *Control* more closely associated with the cluster on the left.

8.2.4. Intersection W: The Three Lenses Combined

When I combined the findings from all three lenses, I was able to see how the two-factors, the four RTA themes, the four GETs, and the two SuperGETs were related to each other. This relationship is illustrated using the model shown in Figure 8.5.

Figure 8.5

A Model of the Being and the Doing of Teacher Mentoring as Seen and Conceptualised Through Three Lenses



In this three-phase study, each lens focused on a different dimension of the domain of teacher mentoring, with each lens providing insights that have enabled me to gain a deeper, richer, and more comprehensive understanding of it. However, it was only when I combined all three lenses and the syntheses from their intersections that I was able to gain a true sense of how the factors, themes, GETs, and SuperGETs were interconnected. The relationships between these different categories of abstractions – all representing *experiences* related to teacher mentoring – possibly reveal a *deeper* underlying structure.

In the overarching model in Figure 8.5, the SuperGET *Control* is most strongly related to the factor *Pedagogical Practices*, the RTA themes *Teacher Practitioner* and *Plan-Do-Review*, and the GETs *Controlled Freedom* and *Working With Difference*. In contrast, the SuperGET *Attachment* is most strongly related to the factor *Professional Relationships*, the RTA themes *Professionalism* and *Inter and Intrapersonal Relationships*, and the GETs *Being There* and *Role Models*. For each SuperGET, the central organising concepts of the qualitative themes and quantitative factors generated from the analyses presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of this thesis align with the core quality of their respective SuperGET. To instantiate this, consider the central organising concepts of the RTA themes *Professionalism* and *Inter and Intrapersonal Relationships* presented in Table 5.1. The categories—and their resultant competencies—related to modelling of the professional skills and behaviours expected of a teacher, and to building and maintaining relationships, directly reflect the prosocial and relational quality of *Attachment*.

As all of these sets of experiences are related to the being and the doing of teacher mentoring, they form part of a “Teacher Mentor” identity, a single facet of the multifaceted “self” displayed in Figure 8.5. Each facet of the self in this model represents a different identity. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, many identities are possible, some of which may still be waiting to be manifest and exist only in the future as *possibles* (Markus & Nurius, 1986), waiting to be actualised through our experiences (Jung, 1969). Some of these experiences we choose and some we do not.

The experiences we have and the inferences we draw from them have the power to grow and develop our identities. Who we choose to be depends on many factors, such as what we place value on (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000); our basic human

needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1985); what we think we are capable of doing (Bandura, 1977, 1986); who we think we are (Bem, 1972; Burke & Stets, 2023); how we are socialised—it is through our interactions that we learn who we are allowed to be (Bourdieu, 1977; Heidegger, 1927/1996; Mead, 1934); and our genetics (Turkenheimer, 2000). In other words, the model presented in this section only represents a small part of the *who* of teacher mentoring. The Teacher Mentor facet in Figure 8.5 is multi-layered, and the findings from this study only represent one of those layers.

As the multifaceted self in this model is free to move and rotate, different identities can be displayed at different times, and multiple identities can be presented at the same time. Who we choose to be depends on context, circumstance, what we want others to see, what we value, and how we see (position) ourselves in our own personal stories, our autobiographies, that we continually construct and re-construct throughout our lives (Bruner, 2004; Conway, 2005; Piaget, 1976). In addition, there may be an interconnectedness to these identities. For example, in this research, although the domains of TMSE and teacher self-efficacy (TSE) are different, they are still related (see the bivariate correlations between these two constructs in Table 6.12).

Although our experiences are thought to have the power to shape who we are and who we become, there remains the issue of what these experiences are shaping. Arguably, humans are “fleshy” beings (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), the products of those who have come before us—sociologically, biologically, and cognitively (as referenced in the arguments presented in Chapters 2 and 3). As such, each of us is part of a far greater whole, an interwoven mesh of complex and interconnected systems that seemingly have evolved the capability to recreate themselves. For biological and sociological systems to do this, control over these processes is essential to maintain

system fidelity and integrity across sociological, biological, and psychological domains (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Bourdieu, 1977; Powers, 1973; Varela, 1978/2025).

If mentoring is, arguably, at its core a mechanism for passing on learning (wisdom) that has been accrued over a lifetime of being and doing, then it could be considered to confer a survival advantage. In this way, the next generation of humans are able to access the acquired knowledge and wisdom of their forebears—just like the pups learning how to forage from the adult mongooses in their pack in Chapter 2 (Sheppard et al., 2018).

In this research, as a teacher mentor models how to teach and how to be a teacher, they are passing on their knowledge, learning, and wisdom to the next generation of teachers (e.g., “they need to feel your wisdom” [Jennifer, 350-351]). Theoretically, it is plausible that it is through these social interactions between mentor and mentee that the order of the system is maintained—and in this case, that system is education—shaping the self of the individual and maintaining role expectations from one generation to the next (e.g., see Figure 3.1, Bandura’s model of reciprocal causation, 1986; Harré, 1983).

As the core qualities of the factors and themes generated across all three phases of this study marry, the “existence” of the SuperGETs *Control* and *Attachment* (see Section 7.7.3) appear to be supported by both theory and the strong interrelationships observed. This suggests that these SuperGETs could represent the deeper underlying structures, or phenomena, that may be underpinning the model presented in Figure 8.5 for the teacher mentors who took part in Phase 3 of this study (see Bhaskar, 1975/2008). However, it is important to acknowledge that these structures are unlikely to operate as entirely discrete entities; as with the boundaries between the factors and themes generated from this research, there is overlap. In this

study, experiences associated with *Attachment* may also be associated with *Control*. For example, providing relational support (GET 3 *Being There*), associated with *Attachment*, may also enable a mentor to steer or guide their mentee's behaviour (GET 1 *Controlled Freedom*), which is an experience associated with *Control*, thus reflecting the interdependent nature of the experiences linked to each of the SuperGETs for the IPA participants in this study.

8.3. Teacher Mentors are Shaped by Their Experiences

To know what it is like to be a teacher mentor, it is conceivable that one needs to experience what it is to be a teacher mentor. This experience can be direct, in that the role needs to be performed by the experiencer, or it could be vicarious, in that the experiencer is gaining knowledge of the role through observation. However, there is some debate about whether one has to experience something directly to be able to fully understand what it is like to be that thing. Some philosophers believe that the subjective nature of conscious experience, the aspects of which are referred to as qualia, is such that it must be felt to be truly understood (e.g., Chalmers, 2010), whereas others argue that there is no mysterious quality to qualia at all, and that as everything is of a physical nature, human experience can be explained in the same terms (e.g., Dennett, 1991).

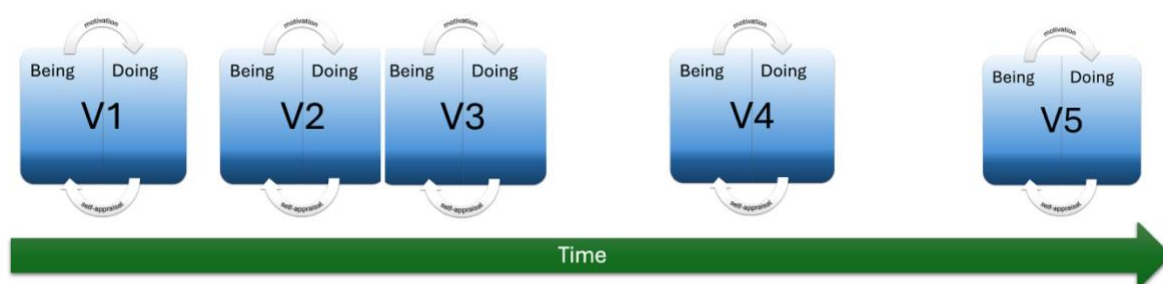
Although I think that Dennett (1991) is correct, like Chalmers (2010) I do not think that someone would be able to know *what it is like to be* something from knowing facts alone. I do think that direct experiences are necessary to understand and articulate what it is like to be – to feel – that thing. I think feeling the thing, whatever that thing may be, creates a different type of knowledge. This is why I selected people

who had experience of teacher mentoring for this research, because they have a *phenomenological knowledge* of it gained through experience. An experience (an event) is a change, for example, a change in how we see something, or a change in how we see ourselves through the process of apperception.

These changes, representing experiences (events), are how we conceptualise time (Rovelli, 2019), and we are temporal beings (Heidegger, 1927/1996). In Figure 8.6 I return to the idea presented in Chapter 1, the intertwined relationship of the being and the doing of teacher mentoring, who we are continually affects what we do, and what we do affects who we are, how we see ourselves. The self-beliefs we hold about ourselves, which have been influenced by events, motivate us to behave and think in certain ways, and over time these cognitive and behavioural changes change us (see Chapters 2 and 3). We become different versions of ourselves through our experiences across time. In other words, we are constantly *becoming*.

Figure 8.6

We Change Over Time



Note. V = version of "self."

As can be seen in Figure 8.6, this change in self may not happen in a uniform way. Certain experiences in our lives may cause us to unlock possibly hidden identities (Bem, 1972; Jung, 1969), causing a shift from one version of self to the next—V3 to V4, V4 to V5. However, although we change, we are still at one level the same person, because our consciousness, memories, and the story we have constructed about ourselves remains (Dennett, 1991). In Figure 8.6, once a new identity or version of “self” is established, the process of doing and being continues, with self-appraisal of our behaviours against these *new* identities affecting what we choose to do next (e.g., Powers, 1973).

As our experiences shape us, it is important that teacher mentors receive the types of experiences that will benefit them. As it is through the doing of mentoring that a teacher’s domain-specific TMSE beliefs can be strengthened or weakened (see Bandura, 1997), the quality of the experiences they have access to is incredibly important, as this is likely to affect their future choices, such as their commitment to undertaking this important role. However, as the findings and analyses presented in Chapter 7 show, the lifeworlds of teacher mentors are far bigger than domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs alone, and their teacher mentoring lifeworlds and TMSE beliefs, although important, are only part of their story.

8.4. A Partial View

As outlined at the start of this chapter, when I combined all of the *parts* of this research – the findings from each of the lenses and the models generated from the analyses of their intersections – I was able to synthesise an integrated model, representing the being and the doing of teacher mentoring, as a *whole*, in the context of this research. Although the model in Figure 8.5 is comprehensive, it is still only

offering a partial view, as it is itself a part of a much larger whole. It cannot possibly represent the whole of the teacher mentoring domain because there are many other lenses.

To illustrate this, consider emotion – the affective – although it is theorised to be a source of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), there was no specific focus on the affective in this work. Likewise, self-esteem, a different construct to self-efficacy, may also influence the behaviours and hence experiences teacher mentors will have, and there was no specific focus on this either.

Although the openness of lens three enabled me to view the teacher mentoring lifeworlds of the seven participants taking part in Phase 3 of this study and access their experiences “in-the-round,” I am not in a position to make any claims for generalisability. For example, as the teacher mentors used in this IPA study were based in the Yorkshire and Humber region, they could have very different experiences of teacher mentoring compared to teacher mentors working in another part of the country. However, this being said, their experiences of teacher mentoring—as a whole—were not necessarily geographically bound. For example, Megan trained to be a teacher in the South West of England, and Jennifer has worked in other areas of the country.

The overarching model presented for the being and the doing of teacher mentoring in Figure 8.5 relates to the experiences of the teacher mentors who took part in Phase 3 of this research. What this model offers are a number of theoretical insights that are, at this stage, exploratory in nature, highlighting possible avenues for further research before any firm conclusions can be reached. This will be discussed next in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9. Conclusions

9.1. Summary of the Main Findings

The central aim of this study was to explore the domain of teacher mentoring through the being and the doing of it, centred on the experiences of teacher mentors. An answer to the overarching research question for this work, research question four:

“What do the findings from this study tell us about the nature of the *being* and the *doing* of teacher mentoring?”

has already been presented in Chapter 8. However, I will now outline how each of the research questions (RQs) first shared in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.1) were addressed, providing a summary of these findings according to phase.

Due to the multidimensionality and complexity of the teacher mentoring domain, I knew that it would have been impossible for me to explore all of it at once through one study. As the domain is complex, and the being and the doing of teacher mentoring is impossible to separate completely, I knew that a complex and interconnected research design would be needed. As I wanted to generate findings that had the *potential* to lead me to theoretical insights, I chose to embrace the complexity of this domain as advised by Cochran-Smith et al. (2014), and, as explained at the start of this thesis, a focus on wholes and not just parts requires a multi-dimensional approach. As such, my focus was, and is, on the exploratory.

In this regard, the use of mixed and multiple methods in this research has conferred a considerable advantage:

“the qualitative can clear the ground for the quantitative—and the quantitative be suggestive of differences to be explored in a more interpretative mode.”
(Pring, 2000, p.259)

In Phase 1, the qualitative reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) provided answers for RQs 1.1 and 1.3. Using the Delphi panellists’ responses, I was able to identify the skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours required for effective teacher mentoring, and also determine their relatedness in the four-theme model presented in Chapter 5. This qualitative methodology “cleared the ground” for the quantitative, which featured in both Phase 1 and 2.

Firstly, in rounds two to three of the Delphi, I used expert panellist consensus to validate and determine the most salient competencies required for effective teacher mentoring, thereby answering RQ 1.2. Secondly, the exploratory analysis (EFA) used in Phase 2 enabled me to use this set of 44 competencies to develop the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES) and to explore the construct of teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE), thereby answering RQs 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. This resulted in the TMSES and the 16-item two-factor model presented in Chapter 6.

The quantitative findings provided a suggestion of what to explore in the accounts of the participants who contributed to the IPA in Phase 3 and the findings from the RTA presented in Chapter 5. This interpretative exploration resulted in the analyses and syntheses presented in Chapter 8. In addition, the findings from the IPA conducted in Phase 3 of this research provided answers for RQs 3.1 and 3.2. By accessing the experiences—the lifeworlds—of the teacher mentors who shared their stories in this phase of the study, I was able to understand *what it is like to be a teacher mentor*. This understanding was firstly for them individually: through their

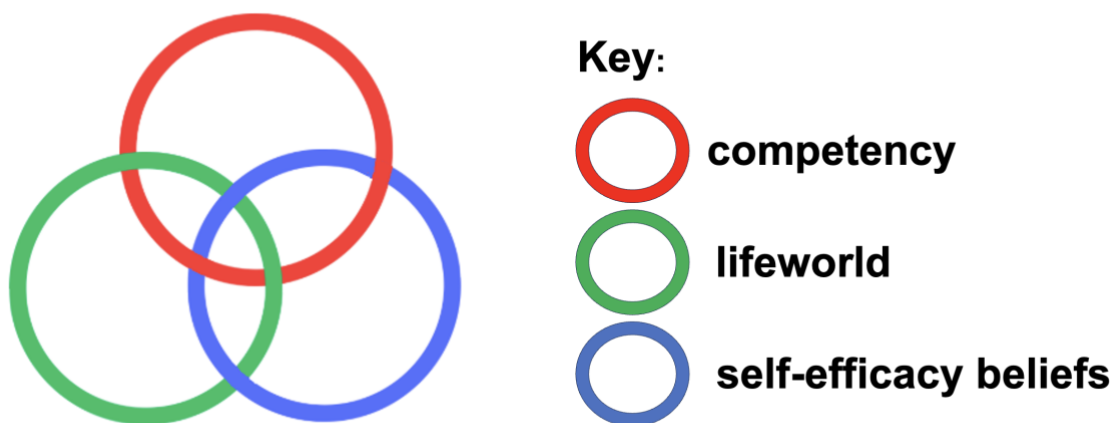
personal experiential themes (PETs), and then collectively: through the four general experiential themes (GETs) generated from this analysis, as shared in Chapter 7.

9.2. Research Significance and Contribution

My research design has afforded me not only with the opportunity to increase the validity and credibility of my findings through triangulation, in both a methodological and data source sense (Flick, 2019), but also as a means of further revealing the complexity of the domain of teacher mentoring. In Figure 9.1, the strong commonalities between the findings, representing the experiences comprising the lifeworld of a teacher mentor, their perceptions of personal competency, and their teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs are such that these dimensions are hypothesised to be inseparable.

Figure 9.1

The Interconnectedness of the Experiences of Teacher Mentors



In Figure 9.1, each loop is interconnected with the next in such a way that if one is broken the whole structure falls apart; it is a *Brunnian link*. For example, a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs are as much a part of their lifeworld experiences as their lifeworld experiences are a part of their TMSE beliefs. This is because these experiences are the sources of their TMSE beliefs, and these beliefs are highly likely to affect the choices someone makes. Arguably, as the choices someone makes lead them to new experiences, a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs will shape their lifeworld. The connection between experience and personal factors, such as TMSE, and perceptions of competency and behaviour, can be explained using Bandura's (1986) model of triadic reciprocal causation, as previously discussed in Chapter 3.

Experiences (events) can be thought of as interactions. As these interactions are with the environment—for example, with other people, and with the “self,” the quality of experiences a teacher mentor has is important. This is because experiences are powerful; our experiences shape us, they tell us who we are and who we are allowed to be (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990; Heidegger, 1927/1996; Jung, 1969; Mead, 1934). This means that experience—the nature and the quality of it—can strengthen or weaken a teacher mentor's TMSE beliefs, and also, strengthen or weaken their association with a “teacher mentor” identity. Therefore, knowing more about the experiences a teacher mentor has, and how they might affect their self-perception with regard to their personal competency, their self-efficacy beliefs, and their teacher mentoring lifeworld has real value.

One way this value is presented is in terms of helping teacher mentors to develop their competency in this domain. By fulfilling a basic human need or desire (Deci & Ryan, 1985), teacher mentors may be able to find personal fulfilment, job satisfaction, and enjoyment through mentoring, possibly motivating them to stay in a

role that they may otherwise leave. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, England has the youngest teaching workforce in the OECD countries (OECD, 2019) because experienced teachers are choosing to leave. This loss of knowledge and wisdom—practical and theoretical—from the system may have deleterious consequences in the years ahead. This is especially true when one considers that a potential human motivator for teachers to invest time and energy in teacher mentoring is “generativity” (van Ginkel et al., 2016), and as this drive is theorised to begin in a person’s 30s to 40s (Erikson, 1950/1963), it is also coinciding with the time large numbers of teachers are choosing to leave the profession (McLean & Worth, 2025).

Due to this retention issue, this means that not only is England losing experienced teachers with knowledge, it is also potentially losing those people who *want* to provide mentoring support for the next generation of teachers. This has a knock-on effect with regard to the lack of suitable mentoring support for ECTs entering the profession. For example, an ECT being mentored by an experienced teacher who has the desire to perform their mentoring role well, may fare better than an ECT who is being mentored by a teacher without those attributes. As the provision of mentoring support is seen as highly beneficial for ECTs (e.g., Thomas et al., 2019), those ECTs without access to high-quality mentoring may also choose to leave: “The leaving rate for ECTs also continues to be higher than the average leaving rate for all teachers, despite the national roll-out of the ECF...” (McLean & Worth, 2025, p.30).

From my own personal experience, I know how powerful mentoring can be for a teacher’s professional development and learning. The process can be transformational for both mentor and mentee; however, not all transformations result in positive outcomes. To improve the outcomes from the mentoring process, we need to know more about how teachers develop, and in this respect, this research offers insights into

what we can do to support teachers currently in the profession. For example, the TMSES developed in Phase 2 (Tickell & Klassen, 2024), could be used to help us to look towards models of teacher mentoring development that are focused on growth matched to individual strengths and needs, and not “one-size-fits-all” approaches based on deficit models.

The thinking shared here builds upon the suggested implications and opportunities for teacher mentors and educational researchers previously discussed in Sections 6.4.4 and 5.6.2. In short, the findings from this research provide a genuine opportunity to reconceptualise how teacher mentor development is approached and to understand how both teacher mentor and teacher self-efficacy beliefs are affected by the choice of approach taken. Although some researchers working in the field of teacher education and development consider teacher mentor agency to be “an important professional asset” (e.g., Daly et al., 2023, p.362), the extent to which teachers truly have a choice in steering their own professional development remains open to debate.

As agentic adults, I would argue that teacher mentors are more than capable of identifying and deciding for themselves the areas they need to develop, working within their “zone of proximal teacher mentor development” (see Warford, 2011), as discussed in Chapter 6. However, this is not to say that they would not benefit from support. Providing such mentoring support for teacher mentors may not be as costly or difficult as predicted, given the meteoric rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI agents that can help mentors devise suitable development plans, challenge their thinking, and even evaluate how effective such support and interventions are by using instruments such as the TMSES developed as part of this research (Tickell & Klassen, 2024).

By providing teachers with the opportunities for mentoring development that enable access to tailored experiences, both direct and vicarious, to support them to develop their competency by strengthening their TMSE beliefs, we have the potential to increase job satisfaction (e.g., Ghosh & Reio, 2013). This, in turn, may then serve to potentially reduce the high rates of teacher attrition we are currently experiencing (e.g., Madigan & Kim, 2021).

9.2.1. Maintaining the Standards

We are all parts of a much larger whole. Each of us is part of a complex social and biological system that is capable of self-replicating the structures needed to maintain itself (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Mead, 1934; Varela, 1978/2025). To do this, to maintain structural and system integrity from one generation to the next, standards for each “thing,” such as a role or a process, are needed if they are to be replicated as is *control* over the mechanism of replication.

In the English school system, who holds this control in terms of initial teacher training and education (ITTE) is shifting. It is becoming increasingly school-led (Oancea, 2014; Peiser et al., 2022), moving the university away from the schools, the student teachers, and their teacher mentors, and therefore away from the model of the “Oxford Internship Scheme” (Benton, 1990; Burn, 2006) as shared in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The responsibility for ITTE is now shifting to one of centralised control by schools and trusts, who are in turn controlled themselves by central government.

As previously discussed in Chapter 5, by having control over how teachers and teacher mentors are trained and developed, narratives can be constructed and propagated and *externally* imposed standards set. However, systems, and the people

that comprise them, can take a long time to move and change and accept these standards—even if there are “carrots,” such as government accolades, and “sticks,” where nonconformity can result in ostracization or loss of position. Instead, *real* change in social systems often takes time to happen (see Bourdieu, 1977), and I believe it is the internal mechanisms of control that make the difference.

As people tend to act in such a way as to affirm their identity standards and beliefs (Bandura, 1977; Burke & Stets, 2023; Powers, 1973), changing how someone sees themselves will change how someone acts to *internally control* themselves (see Figure 8.6). In the field of state education, one way of trying to ensure that change happens is by directly accessing the agents of change, those who work in this field at its ‘grassroots’, the teacher mentors.

As mentors are, by and large, controlling the daily diet of experiences their mentees access, mentees' teacher identities will be shaped by these experiences. This is because people learn who they are from the experiences they have (e.g., Jarvis, 2018). Then, once an identity and its norm reference values are established, people will act in such a way as to affirm their *new* identity (e.g., Burke & Stets, 2023; Powers, 1973). In this way, *real* transformational change happens; it is through *internal control* that paradigms shift. As this research explores the competency, self-beliefs, and experiences of “the teacher mentor,” it may help to provide insights into how this shift from external to internal control happens in a complex social system.

9.3. Research Limitations

As the methodological limitations for each phase of this study have been previously addressed in Chapter 4, in this section I will now discuss the limitations of this research in terms of the findings and analyses presented.

“the act of distinction lies at the foundations of any description. The most fundamental operation is that of distinguishing the ‘it’ to be studied from its background.”

(Varela, 1978/2025, p.128)

The RTA themes, factors, PETs, GETs, and SuperGETs conceptualised in this work are all sets of things that have a certain homogeneity. Although each has been generated from raw data that contains lots of “noisy” detail, that detail is still there as part of each set, it is just no longer visible when each lens is zoomed out. In this sense, the analyses and syntheses presented here are *not reductive*. Instead, they are offering a way of making sense of this detail. They provide a view of the domain of teacher mentoring through the underlying patterns and structures that *possibly* underpin it. As previously explained, the sets of things—the factors and the themes presented in this work—are abstractions, they are not physical objects and should not be thought of as such (Hesse-Biber, 2015; Kline, 2016).

All of these sets have boundaries indicating where one set ends and another begins. The business of demarcating these boundaries is not an easy task, because these sets (constructs) are interconnected (e.g., see Figure 9.1). This results in “fuzzy” boundaries (Ragin, 2000; Ziegler et al., 2015), making it harder to *clearly* and *cleanly* distinguish one set from another. Even though my methodological design has enabled

me to partially validate my findings, to *prove* that these models are representing the underlying patterns in this domain, and are therefore offering verisimilitude, will require further work.

As the findings and analyses I present here relate to the experiences provided by the participants taking part in this study, I am not in a position to generalise any further than that. For example, it may be that the TMSES items require adaptation and validation for use in different countries due to cultural differences (Tickell & Klassen, 2024), and different “expert” panellists may have alternative ideas as to what is needed for effective mentoring. Furthermore, the teacher mentors working in “master teacher studios” in China (Zhang et al., 2024), as discussed in Chapter 5, may have very different lifeworlds to the group of English teacher mentors I interviewed in Phase 3.

