ACADEMIC MENTORING AND HOW IT CAN SUPPORT PERSONALISED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how academic mentoring in two secondary schools in England could support personalised learning. The focus was limited to academic mentoring of year 11 students by members of staff, which aimed to improve academic performance.

Academic mentoring was one of the strategies used after the introduction of school accountability measures such as league tables and school targets. School accountability is based upon the policies that are believed to have consequences for educational attainment. The overall picture from literature was that mentoring is difficult to define for specific contexts and is linked to many positive outcomes for mentors and mentees. However the link between achievement and mentoring is problematic due to the limited evidence and the complex interplay between different factors.

With the introduction of personalised learning in schools, a new and additional dimension to mentoring was provided besides the enhancement of exam performance. The definition of personalised learning was imprecise and this provided schools with the flexibility to develop initiatives to meet their own needs and context. Despite the research on school based mentoring and its potential outcomes, little was known about how mentoring could support personalised learning beyond the advice and guidance suggested by different models of personalised learning by Hargreaves (2004a) and the DCSF (2008b).

This was partly due to the lack of shared understanding of 'personalised learning' and which activities could be classified under this term.

The aim of the study is to explore how academic mentoring can support personalised learning. The sub-aims are:

1. How do students and staff understand the purpose of mentoring?

2. How does academic mentoring help students achieve their targets?

3. How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?

4. How do staff understand personalised learning?

5. What might a mode of mentoring look like to support personalised learning?

This study adopted a qualitative approach in two case study schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, of differing abilities and gender, and in groups and individually, at the beginning of the mentoring programme and near the end to identify any changes or similarities in their responses regarding mentoring. Staff completed a questionnaire initially to inform the sample choice then semi-structured interviews were conducted regarding their understanding of the mentoring programme and personalised learning. Interviews and documentation were analysed using NVivo 8 software to identify themes in participants' responses. An analysis of student and staff interviews, relevant documentation and a staff questionnaire yielded insight into the participants' definition of mentoring, activities and perceived outcomes of mentoring, the logistics of the mentoring programme, and staff perceptions of personalised learning.

The findings of this study suggest that personalised learning and mentoring are poorly understood concepts, but any suggested definitions tended to be context specific. The personalised learning agenda tends to be better understood at the senior leadership level as they are responsible for the integration of the policy into their school. The role of mentor is not viewed in isolation from the other roles a teacher inhabits. However a pre-existing relationship between the mentor and mentee was viewed as the foundation on which to build a successful mentoring relationship. The mentoring outcomes suggested by participants goes part way to preparing students for personalised learning, however there needs to be a consistent approach to ensure that students develop the necessary characteristics to enable them to take responsibility for their learning and progress.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This introduction will present an outline of the study and the path that the study took throughout the research process. The first part will provide a brief and general overview of the educational context that lead to the research area being studied. The second section discusses my personal journey towards realising the need to research the areas of mentoring and personalised learning. The third section provides a description of the primary purpose of the study and a brief summary of the contents of each chapter is described in the final section.

1.1 The Context

Education reform throughout the 1980s and 1990s in England was based upon governmental concerns relating to falling standards in schools. The foundations of these concerns were the low rate of students staying beyond compulsory education and the lack of improvement of exam performance at the end of compulsory schooling (Spielhofer *et al*., 2007). The education reforms introduced 'market mechanisms' into the education system to force improvements in standards (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). The big changes in education began with the 1988 Education Reform Act and the subsequent introduction of the National Curriculum in the same year.

The impact of the National Curriculum on students staying at school beyond compulsory education and exam performance was difficult to establish, however the impact of National Strategies were more easily measured (Machin

and Vignoles, 2006, DfE, 2011).   The National Curriculum is a curriculum for all state schools in England and Wales that set the subjects and their content studied by primary and secondary school students, and the standards the students can reach (Moon, 1995). As a result, the number of 16 year olds staying on in full time education improved from 51.8% in 1988 to 59.6% in 1990, however any change in exam performance from 1988 onwards was a more complex calculation (DfES, 2005a, DfES, 2005d, Machin and Vignoles, 2006, DfES, 2005c, DfES, 2005b). This complexity was based upon the inability to evaluate the National Curriculum as it was introduced nationally, and the unknown effects of market orientated reform such as competition between schools. However, National Strategies such as the literacy hour had impacted upon reading skills and English achievement (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). National Strategies were a set of professional development programmes aimed at teachers to develop teaching and learning in all stages of education (DfE, 2011).   The DfE (2011) claimed that the literacy strategy increased the percentage of students gaining level 4 or above from 49% prior to 1998 to 80% in 2010 while the numeracy strategy increased students gaining level 4 or above from 47% in 1995 to 80% in 2010.

Machin and Vignoles (2006) believed that the totality of National Strategies introduced from 1997 have had an effect on achievement especially at GCSE level. However, care in the interpretation of this data is required due to the move from the GCE Ordinary Level to the GCSE system in 1988, which included the introduction of coursework (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). Harris

and Ranson (2005) indicated that socioeconomic factors may have a greater effect on standards than the introduction of the National Strategies.

Parental choice, as part of the market strategies introduced by the government at the time, was supported by the introduction of 'league tables' to allow comparisons between schools based on educational performance at the end of compulsory schooling and as a method of school accountability (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). However, Harris and Ranson (2005) suggested that parents of a higher socioeconomic level benefited from the 'marketisation' of education more than those of a lower socioeconomic level by being able to use the information provided by the Government to move to a better school. This inequality may have led to social segregation and reinforcement of disadvantage (Machin and Vignoles, 2006). Harris and Ranson (2005) suggested that the one-size-fits-all interventions provided by the Government were not context specific to schools and may have reinforced inequalities between schools.

1.2 Personal Reflection

As a teacher I have observed many changes in education over the last twelve years that have been introduced by the Government or by an individual school in response to national agendas and local authority pressures. Some changes have been more easily accommodated than others such as ICT training for teachers (Galanouli *et al*., 2004) or parents wanting additional student progress reports (Power and Clark, 2000). The introduction of mentoring and, later, personalised learning was challenging for a variety of reasons, including staff

not knowing what mentoring or personalised learning looked like when implemented in schools. The Personal Reflection section describes my observations within schools that have introduced mentoring and the efforts within those schools to personalise learning.

1.2.1 The Mentoring Context

This piece of work arose out of a situation I observed during my induction training in a secondary school as a teacher and form tutor. The school's senior leadership introduced an intervention to focus on learning and high attainment for all GCSE students.   The perception that students were underachieving was based upon a disparity between academic expectations, teacher reports and their performance in mock exams. Academic expectations of achievement in GCSE exams were based upon previous attainment in Key Stage 2 and 3. This data was used for school improvement and as an accountability measure (Kelly and Downey, 2010).   If students achieved significantly less than their target in subject reports and the mock exam, concerns were raised as to whether the student was going to reach their target grades. The reasons for the underachievement of these students were believed by staff to be pupil disaffection, demotivation, personality traits or lack of skills relating to preparation for exams. The strategy for dealing with these issues was chosen by senior leadership to be mentoring, and each form tutor was instructed to mentor their tutor group in small groups of 'like' students or individually. Initially the difficulty for all levels of staff in the school stemmed from a lack of understanding of what 'mentoring' was. Some teachers believed that they

were already mentoring while others viewed it as target setting; a meeting to review current academic performance in relation to target grades and set goals to assist students in reaching those academic targets. Finding time for meetings with mentees was also another issue as teachers had full timetables and mentees forgot to attend meetings. Due to the confusion regarding an understanding of mentoring, Head of Years (HOYs) either believed that their form tutors were fulfilling their mentoring role, or were concerned as to whether it was being done or done 'properly'. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) believed that as mentoring had been implemented, students were being mentored. I started to become aware of this disconnect, and forms part of the need for this research.

On visiting a neighbouring school, I found that the mentoring programme was very different. The programme aimed to improve the attainment of GCSE students. The form that the programme took was a competition to win prizes. Each student was put into a mentoring group of between six and eight students, which was of mixed ability. The mentor of each mentoring group was a teacher who voluntarily chose the group based on their relationship with the mentees. The mentees and mentor met regularly to discuss study methods, planning and ways of improving their attainment. The group that gained the best value-added on their expected GCSE results compared to their target grade won a prize such as a theatre trip to London or a shopping trip in Oxford. The neighbouring school's mentoring programme and my induction school's mentoring programme were on the surface viewed as effective as the schools

were seen to be doing something; however, little to no evaluation took place to provide evidence of either programme's effectiveness.

At this time, I became aware of the National Mentoring Network (as of 2005 the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation). This organisation started in 1994 and is the national strategic body for mentoring and befriending in England. The research, good practice and guidance on evaluation from this body provided insight into the different types of mentoring occurring in English education. However, the evidence presented for the effectiveness of mentoring programmes by many researchers was mainly anecdotal. Further reading in this topic lead to a review of the literature related to mentoring and motivation for the thesis part of my Masters degree in Education.

In 2005 I taught in another secondary school in the area. This school had a number of mentoring initiatives in place. The GCSE mentoring system was a similar mentoring programme to the school I previously taught in however, there were some significant differences. Teachers volunteered to mentor students. Teachers chose the students they wanted to mentor. There was a designated time for the mentoring sessions to occur, usually during whole school assemblies. The programme ran from November to May and ended just before the start of the GCSE exams. Each teacher mentor received documentation on the attainment of their mentees and points of discussion for each meeting. However, the programme changed annually due to a change in the person running the programme; again it was not evaluated and there was an inherent belief that the programme was working.

In the academic year 2006-07, I volunteered to mentor two GCSE students prior to their examinations. A list of all year 11 students, with indications as to who were not achieving their targets GCSE grades in some subjects, was posted in the staff room. After volunteering, I was sent a mentoring booklet that set out the content of each mentoring session and chose two students from the list. I initially organised meetings of 15 to 20 minutes with each student on a fortnightly basis. This proved difficult as attendance was erratic due to students forgetting to attend. When students did not attend sessions, I would have to find them in the playground to remind them. This situation was resolved the next year when time was allocated to mentoring on a termly basis during whole school assembly time.

The content of the session revolved around coursework completion, study skills and mock exam results, time permitting. Both students were offered mentoring sessions during the study period prior to the GCSE exams. The mentoring relationship was focussed on ensuring that coursework was completed satisfactorily and that the students were keeping to a revision plan. Goals were set for each session. Any problems or obstacles to achieving their goals for each session were also discussed.

At the time, some teachers in my school felt that the mentoring system was a waste of time as the students were compelled to attend the meetings but rarely did. The students who were doing well were the students who were more likely to attend as opposed to those students who needed the sessions. The

mentoring meetings tended to be with all mentees at the same time for fifteen to twenty minutes, which did not give enough time for each student to get individual attention.   Discussing the progress of one student in front of other students was a potential source of anxiety for some students and an opportunity for other students to gloat.

If mentoring is found to be effective, there may be a renewed impetus by schools to recruit and invest in training for mentors as well as allocating time. From the research, mentoring may be found to be "a good thing to do" or altruistic but not as effective as expected for the purpose of improving attainment.   This finding may alter the type of mentoring in the school and its purpose to meet the needs of the students more closely.   Is it worth mentoring students who are not achieving their potential when there may be no demonstrable benefit?

1.2.2 Personalised Learning

Personalised learning was a term first encountered by me during an in-service training (INSET) session, and many teachers were not too sure what it meant. The school leadership in my current school viewed college courses offered to students in year 10 and 11 as one way of personalising their education (Hargreaves, 2005, Sebba *et al*., 2007). As the term was used more and more, teachers at my school became more confused by what it might be, or else just ignored it as another initiative imposed upon them by the government. In fact, some teachers were worried that personalised learning would lead to individual lesson plans for each child in their class, leading to additional time needed for

lesson preparation.   However, within a classroom the implementation of personalised learning was limited by teachers understanding of personalised learning. The planning of lessons incorporated the students' interests into the lessons where possible as a means of personalising learning.

Members of the senior leadership team used the term 'personalised learning' liberally in their talks and meetings with little concern as to whether there was a shared understanding. Many activities within school were labelled as 'personalised' as the activities linked to something that might interest a student. The trend in many schools was to claim that students were provided with a personalised education with a personalised curriculum and personalised learning pathways.   Fundamentally, a discussion of what personalised learning meant for a school may be the starting point in providing a shared understanding of personalised learning for that school, and may help to dispel some of the 'fear' felt by some staff.

A shared understanding of personalised learning could allow all members of the school to contribute to the promised personalised education of students. Mentoring in schools was closely linked to improving pupil attainment and target setting (Smith 2003). With the introduction of personalised learning in schools, this could provide a new and additional dimension to mentoring.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate how academic mentoring in two secondary schools in England could support personalised learning. The research questions to support this main question are:

1. How do students and staff understand the purpose of mentoring?

2. How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?

3. How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?

4. How do students and staff understand personalised learning?

5. What might a mode of mentoring look like to support personalised learning?

However, due to the limited scope of this part time research project, the focus was limited to academic mentoring of GCSE students by members of staff. I aimed to find out about staff and student perceptions of the rationale for mentoring year 11 students, which relates to research question 1. I was particularly interested in the mentoring experience of students of different abilities and how they believed mentoring helped them with their exams, which relates to research question 2 and 3.

Mentoring was one of the aspects of the DfES model of personalised learning (DfES, 2004). I was interested in staff perceptions of personalised learning and how they could see mentoring supporting personalised learning, which relates to research question 4 and 5. I explored with students and staff their perceptions of mentoring outcomes, then I considered how these outcomes matched with the skills and attributes needed for students to participate in their

personalised learning, which relates to the main research question. There seems to be a knowledge gap between the current forms of the academic mentoring programmes in secondary schools, and the ability to contribute to personalised learning; therefore the responses from staff and students would aid an exploration of a suitable mode of mentoring that could support personalised learning.

1.4 Brief summary of the contents of the thesis chapters

The purpose of this thesis is to research how mentoring could assist in realising the potential of personalised learning. This research formed part of a continuing discussion in schools with regard to personalised learning. The research had a distinct focus on perceived student outcomes from academic mentoring linked with the development of an understanding of personalised learning.

A literature review (Chapter 2) was used to explore previous research on school based mentoring and personalised learning through the lens of governmental policy in England. The perception of mentoring by mentors and mentees was considered as well as the qualities that would be helpful in a mentor. The literature review further investigated mentoring and personalised learning in terms of definitions, outcomes, activities involved and models. Chapter 3 discussed the philosophical stance of the researcher and methodological issues relating to this study. An explanation and justification for the chosen methodology was made clear. The data gathering techniques and the analysis procedure are also detailed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes

the findings of the study. Chapter 5 presents conclusions and

recommendations.

Finally, Chapter 6 contains the main conclusions from the research findings.

These research findings were examined in the context of the research questions

and previous research findings. The implications for application within

schools and recommendations regarding further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by presenting the policy context in England for secondary schools, and how these policies were enacted in these schools at the time of this study. Mentoring as one of the strategies used in the schools will be explored in its many forms. Academic mentoring will then be explored in the context of one particular policy initiative, the personalised learning (PL) agenda.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted to identify the different policy pressures that are currently being experienced by secondary schools in England. In respect of school mentoring programmes, mentoring definitions, mentoring characteristics, the outcomes of mentoring, and perceptions of mentoring are investigated. The review will then focus on mentoring programmes that could be defined as academic mentoring for the purpose of improving academic achievement.

PL in England was explored through its definition and issues in this review of the literature. Activities that have been classified as PL and their outcomes were examined. Of importance were the necessary conditions for students to participate in PL.

2.2 The Policy Context in English Secondary Schools

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum (NC) in primary and secondary schools in England as part of the 1988 Education Reform Act, there have been a large number of policies created to tackle the perceived issue of falling school standards (Children, Schools and Families Committee 2009). The NC has gone through a number of changes since its inception in response to complaints from teachers regarding the assessment burden related to the NC, and insufficient levels of student academic achievement (Children, Schools and Families Committee 2009). The NC had also changed to enable teachers and schools to incorporate new education policies such as the Early Years Foundation Stage: an extension and distinct part of the NC that incorporates children up to 5 years old, and reduce content to allow schools and teachers to personalised learning for their students (Children, Schools and Families Committee 2009). This section will explore some of the main educational policies and the consequences for secondary schools in England.

2.2.1 Accountability, League Tables and National Challenge Schools

The National Curriculum and the associated testing regime have been used to improve standards (Torrance, 2011). This was the start of school accountability to inform stakeholders of the spending of public monies, further education institutions and employers as to the preparation of students for further study or work, school leaders to aid allocation of resources, teachers to improve teaching and learning strategies, and parents to inform choice of

school (Astle *et al*., 2011). Wößmann *et al*. (2007) defined educational accountability as all policies that have consequences attached to educational attainment.   Astle *et al* (2011) suggested that educational accountability aimed to develop schools by producing a truly personalised mode of teaching and learning that aided students in reaching their potential.

Astle *et al.* (2011) identified two types of accountability for school; market accountability and administrative accountability. Market accountability was linked to market orientated reforms such as parental choice, providing parents with information, and encouraging competition between schools (West, 2010). Administrative accountability consisted of:

i.   the Local Education Authority that had a supportive role in school improvement as well as supervising school performance and providing advice when necessary,

ii.   Ofsted, the national inspectorate that produces an inspection report based on qualitative and quantitative data after a school inspection, and

iii.   the Department of Education that uses the school performance data to produce the league tables (Astle *et al.*, 2011).

In the drive to improve standards, each had a responsibility to hold a school accountable if it was believed to be failing (Astle *et al*., 2011, Sammons, 2008)

School and college league tables have been published since 1992 (Vulliamy and Webb, 2006). The achievement and attainment of students, at age 16 and 18, within schools was one means of holding schools and teachers accountable for the quality of education they provided. As a consequence of the publication of public examination results, Gorard (2005) suggested that secondary school policy focussed on the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE exams and also provided parents with information to allow them to make an informed choice of which school to send their children. However, Thomas *et al* (1997) maintains that parents have not found these tables particularly useful as the information the tables contain were not viewed as of importance in school choice. Whereas West (2010) reported that the consequences of not achieving 'good' results were the potential for parents to send their children to another school, and difficulty in recruiting teachers. Teachers would be more likely to apply to a school with 'good' results (West, 2010). In addition, there were also the risks of being inspected by Ofsted and being classified as 'special measures' or 'requiring significant improvement'.

The introduction of a 'free market' in schools encouraged competition and comparison via league tables. This resulted in schools being labelled as 'succeeding' or 'failing' according to targets based on expected levels of student attainment for a particular age group (Sammons, 2008). Those schools that were identified as performing poorly were sanctioned through losing reputation, 'name and shame' policies and school closure (West and Pennell, 2000, Woods and Levacic, 2002). Despite the ability for parents to choose and change their child's school due to poor performance, Thomas *et al* (1998)

found that parents were unlikely to change their child's school even assuming that school places were available. In addition, the league tables were used as a school performance indicator, which could be misleading, as the data was summary data that did not take into account the prior attainment or socio-economic background of pupils (Burgess et al., 2005). These measures among others were taken into account in the contextual value added measure.

From 2002 to 2011 contextual value added (CVA) measures had been added to the performance tables. The CVA was a measure of the attainment of pupils in comparison to pupils with similar prior attainment. This was achieved by taking account of the variety of factors that affect individual pupil progress, including prior attainment, gender, ethnicity, the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) to name a few. However, there were concerns regarding the 'fairness' of the CVA, and whether the baseline exams were a sufficient method to measure student attainment (Thomas, 1998). Concerns regarding the basis of the measure being mainly on prior attainment and student background, which could cause the measure to be misinterpreted led to Wales withdrawing the publication of school league tables in 2001 (Gorard, 2005). In England, the CVA was withdrawn due to concerns regarding public understanding, that research suggested that CVA was a weaker predictor than raw attainment data of educational success and, linking family circumstances and ethnic background to differing levels of pupil progress (DfE, 2010). However, Leckie and Goldstein (2011) suggested that there was a lack of understanding in relation to CVA; the need for confidence intervals in relation to CVA scores, CVA was inappropriate for parents choosing schools as it was

not a predictor of school performance, and CVA was useful for comparing schools to the national average but not school-to-school comparisons.

In 1998, the first GCSE targets were set with the aspiration that nationally 50% of 16 year olds would achieve five good GCSE passes by 2002. In fact, nationally 51% of pupils gained five good A*-C GCSE grades. This target was later amended for individual schools in 2000 to 25% of pupils achieving five good GCSE grades (DfES, 2002a). However, Burgess *et al* (2005) claimed it was not clear whether these improvements could be attributed to the policies and initiatives, or changes to the exam.   Whereas Green and Oates (2009) found that familiarisation with the exam requirements may be behind the improvement in exam performance rather than improvements in learning.

In 2008, the National Challenge, part of the Government's Children's Plan, was the next strategy to support schools with the lowest GCSE results (DCSF, 2008a). The target was to raise results in GCSEs to a minimum of 30% of pupils nationally achieving five good A*-C GCSEs including English and maths. Schools whose pupils attained less than five GCSEs including English and maths were identified as in need of 'greater attention, help and resources' (DCSF, 2008b, Riddell, 2009).   If schools continued to achieve below the target by 2011, they were to be closed or replaced by an Academy or National Challenge Trust.   Riddell (2009) suggested that the need for short term changes in the schools, that need to achieve 30% A*-C GCSE including English and maths, may leave deeper school issues unaddressed. However,

Norman (2011) explored strategies for the long term that could achieve sustainable improvement such as distributed leadership, and have a culture of high aspiration for staff and students.

The introduction of policies to improve standards and schools were believed to benefit learners by improving their attainment and raising expectations (Green and Oates, 2009). Wößmann *et al*. (2007) suggested that policies that focus on student external exams, monitoring teacher's lessons and comparing schools on attainment all improve student achievement. In fact, accountability was lauded as a means of motivating behaviour of staff within schools to position the learning of students above all else. However, the pressures placed on schools to improve attainment in external exams had resulted in unintended consequences (Astle *et al*., 2011).

The focus on GCSE results in secondary schools had consequences for students and their education. The pressures on schools and teachers may be transmitted to students causing anxiety, stress and demotivation (ARG, 2002, Green and Oates, 2009, Woods and Levacic, 2002, Plowright, 2007). Plowright (2007) suggested that Ofsted inspections may have a negative effect on results due to the stress induced by a visit. Schools have responded to these policy pressures by focussing on strategies to improve student exam results including the allocation of resources for the exam groups (Barker, 2008, West, 2010):

i. At the school level, strategies may include the selection of higher ability students to make up the school population and enhance exam results (West, 2010). Norman (2011) suggested that attendance and aspirations should be improved to raise attainment.

ii. Within schools, performance data may become very important in the monitoring of student performance (Wilson *et al*., 2006). The school calendar was managed to ensure that there were no distractions planned for exam periods (Norman, 2011).

iii. At the curriculum level, students may be encouraged to take easier subjects and qualifications such as vocational qualifications that have an equivalence with GCSEs (Astle *et al*., 2011, West, 2010). This may include moving students from GCSE courses to vocational courses when the student's performance is at the borderline between grade C and D (Barker, 2008).

iv. At the subject level, Easter and Saturday revision classes may become available (Perryman *et al*., 2011). One-to-one tuition may be another strategy adopted (Norman, 2011). Intensive revision sessions may take the form of revision out of school time; however Norman (2011) reported that some schools were taking students out of option subject or non-exam lessons for these sessions. Norman (2011) reported that reward schemes have been used to reinforce attendance at revision sessions.

v. At a class level, lessons may become focussed on teaching how to pass the test (Astle *et al*., 2011). West (2010) suggested that this strategy

limits learning while Astle *et al* (2011) suggested that learning becomes superficial and affects student enthusiasm for learning.

vi.   At a teacher level, monitoring of teaching through observations (Plowright, 2007) and professional support may be used to improve teaching and learning in lessons (Harris *et al.*, 2003). However, Vulliamy and Webb (2006) suggested that teachers may create a performance for the purpose of evaluation.

vii.   At student level, underachieving students may be interviewed by members of the senior leadership team (Perryman *et al.*, 2011). Mentoring was another strategy used to enhance exam performance but also to improve the welfare of students (Harris *et al.*, 2003, Wilson *et al.*, 2006). Wilson *et al* (2006) reported that one school was targeting student's underachievement in year 8 as year 11 was viewed as too late to make an impact.

viii.   Many schools were targeting particular sets of students with the aim of enhancing their exam performance. The group usually focussed on was the students at the grade C/D borderline as small changes in their performances could translate into larger gains for the school (Astle *et al.*, 2011, Burgess *et al.*, 2005, Perryman *et al.*, 2011).

The view that student learning was central to education (Wößmann *et al.*, 2007) became skewed as some students became more important to the school than others (Astle *et al.*, 2011). As grade C was more desirable for the

school's league table positioning, students at the borderline of grade C and D were focussed on to ensure that grade C was achieved in the GCSE exams (Astle *et al*., 2011, Torrance, 2011, Wilson *et al*., 2006). Astle *et al* (2011) suggested that the school's interests were being served above the education of their students.

The focus on the C/D borderline students disenfranchised many other students who were achieving below grade D or above grade C (Astle *et al*., 2011, Harris *et al*., 2003). However, some schools focussed on the underachievement of any students (Torrance, 2011). Green and Oates (2009) claimed that the students achieving a lower grade were affected by a lowering of their self-esteem. Harris *et al* (2003) believed that the focus on C/D borderline students had a limited affect on exam performance.

The different approaches adopted by schools in response to the pressures of accountability are embedded in each school's philosophy of education; what is their purpose of education? Fielding (2006a) suggested that the culture of seeking continual improvements in performance that is demanded diminishes our humanity. In schools that seek to improve the grades of a specific population of students, there is a concern that the functional outweighs the personal. In this context, functional relates to relationships that get things done to accomplish our aims, while personal relates to relationships that help us grow as a person such as friendship (Fielding, 2006b). This is realised in using personal relationships to help students gain results for the sake of the

school. In contrast, the school that is more inclusive strikes a balance between the functional and personal (Fielding, 2006a). The school needs to ensure that pupils achieve but for the benefit of the pupil rather than the school. The school ethos has implications for how the school reacts to external pressures.

The publication of league tables was created for the purpose of improving school development and accountability (Torrance, 2011). League tables also had the purpose of improving student learning.   However, there was a tension between the emphasis placed on league tables for accountability purposes and developmental purposes (Green and Oates, 2009). This conflicted position may have been the driving force in enabling schools to provide a solution for their context that would enable assessment to be used developmentally. In addition, the school's ethos may also have an impact on how this conflicted tension is resolved as the developmental outcomes may be used to support student learning or further the school's aims (Fielding, 2006b).   The next section will explore one of the school strategies used in a bid to improve school performance; mentoring.

2.3 Mentoring in Secondary Schools

Mentoring in England has developed since the 1980s and has had many influences (Miller, 2002). This first section explores a definition of youth mentoring. The second section focuses specifically on academic mentoring and its outcomes. The third section investigates mentors and mentees, and their perceptions of mentoring.

2.3.1 Critiquing Youth Mentoring

Government policy encouraged the use of mentors in many situations. Policies included mentoring as integral to the rehabilitation of young offenders, dealing with the social exclusion of rough sleepers and the support of young entrepreneurs (Newburn and Shiner, 2005). The trend in England seemed to be following the US model of encouraging and promoting a culture of volunteering and mentoring as a civic duty (Golden *et al*., 2002b). However, there was also a move to incorporate youth mentoring into schools as a means of improving standards in schools through the Excellence in Schools policy (Miller, 2002, Philip, 2003).

There are many definitions of mentoring however, there is a need to have a better understanding of mentoring due to the pressures of accountability in English schools (Miller, 2002). Some definitions used are presented below:

Table 2.1: Definitions of Mentoring

Author	Definition
Hylan and Postlethwaite (1998) p. 69	'a supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone who offers support, guidance and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, take on important tasks or corrects an earlier problem'
Irving *et al* (2003) p. 100	'one-to-one relationship between caring adult (mentor) and a young person (protégé)'
Roberts *et al* (2004) p.	'a mentor will be a volunteer who provides support or guidance to someone younger or less experienced.

512	The mentor aims to offer support, understanding, experience, and advice.'
Arnold (2006) p. 117	'Mentoring is a form of personal and professional partnership which usually involves a more experienced practitioner supporting a less experienced one.'
Meier (2008) p. 2	'Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.'
Goldner and Mayseless (2009) p. 1139	'special dyadic relationship between non-professional, non-parental adults and their protégés'
Komosa-Hawkins (2010) p. 121	'structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee'
Keller and Pryce (2010) p. 33	'individualized, relationship-based intervention intended to promote positive development'
DuBois et al (2011) p. 66	'A program or intervention that is intended to promote positive youth outcomes via relationships between young persons (18 years old and younger) and specific non-parental adults (or older youth) who are acting in a nonprofessional helping capacity'
Kelly et al (2011) p. 1013	'the concept of the nurturing adult who serves as a role model to elicit positive change especially in the areas of self-efficacy and resilience'

Each of these definitions of mentoring is based on the traditional one-to-one relationship (as seen above). This raises the question of whether a group of young people being 'mentored' by an adult is indeed mentoring, or whether a group of individuals can 'mentor' an individual. With the proliferation of different types of 'mentoring', what can be classified as mentoring and what is an extension of pastoral care?

Group mentoring has become more prevalent in school based mentoring i.e. where one person mentors a number of mentees. Herrera *et al* (2011) suggest that the benefits of this type of group mentoring are due to being able to reach more young people, the lower cost of the mentoring programme, and the preference of some mentors and mentees for group based relationships. Herrera *et al* (2002) believed that group mentoring where a group of mentees are mentored by a single mentor, or a team of mentors mentor a group of mentees can be defined as 'mentoring' due to the building of a strong relationship between the mentees and the mentor(s).

Many of the definitions in the table above suggest that the supportive (Hylan and Postlethwaite 1998), caring (Irving *et al* 2003) relationship between the mentor and mentee is fundamental to mentoring. This raises questions as to whether the mentor needs to be older than the mentee, how this relationship differs from other relationships, and, whether the mentor and mentee should respect each other to gain benefits from mentoring.

Mentoring relationships can also be defined in terms of an older mentor and a younger mentee. In the school context, youth mentoring tends to fall into the traditional relationship of mentors being adults or older peers while the mentee is the youth (Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012). However in adult mentoring, it is not uncommon for mentors to be younger than their mentees (Finkelstein *et*

al., 2012). Beattie and Holden (1994) suggested that there is an assumption that the mentor should be older as they are viewed as more experienced. However, a number of definitions shown in table 2.1 suggest that mentoring occurs by a transfer of knowledge through advice, guidance and support (Arnold, 2006, Hylan and Postlethwaite, 1998, Irving et al., 2003, Kelly et al., 2011, Komosa-Hawkins, 2010, Meier, 2008, Roberts et al., 2004). If the basis of mentoring is related to a transfer of knowledge or experience, then the relative age difference between mentor and mentee is irrelevant.

The relationship between the mentor and mentee was viewed as the foundation of the mentoring process in schools (DfES, 2001b, Hansford *et al*., 2003, Newburn and Shiner, 2005, Philip, 2000, Powell, 1997, DfES, 2001a). The definitions in table 2.1 described the nature of the relationship as non-judgemental, trusting, supportive, structured, guiding, and encouraging. The development of these characteristics in the mentor-mentee relationship was suggested for the purpose of creating closeness and a connection (Goldner and Mayseless, 2009).

The mentor-mentee relationship may be viewed as no different from the teacher-student or form tutor-student relationship. A good teacher-student relationship can be positive, supportive and respectful, and have a positive impact upon academic performance, social skills, motivation and attitude towards school (Bernstein-Yamashiro and Noam, 2013). This description and potential outcomes of a good teacher-student relationship seems to fit with

most of the mentoring definitions from table 2.1. What are the boundaries that make one type of relationship mentoring and another not? Bernstein-Yamashiro and Noam (2013) suggested that teachers can be mentors and their role overlaps between teaching, counselling and mentoring. However, Noam and Bernstein-Yamashiro (2013) claimed that the delineation between teachers and mentors was that mentors become personally involved in the lives of their mentees while teachers who are not mentors do not. However, forms tutors tend to develop relationships with their students that may lead them to become more aware of the impact of personal circumstances on their students behaviour and academic performance in school.

Roberts (2000) acknowledged that some research viewed tutoring as a separate role from mentoring while others viewed mentoring as a component of tutoring. DuBois *et al* (2011) and, Goldner and Mayseless (2009) claimed that the mentoring relationship was non-professional as opposed to tutoring that may be perceived as a professional role. This may be due to the belief that mentoring supports developmental outcomes and non-cognitive variables mediated the outcomes of mentoring, such as attainment. Roberts (2000) found that teachers whose role was as a tutor tended towards traditional supervisory roles even though they had responsibility for mentoring. However, this still does not clarify the difference in role between mentors and form tutors. As the role of form tutors expands from being the first point of contact for students and parents to include taking responsibility for the development of individual students, mentoring has become one of the tools in the form tutors armoury (Stewart 2000).

Rhodes and DuBois (2008) found that if mentors assumed a style of mentoring that placed the interests and preferences of the mentee at the centre of the relationship, closer relationships would form leading to positive outcomes. This seemed to suggest that the mentor and mentee would benefit from having an affinity towards each other to create the connection that encourages positive outcomes for those mentees (Goldner and Mayseless, 2009, Rhodes and DuBois, 2008). However, the question still remains, if these characteristics are not present in the mentoring relationship, can the mentor and mentee still benefit from the mentoring relationship?

Goldner and Mayseless (2009) suggested that the mentoring relationship assisted mentees in managing other adults relationships, confronted negative self-image where it existed, and promoted positive changes in social adjustment. However, these reported outcomes may be due to mentors being university students who are external visitors to the school and these outcomes may be difficult to reproduce with mentors who are already present in the school.

The outcome that seems to be of importance in school based mentoring, in its current form, is academic achievement. Rhodes *et al* (2000) suggested that improved mentee-parent relationship may mediate academic improvement. However, Parsloe and Wray (2000) claimed that this could only be

accomplished to a small extent.. This issue is explored in more detail in section 2.5.

Another characteristic that may be of importance in a school based mentoring relationship was an element of challenge as discussed in assertive mentoring adopted by some schools (Beattie and Holden, 1994, DfES, 2001b, Newburn and Shiner, 2005, Parsloe and Wray, 2000, Philip, 2000, Powell, 1997).

Assertive mentoring is a method of mentoring that has been adopted by a number of schools (Farrar, 2008). This type of mentoring provides challenge to the mentees through target setting to aid mentees change their attitudes in order to improve their attainment (Farrar, 2008). Causes of underachievement are identified and, using performance data as evidence, targets are set and tracked over time (Horsley, 2010). Younger *et al* (2005) suggested that some mentees valued mentors they respected to motivate them through the challenge. The outcome seemed to support mentees in becoming more proactive in their own learning (Younger *et al*., 2005). Assertive mentoring was described as an interventionist approach (Farrar, 2008). Many mentoring programmes in schools could be classified under this term.

Mentoring has been described as developmental and transitional. These terms belie the nature of the mentoring programme and have been used as a method of classifying mentoring agendas. Developmental mentoring's primary goal

was the development of the relationship between the mentor and mentee to influence psychosocial development and academic achievement in the mentee (Karcher et al., 2002, Karcher, 2005, Piper and Piper, 2000).   Activities associated with developmental mentoring may have been building the relationship through recreational activities and discussing shared interests (Karcher et al., 2006). Instrumental mentoring was viewed in opposition to developmental mentoring, through specific goals or learning skills being the primary focus. However, Karcher and Nakkula (2010) believed that they were complementary to each other as they were both centred round the mentee and focus on particular developmental requirements of the mentee. The nature of a mentoring relationship may start as developmental then transform into instrumental mentoring once the relationship was established, or start as instrumental mentoring and produce developmental outcomes through the process of reaching instrumental goals (Karcher and Nakkula, 2010). Although both mentoring types were adult-led, the mentee should feel that they were involved in decision-making to gain the most from the relationship (Karcher and Nakkula, 2010, Rhodes and DuBois, 2008).   The alternative was classified as prescriptive mentoring where the goal of the programme was determined by the mentor to meet their needs. Prescriptive mentoring was viewed to be ineffective due to the lack of involvement of the mentee and the lack of relationship quality (Karcher and Nakkula, 2010, Karcher et al., 2006, Rhodes and Lowe, 2008).