Lastly, as this work relies on the recalling, telling and interpretation of experiences, it relies on memory. Our autobiographical memories are not fixed; as we gain new experiences, they change over time (Conway, 2005; Piaget, 1976). This means that an experience as retold may not reflect the experience as it was then, because a different person is retelling it *now*. Furthermore, as we experience far more than we know, the true “thickness” of the experiences we have will never be captured (James, 1890). Moreover, as the knowledge we hold may be tacit, we may even know things that we are unaware we know (Polanyi, 1966/2009). In addition, as each of us filters what we remember, if an inference does not fit with our worldview, we may well disregard it (e.g., Festinger, 1957). This means that as we all have the potential to bear false witness to our own experiences, the models conceptualised using the findings from this research may not represent the *whole truth*.

9.4. Directions for Future Research

As the research presented in this thesis is exploratory, there are many different avenues to take with regard to future research directions. All of these paths have the potential to lead us to a deeper understanding of our humanness, and how we make sense of the world. Each of the phases of this study point to new areas to investigate, as do the analyses and syntheses from the intersections presented in Chapter 8. For example, the two-factor model suggested by the EFA in Phase 2 is one area that may be of further investigative interest. The factors in this model are certainly “complex enough to be intriguing” (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019, p.510), and as discussed in Chapter 6, the relationship between TMSE and teacher self-efficacy is one of significant interest.

As such, the next natural step here would be to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the “fitness” of this model. A suitable method to assess scale reliability following a CFA would then be to use McDonald’s omega, as this method is thought to provide a more accurate result than Cronbach’s alpha (Hayes et al., 2020). Whether or not there is indeed a distinction between the factors *Pedagogical Practices* and *Professional Relationships* is still to be determined, and by doing so a clearer understanding of how these factors are underpinning the TMSE construct could be established.

These new understandings could potentially lead to other studies, such as investigating whether self-efficacy beliefs related to mentoring in other professions or domains, have the same underlying structure. In turn, this could help to provide answers to much broader questions, such as the provocation shared at the start of this thesis in Chapter 2: is the identity of *mentor* a latent identity—an *archetype* (Jung, 1969)—in all of us waiting to become manifest through our experiences?

Another fruitful direction to take would be to investigate the GETs uncovered by the IPA in Phase 3. If these four GETs are phenomenological essences, and essences are “open, infinite, and expandable and ... never fully described” (Dharlberg, 2006, p.16), it would be interesting to explore how these essences show themselves, if at all, in the accounts of teacher mentors as they *become*—from novice to experienced mentor. This could be achieved by conducting a longitudinal study, accessing the teacher mentoring lifeworlds and experiences of participants from the start of their journey to its close, possibly using different devices such as reflective journaling to provide another way of engaging with their experiences that has the potential to yield rich insights.

In addition, as the ways of understanding and experiencing anything varies from person to person, are these four GETs—the essences that *are* the phenomenon of *what it is like to be a teacher mentor* for the seven participants in Phase 3—the same for all teacher mentors? One way to answer this question would be to conduct an RTA using pre-defined themes, in this case the GETs from Phase 3. This deductive approach would also enable different groups of teacher mentors to be compared. For example, novice mentors could be compared to those with more experience, and cultural differences between groups of mentors may also be explored.

Lastly, phenomenography could also be used to provide another way of verifying the findings from the IPA. Although categories cannot be pre-defined in a phenomenographic study, as this methodology also focuses on capturing human experiences (Gerlese, 2025), it provides another way of validating the GETs uncovered by the IPA, this time through the means of comparison. For example, if the “categories of description” generated from a phenomenographic study marry with the GETs, then it gives the analyses and syntheses presented in this study greater

credibility. Furthermore, using a methodology such as phenomenography allows for comparisons to be made across groups. For example, do teacher mentors working in different countries have the same types of experiences? If the capacity to mentor is a universal human characteristic or trait, it could be that the quality of experiences mentors have are also similar.

All of the findings generated from this research have led me to new insights that have deepened my knowledge and understanding of teacher mentoring. The importance of teaching, and by extension mentoring, is far reaching—as discussed in Chapter 2, it has a long history, and arguably as a species, it has always been a part of us. Without it, the ability to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next would be lost, alongside the competitive advantage this confers. For education, the loss of knowledge and wisdom from the English school system through continued teacher attrition will benefit no one. Collectively, we need to work much harder to understand what is causing this loss and how we can mitigate it. In this regard, the research presented in this thesis may help to formulate some answers.

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Research paper

Developing the Teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES) using the Delphi method and exploratory factor analysis

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ABSTRACT

As a psychometrically robust scale for measuring teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs remains to be established, the purpose of this study was to address this gap by developing the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES). In Phase 1 a Delphi approach ($N = 26$) determined the competencies needed for effective teacher mentoring. In Phase 2 these 44 competencies were used to generate TMSES items. Following testing with 239 teacher mentors, exploratory factor analysis suggested a 16-item two-factor model, with factors named as 'Pedagogical Practices' and 'Professional Relationships.' Results suggested strong inter-connections between qualitative themes, quantitative factors, and the theorised sources of self-efficacy.

1. Introduction

The attrition of early career teachers (ECTs) is an urgent problem facing education systems in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally (OECD, 2021). Providing effective mentoring to ECTs has the potential to boost retention rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Maready et al., 2021), increase self-efficacy (OECD, 2019; Renbarger & Davis, 2019), and build teaching effectiveness (Pfizner-Eden, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2018). However, results from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2018, showed that only 22% of novice teachers across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had been allocated a mentor to support and work with them through their induction period (OECD, 2019). Mentoring new teachers requires a set of mentoring competencies and the confidence to implement these skills in a range of settings (e.g., Schville, 2008).

In 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), with goal number four being to 'substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers' by 2030. The data collected from TALIS in 2018 indicates that, globally, there is a serious shortage of teachers. Recognising that this target may not be met should be an international call to action. One of the main factors contributing to the deficit of suitably qualified teachers is teacher attrition (OECD, 2019).

With high teacher attrition rates having deleterious consequences for

students, schools, and the areas/districts they serve (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020), governments must start to investigate strategies for teacher retention to redress this situation. Factors that have been identified as contributing positively to teacher retention are high job satisfaction (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021) and effective teacher preparation, including mentoring (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Renbarger & Davis, 2019).

There is a wealth of research to suggest that mentoring is beneficial for ECTs (e.g., Hobson et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2019), the pupils they teach (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2018), and for mentors themselves (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005; Simpson et al., 2007). However, we do not know very much about which competencies are most salient for the effective mentoring of early career teachers, nor do we know how we can assess the self-efficacy beliefs of teacher mentors with regard to executing these competencies. As such, the need for a better understanding of what effective teacher mentoring entails, and how we can best support mentors to perform this role requires further investigation. In this article, we address these research gaps through a mixed methods study that (a) explores the competencies required for effective mentoring of early career teachers, and (b) tests a new scale designed to assess teacher mentoring self-efficacy. As teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been found to be positively related to teacher effectiveness (Burić & Kim, 2020), one way of addressing teacher mentor development could be by providing teacher mentors with

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opportunities designed to strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs, thus maximising their effectiveness as teacher mentors. Developing a valid and reliable instrument capable of measuring teacher mentors' self-efficacy beliefs is of fundamental importance if we are to gain a deeper understanding of teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE) and its impact.

2. Defining the construct

2.1. Teacher mentoring self-efficacy (TMSE)

Self-efficacy is a well-established construct, originally proposed by Albert Bandura as a key element of his 'Social Cognitive Theory' (SCT) in 1986. It relates to the self-perception or belief one has in their ability to accomplish a specific task, or complete a course of action successfully (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997). Many studies have demonstrated that the self-efficacy beliefs someone has can impact on their performance. For example, in Klassen and Tze's (2014) meta-analysis, using 43 studies, they found that 'teachers' self-efficacy is strongly associated with evaluated teaching performance' and '... modestly but significantly associated with the achievement levels of students.' Furthermore, Burić and Kim (2020) found that teacher self-efficacy was positively related to three measures of teaching, or instructional, quality, namely 'classroom management, cognitive activation and creating a supportive climate.' The strength of these domain specific self-efficacy beliefs can be viewed as a measure of the confidence an individual has in their ability to execute a task successfully (Bandura, 1986; Klassen & Klassen, 2018). For example, a teacher mentor with a strong sense of self-efficacy, who is confident in their ability to successfully mentor another teacher, will be more likely to achieve success than would a teacher mentor with weaker TMSE beliefs.

The efficacy beliefs we hold about ourselves are derived from four sources; namely mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective and physiological states (Bandura, 1997). Of these, mastery experiences, or performance accomplishments, are considered to be the most influential as they are the most authentic i.e., the person is performing the action for themselves (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). For a teacher mentor, the act of successfully mentoring another teacher will provide an opportunity for them to gain mastery. However, successful outcomes are also influenced by other factors. To mentor another teacher effectively, teacher mentors also need to acquire the skills required to do this (Schwille, 2008), and the acquisition and development of these skills influences self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, if someone experiences success during skill development, their sense of efficacy is strengthened, especially if the tasks used to develop the skills are new and challenging (Bandura, 1986). These stronger efficacy beliefs, in turn, affect skill development as the individual may be more motivated to engage in activities they have previously experienced success in.

This model of reciprocal causation is part of a bigger picture of what it takes to be successful in an endeavour (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Self-efficacy is a key element in the model of triadic reciprocal causation, posited as part of SCT (Bandura, 1986). In this model, three factors are at play, each influencing each other bidirectionally. These factors are personal - such as self-efficacy beliefs; behaviour; and the environment. In a school, TMSE beliefs may well be influenced by the structures in place, such as weekly time allocated for skill development. School structures, the environment, may then be shaped and influenced by the self-efficacy beliefs and behaviours of the individuals who have accessed this development time. Alongside this, our behaviour is also influenced by how we cognitively process and interpret behavioural outcomes (Klassen & Klassen, 2018), the filters we have through which we perceive the world, and what we attribute our successes and failures to (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs may also have other sources, with Maddux (2009) proposing a fifth source of self-efficacy beliefs being 'imagined experience.' He suggests that imagining ourselves as being successful in completing a task or activity that we find difficult may

serve to boost self-efficacy beliefs. This cognitive self-modelling may prove to be a useful tool for strengthening TMSE as part of a training and development programme.

2.2. The need for a teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES)

Although established and well-tested scales already exist to measure the construct of teacher self-efficacy e.g., the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and the *Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale* (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), a well-defined and established scale to measure TMSE beliefs has remained elusive. A thirty-item teacher mentoring scale was created by Riggs nearly a quarter-century ago (2000). However, this scale was developed for local use, and no psychometric data on scale properties were released. Riggs (2000) consists of items that measure constructs outside of the conventional definitions of self-efficacy, i.e., outcome expectancy. As self-efficacy beliefs are not outcome expectancies (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 2009), and the scale is split further into four predetermined skill areas that may not reflect current thinking about teacher mentoring (e.g., a new early career framework focusing on teacher mentoring was recently introduced in England (Department for Education (DfE), 2019), Riggs' scale (Riggs, 2000) does not adequately capture current conceptualisations of TMSE beliefs.

Aside from Riggs' work in 2000, very little research has been conducted on scale development with regard to the measurement of TMSE beliefs. In a study conducted by Lejonberg and Christophersen in 2015, four items to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs were constructed; however, although Lejonberg and Christophersen (2015) state that their items were adapted from those shared in a previous study unrelated to teacher mentoring (Jones, 1986), scant detail is provided as to how this was done. In addition, it is highly unlikely that this limited number of items fully reflect the breadth of the TMSE domain.

As both of these scales have significant limitations, and the authors are unaware of any other scales that have been developed to assess the self-efficacy beliefs of teacher mentors, the need for the development of a new scale is evident.

2.3. Measuring TMSE beliefs

When constructing a psychometric scale, it is important to ensure that the items created are fully representative of the construct being studied (DeVellis, 2017; Goldberg & Velicer, 2006; Nunnally, 1978). As self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific (Bandura, 1997), items must be created that reflect the domain of interest (Bandura, 2006), which in this case is teacher mentoring. The reason for this is to ensure content validity (DeVellis, 2017), an essential feature for creating an instrument capable of measuring TMSE. Therefore, to begin the task of measuring TMSE beliefs, establishing what teacher mentors need to do to be effective in their role is imperative. Alongside this, an additional consideration is that of defining and delineating what is meant by the term 'teacher mentor,' which may mean very different things, depending on the context.

There is a bewildering number of interpretations of the terms 'mentor' and 'mentoring' (Mullen, 2012). Crisp and Cruz (2009) identified over fifty different definitions for the word 'mentor' in their literature review and some definitions even come with their own caveats e.g., 'pre-service' (Ellis et al., 2020), indicating a specific role and type of mentoring that is expected to be performed. As such, there is no shared consensus or simple understanding of what these terms mean (e.g., Hobson & Maxwell, 2020), nor is there a consensus on what a competency is either (Hoffmann, 1999).

As mentoring is a human endeavour that is certainly not new, this lack of definitional clarity comes as no surprise. People have been learning from a wiser or more knowledgeable other since the dawn of our species (Ackerman et al., 2002), and as we have used these terms or notions of them for so long, their meaning, usage and our understanding

of them has evolved (Mullen, 2012; Roberts, 2000). Additionally, different countries use their own terminology for teacher mentors, such as 'cooperating teacher' in parts of Australia (Simpson et al., 2007), and 'support teacher' (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), or 'supervising teacher' in parts of the USA (Ellis et al., 2020). This adds to the complexity of establishing an accepted definition for these terms and is something we address in this paper through the use of the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2011). However, clarifying the definitions of what a 'teacher mentor' is does not lead to improved educational practice; we also need to understand the beliefs and attitudes related to successful teacher mentoring. In this regard, we have chosen to explore the self-efficacy beliefs related to teacher mentoring, which are directly related to teacher mentoring competencies.

2.4. Establishing the competencies teacher mentors need

The approach we have chosen to determine the competencies needed for teacher mentors to be effective, is the well-tested Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2011). The Delphi method uses expert input to address a particular problem or research question through the means of establishing a consensus (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). As the goal for Phase 1 was to establish a consensus regarding the competencies teacher mentors need, the Delphi method was primarily chosen on the basis of 'fitness for purpose' (Gorard, 2002). Another advantage was that it had been successfully used to establish the competencies needed to perform certain roles in the past e.g., Wester and Borders (2014); Neuer Colburn et al. (2016); Sakuramoto et al. (2023).

Another key advantage of the Delphi method relates to the use of expert input. Convening an expert panel is thought by many to be the most important phase of any Delphi study (e.g., Devaney & Henthon, 2018). However, what exactly confers 'expert' status is vague and imprecise (Waggoner et al., 2016), leaving it to the researcher to define what this term means for themselves (Devaney & Henthon, 2018). In terms of the current study, accessing expertise from knowledgeable others in the field of teacher mentoring is of critical importance, as this ultimately affects the credibility of the data and hence the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

As studies have demonstrated that questions or situations requiring expert judgement may be better addressed by a panel, compared to the averaging of individual responses (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004), the Delphi method also has advantages over more traditional survey techniques. Moreover, anonymity, a key feature of this methodology (Iqbal & Pipon-Young, 2009), may lead to better representation of expert opinion (Landeta, 2006), as group members will not be able to use their position or social standing to influence others covertly, or even overtly, within the group (e.g., Hussler et al., 2011; Rowe & Wright, 2001). However, Iqbal and Pipon-Young (2009) suggest that meeting anonymously may be disadvantageous, as a lack of interpersonal interactions may lead to a lack of 'richness' in the data produced, and result in 'less ownership' of the responses offered.

As the Delphi method uses panellists' expertise to establish consensus over a series of surveys, the researcher's interpretations of the data are validated by the expert panel at each stage of the Delphi (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). In addition, as the panellists are the 'definers' in a Delphi study, previous issues raised with regard to definitions are circumvented through the mechanism of consensus.

3. Research purpose

Teacher mentoring is a critical component of successful education systems (e.g., OECD, 2019). Gaining a better understanding of how to help teacher mentors strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs will develop their practice, helping them to mentor more effectively. As the purpose of this two-phase study is to (a) define what teacher mentors need to be able to do to perform their role effectively, and (b) use these findings to develop the teacher mentoring self-efficacy scale (TMSES), we propose

to address the following research questions.

RQ1. What are the skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours required for effective teacher mentoring?

RQ2. Is there a relationship between the skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours required for effective teacher mentoring?

RQ3. How are the items in the TMSES related to each other (exploring the underlying scale structure)?

RQ1 will be addressed in Phase 1 of the study using the Delphi method and reflexive thematic analysis (RTA). The findings will be used to construct a set of teacher mentoring competencies, which will be rated for importance for effective teacher mentoring by the panellists. RQ2 will be answered through the RTA conducted in Phase 1, and RQ3 will be addressed in Phase 2 of this study using exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

4. Methods

4.1. Phase 1 Delphi study

4.1.1. Panel participants

The Delphi method requires a panel of respondents who have expertise in the domain of interest (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Participants, denoted by Linstone and Turoff (1975) as 'informed individuals', selected for the expert panel in this study had a minimum of five years experience in the field of teacher mentoring. This length of experience was chosen as a cut-off as it indicates that a participant would likely have the requisite knowledge and expertise needed to contribute to the Delphi (e.g., Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Powell, 2003). Alongside this, although experts are purposively selected on the basis of their homogeneity (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004), access to 'disparate domain knowledge' (Rowe & Wright, 2001) is also an advantage when conducting a Delphi. For example, all panellists selected for this study were knowledgeable in the field of teacher mentoring, however, they each gained experience of this domain from a combination of different contexts and positions e.g., direct experience of mentoring; system leadership; academia; and government advisory roles. This diversity and breadth of experience is an advantage in terms of augmenting the credibility of the findings (Powell, 2003) and is highly beneficial for developing self-efficacy scales (Bandura, 2006).

Potential participants were identified in a number of ways: (a) internet searches were conducted using keyword search terms e.g., 'teacher mentoring', 'teacher education'; (b) publicly available lists of institutions and organisations that would have a considerable interest in the findings of the study were used e.g., universities, teaching school hubs 'school-led centres of excellence for teacher and leadership training and development' (DfE, 2021); (c) searches for UK researchers with publications in the field; and (d) individuals already known to the researchers. Of the 74 individuals contacted, 31 accepted the invitation to take part but 5 later withdrew, leaving a final panel size of 26. Due to the international variance in understanding and usage of the terms and activities associated with 'teacher mentoring' (Mullen, 2012), and due to the particular national focus of this study, it was decided that all panellists should be based in the UK. As all participants involved in Phase 1 of this study provided responses during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that panellist responses may have been affected by this, e.g., survey fatigue (de Koning et al., 2021).

4.1.2. Panel demographics

Of the 26 panellists (age $M = 51.3$ years; $SD = 5.93$), 83.3% identified as female, 12.5% as male, and 4.2% did not disclose their gender; with the majority of panellists identifying as 'white British' (65.4%). The panel was highly experienced in the field of teacher mentoring, $M = 16.46$ years ($SD = 7.64$), with panellists having gained experience across a broad range of contexts and often in more than one:

25.7% initial teacher education; 21.4% secondary phase (ages 11–16); 17.1% higher education; 15.7% primary phase (ages 5–11); 4.3% early years foundation stage (ages 3–7); 4.3% further education; 1.4% special schools; and 1.4% alternative provision. In addition, 29.2% held a mentoring and coaching qualification; 83.3% held qualified teacher status; and 41.7% gained experience relating to this domain from an international context. There are no hard and fast rules regarding panel size for conducting a Delphi (Hsu & Sanford, 2007; Iqbal & Pipon-Young, 2009). The factor considered to be the most important for panel composition is representativeness (Powell, 2003; Rowe & Wright, 2001). As panellists have experience of teacher mentoring across a range of contexts, reflecting the five stages of education in the UK (DfE, 2012), the representativeness of our panel is a clear strength.

4.1.3. Procedure

A small pilot study ($N = 5$) was conducted to evaluate our processes and to check the readability of the questions used in Round 1 (R1). Participants in the pilot were known to the researchers and were considered to have the expertise needed to provide meaningful feedback. Using the contributions from the pilot study, minor amendments

were made to the R1 survey. The Delphi comprised three rounds of surveys, with the study taking place over a period of four months.

In R1, panellists were presented with open-ended questions designed to capture the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes required for teacher mentoring (Fig. 1). Panellist responses to the open-ended questions presented to them in R1 were subsequently analysed using an open-coding process, as part of a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022; Saldana, 2016). To perform the RTA in this study, two approaches were used concurrently to analyse the data corpus. The data were coded and analysed using NVivo 12 and by using a paper-based method. The initial codes identified were used to generate categories and themes (Table 1); and for each category a competency statement was constructed. As no predetermined codebook is used for an RTA, it is to be expected that an individual researcher performing an RTA would have a different analytical outcome to another using the same data set (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As themes were not predefined and no pre-existing conceptual or theoretical frameworks were used, we recognise that we, the researchers, also bring ourselves to this data.

In Round 2 (R2), panellists were provided with an overview of the analysis from R1. They were asked to rate each competency in terms of

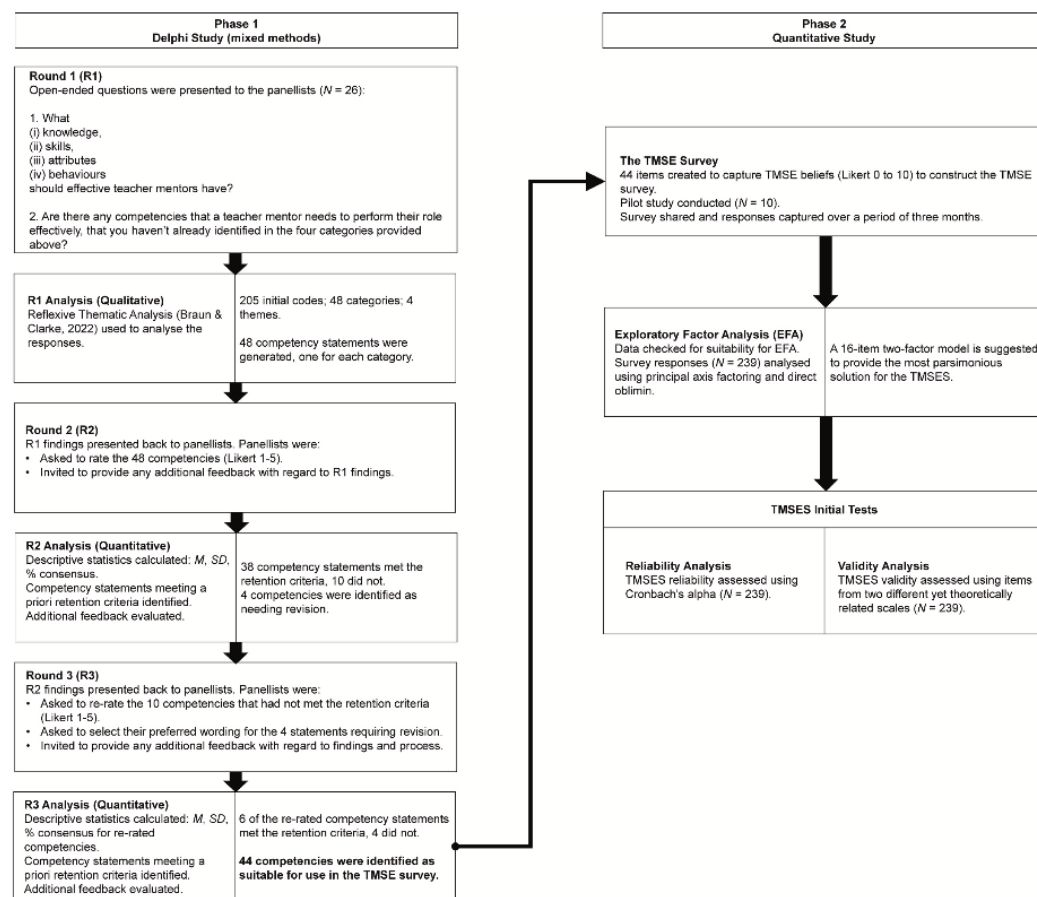


Fig. 1. An overview of the Procedures and analyses used in phase 1 and phase 2.

Table 1
Overview of themes, theme descriptors and categories generated from the reflexive thematic analysis.

Theme	Description		Categories	Shared Categories
Plan-Do-Review	Leading and facilitating the process of reflection. Based on mentee's experience, pedagogical practice, performance and expectations.	Critical reflection Problem solver <i>Focus on key developmental areas</i> Questioner Scaffolded support Andragogy Devise interventions	Facilitate dialogue Constructive challenge Build autonomy Construct learning opportunities Goal setting Constructive feedback Deconstruct practice	Assess mentee progress Programme or pathway CM Tools and Strategies Barriers to learning - mentee
Professionalism	Role modelling - explicitly and/or implicitly - the professional behaviours/skills expected and sharing knowledge about the field*. <i>*This takes place within a specific context/setting, changing according to mentee's needs and/or place on their pathway.</i>	High expectations Bigger picture Advocate for profession <i>Teacher development</i> Connection builder Commitment to mentor role	Flexibility and adaptability Advocate for mentee Genuine interest School context Objectivity <i>IT Skills</i>	Assess mentee progress Programme or pathway Learner
Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence	Building and maintaining professional and productive relationships.	Respectful and considerate Communication skills Is self-aware Relationship builder Non-judgemental	Emotional intelligence Open-mindedness Change management Empathetic	Barriers to learning - learners Barriers to learning - mentee
Teacher Practitioner	Mentor as teacher; holder of pedagogical knowledge and expertise; adviser; modeller and researcher.	Researcher-practitioner Behaviour management Expert teacher Subject knowledge	Pedagogical knowledge Modelling - pedagogical <i>Curriculum</i>	Learner CM Tools and Strategies Barriers to learning - learners

Note: Categories that have been italicised did not meet the inclusion criteria for item construction in study two.

importance for effective teacher mentoring, using a Likert scale, from 1 'unimportant' to 5 'very important.' To avoid potential researcher bias, the competencies were randomised for the rating exercise. At the end of R2, panellists were given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggest any additional competencies that may have been missing. Using responses from R2, a range of statistical tests were performed and % consensus for ratings ≥ 4 calculated. A competency was determined to be important for teacher mentoring if it achieved a $\geq 80\%$ consensus rating of ≥ 4 . This cut-off point was decided a priori. A cut-off criterion for inclusion of 80% of panellists rating the importance as 4 'important' or 5 'very important' was chosen based on the guidelines suggested by de Loe (1995), as this level of consensus in two contiguous categories indicates a 'high level of agreement.' The mean (M) value for competency importance was also used, with a $M \geq 4.25$ chosen to signify that a competency failing to reach the 80% cut-off should still be considered for inclusion in the final list (Morrison & Greenhaw, 2018).

In Round 3 (R3), the analyses from R2 were shared. Panellists were asked to re-rate ten competencies that had failed to achieve group consensus (Tables 2a and 2b) and invited to provide feedback for two competencies that had received polarised responses. In addition, panellists were asked to indicate their preferred wording for four competencies that were identified as needing revision. Panellists remained anonymous to each other throughout this Delphi study to avoid more dominant group members covertly, or overtly influencing the judgements of others (Rowe & Wright, 2001).

4.2. Phase 2 quantitative study

4.2.1. The TMSES survey

The 44 competencies generated from the Delphi study (Tables 2a and 2b) were converted into items for the TMSES, using Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy scale development guidelines, and models provided from other well-tested self-efficacy scales e.g., Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007). As such, all resultant items were designed to measure the beliefs someone holds about their capability to perform a task or activity successfully within the domain of teacher mentoring. The change from

competency to item is reflected by the stem used i.e., 'An effective teacher mentor is able to ...' precedes each competency statement, whereas 'How confident are you that you can ...' precedes each item, with competency number directly corresponding to the item number. A Likert scale of 0 'not confident at all' to 10 'highly confident' was then applied to each item. In addition to the 44 items designed to measure TMSE beliefs, three items from the 'Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)' (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and three items from the 'Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS)' (Klassen et al., 2013) were added to the end of the survey to provide checks for convergent and discriminant validity (DeVellis, 2017). As with the Delphi study, a pilot study was conducted ($N = 10$) prior to survey launch, to check for readability and ease of use. Feedback received from the testers was positive and the survey was open for three months. The survey programme Qualtrics was used to capture respondents' data securely and anonymously throughout; all survey responses were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. As many teacher mentors completing this survey will have faced additional challenges during this time, e.g., a move to online teaching and mentoring (Howard, 2021), it is possible that participant responses may have been affected.

4.2.2. TMSES survey dissemination

Potential participants were targeted using publicly available email addresses, e.g., the 87 national teaching school hubs in England were approached and asked to disseminate the survey link to colleagues who met the suitability criteria. The survey link was also shared through social media channels. As we wanted the respondents to be representative of the teacher mentor community, the survey was open to anyone identifying as having had experience of teacher mentoring across the whole sector, e.g., schools and centres for further and higher education. Heterogeneity is recommended for scale development (Gorsuch, 1997; Yong & Pearce, 2013) as it reflects the full range of experience and beliefs of the population it will be used for (DeVellis, 2017).

4.2.3. Respondents

At the close of the survey, 239 people had completed the survey in

full, from a total of 297 respondents who had started the survey. The ages of respondents ranged from 24 to 66 years ($M = 42.4$ years, $SD = 10.44$), with 77.8 % identifying as female and 20.5 % identifying as male. All 239 participants self-identified as being experienced in the field of teacher mentoring, with 98.3% holding qualified teacher status. Years of experience ranged from less than one year (7.1% of respondents), to over twenty-five years (5.9% of respondents); $M = 9.81$ years. Experiences of teacher mentoring were varied, with 44.8% reporting experience of teacher mentoring in two or more contexts (e.g., secondary phase and higher education). Nearly all respondents completing the survey were based in the UK (99.2 %), with 72.9% identifying as white British. Only fully completed surveys were used for the exploratory factor analysis ($N = 239$), to avoid statistical issues arising from missing data (Goldberg & Velicer, 2006).

4.2.4. Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a widely used first step for scale development (e.g., De Coninck et al., 2020) and was chosen to investigate the structure of the TMSES. All items were first checked for normality, and Bartlett's test of sphericity and a Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) test were then conducted. As all items met the acceptable ranges and the sample size met conventional EFA guidelines (Comrey & Lee, 1992) the data was judged suitable to be analysed using EFA.

Survey responses ($N = 239$) were analysed using principal axis factoring (PAF) with direct oblimin (oblique rotation). For this study PAF was chosen as this type of factor analysis can be used to identify the latent variables underlying a construct (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Yong & Pearce, 2013). IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was used to conduct the PAF, with delta set to the default value of 0 for the factor rotation, as advised by Costello and Osborne (2005). An oblique factor rotation was chosen as it is expected that any latent factors underpinning this psychological construct will be related (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Direct oblimin was chosen as the method for the oblique rotation as it is one of the most widely used approaches and has been successfully used for self-efficacy scale development in the past e.g., De Coninck et al. (2020).

To determine the number of factors to extract, Cattell's scree test was used (Cattell, 1966) in conjunction with Kaiser's criterion (Kaiser, 1960). As advised by the literature, a number of possible factor solutions were investigated in order to establish the most parsimonious factor model (De Coninck et al., 2020; Gorsuch, 1997). For each solution, any items that did not meet the factor loading criterion for retention of ≥ 0.40 were removed from the analysis (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). Likewise, any items that cross-loaded strongly onto two or more factors, with a loading ≥ 0.32 were also discarded (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

As the number of steps, and decisions required, for Phase 1 and Phase 2 are considerable, Fig. 1 has been constructed to illustrate how the two phases of this study are integrated.

5. Results

5.1. Phase 1 Delphi study

5.1.1. Reflexive thematic analysis (RTA)

From the RTA conducted after R1, 205 initial codes were generated from the data, which were grouped into 48 categories or sub-themes, comprising items that shared an underlying concept or common feature. As part of this recursive, abductive, and nonlinear analysis, four themes were generated, reflecting higher-level meanings and inferences that capture a core commonality shared by the categories within them. These four themes: 'Plan-Do-Review', 'Teacher Practitioner', 'Professionalism' and 'Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence' provide an account of different aspects or facets of the phenomenon of teacher mentoring. Theme descriptions and their associated categories are presented in

Table 1.

Six of the 48 categories or sub-themes, have elements that are common to two themes. For example, the category 'Learner' has qualities that connect it to the themes 'Professionalism' and 'Teacher Practitioner.' This illustrates the interdependence and interconnectedness of the knowledge, skills, attributes and behaviours required for effective teacher mentoring; teacher mentoring can be viewed as both a role to be performed and as a process. Following the tenets of RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022), the outputs and inferences drawn from the analysis were translated into 48 competency statements that were designed to reflect the nature or essence of each category.

5.1.2. Competency rating and consensus

The 48 competency statements were rated in terms of their importance for teacher mentoring in R2 (Tables 2a and 2b). Following the R2 analysis, 38 competencies met the inclusion criteria for item development, with eight competencies scoring 100% agreement from panellists that they are 'important' or 'very important' for effective teacher mentoring. After the ten competencies that failed to reach the cut-off criterion were re-rated in R3, only four competencies failed to meet the retention criteria and were therefore discarded (Tables 2a and 2b). In addition, none of the ten competencies rejected at the end of R2 achieved a mean score ≥ 4.25 for importance. Following the re-rating exercise in R3, the mean scores for eight competencies increased, and four out of the six competencies now meeting the inclusion criteria were rated $M = \geq 4.25$. It is important to note that, although competencies have been rejected, these competencies may still be valid activities for effective teacher mentoring in their own right. The aim of this exercise was to identify the most important for effective teacher mentoring, paring down the list of competencies ready for scale development (see Tables 2a and 2b).

Following the R2 analysis, two competencies were identified as receiving polarised responses using the variance of the distribution as an indicator. A variance of ≥ 1.5 was used to indicate a strongly polarised distribution (de Loe, 1995) and panellists were invited to comment on why they thought there was a difference of opinion for the competency 'Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria' (Variance = 1.99, $M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.41$, % consensus $\geq 4 = 83.3$) and the competency 'Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, identifying next steps' (Variance = 1.63, $M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.30$, % consensus $\geq 4 = 85.0$). As both competencies relate to the assessment of a mentee's performance and progress, there appears to be some disagreement as to whether or not assessment should be part of a mentor's role. Some panellists identified that there has been a recent change in structure in mentoring arrangements, following the roll-out of a new early career framework to support the induction of early career teachers (ECTs) in England (DfE, 2023). This means that an 'induction tutor', not the mentor, is now responsible for formally assessing an ECT. Whereas others suggested that the type of assessment to be used by mentors has relevance e.g., "assessment against performance criteria is relevant if it is a discursive activity." Some panellists suggested that relational aspects should also be considered e.g., "personal dimensions of a mentoring relationship may inhibit objective assessments being made", with one panellist suggesting that the act of assessing brings "a compromise to the possibility of that role." All of these responses suggest that although these competencies may be important, expectations with regard to the role and responsibilities expected of a teacher mentor vary widely.

Feedback from panellists in R2 also suggested that it is important the impetus for action rests with the mentee, not with the mentor. After review, competencies one, eighteen, twenty and thirty-three were identified where a change of wording to reflect this emphasis may be necessary. All suggested changes were preferred by the panellists in R3 and the final list of competencies was amended to reflect this (Tables 2a and 2b).

Table 2a
Descriptive statistics for the competencies belonging to the themes 'professionalism' and 'Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence'.

Competency description: <i>An effective teacher mentor is able to ...</i>		n	% consensus ≥ 4	M	SD
Professionalism					
C41	Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee's development.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38
C27	Remain objective and fair when working with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.67	0.49
C43*	Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them.	18	100.0	4.22	0.43
C42	Help their mentee to navigate and understand the context of their setting.	18	94.5	4.33	0.59
C21	Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet their mentee's needs.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C38	Demonstrate commitment to their role and responsibilities.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C7*	Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting e.g., observing the teaching of other practitioners.	18	94.4	4.39	0.61
C10	Display high expectations for their mentee.	20	90.0	4.25	0.64
C3*	Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70
C26	Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.	18	83.4	4.39	0.78
C32	Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession.	18	83.3	4.22	0.73
C14*	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.	18	83.3	4.17	0.71
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C11*	Signpost their mentee to different development opportunities that may lead to career progression.	18	50.0	3.61	0.70
C36*	Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.	18	33.3	3.17	0.79
Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence					
C44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38
C5	Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners.	20	95.0	4.60	0.75
C9	Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee's perspective.	20	95.0	4.55	0.60
C8	Operate in an empathetic way, responding to mentee needs with kindness.	20	95.0	4.50	0.61
C34	Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.	18	94.5	4.50	0.62
C15	Demonstrate emotional intelligence in their thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship.	20	90.0	4.55	0.69
C17	Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor.	20	90.0	4.20	0.77
C29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development.	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C30	Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C24	Help their mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84
C31	Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84

Notes: 'C' denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; italicised competencies were those that were omitted from item construction for the TMSE survey; C14, C22 and C34 also belong to the theme 'Plan-Do-Review', and C26 and C30 also belong to the theme 'Teacher Practitioner.'

Table 2b

Descriptive statistics for the competencies belonging to the themes 'plan-do-review' and 'teacher practitioner'.

Competency description: An effective teacher mentor is able to ...		n	% consensus ≥ 4	M	SD
Plan-Do-Review					
C35	Support and encourage their mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement.	18	100.0	4.78	0.43
C20	Deconstruct practice with their mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why.	18	100.0	4.72	0.46
C39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques to check understanding and promote thinking.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51
C2	Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way.	20	95.0	4.65	0.59
C37*	Devise effective interventions to address their mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth.	18	94.5	4.61	0.61
C34	Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.	18	94.5	4.50	0.62
C40	Meet the needs of adult learners.	18	94.5	4.28	0.75
C33	Work with their mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic, and achievable goals.	18	94.4	4.56	0.62
C19*	Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme pathway requirements.	18	88.9	4.39	1.04
C23	Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of their mentee, giving them the space they need to develop their practice.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70
C1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps.	20	85.0	4.45	1.29
C6	Provide scaffolded support to enable their mentee to make good progress.	20	85.0	4.30	0.98
C12	Co-construct solutions to complex problems with their mentee.	20	85.0	4.25	0.97
C16	Encourage their mentee to be a self-directed learner.	20	85.0	4.15	0.99
C14*	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.	18	83.3	4.17	0.71
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools, and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	3.89	1.41
C18*	Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.	18	77.8	4.22	0.94
Teacher Practitioner					
C46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for their mentee, to help them to develop their practice.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51
C25	Provide support for their mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively in their setting.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62
C4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning.	20	90.0	4.15	0.75
C30	Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).	18	88.9	4.44	0.70
C28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee.	18	88.9	4.17	0.79
C47	Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions.	18	88.8	4.28	0.83
C13	Model effective practice including planning, teaching, and assessment.	20	85.0	4.20	0.83
C26	Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.	18	83.4	4.39	0.78
C48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools, and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86
C45*	Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.	18	61.1	3.89	1.08

Notes: 'C' denotes competency number, competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES; an asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; italicised competencies were those that were omitted from item construction for the TMSE survey; C14, C22 and C26 also belong to the theme 'Professionalism'; C34 also belongs to the theme 'Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence'; C48 also belongs to the theme 'Teacher Practitioner'.

5.1.3. Response rates

Maximising response rates and minimising attrition is important in terms of establishing credibility and validity for Delphi studies (Gargon et al., 2019; Iqbal & Pipon-Young, 2009). The response rates achieved for each round of this study were acceptable and within the range expected for other Delphi studies with three rounds (Gargon et al., 2019). With 23 panellists contributing to R1 giving a response rate of.

88.5%, 20 panellists contributing to R2 giving a response rate of 76.9% and 18 contributing to R3 giving a response rate of 69.2%. These high response rates serve to increase the credibility and validity of the findings (Iqbal & Pipon-Young, 2009), indicating that the competencies derived from the RTA are representative of those needed to perform the role of teacher mentor effectively.

5.2. Phase 2 quantitative study

5.2.1. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

As Bartlett's test for sphericity was found to be significant and a KMO test achieved a score of 0.954, placing the data into the "marvellous" category (Kaiser & Rice, 1974), the TMSE survey data was considered suitable for EFA. Following these tests, the TMSES survey responses for the 44 items were then analysed using PAF. The initial solution obtained gave six factors with eigenvalues >1.0 (Kaiser, 1960), accounting for 66.08% of the total variance in the respondents' scores ($N = 239$). The results from the scree test were inconclusive, indicating that 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 factor solutions could be possible. Each potential solution was investigated in turn to identify the most stable and parsimonious factor model, following the criteria for item retention suggested by Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988). For example, after weakly loading and strongly cross-loaded items were removed, the six-factor solution suggested by Kaiser's criterion was rejected, as two factors did not meet the minimum criteria for retention of at least three items loading 'strongly' (loading ≥ 0.40) onto each factor (e.g., Child, 2006; Field, 2017). Following the same criteria, four factor and three factor solutions were then investigated. These proved to be unstable, suggesting that a two-factor extraction should be run.

At the end of this iterative EFA process, a 16-item two-factor model provided the 'cleanest' solution i.e., factors with item loadings ≥ 0.40 and no cross-loading items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The pattern matrix produced from the two-factor extraction can be seen in Table 3.

This two-factor model accounts for 61.07% of the total variance in the respondents' scores and both factors are well-defined, with each having five or more items strongly loading with values > 0.50 as recommended by Costello and Osborne (2005). The strongest-loading item for factor one (F1) was item 1 'Provide constructive and meaningful feedback ...', with a loading of 0.96. This competency is explicitly related to facilitating the development of mastery, through the use of effective feedback, as a type of verbal persuasion, which are powerful sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). The strongest-loading item for F2 was item 29 'Adopt a non-judgemental approach ...', with a loading of 0.83. Each cluster of items loading onto F1 and F2 convey a certain homogeneity, appearing to represent a different facet or dimension of the TMSE construct.

5.2.2. Reliability analysis

To assess scale reliability Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was used ($N = 239$). The alpha coefficient for the whole scale, containing all 16 items, was 0.94. To test the internal consistency of the subscales, alpha was then calculated for both factors: F1 $\alpha = 0.94$ and F2 $\alpha = 0.84$. As alphas of ≥ 0.70 are considered to indicate reliability (Field, 2017; Nunnally, 1978), the high alpha values obtained suggest that the initial scale produced from the EFA has the potential to be a reliable assessment tool for measuring TMSE beliefs.

Table 3
Pattern matrix produced from the EFA suggests a two-factor structure ($N = 239$).

Item	Item description	Factor	
		1	2
Item 1	How confident are you that you can ...		
Item 2	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?	.96	
Item 20	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	.91	
Item 14	Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?	.81	
Item 6	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?	.79	
Item 28	Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?	.78	
Item 48	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?	.69	
Item 39	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?	.69	
Item 46	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?	.68	
Item 47	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?	.68	
Item 4	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?	.54	
Item 29	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?		.83
Item 44	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?		.73
Item 27	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?		.73
Item 43	Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?		.58
Item 9	Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?		.57
Item 9	Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?		

Notes: Extracted using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF); rotation method used: Direct Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization; rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Table 4
Bivariate correlations between TSES and ETS items and the TMSES (N = 239).

	TSES_3 items	TMSES Factor 1	TMSES Factor 2	TMSES all items
ETS_3 items	.42**	.51**	.44**	.53**
TSES_3 items	1	.61**	.51**	.63**

Notes: ** $p < .001$.

5.2.3. Validity testing using TSES and ETS

For further evidence of scale validity, three items with the strongest factor loading were selected from both the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and the ETS (Klassen et al., 2013). These scales were chosen as comparators as they are measuring different, yet theoretically-related constructs. The respondents' scores for these items were then compared to the item scores from the responses to the items comprising the TMSES (Table 4). The number of items used from each scale was kept to a minimum to avoid survey fatigue.

The correlations shown in Table 4 show that items from both the TSES and ETS were positively and significantly correlated to both factors of the TMSES. The results demonstrate that the TMSES has both convergent and divergent validity. For the TSES, a scale specifically designed to measure teacher self-efficacy beliefs, a stronger correlation between the two factors in the TMSES is observed ($r = 0.63$) compared to the correlations seen between the ETS items and TMSES items ($r = 0.53$). As confidence in one's ability to teach effectively may well influence a teacher mentor's belief in their capabilities to mentor another to teach effectively, this result was consistent with our expectations. The correlations are also small enough to demonstrate that the scales are measuring different constructs (Field, 2017), with smaller correlations seen between items from the ETS and TMSES factors reflecting the greater theoretical difference between these constructs compared to two scales designed to measure self-efficacy beliefs.

6. Discussion

6.1. A comparison of the analyses produced in phase 1 and phase 2

The themes generated from the RTA in Phase 1 represent different facets of the TMSE construct. Each has its own unique descriptor (see Table 1) illustrating the homogeneity of the categories associated with the theme, and the uniqueness or heterogeneity of each theme itself. The categories have been translated into items and these items have been used in the EFA to identify the underlying structure of the construct using a different analytical technique; we move from a qualitative methodology to a quantitative methodology. However, it is recognised

that there is a certain 'art' to both of these methodologies, due in part to the degrees of researcher freedom available (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The output from the RTA contains all of the 48 categories or sub-themes associated with the construct, whereas the result of the EFA (Table 3) offers up a much more parsimonious account of the underlying meaning. The EFA also provides an initial or exploratory explanation of what might be influencing or causing what can be observed. In this case, the observables are the item scores inputted by respondents in the TMSES survey, with these scores reflecting the 'unseen' i.e., the respondents' TMSE beliefs.

Results from the EFA suggested that respondents' TMSE beliefs are influenced by two factors underpinning the TMSE construct, named as *Pedagogical Practices* (F1) and *Professional Relationships* (F2). A comparison of the analyses from the RTA and EFA was conducted to investigate if the four themes generated from the RTA are related to these two-factors, the results of which are displayed in Fig. 2.

The comparison suggests that there is a relationship between the two EFA factors and the four RTA themes. The items loading onto *Pedagogical Practices* are derived from the competencies belonging to the themes 'Teacher Practitioner' and 'Plan-Do-Review', with the items loading onto *Professional Relationships* derived from the competencies belonging to the themes 'Professionalism' and 'Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence.' These relationships between factors and themes would be exclusive, were it not for the category 'Programme or pathway' which belongs to two themes in the RTA. The results of the EFA have validated the output from the RTA, giving the findings from this qualitative analysis greater credibility. Additionally, the findings from the RTA serve to validate the solution suggested by the EFA.

6.2. Factors, themes and sources of self-efficacy beliefs

In Fig. 3, we explore what these factors might represent, and look towards the sources of self-efficacy beliefs as theorised by Bandura (1997). The items loading onto the first factor are associated with performance accomplishments (mastery) and vicarious experience, including the use of modelling. The items loading onto the second factor are associated with social persuasion and affective state or physiological effect. In other words, the EFA provides evidence to suggest that these factors are in some way related to the sources of the TMSE beliefs themselves (illustrated in Fig. 3). Furthermore, it is important to recognise that these sources of self-efficacy beliefs do not sit in isolation, and they can be informed by each other (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016), e.g., affective state may influence the judgements a mentor makes about their ability to successfully model a pedagogical approach, pre-, during, and post-task.

The majority of items loading onto the *Pedagogical Practices* factor

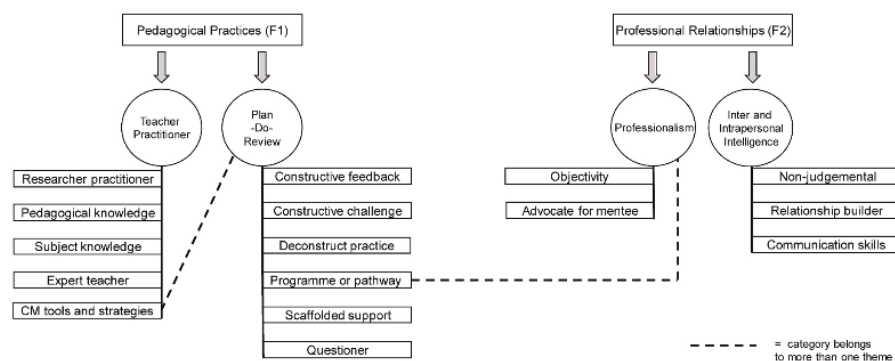


Fig. 2. A comparison of the analyses produced by the RTA and EFA

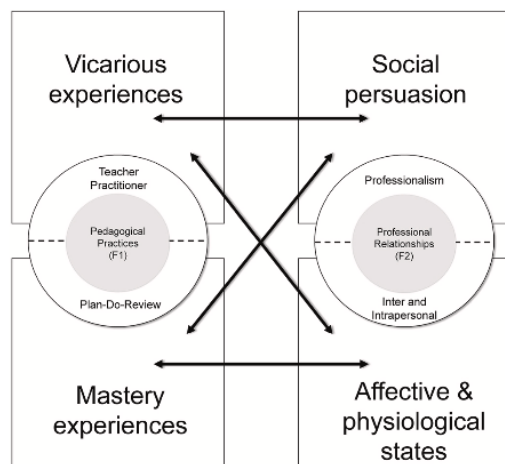


Fig. 3. Relationship between factors, themes and sources of self-efficacy beliefs.

require an understanding of what makes teaching effective, e.g., item 20 'How confident are you that you can deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?' (Table 3). As recent research suggests there is a positive correlation between mentee teaching effectiveness and mentor teaching effectiveness, e.g., Ronfeldt et al. (2018), Goldhaber et al. (2020), it may be that those judged to be the most effective teachers will also be more confident in their ability to mentor another teacher. However, a mentor's teaching ability or teaching effectiveness is only one part of what makes a teacher mentor effective (Schwille, 2008).