Transitional mentoring was described as a means of mentoring that aided an adolescent psychosocially (Bennetts, 2003) in a transitional period into

adulthood (Lunt *et al*., 1992). McQuillin *et al* (2011) described this type of mentoring as a method of alleviating the issues linked with any type of transition such as the transition from primary to secondary school. Rudolph *et al* (2001) identified some of these issues as disconnectedness, changes in requirements for academic tasks and not having any support network to depend upon.

Others have tried to characterise mentoring through what people do, i.e. 'helping behaviours' such as counselling, befriending, coaching and tutoring (DuBois and Karcher, 2005, Miller, 2002, Roberts, 2000).   However, Parsloe and Wray (2000) used the aim of the mentoring programme to define mentoring and viewed mentoring as a way to improve learning. Goodlad (1998) defined mentoring characteristics in comparison to tutoring where mentoring focuses on life skills rather than academic learning.

A charge made against mentoring was that in many situations the activities involved may constitute coaching (Pask and Joy, 2007).   In different contexts, as with mentoring, coaching is perceived differently. In sport, coaching was viewed primarily as the development of a skill and performance (Miller, 2002, Parsloe and Wray, 2000). In business, the coaching relationship was short lived with a focus on the needs of the organisation rather than the individual (Hall, 2003, Jackson, 2002), while mentoring is viewed as focussed on the individual for longer periods of time (Parsloe and Wray 2000). However,

Campbell *et al* (2007) believed that the individual may also benefit developmentally from coaching.

Parsloe and Wray (2000) viewed mentoring and coaching as the opposite ends of a continuum. It is therefore conceivable that there is an overlap between the two approaches where coaching may be viewed as part of the toolkit at the disposal of a mentor (MacCallum and Beltman, 1999). As part of the mentoring, coaching was seen as a means to share information and skills (MacCallum and Beltman, 1999). However, many of the definitions of mentoring in table 2.1 (p.37) based their definitions on the primary function of mentoring as the sharing of knowledge and experience. Both mentoring and coaching entail the sharing of knowledge and expertise, however mentoring was viewed as using emotional intelligence or psychosocial support to develop the individual in a range of areas (Jackson, 2002, Megginson, 2000).

The exploration of the definition of mentoring had seen many researchers defining mentoring in terms of their context and programme, while others sidestepped the issue altogether and failed to define mentoring at all. Wilkin (1992) suggested that in the quest for a definition of mentoring, the mentor's role should be associated with a particular agenda such as training or working towards a qualification. This approach avoids issues related to the number of people involved, the status of the mentor or mentee(s), or the purpose associated with the mentoring relationship; however it does limit the definition by not being able to distinguish mentoring from other types of helpful

relationships such as a supervisory relationship. In trying to define mentoring there seems to be fragmentation rather than a definition that provides boundaries to the practice and is inclusive of a range of mentoring practices.

In this study, the academic mentoring for the purpose of improving academic success in external exams may have been interpreted as instrumental as the relationship with the mentors (teachers/staff) was already established. However, there was a danger that the programmes could become prescriptive if the collaborative nature of the relationship was ignored in favour of the school's priorities.

The focus of the next section involves a discussion of different secondary school based academic mentoring programmes.

2.3.2 Academic Mentoring

Miller (2002) claimed that some people would argue that teachers mentoring students with a 'subject' objective should be more accurately described as academic tutoring; not true mentoring. If the objective claims to be about learning skills then teacher mentors were best placed to offer this advice. However 'mentoring' was defined, many schools had invested time and resources in the hope that "mentoring" would help their students attain or surpass their target grades.

In schools, pupils were usually mentored during their last GCSE year when they had been identified as having a problem achieving their target grade or were targeted at a grade C/D. The aim of this type of academic mentoring was to help pupils to achieve the grade C rather than grade D, or to achieve their target grade. In addition to academic improvement, motivation to learn and self-esteem objectives had been reported to be the main outcomes of most forms of mentoring (Miller, 2002). The improvement in motivation to learn had been mainly self-reported by pupils. Teachers reported changes in motivation but they usually knew who was being mentored, suggesting that any changes in student behaviour may have been attributed to mentoring rather than any other factor (Hylan and Postlethwaite, 1998, Kelly *et al*., 2011).

There are many studies that report how academic achievement can be improved by mentoring in comparison to predictions (DuBois *et al*., 2002, Hylan and Postlethwaite, 1998, Larose *et al.*, 2005, Schwartz *et al*., 2011, Thompson and Kelly-Vance, 2001, Waters and Harland, 2004). However, many studies also reported little or no effect on academic performance (Golden, 2000, Irving *et al*., 2003, Rodriguez-Planas, 2012, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012, Younger and Warrington, 2009). Hylan and Postlethwaite's (1998) findings were based on a correlation between grade improvements in year 12 and mentoring; however this does not mean that there is causation. It may have been the perception of staff and students that mentoring was effective in assisting students to achieve their potential. Irving *et al* (2003)

found that mentored high ability students were less likely to have a measureable effect on their academic performance and they suggested that mentoring to improve academic performance may be more successful with lower ability students. Alternatively, it may be that mentoring may not have an effect on academic achievement. Similarly Woods and Mayo-Wilson (2012) found that effect sizes were small for academic achievement and other mentoring outcomes; however it may be the choice of mentoring programmes included in the meta-analysis that had little effect on academic achievement.. Larose *et al* (2005) suggested that those students who had had effective mentoring were more likely to have better academic outcomes than those students who had had ineffective mentoring. Randolph and Johnson (2008) supported this as they found that students with lower academic performance improved more than the comparison group and effective mentoring also showed an improvement in academic performance however there seemed to be insufficient information regarding the evaluations that were included in the meta-analysis. Golden (2000) found that although there was no change in results compared to predicted grades, English GCSE exam results were slightly improved. This improvement was associated with an improvement in literacy and communication skills as a result of mentoring. An improvement in these skills would be expected to improve other subjects therefore there may be another factor influencing the English GCSE exam results.

The perception of students as to whether mentoring effects their academic performance was just as mixed and complex. Irving *et al* (2003) found that students did not perceive mentoring as helping them improve academically but

this may have been due to the students already being of higher ability or mentoring actually had not been helpful for those students. It may be that the content of this mentoring programme was not matched well to the students' needs or expectations. Younger and Warrington (2009) found that students felt that mentoring improved their grades by improving their motivation and, providing encouragement and challenge. However, the effect of mentoring seemed gender specific where boys felt that mentoring had more effect on their motivation than girls. Rodriguez-Planas (2012) supported this view with the belief that poor academic achievement may have been linked to underdeveloped non-cognitive skills such as self-esteem and motivation but also suggested that other personal or social barriers may be responsible. A positive relationship with an adult outside of the family was believed to build resilience. Resilience was built through improvements in self-worth and perceived competence by enabling adolescents to benefit from adult and parent support (Rodriguez-Planas, 2012). Randolph and Johnson (2008) supported this by claiming that mentoring could strengthen the parent-child bond.

2.4 Perceptions of the Youth Mentoring Relationship

Many believe that the relationship between the mentor and mentee is the central component that determines whether a mentoring initiative would succeed or fail (Hansen *et al*., 2011, Linnehan, 2003, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012). In some research, the mentor and mentee perceived the mentoring process to have similar functions (Fowler and O'Gorman, 2005), however, this was not always the case. This section will explore the impact of the mentoring

relationship on the mentor and mentee, and how each perceived the relationship.

2.4.1 Mentee's Perception

The views of mentees are critical as their perception could affect whether they gain anything from the experience and whether it is beneficial. Philip (2000) found that most mentees had a positive relationship with their mentor. Mentees felt that mentors were genuine and mutual respect facilitated the mentees feeling of acceptance. Mentors from similar backgrounds were given the status of being 'survivors' and successful by young people, while those from different backgrounds were viewed as lacking empathy and mentees were less likely to confide in them (Philip, 2000, Philip et al., 2004). However, the mentees from this study tended to be from vulnerable backgrounds and had experienced a variety of difficulties and this may not reflect the needs of less vulnerable young people.

At a time when adolescents are negotiating their identity and relationships, teachers are in the position to provide support within a safe environment (Bernstein-Yamashiro, 2004, Fredriksen and Rhodes, 2004). In a study of mentoring year 8 pupils mentored by teachers and year 12 students, the characteristics that were held as being important for mentors were being approachable, being a good listener, trustworthy, the skills to promote communication, and experience, which seems to be in line with other mentees views (Batty et al., 1999, Evans et al., 2006, Lucas, 2001, Philip et al., 2004).

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However, in Batty *et al*'s (1999) study, the purpose of mentoring seemed to be muddied by the need to intervene with younger students to prevent underachievement in later years and the need to build confidence. The mentoring process sounded similar to counselling where mentees shared concerns and they were helped to reach their own solutions, however all participants had the same understanding of the process. The identification of year 8 as targets of a mentoring intervention seemed to be based upon a decline in commitment in this academic year however, the underlying reasons for this decline did not appear to be fully explored other than to identify the issue as a lack of identity (Batty *et al.*, 1999). Mentees tended to report that teachers were better mentors than year 12 students, however there was an issue with confidentiality with both types of mentor, and the 'halo' effect may cause students to view their teachers as more experienced or more knowledgeable in this context. However, Fredrikson and Rhodes (2004) claimed that a teacher's ability to take a student-centred approach and provide opportunities for student autonomy may be important skills that teachers could bring to the mentoring relationship.

Although there were many reports of positive relationships between mentors and mentees, there were situations where things did not go right for a variety of reasons (Simon and Eby, 2003). The most important part of a relationship was communication and difficulties can arise from misunderstandings and differing expectations (Green and Rogers, 1997). Some problems may have arisen from lack of experience, a poor understanding of mentoring or lack of interpersonal skills (Simon and Eby, 2003). The programme being imposed

may have caused feelings of resentment among mentees. Some mentees did not expect to have to work at it or felt it was unhelpful (Green and Rogers, 1997, Lucas, 2001, Philip et al., 2004). However, Batty *et al* (1999) reported that students who were not mentored claimed that they had no need of a mentor, which could be interpreted as a way of 'saving face'.

With the limited number of mentors available, teachers are a logical option to reach more students as well as keeping costs down (Pianta *et al*., 2002). Murray and Malmgren (2005) found that the attendance and academic engagement benefits from the teacher-student relationship were similar to school-based intervention effects associated with mentoring. However, they found psychosocial benefits were not impacted upon in the teacher-student relationship despite other studies on the nature of the student-teacher relationship finding that it supported the emotional and social function (Pianta *et al*., 2002). Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004) also claimed that the teacher-student relationship may enable students to develop adult psychosocial behaviours such as student motivation, academic achievement, social well-being and school connectedness, which was also supported in research by Fredrikson and Rhodes (2004).

The benefits of mentoring may be invalidated by the early ending of a relationship (Simon and Eby, 2003). A negative relationship between teacher and student may also have further consequences in academic behaviours as students may be less inclined to participate in the teacher's lessons (Bernstein-

Yamashiro, 2004). Some students have had negative relationships with adults or had difficulty establishing relationships with adults in general (Fredriksen and Rhodes, 2004). This may not have allowed the formation of a positive teacher-student relationship. However, if the basis was a mentoring relationship, the school context may have linked mentors with giving advice and offsetting negative feelings (Rhodes, 2001).

The skills teachers had developed in their classrooms and as tutors may put them in the ideal position to meet the needs of students in a mentoring capacity. Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004) reported that there was a positive correlation between student efforts and teachers demonstrating care and encouragement towards their students. In schools, teachers are not the only adults that students interacted with; other members of staff may have also established a relationship with students that would enable them to provide mentoring. During the time of the study, support staff were increasingly employed in schools to support the workforce remodelling agenda. Support staff were increasingly taking responsibility for whole classes in the role of Higher Learning Teaching Assistants (HLTA) and cover supervisors. New support staff roles were being developed in the form of learning mentors as part of policies to tackle disadvantage (Hutchings *et al*., 2009). Reid (2002) identified that due to the increase in mentoring programmes in schools, mentors come from a wide range of sources including support staff. Support staff may provide a potential reserve of mentors as they have an understanding of the school context and the needs of their pupils.

2.4.2 Mentor's Perceptions

Fowler and O'Gorman (2005) suggested that mentors and mentees had similar perceptions of the mentoring process. However, other studies suggest that mentors and mentees had different perceptions of the process as well as the value and aims of mentoring (Fagenson-Eland *et al*., 1997, Golden, 2000).

Evans (2005) suggested that different interpretations of mentoring may cause mentors to set the agenda and try to change student behaviour rather than supporting the mentee in making the changes themselves; however this is dependent on the type of mentoring programme. Piper and Piper (2000) found that there were many different accounts of the mentoring role. Mentors felt that the mentor-mentee relationship was largely determined by the mentee, which caused difficultly for mentors in relating to mentees (Philip et al., 2004, Green and Rogers, 1997). Some mentors felt that their goals were to undo the impact of negative experiences and help the mentee to become independent by being a role model and by demonstrating different ways to cope with difficult situations (Philip et al., 2004). However, the school and student requirements determine the mentor's role (Jones *et al*., 2009).

Mentors became involved in mentoring initiatives for many reasons including altruism, to develop new skills and improve job prospects (Evans, 2005, McLearn et al., 1998, Philip et al., 2004). However, Evans (2005) felt that altruistic motives masked a need for volunteers to work out their own issues. Bennetts (2003) and Evans (2005) found that some mentors saw aspects of

themselves in their mentees, which may represent this need. However, this was based upon mentoring teenagers in care and may not be representative of mentors within a school mentoring programme.

Mentors as well as mentees benefited from the mentoring relationship in a variety of ways. Irving *et al* (2003) reported that mentors felt a sense of fulfilment and personal worth. Evans (2005) suggested that the mentor's feelings of contentment were caused by a gain in confidence, and improved personal interactions. Alternatively, within the school context, these benefits may be felt by non-teaching staff, but teachers may not benefit in the same way as they may view mentoring as part of their professional role.

Expectations of the mentoring relationship could impact on feelings of success for the mentor and mentee. Some mentors felt disappointed if the relationship did not develop as they would expect. The social distance between the mentor and mentee could cause issues as the mentor may not be able to empathise with the mentee's life experiences and lifestyle (Lucas, 2001, Piper and Piper, 2000). However, the mentor may also experience difficulty within the mentor-mentee relationship when issues arise the mentor is unable to deal with (Lucas, 2001, Philip et al., 2004).

The termination of a mentoring relationship within schools was the natural end of student compulsory education; however it could cause negative

consequences for mentors and mentees (Grossman *et al*., 2012). Relationships were also terminated for a variety of reasons such as it being too intense, failure to grow, mentor-mentee incompatibility, or subversion of the relationship to incorporate personal aims (Philip et al., 2004). Within the school context, Grossman *et al* (2012) found that relationships within mentoring programmes aimed at academic achievement tended to end early, possibly due to a lack of empathy with all aspects of the student's life. However, this may be due to the relationship between teacher and students only being useful when the teacher was able to influence the student to improve attainment for the exam, such as coursework completion and preparation for the exam. In addition, it may be that the student has gained as much as they can from the relationship and no longer feels they can gain anything more in terms of exam preparation (Fielding, 2007). These encounters and responses may be influenced by the school ethos as suggested by Fielding (2007) where a high performance school may use relationships for its own purposes of gaining good results for the school. The focus within this type of school is the departments and their core purpose of gaining results (Fielding 2006a).

Rhodes and DuBois (2008) reported that academic achievement improved despite it not being the primary purpose of the mentoring programme. However, the size of academic improvement in both cases was small and declined over time to a negligible effect (Rhodes and DuBois, 2008).

2.5 Mentoring Outcomes

The aims and objectives of school based mentoring can be classified into three areas: developmental, work-related and subject. Developmental aims of mentoring may include self-esteem and, other personal and social development of the student. Work-related aims include the acquisition of skills in relation to the student's knowledge of work and their employability skills. Subject aims are related to study skills and student achievement (Miller, 2002).

Year 11 GCSE mentoring seems to incorporate all three aims. The mentoring programmes primary objective is to optimise achievement in the GCSE exams (subject aim). However, this may be mediated partly through the raising of student aspirations and developing skills that are valued by employers (work-related aim). These work-related and subject aims may not be realised without developmental aims such as motivation to learn, self-esteem and, the development of personal and social skills to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural changes (DuBois *et al*., 2002, Rodriguez-Planas, 2012).

Mentoring practice used these various developmental or psychological factors as a vehicle to achievement, independently or as part of a larger initiative. The psychological factors identified as aims for academic mentoring are motivation to learn, self-esteem and engagement (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012, Miller, 2002). They will be discussed and, how they relate to achievement and mentoring will be explored.

2.5.1 Achievement Motivation

For the purpose of this study, the focus was on achievement motivation defined as the 'willingness, desires and conditions of activation' relating to learning, performance and achievement (Anderman and Wolter, 2006). Motivation impacts on achievement and performance however; achievement and performance were poor indicators of motivation due to the confounding factors of ability and prior learning (Anderman and Wolter, 2006, Pintrich and Groot, 1990).

Miller (2002) suggested that mentors tend to provide external motivation to students but this was in parallel to encouraging internal motivation to learn. Students who were motivated to learn became involved in activities that assisted their learning which led to further intrinsically motivated learning (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002).

Social cognitive theory relates to students' perception of their ability and their expectation of the outcome (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2006). Students who believed that they would not succeed were viewed as having low self-efficacy and this was also related to the stress and anxiety they experienced when attempting tasks. Interventions have had a positive effect through assessing progress, setting goals and developing study skills (Moseki and Schulze, 2010), however this finding may not be representative as it was based upon a small sample of students.

Goal theory was the individual's reasons for tackling a task and, depended on the purpose and focus of the task. The two main orientations were mastery and performance goal orientations. Mastery goals related to the gaining of skills from a task while performance goals related to demonstrating ability in a task to do better than others. Mastery goal orientation was viewed as preferential to performance goal orientation because when students perceived progress, this maintained motivation and led to further learning (Hruska, 2011). Kulik *et al* (1990) found that mastery goal orientation was linked positively to exam performance while Anderman and Wolters (2006) suggested that the orientation was also linked to effort and persistence in academic tasks. Performance goal orientations may be a positive predictor of persistence in a task, however this was not supported by other studies (Anderman and Wolter, 2006).

Blackwell *et al* (2007) found that student's perception of their intelligence as either fixed or malleable had an effect on whether the student was likely to develop a mastery or performance goal orientation. Students who believed that their intelligence was fixed were more likely to hold a performance goal orientation, which then led to helpless response patterns when faced with academic challenge and difficulties. Students, who believed that their intelligence was malleable and contingent on effort, tended to apply effort to their learning, which lead to a mastery goal orientation and gains in academic achievement.

There were many aspects to achievement motivation that centred on student control and beliefs of competence. The teacher-student relationship was pivotal as it could facilitate or impede motivation by affecting the student's beliefs. Lack of control and competence could lead to motivation to avoid failure, which would negatively impact on achievement. Aspects of each theory that could impact on motivation could be implemented through interventions. Mentoring may be in the best position to assist students with their attributions, expectations and goals.

Gender was an important determinant of how students were motivated and how they could improve their level of motivation (McLearn *et al.*, 1998). Younger and Warrington (2009) suggested that mentoring could aid female students' motivation through regular meetings, security and reassurance. Male students were motivated through encouragement and support with an approach that sets challenges. However, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) believed that motivation alone is insufficient for academic performance, and self-regulation of learning was an important aspect to academic performance.

Mentoring was believed to improve motivation to learn, however some studies suggested that the positive effects were marginal (DuBois *et al.*, 2002, Randolph and Johnson, 2008). Eby *et al* (2008) found that the function of a mentor as a role model may have motivated students to take advantage of new opportunities while the setting of personally relevant goals and outcomes motivated students within the school context. Craske (1988) described efforts

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to improve motivation to learn through attribution retraining to link performance with effort rather than ability. Blackwell *et al* (2007) also established that students who perceived their intelligence to be fixed benefited most from an intervention on incremental theory, i.e. that intelligence is malleable. Students' benefitted from a reversal in their declining grades in maths, an increase in motivation and the effect persisted after the intervention. This could be accomplished within the context of mentoring to improve self-efficacy and expectations for future academic success (Craske, 1988).

2.5.2 Engagement for Learning

Engagement is an outcome of motivated behaviour that is linked to academic performance (Perry *et al*., 2006, Pintrich and Groot, 1990, Schunk and Zimmerman, 2006). Levels of effort and persistence in a task were identified as engagement, which was also affected by the individual's motivation (Elliott *et al*., 2005). Engagement could also be defined in terms of relationships and commitment to school (McLean, 2004).

Engagement has a behavioural and emotional component (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Students who felt valued and respected tended to be more engaged (Juvonen, 2006). Strong engagement was inclined to be associated with improved academic performance (Furrer and Skinner, 2003, Willms, 2003).

Skinner and Belmont (1993) found that there was a reciprocal relationship between teacher behaviour and student engagement. The more engaged students were, the more positive and more involved the teachers were in the interaction. However, the opposite was also observed where the less engaged students were, the poorer the teacher-student relationship, which could then lead to further disengagement. The greatest impact on engagement was when teachers interacted with students on an individual basis and therefore impacted on achievement (Green and Rogers, 1997, Skinner and Belmont, 1993, Willms, 2003). However, Willms (2003) reported that for some students improved academic performance did not always follow from engagement suggesting that the link between engagement and academic performance is more complex.

Furrer and Skinner (2003) suggested that feeling of belonging underpinned academic engagement. The school culture was an important factor when considering student engagement and feelings of belonging. Komosa-Hawkins (2012) suggested that a strong mentoring relationship improved school engagement and connectedness to the school. School connectedness and academic engagement may have a reciprocal relationship, which is supported by Eby *et al* (2008) who suggested that positive attitudinal outcomes may promote a psychological connection to the school. Academic engagement was weakly associated with socioeconomic background therefore students could be assisted in improving their academic engagement (Smyth and Fasoli, 2007, Willms, 2003). However, if there was a large population of students from low socioeconomic background, there may be a negative effect on engagement.

2.5.3 Self-esteem

The self is central to motivation (McLean, 2004). Miller (2002) described self concept as how a person sees themselves and is related to their picture of the ideal self. Self-esteem is related to how the person's matches the ideal self. If the match was good, they were said to have high self-esteem. The focus on self and the link with motivation had led some to believe that an improvement in self esteem is associated with an improvement in academic achievement (Crocker and Park, 2004, Shokraii, 1996, Woolfolk, 2001).

The self-concept in adolescents was based on the creation of an identity. This identity was an amalgamation of separate, context-specific self-concepts (Woolfolk, 2001). Self-concept develops through constant self-evaluation via reactions from the significant people in their life, frames of reference, mastery of experiences and causal attributions (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003, Woolfolk, 2001). The general view of self is the totality of a person's self-concept, which consists of a non-academic and academic self-concept (frames of reference). The academic self-concept is based upon personal beliefs about academic ability (Woolfolk, 2001).

The development of self-esteem was based on a number of factors including motivational mindset, relationships and value placed on the task by the student (McLean, 2004, Pintrich and Schunk, 2002, Woolfolk, 2001). McLean (2004)

suggested that self-esteem was linked with motivation attribution theory. If success or failure was attributed to actions that are under the person's control, the person's self-esteem is maintained and not damaged (Woolfolk, 2001). However, if self-esteem is attributed to actions beyond a person's control, self-esteem would vary depending on level of success or failure leading to pride, or feelings of anger and frustration. This is supported by Dweck (2000) who found that students' perception of their self-esteem as a fixed entity or has the ability to grow affects how students react to negative feedback. Students with a fixed perception of self-esteem tended to interpret negative feedback as threats to their ego rather than students with a growth perception of self-esteem who facilitated its development through effort and challenge.

Some studies suggested that self-esteem is determined by performance in tasks that were valued by the student (Pintrich and Groot, 1990, Pintrich and Schunk, 2002, Woolfolk, 2001). Students, who were competent in an area they valued, showed improved self-esteem. If the area was not of value to the student, self-esteem was protected if performance was poor (Woolfolk, 2001). The student's perceptions and beliefs about the value of the task depended on how useful they believed the task to be, level of enjoyment and any perceived negative consequences attached to engaging in the task (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002).

Crocker and Park (2004) suggested that the pursuit of improving self-esteem had more of an impact on motivation than the actual value of self-esteem.

Although there was no evidential link, there was a belief that perceptions of competence and control lead to high self-esteem thereby reducing anxiety and increasing self-efficacy, which fits with Dweck's (2000) theory on a growth perception of self-esteem. Self-efficacy was a person's perception of their own competence to be able to achieve a goal (King *et al*., 2002, Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). Yet striving to increase self-esteem may also have led to feelings of pressure and anxiety due to behaving in a way to please others leading to an unstable level of self-esteem and a loss in autonomy (Crocker and Park, 2004). Relationships may also be damaged in response to this contingent self-esteem as others were viewed as competition rather than sources of support (Dweck 2000). However, DuBois and Flay (2004) argued that if self-esteem goals were based on the development of competencies and positive relationships, outcomes could be long term and positive. These positive beliefs regarding abilities could lead to improvements in academic achievement (DuBois and Flay, 2004). Other studies have surmised that programmes that promote positive relationships may help students achieve better academic performance (Irving *et al*., 2003, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

Shokraii (1996) reported that there was no relationship between self-esteem and achievement but suggested that achievement may be more closely linked to self-concept. Flouri (2006) also established that self-esteem did not contribute to achievement. Whereas King *et al* (2002) suggested that an improvement in self-esteem and connectedness was associated with academic improvement, but this observation was based upon a small sample size. If

there was a positive link between connectedness and academic achievement, the improvement in self-esteem may be a consequence of improved relationships and achievement rather than a causal relationship between connectedness and achievement. However, parental support and an internal locus of control (believing events are caused by controllable factors such as effort) significantly affected academic achievement (Younger and Warrington, 2009).

The link between self-esteem and academic performance was ambiguous and was further complicated by self-concept and self-esteem being used as the same concept (Woolfolk, 2001). Some mentoring programmes claimed to enhance self-esteem as well as other outcomes (Evans, 2005, Golden, 2000, Karcher, 2008, Waters and Harland, 2004, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012, Younger and Warrington, 2009). Woods and Mayo-Wilson (2012) claimed that self-esteem improved in the short term and felt that if self-esteem was increased through performance motivation, there may be negative consequences on the student, such as increased risk-taking due to being motivated by competition rather than academic improvement. Dweck (2001) found that easy success and praise for that success tended to lead to students displaying a sense of entitlement therefore expecting success to come without effort. However, Rhodes *et al* (2000) suggested that mentoring enhanced self concept through role modelling and emotional support. They believed that self-concept was enhanced through an effect on the student's perception of their self-worth and competence as a learner.

McLean (2004) suggested that disaffection was not caused or influenced by self-esteem but by a variety of factors including fixed ability ideas, performance attributions, low competency and self-esteem contingent on the approval of others, whereas Dweck (2000) found that fixed ideas about self-esteem led to threats to self-worth, which could potentially lead to disaffection. Improving self-esteem may improve emotional and behavioural health (DuBois and Flay, 2004, Komosa-Hawkins, 2012, Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). Pintrich and Schunk (2002) suggested that the development of self-perceptions of competence (self-efficacy) may be more beneficial than general self-esteem in relation to academic achievement.

2.6 Personalised Learning

This part of the chapter is going to examine, through a review of literature, a brief history of personalised learning (PL), and the definition of the term 'personalised learning' as used in the English education system, as a necessary prerequisite to the designing of a model of how mentoring can support personalised learning.

Personalised public services were viewed as the way forward to provide equitable, high quality services for all that was flexible enough to cater to the needs of everyone (Leadbeater, 2004b). To meet the needs of everyone in education, learning would be personalised. Personalised learning was to create

a more flexible education opportunity for all children, something that was supposedly missing from the current model of education in England. The idea was that children were to take responsibility for their education rather than relying on others for their progression. However, it was not clear how this equitable, high quality education would cater for the needs of everyone, not just children.

The attraction of personalised learning was in the way different components of personalised learning filtered through all areas of education. However, at inception, personalised learning was a political idea rather than based in pedagogic theory or on research evidence (Ecclestone, 2007). David Miliband (2004) attempted to define personalised learning as:

> 'High expectations of every child, given practical form by high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It is not individualised learning where pupils sit alone at a computer. Nor is it pupils left to their own devices – which too often reinforces low aspirations. It can only be developed school by school. It cannot be imposed from above.' (Miliband, 2004)

Miliband's (2004) definition of personalised learning is problematic in that children's needs are to be assessed but how and by whom is not made clear (Dainton, 2004). There is an underlying assumption that children left to do as they wish would underpin low aspirations. However, it seems that the ultimate aim of PL was to continue the standards agenda, i.e. to continue to raise attainment for all children (Pollard and James, 2004).

The lack of conceptualisation of PL coupled with the enthusiastic mass adoption of the term raised concerns. Personalised Learning could have the potential to transform education from a system of control and compliance to a system of creating knowledge and, radical collegiality (Fielding, 2006a, Fielding, 2006b). However, the version of 'personalised learning' that is more likely to be adopted may reinforce the current system (Fielding 2007).

Fielding (2007) suggests that the current education system is competitive. Personalised learning could reinforce the current system's focus on the individual. This would be accomplished by schools personalising learning through tailoring teaching and learning to meet the needs of the individual (DCSF, 2007, DfES, 2004). Fielding (2007) argues that the primary aim of schooling should relate to wider social aims such as social stability and what it means to be human, which is at odds which the current implementation of personalised learning.

With difficulties in defining the concept of personalised learning, institutions had started producing context specific initiatives to fit their situation (Hartley, 2007, Johnson, 2004a, Pollard and James, 2004). 'It can only be developed school by school' (Miliband, 2004) implied that personalised learning should be a grass roots initiative, which had started to occur due to institutions interpreting the concept of PL in their own way. The risks to personalised

learning were that it has been instigated from a top down perspective and the 'school by school' development of the concept advocated by Miliband (2004) may have given rise to a narrower emphasis on 'teaching and curriculum delivery' rather than all aspects of learning (Pollard and James, 2004). However, this narrower emphasis may be more to do with other education policy pressures that were at odds with personalised learning.

One of the difficulties in defining personalised learning was that it had many constituent parts, which were overlapping. In this chapter, the foundation of personalised learning is explored in different teaching philosophies and, economic and societal changes. The last part of the chapter is an overview of the nine key features as identified by the DCSF (2008b) and, the 'nine gateways' model and the 'Four Deeps' (Hargreaves, 2004a).

This part of the chapter is divided into why we need personalised learning, a brief history of PL, a discussion of the definition of PL, an overview of the models of PL, the link mentoring with personalised learning, and the psychological connections between personalised learning and mentoring.

2.6.1 Why do we need personalised learning?

The English school curriculum had been based around the education of the masses since its conception. The curriculum was traditionally the same for all as it was an easy way to measure and categorise children.

The 'one size fits all' curriculum has been recognised as an inadequate model of effective learning. The preferred model was a more inclusive curriculum with access to curriculum provision for all children (Feiler, 2010). An inclusive curriculum usually related to an approach to educate pupils with special needs but more broadly an approach to educating all children. Inclusion was about the right of the child to participate in and gain access to education. Teaching was at the forefront of an inclusive curriculum by ensuring equality of access, equal opportunities, meeting pupil's needs and taking into account the cultural diversity of students (Corbett, 1999). However, Hargreaves (2004b) recognised that not all children were getting the opportunity to reach their potential.

PL was developed as part of a range of initiatives including Every Child Matters and The Children's Plan to help every individual child succeed from all social backgrounds. In an attempt to tackle underachievement across schools, the English education system had given schools more autonomy to design their curriculum, however this was limited. The number of pathways for young people had expanded with the introduction of apprenticeships, vocational course, diplomas and college opportunities (McCrone *et al*., 2010). The OECD's PISA 2009 study (Programme for International Student Assessment) found that overall underachievement had been reduced (OECD, 2009). Educational reforms have resulted in increased participation in education, and a widening of the curriculum. However, there was still a core

of underachievement in comparison to other countries in the OECD, which had been linked to the high social inequality in England in relation to income.

Low levels of achievement has been linked to the low socio-economic status of students (Sirin, 2005). The NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) were recognised as underachievers that may be a consequence of socioeconomic status. They were viewed as lost contributors to society and the UK economy. PL was for all children and young people especially those at a social disadvantage and academically at risk of underachieving or leaving the education system and becoming NEETs (McCrone *et al*., 2010). Alfassi (2004) suggested that a personalised learning environment in conjunction with a structured academic programme that was tailored to the students needs was claimed to improve achievement. This was claimed to be accomplished through learners being proactive in their choice of learning experiences and changing the educational experience of these students from one that focussed on their deficits.

Personalised learning seems to be viewed as a remedy for the ills of the current education system; to provide all children with a fulfilling educational experience, tackle underachievement and challenge social inequality. In reality, systems built around accountability expect a 'one size fits all' progression and testing system supported by teaching and learning systems that are assessed (Dainton, 2004, Tutt, 2006). Fielding (2006a) suggested that the current system is built upon control and compliance therefore the

transformative potential of personalised learning may be unattainable. Whether the political rhetoric can be realised is questionable unless the educational systems currently in place can be radically changed.

2.6.2 A brief history of Personalised Learning

'Personalised learning' (PL) came into our vocabulary as part of education through a number of speeches from the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Minster of State, David Miliband, in 2003 (Johnson, 2004a). Further speeches in 2004 by the Prime Minister elaborated on the PL agenda. This was the same year that Leadbeater's (2004a), 'Personalisation through participation: A new script for public services' was published. The scene had been set for the introduction of 'PL' within education.

The conceptual introduction of PL was minister-driven and not based on prior research or in-school practices (Johnson, 2004a). Leadbeater (2004a) suggested that personalisation's foundations lay in the need for change in all public services – to personalise all public services for the good of society to provide effective public services with limited resources. This would take the shape of the complementary approaches of users being able to self-manage their lives and the state providing better services. In the case of education, the parental choice of school, the child's need for tailored learning and the creation of a learning programme to suit individualised goals would go hand in hand. Miliband (2004) took the lead regarding the definition of personalised learning. These approaches to personalised learning gave little information to

how the concept could be translated into classroom practices or pedagogical approaches within the class, or how the principles of student self-management could be developed within the school's systems.

Leadbeater (2004a) seems to assume that (i) personalised learning is in the best interests of parents and children, that (ii) parental choice and a child's needs will be complementary, and that (iii) individualised programmes will support social equality rather than highlight differences between children. The interpretation of personalised learning at school level and the degree to which the education system can change would affect the extent to which Leadbeater's (2004a) idealised public services could come into being. Leadbeater's (2004a) view of the individualised education system for the benefit of society is in opposition to Fielding's (2006a) belief in the potential of personalised learning. Fielding (2006a) suggested that personalised learning could be used for the 'wider human purpose' of education (Fielding 2006a, p 310) viewed from a societal or community perspective. Fielding (2007) effectively argues that personalised learning as implemented in its current form diminishes social equality and humanity, due to the narrowing of educational aims and, the belief that this is the only way to engage and motivate students.

Since PL's introduction to schools, there had been many case studies showing how learning had been personalised in different contexts. The lack of definition seemed to have been an advantage as it allowed schools to take the concept of PL and contextualised it to find ways to meet their own needs

(Rudduck *et al*., 2006). This also failed to provide boundaries to the concept to the point where anything could be described as 'personalised learning'. Personalisation by context was the same grassroots emphasis that David Miliband made when he claimed that PL could only be developed 'school by school' (Miliband, 2004). However, Ball *et al* (2012) claims that the 'school by school' approach tended to be the process by which schools interpret and translate policy into practice; through complex processes that take into account the multiple other, often competing, policies they are subjected to.

Different schools respond in different ways to the pressures placed upon them. Fielding (2007, p395) identified four types of organisation that develop depending on the school's beliefs about the purpose of education and in response to the pressures placed upon them;

1. Impersonal – In terms of performance, efficiency is of importance therefore intellectual capital is valued. To achieve this, the functional relationship is prized over personal relationships. The schools position is to use students' achievements to meet their aims rather than education of the whole person.

2. Affective – the theme is restorative, where the personal is of greater value than the functional relationship. This type of school is inclusive in the aim of educating the whole person recognising personal effort; however issues relating to performance are not central to their aims.

3. High Performance – the effective organisation that epitomises the high performance school uses the personal relationship to gain the academic results they want. This is viewed as largely a manipulative approach.

4. Person-centred – this type of school is in opposition to the high performance school where the functional relationship is for the benefit of the personal, i.e. the whole person, rather than benefiting the school.

Fielding (2012) tended to favour the person-centred organisation due to the inclusive nature of this type of learning community that views education as more than the pursuit of grades. In Fielding's (2012) view the values and aspirations of the school drives the school's ethos towards the predominance of one of these organisational orientations although he provides little evidence that these orientations are mutually exclusive.

The Personalised Learning Agenda was built upon various education initiatives including the Standards Agenda, Inclusion Agenda, and Every Child Matters. Although the National Curriculum had been slimmed down, and end of Key Stage exams had gone, there was still an emphasis on improving standards through target setting, accountability and testing (DfEE, 1997, Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2003). The Standards Agenda is the policy basis upon which all educational initiatives and agendas are built (Dyson *et al*., 2003). Vulliamy and Webb (2006) claimed the drive to improve educational standards was based upon primary school children 'falling behind' in basic skills in comparison to global standards. However, Harris and Ranson (2005) felt that it was the underachievement of all young people rather than the subset of

primary school children that drove the Standards Agenda, while personalised learning was driven by the need for customisation, and the public perception of secondary school quality.

The DfES (2005a) felt that previous policies had not gone far enough to improve standards due to (i) a lack of pressure to improve the existing standards and (ii) a lack of parental choice of school and student choice of courses. The belief was that increased choice would cause the school to maintain improved standards and equity (DfES, 2005a) while Ofsted would provide the pressure to improve further (Rosenthal, 2004). However, questions were raised as to whether the pressures related to a visit from Ofsted did improve standards as there was difficulty in separating the effect of Ofsted from the other pressures placed on schools (Fitz-Gibbon, 2002, Rosenthal, 2004). There was also concern over providing choice to parents and students as if they are the same thing as this seemed to be a clash of consumerism and learning needs of students (Harris and Ranson, 2005). There is also the question as to the reasoning behind the choice; whether the choices provided were to placate parent's and children's wants or for learning.

Choice was a pivotal aspect to education policy. The assumption was that parental choice of school would drive up standards as schools improved their standing in the league tables to attract and keep their students (DfES, 2005a). With more choice, there would be a greater increase in standards. In the 2009 PISA study showed increased competition between schools tended to relate to

better student performance (OECD, 2009). When the socio-economic backgrounds of the students were controlled for, there was no statistically significant correlation between competition and student performance (OECD, 2010). Therefore the choice and competition espoused by the DfES (2005a) did not seem to drive up standards; however it is more likely to encourage social inequality. Johnson (2004) recognised that this individualistic approach to education could undermine the purpose of schools to create social stability.

Increased accountability and autonomy for assessment and curriculum supposedly had a positive relationship with improved student performance (OECD, 2009). However, competition between schools had potential dangers for social cohesion. Lee (1993) suggests that although policy emphasises the benefits of parental choice, the potential social divisiveness was not apparent. OECD (2010) found that parental choice led to social inequality, however, that the reasons for this link were unclear. Low income parents may not choose schools based on academic performance, however higher income parents may be able to move to areas nearer more 'successful' schools or pay for additional travel costs (Elacqua *et al*., 2006, Ladd and Fiske, 2001, OECD, 2010).

Leadbeater (2004a) and Miliband (2004) believed that well-off parents were already customising their children's education through extra-curricular activities, moving them to independent schools or homeschooling them. Well-off parents were able to provide alternative or complementary educational opportunities to the standard school system. By contrast, the less well off were

unable to buy this level of choice. There was a belief that state intervention would allow all to have the same opportunities thereby address inequality (Vulliamy and Webb, 2006). However, this raised the question of whether sufficient resources of comparable quality could be made available to all students and parents, and whether they would have the desired effect on attainment. Harris and Ranson (2005) also were concerned that this parental choice would strengthen the middle-class parent advantage and increase inequality through the further stratification of education.

Education policy focussed on improving attendance and reducing exclusions by targeting resources at disadvantaged areas with the assumption that this would also improve attainment and standards (Steele *et al*., 2007, Heinesen and Graversen, 2005, Vulliamy and Webb, 2006). However, Steele *et al* (2007) suggested the increased resources would improve maths and science attainment, while this was not supported for English. Personalised learning requires, by definition, personalised resources and Steel *et al* (2007) suggested that an increase in monetary resources would improve science levels by a small amount. The amount of improvement varied significantly by subject. The study also suggested that it would be more efficient to use monetary resources on structural factors that would affect attainment more consistently, for example, pupil-teacher ratios as it had a better cost-benefit outcome. Although this study was statistically valid, there was no attempt to discuss other outcomes that are associated with attainment. It would be difficult to suggest that throwing money alone at any subject area would improve attainment consistently over time.

The Five Year Plan Strategy for Children and Learners made a commitment to improve opportunities for special educational needs (SEN) students (DfES, 2006). However, this seemed to conflict the standards agenda with the inclusion agenda. Dyson *et al* (2003) suggested that while schools are encouraged to be more inclusive, the drive to increase standards would lead some schools to avoid accepting SEN pupils. To combat this issue, the Children's Plan had included a new layer of accountability for schools to compare SEN pupils with their peers and ensure that SEN pupils were supported to ensure progression (DfES, 2007).

The Every Child Matters initiative was to combat inequality in education and to promote cooperation between agencies to improve the welfare of children (DfES, 2003b). Personalising learning was based on the aims of the Every Child Matters initiative; be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being that schools were actively encouraged to promote (DfES, 2003b).

PL played a part in Every Child Matters and the Pupil Guarantee (DCSF, 2010, DfES, 2003b). PL responded to many areas of Every Child Matters through personalised teaching and learning, personalised extra-curricular opportunities, personalised flexible academic pathways with a choice of courses, personalised mentoring, advice and guidance, student's feedback to the school to suggest

improvements, and personalised support to improve academic progress (DCSF, 2010, Pollard and James, 2004). Mentoring would take the role of supporting health and improving student aspirations (DfES, 2003b).

Personalised learning became of importance in relation to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students in response to the Lamb inquiry in 2009 (Lamb 2009). The Lamb inquiry took place due to the concern that the SEN (Special Educational Needs) framework was not being applied consistently throughout schools in England. As a consequence some students were not having their needs met (Lamb, 2009). Lamb (2009) found that schools needed to engage more with parents through clear communication, which was also established by Morewood and Bond (2012). Lamb (2009) also suggested that personalised learning was viewed as a possible replacement for the SEN framework in place at the time, and found that there was the potential for a web-based mentoring scheme for SEND students.

More recently, Maguire *et al* (2012) found that personalised learning within schools was implemented within limits. Curriculum choice, teaching and learning strategies and assessment technologies were observed within the case study schools in England. However, these may have been observed due to these strategies being more easily measured and implemented, and they provided a higher cost-benefit than other strategies. The more involved aspects of the learning environment such as more student choice and control were absent (Maguire et al 2012). Fielding (2005) suggested in his study of

Alex Bloom that if students have the capacity and opportunity to make choices relating to all areas of their learning, this could strengthen the learning community within a school. However, the more involved aspects that were absent may have been more complex to initiate and may not have had a substantial enough impact on attainment to consider implementing in the short term. Alternatively, in some schools students may not be trusted to make choices and have control over their learning.

Without a more precise definition of personalised learning, many different practices within schools could be attributed to personalised learning. Maguire *et al* (2012) claimed the effects of personalised learning tended to be minor or nuanced rather than a direct result of the policy. In contrast, Prain *et al* (2012) found that personalised learning was a key policy within Australia. Many current educational practices already supported personalised learning; therefore these practices were not directly credited with improving personalised learning. Fielding (2005) was concerned about the confusion surrounding personalised learning and how the concept has been adopted with enthusiasm and supporting the use of the teaching strategy, learning styles; a flawed approach to learning (Pashler et al., 2008).

Prain *et al* (2012) found that the limiting factors were mainly leadership, teachers' skill sets and practices, and learner capacities and goals. However, this seems to suggest that the educational systems within schools and the students were inhibiting the full adoption of personalised learning. On the

other hand, Maguire *et al* (2012) suggested that there were a number of obstacles to personalised learning policy coming to fruition e.g. the policy was promoted as 'good practice' but with little detail as to how to put it into practice, and personalised learning was a 'contested and elastic concept' (Maguire *et al* 2012 p.335). However, the real obstacle may be due to schools having to enact personalised learning while having to prioritise attainment for accountability purposes.

2.6.3 Towards a Definition of Personalised Learning

Personalised learning (PL) is not an easy concept to define but has become a widely used term in many different educational contexts. Many research articles and books have been dedicated to this area, e.g. the Personalised Education Now Journal and Schooling for Tomorrow: Personalising Education (CERI, 2006). Much of the research into PL in education had focussed on its different components such as assessment for learning and pupil voice (discussed later in the chapter).

The DfES (2004) defined personalised learning as the drive to get all children to reach their potential by tailoring education to their individual needs, interests and aptitudes. However, there was a lack of clarity as what was meant by 'potential', how it could be measured, who could measure it and how education could be tailored. Due to the large range of practices that constituted personalised learning there was a lack of clarity as to what personalised learning was and how it could be put into practice (Pollard and James, 2004).

The lack of detail encouraged Hargreaves (2004a) to believe that the teaching profession should take ownership of PL, and define it in a way to benefit all pupils. PL was broken down into nine components called gateways, which was reminiscent of the nine key features designed by the DfES (2004) (explored later in the chapter).

Leadbeater (2004b) suggested that there could be at least five different definitions for personalisation within public services based upon availability of access, choice and information, deciding how money is spent in the service, helping to design their own solutions and, working with professionals to improve the service. The application of these definitions within education could see pupils being actively involved in their own learning by creating their own learning goals and targets, self-regulation of learning and the choice of learning environment. Leadbeater (2004b) suggested that this could only be achieved through 'earned autonomy'. Students needed to learn the skills to become more independent in their learning, which in turn earned them the right to make their own choices about their education. However, Pollard and James (2004) suggested that personalised learning was viewed as a philosophy that had the learner at the centre, but reached beyond the limits of the school to include support mechanisms for the learner such as family, professionals and agencies outside of education. This is based on the assumption that pupils' being in charge of their own learning is a 'good thing' (Campbell *et al* 2007, DCSF 2008, Johnson 2004a).

The DfES (2005a) further defined personalised learning as a process that results in the learner self-managing and investing in their learning within a standards framework. The DfES (2005a) appeared to view the learner at the centre and looked to develop more learner autonomy. However, this definition was criticised for supposedly returning to the child-centred learning policies of the 1970s.

Gilbert (2006) seemed to echo part of the DfES' view but extends it beyond the classroom:

> '… personalising learning and teaching means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's and young person's learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils – and their parents – as partners in learning.'
>
> (Gilbert, 2006)

Gilbert (2006) did not limit her definition of personalised learning to learning but extended this to all areas of education including teaching, assessment and knowledge acquisition. Later, the DCSF (2008b) defined personalised learning as more teacher led where the student was challenged. This definition on the other hand reflected the current classroom situation of the teacher being at the centre of the educational process with the students being dependent on the teacher (DCSF, 2008b). This may be interpreted as the student being a passive participant in their learning.

The link between Gilbert's (2006) and the DCSF (2008b) definitions was the idea that structured teaching was pivotal in the progression of students, however Gilbert (2006) seemed to view this as a cooperative situation that also brought parents into the learning relationship. The risk to personalised learning was that there was nationally a lack of structure to the concept (Campbell *et al*., 2007, Hartley, 2007).

West-Burnham (2010) suggested that personalised learning was more than the sum of its parts but an ethos or culture that was expressed through the key components of achievement, aspiration, inclusion, relational (supported by teacher-student and peer relationships) and, accountability by teachers and students. West-Burnham's (2010) view was that a personalised learning culture came from the idea that within any institution, methods and principles of teaching was the responsibility of all involved, from students to teachers to school leaders. The culture of an institution was based upon shared values and attitudes within its community, which was supported by Campbell *et al* (2007) who believed the aim of personalised learning was to have students and teachers having a shared understanding of what constitute learning within the pedagogical concept of personalised learning.

 The definitions discussed so far have not made it clear what PL is but what it is not; a product, a single technique, individualised learning, leaving pupils to their own devices or child-centred learning. Some of the vocabulary used in

the definitions has a multitude of meanings and understanding in the field of education, which had lead to some misinterpretations.

Personalised learning had been taken to mean individualised: to modify something to match the individual, and has been used to describe initiatives and programmes that encourage individualised learning (OED, 2010, Sebba *et al.*, 2007). However, the term 'individualised' had been confused with individualised instruction as it had been used to describe students working and learning in an environment that separates them from others. This use of the term 'individualised' took the modification of a learning programme to the extreme of creating a unique programme of instruction for each student where they learned independently (Campbell *et al.*, 2007). The DfES viewed individualised learning as a strategy that was one aspect of PL that could be used through one-to-one tutoring (Sebba *et al.*, 2007). More recent research on personalised learning has continued to have difficult in defining the concept (Education_Scotland, 2012, Ewen and Topping, 2012, Maguire *et al.*, 2012, Prain *et al.*, 2012). Education Scotland (2012) defined personalised learning simply as meeting the needs of students through tailoring learning and teaching, in contrast , Ewen and Topping (2012) accepted the complexity of the concept but choose to identify themes that largely represented personalised learning for their purpose; organisation of learning, diversity of curriculum and initiatives for 14-16 year old students, and programmes that aim to provide positive outcomes for disaffected and SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) students. Governmental emphasis on personalised learning has shifted towards the teaching of SEBD students following the

Lamb (2009) inquiry and this shift is reflected in how personalised learning is interpreted in England.

Each definition that has been discussed so far seems to be based on an idealised view of education. The reality of exams and accountability measures, and the requirement for specific levels of pupil progress are viewed as obstacles to the realisation of personalised learning, even making personalised learning an impossibility (Tutt, 2006). However, if these obstacles could be overcome, it may be possible to get a better understanding of the concept through models of PL developed by the DCSF (2008b) and Hargreaves (2004a).

There is no one definition of personalised learning. However, for the purpose of this study, personalised learning is considered to include practices and strategies that are perceived to have an impact on the individual, especially in relation to providing opportunities for self-direction and the relationship between teacher, student, home and school in aiding this.

2.6.4 Models of Personalised Learning

This section will explore two models of PL, Hargreaves (2004a) Deeps and Nine Gateways, and the DCSF (2008b) model.

2.6.4.1 The Deeps and the Nine Gateways

Hargreaves (2004a) believed that the nine gateway model of PL provided the constituents that would raise achievement. These outcomes were conditional on students being engaged sufficiently to motivate and being committed to their learning. The areas shown below in the diagram constitute the nine gateways and I will discuss how each can contribute to a picture of PL in practice.

Figure 2.1: Hargreaves' Deeps and Nine Gateways
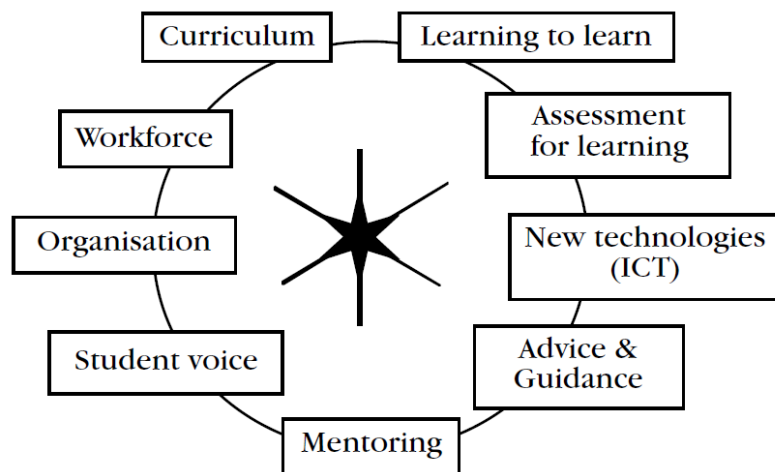
(Hargreaves, 2004a)

The curriculum was looked at from the perspective of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 had a central curriculum with specific subject areas for all students. Hargreaves (2004a) discussed how choice and flexibility could be introduced into the Key Stage 3 and whether the most appropriate way to learn the content was within subject areas. A 'stage not age' approach to courses and examinations was a means of tailoring education to the needs of the child and potentially improving attainment (DCSF, 2007). The 'stage not age' approach to testing was based on children taking courses and examinations

when they were ready rather than having them imposed upon them at set stages in their education. Schools were developing new approaches to Key Stage 3, which had lead to innovations such as the introduction of vocational courses, theme based learning, different learning pathways as well as some schools reducing their Key Stage 3 from three years to two years to start GCSE courses early (Hargreaves, 2005b).

Key Stage 4 had the advantage of allowing flexible learning pathways, which ensured that students could choose optional courses as well as learning a core curriculum. The current options tended to be based on formal qualifications such as GCSE and BTEC. Vocational learning may have taken place at a local college therefore personalising learning beyond schools. Personalised learning could be extended in Key Stage 4 through more flexible learning pathways, a variety of courses as well as alternatives to the classroom environment as the main context of learning (Underwood *et al*., 2009).   However, accountability and targets were a constraint on teachers and were obstacles to any innovations. The recent reforms challenged the inflexibility of the curriculum where the focus was the education of the whole person; developing personal qualities, skills and knowledge (Hargreaves, 2005d).

Learning to learn (L2L) skills assist students in understanding and taking responsibility for their own learning. The purpose of learning to learn is to create independence from the teacher and increase the student's capacity to learn (Hartley, 2007, Black *et al*., 2006).   How students understand their

learning was influenced by their 'goals, feelings, social relations and context of learning' (Watkins et al., 2001). A number of initiatives for learning to learn ranged from the instrumental approach; as a skill or technique to aid learning, to the ideal of learners understanding how to become effective learners leading to motivated and empowered learners (Watkins *et al*., 2001).

Assessment for learning (AfL) is a method of formative assessment to allow teachers to facilitate the learning of students through feedback. Teachers use this form of assessment to meet the needs of the students through adapting teaching and creating student independence by providing them with advice on how to improve (Hargreaves, 2005)

Assessment for learning allowed the teacher to learn the needs and preferences of the student while the student voice evaluated how and what the students learn. This was further extended to the development of the school as a whole as well as the extension of this role to students as researchers (Hargreaves, 2004a).

New Technologies had the potential to offer learning activities that could be individualised. The learning activities could take the form of e-learning products and software, including the use of web-based learning and mobile technologies. Personalised learning was the basis to encourage the co-production of education and technology could be the ideal area for co-

production (Hargreaves, 2005a). Teachers could harness student expertise to aid the co-production and co-design of learning activities and resources (Hargreaves, 2005a). The input from students on new technology overlapped with student voice. The disadvantage to the student's use of technology was although students had the tendency to be engaged for significant periods of time, learning may not be reflected in the learning objective due to students absorbing or using irrelevant information (Pollard and James, 2004).

Due to the increased flexibility in the curriculum, there was an increase in choices for students (Hargreaves, 2005b). One of the principles of PL was the need to be informed about the choices available (Leadbeater, 2004a). However, with greater curriculum choice, came increased expense for schools (Johnson 2004a). Advice and guidance was important for students to inform them of their choices either in the curriculum or for individual learning plans. Advice and guidance was also important for parents to support and assist their children in their choices. The aims of advice and guidance were to assist students pre-entry to courses, during courses and after completion to aid the next step. However, not all information and guidance was available from one source. Advice and guidance could take the form of websites, 24 hour access via an answering service, outreach provision or appointments for advice within or outside of office hours (Jones, 2007). Students and parents needed to participate in the design of their advice and guidance service through learning conversations with professionals. Learning to learn was an aspect of guidance and advice to help students self-assess and design their own learning experiences (Jones, 2007).

Hargreaves (2005c) defined the process of mentoring as agreed expectations and appropriate behaviour, as long as it was fit for purpose but mentoring may not be appropriate for everyone. Mentoring has been addressed earlier in the chapter in considerable depth.

Student voice was the involvement of students in the process of learning and their education. The belief was that student voice was a right that would lead to a more democratic education for students as well as an opportunity to improve standards (Thomson and Gunter, 2006). Student voice could take many forms including consultation with students for school improvement, school evaluation and students as researchers (Fielding, 2006b, Thomson and Gunter, 2006). Brooker and Macdonald (1999) claimed that the benefits would be a reduction in student alienation and students having increased ownership of their education. However, the form student voice took within a school was heavily influenced by the school culture, which would determine the level of student consultation (Fielding, 2006b). The hierarchical structure of schools may have been problematic in the pursuit of genuine student voice and participation. The power differences between adults and students may have brought about a difference in how adults describe school culture and how it is experienced by students (Brooker and Macdonald, 1999, Leitch and Mitchell, 2007).

School design or remodelling was to transform secondary education; schools needed to be fit for the purpose of personalised learning, which required a move away from traditional school structures (DfES, 2002b, DfES, 2003a). This was based upon the assumption that there was a relationship between improved building design and academic attainment, and these buildings would more effectively meet the needs of students (DfES, 2002b). The 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) investment programme was central to the design and remodelling of schools in the most disadvantaged areas where some schools were provided with new buildings or had partial-rebuilds, however the programme was cancelled in 2010 before it had any effect (DfES, 2003a, Durbin and Yeshanew, 2010). Durbin and Yeshanew (2010) reported that as a consequence of schools being rebuilt, pupil attitudes to school improved, absences were reduced signifying a potential future academic improvement, however attainment was lower than similar groups of students and there was no significant difference in attendance. Any increase in attainment linked with school design may be due to the improvement in quality of learning environment, however small improvements did not have a significant impact on students (Woolner *et al.*, 2007). Positive effects for new schools may have been short term especially if students lack a feeling of ownership of their environment. To include students and staff in the design process may initiate feelings of ownership and a vested interest in their school (Besten *et al.*, 2008).

System redesign relates to how the current school system needs to change to meet the needs of students (Hargreaves, 2005d). Reform of the current system was required through changes in the system's structure such as the structure of

the school day, the roles within the system and the leadership of the system. By creating feelings of ownership, changes could be designed and implemented by the students and staff rather than imposed (Carter, 2008). However, system changes may not have been sufficient to overcome the cultural shift required to incorporate student voice and other aspects of PL policy (Cook-Sather, 2006).

Distributed leadership was a change in the role of leaders and a further move towards the democratization of schools (Woods *et al*., 2004). Leadership was shared beyond those who were traditionally part of school leadership (Hargreaves, 2005d, Harris and Goodall, 2007). The flexibility of the term could lead to the need for responsibility to be shared (Harris and Spillane, 2008). Woods *et al* (2004) described a school where leadership was shifted to a flat structure; however shifts from traditional leadership are context dependent.

The four 'deeps' were part of Hargreaves' model related to the interactions between the nine gateways; deep learning, deep experience, deep support and deep leadership The 'deeps' were one aspect of the development of the nine gateways and the continuing transformation of the model to incorporate new ideas. The 'deeps' were not necessarily something that occurred within one institution but could be in collaboration with other institutions and agencies. The development of the 'deeps' reorganised the nine gateways to show how they related to each other, and how they interacted (Hargreaves, 2006a).

Deep support was of particular interest as this incorporated mentoring and coaching (Sebba *et al.,* 2007) to support emotional and social development (Harris, 2008). Deep support tended to be more prevalent in secondary schools either through learning mentors or the reorganisation of staff to provide flexible support to students (Sebba *et al.*, 2007). Evidence of deep support as part of the PL model was limited, however peer mentoring initiatives for teachers and students as well as experimenting with coaching was used to support vulnerable students (Harris, 2008). Deep support was not limited to student support but included support between other institutions and agencies (Harris, 2008). Glazer and Peurach (2012) suggested that the US policy relating to support between institutions and agencies provided expectations for schools to attain but without the necessary support to reach these expectations. Evidence of deep support in relation to inter-institution support come from partnerships between schools to support staff (Hargreaves, 2010).

2.6.4.2 The DCSF and the components of personalising learning

The DCSF divided PL into nine components similar to the gateways although the emphasis was different. The DCSF nine components seemed to be more process orientated and highlight practical methods of implementation. Each of the nine areas overlapped and interacts with each other just as the nine gateways are dependent upon each other. The figure below details the nine areas of personalised learning with the centre being the pedagogy of personalised learning (DCSF, 2008b).

Figure 2.2: DCSF Personalised Learning Model
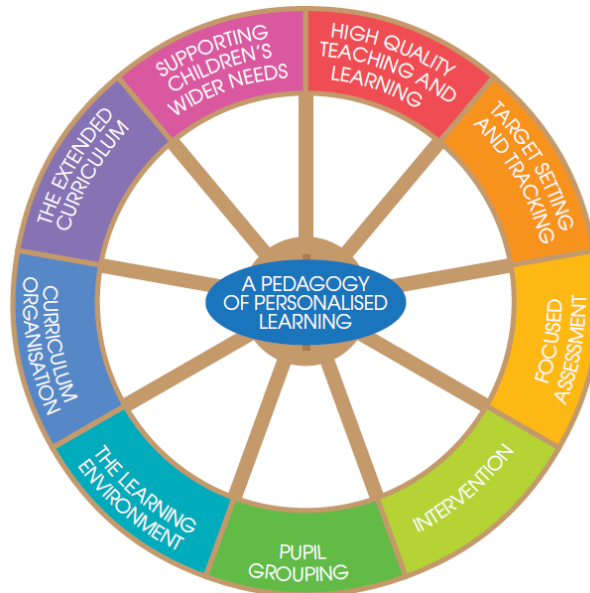
(DCSF, 2008b)

The basis of the PL model was that schools could approach this in different ways due to their differing contexts and intakes, however there were core principles that would be consistent across all schools. Each component of the wheel was linked to the Children's Plan; to tackle the effects of disadvantage through supporting families whilst shaping services around them and their needs, to allow all children to succeed and prevent failure, and allow children to enjoy their childhood (DCSF, 2007). Practices that were successful in other schools or institutions were held up as good practice (DCSF, 2008b).

The DCSF (2008b) described the high quality teaching and learning as coming from a knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher using effective planning of lessons to meet the needs of students through high expectations, student participation, Assessment for Learning (AfL) and differentiation. High quality

teaching and learning included one-to-one tuition, small group teaching, and catch up classes (DCSF, 2008b). This reflected parts of Hargreaves' (2004b) model. However, Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that personalised teaching was already being achieved in some schools.

Pupil grouping outcomes were for pupils to build teams and community cohesion that could be accomplished through guided group work, coaching of small groups, and cooperative learning. The ability for pupils to develop social skills and learning skills would enable them to become more independent learners, which would be able to learn across a wide range of contexts (DCSF, 2008b). However, many subject areas in schools organised their pupil grouping by ability. Burton (2007) suggested the 'social pedagogy of pupil grouping' should be tackled to allow the development of the previously mentioned skills.

Target setting and tracking were a foundation of this model, the other being focussed assessment. The purpose of target setting and tracking was to use formative assessment to identify barriers to student learning as well as curricular targets at individual, group and class levels (DCSF, 2008b). School accountability was based upon National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades as the foundation of long term target setting, while target setting was part of the standards agenda (Harris and Ranson, 2005). Target setting fed into differentiation to ensuring that students were challenged and were able to achieve their targets (Burton, 2007).   Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that

target setting would encourage student evaluative skills.   However, Sebba *et al* (2007) reported that in schools, monitoring of these targets was of importance.

Focussed assessment seemed to be in three parts; Assessment for Learning (AfL), timing, and planning progression. Timing consisted of day to day assessments, the periodic summative and formative assessments within subject areas, and external exams such as end of Key Stage, GCSEs and A levels. Planning progression was more related to the use of the data in planning the next step in the student's progress and could be linked with target setting. Assessment for Learning was the central theme where students, parents and teachers could be involved; the school managed the assessment and purpose of assessment; teachers made judgements about the student, used data to plan student progression and support to help students progress; the parent/carer were informed of their child's progress, how their child could improve and also how to support their child; the child would be informed of their achievement and how to progress towards their target. This flow of information would allow students to become independent learners. Sebba *et al* (2007) reported that AfL was embedded in the schools studied, however Ofsted regularly claimed that AfL was not sufficiently developed in schools.

Learning environment entailed the classroom as an organised space that should be used flexibly to support a range of teaching and learning strategies (DCSF, 2008b). This resembled Hargreaves (2004b) organisation gate. A minority of schools studied by Sebba *et al* (2007) identified their buildings as limiting.

Burton (2007) suggested that learning environment could aid learning by feeding into learning styles relating to individual choice of environment.

The extended curriculum related to the opportunity to experience different and varied activities and the opportunity for students to develop their talents outside of lessons. The potential outcomes could be to develop pupil's social skills, self-esteem and motivation, and, in turn, improve attainment. Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that the extended curriculum would allow schools to become part of the community while IT (information technology) would link school to home. However, Harris and Ranson (2005) felt that this aspect of personalised learning would require a fundamental change in the structure and organisation of schooling.

Wider needs related to the identification of barriers to learning outside of school such as health or family issues and putting interventions in place to assist those students. This would allow students to participate fully in personalised learning. Achievement data would be used as evidence of student's experiencing difficulties. Sebba *et al* (2007) described the use of learning mentors in a school to work with parents and the student to break down the barriers, as well as assist students during transition from primary to secondary school. However, most schools had transition interventions in place prior to the PL agenda (Galton *et al*., 1999).

Interventions could take place at the classroom level as well as outside the classroom usually initiated at the subject or class level. Most interventions were targeted at underachievement while a minority were targeted at those students who needed to be challenged academically (Sebba *et al*., 2007). Specific interventions could be initiated by gaps in attainment. Catch up or booster interventions could take the form of additional individual or small group tuition but they were for a limited period of time (DCSF, 2008b). Sebba *et al* (2007) described some schools intervention strategy that linked with parent consultations.

The DCSF model (2008b) and Hargreaves (2004b) model had a different emphasis and different approaches to the PL agenda. The DCSF model took the existing school model and built around it with a few subtle changes to the classroom learning environment. This may be due to economic and curriculum limitations as well as perpetuating the current system structure. The model's strength lay in the research it was based on and used real examples of school projects trying to integrate the PL agenda into their current system. Underwood *et al* (2009) viewed the personalising agenda as a more passive view of PL. A variety of learning environments were encouraged to allow learners to personalise their experiences and track their learning. Hargreaves'(2004b) model was more ambitious in wanting to radically change the current system and how it intended to attempt those changes. Whilst both models of PL encompass many similar and relevant themes, they provided little specificity for schools to facilitate implementation.

The grass roots approach had many advantages, such as greater ownership of personalisation by teachers, staff and pupils rather than if imposed. The disadvantages were the limitations and requirements of the National Curriculum. The league tables for school formal exam results are linked to a specific stage in schooling and age of pupil, which restrict the subject choices and possibility of allowing students to start formal examination courses earlier or later in their school lives. These factors were risks to the ability of schools to personalise the curriculum for their pupils.

2.7 Mentoring and Personalised Learning

Hargreaves (2005c) identified mentoring and coaching as part of his nine gateways for personalised learning (PL). As a response to the PL agenda and the Every Child Matters (ECM) framework, mentoring seemed a natural progression as both PL and ECM have the needs of the student at their centre (Stewart, 2006). ECM claimed that students are entitled to have access to mentors to enhance student aspirations (DfES, 2003b).

Mentoring was used by schools as one of the strategies to improve standards; however mentoring was usually restricted to borderline students (Watkins *et al*., 2001). With the introduction of personalised learning, Sebba *et al* (2007) noted that mentoring was one of the most frequently introduced initiatives. However, schools were less likely to relate the agenda to advice and guidance.

Hargreaves (2005c) identified a variety of mentoring relationships that could exist within the school context to fulfil a role in personalised learning: peer mentoring such as cross-age, adult to student, and adult to adult (Gilbert, 2006, Leadbeater, 2005, Sebba *et al*., 2007). West-Burnham (2010) believed that mentoring is the most effective way of supporting personalised learning and students were entitled to support. Mentoring was linked to the overarching principle of ECM in many ways and can perform many functions within personalised learning:

• as a way of removing barriers to learning (Johnson, 2004b).

• by agreeing personal learning targets (DfES, 2005c, Littkey and Allen, 1999, Younger *et al*., 2005).

• by supporting learning strategies (West-Burnham, 2010, Younger *et al*., 2005). Assessment for Learning (AfL) used in conjunction with questioning is an important strategy in personalised learning (Stewart, 2006).

• by tracking academic progression (Christenson and Thurlow, 2004).

• by supporting curriculum choices (West-Burnham, 2010).

• by providing careers advice (Younger *et al*., 2005).

• by using individualised learning plans which were found to work best when there was a cooperative effort between the mentor, advisor and family (Littkey and Allen, 1999).

•   as an ideal platform for the discussion of personal issues (Herrera, 2004).

•   by engaging with absentee students (Rudduck *et al*., 2006, West-Burnham, 2010).

•   by providing access to wider school opportunities for disadvantaged students (Campbell *et al*., 2007).

•   as a social intervention for students who are at risk due to anti-social behaviour (Roberts *et al*., 2004).

The school system based upon personalised learning views mentoring as part of a new way of teaching. There was a belief that teacher's roles would change in order to aid groups of students through cross-curricular projects, ensuring that the student's learning was balanced (ATL, 2006, Beare, 2006, Johnson, 2004b). The teacher's role as mentor would allow students to get to know them as individuals and vice versa, which would encourage students to feel part of the school as well as ownership over their learning (Rudduck *et al* 2006).   However, Roberts *et al* (2004) warned that any intervention must be evidence based to reduce any harmful consequences. Humphrey *et al* (2010) also warned against too much tailoring to the local context as personalised learning would then become diluted and confusing. Maguire *et al* (2012) observed that many schools had superficial personalised learning due to the many constraints placed on schools by the multiple policies and, the necessity to improve and progress.

2.8 The Psychological Connection between Personalised Learning and Mentoring

The move towards an educational culture of autonomy rested in developing the skills needed for students to have a personalised education, as well as how mentoring could support the development of these skills. McLean (2004) suggested that the development or lack of these skills have important consequences for young people that may affect their lives. The ability to access training courses and jobs may have been affected by psychological factors such as their confidence, determination and self-discipline.