The items from the TMSE survey loading onto the *Professional Relationships* factor reflect a different quality (Table 3). They represent a set of competencies that are associated with the ability to establish and foster productive relationships within a professional environment. We can see that the items loading onto this factor are not specific to teaching and could, hypothetically, be used to measure mentoring efficacy beliefs across a range of disciplines. These items share commonality with more generalist mentoring competencies that have been previously posited, e.g., the ability to build and manage relationships (Clutterbuck, 2004).

To strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs, teacher mentors will require development opportunities for gaining mastery and vicarious experiences, alongside support and achievement-focused feedback (Bandura, 1997). This individualised feedback can then be used to better facilitate the processes of reflection and goal-setting. As the primary focus of teacher mentoring is concerned with developing the skills of the mentee (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001), the learning and development needs of teacher mentors can often be overlooked. In order to provide an environment where teacher mentor learning is maximised, an understanding of how best to support this, and strengthen TMSE beliefs, is therefore required. Providing the 'right' environment for a mentor's professional development is a critical component of Bandura's triadic reciprocal causation model (1997). If we accept the premise that the setting a teacher mentor works in will influence the quality of mentor development opportunities available, this model suggests that these environmental conditions will, in turn, affect teacher mentor behaviour and TMSE. Therefore, it follows that, if teacher mentors are in an environment where they are motivated to engage in their own development, then the behaviours associated with improving their mentoring competency, e.g., acquiring mastery, are more likely to be actioned.

6.3. Teacher mentoring competencies

The Delphi was successfully used to determine a set of 44 competencies, that are judged to be important for effective teacher mentoring. It could be argued that the list of competencies generated by this study are representative of the TMSE construct, and have content validity (Goldberg & Velicer, 2006), as they have been decided and validated by panellists who have significant expertise in this field. As discussed in section 4.1.2, convening a diverse Delphi panel is highly beneficial (Hussler et al., 2011). The field-heterogeneity of this panel has resulted in a set of competencies that could, theoretically, be used to assess TMSE beliefs across a broad range of educational contexts, as they are not specific to phase or subject.

As teacher mentoring is of critical importance to ECT development (e.g., Renbarger & Davis, 2019), it is unsurprising to discover that many studies have been conducted in this area e.g., being able to facilitate 'dialogic feedback' was identified as a required competency by Jones et al. (2018), Hobson and Malderez (2013) posited that mentors need skills to execute 'non-judgemental' mentoring and Nesje and Lejonberg (2022) suggested that tools such as discussion templates could be used as part of the mentoring process. All of these competencies are reflected in our own findings, e.g., C29 directly relates to adopting a non-judgemental approach and C48 refers to the need for mentors to be able to use tools to support the mentoring process (Tables 2a and 2b). However, it is important to recognise that, often, these studies tell us little about the importance of the teacher mentoring competencies that have been identified with regard to mentoring effectiveness.

To illustrate this point, a literature review of 70 peer-reviewed articles, conducted by Ellis et al. (2020) uncovered '53 indicators' representing the 'elements of a quality pre-service teacher mentor.' However, some of these indicators, e.g., the use of metaphors as part of the mentoring process (Izadinia, 2017), have been extracted from small-scale studies, which tell us little about how essential this activity is for effective mentoring. The authors themselves recognise this as a limitation and have suggested additional studies, e.g., gathering data from 'experts', be conducted to justify and verify the indicators for 'quality pre-service teacher mentoring' they have identified. Therefore, the findings from this study could be used in subsequent studies to deepen our understanding of this domain. Furthermore, the use of the Delphi method has also contributed to our understanding of the term 'teacher mentor.' In this study, the panellists have collectively agreed and established what the role of an effective teacher mentor entails using the mechanism of consensus; as stated by Roberts (2000) 'if we do not agree on what mentoring is, how do we know if we are talking about the same thing?' (p.163).

7. Conclusions

Teacher mentoring is an essential component of teacher induction and development (e.g., Ronfeldt et al., 2018), thereby contributing to the successful functioning of effective school systems. In this study, we have identified the most salient competencies required for effective teacher mentoring and used them to develop a psychometrically robust scale that is grounded in practice and capable of measuring TMSE. The novelty of this study is that we have integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies to develop the TMSEs. Although Delphi studies have been successfully used for psychometric scale development in the past e.g., Dragostinov et al.'s (2022) 'Propensity to Trust' scale, and for the purposes of scale/item validation e.g., Neuer Colburn et al. (2016), this method does not appear to have been used to develop a scale that is capable of measuring teacher mentoring self-efficacy beliefs. To the best of our knowledge, this is potentially the first time the Delphi method has been used to develop a scale of this nature.

7.1. Limitations of this study

It is important to recognise that our findings do have some limitations. Firstly, Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study used participants who were based in the UK. However, as it has been shown that self-efficacy beliefs vary according to cultural settings and contexts (Vieluf et al., 2013; Zee & Koomen, 2016), it may be that the scale items would need to be tested across a range of settings to assess their validity e.g., via a cross-cultural study. Secondly, all participants taking part in this study did so during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have influenced their responses.

Although the range of teacher mentoring competencies created from Phase 1 of this study was comprehensive, it would be wrong to say that the final list of 44 competencies is exhaustive. For example, another Delphi panel may produce different competencies, and there may be different tasks that teacher mentors are expected to perform in different countries and/or settings. For example, in Japan beginning teachers are trained by an assigned teacher mentor, and supported by colleagues in the 'shokuin shitsu' or teacher room (Ahn, 2016), which may require a unique skill set. Additionally, as the difficulty of a competency influences self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), it could be useful to know which competencies teacher mentors perceived to be the most difficult, both at an individual and group level. This information could be used to personalise approaches to teacher mentor development, enabling teacher mentors to spend more time gaining the skills and developing the competencies they need to perform their role effectively.

The factor analysis conducted in Phase 2 is, by its nature, exploratory. Although the items in the TMSEs have loaded onto factors 'cleanly' and 'strongly,' it is not enough to draw any firm conclusions with regard to the verisimilitude of this model. As to be expected with a psychological construct, there is still a level of interconnectedness between the variables (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). To further test the structure and validity of this hypothesised 16-item two-factor model, a confirmatory factor analysis with a new sample will be needed (Gorsuch, 1997) as a next step.

7.2. Implications for future research and suggestions for teacher mentor development

A potentially fruitful direction for future research would be to use the TMSEs to further investigate the relationship between TMSE and teacher self-efficacy (TSE). Theoretically, it is possible to understand how the self-efficacy beliefs a teacher mentor holds for each of these two domains could be related to each other. For instance, it follows that if a teacher mentor is confident in their own ability to teach effectively, this will be a source of self-efficacy information used to inform their beliefs about their ability to successfully mentor another to teach effectively. We have some evidence to support the veracity of this claim via the higher correlation found between the TSEs items and the 'Pedagogical Practices' factor ($r = .61$). However, how these measures are interrelated is currently unknown. Furthermore, if there is found to be a robust reciprocal relationship between TMSE and TSE, strengthening TMSE beliefs may lead to gains in other areas e.g., pupil achievement and motivation (Zee & Koomen, 2016); and teacher enthusiasm (Lazarides et al., 2021; Moè & Katz, 2022). As teacher enthusiasm has been found to be strongly positively correlated with teacher enjoyment (e.g., Keller et al., 2016), strengthening TSE beliefs through effective mentoring practices may confer additional benefits in terms of teacher retention, e.g., a teacher who enjoys their work may be less likely to leave the profession. Investigating the relationship between TMSE, TSE and teacher enthusiasm is therefore an area worthy of future research.

How TMSE beliefs change over time may also provide insights with regard to the developmental approaches needed for inexperienced and experienced teacher mentors. If TSE beliefs are the most malleable and susceptible to change earlier in a teacher's career (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), then the same could hold true for TMSE beliefs. As

inexperienced teacher mentors will have fewer mastery experiences to draw on than experienced mentors, it may be that using different approaches for mentor development at different stages of a teacher mentor's career would be beneficial. The TMSEs and the list of teacher mentoring competencies developed from the Delphi study, may be useful to teacher mentors and training providers, both as tools for personal development and for programme design.

Designing a teacher mentor development programme that focuses on strengthening TMSE beliefs would potentially confer many benefits. One key potential benefit is that of increasing teacher retention at a time of a global teacher shortage (OECD, 2019). Renbarger's and Davis' (2019) research using TALIS (2013) data, found a positive relationship between the 'presence of a mentor' and job satisfaction for teachers new to the profession. If mentors are able to perform their role more effectively, then we could hypothesise that this may have an even greater impact on job satisfaction for early career teachers (ECTs), and for mentors themselves (e.g., Ghosh & Reio, 2013). As higher job satisfaction is a factor that has been shown to lead to improved teacher retention (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021), the benefit to the system in terms of increasing retention is clear.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Rebecca M. Tickell: Writing - original draft, Validation, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing. Robert M. Klassen: Writing - review & editing, Validation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

We declare that we have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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CRediT author statement

Rebecca Tickell: Conceptualisation; Methodology; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Writing – original draft preparation. **Robert Klassen:** Conceptualisation; Validation; Writing -review and editing.

Appendix B

Phase 1: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.



Department of Education

Background

The University of York would like to invite you to take part in the following research project:

I am currently undertaking a research project to construct a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

Having considered your considerable contribution to the field of coaching and/or mentoring in the context of teacher education, I am contacting you to invite you to take part in this study as a member of an expert panel.

Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and let us know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study has been designed to use the expertise of a carefully selected panel to inform the construction of a new and novel scale to measure teacher mentor efficacy beliefs.

I will be using the Delphi method, first used as a surveying tool by the RAND corporation in the 1950's, to gather responses from an expert panel. The delphi that will be used for this study comprises three rounds, or iterations, of a questionnaire. Qualtrics (a secure online surveying tool) will be used to gather and share responses/contributions from panel members and analyses and questions from the researcher.

The first of these rounds will be open-ended and designed to ascertain what the core competencies required of an effective teacher mentor are, specifically for those mentors working within the field of education. Responses from this round will then be analysed and presented back to the panel for further discussion and analysis. In the third and final round, the responses from the second round will be analysed and presented back to the panel for final comments.

What would this mean for you

As a member of the panel, you would be expected to contribute to each round or iteration of the Delphi, there will be three rounds in total.

The Delphi will be conducted online using Qualtrics. Participants will be expected to have access to a computer/tablet and the internet. The Delphi is expected to be completed within a four month period.

Participants will remain completely anonymous to each other throughout the Delphi. Individual panelist responses will be shared with the panel in each iteration but these responses will remain anonymous. Panelists will be asked if they would like their identity to be known at the end of the study e.g. to each other and also referenced as participants academic papers which may be written as a result of this research.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you have been identified as having considerable expertise in the field of coaching and/or mentoring in the context of teacher education.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to complete a consent form. If you change your mind at any point during the study, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason.

On what basis will you process my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University has to identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data.

In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR:

Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest

Special category data is processed under Article 9 (2) (j):

Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes

Research will only be undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data.

In line with ethical expectations and in order to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

How will you use my data?

Data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice.

Will you share my data with 3rd parties?

We are practising Open Science and anonymised data will be managed professionally and stored indefinitely with the University's Research Data York service. Anonymised data may be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research purposes.

How will you keep my data secure?

The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. For the purposes of this project, data will be stored on the university Google Drive and Qualtrics via a password protected computer. Data will be fully anonymised at and after each iteration of the Delphi.

Information will be treated confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition, we will anonymise or pseudonymise data wherever possible.

Will you transfer my data internationally?

Possibly. The University's cloud storage solution is provided by Google which means that data can be located at any of Google's globally spread data centres. The University has data protection compliant arrangements in place with this provider. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/google/policy/privacy/>.

Will I be identified in any research outputs?

Participants will remain completely anonymous to each other throughout the Delphi. Individual panelist responses will be shared with the panel in each iteration but these responses will remain anonymous. Panelists will be asked if they would like their identity to be known at the end of the study e.g. to each other and also referenced as participants academic papers which may be written as a result of this research.

How long will you keep my data?

Data will be retained in line with legal requirements or where there is a business need. Retention timeframes will be determined in line with the University's Records Retention Schedule.

What rights do I have in relation to my data?

Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualsrights/>

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, contact Rebecca Tickell in the first instance rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk

Right to complain

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Education

Dear Colleague

I am currently undertaking a research project to construct a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

Having considered your considerable contribution to the field of coaching and/or mentoring in the context of teacher education, I am contacting you to invite you to take part in this study as a member of an expert panel.

Before agreeing to take part, please read the Participant Information sheet carefully and let me know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link below

https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

I hope that you will agree to take part. If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return the form via email to rmt534@york.ac.uk by the **XXXXXX**. Please keep the Participant Information sheet for your own records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Tickell

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the Participant Information sheet, the study itself or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Rebecca Tickell by email rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.



Department of Education

Consent Form

Please tick each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

Statement of consent	Tick each box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the study.	
I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.	
I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason before publication.	
I understand that my data will not be identifiable, however, I will be given the option to share my identity at the end of the study. I also understand that this could then be referenced in any future publications that may result from this study.	
I understand that anonymised data from this study may be used in future research, publications and presentations.	
I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR.	
I confirm that I agree to take part in this study.	

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the Participant Information sheet, the study itself or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Rebecca Tickell by email rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.

Appendix C

Competency Number	Competency: An effective teacher mentor is able to ...	n	% consensus ≥ 4	M	SD	Category	Theme
41	Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee's development.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38	Genuine interest	Professionalism
44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.83	0.38	Relationship builder	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
35	Support and encourage their mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement.	18	100.0	4.78	0.43	Critical reflection	Plan-Do-Review
20	Deconstruct practice with their mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why.	18	100.0	4.72	0.46	Deconstruct practice	Plan-Do-Review
27	Remain objective and fair when working with their mentee.	18	100.0	4.67	0.49	Objectivity	Professionalism
36	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques to check understanding and promote thinking.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51	Questioner	Plan-Do-Review
40	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for their mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51	Pedagogical knowledge	Teacher Practitioner
43*	Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them.	18	100.0	4.50	0.51	Advocate for mentee	Professionalism
2	Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way.	18	100.0	4.22	0.43	Constructive challenge	Plan-Do-Review
3	Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners.	20	95.0	4.65	0.59	Respectful and considerate	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
9	Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee's perspective.	20	95.0	4.60	0.75	Communication skills	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
5	Operate in an empathetic way, responding to mentee needs with kindness.	20	95.0	4.55	0.60	Empathetic	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
37*	Devise effective interventions to address their mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth.	20	95.0	4.50	0.61	Devise interventions	Plan-Do-Review
42	Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.	18	94.5	4.61	0.61	Barriers to learning - mentee	Plan-Do-Review and Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
34	Help their mentee to navigate and understand the context of their setting.	18	94.5	4.50	0.62	School context	Professionalism
40	Meet the needs of adult learners.	18	94.5	4.33	0.59	Andragogy	Plan-Do-Review
33	Work with their mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals.	18	94.5	4.28	0.75	Goal setting	Plan-Do-Review
21	Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet their mentee's needs.	18	94.4	4.56	0.62	Flexibility and adaptability	Professionalism
25	Provide support for their mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively in their setting.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62	Behaviour management	Teacher Practitioner
38	Demonstrate commitment to their role and responsibilities.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62	Commitment to mentor role	Professionalism
7	Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting e.g. observing the teaching of other practitioners.	18	94.4	4.44	0.62	Connection builder	Professionalism
15	Demonstrate emotional intelligence in their thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship.	20	90.0	4.39	0.61	Emotional intelligence	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
10	Display high expectations for their mentee.	20	90.0	4.25	0.64	High expectations	Professionalism
17	Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor.	20	90.0	4.20	0.77	Is self-aware	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
4	Teach effectively and have positive impact on learning.	20	90.0	4.15	0.75	Expert teacher	Teacher Practitioner
29	Adopt an non-judgemental approach to mentee development.	18	88.9	4.44	0.70	Non-judgemental	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
30	Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).	18	88.9	4.44	0.70	Barriers to learning - learners	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence and Teacher Practitioner
3*	Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.	18	88.9	4.44	0.70	Bigger picture	Professionalism
19*	Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme pathway requirements.	18	88.9	4.39	1.04	Facilitate dialogue	Plan-Do-Review
23	Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of their mentee, giving them the space they need to develop their practice.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70	Construct learning opportunities	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
24	Help their mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully.	18	88.9	4.39	0.70	Change management	Inter and intrapersonal intelligence
31	Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84	Open-mindedness	Teacher Practitioner
28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee.	18	88.9	4.33	0.84	Researcher-Practitioner	Teacher Practitioner
47	Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions.	18	88.9	4.17	0.79	Subject knowledge	Plan-Do-Review
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps.	20	85.0	4.45	1.29	Constructive feedback	Plan-Do-Review
6	Co-construct solutions to complex problems with their mentee.	20	85.0	4.30	0.96	Scaffolded support	Plan-Do-Review
12	Model effective practice including planning, teaching and assessment.	20	85.0	4.25	0.97	Problem solver	Plan-Do-Review
13	Encourage their mentee to be a self-directed learner.	20	85.0	4.20	0.83	Modelling - pedagogical	Teacher Practitioner
16	Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.	20	85.0	4.15	0.99	Build autonomy	Plan-Do-Review
26	Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession.	18	83.4	4.39	0.78	Learner	Professionalism and Teacher Practitioner
32	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.	18	83.3	4.22	0.73	Advocate for the profession	Professionalism
14*	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.	18	83.3	4.17	0.71	Programme or pathway	Professionalism and Plan-Do-Review
48	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.	18	83.3	4.17	0.86	CM tools and strategies	Plan-Do-Review and Teacher Practitioner
22	Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.	18	83.3	3.99	1.41	Assess mentee progress	Plan-Do-Review and Professionalism
18*	Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.	18	77.8	4.22	0.94	Focus on key developmental areas	Plan-Do-Review
45*	Support their mentee to different development opportunities that may lead to career progression.	18	61.1	3.99	1.08	Curriculum	Teacher Practitioner
11*	Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.	18	50.0	3.61	0.70	Teacher development	Professionalism
36*		18	33.3	3.17	0.79	IT Skills	Professionalism

Notes: An asterisk denotes a competency that was re-rated in R3; shaded cells show the competencies that were omitted from the TMSES instrument; competency number corresponds directly to item number in the TMSES.

Appendix D

Phase 2: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.



Department of Education

Background

The University of York would like to invite you to take part in the following research project:

I am currently undertaking a research project to construct a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

I'm contacting you to take part in this study, as you are a teacher mentor working in the education sector and I'd really value your support. It doesn't matter if this is your first year or experience of mentoring, or even if you have considerable experience in this field, all contributions are of equal importance.

Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and let me know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

What is the purpose of the study?

During the first phase of my doctoral research, I constructed a new and novel scale to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs. For my scale to be of any use to mentors working in education, I now need to test it to ensure that it is valid and reliable.

What is self-efficacy?

Perceived self-efficacy is an integral component of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and it concerns people's beliefs about their own capabilities to produce desired effects. The self-efficacy beliefs we have affect many aspects of our lives, influencing the choices we make and the goals we set for ourselves (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific, that is to say that your beliefs about your capability to execute tasks successfully, or achieve certain outcomes vary according to context e.g. you might believe that you have the skills, attributes and behaviours to make you a successful teacher but you may be less confident in your ability to scale Mount Everest. In the case of my research and this study, the domain I'm interested in exploring is mentoring and your contribution will enable me to do this.

What would this mean for you

The scale comprises a series of statements that have been constructed to measure your self-efficacy beliefs, specifically in relation to your role as a teacher mentor. You will be asked to rate yourself on the items presented to you by selecting the rating that reflects your self-evaluation using the scale provided.

The survey will be administered using Qualtrics, a secure online surveying tool. To take part, you will need access to a computer, tablet or smartphone and the internet. The survey will remain open for a period of one month and you will be able to contribute responses at any time during this period.

Your responses will remain anonymous, although you will be given the option to share your contact details at the end of the survey, if you'd like to be kept informed about the outcomes of my research and/or contribute further.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are currently a teacher mentor and/or have had experience of being a teacher mentor in the past.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to complete a consent form. If you change your mind at any point during the study, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason.

On what basis will you process my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University has to identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data.

In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR:

Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest

Special category data is processed under Article 9 (2) (j):

Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes

Research will only be undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data.

In line with ethical expectations and in order to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

How will you use my data?

Data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice.

Will you share my data with 3rd parties?

We are practising Open Science and anonymised data will be managed professionally and stored indefinitely with the University's Research Data York service. Anonymised data may be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research purposes.

How will you keep my data secure?

The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. For the purposes of this project, data will be stored on the university Google Drive and Qualtrics via a password protected computer. Data will be fully anonymised.

Information will be treated confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition, we will anonymise or pseudonymise data wherever possible.

Will you transfer my data internationally?

Possibly. The University's cloud storage solution is provided by Google which means that data can be located at any of Google's globally spread data centres. The University has data protection compliant arrangements in place with this provider. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/google/policy/privacy/>.

Will I be identified in any research outputs?

No, participants will remain completely anonymous throughout the survey and subsequent analysis. Participants will be asked if they would like to share their contact details at the end of the survey but this information will not be shared with anyone else.

How long will you keep my data?

Data will be retained in line with legal requirements or where there is a business need. Retention timeframes will be determined in line with the University's Records Retention Schedule.

What rights do I have in relation to my data?

Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualsrights/>

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, contact Rebecca Tickell in the first instance rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk

Right to complain

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Informed Consent Form

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.



Department of Education

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking a research project to construct a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

I'm contacting you to take part in this study, as you are a teacher mentor working in the education sector and I'd really value your support. It doesn't matter if this is your first year or experience of mentoring, or even if you have considerable experience in this field, all contributions are of equal importance.

Before agreeing to take part, please read the participation information below. Please let me know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

What is the purpose of the study?

During the first phase of my doctoral research, I constructed a new and novel scale to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs. For my scale to be of any use to mentors working in education, I now need to test it to ensure that it is valid and reliable.

What is self-efficacy?

Perceived self-efficacy is an integral component of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and it concerns people's beliefs about their own capabilities to produce desired effects. The self-efficacy beliefs we have affect many aspects of our lives, influencing the choices we make and the goals we set for ourselves (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific, that is to say that your beliefs about your capability to execute tasks successfully, or achieve certain outcomes vary according to context e.g. you might believe that you have the skills, attributes and behaviours to make you a successful teacher but you may be less confident in your ability to scale Mount Everest. In the case of my research and this study, the domain I'm interested in exploring is mentoring and your contribution will enable me to do this.

What would this mean for you

The scale comprises a series of statements that have been constructed to measure your self-efficacy beliefs, specifically in relation to your role as a teacher mentor. You

will be asked to rate yourself on the items presented to you by selecting the rating that reflects your self-evaluation using the scale provided.

The survey will be administered using Qualtrics, a secure online surveying tool. To take part, you will need access to a computer, tablet or smartphone and the internet. The survey will remain open for a period of one month and you will be able to contribute responses at any time during this period.

Your responses will remain anonymous, although you will be given the option to share your contact details at the end of the survey, if you'd like to be kept informed about the outcomes of my research and/or contribute further.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you can download a copy of this information sheet for your records here [Participant information sheet](#) If you change your mind at any point during the study, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Kind regards,

Rebecca Tickell

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the Participant Information sheet, the study itself or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Rebecca Tickell by email rmt534@york.ac.uk , or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link below

https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

Project: Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors.



Department of Education

Consent Form

Please tick each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

Statement of consent	Tick each box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the study.	
I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.	
I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason before publication.	
I understand that my data will not be identifiable, however, I will be given the option to share my identity at the end of the study. I also understand that this could then be referenced in any future publications that may result from this study.	
I understand that anonymised data from this study may be used in future research, publications and presentations.	
I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR.	
I confirm that I agree to take part in this study.	

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the Participant Information sheet, the study itself or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Rebecca Tickell by email rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

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Training and Development

Do you have a coaching and/or mentoring qualification?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Personal Details

Age

Please state your age in years in the box below.

Leave blank if you would prefer not to say.

Gender

Please state your gender in the box below.

Leave blank if you would prefer not to say.

Ethnicity

Please state your ethnicity in the box below.