The PL agenda in England was supported through the introduction of PLTS (Personalised Learning and Thinking Skills) (Burton, 2007). This framework was introduced as a method to support the development of skills to support learning (Braun *et al*., 2010). The skills developed through PLTS were viewed as necessary for pupils to become more independent learners and were required for successful learning and employment (QCA, 2008). PLTS supported the development of the student becoming self-managers, effective participators, creative thinkers, reflective learners, independent enquirer and team-workers (Beere, 2009). This was enhanced with 'soft skills' from the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) framework to underpin effective learning such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Beere, 2009, Humphrey *et al*., 2010). Some of these hard skills or tools for

personalised learning could be applied across the curriculum and taught through subject areas.

Hargreaves (2005a) suggested that the development of engagement, responsibility, independence, confidence, maturity and co-construction are the elements that may allow a student to have a more personalised education. Sebba *et al* (2007) identified soft skills that students would need to assist their development including realistic target setting, learning style, social skills, thinking as learners, emotional skills, skills for life-long learning, communication skills, confidence, motivation and aspiration. Wikeley and Bullock (2008) suggested self-confidence, communication skills, negotiating skills and planning. Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested awareness of motivation, value of education, responsibility, self-assessment, self-motivation, and self-regulation. Others also included resilience in their list of skills needed for personalised learning (Gilbert, 2006, Pykett, 2009). However, some of these skills were very broad while others developed with age.

Smith *et al* (2007) reported that many schools in six local authorities in England introduced some type of mentoring to fulfil the SEAL framework including the use of learning mentors and peer mentoring. Rhodes *et al* (2000) found that non-familial adult support may reconcile a student's need for autonomy and adult guidance. Mentoring studies had shown that outcomes include raising awareness of higher education opportunities, the development of confidence, persistence, communication skills, self-organisation and time

management (Evans, 2005, Golden *et al*., 2002a, Waters and Harland, 2004, Younger and Warrington, 2009). The reported psychological outcomes of mentoring included confidence, academic engagement, school connectedness, self-esteem, interpersonal skills (Hall, 2003, Jekielek et al., 2002, Linnehan, 2003, Philip et al., 2004, Randolph and Johnson, 2008, Stewart, 2006, Tarling et al., 2001, Waters and Harland, 2004, Younger et al., 2005). Golden *et al* (2002a) suggested that students have improved skills in dealing with personal issues by viewing situations from difference perspectives and thinking for themselves. Waters and Harland (2004) felt that mentoring also improved study skills and autonomy through planning and revision effectively even though this finding was based upon a small sample of students. The main psychological areas seemed to be:

• Motivation – relates to engagement, aspirations, self-motivation, resilience and connectedness. Motivation for learning was identified as one of the outcomes of mentoring in section 2.3.2.

• Self-regulation – the ability to take control of own learning and evaluating learning. This area incorporates self-efficacy and overlaps with motivation.

• Self-esteem – this incorporates self-concept and relates to confidence.

• Social skills – this area also incorporates communication skills.

• Autonomy – this area also incorporates self-regulation, self-reliance, responsibility, and meta-cognition.

Many of these areas overlap and may be mediators of motivation (Ntoumanis, 2001).

2.8.1 Motivation to Learn

Motivation is an important aspect to learning and is mediated by many psychological factors. Larson (2006) suggested that motivation drives development as a person and a learner. In school, motivated students may work towards learning goals and be engaged in learning even if they do not enjoy aspects of the activity. The development of an internal locus of control, self efficacy, interest, competence and autonomy enabled learners to be motivated.

Research and theory suggested that motivation drives an individual instinctively to learn (Woolfolk, 2001). However, there were barriers to the development of motivation towards learning. Larson (2006) suggested that motivation was not a constant factor but lessens when a student does not feel ownership over a task or sees little value in it. Students are also motivated by things other than learning especially in a school environment where there are many distractions. As motivation is related to self-regulation, students need to develop this skill as they do not normally have the skills to maintain their efforts (Pintrich, 1999, Ushioda, 2011). In these circumstances, students may become disengaged due to boredom or being overwhelmed (Larson, 2006). Senecal *et al'*s (1995) finding that procrastination occurred when external distractions overrode intrinsic interest in a task was based upon a sample of

498 French-Canadian college students.   Therefore, this may not be representative of secondary school students in the UK.

Evidence from the US suggested that mentoring could play an important role in the development of resilience and act like a buffer to protect the mentee from the impact of a variety of risk factors (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012, Miller, 2002). Resilience and persistence were similar concepts, however the difference was adaptability. Persistence required continued effort even in the face of obstacles; however resilience was defined as the ability to succeed by adapting despite the obstacles (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002, Woolfolk, 2001). Komosa-Hawkins (2012) suggested that resilient students were more successful in school, however this was based upon a small sample size. In contrast, Mangels *et al* (2006) found that the relationship between academic success and resilience was more complex. The student's perception of their intelligence impacts upon their resilience. Fixed intelligence perceptions tended to be threatened by negative feedback and their beliefs about their ability. In addition, those students also were less likely to maintain engagement in processing of relevant learning feedback therefore they were less likely to be able to learn from their errors.

Mentoring may improve levels of resilience through the mentoring relationship and modelling the competencies needed for resilience; problem solving, decision making, goal setting and choosing appropriate resources (Philip, 2003, Philips and Hendry, 2000, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012).   Resilience

is also related to social competence, autonomy, motivation and positive time management (Philip, 2003, Roeser *et al.,* 2006).

Improving aspirations has been an important mentoring aim as it was viewed as one of the reasons for underachievement. Mentors acting as a role model could improve aspirations (Younger and Warrington, 2009). Higher aspirations took the form of seeing higher education as an option as well as choice of career. Students' low aspirations were believed to be inherited from their parents and mentoring was a way to improve social mobility (Younger *et al*., 2005). However, Spielhofer *et al* (2009) found that young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and those who were in education had similar aspirations, which could mean that lack of aspiration is less of a problem than expected in relation to underachievement. Younger *et al* (2005) suggested that confidence may be another factor that affects student's ability to fulfil their aspirations.

Teacher behaviour may have had an impact on the development of students through their method of control (Madjar *et al*., 2012). Teachers who tried to evoke feelings of guilt or other negative associations to compel students to work may have an impact on their motivation.   There may be a reduction in mastery goals and an increase in performance goal motivation orientation. Autonomy supportive behaviour from teachers had a positive association with mastery goal orientation.

2.8.2 Self-regulation

Self-regulation uses the tools for learning and self-control to improve learning (Woolfolk, 2001). The skills involved in self-regulation are planning, goal setting, self-monitoring and self-evaluating (Zimmerman, 1990). The tools used by those students who self-regulate usually include learning to learn strategies (Zimmerman, 1990). Russell and Riley (2011) suggested that needs assessment and analysis are the starting blocks to evaluate current learning which allow students to develop the skills to identify their own needs and decide how to meet those needs. Watkins *et al* (2001) proposed that reflection on learning is essential for managing conceptual change and preventing a reversal to original misconceptions. This was also involved in the development of students taking responsibility for their learning through facilitative questioning. However, Hall (2003) suggested that the current mentoring models may not improve the person's perception of their work.

Learning meta-cognitive skills increased student learning potential through knowledge of their own learning strategies and having control over them (Burton, 2007, Kurtz and Borkowski, 1984). However, Kurtz and Borkowski's (1984) study was based upon a small sample size and Bates (2005) believed that context and content may be a more important factor in meta-cognitive skills. Wikeley and Bullock (2008) observed that 'learning guides' would assist the learner in understanding their learning across the subject areas, however they felt that as the 'learning guide' was outside of the learning context they were less likely to be able to assist personalisation. This

view did not seem to take into account the wider implications of personalised learning or of other psychological changes that needed to take place in the student to develop their personalised learning. Hylan and Postlethwaite (1998) believed that mentoring encouraged additional self-awareness, however their findings were based upon a small sample within a girls comprehensive school.

2.8.3 Self-esteem

As previously stated, self-esteem is related to self-concept however, these factors were only parts of the picture that develops student identity and relates to their academic learning. Baumeister *et al* (2003) and, Hair and Graziano (2003) reported a small correlation between self-esteem and school performance. Some suggested that self-esteem was one of many psychological factors that mediated motivation to improve academic performance including confidence (Booth and Gerard, 2011). Alves-Martin *et al* (2002) also connected self-esteem with attitude towards school.

Relationships were an important component of self-esteem. Connectedness to peers, school and parents had a similar protective factor to resilience in that it reduced involvement in risky behaviours and encouraged healthy behaviour (Karcher, 2005, King et al., 2002). High school connectedness was believed to be related to better mental health, however if there was greater social connectedness then an individual would be more likely to get involved in risk behaviours related to health such as smoking (Bond *et al*., 2007). Karcher (2005) suggested that social connectedness was developed through the

emulation of behaviours within a close relationship with an idealised person, which progressed to improve context and interpersonal connectedness. In a school based mentoring relationship, this may have assisted in the development of school connectedness and, improvements in self-esteem and self-management through role modelling and discussion of values (Karcher *et al*., 2002). Connectedness seemed to have an important role to play in the well-being of young people; however there may have been many mechanisms by which this was achieved.

Collaborative learning may have had a positive impact on self-esteem however, initiatives such as student of the month seemed to have no significant effect (Woolfolk, 2001). Collaborative learning may have improved social connectedness and context connectedness resulting in improvements in self-esteem. Moving to a lower ability groups may have had a negative impact on self-esteem but moving to a higher ability class had no significant effect on self-esteem (Woolfolk, 2001). Ryan *et al* (1994) suggested that connectedness related to school motivation. Adult connectedness was believed to have had more of a relation to school motivation than peer connectedness. Karcher *et al* (2002) believed that connectedness may require the mediating factors of school attitude and self-esteem to improve academic achievement. Alternatively, student knowledge that there was a network of supportive relationships around them was the enabling factor in developing self-reliance (Ryan *et al.,* 1994). Motivation was promoted as a consequence of improved perceived autonomy, self-esteem and self-reliance. Bond *et al* (2007) found that high levels of school and social connectedness in year 8 was related to better outcomes in

year 12 and higher risk aversion. Students who were mentored demonstrated a higher school and family connectedness than non-mentored students (King et al., 2002). The positive impact of family connectedness had a cumulative effect based upon the student developing a positive with an adult mentor. King *et al* (2002) suggested that mentoring focussed on academic achievement and connectedness, which are the mediating factors in improving self-esteem. Mentoring may have the potential to have a positive effect on student connectedness socially, to school and to family, possibly leading to improved academic performance. This seemed to be accomplished through role modelling but the pathway from connectedness to achievement was indirect.

Confidence and self-esteem seem to be closely related concepts but were not the same. Self-esteem was related to how a person feels about their self-concept; however confidence was more than an emotional response. Confidence concerns abilities, acceptance by others and trust therefore confidence and self-efficacy are closely linked (Eldred *et al*., 2004). Norman and Hyland (2003) claimed that confidence was better understood and developed through three lenses: the cognitive, performance and emotional. The cognitive lens related to knowledge of abilities, the performance lens related to the ability to do a task and the emotional lens related to how the person feels about the cognitive and performance lenses (Norman and Hyland, 2003). Healthy self-esteem was believed to add to confidence; however the reverse relationship may not be true.

Confidence was frequently mentioned in relation to academic behaviour and performance (Al-Hebaish, 2012, Chang and Cheng, 2008, Eldred *et al*., 2004, Johnson, 1941). A lowering in academic achievement was ascribed to lack of interest caused by a decline in general confidence although it was acknowledged to be a complex relationship (Chang and Cheng, 2008). The factors that developed confidence were believed to be past achievement within a specific context and general confidence (Johnson, 1941). There was a distinction between general confidence and confidence specific to a context. Learning tended to be situational and led to confidence specific to the situation while general confidence was confidence based upon social factors, presentation and communication (Eldred *et al*., 2004). Buckley *et al* (2012) believed that the pathway to confidence in changing behaviour stems from supportive relationships also known as connectedness. As a consequence of improving confidence in a specific context, students were believed to be inspired to learn and progress (Eldred *et al*., 2004). Eccles *et al* (1993) reported that academic grades were also a strong predictor of confidence. However, this may have been mitigated in adolescents by social comparisons and competition at a time when they tended to be susceptible to excessive introspection (Eccles *et al.,* 1993). Confidence tended to be a current state that changed from time to time and situation to situation. The potential for mentoring in assisting students with confidence issues may have been in providing support, encouragement and constructive feedback (Norman and Hyland, 2003, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

Self-efficacy was closely related to confidence in that it described how a person views their ability to deal with a chosen task (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003, Pintrich and Schunk, 2002, Woolfolk, 2001). Pintrich and Schunk (2002) also interconnected self-efficacy with effort, choice of task and persistence. The main difference between self-efficacy and confidence was that self-efficacy involved making judgements relating to capabilities to succeed in a specific task (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002, Woolfolk, 2001). Self-conception was believed to be a result of continuous internal and external comparisons in relation to other facets of self and other people. Self-efficacy had a strong relationship with academic achievement. If a student had low self-efficacy, this led to task avoidance. High self-efficacy inclined a student to participate in a task and persist when confronted with obstacles (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). Self-efficacy was associated with motivation through goal setting, motivation through prior performance and had an effect on career choice (Rezaei, 2012).

Mentoring has the potential to assist students with their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was believed to be a self-motivating belief occurring before learning begins (Moseki and Schulze, 2010, Woolfolk, 2001). Fan and Williams (2010) found that self-efficacy was associated with parental support through interaction encouraging and verify capabilities. In the instance of academic self-efficacy, the mentor may have been the best person to verify academic capabilities. Assisting students in finding new strategies to manage obstacles could reduce task avoidance and build self-efficacy (Woolfolk, 2001). An

improvement in self-efficacy may have positive consequences for engagement, internal motivation and goal setting.

Schmidt *et al* (2007) claimed that mentoring reduced anxiety and depression, and positively impacted self-esteem in students but had no effect on self-concept, however this was based upon a small sample. However, Bong and Skaalvik (2003) suggested this may be due to changes in academic self-concept taking more time and effort to change as opposed to self-efficacy or self-esteem. An increase in self-efficacy is related to improved persistence on a task, more effort and more effective use of meta-cognitive strategies (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). Mentoring seemed to improve self-esteem and self-worth through improved perceived social support and parental relationships, however this was based upon a small sample size (Komosa-Hawkins, 2012). Ewen and Topping (2012) reported that self-confidence, self-efficacy and family relationships improved with students who were mentored compared with those who were not, however this finding was also based upon a small sample size.

2.8.4 Social Skills

Johnson (2004b) suggested that the development of social skills should be the teacher's domain. Teaching and learning occurred in a classroom setting, which was not an individual activity but a shared activity. Social skills were believed to develop through interaction with others. Social development was the changes in how students related to others (Woolfolk, 2001).

Communication was an aspect of social skills development. In personalised learning, new knowledge could be developed through social processes such as communication, cooperation and conversing (Harris, 2008). Mentoring had been shown to develop literacy and achievement in English due to the need to vocalise concerns and discuss targets in a way that is clear and appropriate (Golden, 2000).

Social skills were developed through relationships and were therefore an important factor in the development of social identity (Ushioda, 2011). Relationships also mediated other psychological factors. Relationships were viewed as essential to promote resilience, impact self-worth, and beliefs of learning competence (Rodriguez-Planas, 2012). Therefore, programmes that enable long lasting relationships to develop may achieve improved academic results as well as improved behavioural and psychosocial outcomes (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002, Irving *et al*., 2003, Reid, 2002, Wood and Mayo-Wilson, 2012). Rhodes *et al* (2000) found that mentoring could assist improvement in parent-mentee relationship. However, Rodriguez-Planas (2012) was concerned that mentoring may have a negative impact on the parent-mentee relationship. Family barriers contributed to academic failure, therefore involving parents in the mentoring relationship may be advantageous but not to the detriment of the relationship between mentor and mentee. Harris and Goodall (2007) suggested that the incorporation of parents into the mentoring relationship may circumvent this issue and assist students in areas of their development such as

attendance and punctuality.   These relationships may depend upon

mentoring's capacity to fulfil certain psychological needs; autonomy,

relatedness, motivation and competence (Larose *et al*., 2005).

2.8.5 Autonomy

Autonomy in the learning environment related to the learner taking

responsibility for their learning where the teacher is no longer controlling the

context but facilitating learning (Spratt *et al*., 2002, Woolfolk, 2001).

However, the learner control over their learning was limited due to factors such

as course content, exams being predetermined by exam boards, and inability to

change school organisation (Lewis and Vialleton, 2011). Scharle and Szabo

(2000) suggested that the development of autonomy is limited by personality

traits, cultural attitudes and learning styles. The traits referred to motivation

and self-confidence. Some students may have difficulty with the uncertainty

associated with autonomy. In contrast, Prain (2012) found that students in a

school Australia who demonstrated strong relationships with peers, teachers

and family, which was referred to as 'relational agency', were more self-reliant

and had the ability for independent learning.

Independence of learning may start with self-control and confidence

(Woolfolk, 2001). However, Madjar *et al* (2012) suggested that autonomy is

based upon motivation and self-determination. Beach and Dovemark (2009)

suggested that the space and time needed for students to develop self-reliance

and autonomy was limited by the pursuit of standards in relation to curriculum

attainment targets, however these findings were based upon a small sample size. This may be due to the importance of accountability in schools that diverts time from developing self-reliance and autonomy to exam practice and preparation for exam.

Watkins *et al* (2001) suggested that lower attainment correlated with perceived pressure from adults, however, higher attainment correlated with independence and competence. This did not mean there was a causative relationship between the factors. However, Putwain (2009) claimed that external pressures caused by others such as parents or teachers may cause students to improve their achievement through communicating the link between effort and achievement, but this finding may be limited by the small sample size this study was based upon. Stress may cause students to be motivated to achieve through threats to psychological characteristics such as self-esteem (Putwain, 2009).

Mentoring could assist students in preparing for autonomy through raising awareness, development of motivation and self-confidence, and changing attitudes before the transferring of roles from teacher to student (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). Ushioda (2011) suggested that for personalised learning, autonomy started with motivation. Students needed to be motivated first in their learning to enable autonomous learning (Spratt *et al*., 2002). An improvement in motivation and engagement may result in autonomy, however this was a reciprocal relationship and autonomy may also in turn improve engagement and motivation (Scharle and Szabo, 2000, Spratt *et al*., 2002).

Mentoring could support student autonomy through role modelling, development of action plans for student's chosen goals, providing challenge, and making students accountable for the consequence of their choices (Black *et al*., 2004). Inconsistencies between teachers and subject areas may make students feel negative towards teacher's control and this should be recognised (Woolfolk, 2001).

Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that students were more autonomous if teacher's structured support for their learning. Mentoring may be an opportunity for students to be actively listened to as well as permitting time to develop goals and reflect on situations (Reid, 2002). However, mentoring had the potential to be much more on its own or part of a multifaceted initiative.

In summary, academic mentoring in secondary school produced a variety of positive outcomes for students. PL is an educational policy that has been introduced in English schools that required them to adopt it in a way that suited their context. Based on the personalised learning models, mentoring was one of the strategies that schools could use to embed personalised learning. To personalise the learning of students, teachers needed to adopt new strategies for teaching and learning. Students also needed help to develop skills that would allow them to learn in new ways. To be able to answer the research questions,

How can academic mentoring support personalised learning?

How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?

I needed to know how academic mentoring could develop these skills to fulfil personalised student learning and continue to assist students in reaching their academic examination targets.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a discussion of the philosophical basis of research and describes the factors that led to my choice of philosophical stance from both epistemological (the nature of knowledge) and ontological (the nature of reality) perspectives. The methodological approach is discussed and the methods used in this research are justified. The design of the research instruments, i.e. the interview questions and questionnaires, is examined. Finally, the issues relating to analysis, ethical issues, validity and reliability of the instruments used are considered. In the second half of the chapter the schools in which the study was carried out will be described. Finally this chapter will attend to any issues with participants and method choice that arose in the process of this research.

3.2 Research Framework

In considering the methodology of this research project it is important to be aware of the purpose of the study. The main aim of this study is to explore how academic mentoring could support personalised learning. The study was limited to academic mentoring for the purpose of preparing students for GCSE exams and did not focus upon any other mentoring programme that occurred in either of the two schools.

3.3 Methodology – Research Paradigm

Approaches to educational research differ in terms of whether the research is qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. However, these approaches are not the starting point of the research process. My belief systems and philosophy about knowledge and the world around me are the epistemological and ontological considerations that affect my methodological choices. My chosen methodological stance therefore affects the choice of instruments and methods of data collection (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

This section explores the underpinning belief systems of the researcher and relates this to the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the nature of reality and what we can know (ontology), and the justification for the ways in which research is conducted (methodology) (Morrison, 2002). The purpose of exploring these areas is to make the process of this research transparent. Any biases or limitations relating to the process are a consequence of my epistemological stance. Pring (2000) believes that the researcher's philosophical stance has a 'profound impact upon the conduct of research', however, this stance is often not made clear to the reader. My approach is to make my philosophical stance explicit.

3.3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is based on the researcher's understanding of social reality.   The understanding of social reality gives rise to a range of views of reality along a continuum from reality internal to an individual (subjectivism) to reality external to the individual (objectivism) at the extremes. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and creation of knowledge. Different epistemological stances are distinguished by their nature, form, its acquisition and ability to be communicated (Cohen *et al*., 2000). The epistemological stance of the researcher reflects her ontological perspective.

As a result of my background in science, my ontological stance as a researcher about the nature of being and reality tends more towards pragmatism. The ontological basis of pragmatism is naturalistic transactionalism (Biesta and Burbules, 2003, Cresswell, 2003, Kwinen and Piiroinen, 2004). Social reality from the pragmatic perspective is multiple and singular; one world with many interpretations as the 'real' world is one which we experience (Biesta and Burbules, 2003, Feilzer, 2010, Morgan, 2007). A living organism's connection with reality is through experience or transactions between the living organism and their environment. However, in the case of humans this is also affected by cultural influences (Biesta and Burbules, 2003). Any person's experience is equally real, however they may be different due to their different interactions with their environment based upon their different standpoints (Biesta and Burbules, 2003).

Ontological beliefs give rise to epistemological beliefs. These viewpoints have implications for a researcher's belief on how knowledge is constructed thereby placing limits on their choice of methodology, type of data collection and analysis.

Pragmatism makes a link between actions and knowledge. The dualism between the objective and subjective nature of knowledge is based on the positivist- interpretivist duality of social reality (Cohen et al 2000). The physical world and the personally constructed world cannot independently represent reality but, in using both approaches, the truth may become visible (Pring, 2000). The pragmatic notion of knowledge is concerned with actions (Biesta and Burbules, 2003). Pragmatism views knowledge as a construction based upon the organism-environment transaction and reality (Biesta and Burbules, 2003).

Knowledge from the pragmatic philosophical viewpoint does not start in the mind but in action and reflection which is then revealed through language (Biesta and Burbules, 2003). Knowledge is acquired through the relationship between our actions and their consequences, and this provides things with meaning. Due to the changing nature of our environment, knowledge is provisional for the context in which it was achieved and for that time (Biesta and Burbules, 2003).

3.3.2 Implications for Methodology

As with ontology leading to a corresponding epistemology, each epistemological perspective leads to a corresponding methodology. Methodology is an implied set of guidelines, procedures and conventions to support the process of research (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). The guidelines and rules provide a "structure of enquiry" that is based upon an ontological and epistemological perspective. The conventions provide a method of communicating research and establishing legitimacy as a researcher (Daly, 2003). As the pragmatic approach was a viable ontology for the aims of the research, the methodological implications of this approach will be explored.

The methodological implications of pragmatism lie in the reciprocal relationship between epistemology and methodology, and methodology and methods. Morgan (2007) suggested that the nature of knowledge and the creation of knowledge should be considered together, rather than as separate entities. The relationship from methodology to methods is through intersubjectivity; a midpoint between subjectivity and objectivity. This allows the pragmatic researcher to accept that there is a shared world view through the process of communication with participants (Biesta and Burbules, 2003, Morgan, 2007).

In regards to this thesis, these assumptions led to my choice of qualitative research methodology, which led to my choice of methods for data collection. Qualitative research methods are useful to understand complex social

interactions in their natural settings. In this research, the problem is how mentoring can support personalised learning. Pragmatism is linked with mixed methods research; however, this thesis uses qualitative research methods to understand actions and consequences (Biesta 2007, Cresswell 2003). An in-depth understanding of the mentoring programmes and the experience of participants are best addressed by a qualitative approach and informed by pragmatist research philosophy (Cresswell 2003, Pring 2000, Yin 2003, 2009).

The two methods selected were a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as Biesta and Burbules (2003) suggest that others shared experiences provides more resources for dealing with a problem. The questionnaire allowed me to collect data regarding staff's previous experience of mentoring, training and view of the current mentoring programme. This allowed me to select a staff sample that encompassed a variety of staff, and a variety of mentoring experiences. The data from the questionnaire provided a basis for the staff semi-structured interviews. This allowed me to produce an in-depth understanding of the issues involved and to seek patterns of meanings and understandings from the students and staff. The use of interviews allows participants experiences of mentoring and personalised learning to provide the resources for dealing with the research questions. Through this process, the production of educational knowledge is made visible regarding the possible links between actions and consequences.

3.4 Method

3.4.1 Introduction

A pragmatic approach to the research design puts the research question centre stage. The methods of data collection chosen were those that best matched the context and research question. The research aims centred on participants' perceptions, and their understanding of phenomena. I had to choose an appropriate method of data collection that would enable me to measure the phenomena meaningfully and take into account the length of the mentoring programme.

3.4.2 Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods

Studies that have researched the outcomes of mentoring tended to rely on quantitative instruments such as questionnaires or self reporting psychological tests based on the Likert scale (Cook *et al*., 2010, Ryzin, 2010). After discussion, a quantitative approach based on this type of approach was viewed as inappropriate for several reasons:

i. Within a school, mentoring programmes tend to be focussed on a relatively small sample size such as a year group, a group of students with a particular need or mentoring on a voluntary basis. Quantitative methods require a larger sample size. However, the Likert scale method could be used qualitatively where statements are used to elicit and prioritise views from participants (Bryman, 2004, Cohen *et al*., 2000). With the addition of an open ended component to the Likert

scale statements, participants could provide reasoning behind their responses on the scale. This does assume that students and teachers alike could communicate their reasoning clearly and they have the inclination to complete a potentially time-consuming questionnaire (Bryman, 2004, Cohen *et al*., 2000).

ii.   The questionnaire or attitude scale methods prior to and after the mentoring programme were viewed as an unnecessary burden for the students to complete and the teachers who would have to administer the tests or questionnaires.

iii.   The mentoring programme occurs over a small period of time therefore any changes measured by questionnaire or attitude scale would be difficult to detect.

iv.   The responses may be unreliable; students may avoid the extremes of the scale, choose the midpoint, assume equal intervals between each category in the scale or just make false responses (Cohen *et al*., 2000).

v.   If students feel their response is between categories, they may leave the item undecided.

vi.   Students may be impacted upon negatively if their responses to statements are clustered on one side of the Likert scale; i.e. if students choose responses on the extremes there may have negative implications associated with extreme responses. The alternative is that students may choose middle responses to avoid the extremes.

vii.   The items on the rating scale may not include an issue that a student

may feel is important about the research context therefore this detail

could be lost (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

Research that focused on the mentoring experience and process tended to be

qualitative approaches, such as observations, diaries and interviews (for

examples see (Rose and Doveston, 2008), (Younger and Warrington, 2009).

These research approaches provide the depth of detail and focus needed to

understand the process and mentee-mentor experience.

Qualitative methods would be most suitable for a research focus on the

phenomenon of mentoring and personalised learning within the school context.

Qualitative research methods into mentoring and how it can support

personalised learning would be regarded as the most appropriate as the focus is

on a phenomenon that needs to be studied in depth and detail (Patton, 1990).

For the purpose of this study, interviews for students and staff, and a

questionnaire to inform staff interviews were chosen as part of a case study.

3.3.3 Rationale for Case Study

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary
phenomenon in depth and with its real-life context, especially when the
boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"

Yin (2009) p.18

The research strategy depends largely on the research question. As the research question could not be sufficiently answered through numerical analyses, a qualitative approach was more appropriate.

This study raises questions about mentoring and personalised learning and concerns mainly 'how' type questions as shown at the beginning of this chapter (Yin, 2009). The project aims to study a mentoring programme as a phenomenon that was already established in the school context therefore the researcher has no control over the content or processes of the programme (Yin, 2009). The GCSE mentoring schemes are time bound events that occur each year for a particular set of students within the specific context of a secondary school therefore the focus is a contemporary issue (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Cresswell, 2003, Yin, 2009). This issue arises from the pressures for school effectiveness and improvement as discussed in Chapter 2. Due to these considerations the case study method offers the most appropriate strategy.

The type of case study chosen for this research project can be categorised in different ways; based on the rationale for the method to the process and outcome. The rationale for this case study was intrinsic as the subject of the research was of interest to me and was carried out to gain a better understanding of the cases (Stake, 1995). The process of the case study was categorised as historical-organisational as the mentoring programme was studied over a period of time, tracking its development and it involved participant interviews with those who have been at the organisation for a

significant period of time (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). However, this aspect is incidental to the main research study. Despite the reduction in weight of the historical aspect in preference to the current context, the observational aspect is not fulfilled but replaced with participant interviews. The participant interviews were used as observation of mentoring meetings would have been too intrusive to find out about what was done in mentoring meetings. It was more efficient to interview students to find out what they thought about what happened in mentoring meetings.

In this study, the case study may bring fresh insight into how mentoring can support personalised learning by assisting students in their ability to help themselves. This study could be classified as particularistic as the case study focuses on a particular programme that is being studied and the detail revealed about the programme can be useful in practical settings (Merriam, 2009).

The outcome of the case study is explanatory (Yin, 1994). Yin's explanatory case study category is used to link a programme with its possible outcomes rather like an evaluation where the context is so complex that surveys or quantitative analysis would be insufficient (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The rationale for using a single case study is to investigate a unique case or a case that is crucial in testing a theory (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Yin, 2009). Multiple cases are preferred over a single case study as they provide additional evidence

and make the study more robust. The analytical conclusions of each case were arrived at independently thereby strengthening the findings.

3.3.4 Criticisms of Case Study Approach

As with all research approaches, the case study approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Case studies have been used to complement experiments however; this is not their only purpose (Yin, 2009). In their own right, they are a source of rich descriptive material that has given rise to concrete context-dependent theories (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The case study's strengths lie in it being an easily understood form of research (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Wellington, 2000). Case studies have a strong foundation in reality that provides rich detail and enables the researcher to capture unique characteristics (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Wellington, 2000). Findings can provide insight into other similar cases and inferences can be taken from them, however they are not considered to be generalisable (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Wellington, 2000). Other disadvantages of the approach include the case study approach not being representative, replicable or repeatable (Wellington, 2000). These are due to an inability to verify the approach and this may be due to the researcher bias that is inherent in this approach (Cohen *et al*., 2000).

3.3.5 Generalisability

The ability of the findings of case studies to be generalised is discussed in this section. A case study may be a natural basis for generalisation but only in a situation where others can relate to the case study, and apply conclusions practically (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Stake, 1995). However, Flyvbjerg (2006) suggested that a case study cannot generalise on the basis of a single case due to the lack of theory production that is independent of the context. Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) claimed that comparing and contrasting cases to other cases, prior knowledge or theories is a method of making tentative generalisations beyond the initial case study.

Cohen *et al* (2000) viewed the context dependence of case studies as an opportunity to gain insights that can be interpreted then used. Patton (1990) felt that case studies were used as a means of adapting programmes to meet the needs of the local community.

Yin (1994) believes that multiple case studies can produce a cumulative effect that can lead to generalisations. However, in this instance there were an insufficient number of case studies to cumulatively create generalisations. In summary, a case study approach is not generalisable in the traditional scientific sense; however there may be some application of findings on a local level.

In this study, two dissimilar mentoring programmes in two similar secondary schools were being researched. School context and the processes that occur in the organisation have had an impact on how a mentoring programme is implemented. Due to differences in the two school's mentoring populations, and their organisation of the mentoring programme, the case studies cannot be directly compared. However, the case studies can be contrasted and insights gained.

3.3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are given different levels of importance depending on the researcher. In case study evaluation, Bryman (2004) felt that reliability is only taken into consideration where appropriate. However, Thomas (2011) suggests reliability is not one of the main concerns as the assumption that repeat measures would yield similar results does not hold for case studies. Thomas (2011) believes that validity is believed to be related to the sample, however there is no probability sample therefore there are no expectations of validity.

Validity and reliability are as pertinent to qualitative methods, including case studies, as they are to quantitative methods (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Riege, 2003, Yin, 2009). However, the criteria used to assess validity and reliability within a case study context is considerably different from quantitative studies.

Within qualitative research, internal validity refers to the credibility of the research. Internal validity is concerned with explanatory case studies and relates to the inferences made (Yin, 2009). The explanation of an event needs to be true to the reality and supported by data (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Merriam, 1995).

Internal validity was addressed through a number of strategies. In this study, a limited amount of documentation relating to the mentoring programmes and, semi-structured interviews are the basis of data collection. The interviews were conducted with a range of people within the organisations including students and staff. These methods of data collection allow for triangulation (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Merriam, 1995, Riege, 2003). Member checks were conducted within the interviews to check understanding of responses by summarising the interviewee's responses and asking for clarification or questioning them to check accuracy (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Merriam, 1995). Parts of the study were examined by colleagues and supervisors during the study (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Merriam, 1995). My biases and previous associations in regard to the study have been declared (Merriam, 1995). Pattern matching and explanation building are very much part of the analysis process that allows any patterns found in the data to be compared to patterns in the literature review. Addressing rival explanations to add support or refute a theory based in data is good practice and adds to the validity of the study (Yin, 2009).

Construct validity relates to how well the measures used to study a concept match what is to be measured (Cohen *et al*., 2000). In qualitative research it is difficult to develop measures as the data collected tends to be subjective. However, in this study multiple sources, such as documentation and interviews from staff and students, were used to cross check data, a chain of evidence was created and, member checks were carried out (Riege, 2003, Yin, 2009).

The reliability of the case study relates to the ability to gain the same or similar results on repeat trials. However, case studies do not tend to have repeat measurements as in an experiment, therefore there needs to be another method to ascertain reliability. Some researchers believe that replication in qualitative research is not viable or wanted (Cohen *et al*., 2000).   The nature of qualitative research does not produce stable data as people behave differently at different times and different contexts (Merriam, 1995). An alternative viewpoint is to see reliability as how dependable or consistent the data within the case study is with the conclusions (Merriam, 1995, Riege, 2003). However, Yin (2009) suggests that reliability is based on the ability for an external person to repeat the study and gain similar conclusions.

A solution to the reliability issue was to operationalise the process by producing a case study protocol in conjunction with a case study data base that encompasses the instruments used, the procedures and 'general rules' to ensure that the process is repeatable by another researcher (Riege, 2003, Yin, 2009). To ensure the reliability of this study, a case study database has been created

and measures were taken to increase construct validity and internal validity (Riege, 2003).

3.3.7 Effects related to the research context

This section outlines the main sources of bias that are potential threats to validity.

1. Subjectivity: In case studies, the researcher is viewed as the main source of bias, which may occur through selective and subjective observer bias (Cohen *et al*., 2000, MacCormick and James, 1983, Yin, 2009). However, Flyvbjerg (2006) counterclaims that in case studies, the researcher's subjectivity is less of a disadvantage as real life situations are observed and the views of the researcher are tested through the development of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher may be viewed as the instrument therefore validity depends on their skill and rigor (Patton, 1990).   To mitigate against subjectivity in data analysis, any ethical issues and solutions were recorded, the method of data collection was the use of recording equipment to avoid selective data collection and data management decisions were recorded.

2. Halo effect: The halo effect relates to a potential researcher bias where knowledge relating to the participants or context could affect the researcher's judgements (Cohen *et al*., 2000). This threat to reliability was reduced by ensuring that participants were informed of the aim of the research to reduce any negative consequences relating to intent of

the research and ensuring they are aware of their right to withdraw at any time in the research process. In this study there may have been instances where students in group interviews may change their behaviour in the presence of other students or in the presence of the researcher (Patton, 2002).   Data triangulation was used and looking for differing findings in literature to refute the study's findings was used to diminish the halo effect (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, Yin, 2009). Data triangulation involved combining data from different sources over time; interviews were held at different times during the school year, space; interviews were held in different locations such as different meeting rooms, and persons; different people were asked about the same thing (Mathison, 1988). However, in this study the suggestion to use an external observer was not possible.

3. Reactivity effect: This study involves interviewing a wide range of individuals, which will have an effect on how the participants behave (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). The researcher may unintentionally communicate their expectations to the participants and participants may provide responses that they feel the researcher is expecting. The researcher took care in how she presented herself (Yin, 2009) and, explained any biases and assumptions in relation to the study (Merriam, 2009).

4. Issues relating to power differences: It is impossible to maintain an unbiased position when the researcher is involved in the school that is being studied (Wellington, 2000) The main instrument used in this study was interviews as designed by the interviewer. The power and knowledge, therefore, resided with the interviewer (Karnieli-Miller *et*

al., 2009), however, in staff interviews, the power may be held by the person in a position of power whether interviewer or interviewee (Cohen *et al*., 2000). The interview was considered a gift therefore there was a level of reciprocity (Limerick *et al*., 1996). During interviews, the interviewer also conducted member checks to validate interpretations of interviewee responses (Kvale, 2006). However, the suggestion of a second interviewer to reduce the effect of power was not possible (Limerick *et al*., 1996).

3.8 School Background

Background information regarding both schools is described in this section to situate the research project in the real context rather than through the lens of the literature review.

3.8.1 School A

This school is situated in a market town in England with a population of about 20,000. It is situated in a valley surrounded by farmland and has good transport connections.

The school is an 11-18 non-selective upper school within a selective education system. Students sit the eleven-plus exam to determine entrance to grammar school (BCC, 2011). The school population in 2009 was 727 with 96 students in the sixth form. Of those students, 130 were in year 11 (DfE, 2012).

The mentoring programme had been in place since 2001. The stated aims for the mentoring programme were:

- To provide support for students during the GCSE course.

- To target students academic progress and encourage them to monitor their own progress and identify strengths and weaknesses

- To help students set targets and action plans which will actively improve their performance at GCSE

- To increase the self-esteem and confidence of the students by giving feedback on targets set and academic progress in the context of their personal ability

- To raise student expectations

- To provide strategies to help students with time management, coursework, planning, revision skills and examination technique.

However, each year the programme was different in respect to when it started and what the programme contained as this was decided by each respective head of year. Each year, the overall aims were not stated except for the aims for each individual session. In 2011 the aims were made explicit with the overall aim of helping students to be self motivated to do well in their exams.

All staff were potential mentors. The choice to be a mentor was on a voluntary basis and the choice of allocated mentee was taken by the mentor. Meetings initially occurred at suitable times agreed between mentor and mentee. In the past couple of years, the timing of mentoring meetings occurred at a fixed time

during whole-school assemblies. Information for those meetings was at first available on the day of the meeting; however this changed to an earlier time to allow mentors to prepare for the meetings.

Initially, there were some training opportunities for mentors but this did not continue after the first year. There was a mentoring meeting every term for mentors but this was focussed upon mentoring teachers especially newly qualified teachers.

3.8.2 School B

This school is situated in a market town in England with a population of about 17,000. The town has two distinct areas; an old and a new area. It is situated in a valley and the new area is on the north side of the valley.

The school is within the same region and has the same characteristics as School A. The school population in 2009 was 767 with 134 in sixth form. Of the 767 students in the school, 124 were in year 11 (DfE, 2012).

The mentoring programme has been used over a number of years; however there is no documentary evidence to suggest when it was first implemented. The programme changes each year based on feedback from staff. The staff volunteered to be mentors and usually choose their mentees. However, in 2009 the students were allowed to choose their mentors. This was short lived

as it was decided that the next year would revert back to mentors choosing the mentees.

Training for mentors is offered to sixth form students who were involved in mentoring year 7 students. Staff were also able to attend this training if they are available, however there was no formal training programme for staff involved in mentoring.

The school has aspirations to become a school focussed on personalised learning according to their prospectus. This has been facilitated through a change of language such as learning support assistants changing their name to raising achievement facilitators (RAFs) as well as the school having a director of personalised learning. The school feels that it offers a personalised learning experience through one of the three flexible option pathways available at Key Stage 4. The virtual learning environment provided by the school also contains a personalised learning area for students.

Details of each case study school's academic performance at Key Stage 4 are discussed in relation to national trends in Appendix 1.

3.9 Design

In this research study two secondary schools were involved to:

- Examine their perception of mentoring for GCSE students (research question 1)

- Examine their perceptions of the current mentoring programme. (research question 2 and 3)

- Examine staff understanding of personalised learning. (research question 4)

- Contextualise mentoring in the wider framework of personalised learning. (research question 5)

The students started year 11 in 2008 and were about to embark on their GCSE examinations in Spring 2009. Teachers involved had a variety of roles and experience in teaching and mentoring.

The research methods used in this study were based on the research aim and allowed for any emerging issues to be highlighted whilst keeping the study manageable for a single researcher. Most studies involving mentoring programmes tend to be case studies (Stewart, 2006, Gibb, 1999), surveys (Mitchell, 1999) or quantitative studies around attainment (Hylan and Postlethwaite, 1998). Personalised learning has been studied through case studies using surveys and semi-structured interviews (Sebba *et al*., 2007, Robinson and Sebba, 2010), and discussions relating to technology (Burkett, 2008).

This study was based upon a staff questionnaire then on a combination of semi-structured individual staff interviews, individual student and group interviews prior to/ at the start of the mentoring programme (pre) and at/ near the end of the mentoring programme, and analysis of relevant documentation from each school for these reasons:

- The student pre-mentoring interviews provided the opportunity to find out about any preconceived ideas regarding mentoring and any information they may have been given prior to the start of mentoring.

- The student post-mentoring interviews provided the opportunity to find out about how the students' ideas about mentoring had changed and, the ability to probe and gain clarification on their previous responses from the pre-mentoring interviews.

- All methods were used to provide rich detailed qualitative data

- To triangulate data from students, teachers, managers and support teachers.

- To gather facts relating to the mentoring programme and, their feelings and beliefs about the programme.

- To elicit reasons and explanations relating to participants' role as mentors or mentee.

- To gather from staff their beliefs about personalised learning and the actions that could be taken regarding personalised learning and mentoring.

- Documentation in the form of Ofsted reports, newsletters, mentoring programme documentation, and the results of a student questionnaire from School A provided evidence of the formal mentoring programmes' aims, objectives and activities historically and at the current time. This would allow comparisons to be made between these aims, objectives and activities, and the participants' perceptions of these.

Other research methods would not have produced the detail of information required to address the research questions. The size of the programmes in each school and the available participants also limits the range of research methods available for this study.

3.9.1 Sample

In School A all year 11 students were informed about the research study in an assembly arranged by the head of year and provided with a letter of invitation to participate to take home and discuss with parents. Parents were also informed through the school newsletter.   Staff were informed about the study through a presentation at the middle leaders' meeting and a staff meeting. The staff were then provided with a letter of invite and a questionnaire.   As this was my workplace, the collecting of questionnaires and organisation of interviews was straightforward.

All year 11 School B students were also informed through an assembly arranged by the year leader. The school then distributed letters of invite to all year 11 students. The staff were informed through a morning briefing and letters of invite and a questionnaire was distributed by the school to all members of staff. Further meetings at the school allowed me to collect any completed questionnaires and organise interviews.

The staff and student sample chosen for the semi-structured interviews at each school was based on convenience. The schools were chosen on the basis that the researcher worked at School A and had knowledge of the mentoring programme and School B was chosen as it was a similar school to School A, and nearby. The students were year 11 as this was the year group that tended to be academically mentored due to impending GCSE exams. The staff who were willing to be involved in the study held a selection of different roles in the schools.

A system of alphanumeric coding was used for participants who took part in questionnaires and interviews, for ease of reference. Students from School A are coded with the prefix A then with the letters A to Z. When the number of students exceeded the alphabet, an extra A was added, i.e. AZ was followed by AAA. Following the participant code, the attitude to learning score was assigned, i.e. AB1. The attitude to learning score was based upon teacher subjective assessments of student engagement and contributions in lesson on a scale from 1 to 3: ATL 1 denoted engagement in learning and positive

contributions; ATL 2 denoted usually focussed but could be a source of
disruption; ATL 3 denoted disengagement from learning and disruptive in
lessons.   Participants from School B were coded from A to P with their
assigned attitude to learning score. These are summarised below in the
following table. The teachers were coded by their role in their school.   The
codes are detailed below:

T denoted the role of a teacher;   **S** denotes a member of senior

leadership team.

H denoted a role of head of department;   **Y** denoted a head of year.

A denoted a learning support assistance;   **D** denoted a director.

Table 3.1: School A Participant Codes

Code	Description
T1-6	Role of teacher. Sample of 6.
S1-3	Role of member of senior leadership team. Sample of 3.
H1-4	Role of head of department. Sample of 4.
Y1-2	Role of head of year. Sample of 2.
A1-3	Role of learning support assistant. Sample of 3.
D1	Role of director. Sample of 1.
Student AA-AAD ATL1-3	Role of student. Sample of 28.

Table 3.2 School B Participant Codes

Code	Description
T01-03	Role of teacher. Sample of 3.
S01	Role of member of senior leadership team. Sample of 1.
H01	Role of head of department. Sample of 1.
A01	Role of learning support assistant. Sample of 1.
D01-02	Role of director. Sample of 2.
Student BA-BP ATL1-3	Role of student. Sample of 16.

Of the six School A teachers who completed a questionnaire, two were unable to attend interviews as they had retired prior to the interviews starting, three had resigned their posts and moved to other schools and once was on long term leave. Of the four School B teachers who completed a questionnaire, two claimed that they were too busy to participate due to being NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers), one had left the school and, I was unable to get in contact with the two remaining participants even though I had e-mail them.

3.9.2 Timing of Research

The research was timed to start prior to the mentoring programme starting for the student participants. Timing was important as the mentoring programme usually lasted about six months or less in the lead up to the GCSE exams. This allowed the second set of interviews to be conducted either near the end or after the completion of the programme. Questionnaires and interviews with staff were not as time-restricted as access was available throughout the academic year. The timetable for the research is shown below:

Table 3.3: Research Timetable

Phase	Date	Type of activity	Participant(s)
Pilot	August 2008	Student interview – focus groups	Pilot A
Pilot	October 2008	Student interviews - individual	Pilot B
Pilot	September 2008	Teacher questionnaire	Pilot C
Pilot	June 2009	Teacher interview	Pilot D
Research	Dec 2008	School A Pre-mentoring: focus group interviews	Student Groups:: AA1, AB1, AC1; AD1, AE1; AH2,

			AG2, AI2; AJ2, AK2, AL2; AN3, AM3, AO3
	Dec 2008	School A Pre-mentoring: individual interviews	Student AO3 Student AJ2 Student AA1
	Jan 2009	School A Pre-mentoring: mixed group interviews	Student groups: AU1, AP1, AQ1, AV1, AW2; AX2, AY1, AZ2, AAA1, AAB1, AAC1; AAD2
	Jan 2009	School B Pre-mentoring: focus group interviews	Student Groups: BA1, BB1, BC1, BD1, BE1, BF1; BG2, BH2, BI2, BJ2, BK2, BL2; BN3, BO3, BP3; BM3
	Jan 2009	School B Pre-mentoring: individual interviews	Student BO3 Student BJ2 Student BC1 Student BD1
	May 2009	School B Post-mentoring: individual interviews	Student BJ2 Student BB1 Student BL2 Student BP3
	May 2009	School B Post-mentoring: group interviews	Student groups: BB1, BC1; BJ2, BI2, BM2; BM3, BL2
	May 2009	School A Post-mentoring: individual interviews	Student AC1 Student AD1 Student AA1 Student AJ2 Student AO3
	May 2009	School A Post-mentoring: group interviews	Student groups: AD1, AE1, AF1; AA1, AB1, AC1; AM3, AN3, AG2, AK2; AK2, AL2; AM3, AN3; AI2, AO3
	April 2009	School A Staff questionnaire	Staff participants
	May 2009	School B Staff questionnaire	Staff participants
	June 2009	School A Staff interviews	Staff participants
	Sept 2009	School B Staff interviews	Staff participants

In School A fourteen group and nine individual student interviews were conducted as well as twenty staff interviews. In School B seven group and eight individual student interviews were conducted as well as eight staff interviews. Further details of student interview composition can be found in Appendix 5.

3.10 Data Collection Strategies

Interviews were the main source of data collection in this research. However, a staff questionnaire and school documentation relating to the mentoring programme and personalised learning were additional sources of data to complement the data derived from the interviews.

This section outlines the different data collection strategies used in this research, the piloting of the different strategies and resultant changes.

3.10.1 Staff questionnaire

The staff questionnaire was used prior to the interviews to identify staff with varying levels of mentoring experience and training. The initial questions related to:

- their role in the school,

- the length of time the member of staff had been working at the school

- experience of mentoring (related to research question 1, 2 and 3)

- their experience of mentoring training (related to research question 1, 2 and 3)

The information from the questionnaire was used to frame the semi-structured interview.

The pilot questionnaire included eight questions. Two volunteers completed the questionnaire and I timed how long they took to complete it to ensure that the questionnaire was not too time-consuming. The volunteers were asked for feedback regarding the questions in the questionnaire and the process in which they were approached to participate. This led to clarification of the opening statement on the questionnaire introducing the study's purpose and instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. An additional comments box at the end of the questionnaire was added to allow for any feedback comments and boxes for alternative answers to questions other than the fixed choice of answers presented. The second participant offered no suggested modification to the layout and questions presented in the questionnaire.

3.10.1.2 Staff semi-structured interview

Planning is needed to ensure that interviews relate to the research questions. Therefore an interview schedule was developed (see Appendix 2). In addition, a strategy for identifying and addressing explanations for findings was necessary; therefore questions were included in the interview schedule to

answer possible rival explanations, for example, whether staff felt that mentoring year 11 students was voluntary or a requirement of being at the school.

Questions in the interview started with more 'how' questions to encourage participants to be descriptive about their practices in mentoring rather than 'why' questions, which may be construed as judgemental or threatening (Yin 2009). It was unnecessary to start with prescriptive questions and statements as this information had already been gained by the staff questionnaire to contextualise participant's answers. The questions were also phrased using language that was familiar by all staff rather than 'education-centric' language that may not be readily understood by staff who were not teachers. Questions were open-ended to gain information about their opinions, actions and attitudes.

A pilot staff interviews were conducted with the purpose of testing questions for interpretation issues and clarity. A teacher from another school and a non-teacher assisted in piloting the staff semi-structured interview. The data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The outcome of the pilots informed the further development of questions and refined the interview schedules; for example, the first question stated 'Tell me about you experience of mentoring', which was too much like an order so it was replaced with 'Have you ever been mentored before, inside or outside school?' This question related to research question 1..

This information allowed the semi-structured interviews to be personalised to elicit information relating to the history of the programme, their experiences of training, their reasons for choosing to become mentors and choosing their mentees, and a starting point to elaborate on their opinion of the mentoring programme. The semi-structured interview was organised into three parts:

- Part 1 – generalised questions relating to purpose of mentoring, reasons for being a mentor, feelings about the mentoring process, reasons for choosing mentees, perceptions of students feelings regarding mentoring, how students are affected by mentoring and the activities involved in sessions. This section relates to research questions 1, 2 and 3.

- Part 2 – personalised questions relating to the questionnaire. This section relates to research question 1, 2 and 3.

- Part 3 – generalised questions relating to personalised learning, their view of the purpose of personalised learning, their interpretation of personalised learning experiences and how the mentoring programme could be involved in personalising learning. This relates to research questions 4 and 5.

The pilot semi-structured interview was conducted as individual interviews. The participants were interviewed using an interview schedule with questions relating to the research questions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed

then analysed for themes. At the end of the interviews, the participants were also asked for feedback regarding the experience. The feedback suggested that where questions were asked, pre-planned prompts for each question was necessary to assist me in focussing on the research questions and not straying off topic. This allowed me to focus on the participant's answers rather than the formulation of prompts to clarify points or elaborate on answers.

The pilot semi-structured interviews confirmed some areas of research. Issues relating to the definition and purpose of mentoring and personalised learning were emphasised, which was mirrored in the literature review. Many issues that were expected were discussed, however the views of personalised learning was a particular sticking point as a significant number of staff did not have any knowledge of personalised learning. This inhibited further exploration of the issue of personalised learning in some instances.

3.10.2 Individual and Group Student interviews

The questions in the pre-mentoring semi-structured interview with mentees focussed on the following areas prior to mentoring commencing:

- Previous mentoring experience (research question 1)

- What they thought mentoring would do for them. (research question 1)

- The purpose of the mentoring programme (research question 1)

- What their hopes of mentoring were. (research question 1 and 2)

- Description of how mentors and mentees are matched (research question 3)

- Their views on how friends and parents perceived mentoring (research questions 2 and 3)

- Questions relating to different outcomes potential outcomes of mentoring based on the aims of the programme. (research questions 2 and 3)

The individual interviews allowed me to gain more detail away from the influence of other students and to check for inconsistencies in responses.

The post-mentoring group interviews focussed on the same areas but were based on the students' experiences of the mentoring programme and were used to clarify some of the responses in the first group interview. The individual semi-structured interviews allowed for clarification of responses in the first interview and the opportunity to change their viewpoints if necessary.

The semi-structured group interviews were piloted with participants from sixth form who had been involved in mentoring during their previous year in the school. Questions relating to the process of mentoring were moved from the pre-mentoring interviews to the post-mentoring interviews as students had not started the mentoring programme and would have had difficulty answering these questions. Feedback from these interviews suggested that some questions were too open, wording in questions that asked about problems were

viewed as too negative and needed to be reworded and questions asking participants to 'tell me' about something was viewed to be too similar to a command so needed to be reworded.

As a result of conducting a pilot study for the constituent instruments of the research project, the researcher was enabled to practice the skills required for designing a questionnaire and interview as well as practising on a small sample. The process allowed for unclear, insensitive or vague questions to be reworded or removed such as: 'Have you any problems with your homework this term?' was deemed too negative and removed from the schedule, while 'Tell me about yourself' was too open and direct. This was changed to two questions ; 'What three things do you like about yourself?' and 'What three things would you like to change about yourself?'. This question related to research question 3 (see Appendix 2).

3.10.3 Documentation

Documentation was used to provide additional information regarding the formal mentoring programme and the written evidence of this. In School B there was little documentation available only public documentation in the form of newsletters and Ofsted reports. In School A I was able to gain access to historical documentation of the mentoring programme, documentation regarding the current mentoring programme, a previous student questionnaire based evaluation of the mentoring programme, Ofsted reports and newsletters. The documentary evidence is detailed below:

Table 3.4 School Documentation

School A documentation	School B documentation
Ofsted reports 2002 and 2007	Ofsted reports 2004, 2007 and 2011
Newsletter March 2011	Newletters:
ATL grades – 2009	16th, 23rd and 30th Jan 2009
Letter to teachers 2009	April 2009
Student tracking sheet 2009-10	May 2009
Student revision guide (undated)	Sept 2009
Mentoring session 1 information 2009	Oct 2009
Pupil mentoring booklet 2001	Jan 2010
Yr 11 mentoring – pupil profile form 2006	Feb 2010
Parents booklet (undated)	
Letter to parents (2008)	
Mentoring questionnaire reponses (undated)	
Mentoring programme 2001-02	
Mentoring programme 2002-03	
Mentoring programme 2005	
Mentoring guidance 2011	
Three year plan 2010-2013	

3.11 Ethics

The morality of conduct in relation to any research is complex. This morality focuses on every aspect of the research from the focus of the study through to dissemination (Thomas, 2011). This section details the ethical issues relating to the design of the study, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, writing and dissemination.

Researchers involved in any kind of research have to anticipate and plan for any ethical concerns. The University of Nottingham, School of Education followed the BERA (British Educational Research Association's) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) at the time of the research . The University of Nottingham's ethics approval process as well as the guidance from BERA provided an ethical framework to work from in this study and guided the choices made to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner.

The subjects under research were academic mentoring and personalised learning (Cresswell, 2003). The study of these areas was viewed to be of benefit to students in future years of the school and also assisted staff in providing the students with a better service (Cohen *et al*., 2000, Cresswell, 2003, Simons, 2005). In considering the location of the study, the convenient choice for a lone researcher was their workplace where they were familiar with the processes and the potential participants. The issue of access and acceptance of the study to the institution was through a letter sent to the LEA (Local Education Authority) advisor for advice on protocol and the head teacher. This letter outlined the study's purpose, the potential benefit to the school, how the study was going to be conducted, the demands to be placed on the participants and the instruments used (Cohen *et al*., 2000). The second location for the study was a similar school in the area where I was unknown

and would take the role as an external researcher. The process to gain access was repeated with this school.

The design of the study required that for the student interviews parents needed to be informed. An article in the school newsletter initially raised the awareness of the study to parents and students. Students were also introduced to the study through an assembly at each school. The informed consent was addressed through a letter to the parents that provided information regarding the nature, purpose and methods of the study, expected benefits, information regarding confidentiality, anonymity and how data will be held, ethical procedures and my full name and contact details (Thomas, 2011). A tear off slip at the end of the letter was used as a method of parents giving their permission for their children to participate. Children also had to sign the form to signify their willingness to participate.

In working with children, there are a number of important considerations that had to be attended to prior to starting research:

•   The researcher was CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checked

•   Permission was sought from parents or guardians.

•   Disruption was minimized especially as the GCSE exam period and the time leading up to the exams are important periods of time for the students.

•   Participation was voluntary.

•   The privacy of the students was to be respected, however if they disclose something that is of a criminal nature or of concern, it must be passed on to the relevant authority.

•   Participants were aware of the purpose of the study, the procedures and any benefits that they would received from the research.

•   Participants were aware of their right to ask questions and obtain the results of the study.

(Bryman, 2004)

As previously stated, the method used in the study with student participants was group and individual interviews. The research instruments needed to be piloted in order for any ethical issues to emerge then addressed. This ensured that any issues were detected before the study begins and, to avoid difficulties or misunderstandings for participants (Cresswell, 2003). The location of the interviews was important as students may be intimidated if a manager's room was used, or the potential for others to see them in a classroom. The location at School A was a meeting room, which was a neutral place away from other students to avoid distractions and interruptions. In school B, the meeting place for interviews was outside of my control and was determined by the head of year. This was a large room away from the main building that allowed space for group meetings and little interruption.

At the start of each group or individual interview, students were re-introduced to the study and given the opportunity to withdraw from the study, reassured about anonymity and confidentiality, and asked if they were approved of being recorded. The method of recording the interview was a solid state recording device to keep recording noise levels low to allow participants to talk freely without being self-conscious. However, due to chid protection issues students were also advised that if they mentioned any situation where they were being harmed in any way then the research could not keep this confidential and a teacher would have to be informed. Also individual interviews had to be conducted with the door open to protect both the interviewer and the interviewee.

Whilst conducting the group and interviews, I had to be mindful of the potential for students losing face in front of their peers and the power differential between myself and the students (Thomas, 2011, Cohen *et al*., 2000). Whether as teacher or external researcher, I would be viewed as an authority figure by students. To address this, I tried to establish a rapport with students and actively listened to them so that they felt that what they were saying was being taken seriously. This strategy also assisted in motivating participants to discuss their thoughts and keep the discussion going.

Staff from School A and School B were introduced to the study through a presentation at a staff meeting in their respective schools. The purpose and methods of the study were described as well as potential benefits to the school

and the students. Their participation was sought through a letter and a questionnaire. The letter to the potential participants provided essential information that mirrored the information provided to the students. The completion of the questionnaire coupled with the signing of the letter confirmed their consent to participate in the study. The questionnaire was piloted in advance of distribution to ensure that any ethical issues were addressed.

In School A, staff interviews were conducted in a meeting room away from distractions or interruptions unless the participant requested another location. A few participants requested that the interview be conducted in their office. This may have been due to their limited time availability but it also may have been to reinforce their status in the school and it may have put them more at ease to allow them to speak more freely. As with the student interviews, the staff participants were re-informed of the nature and purpose of the study, anonymity and confidentiality were addressed, and whether they approved of being recorded during the interview.

Data was collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The data was stored securely in a location protected by a password. The University of Nottingham supervisor and I had access to the data. In relation to presentation of findings and dissemination, the issue of traceability was at the forefront. I have endeavoured to ensure that any information that may

allow a reader of the study to trace the location of the study and participants have been removed from the study report.

In this study I hold the role of internal researcher in School A and external researcher in School B. These two stances impact on the quality of data obtained in this study. If I had been an external researcher in School A, different information may have been gained from the participants. These approaches to the study will have affected the conduct of the research and the consequent analysis and presentation. Awareness of my biases was important to acknowledge and were reduced through piloting instruments, asking for clarification in interviews and looking for evidence that disputed preconceived ideas (Cohen *et al*., 2000).

The next section will describe the process used to code the data collected through interviews and analysis.

3.12 Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

3.12.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate GCSE mentoring; how students and staff understand the purpose of mentoring (research question 1), how mentoring helps students achieve their targets (research question 2) and how it works for different students (research question 3). Personalised learning

formed the second strand of this study; how personalised learning is understood by staff (research question 4). The two aspects were merged in the question asking how mentoring could support personalised learning (research question 5). The answers to these questions were sought through questionnaires, interviews with staff and interviews with students of two schools; School A and School B, and analysis of official school documentation that related to the mentoring programme and personalised learning.

In this chapter, the analysis process that took place is described for the staff questionnaire, student and staff interviews, and documents collected. The process of collecting the data, the analysis of that data to identify emerging themes, called nodes, and the classification of these nodes to produce larger themes were described. The emergent free nodes and themes are detailed in Appendix 3.

The first part of this section (3.12.2) describes the process of distributing and collecting questionnaires, and analysis of the questionnaires. The second part (3.12.3) describes the process of interviewing and analysing the student interviews and teacher interviews. The second part (3.12.4) describes the document analysis process. The third section (3.12.5) describes the further analysis that was undertaken to fully explore the link between personalised learning and mentoring. This part of the analysis incorporated the development of psychological characteristics for personalised learning and linked this to the psychological characteristics that mentoring could develop.

The fifth and sixth part (sections 3.12.6 and 3.12.7) of this chapter described the experience of conducting this project in both schools.

3.12.2 Questionnaire Analysis

The responses from the questionnaire were collated in an Edexcel spreadsheet for School A and B. Details in the responses have been anonymised and the open question responses have been removed. How these responses were used in the design of the staff interview questions is discussed later in this section. The responses from the School A and B staff questionnaire, excluding the open answer questions, are detailed in Appendix 7 and summarised below:

Table 3.5 Summary of School A and School B Staff Questionnaire Responses

School	School A	School B
No of questionnaires	25	13
Teaching experience of participants	Range: 1-37 years Mean: 13.4 years	Range: 0.25-36 years Mean: 20.3 years
Teaching experience at the school	Mean: 7.2 years	Mean: 12.5 years
Experience of mentoring: As a pupil As a teacher other	56% 7% 86% 14%	46% 17% 100% 33%
Been a mentor:		

To year 11	80%	40%
To other year group	40%	23%
To student teachers	60%	54%
To NQTs	48%	46%
To new staff	60%	54%
To others	20%	15%

The responses were used in the design of the second part of the interview where questions were personalised to the interview based on their questionnaire responses. To illustrate, School B participant D01 reported that they had been mentored as a pupil at school and in a previous professional role. These responses lead to a series of questions exploring their mentoring experiences, and how these experiences may have affected their present mentoring practices. These interview questions informed research questions 1, 2 and 3. School A participant T3 reported that in their time at the school they had not mentored year 11 students, which led to questions in their interview regarding their reasons for not mentoring year 11 students. This interview question informed research questions 2 and 3 in regards teachers being mentors.

The open question responses were used to elaborate their answers in the staff interviews. In School A, participant S1 reported that they were

'Unsure about impact & effectiveness'

This led to the following questions (related to research questions 2 and 3) in their interview:

'You mentioned that you were unsure of the impact and effectiveness. From your mentoring group, have you felt that it has had an impact on the students you mentor?

What kind of impact?'

In School B, participant A01 reported that she thought that the mentoring programme was

'Rather 'bitty'.'

This led to questions in their interview (related to research question 2 and 3) to probe this comment:

'You mentioned that the mentoring was 'bitty'. Can you tell me what you meant by that?'

3.12.3 Interview Analysis

The interviews were transcribed from the recordings in Microsoft Word. Questions and answers were clearly differentiated. Analysis of the data was carried out using NVivo 8 software. The interviews were uploaded into the

software and put into folders for clear identification, each one stored

separately.

I read the text. Through subjective judgements, ideas were flagged and coded

as nodes. This process used the research questions at this stage. The text was

re-read carefully to identify flagged ideas, as well as identifying any additional

new nodes. I reviewed the flagged ideas or nodes to look for other instances of

previously identified ideas or nodes. The nodes were reviewed to check for

commonality across similar nodes for themes to emerge. The text is then re-

examined in terms of these themes and, additional coding and re coding was

done. The final forms of the themes were defined and quotations from the

original text were used to illustrate the theme. Then, related these themes,

supported by example quotes, to the original research questions (ref to section

1.3). In addition, interview text was then re-examined in light of any aspects

of the research questions that were not covered or addressed by the emerging

themes.

To exemplify this process, this quote was identified as information relating to

how students perceived mentoring before it had started. :

> *I thought we'd have to like a proper counselling session where*
> *you'd have to bring in your diary of your week and you'd have to*
> *spill all your guts and I just got really scared. [Student AD1]*

After re-reading the interviews, this was categorised together with:

> *...to kind of prioritise and organise and someone else is there to help if you forget stuck and stuff like that [Student BC1]*

The information was categorised under 'prior idea of mentoring', which related to research question 1. The interviews were re-examined and text was considered in terms of the new category as well as original data to avoid contradictions.

The following quote was coded under 'relationship with teacher' as it was cited as the student's perception of their experiences with one of their teachers:

> *...I'm old enough to make my own decisions and that, you don't need to keep moaning at me. [Student BO3]*

After a re-reading of the text, the following quote was also coded under the same node:

> *She's sort of like is strict and sort of gets to the point rather than sort of dodging it. [Student BH2]*

These quotes were then categorised with other quotes relating to relationships which related to research question 2 and 3.

The process described above is indicative of an interpretivist understanding of participant's experiences. This allowed a flexible approach to analysis. Some sections of the data were coded more than once as they reflected more than one idea; for example, comments relating to motivation frequently coincided with mentoring aims, for example:

> *...'cause once you get all the coursework done then you start to feel like oh, I can actually do quite well in this subject so you sort of pay attention a bit more. [Student BJ2]*

This was coded under 'mentoring aims' for the coursework completion objective of mentoring and 'motivation' for the motivating effect for this student for completing their coursework, which related to research questions 1 and 2.

Similar ideas were then categorised together to make a theme such as the theme 'Personalised Learning Purpose' which comprised of the ideas relating to 'PL definition', 'PL process', 'early GCSEs' and 'importance of PL'. The perceived definitions of personalised learning tended to relate to what it could achieve. The process of personalised learning was usually explained in terms of what it could achieve as well as how it could be achieved. The participant's response relating to early GCSEs was one method of demonstrating their understanding of personalised learning. The importance of personalised learning tended to be stated in terms of how the participant defined personalised learning.

Coding from emergent themes allowed analysis to be framed by the importance participants placed on their perceptions rather than the research aims. Once the themes were identified, the data re-analysis was reframed with the research questions in mind to identify any further themes and to identify comments that could be used to exemplify the research questions. These comments were checked for their context by checking with the original recordings and transcripts. The rationale for analysing the data in this way was

to reduce the researcher's influence, which may have led to evidence being excluded.

An iterative approach to data analysis led to data reduction of free nodes that reflected a similar theme being merged together into larger categories and related to larger ideas and concepts. An example was the free nodes 'trust' and 'respect'. They related to the relationship between mentor and students, and were collated in the 'relationship with mentor' node. Other free nodes had connections with a relationship with parents, teachers or peers therefore I decided that the overarching concept was 'relationships', which these free nodes eventually were merged within. For each section, the data needed to be further interrogated for outliers and the possible reasons behind them. The themes and free nodes are detailed in Appendix 3.

The student interviews had been conducted prior to mentoring starting and, later, near the end of the mentoring programme for the purpose of exploring preconceptions of mentoring and clarifying responses. The only categories I have kept in relation to interviews pre and post mentoring are:

- the student definition of mentoring (related to research question 1),

- the activities they expected in mentoring (related to research question 2) and

- what the students thought the purpose of mentoring was (related to research question 1).

Prior to data analysis it was decided that there would be little discernible difference in responses, outside of the categories preciously mentioned, due to the short period of time for the programme. I therefore merged the pre-mentoring interviews and later mentoring interviews for analysis of each ability grouping (relates to research question 3). Each ATL (attitude to learning) group was analysed and the free nodes identified. The mixed ability interviews were analysed together but separate from the individual interviews. These interviews allowed the researcher to interview a broader range of students within the short time period.

The individual student interviews for each of the ATL groups were analysed together but separate from the group interviews. This approach allowed a general overview to be produced and individual differences in views were used to illustrate any discontinuity in views. The individual interviews were used to question individuals further and ensure that students were not inhibited from speaking within the group setting.

3.12.4 Document Analysis

In School A, a variety of documents both formal and informal produced by the school for teachers, parents and students, and the school's OFSTED reports from 2002, 2007 and 2011 were analysed. In School B, newsletters produced by the school for distribution to parents via their children and, the school's OFSTED reports from 2004, 2007 and 2011 were analysed.

As the documents were mainly hard copies, they were scanned on a flatbed scanner and transformed into an editable document using optical character recognition software, ABBYY FineReader 6.0 Spirit software. Analysis of the data was then carried out using NVivo 8 software. The documents were transferred into the software and put into folders for clear identification, each one stored separately.

The documents were read to code for emerging themes in the first instance, for example the following passage from School B's 2004 Ofsted report was coded in the first instance under 'academic mentoring' and 'target setting' :

> *The students are aware of how to improve though staff recognise the need to further improve mentoring and target-setting... [School B Ofsted 2004]*

However, the academic mentoring and target setting referred to in this passage is related to aspects of student self-regulation. In the second round of coding, this passage was coded under 'outcomes'.

The documents were then re-analysed with the nodes and themes identified from the interviews in mind. The free nodes related to similar themes to those identified in the interviews. The documents were then analysed with the research questions in mind. These free nodes were organised into larger themes that reflected similar ideas, for example, free nodes mentoring activities and counselling had similar ideas and were incorporated into

mentoring process node, and the free nodes expectations, control and confrontation were incorporated into the relationships node. Quotes were then identified to illustrate particular points and themes. The free node lists and themes are detailed in Appendix 3.

Documentation from each school provided an insight into the formal mentoring programme, its objectives, activities suggested or prescribed for meetings, perceived outcomes, and history. The purpose of using documentation from each school was to examine the mentoring programmes from a different angle and enabled me to highlight any similarities or contradictions in evidence between the documentation and, interviews with students and staff.