Leave blank if you would prefer not to say.

TMSES Intro and items Block 1

The Teacher Mentor Self-efficacy Scale (TMSES)

The TMSES scale comprises a series of statements that have been constructed to measure your self-efficacy beliefs, specifically in relation to your role as a teacher mentor. For each of the 44

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Qualtrics Survey Software

teacher mentor statements that follow, please select the rating that best reflects your self-evaluation using the 0 to 10 scale provided.

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your response by using the same survey link you were emailed.

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Prepare your mentee for their role within the current educational landscape?

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0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards your mentee, colleagues and learners?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Facilitate access to wider expertise within your setting for your mentee e.g. to observe other practitioners teach?

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0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Operate in an empathetic way, responding to your mentee's needs with kindness?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Display high expectations for your mentee?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

https://psk.co.qualtrics.com/QSubsection/Blocks/Agos/GatherSurvey/PrefPreview/ContextSurveyID=4Y_H11LQPHLCTPqk&ControlLibraryID=4R_3486... 8/21

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'How confident are you that you can ...'

Co-construct solutions to complex problems with your mentee?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

TMSES Intro and items Block 2

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your response by using the same survey link you were emailed.

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Model effective practice, including planning, teaching and assessment?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

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0: Not confident at all

1

2

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4

5: Moderately confident

6

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8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

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0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet your mentee's needs?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria?

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

https://york.co.qualtrics.com/Q/EdSectionBlocks/Agas/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=5V_0H1LQPHLCTFqk&ContextLibraryID=UR_5MB... 11/21

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0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

7

8

9

10: Highly confident

0: Not confident at all

1

2

3

4

5: Moderately confident

6

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10: Highly confident

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0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Learn with your mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?

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0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Support your mentee to remove barriers to learning for learners/pupils?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Give your mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Work with your mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals?

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0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Support your mentee to address their own barriers to learning?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Support and encourage your mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

TMSES Intro and Items Block 4

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your response by using the same survey link you were emailed.

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Devise effective interventions to address your mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth?

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0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Demonstrate a commitment to your role and responsibilities?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Meet the needs of adult learners?

0: Not confident at all12345: Moderately confident678910: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

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Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in your mentee's development?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Help your mentee to navigate and understand the context of your setting?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

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'How confident are you that you can ...'

Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

Validity

Validity Check 1

In order to test validity of the TMSES scale, please complete the same process for the three

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Items below which have been taken from the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran, M. and Hoy, A.W., 2001).

'How confident are you that you can ...'

How confident are you that you can get students to believe they can do well in their work?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

How confident are you that you can use a variety of assessment strategies?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

'How confident are you that you can ...'

How confident are you that you can control disruptive behaviour in your setting e.g. in the classroom?

0: Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5: Moderately confident 6 7 8 9 10: Highly confident

Validity Check 2

In order to test validity of the TMSES scale, please rate yourself on the three items below which have been taken from the Engaged Teachers Scale (Klassen, R. M., Yerdelen, S., & Durksen, T. L. (2013).

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I love teaching.

0: Never 1 2 3 4 5 6: Always

In my workplace, I value the relationships I build with my colleagues

0: Never 1 2 3 4 5 6: Always

While teaching, I really 'throw' myself into my work

0: Never 1 2 3 4 5 6: Always

Block 8

Contact

All responses recorded are anonymous, however, if you would like to be kept informed about the findings from this research and/or be willing to take part in further research related to this study, please provide your contact details in the space below.

If you don't want to leave your details, please just click the on the forward arrow.

Name

Email address

Please select all that apply, you may select more than one option.

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- ☐ I would like to be kept informed of the findings from this research study
- ☐ I would be willing to take part in further research related to this study

Block 7

To submit your response please click on the forward arrow. Once you have done this you will be unable to return to your form again.

If you're not yet ready to submit your response, closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this form to revise your responses by using the same survey link you were emailed.

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Appendix E

Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

Project: Exploring the domain of teacher mentoring - An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis



Department of Education

Background

The University of York would like to invite you to take part in the following research project:

I am currently undertaking a research project to explore the domain of teacher mentoring using a method known as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

I'm contacting you to take part in this study, as you are a teacher mentor working in the education sector and I'd really value your support. Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and let me know if anything is unclear or if you would like further information.

What is the purpose of the study?

During the first phase of my doctoral research, I used a panel of experts to generate a list of competencies - comprising skills, behaviours, knowledge and attributes - that teacher mentors need in order to perform their role effectively. I then used these competencies to construct and test a new and novel scale to measure teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs quantitatively. Following this, I now want to explore what mentoring is and what it is not, from the perspective of the teacher mentor by conducting an IPA.

IPA is a qualitative methodology often employed in psychology to enable a researcher to focus on the particular rather than the universal, the particular in this case is your experience of mentoring and what it means to you.

What would this mean for you?

You'll be invited to take part in a 90 minute interview, either via Zoom or in person, to share your experiences. The interview will comprise a number of open-ended questions, designed to open up discussion and explore what teacher mentoring looks and feels like for you.

This interview will be recorded (audio) and transcribed. You will be given the opportunity to comment on the written record of the interview via email.

Your responses will be anonymised and will remain anonymous throughout. Transcript excerpts from the anonymised scripts may be used in the write-up of both my thesis and any additional papers published as a result of my research.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are currently a teacher mentor and/or have had experience of being a teacher mentor in the past.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to complete a consent form. If you change your mind at any point during the study, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason.

As the data collected from your interview may be included in publications, the right to withdraw will operate for three months after the interview has been conducted.

On what basis will you process my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University has to identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data.

In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR:

Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest

Special category data is processed under Article 9 (2) (j):

Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes

Research will only be undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data.

In line with ethical expectations and in order to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

How will you use my data?

Data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice.

Will you share my data with 3rd parties?

We are practising Open Science and anonymised data will be managed professionally and stored indefinitely with the University's Research Data York service. Anonymised data may be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research purposes.

How will you keep my data secure?

The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. For the purposes of this project, data will be stored on the university Google Drive via a password protected computer. Data will be fully anonymised.

Information will be treated confidentially and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition, we will anonymise or pseudonymise data wherever possible.

Will you transfer my data internationally?

Possibly. The University's cloud storage solution is provided by Google which means that data can be located at any of Google's globally spread data centres. The University has data protection compliant arrangements in place with this provider. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/google/policy/privacy/>.

Will I be identified in any research outputs?

No, participants will remain completely anonymous throughout the survey and subsequent analysis.

How long will you keep my data?

Data will be retained in line with legal requirements or where there is a business need. Retention timeframes will be determined in line with the University's Records Retention Schedule.

What rights do I have in relation to my data?

Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For further information see, <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualsrights/>

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, contact Rebecca Tickell in the first instance rmt534@york.ac.uk , or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk

Right to complain

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Yours faithfully,

Rebecca Tickell

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Education
Consent Form

Please tick each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

Statement of consent	Tick each box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the study.	
I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.	
I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason before publication.	
I understand that my data will not be identifiable, however, I will be given the option to share my identity at the end of the study. I also understand that this could then be referenced in any future publications that may result from this study.	
I understand that anonymised data from this study may be used in future research, publications and presentations.	
I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR.	
I confirm that I agree to take part in this study.	

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix F

Interview Guide for the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Overarching research question:

What does it mean to 'be' a 'mentor'

- Process
- Relationship
- Coach-mentor-counsellor-teacher-trainer
- Support vs. challenge
- Role
- Persona
- Attributes
- Personality

1. Tell me about your first experience(s) of teacher mentoring.

Prompt/Probe: **Can you tell me** a bit more about ...

Probe: **How** did you feel?

2. What sorts of things do you do in this role?

Prompt: **Can** you tell me about ...

Probe: **Is <X> important?**

3. What sort of mentor are you?

Probe: **How** would you describe your mentoring approach or style?

4. What do you think your mentee(s) would say about you as a mentor?

Prompt: **How** would your mentee(s) (past or present) describe you?

Probe: **Why** do you think they would say that?

5. What makes a mentor good or effective at mentoring someone?

Prompt: **Do you think** mentors need specialist knowledge to perform their role?

Probe: **What** qualities or attributes do they have?

Probe: **What** skills do they use?

Probe: **What** do they need to do (behaviours)?

6. Can people get better at mentoring?

Prompt: **How? Explain/Tell me more.**

Probe: **What** makes you think that?

7. What happens when a meeting with your mentee doesn't go well?
 Probe: **How** did you feel?
 Probe: **What** did you do?
 Or, if they haven't had a negative experience:
How do you think you might feel?
What might you do?
8. If you could pick your ideal mentee, what qualities would they have?
 Probe: **Why? Explain/Tell me more.**
 Probe: **Should** mentors be able to pick/select their mentee?
9. They often say people teach the way they were taught, do you mentor as you were mentored?
 Prompt: **What** was/were your mentor/s like as a beginning teacher?
 Probe: **Were** they effective?/ **What** makes you say that?
 Probe: **How** did they <your mentor/s> make you feel?
10. Do mentors matter?/ is the role of mentor an important one?
 Probe: **What** makes you say that?
 Probe: **What** do you think would happen if mentors weren't allocated?
11. Has mentoring changed your practice as a teacher?
 Prompt/Probe: **In what way?/How?**
 Probe: **Can you tell me more about that?**
12. What advice would you give to somebody who is new to mentoring?
 Probe: **Why** is <X> important?
 Probe: **Tell me more about <X>**

Appendix G

The PET Table for IPA Participant 1 Jennifer

Key: PETs are shaded light yellow; subthemes are shaded grey, with their page reference in parentheses; quotes used to generate subthemes are contained with quotation marks, with their line reference in parentheses.

1 THE TEACHER-MENTOR TYPE

If you think you can.

She thinks that mentees can be arrogant in their appraisals of others <p.16>

"Because some of them, quite arrogantly will come back and say: well I wouldn't do it like that, you know." (505-506)

Overconfidence creates a false belief in your capabilities <p.4>

"yeah, that his biggest challenge to try and get him from <pause>, you know I'm the fountain of all knowledge to becoming a decent sixth form teacher." (115-117)

Fake it to make it <p.37>

"but sometimes you've got to fake it to make it, haven't you? And I just think somebody who's going to be mentored needs to, needs to have that respect for you and I think unless you respect what you're doing and you're good at what you'll do, you know," (1213-1216)

You don't need to know what it's called to do it <p.19>

"sometimes having to say: look this is what I think we need to do now for it to work and I think errmm I've done it without actually being aware of what it was called." (618-619)

Mentors need confidence to lead <p.28>

"confidence I think you need to be confident, I think it, I think you can't just rely on them to, to lead it, you know you'll get some trainees who don't want to speak ummm and you've got to be able to think: right, what we doing here?" (907-909)

You need to know what you're doing to be respected <p.27>

"And that, you know you've got the respect of the rest of the school and you've got, you know, you're not their friend but you've, you're confident and you're qualified to actually guide them because if you're not then it'll fall flat won't it?" (862-864)

Knowing what it means to be a teacher.

Jennifer thinks a mentor needs to be able to walk-the-walk <p.9; p.27>

"and I think where the, where the mentor, I always felt that mentoring was <pause> I don't know I always had this impression that it was somebody who was a little bit older, wiser, somebody who'd done, who'd been there done that." (261-263)

"But I do think you've got to be good at what you do because ultimately you are working with people to be a good classroom practitioner. And I think if you haven't got that, that discipline, that ability to, to teach well and to show flair, I mean they need to be able to come and see you and to think: that's good, that's really good." (873-876.)

Expert teachers make it look easy, but it isn't, you can't just step into Jennifer's shoes <p.5>

"Because I think when it was just me and him, what he was seeing with my relationship with the sixth formers, some of them that's I'd taught through GCSE into sixth form he thought he was <slight intake of breath> going to step into my shoes and just do exactly the same and it was difficult for me..." (132-135)

Jennifer thinks they've forgotten what it's like to be new <p.24>

"I think sometimes people can be quite abrupt or a little bit dismissive, and say: look, this is what we're going to do and they forget what it's like to train and what it's like to first start in a classroom and I think the way that sometimes, you know, I've witnessed one or two people be just a little bit abrupt and quite harsh in feedback with them." (783-788)

Mentees have their own ideas about what works in the classroom <p.7>

"He'd read a lot ummm about sort of letting small things go in a classroom situation, ignoring, you the sort of tactical ignoring of low-level disruption ummmm and then when I was saying: yeah but that low level disruption is beginning to dominate..." (212-215)

She thinks teaching can be isolating, so you need someone with you <p.35>

"I think they're the difference between <stumbles> mentors for when you're first starting are the difference between finding who you are as a teacher and having someone who's with you on that journey. And I think it's a difficult enough job, it's a challenging enough job and it's quite an isolating job, when you're on your own in a classroom..." (1126-1130)

Even Jennifer's husband has his own thoughts about what good teaching is and what it isn't <p.14>

"everybody's got an opinion on teaching, because they've been to school. Ummm you know, even my husband, whose probably <"pffff" exhalation> was the least pleasant person as school, probably, errmmm has got an opinion on what teaching's like and what teachers are like" (424-431)

She thinks teaching is a hard job, which is easy to forget <p.10>

"I mean it's hard, isn't it? It's it's so hard when you first start, it's not the easiest job in the world and I think there's too many teachers, who forget how bloody hard it is." (301-303)

Education fads come, go and come back again <p.18>

"I mean it did cut down the amount of teacher talk that I did, and then it died a bit of a death, nobody did it" (564-565)

"And then it came back about ummm fifteen years ago," (571-572)

Jennifer thinks that anyone coming into teaching needs a sense of humour <p.13>

"they need to have a sense of humour, absolutely, well anybody in teaching needs a sense of humour" (400-401)

She thinks there's a 'teacher type' personality <p.14>

"it's the kind of job where you think you're going to be okay at it because you've got that sort of personality" (431-432)

Mentors are a certain type of person.

She thinks you need the right skills to be a mentor <p.27>

"You know, you it, you know you've got to listen and of course you've got to have different skills as a mentor but you've got to be a good teacher." (878-879)

There's a mentoring type, Jennifer doesn't think it's for everyone <p.22>

"oh yeah, yeah. I don't think it's for everybody to be honest. I don't think it's, I don't think <slight pause> I don't people, some people are natural mentors <quiet laugh> .." (709-710)

She thinks that mentors are a source of wisdom <p.11>

"Oh God yeah, yeah. I think so. I think they need to feel that <pause> I think they need to feel your wisdom," (350-351)

She thinks mentors need to be problem solvers <p.27>

"I think they need to be sort of <pause> to think a little bit on their feet and to think: right, what, you know, what <slight pause> this is a new situation, I've not come across this before, what can I actually do now to help." (883-885)

Mentors need to have the time and the desire to mentor to do the job well <p.24>

"I think they, they go into teaching and they, and they're very good perhaps with kids, and within a classroom situation, but somebody, especially if it's a young trainee I think they, if they feel like they haven't got the time to devote to them and that's why sometimes you know heads of departments don't make the best mentors because they haven't got the time the patience and they see it as just an extra hassle." (776-781)

They need the desire to see and bring out the best of someone <p.26>

"And that's what I'm saying, it's about the personality is about wanting to bring out the best in somebody else and it not being about you." (833-835)

Mentors are always there for their mentees.

She takes an interest in her mentees as people <p.12>

"I think, I think I'm actually quite personable and I think you know I'm interested in people and ummm when they arrive in the department, then I've always been, I can make small talk with anybody really, and I'm always, and I don't, I'm <slight pause>, perhaps I am a little bit nosy sometimes but I do, I do try and make them feel a little bit more relaxed and I do think that you know," (367-371)

Being seen to be there for her mentees is important to her <p.11>

"I'd think they'd say that I'm <pause> that I'm always there... and that I am errrr ready to listen even if, you know, I've got to, I've got a lot on." (331-335)

A mentor needs to have their mentee's back <p.10>

"so, I think, you know, the guidance, the support, and the respect and the sort of <pause> just having their back a little bit, I mean it's hard, isn't it?" (299-301)

Jennifer's committed to the requirements of the role <p.11>

"I always gave them time... and that when we had a scheduled meeting I never ever bailed on that scheduled meeting, I always did it." (339-349)

She had a duty of care <p.26>

"being caring to be honest because I think, you know, trainees, I always made a point of every morning I was probably always in first, and when they arrived, going to see them." (836-837)

Your mentor is your champion <p.35>

"I mean you've got your team, you've got your friends, but if you haven't got somebody who's willing you on and sort of championing you, then you, you sort of, you never quite find, it might take a long, long time to find their feet after that." (1130-1132)

There's pride to be had in mentoring someone well, it's a rewarding role.

She's found her niche in mentoring <p.36>

"I think people have found it difficult to think that when you're teaching you haven't always wanted to move on and I genuinely think that I found my niche in, in mentoring." (1178-1180)

Mentoring landed as a role as part of new managerial responsibilities <p.1>

"I mean I worked when I first started teaching, I worked in ummm, I started in Derby and then I went to Nottingham, ummm so it was probably after about five-six years and I just sort of fell into it because ummm I became manager for the English department." (12-15)

She see mentoring as a legitimate and valuable progression pathway for a teacher <p.10>

"And I think the only thing that I've ever found useful with anybody who has ever said anything to me is, is for me to work with trainees, that's the only thing that I feel that I've benefitted from and so to that extent, I want to put that back on the trainees and the mentees." (320-323)

Successful outcomes for your adult mentee/s give a different sense of pride <p.36>

"I do miss that sort of feeling that <slight pause> pride in a way, in that they'd succeeded, in a way that you do when kids do well in exams but it's different with, with, when you're mentoring adults. It is different." (1159-1162)

She thinks mentors need to take pride in their mentee's successes <p.25>

"and I think sometimes you've got to take, as a mentor you've got to take pride in what you're doing and pride in the fact that these people who you're mentoring are improving and that's the sense of success for you and a sense of pride and I just don't feel always that <slight pause> people, some people, some teachers, want to see that." (805-808)

Mentors absolutely do matter <p.35; p.36>

"Oh yeah, absolutely." (1118)

"And errrrr, you know, and I just think, you know I think if they ..., when I read back through some of the comments that they'd made when I left, it does matter, it does matter, it matters massively." (1152-1155)

Mentoring is the only part of the job she misses <p.36>

"And I think it's been, you know, like I said at the beginning, it's the only part of the job that I miss...Ummm I don't miss the stress, I don't miss the kids, I don't miss, you know, some staff." (1154-1159)

If they do well, then she takes pride in the fact that she's done well <p.12>

"I take pride in the fact that they've been successful ummm and are really, and when somebody comes, and you know a member of SLT goes observes some of them and they come back and they say: they're really good, and they're quite astounded you know and that gives me a sense of real pride there I think actually, of course they're good you've just not witnessed it enough, you've not gone in enough but ummm I do see that and I do take pride in them." (380-385)

Gaining self-awareness is vital for professional growth.

Observing others has made her more self-aware <p.33>

"ummmm and I think, I learnt from other people. I learnt a lot from other people because I watched other people and I'm always, I, I'm very into looking at how people react with kids and how they you know work with students, and ummm I think I'm very, I became as I ..., more and more aware of, of my style and my perhaps strengths through watching other people that I didn't really think about ..., (1075-1080)

Real-time feedback helped her to develop her practice as a mentor <p.18>

"when I was at <name of school redacted> and we did it, I was a head of year, errmmm and we did it where errmmm <pause> I was talking, like we did it as a training thing, purpose, and I had it in my ear where I was like mentoring ummmm a pretend student and the deputy head who was a head of pastoral, was telling me the kinds of things that I could do, and say and guiding me almost ummmm on what I could do, and I found that really, really helpful." (572-581)

She's aware of her own limitations <p.10>

"And sometimes I've been out of my depth if they've been that, that good, I mean I, when I've been, when I've had performance management and so on, especially in the last ten, fifteen years <slight pause>, I don't feel like I've achieved anything,

particularly, because I've not gone up the SLT route it's been very difficult then for somebody to say to me: what can we do to help you on your next stage?" (316-320)

She thinks mentoring offers an opportunity to look at yourself <p.37>

"I think to take it as an opportunity to look at yourself. And to think, right, you can't mentor someone else in the way that you can't coach or counsel someone else unless you know yourself. And you know what kind of teacher you are, what kind of person you are." (1191-1197)

His lack of self-awareness created frustration for her <p.3; p.4>

"He found the role of teaching A-level, because he was so close to their age, more challenging I think but he didn't think it was challenging and I think that was my biggest thing with him, that he felt that he'd found his comfort zone with those sixth-formers..." (87-90)

"what was I saying about X? yeah, that his biggest challenge to try and get him from <pause>, you know I'm the fountain of all knowledge to becoming a decent sixth form teacher." (115-117)

Jennifer's readiness to genuinely listen has come with age <p.12>

"I think I'm a lot more patient as I've got older now and I think erm that I'm ready to listen to them and I genuinely, genuinely want people to do well." (378-379)

Mentors are role models.

She has the highest hopes for her young female mentees <p.36>

"And I always feel like, especially with the younger female ones that I've felt like they've been like, not my children but that I've had, absolutely had their best interests at heart. I want them to do well." (1168-1170)

She can always tell when someone's had a good mentor <p.35>

"And I think, I can always tell someone who's had, their early days of teaching, who's had a good mentor" (1145-1146)

Experiences of motherhood have helped her to develop her skills <p.12>

"and I do think that you know, I look at my son and my stepsons who are all in their twenties now and I think doing that and having them ...I always feel that I've learnt quite a lot from that. That I would hate to think that anybody wasn't mentoring them properly, wasn't giving them the time and I think that's made me a little bit more <pause>" (370-378)

A mini-me can be a compliment <p.35>

"And I mean <name redacted> said ermmmm you know, she's, the best compliment she's had is when somebody's said to her: oh, you're a mini-<name of mentor redacted>." (1146-1148)

She doesn't mean to sound big headed, but she's always been decent in a classroom <p.34>

"I mean I've had performance management and I've had chats but I think <slight pause> because, you know without blowing my own trumpet, I've always been decent in a classroom. I think people have found it difficult to find me something to do, or to make that next step. (1090-1096)

She thinks you need to be able to see yourself in others for observation to work <p.16>

"I sent him to see a young history teacher and it, it, it just didn't, it didn't work because it wasn't his style." (518-519)

She has no clear memories of being mentored <p.33>

"... I mean I probably did have a mentor, I think I did on PGCE ummm in my big teaching practice where I went to." (1080-1081)

She thinks that mentees should learn from others but not become carbon copies <p.13>

"They need, they need to be able to <slight pause>, to listen but also to, to, not try and just emulate anybody else. They need to be working towards finding their own style, their own strength and they need to, what I would hope to eventually see, and that might be something you've got to work on with them, that they find their own style, they find their own niche what they're good at, what they enjoy with it." (404-408)

Mentors don't know everything; they need to see themselves as learners too.

Mentors need to embrace challenge and be open to learning from their mentees <p.10>

"so I think a mentor needs to be ready to be challenged, ready to learn new things, and I've learnt so much from some of those trainees errmm and be open to it and be think, and then prepared to sort of think: right, what can I do now to move you onto the next stage? You know?" (309-312)

Learning how to talk to people through coaching has been the best learning for Jennifer <p.34>

"I think the best <slight pause> training and mentoring I've had is when I've been learning how to coach or to you know, to talk to people but never as a classroom teacher." (1104-1106)

Learning from colleagues has shaped her practice <p.34>

"but I think I've always learnt from other teachers" (1087-1088)

She mentored the mentors, because mentors need training too <p.23>

"I can't remember what was the official title now, but it was ummm <slight pause> something mentor and I mentored the mentors." (740-741)

"And I think that was, that was quite an interesting role because some people found <slight pause> you know, they found it hard to mentor errmm and I had to do sort, sort of, I had to do sessions where there were the three of us errmm where I was listening to them mentoring and how they were going about it. And then we had to do some like sort of rehearsals before they went in" (746-750)

Jennifer sees herself as a learner <p.21; p.37>

"And so I had to do quite a lot of research myself, to be honest and think about how am I going to now move on from this" (667-669)

"I might not know exactly what I'm doing now but I'm going to learn with them..." (1198-1199)

She thinks she might be set in her ways <p.34>

"And I've learnt strategies to implement and things that we can use in a classroom, and I've tried them out but not me <slight pause> as a teacher in it, if you know what I mean? Yeah, I do and that, again, but I don't whether that's because I'm old school or what, I don't know." (1111-1114)

2 ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Adult-adult relationships are different to those between adults and children.

Adult-adult dialogue presents a challenge for some <p.24>

"oh, I don't know but it's just sometimes some teachers just find it difficult to communicate with other adults <quiet laugh>" (771-772)

She thinks adult to adult talk is different to adult to child talk <p.23>

"you don't want to, it's different to talking to a student, you know, it's different to, to anything you've ever probably done before." (751-752)

She thinks the 'right' mentor is needed for each mentee <p.24>

"I think, I think if you don't get the right mentor, to start you off, it's, you know, it's <slight pause>, it can be detrimental, can't it? I mean there's a lot of people leaving teaching." (753-755)

Relationships are transient (by programme design) <p.2>

"... and then he went somewhere else to somebody else." (46)

She thinks a peer to peer dynamic requires a different approach <p.22>

"And I think it's treading carefully with instructional coaching errrrmm especially if it's with a peer." (692-693)

Formal observations can strain relations <p.30--31>

"... it had all led up to a formal observation. I think that's where the tension perhaps came in because it was a formal observation." (979-985)

Jennifer has established personal connections reaching further than the classroom <p.2>

"<laughs> yeah, I ended up as his wedding as well, that's why I remember him." (39)

She doesn't need to be their friend <p.10; p.12>

"... open relationship ummm that isn't friendship necessarily you know, I'm not friends with many of them they're a lot younger than me, I don't need their friendship." (296-298)

"... equally it's you know like I said before, I'm not, I'm not their friend." (361)

She took the time to check-in and connect <p.26>

"I always made a point of every morning I was probably always in first, and when they arrived, going to see them. Errrm and never, never going for a day without, you know, two or three times, even if I wasn't observing them, never going for a day without making sure they were alright." (836-842)

She thinks you need a relationship with your mentee to reflect, recognise successes and move forward <p.20>

"And I think, I think that just something that's progressed when you've, when you've actually got a relationship with your, with your mentee or with your coachee, that it goes from, there's only so much listening you can do with someone and only so much listening we can, you know we can talk about it, we can unpick it, but then we have to move forward and we have to you know get better and, and, learn from what we're doing and, and, and see successes." (626-631)

Getting the balance right builds trust.

Novices are more open <p.23>

"And I think sometimes people who've been teaching for a long time, who haven't mentored, or who haven't coached, find it more difficult that somebody who's fairly new in teaching because their more open, their more receptive to it." (735-738)

She always starts with the positives <p.6; p.8>

"I did drop-in observations informal drop-ins, always starting with the positives, always going in with what they wanted me to watch." (184-185)

"so, starting with the positives, always doing that and then focusing on things that perhaps I felt that he'd missed," (242-243)

Getting the balance between challenge and support right <p.9>

"the trainee, the mentee, feels that you know you're challenging them but you're also supporting them and they feel that they've got an opportunity to come to you..." (286-288)

Feedback needs balance <p.25>

"I think <slight pause> it's finding that balance between knowing that you want to support them but you also want them to do well, and I think sometimes some people have struggled with it." (792-794)

Openness is important, anyone can come to her <p.9-10>

"I always feel that anybody I've been mentoring or coaching can come to me privately, and you know, and feel that they can be open and I think if you haven't got that, if you haven't got that honest, open relationship..." (290-296)

You need to be comfortable in yourself as a good teacher and be prepared to show your vulnerabilities <p.37>

"when you first start off you've got to look at who you are you've got to be comfortable in what you're teaching, you've got to know what you believe in, and to be open and receptive and to be, and you know, to learn with them and to be prepared to make mistakes. You know, there are things that you don't always know but to go and be able to ask somebody." (1209-1213)

Getting them to trust her <p.7>

"I probably did for the first week, I probably did three, four drop-ins and all of them were just positives...ummmm, just to try and get them a little bit on side." (193-198)

Openness is important for mentors <p.29>

"you've got to be receptive to, to new things and you've got to be open..." (939-940)

Honesty builds trust <p.10>

"and feel that they can be open and I think if you haven't got that, if you haven't got that honest, open relationship..." (295-296)

Comfortable spaces engender honesty <p.11>

"but I think they also need to feel relaxed enough to be open and to say: look that went well, I'm not happy about that, you know ummm where would, what would you think what do you think?" (351-353)

Working with what you've got.

Ideas can be dangerous <p.6>

"he had some ideas and that was almost a bit dangerous because he had too many ideas..." (174)

The mentor's focus needs to be on the mentee's development <p.25>

"I just think somebody who is just a little bit patient, somebody who genuinely likes people and who wants them, you know, who, is, it's not about them and I just think modesty a little bit, and I think some teachers unfortunately, you know, haven't got, you know I mean not just teachers in any walk of life I should imagine." (801-804)

She thinks it's harder when they're coming in straight from university <p.14>

"but it's hard but I think, ... especially when they're coming straight from university, they've been to school, they've done their A-levels, they've gone straight to uni to then go and then become that teacher in a classroom and not the student themselves, is a massive, massive challenge." (432-436)

Intuitive reading of your mentee to know when to change focus <p.29>

"it's going with the flow a little bit I think and, and knowing <slight pause> being a good people reader. I think you've got to know people and you've got to be able to think: right, who am I, who is this person now?" (919-925)

Jennifer thinks that 'good' students make 'outstanding' teachers <p.15>

"they've been good in a classroom as a kid <laughs> ...Otherwise they wouldn't be accepted on <name of provider redacted>, you know, they're your outstanding classroom practitioner, well potential classroom practitioners," (460-465)

People bring their past experiences and baggage with them <p.3; p.6>

"his mother was a teacher and he'd done a year as a classroom assistant ...what he didn't know wasn't worth knowing really <chuckle> He came with all that" (64-72)

"he'd taught abroad for three or four years, he knew what he was doing and he was decent you know, he wasn't you know, we weren't starting from scratch with discipline, we weren't starting from scratch with ummmm planning," (167-170)

She thinks that a mentor facilitates the development of a teacher identity <p.17>

"Ummm but that's fine because then we, we, we unpicked what he felt the trainee felt was his style..." (523-524)

She has strong memories of her first mentoring experience <p.2>

"He was doing a PGCE, I remember now, errrr, he was doing a PGCE in English and it was his big training term,..., ummm, I even remember his name," (28-35)

Mentors need to see the person in front of them <p.26>

"And I think some people just don't always see the person that they've got and look at their personality, and look at them and think: right, who is this person," (821-823)

Personal school experience isn't always reflective of the 'real world' (i.e., the schools ECTs will be placed in) <p.15>

"you know, their experience of school <slight pause> can be very different to where it was a <name of school redacted>, or at the <name of school redacted> where I was," (458-460)

"and yet invariably they go to <name of provider redacted> schools that aren't their experience of a school. Ummm and they need to see what it's like, without shocking them, without frightening them and I think some of them come with this, some of them are terrified, you know not all of them are blasé about it and to that extent I think I'd, I'd limit you know where they went but some of them need to see what the real, what they're heading towards," (465-475)

Jennifer needs time to understand how they'll fit within the school community. <p.14>

"it might be somebody that I think they would benefit from just getting a general feel for the school. Ummm and from our kids as well, you know it's not, it's not just about them it's about what the school's like." (450-453)

A personalised approach to mentoring is needed to accommodate differences.<p.12>

"it needs to be firm and it needs to be different and every single person I've mentored has been incredibly different. Very different." (362-363)

Managing confrontation: it was "a baptism of fire."

For Jennifer it was about getting him to listen <p.3; p.6>

"so it was a bit of a baptism of fire with him ummm and it was about getting him to, to, listen." (72-72)

"he wasn't ready to listen to where I felt he was, you know, falling down." (175)

Mentoring relationships can be competitive, and she's witnessed it <p.25>

"You know, I think they find it a competition, or they might find it a little bit <slight pause> they like to be top dog sometimes, not always, I mean that sounds dreadful, but I have witnessed it and I have seen people where, you know, they haven't always felt <slight pause> supported." (812-815)

This new challenge brings confrontation, and this creates friction, generating heat for her <p.3>

"... in a classroom situation he liked the sound of his own voice and that was our biggest challenge and our biggest headbutt really because he was constantly saying, because we taught A-level as well, and he was into, and he taught A-level with, he shared one of my groups for A-level Lit and it was about him performing and then I was trying, you know what I mean?." (77-81)

Jennifer finds males are challenging because they lack humility <p.2>

"without sounding sexist a lot of the males that I've mentored have been have been the most challenging because they ummm they don't have that sort of <slight pause> humility, a little bit, and humble state that some of the girls have and I know that sounds a bit dramatic but I have found that quite challenging." (53-56)

She used her voice to (re)establish authority and gain control <p.29>

"I've, like I say I've raised my voice, I've had to, and then felt terrible about it. But then they have come back and apologised and said, you know, I shouldn't have to raise my voice, you should be, you've got to listen to what I'm saying." (926-932)

Her male mentee was overconfident and dismissive of her expertise/experience <p.3>

"so he was quite <pause> blasé about it, (61) ... and he'd done a year as a classroom assistant" (64)

Different types of people bring additional challenges, but he was the only one where she'd had to raise her voice <p.32>

"he was a challenge and I mean he, he was different to any, to anyone I've ever mentored to be honest ummmm but he was the only the one, where I've had to raise my voice." (1043-1045)

Personality has played a part in the level of challenge she has met <p.13>

"I mean sometimes it's harder because you know personality wise, of course, some people are quite challenging, but you know generally I've been lucky." (391-392)

Raising her voice with an adult was the last resort for Jennifer <p.30>

"I'm not the kind of person that feels that I ever need to raise my voice, I do with kids, ummm but I never needed to raise my voice with another adult... You know I very rare, I've very rarely done it." (966-971)

Who is in control is a matter of perspective.

Handing over control creates the possibility of losing her relationship with a class <p.5>

"he was <slight intake of breath> going to step into my shoes and just do exactly the same and it was difficult for me to sort of <pause> lose that relationship with the kids, with the sixth formers that I had," (134-136)

She sows the seeds of an idea <p.33>

"I make him think that he's the one who had the idea in the first place and you just slowly drip-feed ideas in and then give them time to think about it and then they come back with it and you think: oh-ah I did mention that a few weeks ago but we don't say it." (1059-1062)

Ultimately, Jennifer, the mentor is in charge <p.7>

"I said: right I'm going to come in next time, and I just had to sort of occasionally pull rank to be honest and say I'm coming in now." (219-220)

She lets them think they've taken control <p.6>

"I sort of steered it a little bit and say: right, this is, this is where we focusing on, what do you want me to drop in on, what do you want me to see?" (189-190)

You don't know everything, perspective is all <p.23>

"errmm to be able to listen and to, to want to see something from somebody else's point of view and not think that you're always right." (734-735)

Mentees need to accept her judgements and respect her expertise <p.32>

"...and this is something you've got to accept. And we'll move forward from it by putting in place any strategies that you need to see work and we'll see whether we can come back to this ending, this plenary bit. And he still argued about it. And in the end I just had to say to him: look, I'm not going to type this up, I'm going to end the meeting here." (1029-1032)

"But I did go and see him and I just said: look, we need to errmm wrap this up. I'm not changing my mind, have you had time to think about it? Ummm and he hadn't, he was still adamant ummm I just said: right. So, I gave him a day or two, and ummm called the meeting again and he did, he didn't admit defeat, but he admitted that he had to have a next stage, a next step and he listened to what I was saying." (1038-1042)

She found it harder to assert authority with a smaller age gap <p.2>

"I think it was, he wasn't much younger than me to be honest and I think that's what I found quite <pause> daunting at times." (50-52)

She thinks it's better to persuade not challenge, to win them around <p.20>

"I think that's one of the challenges, biggest challenges for me, to, to sort of win people round without them feeling like they've failed. Because there's nothing worse than, than picking," (647-649)

Jennifer's way of doing things gets results <p.5>

"so I think he eventually came round to me saying to him: look this is what you have to do now, this is, we're going to have to take a step back, you're going to have to go and observe other people teaching A-level, other subjects as well, and ummm slowly I think he did come round to it and he was good, I mean you know, he's headteacher now in <geographical area redacted> <laughs>." (143-147)

"But ummm I did raise my voice and I felt bad about it but to be honest with you, afterwards, I mean he even texted me a few weeks ago and asked how I was doing and uh that I was the best, the great mentor and everything and whatever," (238-240)

3 WHERE WE'RE HEADED AND HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THERE

Mentors lead the way as guide and navigator.

Mentors provide direction <p.9>

"I feel I need to challenge them in a different way or move them in a different way... I think they need to guide." (276-282)

She could have let them drift on <p.6>

"Because I could have just let him drift on, both of them I could have let them drift on, because they were okay." (178-179)

Good mentors move them on <p.30>

"it's putting in, a good mentor needs to putting in the effort, and to actually do some planning on what they can do to support the person, you know and move them on." (954-955)

She had to stop them from going round in circles <p.29>

"you know, I shouldn't have to raise my voice, you should be, you've got to listen to what I'm saying, because we're going round and round in circles here." (931-932)

Genuinely giving something to move someone on <p.29>

"you've got to be open and you've got to think: right, what can I genuinely, <slight pause> give to this person to make them improve, where do they need to go?" (940-941)

Meetings are not just a chat; she got better at focused dialogue over time <p.28>

"You know when you've got, when you've got an hour ummm to do it we're not just always chatting about, you know, what they did last night, or what they're doing in the holiday, it's, it's got to be focused it's got to be organised, it's got to follow a structure. Errrr I got better at that." (914-917)

Working as a coach she got them back on track <p.21>

"but I have coached, you know, I've coached a woman who came back off maternity leave once and she was ummm <slight pause> she was a head of department, head of a big department errmmmm in the days when it was languages, so it wasn't just English, it was French and German and everything, she was, she was head of and she'd lost her way a little bit." (658-662)

Listening without action doesn't move people forward <p.23>

"I do think counselling to a certain extent does come into it, you know you are doing that aren't you? There's no getting away from that, that's what you're doing as, you're you're listening but errmm we need to move people forward." (724-726)

She thinks technology can provide structure, but it can also restrict <p.28>

"I mean it was good in a way, it gave us structure and you know if somebody's new into mentoring to think: right, I'm not sure what I should do here with this person and then they'll click on something and then they'll see the next step and they can move forward, but I think at times that had been restrictive for me." (896-899)

Building a teacher on their successes takes time.

She thinks that real-time feedback in a classroom may be too much for a teacher <p.18>

"I've never used that in teaching, I've never seen that happen, where you know, I, where they've got a headset on and you're almost like <slight pause> telling them what to say or what to do. I think it would be, it might be a little bit distracting, if you've got a class of thirty kids," (581-584)

Persuading them that good isn't the end-point <p.7>

"right where do we then go to the next stage because you are good but you want to be even better ummm I think that's what we, that's what I constantly tried to put into their mind, that they were good but we needed to see improvement because you can't just plateau.." (203-206)

Modelling is provided by colleagues <p.5>

"And then following that up by him going and watching other people doing it." (128)

Jennifer thinks listening is important, but they still need to use successes to move mentees forward <p.28>

"I mean we can all listen and sort of nod and sympathise but to actually, you know, move people forward and get them to think about what was successful ummmm to share those moments of success and to be genuinely happy for what they've, what they've achieved and then to think what the next stage is, to constantly be thinking what the next, what the next step is." (887-891)

There's no point in setting targets for improvement unless they mean something <p.34>

"I mean, you know, I have somebody once say to me ummm add a bit of music when they're coming in because that's all they could think of to improve the lesson. And I said: but I don't want any bloody music to come in they're high enough, I

want calm when then come in <quiet laugh> and it was, I just had to nod and say: yeah, okay that might be something I use, yeah, yeah, yeah.” (1098-1102)

Becoming a teacher takes time <p.4>

“Errrrrm, I’m trying to think what else with him, that’s what it was <pause> I think he just had, it was a lot of coaching towards the end, of me just having to take a step back but then every now and again having to say to him: now look, this is what you need to do sometimes.” (121-124)

She thinks that recognising the importance of the process of observing takes time <p.16>

“Not at first, no, because I think sometimes it’s like a when they’ve got their timetable together you know for the week, they see it as ummmm an extra free, they want it as an extra free sometimes. Ummm and for planning and whatever, and and yet it takes time for me to actually say look: to watch somebody else and to make notes on what they’re doing is your planning is where you’re going to go next, is your, is your next you know, your next stage and you need to, you need to, do it and you need to see it.” (491-496)

She thinks highly focused improvement to further build expertise is needed, especially if they’re really good <p.29>

“and it’s got to be something, you know It might just be a whole hour on, on marking. It might be a whole hour on, you know when you’ve moved away from the basics of, of discipline and classroom management and getting some decent work and not speaking, not too much teacher talk, when you’ve moved away from those basics,” (947-950)

Jennifer uses successes as developmental devices <p.7>

“What do you think’s been a success, let me come along and see it, so always starting with the positives and then two or three times, I probably did for the first week, I probably did three, four drop-ins and all of them were just positives...” (190-194)

Coaching is different to mentoring.

Coaching has a different quality to mentoring <p.9>

“and I feel I need to challenge them in a different way or move them in a different way.” (275-276)

Coaching can be telling or advising <p.19>

“You know, where we go from <slight pause> telling < slight pause> sometimes having to like give advice.” (613-614)

She thinks the coach role can be seen as a poisoned chalice <p.20>

“and I think that’s one of the challenges, biggest challenges for me, to, to sort of win people round without them feeling like they’ve failed. Because there’s nothing worse than, than picking, and I know why I’ve been asked to do it because SLT didn’t want to do it.” (647-650)

She thinks there’s a difference between coaching and mentoring <p.9>

“and I think where the, where the mentor, I always felt that mentoring was <pause> I don’t know I always had this impression that it was somebody who was a little bit older, wiser, somebody who’d done, who’d been there done that and was going to sort of, mentor you to get to where they possibly are and then coaching sort of took hold a little bit erm, especially when I’ve, and I’m probably digressing a little bit now, but coaching for me has been with people and students, or even <slight pause> peers, you know I’ve done peer mentoring and er umm coaching and people who have been teaching for a long time errrrm and that process is incredibly different to if I was mentoring a <name of provider redacted> or an NQT

or somebody who was training. I always, I see the mentoring as somebody who's, who's starting out." (261-270)

Coaches create the opportunities for success <p.21>

"and I think, you know, I did know her and I knew her quite well and I think what we had to do was just start going back to where the successes were...and where she felt, when she left and she'd left on a high, how we could get those back" (673-679)

Coaching can be perceived as a negative when used as a tool to address capability <p.20>

"I've been asked to coach people who've been teaching, not longer than me <small laugh> but but a long time who've, who've lost their way a little bit, who've been out on an action plan. Errrrmmm and I've found that uncomfortable." (640-643)

For her, all coaching is instructional <p.20>

"you know, I, I always start when I'm doing instructional coaching or coaching, I think all coaching for me is instructional." (634-635)

She's used instructional coaching to train new teachers unfamiliar with new approaches <p.19>

"We did some working on instructional, we did some work on coaching and instructional coaching,... we did it with ummm, so we had a small group of people, teachers, not all as experienced – not all as old as I was, you know there was some younger people." (598-604)

Counselling can be part of mentoring/coaching but she'd prefer it not to be <p.22>

"Errmm I get frustrated sometimes if I, if it becomes too much of a counselling session." (718-719)

A switch to a coaching approach allows her to step back and be more directive <p.4>

"I'm trying to think what else with him, that's what it was <pause> I think he just had, it was a lot of coaching towards the end, of me just having to take a step back but then every now and again having to say to him: now look, this is what you need to do sometimes." (121-124)

For her, mentoring becomes more directive over time <p.22>

"when I've had the errmm <name of provider redacted>, on the second year it becomes more instructional for me, I think." (698-699)

She thinks you need the right skills and personality to coach <p.23>

"it's not always about experience, it's about having the, the right skills and the person..., I do think it comes down to personality as well, quite a lot of it errmm to be able to listen and to, to want to see something from somebody else's point of view and not think that you're always right." (732-735)

Magpieing what attracts them and matching it to what they need.

They need to see it to be able to do it themselves <p.16>

"to watch somebody else and to make notes on what they're doing is your planning is where you're going to go next, is your, is your next you know, your next stage and you need to, you need to, do it and you need to see it." (494-496)

She thinks that seeing lots of different classroom practice builds a mentee's repertoire; taking something they like from everyone they see <p.13>

"And somebody who, who you know I always say to them: you can learn something from everybody, even if it's how not to do something. And I just think, I like to see that openness and that ability to watch people and to think: you know what, I really liked that this is what I'd do from that. And I think getting them into

seeing as many different people in as many classrooms and situations is, is, is, vital at first. So, I think, you know, the openness and the, the ability to listen but also knowing, knowing their own mind and then wanting to actually do something with it and learn from it and move on. Not just sort of like I say following others.” (411-418)

Vicarious learning is used as a tool to improve practice <p.3>

“he had to do a lot of observation and we had to take a step back <slight pause> and we had to get him to watch other sixth form teachers ummmm in that role. He found the role of teaching A-level, because he was so close to their age, more challenging I think but he didn’t think it was challenging and I think that was my biggest thing with him, that he felt that he’d found his comfort zone with those sixth-formers whereas he could be quiet in a classroom with lower school.” (86-91)

She thinks purposeful watching is the most fruitful <p.16>

“Just because it can be tedious, I mean I find it boring, you watching <laughs> but if they go in with a purpose and they’ve got a focus and that’s their aim for that, then you know, you know, we’ve homed in certain things to do it in that way rather than just observing willy-nilly. Because you know they don’t always get a great deal out of that.” (501-505)

She facilitates vicarious learning opportunities matched to her mentee’s needs <p.14>

“I always put them a programme together, where I think: right, who, who do I feel this person might benefit from seeing? Ummmm and you know maybe sometimes, that hasn’t always been where I’ve really thought it through but I think towards the end I did. You know, initially, on the first meeting, because I’ve always met them before they’ve come into school, I always try and do that before I put a programme together of where I think: right, who would I like them to see in that first week?” (442-447)

A different pair of eyes to see yourself with.

She led him to reflect on his own practice <p.31>

“and so when we did feedback and I asked him about how he felt the ratio of the teacher talk, and I’d picked up on one kid who’d, he’d allowed them to, to talk and then he’d done, and then he’d asked somebody else what they’d said and he’d done some great questioning.” (998-1001)

She thinks that although seeing yourself can be a nightmare, it’s a useful tool <p.18>

“But we had to do it. And then to play that back, I mean that was all that time ago, to play that back, and to have errmmmm <pause> to hear you, and I mean to hear yourself is a nightmare anyway...but to actually, to hear how much time you’re talking, you know, what’s going on, and to see that, was absolutely paramount. And I mean it did cut down the amount of teacher talk that I did,” (557-565)

She thinks that there are always areas for improvement <p.31>

“Ummmm and then we’d looked at areas to improve and I said there was still moments of time, when especially towards the plen..., the end, when he was, when they were packing away, they weren’t listening to him because he was still talking though what he was saying and I said that’s something we need to do. And he just said that I disagree with what you’re saying on that one because errmm I wasn’t speaking to the whole class, I was just speaking to these...” (1006-1011)

Jennifer gives her mentee a different view: “can you see what I see?” <p.8>

“and I’m going to watch these two people, these two students, and I’m going to minute every single thing that they do...and, then I’m going to feedback to you.

And I think it alarmed him and it shocked him a little bit. Ummm and then we read the, we focused on these two or three students that were causing low level disruption, we looked at the quality of the work and he eventually had to admit that they weren't getting out what he thought they were getting out of what they were supposed to be doing. They were a couple of lads who were taking the mickey and he just couldn't see that they were doing it." (224-234)

She's used video before, to see herself teach her peers, but it wasn't really believable <p.17>

"Yeah. Yeah I do. And I think, I mean when I did my PGCE and that was in <puffs>, when did I do that? 1988, we had to video each other <slight pause> but not in an actual classroom but actually teaching each other as if they were the students, which was a bit ... false." (551-553)

Appendix H

Survey for R1 of the Delphi in Phase 1.

31/01/2021

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Education

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking a research project to construct a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors as part of my PhD in Education. My research will be supervised by Professor Rob Klassen, Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York.

Having considered your considerable contribution to the field of coaching and/or mentoring in the context of teacher education, I am contacting you to invite you to take part in this study as a member of an expert panel.

Before agreeing to take part, please read the participation information sheet carefully and let me know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

[Participant information sheet](#)

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link below

https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

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Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Tickell

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about the Participant Information sheet, the study itself or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact Rebecca Tickell by email rmt534@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.

Statement of consent.

- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the study.
- ☐ I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason before publication.
- ☐ I understand that my data will not be identifiable, however, I will be given the option to share my identity at the end of the study. I also understand that this could then be referenced in any future publications that may result from this study.
- ☐ I understand that anonymised data from this study may be used in future research, publications and presentations.
- ☐ I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR.
- ☐ I confirm that I agree to take part in this study.

Please add your signature in the box below

SIGN HERE

[clear](#)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. This study has been designed to use the expertise of a carefully selected panel to inform the construction of a new and novel scale to measure teacher mentor efficacy beliefs.