For example the mentoring guidance for School A's first mentoring session in 2009 focus was:

> *In this mentoring session students will begin to record their current performance so as to track their progress in the build up to their examinations. [session 1 2009]*

Senior leader Vice Principal S1 cited his opinion of the guidance as:

> *It gave an outline of what to do and what to be covered, what to cover in the sessions. [Vice Principal S1]*

However, one of School A's Teachers T4 claimed:

> *I didn't always stick to it because I feel you go with what the students want at the time.{Teacher T4]*

Similar responses from other members of staff highlighted a discrepancy

between the documentation of what was meant to happen in mentoring

sessions, how senior leaders felt it should be used and how the staff used the guidance.

3.12.5 Further Analysis – The Psychological Dimension

A further exploration of the connection between mentoring and personalised learning was required to find out if mentoring could support personalised learning in some way. The initial examination of the data focussed on mentoring and personalised learning independently. However, through the literature review there were apparent common areas between mentoring and personalised learning. The outcomes of many mentoring programmes could be classified into skills that were beneficial for learning, personal characteristics and coaching. Personalised learning required students to have particular skills and characteristics to enable them to participate fully in their education. The common areas between mentoring outcomes and personalised learning requirements lay in those skills and personal characteristics: psychological characteristics. Many secondary school mentoring programmes identified desirable characteristics to develop in students to ensure an improvement in attainment. DCSF (2008b) suggested that students would benefit more from personalised learning if they develop certain characteristics such as responsibility to allow students to full participate in the experience of personalised learning. The psychological characteristics needed for a student to participate in personalised education that could be supported by mentoring required further analysis of the evidence collected (see Appendix 3).

The literature regarding the psychological characteristics that would aid personalised learning and research that reflected these characteristics in a mentoring programme was investigated. In light of the findings from literature, the interview and documentary evidence was re-analysed to assess commonalities between the literature review and views of each school's mentoring programme. The nodes were then arranged into themes that would be used in association with the literature review and research questions.

For School A, the themes identified were motivation, self-esteem, self-regulation and autonomy. Self-regulation was identified as a theme, which included evaluation, control and aspects of autonomy.   However, autonomy has wider implications than within learning therefore autonomy was made a separate theme. School, teacher and student connectedness is associated with student motivation and self-esteem. However, perceived aims of the mentoring programme and outcomes suggested that motivation was of greater importance to participants so was made a separate theme. Connectedness was subsequently included within the theme of motivation. For example, the following interview excerpt was coded as 'motivation orientation' as the student infers that they are motivated by the need to be a good example to others.

> *You just want to keep yourself out of bad things and want to keep yourself to the good things so when you're older you don't want your children to be like that. We just want to be a role model for everyone. [Student AO3]*

For School B, the three main themes identified were motivation, self-regulation and self-esteem. For example, the following interview excerpt was coded as 'motivation orientation' as the student seems to be motivated by the expectations of their mentor.

> *The only reason I want to do it is 'cause I feel bad going next week and being like haven't revised 'cause he's a nice teacher. [Student BO3]*

In the literature review, one of the main themes was autonomy. However, teachers and students views showed little evidence of autonomy. There was some evidence from descriptions of student activities that reflected taking responsibility. I have therefore positioned responsibility within the main theme of self-regulation as it is linked with the idea of taking control of one's learning leading to a limited level of autonomy.

3.13 Researcher Role in School A

The dual role of being a teacher and researcher in school A provided some benefits but also came with its disadvantages. The year that I started this research project, I decided not to participate in the mentoring process. This avoided any conflicts of interest with student interviewees. That particular year I taught only one year 11 class, however I had taught many of the interviewees at some time in their secondary education. This meant that some student interviewees knew me as their class teacher or knew of me. However, I made it clear at the start of the interviews and when introducing the research project to the year group that I was not acting as a teacher but as a researcher. The students were either informal with me or were willing to share lots of

information; for example, some students were open about their animosity towards certain members of staff while others offered insight into their daily lives. Some students were concerned that I would be offended by something they said; for example, one student's view of mentoring was that it was boring then added that I shouldn't take this personally.

Teachers felt able to discuss the research project with me at any point in the school day when it crossed their mind. They were open about their concerns and opinions; however this was not on record. I felt that I could not report it due to those teachers choosing not to be formally interviewed and they had not agreed to the research protocols. Those teachers who did sign up to the research project were honest about their views and opinions possibly due to knowing me; for example, one of the vice principals felt able to criticise the mentoring programme rather than following official school policy. However, not all teachers were as critical about the programme possibly due to the desire to see positive effects or assuming that I knew what the issues were as part of the school.

Knowledge of the staff, school and its systems also allowed me unhindered access to any material that I wanted, which was very beneficial. This allowed me access to present and historical documentation relating to mentoring as well as a previous evaluation of the mentoring programme. However, I was not able to access meetings relating to the current or future mentoring programmes at senior and middle leadership level.

Role duality is an issue for many researchers to consider in terms of research issues and logistical issues. Logistically, the disadvantages of having the dual role of teacher and researcher was evident in the issues relating to time for student interviews. I would book a meeting room for the interviews and then find that they had been allocated for another purpose without warning. Although I had access to students, I found it difficult to get them to attend on time or as arranged.

Time was also tight for interviews when I had other responsibilities and roles to play. There was no room for interviews going over time due to lessons that had to be taught and duties to be attended to for other teachers as well as myself. Students had other lessons to attend and I did not want to get in the way of their studies in other subjects.

As a researcher who was a member of the group under investigation, there were ethical as well as research implications for the study. Ethical issues included voluntary consent being influenced by my status as a teacher, and issues of confidentiality to the continuing relationship between the participants and myself (Nolen and Putten, 2007). I emphasised to students that their participation in the research was completely voluntary and there would be no problem if they chose not to participate. The students were also encouraged to discuss the study with their parents before making a decision on whether to

participate. Outside of the interviews, the issue of confidentiality did not present itself; students did not discuss or approach any of the things that were discussed in the interviews.

Research issues from the dual role of teacher and researcher were based on validity and reliability. As a member of the community under investigation, I need to be aware of my assumptions in relation to the culture as well as my biases. Role confusion may lead to me responding to participants in interviews as a teacher rather than a researcher. The focus of interviews could be formed by my perceptions and personal experiences rather than the interviewee's perceptions and experiences (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). However, rather than reducing the influence of one role over the other, Blair (2010) suggested accepting the duality of the roles and not dissociating himself from the role of teacher as he felt this was incongruent. However, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) claimed that the insider, outsider research duality is a false dichotomy and rather the issue is related to the ability to be honest and genuinely interested in participant's perceptions as well as being able to accurately represent their perceptions and this is the approach I tried to take.

The following sections describe the experience of interviewing students and teachers. The process of interviewing them is detailed, the participants and the themes identified from the evidence gained.

3.13.1 Student Interviews

In School A mentoring of students for the purpose of work experience started late in year 10. The GCSE mentoring started after work experience in year 11; this was two weeks into the academic year of 2008/09.

When meeting students, the interviews were held in the school meeting room and when the meeting room was not available an available classroom was used. The GCSE mentoring programme had only started in the second half of September.   I waited for the group to arrive from the start of lunch break. Each time, they came in almost collectively. I asked them to take a seat and introduced myself. I reiterated to them the purpose of the meeting and asked if they were still happy to talk to me; they said they were. I checked that they had all handed in their consent forms and it was signed by their parents and themselves (See Appendix 4). I explained that I would be recording the interview using a microphone sitting on the desk and checked that they were happy with this – they said they were. Using the interview schedule, I started asking the questions. I asked for clarification on points when required. At the end of the interview, I asked if they had any questions relating to the interview. All interviews followed this process however, there was difficulty getting a further ATL3 group interview due to erratic attendance by some of the interviewees. The details of interview participants are presented in Appendix 5.

In January 2009, due to limitations in time to gain access to students and availability of students, I decided to have three mixed ATL group interviews. These interviews gave me the opportunity to talk to a wide range of students who were willing to participate and had given permission but were not part of the specific ATL or individual interviews. In May 2009, a collection of individual and group interviews were carried out when the mentoring programme had ended for some students or was nearing the end. The membership of these interviews consisted of the same participants as those who were interviewed at the start of the mentoring programme. Due to limited time, ATL2 and ATL3 interviews were conducted in pairs.   An issue relating to this situation was that some individuals had strong personalities that had the potential to dominate if the space was not made for the other participant to respond.

The themes identified through analysis from the student interviews in School A were purpose of mentoring, relationships, mentoring processes, teacher/ mentor characteristics, students/mentees, school/lesson processes, group, opinions of mentoring, and personalisation (Appendix 3).

3.13.2 Teacher interviews

At the beginning of the academic year in 2008, teachers were contacted to find out if they would be interested in being involved with the research project. They were asked to complete a questionnaire to aid in the selection of a sample of teachers who had little experience of mentoring and those who had a

number of years experience (see Appendix 6). At this time, they were also being asked to sign up to be mentors. In December of that year, they were given a form to use to make notes regarding their thoughts on mentoring. At the end of June, the teachers were contacted regarding a suitable time and place for an interview.

The themes identified from teacher interview analysis at School A were mentoring purpose, relationship, PL purpose, PL and mentoring, mentoring process, mentoring effectiveness, and mentors (Appendix 3).

3.14 Research Role in School B

In School B, I was seen as someone who was doing a project on mentoring. The experience of being seen in a single researcher role was refreshing. The benefit of being a guest to the school was that there was no expectation of me to do anything else other than talk to students and teachers about mentoring. Many of the arrangements that I would have had to carry out at School A were organised through the Head of Year. The meeting arrangements and the timings of the interviews were prearranged and were rarely changed. Interview timings were limited only by the time it took for me to travel from School A to School B, the needs of the students so that they did not miss any of their studies and absences.

I could turn up at the school and the students that I was to interview attended without me having to search for them. The students and teachers had no previous relationship with me that may have affected what they wanted to share with me. However, I needed to build relationships and trust with them so they would share their opinions and views as well as being honest about the mentoring programme.

Gaining access to documentation was problematic. Access to public documentation was not a problem but documentation provided to staff for the purpose of mentoring was difficult to access. Despite many requests through my liaison, no other relevant documentation was made available and I had to assume there was none that referred to the mentoring programme.

The following sections of this chapter describe the process of interviewing students and teachers. The dates of the interviews and the groups interviewed are provided as well as the makeup of the groups. The experience of the interviews is described and any relevant interactions.

3.14.1 Student Interviews

At School B on Friday 16th January 2009, I met groups of students in a room within the Design and Technology department. The mentoring programme had not started at this point in the term. I waited for each group to arrive from the end of lunch break. Each time, they came in almost collectively. I asked them

to sit at large square table and introduced myself. The ATL3 group was meant to be two females and two male students in the group, however only one of the boys attended. The interview was then changed to an individual interview at short notice to adapt to the circumstances.

Individual interviews were carried out on Friday afternoons in April. The process for the interviews were the same as the group interviews except the door was kept open in line with the child protection policy of the school. In May 2009, a collection of individual and group interviews were carried out when the mentoring programme had ended for some students or was nearing the end. The membership of the May 2009 interviews consisted of participants from the interviews prior to the mentoring programme started.

3.14.2 Teacher Interviews

At the beginning of the academic year in 2008, the researcher arranged to attend a morning meeting with teachers to introduce the project. They were asked to complete a questionnaire to aid in the selection of a sample of teachers who had little experience of mentoring and those who had a number of years experience. At the end of June, the teachers were contacted by e-mail regarding a suitable time for an interview. Each teacher contacted the researcher to arrange meetings at the school after the end of the school day. The room for conducting the interview was decided by the teacher.

On arrival to the school, the researcher met the teacher and was escorted to the room where the interview would be conducted. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the meeting and check that they were satisfied with the arrangement to record the interview and the ethical limits of the interview. The recording equipment was then set up and the interview commenced.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the themes identified from the analysis of the interviews and documents. The main points emerging from the literature review (discussed in Chapter 2) were:

i.   the accountability agenda has put schools under pressure to focus on particular groups of students to improve exam results;

ii. the definition of academic mentoring in secondary schools is inconsistent, ill-defined and tends to be context specific;

iii. academic mentoring incorporated a variety of activities determined by the programme and context;

iv. teachers' relationships with students had many similarities with the mentor-mentee relationship;

v.   personalised learning is a flexible concept that is context specific, and

vi. mentoring could potentially achieve a variety of different outcomes that could assist students in participation in personalised learning.

However, the question remains, how can academic mentoring contribute to the personalised learning agenda.

The present study examined two secondary schools to explore the different academic mentoring programmes aimed at year 11 students. The methodology of the study includes an analysis of a variety of documents relating to the mentoring programme and interviews with students, teachers, support staff, middle leaders and senior leaders.

This chapter discusses the findings of the research gathered by analysis of relevant documentation and the perspectives of staff and year 11 students at each school elicited from interviews. Initially the analysis of data was organised by groups of participants from each school into areas of similarity and difference. These areas were then compared and contrasted for each school. Using this structure, each group of participants' views is brought together by theme and is presented in this chapter in six broad sections:-

- The first section of the discussion for each school defines mentoring for that context. From the literature review, academic mentoring was often defined by the purpose or aims of the mentoring programme rather than having an explicit definition. This will combine with the purpose and aims of the mentoring programme as mentoring was defined and directed by the aims and purpose behind the mentoring programmes.

- The second section addresses mentoring logistics. Many organisational aspects were identified by participants and there were some distinct differences between the case study schools that I felt needed to be explored. This section will include mentoring grouping, matching

mentees and mentors, timing of meetings and potential for parents to be involved.

- The third section presents findings on mentoring activities and outcomes. The outcomes of mentoring are associated with many factors including the activities used in the mentoring sessions. This section will explore the activities and their potential outcomes.

- The fourth section focuses on the role of teachers as mentors. As each mentoring programme mainly uses teachers as mentors, the characteristics and skills that mentors may need and whether teachers are the best suited for this position are explored. This section includes the effectiveness of mentoring, characteristics and skills required of mentors, mentor support and the mentor-mentee relationship.

- The fifth section presents mentees perceptions of academic mentoring. Mentees are the main focus of the mentoring programmes and their perception of the process of mentoring will affect how successful the programmes are. This section includes mentees' perceptions of the relationship, their opinions of mentoring effectiveness and how they view their parents' participation in mentoring.

- The sixth section addresses personalised learning; its definitions, aims, purpose, skills needed by students and staff, and perspectives on how personalised learning could support mentoring in school.

4.2 Mentoring

This section will discuss different aspects of mentoring based upon an analysis of documentation and staff perceptions. The different perspectives of School A and School B are explored then contrasted at the end of each section.

4.2.1 Mentoring Definitions, Aims and Purpose

This section starts with a basic analysis of data related to mentoring definitions, aims and purpose in School A and School B.

4.2.1.1 School A

Mentoring purpose and definitions varied throughout the school; however most participants acknowledged the focus to be on GCSE results based upon the coursework and terminal exam as exemplified by:

> *...I think the students in year 11 are obviously doing their GCSEs, we want to make sure that we, that they get the best results that they possibly can and I think that that's also in the schools interests that the students get the best results that they can... [Director D1]*

> *I think with coursework, keeping them on target with coursework. ...Pushing them in that direction... [Teacher T4]*

Most of the original aims of the mentoring programme were echoed through the responses from staff; however the original aims of expectations and action planning were absent from participants' descriptions of mentoring as demonstrated by a teacher who claimed:

> *I personally think it's about, you know, helping students and making sure basically that they've got some targets for the year*

> *and making sure they stick to them really and they get the grades*
> *that they want to get at the end of year 11. [Teacher T3]*

This is reminiscent of instrumental mentoring as discussed by Karcher and Nakkula (2010). This variation may be due to changes in aims over the years as well as the lack of reinforcement of current aims. In the absence of reinforcement of mentoring aims, some staff may use their own interpretation of mentoring as a basis for their mentoring practices.

The different students' thoughts on mentoring were understandable as some may not have had any mentoring experience prior to the year 11 mentoring programme such as a focus on core subjects and alternative opportunities as shown by these students' comments:

> *Lots of English. Teaching us English, I don't know why. [Student*
> *AC1]*

> *I thought it was going to be very, very interesting to get to do*
> *something very active like go for trips and get some help ...for*
> *GCSEs [Student AO3]*

Once the programme had begun, their perceptions of the purpose and aims of mentoring reflected staff perceptions as this student claimed that mentoring was for:

> *...boosting you up for GCSEs [Student AO3]*

However, there was an element of nurturing in the perceptions of mentoring of some students and staff similar to the definition of mentoring that Kelly *et al* (2011) suggested as shown below:

> *I think it's about, erm, one to one talking with an adult to erm,*
> *help, so they can help you if you have any problems. They answer*
> *all your questions. [Student AAD2]*

> *I think mentoring is about being able to form a relationship with someone who can actually bounce things off but in a non-judgemental way so in other words you're there, it's support not as, not in an official capacity. [Teacher T1]*

The development and maintenance of a relationship seemed to be of importance to these participants. This may be due to the staff perception that those students did not have a significant adult in their lives and students may value the attention of a non-familial adult as demonstrated below:

> *I'd like to think it helped them in some degree dealing with the pressure of the exams by giving them a structure to follow and not to feel they were on their own 'cause they weren't getting any parental support so I think that was important for somebody to come and say, you know, do that. [Director D1]*

Rhodes *et al* (2000) suggested that this provided the student with adult guidance whilst simultaneously providing autonomy.

Definitions of mentoring were at times confused with tutoring as exemplified by:

> *...working on subjects that were difficult for you. That you weren't doing very well in and kinda like getting kinda tutored to do, to answer exam questions and stuff to push you towards that direction. [Student AA1]*

> *I'm not one that feels that there should be a major differentiation between mentoring and sort of tutoring, I think they're very similar. [Principal S3]*

This may be due to the belief that mentoring and tutoring were similar activities as form tutors were also expected to 'mentor' their form. In the definitions of mentoring from participants in the school, there seemed to be confusion as to whether mentoring was similar to tutoring or constituted a good teacher-student relationship.

The responsibility for the student's academic progress seemed to differ

depending on the student and member of staff. Some students and staff felt

that the responsibility for ensuring coursework was completed, sorting

problems and motivating students was the mentors, while others felt that this

was the student's responsibility as illustrated by:

> *...by the time you get to year 10 and 11 you have to say this is your life, these are your results, we're here for you, you're doing it for yourself and what are you doing and why are you doing it, and what do you want to do when you leave school or go on, that sort of thing. [Teacher T4]*

> *I think it's a bit like when teachers help you with school related issues, say like you have a problem in your class then you can tell them about it and they can sort it out I suppose. [Student AD1]*

Higher ATL students seemed to view the motivation to achieve as coming

from themselves while lower ATL students seemed to view the motivation as

coming from their teachers and mentors. Miller (2002) suggested that

mentoring externally motivated students, however the higher ability students

seemed to be internally motivated. Pintrich and Schunk (2002) supported the

belief that those students who are already motivated to learn would become

involved in their learning, which would lead to further intrinsic motivation.

Student perceptions of ability and expectations of outcomes have an impact on

their motivation. Lower ability students may have had lower perceptions of

their abilities, which may lead to lower levels of intrinsic motivation as

discussed by Schunk and Zimmerman (2006). This may encourage

dependence on the mentor for a source of motivation to avoid failure. Middle

leaders inferred that coursework completion and other tasks were instigated by

the mentor rather than allowing the student to take responsibility. This may

have stemmed from factors such as a lack of trust in the mentor-mentee relationship, the short time period until the exam, the mentor taking responsibility as they worried that their mentee doing badly in the exams would reflect upon them, or the mentee having a history of not completing tasks as exemplified by:

> *Results. Yeah, I like to look good as well. I suppose that the more everyone's helped, I think the better it looks all round and I actually think. Also I don't think we do enough. There isn't time. [Teacher T5]*

Evans (2005) suggested that different interpretations of mentoring may lead mentors to try to change student behaviour as illustrated by:

> *I knew part of it was not in giving advice but actually listening and helping them and listening to some of their problems and helping them negotiate that. [Teacher T5]*

> *...we had to write it down and sort behaviours as well. And he was really impressed with our behaviours because we all got 3s and 2s. [Student AO3]*

However, a combination of the school's needs and students' needs may have determined the mentor's role (Jones *et al* 2009).

Some students felt that the reason for mentoring year 11 students was that they were more mature and required a different approach compared to lower years as claimed by this student:

> *... in year 11 you've become more independent, you need more help, some help in making decisions and stuff because kind of it's like you only go though it once doing your GCSEs, you need someone else who has actually helped someone else before to help you so you can get your best results and go through with it best. [Student AA1]*

However, some students and teachers felt that the reason for mentoring year 11 students was due to an awareness of the short time between the start of the academic year and the examinations as illustrated by:

> *I think it's only very limited in as much as we only have some very short spaces of time [Teacher T5]*

> *...just because, like we've got the most like work to do in the shorter time. [Student AW2]*

A minority of lower ability students saw mentoring as a means of advising students beyond the exams and compulsory education where GCSEs were a means to their future career or studies. Other students seemed to feel that GCSE exams were the end point as demonstrated by:

> *...we also have decisions to make whether we are going to stay or go somewhere else or work or go to college or something. So we need help making decisions. [Student AM3]*

> *...isn't it just 'cause we've got our exams coming up and the school want to get us prepared for it and understand ahead of us and make sure we're up to data with our coursework so we can be entered into exams. [Student AJ2]*

Teachers may feel that they were accountable for their student's achievements (Astle *et al* 2011).   The focus on GCSE examination grades and monitoring of teachers to improve student attainment may have been the cause (Gorard 2005, Wößmann *et al* 2007).

In summary, most participants had different views on mentoring; however their underlying aim and purpose of academic mentoring was similar, i.e. to improve academic achievement. Some students also felt that year 11 was singled out for mentoring as they had different needs to lower year groups and

therefore needed a different form of assistance. As stated earlier, definitions of mentoring were confused with tutoring by a minority of participants; however there was also a need to distinguish their definitions from what constitutes a good teacher-student relationship.

4.2.1.2 School B

The perception of academic mentoring from Ofsted (2011) consisted of mentoring, tutoring, academic and pastoral aspects reflecting a confused definition of mentoring as shown below:

> *Their [students] progress is carefully tracked and they value highly the regular mentoring sessions with their tutors which provide them with effective academic and pastoral support [Ofsted 2011]*

Although students' perception of mentoring prior to the start of the programme was linked to grade improvement, some students felt the need for a counselling aspect to mentoring as exemplified by:

> *...and social skills 'cause it's not all about grades when you're going to interview. [Student BJ2]*

Only higher ability students questioned who the mentoring was for. They claimed that interventions were mainly for borderline students and underachieving students but felt that mentoring should be for the wider student population. The other groups assumed that mentoring would incorporate them.

After mentoring started, student perspectives matched documentation (School B newsletter May 2009). Interestingly, staff seemed to view mentoring as

having a developmental role, which is similar to Keller and Pryce's (2010) definition of mentoring as illustrated by:

> *It is helping personal development over long term. It's helping people make their own decisions by contacting the right people, giving them information, certain amount of offering advice but mainly is a listening ear and helping them making decisions.* *[Teacher T03]*

This was a marked difference from the perspectives of documentation and students experiences. Karcher and Nakkula (2010) believed that some mentoring programmes started as developmental then moved to instrumental to assist mentees in attaining their goals, however the mentoring relationship could move between the two approaches.

The divergence of perceptions of mentoring between staff and students could be due to many causes. At the time of the interviews, the school had begun to move its culture towards becoming a personalised learning/mentoring school. It had already started to change the vocabulary used such as the title of 'teaching assistant' became 'raising achievement facilitator'. The perceptions of staff that mentoring was a developmental tool for more than just academic achievement may have been part of this change. However, the change in culture may have failed to reach the students at this point. An alternative interpretation would be that teachers may still have been emphasising the academic achievement outcome of academic mentoring due to being comfortable in their historical mentoring practice. Ofsted's (2011) view of academic mentoring centred on academic achievement as part of school accountability. Students may be more sharply focussed on the academic

achievement perspective as the exams have implications for the student's next step in life.

4.2.1.3 Contrasting School A and School B

School A seemed to have a consistent understanding of the purpose of their mentoring programme, i.e. academic achievement, even though there were inconsistencies in the type of relationship that would accomplish this. Most staff saw mentoring in the traditional mentor-mentee relationship of helping a less experienced protégé by passing on the wisdom of the older, more experienced mentor similar to definitions of mentoring suggested by Beattie and Holden (1994) and Wood and Mayo-Wilson (2012). However, in School B differences between staff and students regarding the purpose of mentoring were apparent from the data   The staff perceived mentoring as a developmental tool, while students viewed it as a method to improve GCSE exam results.

The student expectations of mentoring in both schools included a counselling aspect. Some teachers supported this in each school by encouraging students with their personal development. However, this aspect of the academic mentoring programme did not get mentioned in aims from documentation from School A.

A few students in School A mentioned the perception that mentoring was primarily to improve the school's status.   In School B, a few students perceived mentoring as a layer of control to ensure students achieve academically. In each case, this may be due to an emphasis on achieving academically to the point where students feel that the interventions were for the sake of the teachers and the school. Alternatively, this issue may be due to the students who had this concern having trust issues relating to adults; however, this was not an issue mentioned by the majority of students. Hall (2003) and Jackson (2002) suggested that in business, coaching tended to focus on the needs of the organisation even though Campbell *et al* (2007) believed that individuals also benefitted. This may also apply to academic mentoring within schools and this may the case here.

4.2.2 Logistics of Mentoring

This section starts with basic analysis of logistical issues relating to mentoring programmes in each case study school. Logistics relates to the organisational aspects of the mentoring programme. These organisational aspects include the process of matching mentors and mentees, timings of meetings and parental involvement.

4.2.2.1 School A

The process of matching mentors and mentees started with the recruitment of mentors. Students and a minority of staff were not generally aware of the recruitment process for mentors. This may have caused confusion for

recruitment of mentors and possibly a barrier to recruiting more mentors.   The

voluntary nature of recruiting mentors was viewed by senior leaders as

beneficial to allow for self-selecting suitable mentors as exemplified by:

> *...some people are probably not suited to it so I wouldn't know so*
> *on reflection wouldn't have for all the teachers, it would have to be*
> *self-selective, some sort of process. [Vice Principal S2]*

There seemed to be some agreement between some senior leaders, middle

leaders, and teachers with the opinion that the process of matching of mentors

and mentees was disorganised. However, some students felt that being

matched to a mentor was a random act due to the composition of the groups.

These students were unable to see a commonality between mentees in their

group as illustrated by:

> *I think they like just choose like some people they want [Student*
> *AI2]*

> *I think they draw names out of a hat 'cause we're like a random*
> *bunch of people in my mentoring group. [Student AD1]*

 This may be due to mentors thinking about mentees as individuals rather than

the group dynamic. Alternatively, the students may not always be privy to the

reasons behind them being chosen as mentees.   However, some staff felt that

mentees were selected on the basis of the students who were liked rather than

the students who needed assistance as illustrated by:

> *I think the way it seems to be now, we've just gone through a*
> *process of allocation and a list goes up on the board and people*
> *cherry pick people they think, I think are going to be easier to get*
> *on with than maybe those that actually have the real need so and*
> *it's just names and it's over to the mentor to pick people. [Director*
> *D1]*

The majority of mentors chose mentees on the basis of having a positive

relationship with them; however there were other factors that were considered

such as how much the student would benefit from the intervention, whether the

student was on the C/D borderline, and current or previous experience of

teaching the student as illustrated by:

> *I like to pick the borderline student that I think would value from it more than either end and I also like to pick students I feel that I've got a good working relationship with to build on so I don't know what other staff do. [Teacher T4]*

> *I chose a couple of students that I taught GCSE PE so I had a slight vested interest in their grades but also interested in what they're obviously doing in their other lessons [Head of Department H2]*

This matched with student perceptions of why they were chosen by their

mentor as suggested by:

> *I think they like just choose like some people they want [Student AI2]*

> *...because you need improvement in their lesson [Student AAC1]*

> *They think they know you well. They choose you because they think they know you or … [Student AL2]*

However, an established relationship seemed to be the main reason for mentors

choosing their mentees.

If there was insufficient volunteer mentors, staff were approached to mentor.

Some staff suggested that it should not matter who the mentees were as long as

the mentor's intentions were for the good of the students.   A minority of

middle managers felt that approaching teachers to match them with students

they did not know was problematic. They did not feel able to assist students as they did not have an existing relationship with them. However, some teachers felt that due to their training, they should be able to help any student as illustrated by:

> *Both the students I mentored last year I didn't teach so I couldn't help them [Head of Department H4]*
>
> *...but then as a teacher you're trained to be able to help all your children in whatever capacity you can... [Teacher T2]*

When asked about whether mentees should have input in the mentor-mentee matching process, most students would have appreciated it. A minority of staff were concerned that using the perception of a relationship between the teacher and student as a basis for choosing their mentees may be one-sided therefore students should have a choice as exemplified by:

> *...'cause then teachers can get a choice, students don't get a choice. You know, you might pick a student and they might actually think – well, I don't have a great relationship with you. You might think I do but actually I don't, I'm just polite. So but I do think that's a good way. [Head of Department H1]*
>
> *...they could have had our input as well 'cause I didn't think he knew me that, he knew me academically and what I could do and what my weaknesses were but he didn't really know me as a person. [Student AE1]*

A minority of students seemed to be concerned that students would choose the teacher who would not insist on them working. Some students had other concerns related to choosing mentors, namely that if they did not get their choice they would be allocated to a mentor not of their choosing. However, these concerns were not reflected by other participants. Some middle leaders

and teachers felt that students could have a limited input especially if the

student did not get on with their mentor as illustrated by:

> *...it doesn't seem very fair on the students that they don't get any say because I can imagine that sometimes they might want to swap ... it might be useful in future to say staff you can sign up for a selection of five students and then the students are given a choice of three teachers. [Head of Department H3]*

However, a minority of middle leaders felt that involving students in the

process was 'impractical' as illustrated by:

> *So I think it's a nice idea for mentees to choose their mentors but fairly impractical really. [Head of Year Y2]*

Students felt that the regularity of mentoring meetings varied and more

frequent meetings would have been beneficial. A few senior leaders felt that

the time allocated to meetings and the frequency of meetings was insufficient.

This was reiterated by a minority of teachers who felt that there was

insufficient time to have a meaningful conversation as exemplified by:

> *This is not a long enough period of time, it's not a good time of day at the beginning of the day when staff actually really would rather be thinking about preparing for the day. [Head of Year Y2]*

> *...twenty short minutes where you're rushing to get to them, you sit down, you've got the equipment, you've got an assembly running, the bell goes, they got to go, you've got to go and it's all a bit quick for me. It's just like aaaaah. You can't really get down to the meat of everything, you know, so that's what I think. [Head of Department H1]*

However, other teachers felt that the meetings were too long and preferred

more frequent but shorter meetings.   A minority of teachers and middle

leaders commented on the time of day that the meetings were held. The

perception was that during assembly was not useful as meetings were hurried

and this was the time of day teachers prepared for the day ahead. The siblings of a minority of students who had to attend the assemblies felt unhappy at the length of the assembly.

When discussing the involvement of parents/ guardians in the mentoring programme with members of senior leaders, the layered nature of the mentoring programme in the school was revealed as illustrated by:

> *...they [parents] felt was most positive was the one-to-one interviews for our C/D borderline students, which is part of mentoring but not specifically part of the whole staff mentoring process.[Vice Principal S1]*

One aspect of mentoring in school was meetings of students and their parents with members of the senior staff when the student was underachieving. However, the majority of participants did not mention this aspect of mentoring other than students who were directly involved. This may be due to these meetings not being associated with mentoring but as something the school does to tackle underachievement. Alternatively, staff may not be aware of these meetings taking place.

Parent involvement in mentoring seemed to be limited to attending meetings when something had gone wrong, although the limited feedback from parents via students seemed to be positive (Rhodes *et al* 2000, Rodrigues-Planas 2012) as exemplified by:

> *I think my parents probably quite like the idea of it [Student AV1]*

> *My parents think it's good because they're going to help us point us in the right direction [Student AH2]*

A minority of students and teachers felt that mentoring was for the student and should not involve parents as illustrated by:

> *I don't think it's really that necessary 'cause it's more about me than… [Student AV1]*

> *I don't think there is any need to 'cause it's going to happen anyway. [Student AAB1]*

This may reflect the changing nature of the parent-child relationship where some students wanted to become more independent from their parents. Alternatively, some students may feel that as mentoring was part of the school process, it did not have an elevated status which required parental involvement.

4.2.2.2 School B

Documentation suggested that the school wanted to encourage parents to take some responsibility in the education of their children to improve student progress as one of their strategies (newsletter 23 Oct 2009). The school's vision of improving student success was reflected in the aim to have students supported by their parents to ensure that students were more successful. However, a minority of teachers were concerned about the increase in workload if parents were involved beyond the 'Academic Review Days' and 'Springboard to Success' evenings as illustrated by:

> *...the end product is the student not the parent. 'Cause often the parent will get in the way. In fact, the parent could be the problem. [Director D02]*

> *...it increases it workload involving parent feedback as well because if you're talking e-mails and things you've then got that extra thing to take on [Teacher T02]*

ATL1 students felt that all students should be given the opportunity to be mentored on a voluntary basis. A minority of students who did not want to be mentored were reassured by their form tutors of them not needing a mentor as exemplified by:

> *I had chosen one but I didn't want it so I didn't pursue it then I talked to my form tutor and I was like yeah I didn't have a mentor and she was like you don't really need one [Student BC1]*

This may have undermined the programme at the time of the study if the aim was to include all year 11 students in the mentoring programme. However, the ATL2 students felt that other students gained better mentors as those students asked first and they were left either with no mentor or with a less able mentor. This may be due to these students being less confident.

Students were aware of the change in strategy of matching mentors and mentees from staff choosing to students choosing as demonstrated by:

> *They originally said that they were just going to put all our names on a wall in the staff room and the teachers were to go round and pick three and that didn't happen so and then everyone decided to rush out and ask all their favourite teachers like first. So you were sort of like left really 'cause they don't really pick us, we had to go to them, when they said they were gonna come to us. [Student BH2]*

Students were not aware of the reasoning behind this change but staff mentioned that when staff chose mentees, they felt that some students missed out on mentoring as illustrated by:

> *...I'm not convinced that everybody did [get a mentor] [Learning Support Assistant A01]*

Some students felt that the system of students asking teachers to be their

mentors was an unfair system as demonstrated by:

> *...the way they just did it, they just asked people like it wasn't ever they could have given out a proforma or something saying like do you want to be mentored [Student BB1]*

> *...it shouldn't be first come, first serve. [Student BJ2]*

There were concerns that the best teachers would be gained as a mentor by

other students. Teachers who were overwhelmed by potential mentees had to

choose who they wanted in their mentoring group and some students felt that

students who were liked by the teacher were chosen first as illustrated by:

> *...I had a lot choosing me so I whittled it down to eight [for mentoring]. They were either in my form or they were in my maths group and that's really and I just carried on. [Head of Department H01]*

Staff were concerned that the more confident students would get mentors and

those less confident would become disaffected and miss out on mentoring.

However, other staff were more concerned with those students that were turned

away from a mentoring group and the negative impact that would have on the

relationship between that student and the teacher as exemplified by:

> *It worked fine for the majority of the confident students ...and then you had a whole load of them who because they weren't chased up, just thought sod it actually, I'm not confident enough to go and talk to a member of staff, I didn't really want to do it anyway so they're there,.... There are going to be kids who will miss out and so on. We have to make it as tight as possible. ...so I asked them who they would like and so I approached a member of staff for them. [Director D01]*

> *...I'm not convinced that everybody did [get a mentor]... You know, a list went up on the wall and he said sign against, now I looked at that list on several occasions and clearly there were quite a lot of*

people who didn't have names by them. [Learning Support Assistant A01]

One student suggested that a proforma could be used to reduce this effect and, a member of staff inferred that there were strategies in place to deal with these issues but they did not elaborate further.