This, the first of three rounds of this Delphi questionnaire, will be open-ended and designed to ascertain what the core competencies required of an effective teacher mentor are. Responses from this round will then be analysed and presented back to the panel for further discussion and analysis. In the third and final round, the responses from the second round will be analysed and presented back to the panel for final comments.

Qualtrics will be used to gather and share your responses/contributions, alongside my analyses and questions.

Block 4

About You

Experience

How much experience have you had in the field of coaching and mentoring in education?

Please record your answer in years in the box below.

Where did you gain this experience? You may select more than one option.

- ☐ Early Years Foundation Stage (3 -7)
- ☐ Primary phase (5-11)
- ☐ Secondary phase (11-16)
- ☐ Further Education
- ☐ Higher Education
- ☐ Initial Teacher Education
- ☐ Alternative Provision
- ☐ Special Schools
- ☐ Outside of schools and colleges e.g. for an external organisation or consultancy
- ☐ Other

Please tell me more about your experience in the box below.

Do you have experience of coaching and mentoring outside of education?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide more details in the box below.

Do you hold qualified teacher status (QTS)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you have a coaching and/or mentoring qualification?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If the answer to this question is 'yes' please provide further details in the box below

Do you have any experience of coaching and mentoring in an international context?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If the answer to this question is 'yes' please provide further details in the box below

Personal Details

Age

Please state your age in years in the box below.

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Ethnicity

Please self-report your ethnicity in the space below

Block 1

There are many different frameworks used for coaching and mentoring. If you find it helpful, please draw on these, alongside any other documents or research that you think are relevant when completing this questionnaire.

Using the boxes below please identify the expertise that all teacher mentors need to perform their role effectively.

The headings used are there to act as prompts and have not been placed in any order of importance. The meaning of each heading is open to interpretation and may vary dependent on your experience and context.

As the spaces provided for your response are free text, you may write as much or as little as you like. Please either start a new line or use a semicolon to separate each item you have listed.

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your response by using the same survey link you were emailed.

Knowledge

What knowledge should a teacher mentor have?

For each area or type of knowledge you have identified please explain why it is important.



Attributes/Personal Characteristics/Personal Qualities

What attributes, personal characteristics and/or personal qualities should a teacher mentor have?

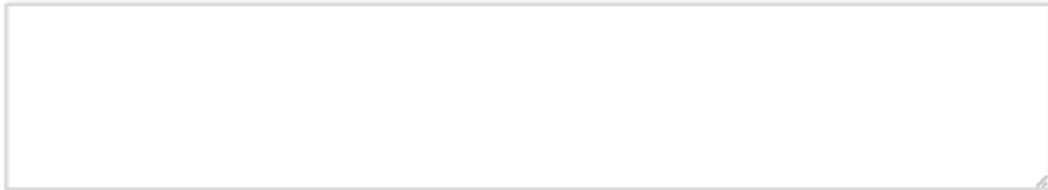
For each attribute, characteristic or quality you have identified please explain why it is important.



Skills

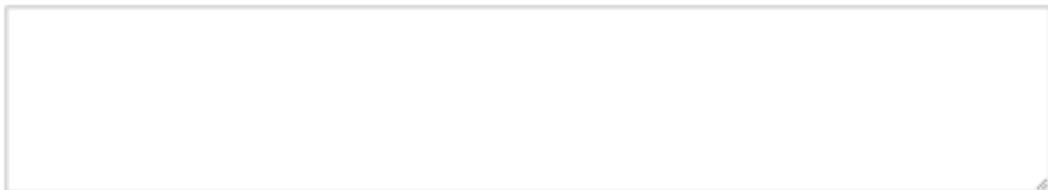
What skills should a teacher mentor have?

For each skill you have identified please explain why it is important.

**Behaviours**

What behaviours should a teacher mentor exhibit?

For each behaviour you have identified please explain why it is important.



Do you broadly agree with these categories?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please use the space below to explain your answer.

A competency can be defined as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently*

Are there any competencies that a teacher mentor needs to be able to perform their role effectively, that you haven't already identified in the four categories provided above?

*Google's English Dictionary, Oxford Languages, Oxford University Press, 2021

Block 5

How important is the role a teacher mentor plays in the development of

	Unimportant	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Beginning teachers (teachers with 0 to 5 years experience)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experienced teachers (teachers with 5+ years experience)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aspirant leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Would the knowledge, skills, attributes and behaviours you've identified as important for effective mentoring be applicable for all teacher mentors, regardless of the career stage of their mentee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Please explain your answer.

Block 3

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, would any of the knowledge, skills, attributes and behaviours you've identified as being important for effective mentoring be any more important, any less important or different in any way?

Please explain your answer in the space below.

Block 2

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this form to revise

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Appendix I

Codebook for the RTA in Phase 1.

Name of Initial Code	Description
Able to deconstruct high quality practice	skill to analyse, break down, and understand the components of effective or exemplary professional work
Able to focus on key development areas	... and be able to identify them; develop mentees range of skills; know how needs may change over time
Accepting	appreciation that everyone is different - sometimes outcomes are not as hoped
Adaptability	'flexibility'
Adaptive teaching	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Advisor	provides guidance, support, and feedback, offering advice
Advocate for the trainee	... linked to providing a sense of security and belonging for the mentee championing
Altruistic	a selfless concern, for the well-being and development of their mentee
Analyse developmental needs	systematically assess the areas where a trainee of ECT requires further growth
Andragogy	linked to domain specific knowledge
Approachable	'welcoming'; 'personable'; 'friendly'
Appropriateness	of pedagogical knowledge needed; of subject knowledge needed; of challenge
Art and craft of teaching	blend of creative, intuitive and relational with the technical, methodical and skill-based elements
Articulate	linked to ability to clarify; thinking ; exposition
Assess students' teaching	assess - formative, using what they know about what 'good' teaching is, and rubrics e.g., from university or SCITT providers.
Assessment - mentee (student)	'assessment frameworks, success criteria'
Assessment - pupils	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Authenticity	'a genuine interest in the mentee's development' sincerity
Awareness of body language	these are the non-verbal cues
Barriers to learning - mentees	inequalities
Barriers to learning - pupils	factors that hinder or prevent pupils from accessing, engaging with or succeeding in education/at school. Can be external and internal.
Behaviour	behaviour management strategies; classroom management
Behavioural responses -adult	Knowledge of them: Deflection; blocks; negative self-talk; barriers

Name of Initial Code	Description
Belief in mentee	confidence in potential, growth, and capability of an ECT/mentee
Build confidence	support trainee/mentee to develop a strong sense of self-belief in their ability to teach/be a teacher
Build on prior understanding	recognise, connect, extend - all related to prior knowledge and understanding
Build rapport	thoughtful
Build relationships	'thoughtful' - maybe respectful
Building autonomy	some interchangeability with agency here: development of independent thinking, decision-making and prof. judgement.
Building positive relationships with pupils	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Calm	can help mentee to feel safe
Can see bigger picture	understand how individual actions - as a mentor - fit into broader educational goals, systems and values.
Career pathways	'developmental'
Caring	emotional attunement; concern for well-being, learning and development
Change management	knowledge of how change can be managed
Child development	understanding of phases/cog, emo, soc, lang// support age-appropriate learning experiences
Classroom interactions	'action and impact's these
Co-constructing learning	planning with mentee to devise learning activities - for mentee and pupils
Coaching models	approaches - structured - that support goal-oriented conversations
Coaching tools	to break down learning into steps
Collaborative	shared working, thinking, mutual support
Commitment to mentoring	relationship and process; have linked this to desire but it's subtly different
Commitment to self-development	... as a mentor
Commitment to sharing practice	colleague - wants to engage with pedagogical discussions; open to sharing their teaching; experiences and reflections with their mentee.
Communication	Constructive; written; verbal; skilled communicator; conversational; active listener ... skills
Compassionate	showing genuine care, empathy and understanding.
Confident mentoring	... builds confidence in trainee; ... robustness
Connecting others	networks in school; networks out of school

Name of Initial Code	Description
Considerate	thoughtfulness and respect for their mentee's needs
Consistency	reliable; steady; coherent - expectations and professional behaviours
Constructive challenge	questioning and critiquing to push their mentee's thinking in a supportive way
Conversational frameworks	structure approaches to dialogue; focused discussions
Courage	willingness to take professional risks; tackling difficult conversations
Create a safe space	creating a positive environment
Credibility	as a teacher
Critical discussions	'around student teacher's practice'
Critical reflective practice	linked to openness and honesty evaluate practice
Curiosity	inquisitive
Current	Research; pedagogies; evidence; practice
Current educational landscape	understanding of government direction, and the expectations placed on mentee and mentor; - linked to curriculum
Curriculum - what should be taught	understanding of curriculum and associated frameworks
Curriculum - wider	know what pupils should know pre and post their age phase
Curriculum development	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Desire to mentor	genuine motivation and commitment; want - a drive - to perform the mentor role
Domain specific - role	what are the expectations?; knowledge of the 'field'; 'specific stages of their development'; 'culture'
Don't criticise	avoiding harsh, personal, or judgemental criticism
Early Career Framework	knowledge of if mentoring an ECT
Effectiveness	to be effective - need to generate trust
Emotional intelligence	'social and emotional knowledge (or skills)'; 'put themselves in the shoes of those they are mentoring'
Empathise	understanding of the feelings, perspectives, and experiences of others.
Empower mentees	support mentee to develop confidence, autonomy etc. // to feel that that can
Enabler of self-awareness	in mentee; self-knowledge
Encourages	actively support, affirm and motivate mentees

Name of Initial Code	Description
Enjoys teaching	enthusiastic advocate for the profession
Enthusiastic	energy, passion and positivity for teaching and learning ... also for professional development
Equality in relationship with mentee	fostering a professional partnership where mentor and mentee are learners and contributors/power-hierarchy imbalance minimised
Ethical mentoring	'ethics and boundaries within mentoring'
Evidence based pedagogies	awareness of teaching methods that are grounded in edu research
Expectations - mentee	believe mentee can improve; high expectations; realistic
Expectations - pupils	what does expected progress look like?
Experience of mentoring	has mentored before
Expert Teacher	in their field; high performing; highly engaged; passionate; strong practitioner
Exposition - ability to explain	e.g. how to teach a subject (effectively); clarity
Facilitate discussions	'not to dominate mentoring conversation'; 'engage in meaningful dialogue'
Flawed approaches to mentoring	'they understand what not to do'; 'I've found that mentors who want mentees to be a 'mini me' cause anxiety and stress as the mentee tries and often fails to fulfil the mentor's expectations.'
Focused	being clear, specific and purposeful
Friendly	warmth, kindness, approachability - welcoming and supportive
Genuine	concern ; interest
Give mentee space	... dialogue; can open-up – freedom to be them
Give students (mentees) freedom	... to make mistakes; linked to step back
Good humour	positive; light-hearted; relaxed; can use humour without sarcasm/ridicule
Good timekeeper	manages time effectively e.g., meetings
Help navigate	helps mentee find the right path/direction
Highly engaged	actively involved, motivated, fully attentive
Honesty	truthful, transparent; openness - shares message/thoughts as they are
How pupils learn	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
How to ask questions	using clear and purposeful language - can be open; knows when to switch from open to closed; using questions to elicit understanding and encourage movement.
How to teach	knowledge of what 'good' teaching is.

Name of Initial Code	Description
Humanity	compassion, empathy and respect for other - their mentee - as people/individuals; humanness
Humility	recognising own limitations, being open to learning and valuing the contributions of others
Inclusive	creating an environment where all feel valued
Induction	provides structured support and guidance to new teachers - new school - new career
Initiates interventions	proactive support when needed to help mentee
Inspirational	motivating others - passionate and positive - someone to look up to/aspire to be.
Integrity	acting honestly, fairly, and with ethical responsibility.
Intercultural sensitivity	recognise, respect and respond to cultural differences // being aware of one's own cultural perspective and position.
Interpersonal	skills and techniques
Intuitive	be able to pick up on cues that indicate stress, worry or misconceptions; insightful
IT Skills	can use digital tools and technologies to support the mentoring process
ITTE Programme or pathway	Curriculum; assessment; reporting arrangements; e.g. what has been covered, where are the gaps, what are the expectations, what documentation and support is available; 'realistic expectations'
Kindness	sympathy
Knowledge of current research	studies; theories; evidence - knowledge of this to support mentoring and modelling
Knowledge of evidence informed approaches	individual's practice shaped through inquiry and experimentation
Knowledge of the teacher role	what teachers need to do: responsibilities, expectations, professional practices - relate to Teachers' Standards and wider
Learning theories	'link between theory and practice'
Link theory to practice	relate/link Edu research, principles, models to real classroom experiences
Listening skills	linked to 'building rapport'; authenticity; 'active'
Mentee's needs	Identify meeting them any barriers to learning?; get to know the mentee as an individual
Mentee-centred approach	focuses on the needs, goals and development of the mentee
Mentor role	understanding - what do mentors do?
Mentoring models	structured approaches used to mentor - any models
Mentoring principles	core values and beliefs that guide their practice - confidentiality; trust; respect etc.

Name of Initial Code	Description
Mentoring requirements	understanding of what is expected of the role, and the mentoring process
Mentoring strategies	linked to coaching 'mentoring and coaching strategies'
Mentoring style - discursive	establishing shared understanding through dialogue; open-ended conversations
Metacognition	help mentee to use metacognitive strategies—plan, monitor, evaluate—and also for themselves - used for mentor self-development.
Modelling	good practice (teaching) strategies modelled for mentees; maintain attractive learning environment; work life balance; time keeping; well-being
Motivational	able to encourage; enthusiastic
Multi-task	balance role of teacher and mentor
Negotiation skills	... reach consensus; getting to an agreement that is mutually acceptable
Non-judgemental	approaching others without making assumptions or criticisms; listening without bias; valuing different perspectives and experiences.
Nurture	helping someone grow and thrive
Objectivity	linked to emotion - 'emotional maturity', 'more emotionally measured'
Observer	watches teaching practice to provide feedback
Offer practical advice	provides clear, realistic and actionable suggestions/feedback
Openness	open to new ideas
Organised	can manage time, resources, and responsibilities efficiently
Paraphrase	restate someone else's ideas in your own words while keeping the meaning - a coaching strategy
Patient	demonstrating calmness, understanding and persistence - allows mentee time to grow
Pedagogical knowledge	Part of 'Pedagogical knowledge appropriate to their subject or age phase that they can clearly articulate'; 'to recognise appropriate strategies, activities'
Performance measures	knowledge of how performance will be measured
Persistence	determination and sustained effort - continuing to support their mentee even when their progress is slow
Plan for development	planning developmental activities; building on prior understanding; to meet developmental goals
Planning	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Positive affirmation	gives encouraging, genuine feedback that recognises progress or strengths

Name of Initial Code	Description
Positive regard	respect, acceptance and belief in someone's potential regardless of current performance or challenges; values mentee as a person
Positivity	enthusiastic about the profession
praise	gives positive feedback that's genuine, timely and focused - a genuine well-done!
Preparedness for the workplace	knowledge of skills and professional behaviours expected in the workplace e.g., school
Prioritise	identify and focus on the most important tasks and goals
Problem solving	ability to reframe
Professionalism	act as a role model
Provide feedback	... as discussion not only judgement
Provide guidance	'best chance of a positive impact'
Provide opportunity for strategic thinking	create situations where mentees or trainees can step back to see the big picture and plan where to go next
Providing learning and development opportunities	Vicarious - and modelling; access the network and connecting to others
Question types	know how to question and when using open-ended, closed, probing, reflective - coaching and teaching technique
Raise concerns	be able to tell mentee if there's an issue with their practice / performance - confident to do this
Realistic	having a practical and honest understanding of what is achievable
Recognise growth	notice and acknowledge the progress and skills of their mentee
Reflective practice	knowledge of reflective models; how to structure reflection; driver to progress and develop(ment); two-way; evaluate practice
Reflective questioning	asking thoughtful, open-ended questions that encourage their mentee to think deeply about their practice
Reliable	dependable, consistent and trustworthy, links to fulfilling responsibilities as a mentor
Research - mentoring and coaching	'in order to select an appropriate approach in a given context'
Research - teacher researchers	engage in systematic inquiry into their own practice to improve teaching and learning, reflecting on current Edu research to inform own practice as a mentor and teacher
Resilience	adapt positively and recover from challenges, bouncing back
Respectful	for all in the partnership
Safeguarding	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'

Name of Initial Code	Description
Scaffolding	'supported in manageable next steps' 'breakdown learning into manageable steps'
School context	knowledge of school demographics, characteristics of community, school culture and ethos, resources
School policies	knowledge and understanding of school policies and rules e.g., safeguarding, behaviour.
School procedures	routines and practices that operate in situ
Self-awareness	knowledge of: self, biases; preferences; assumptions; strengths and areas for development
Self-reflective - mentor	actively reflects on their own teaching and mentoring practices
Self-regulation	emotionally regulated; able to control and adapt one's thoughts, emotions and actions
Sensitivity	awareness of and be responsive to the emotional, cultural and developmental needs of their mentee
Set developmental goals	target setting; identifying specific and measurable objectives/goals that challenge but do not over-stretch
Setting clear boundaries	establishing and maintaining professional limits in relationships
Skill specific	knowledge of the skills required to mentor and knows how to use them
Solutions-focused	emphasises practical strategies and positive outcomes.
Sounding board	is there to listen to concerns, ideas, reflections etc.; a safe pair of ears
Stability	consistency, reliability - creates a safe and predictable environment for learning and growth
Step back	ability to let trainee make mistakes; create safe space; mentees 'feel confident to try practice which pushes the boundaries of their current capability'
Structure effective meetings	ability to plan and facilitate mentor-mentee meetings
Subject knowledge	knowledge of the subject they teach/are expected to teach and their mentee is expected to teach - includes phase specific knowledge too e.g., EYFS
Subject knowledge - misconceptions	awareness of common misconceptions that pupils have; also, that mentees might have
Subject pedagogies	knowledge of the specific teaching strategies that are the most effective for a subject
Support	provider of ...; ...to develop learning opportunities ...develop their practice;...to work independently;...develop own autonomy and professional identity; linked to being a team player;...champion the trainee - teaching is hard
Tact	the ability to communicate and act with sensitivity and discretion, especially in emotionally charged situations
Taking thinking forward	encouraging deeper reflection and progression in a trainee teacher's understanding decision-making or practice

Name of Initial Code	Description
Teach mentee	acts as teacher regardless of age/stage
Teacher development	able to support development of their mentees professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and effectiveness as a teacher
Teacher exposition	part of 'an understanding of current evidence-based pedagogies for teaching in relation to key areas such as ...'
Teachers' Standards	'understanding ... needs to be thorough'
Teaching activities	'appropriate'
Teaching strategies	'appropriate'
Team player	linked to supportive
Theoretical	linked to 'developing an evidence-based approach (to) their practice'
Tough conversations	provide constructive challenge
Trust	trustworthiness of the mentor = linked to effectiveness
Two-way learning	facilitate collaborative learning, mentor and mentee learn from each other
Value contributions of others	recognising, appreciating and building on the ideas, efforts and inputs of others
Welcoming	can create an environment where their mentees (and others) feel accepted, supported and comfortable.
Willingness to be corrected	openness to receiving feedback; seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning and improvement
Wisdom	practical and technical and theoretical - wide reach - ability to apply knowledge. experience and sound judgement in complex teaching and mentoring situations.

Appendix J

Survey for R2 of the Delphi in Phase 1.

25/04/2021

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

Round 1 Findings

Thank you for your contribution to the Round 1 questionnaire. Following a detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of the combined responses, I can share that:

After a process of initial coding, **205** unique items were identified from the panellists' responses. These items represent the knowledge, attributes/personal qualities, behaviours, skills and other additional competencies required to be an effective teacher mentor.

There was considerable overlap between the items identified as knowledge, attributes, behaviour and skills across the panellists' responses.

These items have been grouped into **48** categories and for each category a teacher mentor competency statement constructed.

The categories have been initially grouped according to the emerging themes within the data.

Although I have item frequency data, I am unable to share this with you as I do not want to inadvertently influence your responses in the activity I would like you to complete in Round 2.

Block 1

Teacher Mentor Competencies

For each of the 48 teacher mentor competency statements provided, please rate their importance for effective teacher mentoring using the 1 to 5 scale.

If you think there are any competencies missing, or you feel that any of the statements are unclear then you will be given the opportunity at the end of this rating process to record your suggestions.

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your responses by using the same survey link you were emailed.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, identifying next steps.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Teach effectively and have positive impact on learning.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Provide scaffolded support to enable their mentee to make good progress.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting e.g. observing the teaching of other practitioners.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Operate in an empathetic way, responding to mentee needs with kindness.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee's perspective.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Display high expectations for their mentee.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Signpost their mentee to different development opportunities that may lead to career progression.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Co-construct solutions to complex problems with their mentee.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Model effective practice including planning, teaching and assessment.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate emotional intelligence in their thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Encourage their mentee to be a self-directed learner.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teacher Mentor Competencies

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be

automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your responses by using the same survey link you were emailed.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme pathway requirements.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Deconstruct practice with their mentee reflecting on what worked, what didn't and possible reasons why.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet their mentee's needs.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of their mentee, giving them the space they need to develop their practice.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Help their mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Provide support for their mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively in their setting.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Remain objective and fair when working with their mentee.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Adopt an non-judgemental approach to mentee development.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils).

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role.

1: Unimportant ☐ 2: Slightly Important ☐ 3: Moderately Important ☐ 4: Important ☐ 5: Very Important ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Work with their mentee to set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teacher Mentor Competencies

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your responses by using the same survey link you were emailed.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Support and encourage their mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Devise effective interventions to address their mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate commitment to their role and responsibilities.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques to check understanding and promote thinking.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Meet the needs of adult learners.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee's development.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Help their mentee to navigate and understand the context of their setting.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for their mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process.

1: Unimportant 2: Slightly Important 3: Moderately Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Block 4

If you think there are any competencies missing or you feel that any of the statements are unclear, please use the space below to record your suggestions and comments.



Thank you for taking the time to respond to Round 2 of this Delphi.

To submit your response please click on the forward arrow.

Once you have done this you will be unable to return to your form again.

The graphic below is a word cloud generated from panellists' responses to Round 1 of the Delphi.

Appendix K

Survey for Round 3 of the Delphi in Phase 1.

Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors: Round 3

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Round 3

Thank you for your contribution to this Delphi; panellist responses from round 2 of this Delphi have now been analysed. A range of descriptive statistical tests have been used to determine group consensus on which competencies should be retained and which should be discarded.

Statistically speaking, there is no consensus on how best to determine consensus. As such, I have used a range of tests to do this:

% consensus (two contiguous categories); mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*); median (*Mdn*) and interquartile range (*IQR*); mode (*Mo*); variance.

Data obtained for each competency can be found by clicking the following link:

[Analysis of r2 responses for r3 survey](#)

(items have been sorted by % consensus data).

Criteria for retention was determined a priori at $\geq 80\%$ of respondents selecting either 'important' or 'very important' when asked to rate the importance of each competency for effective teacher mentoring using a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is 'unimportant' and 5 is 'very important'. Other statistical tests, as listed above, were then applied to interrogate the data further.

In order to confirm group consensus, panellists will now be asked to re-rate the ten competencies that did not meet the criteria for retention using the same 1 to 5 point scale.

Anonymity Anonymity

A key feature of a Delphi is that panellists - and their responses - remain anonymous throughout each of the Delphi rounds. As this is the final round of the Delphi, if at the end of this process, you would be happy for your identity to be known, please select the relevant option below.

Your identify may be referred to in subsequent publications as an expert panellist if you select this option; however, individual responses to questions will remain anonymous.

☐ I give my consent for my identity to be shared as an expert panellist as part of this Delphi. (1)

☐ I **do not** give my consent for my identity to be shared as an expert panellist as part of this Delphi. (2)

Meeting F2F Oppotunity to meet

Should panellists wish to meet face-to-face, in order to discuss their contributions and the outcome/s of the project, then a virtual meeting will be convened to accommodate this request.

If you would like to be sent an invitation to this meeting, please select the relevant option below.

☐ I would like to be sent an invitation to attend the meeting. (1)

☐ I do not wish to be sent an invitation to attend this meeting. (2)

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 1 - Re-rating Teacher Mentor Competencies from R2 (10)

Q2 For each of the following teacher mentor competency statements, please rate their importance for effective teacher mentoring using the 1 to 5 scale.

Group response data for these ten competencies is available by clicking on the following link [Rejected items r2](#)

Closing your browser window will close your session and your responses will be automatically saved. You will be able to come back to this section to revise your responses using the same survey link you were emailed.

Q3 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Prepare mentees for their role within the current educational landscape.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q4 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Facilitate access to wider expertise within their setting e.g. observing the teaching of other practitioners.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q5 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Signpost their mentee to different development opportunities that may lead to career progression.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q6 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of their mentee alongside the requirements of the mentee's programme/pathway.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q7 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Prioritise the right areas for mentee development.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q8 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme pathway requirements.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q9 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Use IT to fulfil their mentoring responsibilities effectively.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q10 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Devise effective interventions to address their mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q11 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Be a strong advocate for the mentee they are supporting, demonstrating their belief in them.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
 - ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
 - ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
 - ☐ 4: Important (4)
 - ☐ 5: Very Important (5)
-

Q12 An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

Explain the value and importance of the curriculum in their setting.

- ☐ 1: Unimportant (1)
- ☐ 2: Slightly Important (2)
- ☐ 3: Moderately Important (3)
- ☐ 4: Important (4)
- ☐ 5: Very Important (5)

End of Block: Block 1 - Re-rating Teacher Mentor Competencies from R2 (10)

Start of Block: Block 2 - Polarised responses

Q13 Responding to suggestions and comments made by panellists in round 2

Q14

Polarised Responses

Polarised responses were received from panellists for the two competencies listed below, with

some panellists rating them as important or very important and other panellists rating them as slightly important or unimportant. This suggests that opinion is divided with regard to their importance for effective teaching mentoring.

Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria.

Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, identifying next steps.

(Please click [Polarised responses jpeg](#) to access the descriptive statistics for these two competencies).

Feedback received from round 2 indicates that the role teacher mentors are currently expected to perform as assessors may not be necessary, nor indeed desirable, for effective teaching mentoring to happen.

As teacher mentors are currently expected to assess and evaluate a mentee's performance, both during their mentee's training and/or induction period (early career teachers), group consensus indicates that the competencies identified above are important for effective teacher mentoring given the current context and climate.

Q15 If you would like to respond or provide a comment please use the text box below.

Q16 Feedback from panellists suggests that it is important the impetus for action rests with the mentee, not with the mentor.

After review, the following competencies were identified where a change of wording to reflect this emphasis may be necessary.

Q17 Please indicate your preferred wording from the choices given below.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

- ☐ Work with their mentee to set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals. (1)
 - ☐ Work with their mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals. (2)
-

Q18 Please indicate your preferred wording from the choices given below.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

- ☐ Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps. (1)
 - ☐ Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, identifying next steps. (2)
-

Q19 Please indicate your preferred wording from the choices given below.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

- ☐ Help their mentee to prioritise the right areas for their development. (1)
 - ☐ Prioritise the right areas for mentee development. (2)
-

Q20 Please indicate your preferred wording from the choices given below.

An effective teacher mentor is able to ...

- ☐ Deconstruct practice with their mentee reflecting on what worked, what didn't and possible reasons why. (1)
- ☐ Deconstruct practice with their mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why. (2)

End of Block: Block 2 - Polarised responses

Start of Block: Block 4 - Themes

Q21 Thematic analysis (TA)

The competency statements that have met the a priori consensus retention criteria, have been grouped under four overarching themes.

These themes have been generated from coding process. Using TA - a qualitative methodology - 205 codes were identified from the primary data, leading to the generation of 48 categories that were used to create the 48 competency statements that you were asked to rate in round 2 of this Delphi.

Next, please select the top three competencies you think are needed for effective teacher mentoring under each theme.

N.B. Where a competency is grouped under more than one theme it is included in each theme it belongs to.



Q22 Plan-do-review

Definition: Leading and facilitating the process of reflection. Based on mentee's experience, pedagogical practice, performance and expectations.

- ☐ Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning. (1)
- ☐ Provide scaffolded support to enable their mentee to make good progress. (2)
- ☐ Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria. (3)
- ☐ Deconstruct practice with their mentee reflecting on what worked, what didn't and possible reasons why. (4)
- ☐ Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques to check understanding and promote thinking. (5)
- ☐ Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of their mentee, giving them the space they need to develop their practice. (6)
- ☐ Encourage their mentee to be a self-directed learner. (7)
- ☐ Support and encourage their mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement. (8)
- ☐ Work with their mentee to set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals. (9)
- ☐ Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process. (10)
- ☐ Co-construct solutions to complex problems with their mentee. (11)
- ☐ Challenge their mentee in a meaningful and constructive way. (12)

☐

Meet the needs of adult learners. (13)

☐

Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on their mentee's progress and performance, identifying next steps. (14)



Q23 Inter and Intrapersonal Intelligence

Definition: Building and maintaining professional and productive relationships.

- ☐ Operate in an empathetic way, responding to mentee needs with kindness. (1)
 - ☐ Demonstrate emotional intelligence in their thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship. (2)
 - ☐ Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils). (3)
 - ☐ Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with their mentee. (4)
 - ☐ Help their mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully. (5)
 - ☐ Listen actively in order to understand things from their mentee's perspective. (6)
 - ☐ Give their mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role. (7)
 - ☐ Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development. (8)
 - ☐ Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards their mentee, colleagues and learners. (9)
 - ☐ Support their mentee in addressing their own barriers to learning. (10)
 - ☐ Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor. (11)
 - ☐ Provide support for their mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively in their setting. (12)
-



Q24 Professionalism

Definition: Role modelling professional behaviours/skills (explicitly and/or implicitly); sharing knowledge about the 'field'.

This takes place within a specific context/setting, changing according to mentee's needs and/or place on their pathway.

- ☐ Help their mentee to navigate and understand the context of their setting. (1)
- ☐ Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria. (2)
- ☐ Remain objective and fair when working with their mentee. (3)
- ☐ Demonstrate commitment to their role and responsibilities. (4)
- ☐ Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner. (5)
- ☐ Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession. (6)
- ☐ Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet their mentee's needs. (7)
- ☐ Display high expectations for their mentee. (8)
- ☐ Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in their mentee's development. (9)



Q25 Teacher Practitioner

Definition: Mentor as teacher; holder of pedagogical knowledge and expertise; adviser; modeller and researcher.

- ☐ Learn with their mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner. (1)
- ☐ Support mentees to remove barriers to learning for learners (pupils). (2)
- ☐ Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for their mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice. (3)
- ☐ Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for their mentee. (4)
- ☐ Model effective practice including planning, teaching and assessment. (5)
- ☐ Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process. (6)
- ☐ Teach effectively and have positive impact on learning. (7)
- ☐ Support their mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions. (8)

End of Block: Block 4 - Themes

Start of Block: Block 3

Q26 Constructing a self-efficacy scale for teacher mentors - what next?

The competencies generated from this Delphi will be used to construct a number of teacher mentor self-efficacy statements (items) that will in turn be used to create a scale (instrument) capable of measuring teacher mentor self-efficacy beliefs. This scale will be tested using exploratory factor analysis (EFA)* - a statistical technique - in order to uncover its underlying structure, helping me to identify the latent factors underpinning the construct of teacher mentor self-efficacy.

Following EFA, the themes that have been identified using thematic analysis (TA), a qualitative

methodology, may not prove to be the underlying factors. Outcomes from the EFA will also lead to further modifications of the instrument before it can be put to use. For example, it is likely that the number of items will be reduced further following this process.

It is important to note that just because a competency has not met the criteria for retention, or an item has not 'survived' EFA, it does not mean that the competency or item is not required for effective teacher mentoring. The resulting instrument is designed to measure the construct and certain items will measure this construct more strongly than others. The resultant instrument also needs to be usable. For example, an instrument with over 60 items would be unwieldy and impractical, given the time and thought it would take for mentors to complete it.

Lastly, your expertise has enabled me to advance my research and for that you have my heartfelt thanks and gratitude. Thank you for contributing to this Delphi.

Warmest regards,

Rebecca

*If you're interested in finding out more about EFA, there are a series of YouTube videos delivered by Professor Patrick Sturgis (Professor of Quantitative Social Science in the Department of Methodology at the London School of Economics) that provide a relatively accessible explainer: [link](#) here.

End of Block: Block 3

Appendix L

A list of all Items Generated for the TMSES Survey.

'How confident are you that you can ...'

I	Statement
1	Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?
2	Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?
3	Prepare your mentee for their role within the current educational landscape?
4	Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?
5	Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards your mentee, colleagues and learners?
6	Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?
7	Facilitate access to wider expertise within your setting for your mentee e.g. to observe other practitioners teach?
8	Operate in an empathetic way, responding to your mentee's needs with kindness?
9	Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?
10	Display high expectations for your mentee?
12	Co-construct solutions to complex problems with your mentee?
13	Model effective practice, including planning, teaching and assessment?
14	Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?
15	Demonstrate emotional intelligence in your thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship?
16	Encourage your mentee to be a self-directed learner?
17	Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying your own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor?
19	Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme/pathway requirements?
20	Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?
21	Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet your mentee's needs?
22	Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria?
23	Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of your mentee, giving them the space the need to develop their practice?
24	Help your mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully?
25	Provide support for your mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively?

I	Statement
26	Learn with your mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner?
27	Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?
28	Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?
29	Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?
30	Support your mentee to remove barriers to learning for learners/pupils?
31	Give your mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role?
32	Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession?
33	Work with your mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals?
34	Support your mentee to address their own barriers to learning?
35	Support and encourage your mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement?
37	Devise effective interventions to address your mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth?
38	Demonstrate a commitment to your role and responsibilities?
39	Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?
40	Meet the needs of adult learners?
41	Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in your mentee's development?
42	Help your mentee to navigate and understand the context of your setting?
43	Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?
44	Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?
46	Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?
47	Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?
48	Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?

Note: "I" represents the Item number; it corresponds to the same number of the competency statement each item was generated from. Competency statements have been published in Tickell and Klassen, 2024. CC BY 4.0.

Appendix M

Normality Checks for all Items in the TMSES Survey ($N = 239$).

Item	Range	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> (<i>M</i>)	Var	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Provide constructive and meaningful feedback on your mentee's progress and performance, helping them to identify their next steps?	8	2	10	8.56	1.268	1.609	-1.284	.157	3.566	.314
Challenge your mentee in a meaningful and constructive way?	8	2	10	8.15	1.539	2.369	-.980	.157	1.121	.314
Prepare your mentee for their role within the current educational landscape?	7	3	10	8.02	1.426	2.033	-.608	.157	.296	.314
Teach effectively and have a positive impact on learning?	5	5	10	8.82	1.111	1.235	-1.057	.157	1.104	.314
Behave in a respectful and considerate way towards your mentee, colleagues and learners?	4	6	10	9.59	.783	.613	-2.140	.157	4.654	.314
Provide scaffolded support to enable your mentee to make good progress?	7	3	10	8.38	1.347	1.816	-1.075	.157	2.275	.314
Facilitate access to wider expertise within your setting for your mentee e.g. to observe other practitioners teach?	10	0	10	8.87	1.370	1.878	-2.026	.157	7.892	.314
Operate in an empathetic way, responding to your mentee's needs with kindness?	5	5	10	9.26	.999	.998	-1.602	.157	2.953	.314
Listen actively in order to understand things from your mentee's perspective?	5	5	10	8.76	1.177	1.386	-.608	.157	-.403	.314
Display high expectations for your mentee?	5	5	10	9.08	1.046	1.095	-1.083	.157	1.034	.314
Co-construct solutions to complex problems with your mentee?	8	2	10	8.28	1.254	1.572	-.956	.157	2.766	.314
Model effective practice, including planning, teaching and assessment?	5	5	10	8.71	1.215	1.477	-.881	.157	.431	.314
Devise a plan for development that meets the needs of your mentee, alongside the requirements of your mentee's programme/pathway?	8	2	10	8.24	1.407	1.981	-1.051	.157	1.969	.314
Demonstrate emotional intelligence in your thinking and behaviours in a mentoring relationship?	6	4	10	8.80	1.220	1.489	-1.205	.157	1.780	.314
Encourage your mentee to be a self-directed learner?	7	3	10	8.17	1.276	1.627	-.575	.157	.596	.314
Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying your own strengths and weaknesses as a mentor?	5	5	10	8.64	1.222	1.493	-.654	.157	-.180	.314

Item	Range	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> (<i>M</i>)	Var	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Facilitate and lead effective mentoring meetings that meet mentee needs and programme/pathway requirements?	7	3	10	8.42	1.280	1.639	-.810	.157	1.006	.314
Deconstruct practice with your mentee, helping them to reflect on what worked, what didn't and identify possible reasons why?	8	2	10	8.50	1.337	1.789	-1.329	.157	3.667	.314
Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in order to meet your mentee's needs?	6	4	10	8.62	1.209	1.463	-.723	.157	.342	.314
Accurately and fairly assess progress using set performance criteria?	8	2	10	8.44	1.388	1.927	-1.147	.157	1.999	.314
Construct learning opportunities to meet the needs of your mentee, giving them the space the need to develop their practice?	6	4	10	8.31	1.301	1.692	-.710	.157	.412	.314
Help your mentee to respond to planned and unplanned change successfully?	6	4	10	8.04	1.323	1.751	-.498	.157	.182	.314
Provide support for your mentee to enable them to manage behaviour effectively?	6	4	10	8.33	1.259	1.585	-.462	.157	-.083	.314
Learn with your mentee and model what it means to be an effective learner?	6	4	10	8.43	1.307	1.708	-.590	.157	-.112	.314
Remain objective and fair when working with your mentee?	5	5	10	8.77	1.184	1.403	-.931	.157	.452	.314
Link educational theory to practice, modelling evidence informed teaching for your mentee?	7	3	10	7.92	1.666	2.776	-.726	.157	.045	.314
Adopt a non-judgemental approach to mentee development?	5	5	10	8.58	1.307	1.707	-.741	.157	-.083	.314
Support your mentee to remove barriers to learning for learners/pupils?	6	4	10	8.24	1.324	1.754	-.589	.157	-.001	.314
Give your mentee the freedom and space they need to grow into their role?	7	3	10	8.30	1.381	1.907	-.856	.157	.801	.314
Act as a role model and advocate for the teaching profession?	8	2	10	9.08	1.241	1.541	-1.833	.157	4.879	.314
Work with your mentee to help them set solution-focused, realistic and achievable goals?	6	4	10	8.58	1.251	1.564	-.769	.157	.315	.314

Item	Range	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> (<i>M</i>)	Var	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Support your mentee to address their own barriers to learning?	7	3	10	8.15	1.321	1.745	-.762	.157	.945	.314
Support and encourage your mentee to be critically reflective, identifying and exploring areas for improvement?	6	4	10	8.35	1.227	1.506	-.601	.157	.326	.314
Devise effective interventions to address your mentee's weaknesses, areas for development and growth?	10	0	10	7.90	1.599	2.556	-1.308	.157	3.242	.314
Demonstrate a commitment to your role and responsibilities?	10	0	10	9.20	1.195	1.428	-2.785	.157	14.646	.314
Use a range of questioning strategies and techniques, when working with your mentee, to check their understanding and promote thinking?	7	3	10	8.27	1.365	1.863	-.793	.157	.837	.314
Meet the needs of adult learners?	9	1	10	7.82	1.781	3.173	-1.147	.157	1.920	.314
Demonstrate an authentic and genuine interest in your mentee's development?	4	6	10	9.20	.930	.865	-1.003	.157	.378	.314
Help your mentee to navigate and understand the context of your setting?	6	4	10	8.84	1.115	1.244	-1.130	.157	2.205	.314
Be a strong advocate for your mentee, demonstrating your belief in them?	5	5	10	9.05	1.070	1.145	-1.171	.157	1.129	.314
Use effective interpersonal skills to build and maintain a professional relationship with your mentee?	5	5	10	9.15	.994	.989	-1.169	.157	1.102	.314
Demonstrate the pedagogical knowledge required to provide effective guidance and support for your mentee, in order to help them to develop their practice?	7	3	10	8.41	1.420	2.015	-.967	.157	1.247	.314
Support your mentee to develop their subject knowledge, helping them to identify and address gaps and misconceptions?	7	3	10	8.50	1.341	1.797	-1.008	.157	1.244	.314
Use a range of coaching and mentoring models, tools and techniques to support the mentoring process?	9	1	10	7.92	1.622	2.632	-.781	.157	.801	.314

Appendix N

Jennifer's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
Where we're headed and how we're going to get there.	Mentors lead the way as guide and navigator.	Building a teacher on their successes takes time.
	Coaching is different to mentoring.	Magpieing what attracts them and matching it to what they need.
	A different pair of eyes to see yourself with.	
Establishing and maintaining relationships.	Adult-adult relationships are different to those between adults and children.	Getting the balance right builds trust.
	Working with what you've got.	Managing confrontation: it was "a baptism of fire."
	Who is in control is a matter of perspective.	
The teacher-mentor type.	If you think you can.	Knowing what it means to be a teacher.
	Mentors are a certain type of person.	Mentors are always there for their mentees.
	There's pride to be had in mentoring someone well, it's a rewarding role.	Gaining self-awareness is vital for professional growth.
	Mentors are role models.	Mentors don't know everything; they need to see themselves as learners too.

Olivia's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
Working Through Difference.	All in all it was a crazy year.	We're not always going to agree.
	It's so much easier when you can see yourself in someone else.	Work with what you've got.
	Seeing things from a different perspective.	We're just different.
Let me help you to help yourself.	One thing at a time.	You have to believe that you can change and make progress.
	Questions to move you.	Find the joy.
	The fixer.	If I can't help you, I know someone who can.
	Failing to plan is planning to fail.	Who's in control here?
	Know what drives us and what we love.	Building autonomy.
It's a sliding scale.	I'm not judging.	
	Constructivist versus transmissive.	The dividing line between mentoring and management is fuzzy.
Who am I, what am I?	You've got to know how to teach.	
	I solve my own problems.	Introspection is tough, especially through a wide-angle lens.
	How I see myself.	How others see me.

Angela's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
The best way to learn.	We learn through our failures.	Stepping outside of your bubble.
	Learning through experience.	Reflection increases self-awareness.
	Dealing with your problems builds resilience.	We're learning together.
	When we plan we learn.	
Is this really the right job for you?	I think I've got what it takes.	I won't sugar-coat the pill; they need a reality check.
	To survive you have to adapt.	Get to know them as a person.
	Like butter spread over too much bread.	My mentors helped me to find my own way of doing things.
	What motivates me to teach and to mentor.	
You have to know when to let go of the reins.	It's your class now.	Accessing a wider network of support.
	It's a powerful position.	I'll be there for you.
	We don't want an army of tick boxers.	

Christopher's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
It all depends on the context.	Mentoring isn't one size fits all, you need to pick the right approach.	Scenarios can help.
	Evidence should be used to inform practice.	Phase and context need to be taken into account when mentoring a teacher.
	A mix of mentoring and coaching.	Instructional coaching is a great model because it's explicit.
You're not alone.	Teaching can be very isolating, and so can mentoring.	Support is there when you need it.
	Interpersonal skills are needed to build trust to build relationships.	It takes more than one person alone.
Measuring up to the professional standards.	Professionalism is a non-negotiable.	Judgement leads to development.
	A power imbalance is inevitable.	We need to maintain high standards.
	Mentors need a good understanding of the framework.	
The right people for the right job.	Reflectiveness is a valuable attribute for a mentee to have.	People will hide their true nature.
	Mentees need to take ownership of their own development.	Not all great teachers make great mentors.
	I've got what it takes.	You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
	We need more suitable applicants.	People will ask "what's in it for me?"

Megan's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
Sometimes it's tough fitting in.	Outstanding schools can be toxic places.	Students need a guide to help them find their way.
	The characteristics a mentee needs.	It's better to be nice than a nasty piece of work.
	The right face for the right place.	People need to be authentic and be themselves.
	It's easier to mentor someone similar.	It was tough, but they were good people who cared about their kids.
	She was made to feel that she wasn't good enough.	When there are other people on your side it makes it easier.
Mentoring comes with benefits.	Everyone gains from mentoring.	Being a mentor has been a positive experience so far.
Trying to reach a shared understanding.	If relationships are too close, then they're harder to manage.	Mentors and mentees need to be open with each other.
	People need the freedom to experiment to find out how to make it work.	You need to listen to understand.
	Teaching is hard.	Experience has helped her to understand who she is.
	The bulk of the work.	Similar skills are used to teach children and mentor adults.
	Feedback offers a different perspective.	
Watching them, while someone is watching you.	Jumping through the hoops to meet the standards.	Handing over control comes with risks.
	Judgements come from all sides.	

Lauren's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
Mentors need guidance and development.	Mentors don't need to know everything.	People need a designated someone to ask.
	Feedback is the most important part of the job, so it needs to be done right.	Mentoring is more than just filling in the paperwork.
	It's important to know what's expected for each stage and pathway.	
Working with adults can be challenging but it's worth it.	A direct approach is needed to drive improvement.	Mentees should be treated kindly and encouraged to do their best.
	There's much to be gained from helping someone, even if it can be tough.	Mentees must be willing to take ownership of their own learning and development.
	Interacting with adults can lead to confrontation and conflict.	Mentors need to look for the positives.
	At the end of the day, a judgement still needs to be made.	
If you can teach, then you can mentor.	Good teaching should have children at its heart.	Developing autonomy is important, because she won't be there forever.
	Mentors need to be good teachers to be effective.	Unobserved, she watches and notices the little things.
	Coaching is an integral element of the role.	She can teach children, so she can mentor adults.
	Mentors are role models for the teachers, and teachers are role models for the children.	She's very tough but she's doing it for all the right reasons.
Gaining experience.	Mentees bring their life experiences with them.	Getting to know someone as a person makes it easier to talk.
	Previous experience can increase confidence and effectiveness.	Experience enables perspective.

Sophia's Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) and Associated Subthemes

PET	Subthemes	
Moving them on, a journey of becoming.	Modelling what good teachers do and how they do it.	Without a conversation there would be no movement.
	Good teaching takes children places.	Proximity between mentor and mentee affects the relationship that is built.
	Mentors have to judge if their mentees have the capability to teach.	Overconfidence can be a barrier to progress.
	How much help and support is given is tailored to what they need.	Asking "what do you want to be?" shapes who you will become.
	Coaching is an integral part of mentoring but it's different.	
You have to want to do it.	A willingness to teach, and to mentor, needs to be there.	They need to be prepared for the commitment.
	Mentoring provides mentors with opportunities for introspection.	
People need someone with experience they can go to.	Mentors need to be approachable.	Mentors are different to line managers.
	You have to be able to teach, knowing how it's done isn't enough.	People need a designated person to be there for them.
	Expectations for mentors and mentees are unclear, so how does she know if she's doing the right thing?	Gaining experience of a role takes time.

Appendix O

Representativeness of each general experiential theme (GET) with regard to each participant's personal experiential themes (PETs).

GET	PETs represented in each GET						
	Jennifer	Olivia	Angela	Christopher	Megan	Lauren	Sophia
Controlled Freedom	The teacher-mentor type.	It's a sliding scale.	You have to know when to let go of the reins.	It all depends on the context.	Sometimes it's tough fitting in.	Working with adults can be challenging but it's worth it.	Moving them on, a journey of becoming.
	Establishing and maintaining relationships.	Let me help you to help yourself.	Is this really the right job for you?	Measuring up to the professional standards.	Watching them, while someone's watching you.	Gaining experience.	You have to want to do it.
	Where we're headed and how we're going to get there.	Who am I, what am I?	The best way to learn.	The right people for the right job.	Trying to reach a shared understanding.	If you can teach then you can mentor.	People need someone with experience they can go to.
Working With Difference	The teacher-mentor type.	It's a sliding scale.	The best way to learn.	The right people for the right job.	Sometimes it's tough fitting in.	Working with adults can be challenging but it's worth it.	Moving them on, a journey of becoming.
	Establishing and maintaining relationships.	Let me help you to help yourself.	Is this really the right job for you?	Measuring up to the professional standards.	Trying to reach a shared understanding.	Gaining experience.	You have to want to do it.
	Where we're headed and how we're going to get there.	Who am I, what am I?		You're not alone.		If you can teach then you can mentor.	
		Working through difference.		It all depends on the context.			

GET						
PETs represented in each GET						
	Jennifer	Olivia	Angela	Christopher	Megan	Lauren
Being There	The teacher-mentor type.	Let me help you to help yourself.	You have to know when to let go of the reins.	The right people for the right job.	Sometimes it's tough fitting in.	Gaining experience.
	Establishing and maintaining relationships.	Who am I, what am I?	Is this really the right job for you?	You're not alone.	Trying to reach a shared understanding.	If you can teach then you can mentor.
			The best way to learn.		Mentoring comes with benefits.	Mentors need guidance and development.
Role Models						People need someone with experience they can go to.
	The teacher-mentor type.	It's a sliding scale.	You have to know when to let go of the reins.	It all depends on the context.	Sometimes it's tough fitting in.	Gaining experience.
	Establishing and maintaining relationships.	Let me help you to help yourself.	Is this really the right job for you?	Measuring up to the professional standards.	Watching them, while someone's watching you.	If you can teach then you can mentor.
	Where we're headed and how we're going to get there.	Who am I, what am I?	The best way to learn.	The right people for the right job.	Trying to reach a shared understanding.	Mentors need guidance and development.
		Working through difference.		You're not alone.		People need someone with experience they can go to.