Timing of mentoring sessions was decided either by the mentor or, between the mentor and mentee as exemplified by:

> *...they came in then early in the mornings and we had a session every week at quarter to eight, croissants, buns, whatever drinks and all sorts of things but that's how it really came about 'cause I was doing it informally [Head of Department H01]*

Staff were concerned by the lack of attendance by some students and claimed that it was due to the student's lack of organisational skills or inferred that they were not taking responsibility as illustrated by:

> *I kept forgetting to go to her... because it was in assembly time. ...If it was a lesson like a PE lesson I would've remembered. [Student BL2]*

However, some students claimed that mentoring sessions organised during lessons impacted upon their learning and caused animosity among teachers as exemplified by:

> *...it does get kind of annoying 'cause sometimes if you can't get the right times sometimes you get taken out of lessons for it. So you miss other bits of lessons as well. [Student BI2]*

> *...to be honest, if they're going to take us out of our lessons, I'd prefer it myself to be take out of lessons but if you think about it like in long term you're taking us out of our lessons, we need to be in our lessons to learn for GCSEs. ...if they're doing it during break or lunch time I wouldn't go [Student BO3]*

Other students claimed that they did not attend as they forgot, or they did not want to use their own time and would rather have meetings during lessons. One student suggested that all mentoring could be done at the same time as in School A therefore there would be no excuse for non-attendance as illustrated by:

> *...if they have a set time of 10 minutes or 15 minutes or a bit longer 20 minutes, once a week so that means that everyone in that year or the school had to be mentored. You couldn't get round it, you would have to do it. I reckon that would be better. 'Cause then teachers that say if they're busy, that doesn't make sense, does it? [Student BJ2]*

However, in School A there were students who did not attend mentoring sessions by hiding in the school or arriving late to school either accidently or by design.

4.2.2.3 Contrasting School A and School B Mentoring Logistics

School A seemed to have students who were unaware of how mentors and mentees were matched together as teachers chose their mentees, however School B students were involved in that they chose their mentor therefore they were aware of the process. This led to all staff in School B potentially being mentors while School A staff mentored on a voluntary basis. School A and School B students both voiced concerns about being left with less able mentors. School A students felt that they would have appreciated some input in the mentor-mentee matching process but some School A staff felt this was impractical.

This matching process was already in practice in School B; however staff had concerns relating to less confident students not being able to ask teachers to be their mentor. This was ironic considering confidence (Booth and Gerard 2011) and assistance in building relationships with adults was a potential outcome of mentoring (Goldner and Mayseless 2009). School B staff also voiced concerns that if a teacher had to turn away a student from their mentoring group due to numbers, there was the potential to harm any existing or potential future relationship. A consequence of damaging the relationship was the impact on academic behaviours as suggested by Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004). This system also allowed some students to avoid mentoring altogether even though effort was made to match most students with a mentor when they did not do this for themselves. A minority of students were also advised by other teachers, such as their form tutors, of mentoring being unnecessary for them as they were able students; however this advice may undermine the programme. This reflected School B ATL1 students' view that mentoring should be voluntary. Other students who were not able may believe that they could choose not to have a mentor. This also assumed that able students may not benefit from mentoring.

In School A the majority of staff chose their mentees on the basis of a perceived positive relationship with them. However, School B staff seemed to suggest that they chose their mentees from students who wanted them as a mentor based on a similar rationale. However, other factors influenced staff in School A such as academic achievement but this was not mentioned by School B staff. A factor may be due to the tight focus of mentoring in School A being

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on academic progress while School B mentoring seemed to also incorporate a pastoral focus.

School A had mentoring sessions organised during assemblies on particular days while School B had mentoring sessions organised by mentors and mentees. School A staff mainly focussed on the frequency and time allocated to meetings as insufficient. School B staff focussed on issues relating to lack of attendance by mentees. This was associated with a lack of student organisational skills and possibly students not taking responsibility for their learning. School B students and teachers felt that mentoring sessions organised during lessons was not suitable as it affected learning, and this practice eased once staff and students voiced their concerns. However, there was some indication that this practice was continuing for some students. Some School B students did not want to use their own time for mentoring and would have preferred mentoring sessions during their lessons. A minority of School B students suggested having a similar system to School A for the timing of mentoring sessions. The organisation of meetings at set times in School A suggested to others that mentoring was of value. By not setting specific times for mentoring, the school may transmit the belief that mentoring was of less value. However, organising mentoring within the students' own time may encourage students to prioritise and take responsibility for their learning.

In School A, the involvement of parents in the mentoring programme was limited to senior leaders meeting with parents of underachieving students in a

way similar to that suggested by Perryman *et al* (2011) and, when mentors contacted parents for feedback and support. School A students and, School A and B staff felt that involvement of parents in the mentoring process was unnecessary. School B staff were concerned that involving parents may lead to a higher workload. However, School B had Academic Review Days as part of the process for parents to be involved in their child's education where form tutors, students and parents came together to discuss academic progress and any issues.

4.2.3 Mentoring Activities and Outcomes

This section starts with a basic analysis of activities and outcomes of mentoring. The outcomes of mentoring can be classed as being outcomes of official and unofficial activities as part of the mentoring programme. This section describes the activities that occur within the mentoring programme and the perceived outcomes from these activities.

4.2.3.1 School A

The emphasis of the mentoring programme has remained on academic achievement as exemplified by:

> *...it helps me like concentrate more on my grades 'cause when you've got someone actually talking to you, telling you like you need to get that, it makes you more like, yeah, I forgot what the word is. [Student AU1]*

> *...discuss the data currently available to allow students to record their minimum predicted grades (FFT), aspirational grades and to*

> *use their working levels at the end of last academic year to focus
> their efforts. [session 1 2009]*

Achievement data seemed to be used as a starting point for mentoring. Targets

were suggested as the basis of students creating action plans, which were

linked to students becoming independent and taking responsibility for their

learning (three year plan) as exemplified by:

> *...keeping the students focussed, keeping the students informed of
> their progress, making them more self-aware of their progress,...
> you want them to work for themselves [Vice Principal S1]*

> *We could have got boosted up like that as well 'cause last year in
> maths I got Es and Fs in my mocks and this year in maths I got Ds
> and Cs so I improved big time so you know what I mean cause I
> had a mentor. And I revised so much at home. [Student AO3]*

 Some teachers and students felt that this focus assisted in keeping them

informed, on track and improved student efforts in revision. However some

students and staff also found this focus on achievement data made mentoring

repetitive as illustrated by:

> *...cause you know they hear stuff again and again and it gets a bit
> boring [Student AI2]*

> *Sometimes it's a bit boring, they can't see the point of it, oh lets
> talk about coursework again and the comments that they get. I
> think deep down they don't think it's a complete waste of time
> [Head of Department H2]*

 A minority of teachers and students felt that the targets were for the benefit of

the school rather students and therefore believed that students were not gaining

anything else from the experience as illustrated by:

> *...actually if I think about it I believe that because the mentoring is
> being done with teachers, other than targets I don't believe they
> are getting out of it because okay it's talking about targets but at
> the end of the day who actually wants these targets really is, you
> know, the school more than the students. [Teacher T3]*

> *I think deep down they [teachers] do, they actually want us to do well but it's more about the school get paid more if we do well. [Student AJ2]*

Coursework completion was part of the mentoring strategy to improve academic achievement. For some students, being informed produced the motivation to complete coursework. Some students felt that being aware of coursework progress and deadlines assisted them in finding strategies with their mentor to improve and evaluate their progress as demonstrated by:

> *I really put a lot of effort into my geography coursework. That was a lot and the other one was probably resistant materials, which did spawn out of mentoring sessions getting told I wasn't going well enough... [Student AA1]*

Documentation reflected a mentoring programme that used a variety of strategies including motivational speakers, designing revision timetables and ensuring students were informed regarding exams dates and deadlines (newsletter 28th March 2011). The formal strategies perceived by staff were reflected in the documentation as exemplified by:

> *When you do the coursework deadlines and you talk to them about how they're going and then you say well can't you improve it and they turn around and say how can I and you talk about going back to members of staff and saying, I wasn't happy with my mark. What can I do to make it better? [Teacher T4]*

The expected outcomes ranged from the development of skills to enable students to be better prepared for exams. However, the other strategies and outcomes that mentors felt that they provided produced a wider range of opportunities for student development. Senior leaders felt that the formal

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strategies that were used allowed students to take responsibility. However, middle leaders also included careers advice in their repertoire of strategies.

The informal side of mentoring allowed students to release their stresses, talk through issues and provided students with time to think as exemplified by:

> *I'd feel a bit stressed when I have problems with ... Ask my mentor or the teacher to help me [Student AC1]*

However, many of the strategies that middle leaders tended to advocate were teacher led such as intervening on the student's behalf for coursework issues and resolving problems for students as exemplified by:

> *...they've got someone who can sort out a problem; it depends on the quality of the mentor, of course... [Head of Year Y2]*

This conflicted with the minority of middle leaders and a number of teachers who believed that providing advice to students allowed students to take responsibility and resolve issues for themselves. Teacher's perspectives seemed to focus on informal support; enabling students to do things for themselves, a skill that was valuable in school and beyond school. Teachers talked about life skills and helping students to negotiate their issues rather than solving the issues for them exemplified by:

> *Advice on how to deal with other adults, in other words their teachers, you know, perhaps they might want to negotiate a deadline because maybe the workload is getting too much so rather than just ignore it, they'd be advised to go and speak to that teacher or subject teacher, whatever. How to deal with peer issues, issues within their own peer group as well so certainly for us it doesn't just stop at the academic, it does go beyond that I think. [Head of Year Y1]*

A few teachers also used the mentoring sessions to further their students in their subject areas. However, the other side to the teacher's perspective was the monitoring of students and the use of praise to motivate students.

Most students felt that mentoring revolved around the exams, revision and targets, which some students felt was repetitive. The mentoring strategy of planning revision and designing a revision timetable was viewed by senior leaders as an opportunity for students to develop their organisation skills and encourage a routine. Students viewed this strategy as an opportunity for mentors to provide them with advice on revision, improve planning, confidence and motivation to ensure work was completed. Students felt that this was accomplished through 'badgering' and having someone to talk to as exemplified by:

> *...we were sort of nagging them and they were sort of like 'oh, yeah Miss I know', and then we kept on nagging them and it was sort of like so round the school so we'd go 'have you done that so-n-so yet?' and, you know, I think actually in the end they probably might've appreciated it... I think it just shows that we do care [Teacher T5]*

> *...sets us revision timetables and kinda badgers us until we do something. [Student AA1]*

However, some students also had the opportunity to have that personal support that teachers felt they provided. Advice seemed to be a central strategy that some teachers felt they used to assist students with their school and social life, while students perceived similar outcomes to receiving advice. This would link with the personalised learning strategy where mentoring was used as a strategy to provide advice and guidance. However, a minority of teachers felt

that the role of the mentor was less about advice and more about actively listening to the student. This suggested that these teachers felt mentoring had more of a counselling role that allowed students to achieve their own solutions as opposed to a coaching role. A minority of students felt an established relationship with the mentor was the main factor in providing good advice.

Larose *et al* (2005) suggested that effective mentoring was more likely to have a positive impact on academic outcomes, however this was based upon a small sample size. However, issues relating to mentoring being ill-defined and existing in many forms (Hall 2003, Roberts 2000) may have contributed to the mixed interpretation of mentoring suggested by the perceptions of participants. This situation highlights the need for a mentoring programme to have clearly defined aims and goals with a collective understanding to ensure a more consistent and sustainable approach.

Some students felt that a mentor was a central point of contact so that they did not have to discuss the same issue with other teachers but this then depended on the mentor to pass on the information if necessary as exemplified by:

> *I hope it will help me cause if I have any problems with*
> *coursework deadlines or any questions I can ask then I won't have*
> *to go around asking individual teachers.   [Student AAD2]*

However, this may be a way of students shifting responsibility to the mentor. Students have competing sources of motivation and this behaviour of shifting responsibility may be due to the avoidance of what they believe may be negative or uncomfortable experiences of dealing with other teachers (Larson

2006). Larson (2006) suggested that student ability to maintain their learning is limited by their self-regulatory skills. In some cases, responsibility may have been shifted by the student to others due to exam practice and preparation taking precedence over the development of self-regulatory skills (Beach and Dovemark 2009). Woolfolk (2001) suggested that supporting students in the development of strategies to manage obstacles could reduce task avoidance and the behaviour of shifting responsibility and build self-efficacy.

There was a disparity between the perceptions of teachers and leaders within the school as to the strategies and outcomes of mentoring as exemplified by:

> *...we want to make sure that we, that they get the best results that they possible can and I think that that's also in the schools interests that the students get the best results that they can. [Director D1]*

> *...giving confidence and attention to students who might feel better about themselves and might improve their study habits [Vice Principal S2]*

> *I knew part of it was not in giving advice but actually listening and helping them and listening to some of their problems and helping them negotiate that. [Teacher T5]*

The reasons may have been that teachers invested more on a personal level with students and were therefore more likely to provide personal support in addition to the academic support that were promoted by the mentoring programme. The senior and middle leaders may be more focussed on the academic aspect of mentoring as they may feel the pressures for demonstrating these results for the school's performance than teachers. Alternatively, the teachers may be focussed on the small 'wins' to improve their mentees behaviour in lessons whereas the leaders are more focussed on the 'big' picture

for the school's benefit, i.e. to ensure that the school meets its targets as set by the local education authority as part of the accountability agenda.

Independent learning was believed to be an important characteristic to develop in students. Documentation reported that the school aimed to improve opportunities for students to learn independently after Ofsted (2002, 2007) reported that opportunities were insufficient. Middle leaders sought to improve independent learning through students being encouraged to find their own solutions to issues and evaluate their actions to avoid such issues. Students felt that they were independent and some were able to provide examples of taking charge of their own learning. This gave them the independence to decide whether they needed assistance. These points are exemplified by:

> *You can manage the solution you need to boost your working, I think that was helpful... [Student AA1]*

> *...a lot of it is life skills and understanding that you can organise yourself and by doing a certain amount of organisation [Teacher T6]*

Senior leaders suggested that part of the role of being a mentor was to intervene on the behalf of students. Students also felt this was part of the role of a mentor and valued the support from mentors.   Middle leaders disagreed with this approach and saw their role as helping students decide on a course of action to deal with issue relating to a teacher as suggested by:

> *They've talked to me about the situation, they've talked it through and then by the end they've said to me I should have done that, shouldn't I, should have done that [Head of Department H4]*

The approach taken by senior leaders and supported by some students could lead to students becoming dependent on mentors rather than encouraging independence.

Documentation stated that students were developing their evaluation skills through peer and self assessment (three year plan). Self-evaluation was also encouraged by the mentoring programme. Middle leaders suggested that evaluation of actions could contribute to student's development of independent learning. Students also felt that they were encouraged to evaluate their learning; however in other situations mentors took control and evaluated coursework for a minority of students. Some students felt that evaluating their work, behaviour and mode of learning allowed them to take control and persevere as exemplified by:

> *Catch up coursework and ask questions if you don't understand and that sort of stuff... ...it helps us like realise like got to think about not mucking about [Student AI2]*

> *I think mentoring is sort of like an advice helpline sort of thing for students to go to the teachers when I really want to ask for help and stuff. [Student AD1]*

However, students also felt that being kept informed of progress in mentoring and keeping it foremost in their mind caused positive changes in behaviour and learning.

Senior leaders felt that the role of a mentor was to monitor, support, focus and self-motivate students. Teachers tended to focus on learning while a minority

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felt it was part of their role to help students be more resilient in the face of poor

grades as exemplified by:

> *I think it probably helps focus their mind on how they're doing and not getting lulled into a false sense of security and thinking that their predicted is what they're going to get...equally if they are predicted a bad grade then not to think oh well I'm going to give up [Teacher T2]*

Most students demonstrated resilience through the strategies they had in place

to deal with exam or work stress.

> *I'm a bit annoyed by myself 'cause like I did all the essay and I did something as stupid as forget the book but I'll just explain it to him and ██████ understanding 'cause I tell him the truth about it. [Student AJ2]*

Senior leaders motivated students through their relationship with the students

and by using the parental relationship when students failed to be motivated by

other strategies such as praise as suggested by:

> *... if they're not preparing themselves [students] fully for the current examinations then following through with contacting the parents so that all stakeholders can be working in the same direction. ...praising them and keeping them motivated... as a mentor got high expectations of them so you are trying to foster a relationship where if they haven't done what you've agreed in your mentoring session that they are going to feel as if they have let you down to a degree if they don't do that. [Vice Principal S1]*

Potential feelings of disappointing mentors and parents were believed to be a

motivating force for students.

Documentation stated that the mentoring programme encouraged students to

be internally motivated (mentoring guidance 2011). Some students also

exhibited internal motivation towards their actions in response to their studies as illustrated by:

> *You just want to keep yourself out of bad things and want to keep yourself to the good things so when you're older you don't want your children to be like that. [Student AO3]*

> *You can manage the solution you need to boost your working, I think that was helpful. [Student AA1]*

A minority of middle leaders suggested the use of rewards as a means of motivating students. Miller (2002) suggested that mentors provided external motivation in parallel to encouraging internal motivation. This strategy may have been used in this way, alternatively due to the limited time available for the mentoring programme, external motivation may have been the only strategy available.

Student's perceptions of how they were motivated matched with senior leader's perception that parents were motivating factors as students wanted to meet their parent's expectations. Harris and Goodall (2007) suggested that parental expectations provided the context and framework by which students developed and made decisions. High parental expectations and aspirations have been attributed to positive effects on engagement, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in English and maths (Fan and Williams 2010). However, some students also demonstrated that they wanted to exert their independence from their parents. Research supported this view that students may feel that they need a break from their parents (Harris and Goodall 2007). Students may feel that parents were controlling, which had a negative effect on the student's intrinsic motivation (Fan and Williams 2010).

Teachers felt that parent involvement only went as far as informing parents of any issues that their child had academically or pastorally. A minority of teachers and some students felt that the mentor-mentee relationship was for the student; therefore parents did not seem to have a role to play in this situation. This may reflect the separation between school and home, and the changing nature of the relationship the students had with their parents. Parent involvement in mentoring seemed to be limited to attending meetings when something had gone wrong, although feedback from parents seemed to be positive as exemplified by:

> *My parents think it's good because they're going to help us point us in the right direction and then yeah. [Student AH2]*

> *...anecdotally they do say that they like that their children are meeting with an adult who's spending time with them talking about their studies but it doesn't always result in them studying harder but they are happy that somebody's taking that time and trouble. [Vice Principal S2]*

Senior leaders suggested that improving student confidence would improve study habits. Middle leaders felt that improved student confidence would reduce exam stress and, in turn, the student is less distracted in exams. A minority of staff suggested that exam stress was associated with confidence and a student believed that if they were more confident in asking questions, the result would be better grades. The inference was that exam performance would then improve as illustrated by:

> *Well hopefully you might help them deal with the stress side of things, confidence maybe, it might be that they are not very*

confident and they go into their exams worried about it. [Head of Department H2]

Teachers also suggested that improvements in student confidence would link to improved exam success and exam strategies.   Documentation attributed student's confidence and personal skills to teacher's efforts (Ofsted 2002).

Improved confidence and self-esteem were aims for the mentoring programme and the school. However, a few teachers believed that a significant number of students had low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Students felt that increased self-esteem and confidence was due to the experience of being mentored by an adult thus improving communication skills as exemplified by:

> *... so like we get to talk to an adult 'cause usually we are just talking to like children, like not children, people our age and so if you get to talk to adults it's a bit better and it gives you social skills later, um, probably communication skills as well 'cause it gives you a better way of communicating to people. [Student AAB1]*

Senior leaders suggested that mentoring assisted students in developing their organisational and thinking skills as well as taking responsibility for their learning. Some students took responsibility for their learning by making decisions as to whether they needed their mentor to help as well as having strategies in place to deal with issues.

Documentation suggested that a strategy in mentoring to get students to invest in their learning was to think about their future aspirations (Ofsted 2007). Some mentors provided career advice to assist with making those aspirations transpire, for example by:

> *In my mentoring relationship with him, I was able to offer him various suggestions in terms of career direction and then when he decided actually after all he'd like to come back to sixth form, I managed to guide him into the subjects that I felt best suit him and he seems to be happy. [Head of Year Y1]*

Some students had thought about their futures and suggested higher education, being a role model and being the first person in their family to attend further education were their motivations to succeed in their exams as exemplified by:

> *It gives you more confidence like it gives you like, they give you like some books and all that stuff about where you want to go like college, sixth form [Student AN3]*

> *We just want to be a role model for everyone... 'cause I started going to the gym as well and that helped me and I thought of getting better and I thought of doing sixth form. And I thought I could do BTEC then I could get into if I got a merit then I could do BTEC national then through that go to university. Have a good life. [Student AO3]*

Students felt that confidence was accomplished through mentors keeping them informed of their choices. A minority of middle leaders provided advice and guidance on choices, which supported the student perspective. However, whether these aspirations were realistic was not examined.

Students seemed to be connected to the school and its teachers. The school was viewed as caring and supportive as exemplified by:

> *It's quite like, it's quite a caring atmosphere. The teachers do actually care but then there are again a lot of like people in the school that misbehave and you don't get on with and there's some people you don't want to get on with either. I'd say the attitude of most is caring. [Student AA1]*

Students were influenced by their peers as some students were reliant on their friends to motivate them. Mentors influenced their mentees throughout the school environment. This was viewed as a method of ensuring students

remained focussed and some teachers believed that it showed they cared, which was a view supported by some students. Some senior and middle leaders suggested that an adult being interested in a student's life demonstrated care, support and encouragement.

4.2.3.2 School B

The main evidence from documentation centred on 'Springboard to Success' evenings and Academic Review Days for parents and students (Newsletter Jan 2009). Careers support was also supported by Connexions; the UK governmental information, advice and guidance service for all young people, previously known as the careers service. Staff supported this part of the wider mentoring programme for students and by extension to parents. The main outcome was to provide parents and students with information as exemplified by:

> *I am certain that both parents and students found the Academic Review Day to be very informative. Certainly the many students that I have spoken with subsequently have been able to identify exactly what they need to do in order to fulfil their potential as a result of considering their current "working at grades" and the conversations that they have had with their tutors. [newsletter 16 January 2009]*

This was accomplished through talks from members of staff, discussions with staff and published material. Academic data was the foundation of these events. Staff felt that using data to inform students was effective and the only way to assess the effectiveness of mentoring. Target setting supposedly led to students being aware of how to improve as exemplified by:

> *The only judge we've got is the results and those are black and white things... [Learning Support Assistant A01]*

> *I know more what I'm doing now and helps stay on track kind of.*
> *[Student BP3]*

A comparison of the activities that students believed would be part of the

mentoring programme and the actual activities showed that most students were

correct in their assumptions as exemplified by:

> *I'd probably use it with SMART targets, you know, simple,*
> *something like that, measurable, realistic… [Student BK2]*

> *I think maybe helping us learn how to revise and know what work*
> *to revise a bit earlier would have helped us before. [Student BB1]*

The main activities were revision techniques, setting targets and listening to

the teacher. However, some of the students also felt that it should include

methods of dealing with exam stress. Other activities that students had not

realised would be involved was making active revision activities and, general

discussion to build relationships and identify issues as exemplified by:

> *In our mentoring group we'd be doing more like quiz cards. So*
> *over the weekend we'd be making quiz cards on what we've been*
> *revising and we go and test each other in certain subjects...*
> *...we're set targets what we can get completed over the weekend.*
> *[Student BD1]*

Staff were less explicit regarding activities in mentoring and described

mentoring more through outcomes and processes. Staff tended to describe the

processes of mentoring to be pastoral or academic as exemplified by:

> *There were some that were a bit more organised about it than*
> *others. And it was basically it was taking them through the*
> *process of even working out a revision timetable or finding out*
> *how they revise or how they learn, what's the best circumstances,*
> *what can they do to avoid distractions and that sort of thing.*
> *[Teacher T02]*

The main consensus from staff was that the process was about breaking down

"barriers to learning", which was supported by Johnson (2004a) who believed

this was part of the purpose of mentoring.

> *I think it could overcome a lot of the barriers. I think sometimes*
> *this sort of at the moment certainly with the system we've got it*
> *would certainly help people realise they're not alone in struggling*
> *with a certain subject at a certain time... [Teacher T05]*

Students perceived that outcomes of mentoring were based around the

completion of coursework, which some students found motivational and some

students gained confidence in their abilities by doing this. Other students felt

that mentoring produced changes in behaviour and actualised the GCSE exams

as exemplified by:

> *...I do actually want to revise now so mentoring has helped me*
> *'cause I actually think crap, I've only got like however many weeks*
> *left of school to start revising and that's about it. [Student BO3]*

However, a minority of students found that when mentoring was inconsistently

applied confidence and self-image were impacted as illustrated by:

> *I did get mentoring in year..., well, I was supposed to get*
> *mentoring in year 4 but I never got that 'til I was in year 6 after my*
> *eleven plus and after that it just boost my confidence right down*
> *and ever since then I've always been a bit slow and ... [Student*
> *BM3]*

This may have occurred as mentoring may have been viewed as a deficiency

model where the student was labelled as having learning or behavioural issues.

Staff perceived student outcomes of mentoring to be about results and to some

extent being a surrogate parents to the students therefore combining the

academic and counselling aspects as exemplified by:

> *A lot of them use me because they are not getting that help at home. A lot of them use me because there are no adults for them to talk to... I think it probably was almost like a surrogate mother that you're getting the help from here and help them through that they're perhaps not getting at home. [Learning Support Assistant A01]*

> *They tend to be more to help them with their academic type of work and particularly when we're talking about revision, study skills type things so ideas that they could do. [Senior Leader S01]*

Staff believed that students would then develop organisational skills, social

skills, be able to formulate their own solutions and, in turn, gain better

academic outcomes.

Staff and students suggested that mentoring was to encourage students to

evaluate their learning, set goals and develop engagement to improve results as

exemplified by:

> *We try and meet our targets if we can on homework and coursework... [Student BD1]*

> *When you do the coursework deadlines and you talk to them about how they're going and then you say well can't you improve it and they turn around and say how can I and you talk about going back to members of staff and saying, I wasn't happy with my mark. What can I do to make it better? Pushing them in that direction ... [Teacher T04]*

The incorporation of parents in the evaluation of progress as well as providing

information may have improved connectedness to the school. Students felt

motivated by their parent's expectations as well as parents being a source of

help. The connectedness to the school via the pre-existing teacher –student

relationship as well as the parent-school relationship may be the mediating

factors in improving the psychological outcomes for students and, in turn,

improving achievement.

The students described the school mainly through teachers, students, and ethos.

Students seemed to have developed connectedness to the school through these

factors as exemplified by:

> *...makes you want to do it, I suppose. It makes you want to do work to prove that to your class mates I suppose. [Student BJ2]*

> *The only reason I want to do it is 'cause I feel bad going next week and being like haven't revised 'cause he's a nice teacher. And I know he's trying to help me and if I go back and he'll think, 'oh, you're just wasting my time'. [Student BO3]*

Some staff and students perceived that pre-existing relationships with teachers

may have had an effect on academic achievement as exemplified by:

> *If the teachers gave me a tutor, mentor and I didn't get on with them then it wouldn't really help 'cause I would be able get along with them let alone learn stuff so that's about it. [Student BP3]*

Teachers/mentors were appreciated for their good intentions and showed they

cared by taking an interest in their student's lives as demonstrated by:

> *I think they should make more effort to get to know who you are. Like my science teacher makes a big effort to get to know everyone and your personality and sees what helps you for your personality. [Student BL2]*

Part of building a relationship with students was also through praise and

enthusiasm.   The teacher expectations had an influence on student behaviour

and motivation when a relationship was established. A number of factors

negatively affected the student's connectedness to the school by having too

many supply teachers or being in a class with a teacher they perceived did not

want to be there. Relationships with peers had an impact on learning

behaviours through their influence or absence, however peers were also

sources of support and students were able to confide in them as exemplified

by:

> *He had a girlfriend who they [parents] were not particularly keen on and so thought that was taking him away from his studies. [Head of Department H01]*

> *If you're with your friends I don't think you pay as much attention as you sort of just have a little joke between you. [Student BJ2]*

Motivation was developed through students feeling that they needed to

demonstrate their abilities to their mentoring group and did not want to let

them down. Informing students and reinforcing information motivated some

students especially when this made them realise the short time they had to the

exams. Levels of success were also motivating for students. However, some

parents and staff used money to externally motivate some students as other

strategies may have failed to as demonstrated by:

> *...boys I've mentored have all come back and spoken to me mainly to collect their five pounds if they've got their five A*s to Cs. 'Cause it's a little bit of an incentive in there for me ... I think initially it came out of a need to identify those students who are in danger of underperforming, to provide them with the confidence to sort of look at themselves and the confidence to go on and get good exam results but also for them to have somebody that they can come to with problems and issues which they didn't have within the normal school set up. [Senior Leader S01]*

> *I'm given stuff if I do well in school. Well I'd expect it. I've grown up in a reward system so if you do well you get something. And it's like for like my grades for example in GCSEs I get money per grade and if I get an A* I get more and if I get like C then I have to pay them so it's like it's motivation as well as when you've done it a really feel good thing that I've done this so I get this. [Student BC1]*

Some students demonstrated low levels of confidence and self-esteem when faced with low grades or academic performance. However, when pressed, some students had strategies to help themselves as exemplified by:

> *Can't do some of the work and then I sort of give up. If I don't understand like a question of something then I do give up and leave it. ... I wouldn't tell anyone [about homework difficulties]. I'd keep it to myself really ... Mum's always offering to help me with everything. Go to the mentor I suppose, well she's a teacher that been set me this so stay after school and do something. [Student BJ2]*

ATL1 students tended to perceive that they had a higher level of resilience that lower ATL students as demonstrated by:

> *If I had a problem with it, I'd just go to the teacher and say I don't really understand, explain it. Or I'd get my parents to tell me. Probably get a bit frustrated about it but if I didn't understand then I'd be like AAAH! Why am I so stupid, why do I go to school? Why? Why can't I do something sensible? [Student AA1]*

> *Because if you are behind in coursework then you can't really catch up 'cause you don't really have enough time. [Student AL2]*

Staff suggested that low resilience was linked with low confidence and could be built through exam strategies and praising success. Students and staff claimed that mentoring aims also included wider pastoral aims such as building confidence, social development, motivation, perseverance, and self-esteem. Low self-esteem and self belief in their ability to learn was demonstrated by lower ability students; however a minority of those felt that knowledge improved their self-esteem in relation to their learning. Staff claimed that self-esteem was improved by having someone to confide in.

Student confidence varied depending on the context. Some students did not

feel confident enough to voice their opinions or issues in mentoring sessions

due to not being confident in social situations where their opinion could be

challenged. Students reported feeling more confident about their learning

when they completed their coursework as this demonstrated their ability in the

course as shown by:

> *…'cause once you get all the coursework done then you start to*
> *feel like oh, I can actually do quite well in this subject so you sort*
> *of pay attention a bit more. [Student BJ2]*

Staff intuitively believed that an improvement in confidence would improve

academic progress. As coursework contributed to course grades, the

completion of coursework would also improve academic performance in that

subject.

Staff suggested that they guided students in making choices and decisions,

with the aim that students would then be able to take control of their revision

eventually being able to self-regulate their learning as suggested by:

> *... I think that's why they needed an adult who was going to talk to*
> *them on their level who understood the issues that they've got and*
> *to be able to guide them past all these issues and help them*
> *through it in order to get in the right frame of mind to do these*
> *important GCSEs which was where I came in really. [Learning*
> *Support Assistant A01]*

> *But it's basically about giving students the skills to be able to go*
> *out and find the answers and right path for themselves. [Director*
> *D01]*

Some students felt that mentoring was for the benefit of students who could

not take responsibility for their learning.   Many students allowed mentors to

take control and responsibility of their revision and learning. This was

demonstrated through students allowing and in some instances expecting their mentor to talk to teachers on their behalf.

4.2.3.3 Contrasting School A and B – Mentoring Activities and Outcomes

Academic data was used as the basis for the mentoring programme in both schools. In School A the data was used to develop action planning skills which in turn was intended to improve their student's ability to take responsibility for their learning and be more independent. Each school used the academic data to inform students of their targets and progress which fitted with Horsley's (2010) findings. Leadbeater (2004a) suggested that students designing their own learning goals and targets were an application of the personalised learning agenda that would result in students being able to self-regulate their learning.

School B staff felt that although the use of performance data was effective, it was also clinical and lacked a pastoral dimension. School A staff and students believed that keeping students informed kept them on track and motivated them to revise. However, in School A this also may have been the cause of students feeling that mentoring sessions became repetitive. School B's mentoring programme included informing parents and students together through the Academic Review Days. Encouraging parental support as well as attributing academic success to effort may cause an improvement in academic performance (Younger and Warrington 2009). Advice and guidance for both parents and students may be important to inform students of their choices as

well as parents supporting and assisting them in their choices (Leadbeater 2004a). A minority of School A teachers also questioned the use of the targets being mainly for the school rather than the student; however the teacher may not have been aware of the wider implications for students having knowledge of their own performance data.

While both schools emphasised the completion of coursework, some students in School B found this activity motivational and helpful in developing confidence in their academic abilities. The completion of coursework may have improved a student's belief in their competence and reinforced that success is within their control, therefore increasing academic motivation (Pintrich and Schunk 2002). In School A staff suggested that information regarding coursework completion was used to inform students and assisted them in making better choices. In School B students being informed about coursework was also claimed to be motivating for students as well as students being able to evaluate their progress and be assisted by mentors to devise strategies. In School B documentation, targets set on the basis of coursework and academic progress may have ensured that students knew how to improve. This is supported by Campbell *et al* (2007) who suggest that target setting encourages the development of student evaluative skills.

In School A revision planning took the form of revision timetables, planning and advice. School A staff suggested that student's organisational skills were improved through getting into a routine. However, students also added that

advice in planning revision was motivating and improved their confidence when they achieved something. Zimmerman (1990) suggested that planning and goals setting went part of the way to developing self-regulation in students.   School B staff and students revision based on target setting to complete specific tasks such as coursework or quiz cards. Hartley (2007) suggested that learning to learn skills assisted students in becoming more independent from the teacher and taking more responsibility for their learning.

The mentoring group dynamic and relationship with mentors in School B was used to motivate students to complete work. Students in School A and B claimed that they did not want to disappoint their mentor, however only School B students claimed that they did not want to disappoint their group by not having completed the work set. School B students also wanted to be able to demonstrate their abilities to the group. Herrera *et al* (2002) suggested that group based relationships were beneficial. The supportive relationships within a trusting and accepting group could contribute to an improvement in the student's confidence (Eldred *et al* 2004), which may contribute to progress in achievement (Wood and Mayo-Wilson 2012).

Discussion of careers and aspirations were used in both schools to motivate students. Norman (2011) suggested that higher aspirations raised attainment; however Spielhofer *et al* (2009) found that NEETs had similar aspirations to non-NEETs. Younger *et al* (2005) proposed that it may not be the absence of aspiration that affected achievement but low confidence affecting the student's

ability to realise their aspirations. This does not diminish the need to raise aspirations and inform students of the requirements to accomplish those aspirations. In School B the Connexions career service was used for this purpose and there were a minority of mentors who discussed this with their mentees. However in School A staff suggested that their advice and ensuring that students were informed of their options improved the students' confidence. School A students also demonstrated that they had thought about their future aspirations such as further education, and being a role model for their community through their future career. However, there was no evidence as to whether these aspirations were based in reality or they were impractical ideas.

Advice was a central strategy used by mentors in both schools. Advice was used for student's academic and pastoral issues. However, the majority of mentors felt that their advice was more related to listening and guiding their mentees to reach their own solutions. The hope was that this would encourage students to take responsibility. School B students felt that this was better achieved when the relationship between mentor and mentee was established. Roberts *et al*'s (2004) definition of mentoring included the providing of advice while Hargreaves (2005a) suggested that advice on how to improve encourages student independence.

In School A, staff and students suggested that part of the role of the mentor was to solve problems. If there was a problem, the mentor could be used to

distribute information regarding any difficulties the student had rather than the student having to go round all their teachers. However, coursework issues were dealt with differently depending on the mentor. Some School A mentors felt that they should intervene for the student while others suggested that they could advise students in how to deal with the issue. Both approaches have implications for the student taking responsibility for their learning. School B mentors suggested reaching out to other teachers for support of vulnerable students.

Some of the skills that were believed to be developed from the experience of mentoring tended to be similar in both schools: social skills, communication skills, organisation skills, evaluation and time management. However, School A staff also felt that students developed thinking skills. School B staff wanted to emphasise the pastoral aims of mentoring as well as the academic. However in both schools the pastoral aims tended to be the same: motivation, confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience. Resilience may be developed through an improvement in self worth and perceived competence through a positive relationship with a non-familial adult such as a mentor (Rodriguez-Planas 2012).

School A staff felt that mentoring could assist students to avoid stress. However, School A students also relied on their friends to relieve stress. School A teachers alleged that exam stress was associated with a lack of confidence. Pressures placed on teachers and the school may be transmitted to

students (Green and Oates 2009). However, it was more likely that stress and anxiety was caused by student's low self-efficacy (Schunk and Zimmerman 2006). A minority of School B students felt that mentoring should include stress relief; this was not something that was mentioned as part of the mentoring programme. It may be possible that School B has fewer issues with students suffering from stress than School A but this is unlikely considering the nature of year 11 and the examinations. However, the group mentoring approach may have helped to alleviate stress.

The development of motivation orientation was similar in both schools. A minority of School A and B staff suggested that they wanted students to be able to motivate themselves by understanding that they need to achieve for themselves. However, the possibility of disappointing a significant adult, whether parent or mentor, was used to motivate students. Other external methods of motivation were also used. In School B, rewards in the form of financial rewards from parents and staff were used to motivate students to gain grades. However, a minority of School A staff suggested resources and "confectionary" as rewards. School B's external rewards seemed to have been a last resort when other methods of motivation may have failed. However, School A's external rewards seemed to be used to get students to invest in their learning rather than a reward for the end product. This finding is supported by Miller (2002) who claimed that mentors tended to externally motivate students in conjunction with encouraging internal motivation.

With students who were perceived as vulnerable, staff from both schools took the mentoring role to be 'in loco parentis', i.e. the staff take on the roles and responsibilities of the parent.   In School B students reported that staff used praise and enthusiasm to build the relationship. In contrast, Dweck (2000) found that strategic feedback was more effective and praise of the person can lead to a fear of failure and a poor ability to deal with obstacles. School B staff felt that the facility for students to confide in an adult helped improved student self-esteem. King *et al* (2002) claimed that these factors, a supportive mentor relationship and improved self-esteem, would lead to improved academic performance. Lower ability students in School B felt that self-esteem was improved by acquiring relevant knowledge in relation to their exams. However, research suggests that many factors affect self-esteem. McLean (2004) claimed that academic self-concept and motivation were central to self-esteem.   If students could change their attribution of success to actions under their control, any success or failure would not affect their self-esteem (McLean 2004). Crocker and Park (2004) suggested that the quest for self-esteem may have more of an impact on achievement than the absolute value of self-esteem.

Staff at both schools suggested that act of taking an interest in students would encourage an improvement in their academic focus. In School A, staff were encouraged to talk to their mentees outside of mentoring sessions to act as a reminder and to improve focus around the school. A minority of School A staff suggested that taking an interest may make students feel better about themselves although they doubted the association with improved academic performance. In School A and B, students felt that taking an interest in their

lives was one of the building blocks of a relationship between them and the teacher. This act demonstrated that they cared for the student and staff felt that it demonstrated support and encouragement. Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004) claimed that if teachers demonstrated care and encouragement, student efforts would increase. The combination of developmental aims (DuBois *et al* 2002) and learning skills may facilitate attitudinal and behavioural changes in students.

4.2.4 Teachers as Mentors

This section starts with a basic analysis of student and staff interviews regarding the perceived effectiveness of mentoring, necessary skills and characteristics of mentors, mentor support and the perceptions of mentee-mentor relationship.

4.2.4.1 School A

Analysis of relevant documentation indicated that a significant investment of time was allocated to staff training when the mentoring scheme was first introduced but this had tailed off for the majority of staff and was largely forgotten. The teachers who were involved in sixth form mentoring and teacher training programmes did not feel that training was needed for them as demonstrated by:

> *...I felt probably I've got enough experience at this moment in time*
> *to keep me going... I'm not sure that mentoring training would*
> *have been of huge benefit to me at this point. [Head of Year Y1]*

However, some staff were willing to attend training or researched mentoring themselves as exemplified by:

> *Reading things that he's [Howard Gardner] done on tutoring and mentoring difficult students and approaching that and actually getting a, if you like, a better footing with difficult students... [Teacher T1]*

At a minimum, teachers and middle leaders signified that they would like clarity regarding the programme in regards to the role of a mentor, aims, expectations, where to find information regarding attainment, who to pass information to and student outcomes as suggested by:

> *...more or less a dry run through the pack so that there is preparation, so that everything is understood and also just to highlight that even though I'm sure they are more than aware, the aims of the whole mentoring process and discussion on what techniques can be used to keep the students motivated, to try and motivate the students even more and what steps you should follow if the students are falling off... [Vice Principal S1]*

Some staff indicated that they would like to go through the mentoring materials, share information and gain advice on how to deal with students as exemplified by:

> *I don't know, I mean a student says I'm having problems at home, what do I do? Are you supposed to be able to answer these questions? What would I do? I'd be like 'oh, actually I don't know... So a little bit of help about that. I don't know how to be a good mentor, you know, what's going to be your role, what is expected for you to do, is there any paper work we've got to fill in, hopefully not. [Teacher T3]*

Some staff felt that there was no similarity in skills or approach between mentoring students and mentoring staff as illustrated by:

> *No, they're completely different skills. When you're looking at mentoring staff, you've got a very specific goal in mind... With students you are looking at how they can achieve their best*

potential to get GCSEs, you're looking at them kind of moving on
to college or apprenticeships... [Head of Department H4]

Some teachers tended to focus on the difference in communicating with

mentees of different ages. However, in their interviews many staff described

more similarities than differences as exemplified by:

The skill set I don't think is that different because we have all been
through the examination process whatever level it is and can feel
for those youngsters and we know what they're going through to
an extent with their exams and I think that is the support we're
giving... It does just require that supportive role and
encouragement role. [Principal S3]

Documentation stated that central to the role of mentor was achievement data,

being a point of contact and providing assistance to mentees as exemplified by:

I also hope that you would become the central conduit for that
student. You would need to make contact with the parent/carer of
your mentee(s) to inform them of your role with their
son/daughter... I also hope that teachers can email you, tell you or
send you a note about a lack of homework, coursework, effort,
poor attitude.... [School A mentoring guidance 2011]

School A mentoring guidance pre 2009 linked the role to being equivalent to a

surrogate parent. The roles and associated skills of a mentor inferred from this

description related to mainly of the skills associated with being a teacher such

as organisational, interpersonal and communication skills. Staff also identified

some of these mentoring skills as listening skills, questioning skills, and

empathy to guide, encourage, reassure and support mentees. Some mentors

believed that year 11 students need assistance to 'sort out their personal life';

however this was also applicable to adults who have family and other personal

issues. The manner of how this information was shared between mentor and

mentee was different as child protection concerns were important in relation to

year 11 students and therefore could not be as confidential as staff mentoring.

Some staff felt that some teachers were not suitable mentors as demonstrated

by:

> *...if you're going to do it right it can't be a piecemeal thing so I think it would be how do you make sure that the teacher involved have got the time to do it or are paid to do it if it is an additional thing up above and beyond the call of duty or indeed should mentors be teachers at all and that's a much bigger question, you know, maybe mentors could be brought in [Director D1]*

> *So I think it could be bettered by filtering out the mentors to the good ones, people, it needs to be someone that people respect and people like so they can talk to them [Student AG2]*

Although students linked this ability to planning, knowledge and teacher

'likeability', teachers and senior leaders also mentioned that some teachers had

"natural" or well practiced mentoring skills. This assumes that mentoring is an

innate ability rather than something that can be learnt. Students felt that an

interview process would allow the identification of ill-suited teachers while

senior leaders felt that the option to volunteer to mentor was a way of filtering

out unsuitable mentors.

> *I feel that yeah really 'cause mentors quite rubbish 'cause half of them don't even teach. My mentor doesn't even teach... Because then they know the teaching syllabus... if they don't know what's going on in a subject then they can't really help with all subjects. [Student AK2]*

> *...good listening skills, I think, bad talking skills; not talking about yourself skills, being able to ask questions that will open up the other person, open type questions which are mildly intrusive but actually they are not personal questions but getting them to talk more about themselves, not putting their point of view on to the person, doing it non-judgementally, which a lot of people find hard but whether that's necessary as a teacher... some people are*

> *probably not suited to it so I wouldn't know so on reflection*
> *wouldn't have for all the teachers, it would have to be self-*
> *selective, some sort of process. [Vice Principal S2]*

The implication seems to be that a good teacher may not be the best option for being a mentor due to a lack of specific mentoring skills. Irving *et al* (2003) suggested teachers may not be able to apply their skills as a teacher to mentoring; however this was based upon a small sample size. Some staff have suggested that teachers tend to instruct students rather than mentor. Students suggested that mentors who did not teach would not be suited as they were not aware of the requirements for subject areas. Students felt that age and status were important in their mentors. The more senior the member of staff, the better mentoring the students would receive. However, some students also felt that younger mentors were more suitable as demonstrated by:

> *I think 'cause she's the youngest and she understands our age*
> *group better than most teachers and I think that's why me and a lot*
> *of the other students in year 11 get on with her really well.*
> *[Student AD1]*

The younger mentors were viewed as being more able to empathise with the student's situation as the mentors were closer to their age.

The reasons for being a mentor were similar for the majority of senior leaders and middle leaders. A few middle leaders and teachers became mentors as they were asked either through necessity or they thought it was compulsory as exemplified by:

> *Everybody did. I was told everybody had to do it so I did it which*
> *is one of those things but I actually find it quite interesting 'cause*
> *you get to talk to them in a different context [Head of Department*
> *H3]*

Some members of staff chose to mentor as they felt it was worthwhile, and gained satisfaction from helping students. A minority of teachers believed that mentoring helped the school and its results as exemplified by:

> *Results. Yeah, I like to look good as well. I suppose that the more everyone's helped, I think the better it looks all round and I actually think. Also I don't think we do enough. There isn't time. [Teacher T5]*

Some middle leaders, teachers and a senior leader stated reasons for not being a mentor as not teaching year 11 students, that they had demands on their time that would not allow them to commit to mentoring or not being aware of the mentoring programme. Most mentors saw value in mentoring from their own experience and wanted to give back something of what they had gained from mentoring as demonstrated by:

> *It was something that I found very useful, very valuable when I started out in teaching, having a mentor that I could go to and speak to and not necessarily find solutions but just bring able to unload not silly problems but things ... so all I'm trying to do is to put back a little of what I took out. [Head of Year Y1]*

4.2.4.2 School B

Characteristics and skills that students felt were important in a teacher and prospective mentor were different from those identified by staff. Students focussed upon enthusiasm, expectations, support and friendly, while staff focussed upon listening skills and a caring approach as exemplified by:

> *...like she is so much more enthusiastic and she's really keen for us to learn and she tells us that she really wants you to do well. [Student BC1]*

Some staff also felt that being able to mentor was an innate ability while others felt that it could be learnt as demonstrated by:

> *... I'm afraid my type of mentoring really is an instinctive thing.*
> *[Learning Support Assistant A01]*

Both agreed that mentors needed to be knowledgeable about school systems and courses. Students may have been focussed primarily on the characteristics and skills they preferred in a teacher and in lessons due to their inexperience of mentoring. Staff being more experienced in mentoring had been more focussed on the skills needed in mentoring sessions as exemplified in:

> *Quite a lot of the difference between on how to listen and how to*
> *ask leading, authoritative questions rather than giving advice.*
> *[Teacher T03]*

There was a difference in staff's interpretation of guidance provided to students; some staff felt that coaching and guidance would assist students in coming to their own solutions while other staff felt that the use of guidance provided students with a strategy and solution as exemplified by:

> *I think the key skills is probably listening and actually being able*
> *to interpret what people are telling you and then be able to come*
> *up with a solution and put a session together where you can*
> *actually look at what people are saying to you then give them*
> *solutions and give them a strategy so they can go away and try and*
> *then come back and review that and see how it's gone. [Senior*
> *Leader S01]*

> *I think staff need to know how to listen and they need to learn how*
> *to not prompt students into giving answers... [Director D01]*

There is a subtle different in these approaches that is based in the ownership of the solutions to an issue being the students or the teachers. This issue links with concerns staff had with teachers being mentors.

Students and staff had concerns regarding teachers being mentors, however the reasons were different. Some students felt that age, status and reputation of the teacher were important concerns regarding teachers. Students felt that teachers, especially those with status, may be too busy to prioritise mentoring. Some students felt that some teachers could not empathise with their situation due to the age difference; however some felt that older teachers may be more experienced mentors as exemplified by:

> *But they're older, would be different, um no, you have to admit that some of them are very elderly so they don't know what we are going through, they're not under the same pressure as we do, we're under a lot of pressures. ...It will help except I don't think they [teachers] can really empathise as much as like a professional maybe could, you know. [Student BC1]*

A minority of students felt that professional mentors would be more suitable in their ability to empathise. This is reflected in other students' perceptions that teachers did not understand their situation as they were too old and had not experienced the stresses in students' lives. The student perception seemed to be that professional mentors were better trained in mentoring techniques while teachers may be viewed as generalists or "jack-of-all-trades". However, a minority of staff felt that teachers had poor listening skills and told students what they should do even though this was one of the skills identified as preferable for a mentor.

Some staff preferred more guidance in their role as a mentor as they were unsure of their mentoring approach as described by:

> *We sit down [in the triads] and we talk through whether we had any concerns, suggestions as to what we would do, you know,*

anyone in your tutor group you were concerned about. We would discuss it amongst us what perhaps we would suggest doing. [Head of Department H01]

They were concerned that strategies were not being shared; however some staff mentioned that coaching triads were used for support regarding teacher concerns. This would seem to be an appropriate avenue for sharing strategies. Senior Leadership Team mentoring was also identified as an example of staff support; however this may be limited due to senior leader's availability.

4.2.4.3 Contrasting School A and B – Teachers as Mentors

The common mentoring skills identified by staff at School A and School B included listening skills, questioning skills and support, reflecting those characteristics identified by students in previous studies by Batty *et al* (1999) and Evans *et al* (2006). In both schools, staff had different interpretations in how guidance could assist students; whether guidance was to allow students to find their own solutions or for mentors to provide them with a solution.

Both schools reported that some mentors felt that their role was similar to being a surrogate parent. Philip *et al* (2004) suggested that some mentors may wish to undo some of the negative experiences that students have experienced and to assist some students cope with difficult situations. With vulnerable students, some mentors seem to have adopted the surrogate parent approach possibly to fulfil this role suggested by Philip *et al* (2004).

Most School A teachers chose to be mentors for altruistic reasons, however Jones *et al* (2009) suggest that it is important for schools to determine the role of mentors. Evans (2005) suggested that altruistic motives may be a pretence to deal with their own issues; however this does not seem to be the case in either of these schools. Teachers tended to mentor students to assist students' achievement, or pass on the experience of being mentored earlier in their life, however the professional relationship between student and teachers would make the behaviour suggested by Evans (2005) unethical. A minority of School A staff also mentored to improve exam results, which reflected the pressures on teachers relating to student academic achievement (Astle *et al* 2011). This was not a reason suggested by School B staff. Some staff in both schools associated mentoring skills with an innate ability in some mentors while others felt that the skills could be practiced.

Students discussed the characteristics that they thought were important in a mentor. Students from both schools felt that age and status were important but for different reasons. School A students linked status with better mentoring as they felt the mentor would have more influence, however School B students felt that status may provide a poorer mentoring experience. This is likely to be due to School B students believing that teachers with responsibilities were busy therefore mentoring would be lower in their list of priorities. Philip (2000) suggested that mentors from similar backgrounds as the mentees were perceived as being 'survivors' and successful while mentors from dissimilar backgrounds were viewed as lacking empathy. In School B, the teacher mentors may have been perceived as being of a similar background to the

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mentees, which may have given their mentoring advice a higher level of importance to the mentee. Mentors of a higher status may bring influence over other teachers and students; however these mentors also had greater responsibilities within the school. Mentees in School B would have to balance their choice of mentor against their factors especially due to mentoring meetings being scheduled by mentors.

Age of mentor was another common factor; students feeling that where a mentor was closer to their age mentors would have a better appreciation of their situation that someone who was older. Finkelstein *et al* (2012) found that in business there was some concern related to younger mentors as they may lack the necessary experience and skills to mentor as well as gaining insufficient respect from mentees to be able to mentor effectively, however this does not seem to represent the school context. School based mentoring research tended to be more focussed on the age of the mentee rather than the mentor (Wood and Mayo-Wilson 2012, Karcher 2008). Both sets of students conceded that mentors needed to have knowledge of the school, school subjects and learning opportunities. The characteristics identified as important for students in this study are not reflected in research (Batty *et al* 1999, Evans *et al* 2006).

Students in School A and B felt that some teachers were not suitable as mentors. However, School A students linked this to lack of suitability to teachers planning and knowledge. If mentors received guidance in advance of

meetings, the association of planning and suitability of mentors may disappear. School B students questioned the suitability of teachers due to the low priority that teachers may attach to mentoring as they were busy. Students from both schools also suggested methods of improving mentoring either by removing less suitable mentors or by improving through training. School A staff also questioned the suitability of teachers due to being busy and lacking time to mentor well. School B staff questioned whether teachers were able to avoid advising and listen to students. School A staff suggested that mentors could be from outside of school and, include ex-students and business people. However, Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004) suggested that teachers may be in the best position to provide students with support within a safe environment as they can provide a more student centred approach (Fredrikson and Rhodes 2004)

Training for mentors was an issue that was raised in both schools. However, most mentors in both schools felt that they would appreciate guidance on their mentoring approaches and an opportunity to share strategies. School A mentors also felt that clarity of the role of the mentors, aims of the programme and going through guidance would also assist in their role as mentors. Wilkin (1992) supported associating the mentor's role with an agenda such as training to clearly define mentoring within that context.

4.2.5 Mentees

This section starts with a basic analysis of mentees' perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring, opinions of group size, their view of parental participation and their perception of their relationship with their mentor.

4.2.5.1 School A

The majority of staff and students felt that mentoring should start in an earlier year group as well as earlier in year 11 as exemplified by:

> *I think year 7s, I think mentoring would help year 7s 'cause it's a leap from primary school to high school and yeah, just that whole change of, I don't really know because I didn't go to primary school in this country but I'm guessing it's a big change of the way you do things, you don't get set play times now so I think year 7s might benefit from mentoring. [Student AD1]*

Year 7 was a commonly suggested year group to start mentoring. Students felt that year 7 students would benefit as it was a transition point from primary to secondary school and social issues may arise at this time while staff saw this as an opportunity to develop a relationship with their potential mentee. Other year groups are suggested were year 9 as this was when students chose their option subjects and required advice, and at the start of year 10 and 11 as these are exam years.

Group size was an issue that divided leadership and teachers and students. Senior leaders and middle leaders felt that the one-to-one mentor to mentee situation was something to aspire to. Teachers and other staff supported smaller mentoring groups; however they were very conscious of issues

surrounding child protection policy relating to a one-to-one situation with a

student as demonstrated by:

> *I think we need to expand because the smaller the groups, the*
> *better. Some teachers are mentoring four, five, six and I think*
> *that's too many. Two or three should be maximum. I mean it*
> *should be two than just having one because of all the protection*
> *issues. [Teacher T4]*

Students were also against the one-to-one mentor to mentee situation but for

different reasons. Students felt that smaller groups allowed students to

compare their progress with other year 11 students which would not be

possible in a one-to-one mentor to mentee situation. There was also the feeling

that the formal relationship between teachers and students was an obstacle to

having an open discussion between them as exemplified by:

> *Because of the formal relationship between student and teacher,*
> *it's very hard to get one-to-one mentoring to work, in my opinion,*
> *because I've had one-to-one mentoring. I find it didn't work as*
> *well as having a large group because it's a lot more formal and its*
> *very awkward sitting there talking to a teacher. [Student AA1]*

Parents being involved in their child's education and mentoring was viewed as

worthy as reflected in documentation and senior leader's comments where

more parent involvement as well as sharing of their child's targets with them

was sought as exemplified by:

> *The parents were really appreciative of that support in the sense*
> *that they were just pleased that their youngsters were getting*
> *additional contact, guidance... The current scheme within*
> *█████ I think parents should be more involved*
> *[Principal S3]*

Middle leaders did not reflect this; however one middle leader was asked by a

parent to be a mentor for their child after year 11 suggesting that some parent's

valued mentoring as an intervention to support their children.   Teachers also reported that feedback from parents suggested that the teacher's efforts were appreciated. Students also supported this view of parent opinions of mentoring as demonstrated by:

> *My mum knows, like, it helps you and that it makes you more*
> *focussed really. [Student AC1]*

Some senior leaders felt that students had a positive experience of mentoring; however other senior leaders felt that some students perceived mentoring as a form of monitoring. One senior leader felt that students appreciated mentoring but felt unconvinced about claims that mentoring improved achievement and preferred to believe that attention improved student self-esteem as exemplified by:

> *It [mentoring] might make them feel better about themselves,*
> *whether it has an impact on academic achievement, dubious, ... It*
> *might work but I think the actual attention you give to the student*
> *is the most important thing actually if you argue that somebody's*
> *looking after them, thinking about them, caring for them, providing*
> *them with resources, I think for me is very important and that's*
> *why I like doing it. [Vice Principal S2]*

Middle leaders were less positive but felt that students benefited especially if the sessions were differentiated for differing ability mentees. However, there was an admission by some middle leaders and students that mentoring sessions could be focussed repetitively on grades and paperwork causing boredom as exemplified by:

> *They're trying to get us to like be more, I don't know how to*
> *explain it, like prepare us for our exams, I think. But they don't*
> *really do it very well just giving us sheets and saying oh you must*
> *do this. [Student AJ2]*

Although staff hoped students benefited, a minority reported that some students did not see any value in mentoring. Teachers and other staff generally reported positive feedback and appreciation from students and felt that mentoring was beneficial.

Some students reported that their impression of mentoring declined over time suggesting that they had high expectations at the beginning of the programme as demonstrated by:

> *I'd really rather do my homework in form time rather than having to sit with a teacher [mentor]... I think people got more negative over the course of the time [Student AA1]*

They felt that mentoring had the potential to be beneficial but it had not met the programmes goals or their expectations. Some teachers felt that students tolerated mentoring and this seemed to be the case as some students felt that their time could be better spent. Differences in perspective of how students felt about mentoring may stem from the adult perception that mentoring was 'a good thing to do' therefore expecting benefits of some kind.

To improve the mentoring programme, middle leaders and teachers felt that there needed to be someone in overall charge of the mentoring programme to provide a standard approach to mentoring rather than the current situation where the programme was re-invented each year by the current year 11 head of year as demonstrated by:

> *I'd like to see it becoming more standardised, that we have a very similar thing each year. I think it's got to be one person in charge*

> *of it to ensure that we get that. Whilst the year head's got to be involved in it, I think that if year heads take on each year and change it completely then no one understands what they're supposed to be doing. So I think there's got the be some, whether it's someone in SLT that's got to take responsibility for it and come up with a programme that can be tinkered with but works so it's a programme and a package of materials that we'll be giving out each year. [Head of Year Y2]*

Gaining feedback from participants of the programme was suggested by middle leaders to assist in programme improvements, as well as involving parents more. Making mentoring part of the school's ethos was an aspiration but was viewed as unlikely to happen, possible due to other priorities for the school's senior leadership.

The content of the mentoring programme was an issue for students and middle leaders. Students wanted to have some input on content of the programme and there was the suggestion that revision techniques needed to be taught explicitly as well as providing career advice to focus mentoring sessions as exemplified by:

> *I think they should work more towards like what you want to do after school and like what grades you need and stuff. So if you said you want to be like, for example, like a policewoman or something like that and then they'd like they'd help you say what you do when you leave school and like what grades you need and stuff and like if you had to go to college and more stuff like that and focus on that... [Student AU2]*

> *...they could have our input as well on how, who we want to have as well as how they are structured and we think they should be structured and what should be included. [Student AE1]*

Middle leaders tended to focus on how the programme was delivered. There were suggestions such as including content related to work-life balance, differentiating according to mentee abilities and, keeping records of sessions.

Teachers and other staff suggested that absent mentees needed investigating due to some students avoiding mentoring as a number of students did not attend on a regular basis.

4.2.5.2 School B

The composition of the mentoring groups was determined mainly by the students who asked those teachers to mentor them; however teachers had some influence when they were faced with too many potential mentees as demonstrated by:

> ...I had a lot choosing me so I whittled it down to eight [for mentoring]. They were either in my form or they were in my maths group and that's really and I just carried on. [Head of Department H01]

Therefore views relating to group composition were based upon student perspectives. Students felt that friends within the group affected the mentoring session and their interactions within the group by either not taking the session seriously, trying to save face or worrying about being thought of as stupid as exemplified by:

> You don't feel like you can say like anything you want on your mind, just in case other people disagree. That's what I don't like about it so there are some things you are quite scared to say. [Student BH2]

Some students would have preferred individual sessions so they could speak freely.

'Springboard to Success' evenings were part of the school's efforts to support parents and students in providing information regarding the courses and exams. Student relationships with their parents varied considerably where some students viewed themselves as independent from their parents and these students did not readily discuss school with them as demonstrated by:

> *...my parents know diddley squit about the mentoring 'cause I tend to keep them in the dark about school...I'm pretty independent and they really annoy me. [Student BG2]*

Other students were willing to discuss school with parents and accept assistance for school work from family members. Staff felt that they were a point of contact for parents and some parents had used the mentors to assist their children when they have had trouble communicating with their child. This role had been extended in some situations where staff and students had felt that the mentor was someone to confide in as illustrated by:

> *I've a mentor and stuff like be an extra mum and I can speak to her about random stuff instead of school and stuff [Student BO3]*

However, a minority of staff felt that parents could be an obstacle as exemplified by:

> *...the end product is the student not the parent. 'Cause often the parent will get in the way. In fact, the parent could be the problem... They don't get the help and support they need from their parents or at least they don't feel they can ask for it or it's not readily available and you know it's just one of these things school should be really put on. [Director D01]*

Staff felt that mentoring was a moral obligation and believed that mentoring was beneficial as exemplified by:

> *I think mentoring is the right thing to do. [Teacher T03]*

However some staff felt that they were the significant adult in some of their mentees lives as some parents had little experience of education to advise their child. Students and staff had felt that a positive relationship with a teacher was a good basis for their mentoring relationship. Students appreciated boundaries and being aware of expectations as exemplified by:

> *She's quite lenient but strict like if you're not doing something that you should be doing she'll make sure you do it but if you've got like a problem she's really sympathetic and just really nice, telling you funny stories and make you laugh. [Student BC1]*

Some students felt the sessions were too informal to gain any benefit from them, which may be due to the teacher trying to build a relationship with the student. Staff acknowledged that the building of a relationship and trust may be part of the first few mentoring sessions as illustrated by:

> *I think when you're dealing with a year 11, it's slightly more difficult to get to the nub of what they actually need and it usually takes three or four sessions before you start to get a feel of what exactly this, the mentee, requires in terms of support. [Senior Leader S01]*

The majority of students felt that mentoring was helpful, which was supported by the feedback from staff that students were positive about mentoring. Those students who did not attend or rarely attended tended to suggest that mentoring would be beneficial as demonstrated by:

> *I haven't been to that many things but it's definitely helped me. 'Cause well, I do a revision timetable thing that I haven't done either but I've got to do it and once I get it done it'll help me and I went there, I can't remember what I done, working on subjects that I need to revise and stuff so it does help. [Student BP3]*

However, this and other similar responses may have been the students providing responses they felt they should say rather than how they actually felt about mentoring.

Although the mentoring was meant to be compulsory, some students were missed and most students felt that mentoring had to be a positive experience. Some staff mistakenly believed that mentoring was voluntary, which may be the reason that some students did not feel the need to attend mentoring while others may have not chosen a mentor at all.

Both staff and students felt that mentoring should have started earlier. Students felt that earlier intervention would allow year 9s to get help with options and year 10s weaknesses would have been identified and mentoring would assist students. Students also thought that year 10s with behaviour issues would benefit from earlier intervention. Earlier intervention would also allow for a relationship to be built between the mentor and mentee. However staff felt that an earlier start to mentoring in year 11 would be beneficial, a continuous process of mentoring was also suggested. A minority of staff and students also suggested a voluntary approach to mentoring as they felt that when compulsory those who were against being mentored would not attend mentoring sessions as demonstrated by some students' responses. However, a minority of staff felt that mentoring was a temporary and unsatisfactory solution aimed at C/D grade students but justified it with attributing the nature of mentoring to the nature of boy's organisation skills as exemplified by:

> *I think as a school we need to start mentoring sooner because it's always been a bit of a sticking plaster job until now but obviously all the roles are changing. The C/D mentoring has always been a sticking plaster job but it works 'cause to be honest a lot of them*

are boys and a lot of them always leave it to the last minute
anyway, boys always did. [Teacher T03]

This suggests that this teacher perceived an overrepresentation of boys on the C/D grade borderline in this school due to an inability to organise their learning. Younger *et al* (2005) found that there is a gender gap in achievement where girls outperform a significant number of boys of similar ability. However, within schools Younger *et al* (2005) warns against generalising this underachievement of boys to all boys and the lack of clarity in defining 'underachievement' without contextual information.

Boy's learning behaviour was assumed to predispose them to working towards the final deadline for assessments rather than completing work in advance suggesting a lack of organisational and planning skills. This was supported by Nagleiri and Rojahn (2001) who claimed that planning skills and attention were lower in boys than girls; however other researchers have suggested that the gender gap may have a greater link with other social and economic factors that girls and boys respond to differently (Burgess *et al*., 2004, Machin and McNally, 2005, Salisbury *et al*., 1999) . This research has not informed the teachers' point of view, suggesting that their perception has a judgemental bias towards boys and their abilities. A minority of staff suggested that the mentoring programme would continue to be fine-tuned until the right combination was achieved to gain the best results from students.

4.2.5.3 Contrasting School A and B – Mentees

Students from School A and B were aware that the mentoring was used for preparation in external GCSE exams. However, School A students felt that the change in strategy for assisting in these exams was based upon them being an older year group and more mature. Staff from both schools believed that mentoring was a positive and beneficial strategy to assist students; however a minority of School A staff voiced concerns that mentoring may not improve achievement. Parsloe and Wray (2000) suggested that if the purpose of mentoring was academic outcomes, the gain would be small, as supported by some who believed that mentoring had little or no effect on academic achievement (Golden 2000, Irving *et al* 2003, Rodriguez-Planas 2012, Wood and Mayo-Wilson 2012, Younger and Warrington 2009). However, Larose *et al* (2005) suggested that this may be due to ineffective mentoring practices. This member of staff suggested that providing the student with adult attention and resources would benefit students, this supported Rodriguez-Planas (2012) suggestion that poor achievement may be linked to the underdevelopment of non-cognitive skills.

School A and B wanted to get parents more involved in their children's education, however they used different strategies. This is informed by Rhodes *et al* (2000) who suggested that the mentee- parent relationship mediated academic improvements. School A had senior leaders and some middle leaders involved in having meetings with parents and underachieving students. This was a strategy suggested by Perryman *et al* (2011) to aid underachieving students. Mentors coordinated communication between the school and parents

in relation to year 11 mentees. School B took a different approach. Academic Review Days allowed form tutors, parents and students to discuss progress and targets and the school ran 'Springboard to Success' evenings for year 11 students and their parents during the year. School B senior leaders felt that these evening were part of a wider mentoring culture to include parents. However, mentoring between mentors and mentees did not generally include parents in either school. Rodriguez-Planas (2012) suggested that building a relationship with a non-familiar adult would build resilience, which may be the reason parents were not participants in the mentoring programme within school days. However the reasoning behind the non-inclusion of parents in the mentoring programme within the school day was mainly logistical.

Group size was an issue that concerned students more than staff in each school. In School A senior and middle leaders felt that one-to-one mentoring was ideal, however teachers and students preferred small mentoring groups but not one-to-one mentoring. Teachers were concerned about child protection policy while students were concerned about the formal relationship between teacher and student being an obstacle to open discussion. School B staff had some control over the group size but were limited to a maximum of 3 or 4 mentees; however students had a preference for one-to-one mentoring and were more concerned about the composition of the group. Some students believed that one-to-one mentoring would allow them to be more open in their discussion with their mentor. Groups that included friends were viewed as limiting real interaction as students would try to save face by messing about or claiming that were no issues relating to their work.

The perception of how students felt about mentoring was generally positive in both School A and B. However, staff in School A conceded that some students may not have enjoyed mentoring due to it being repetitive but there was the hope that mentoring had been beneficial for those students. Students were not as positive about mentoring as staff in each school perceived especially for School A. Rhodes and DuBois (2008) suggested that if the interests and preferences of mentees were the basis of the mentor-mentee relationship then outcomes would be more positive. However, this may not be the case in these school contexts and rather the school's needs may have taken precedence. Another potential reason may be that mentees may not have been challenged as Younger *et al* (2005) suggested that mentees who were challenged would be more proactive in their learning.

In School B most students felt that mentoring was helpful, however some students chose not to attend mentoring for a variety of reasons. Philip *et al* (2004) suggested that some mentees may not expect to work at mentoring and this may facilitate some mentees non-attendance. In School A most students appreciated the efforts made by staff but felt that mentoring did not reach the goals set for itself. School A students appreciated the opportunity for less confident students to participate in small groups as they were less likely to participate in class settings. However, there was still a belief or hope from staff and students from both schools that mentoring was beneficial for students.

Suggested improvements for the mentoring programme were centred round when the most appropriate time for the mentoring programme to begin, administration, year-on-year improvements and the ethos of the schools. School A and School B wanted to grow mentoring into part of the culture or ethos of the school. School A staff and students felt that the mentoring programme should start at transitional stages of education such as year 7, year 9 and year 10/11; year 7 was suggested for social reasons, year 9 to assist with choosing options, and year 10/11 due to the associated external exams. School B staff and students suggested mentoring should encompass year 9 to year 11. An earlier start would allow time to build a relationship between the mentor and mentee, option choices, deal with behaviour issues and after the first set of exams weaknesses would have been identified by these points. However, there was a suggestion from some staff that mentoring should be a continuous process. Staff and students in School B also questioned whether mentoring should be compulsory or voluntary.

School A staff tended to focus on administration improvements such as having one person in overall charge of mentoring in the school, and keep records of meetings. Staff also suggested that feedback from mentors and mentees would be helpful while some students felt that they should have input on the content of the programme. Karcher and Nakkula (2010) suggested that having mentees involved in decision making gained most from the mentoring relationship. However there was no suggestion from students or staff that mentors and mentees together may benefit from a form of training.

School A staff suggested improvements in the approach taken in mentoring sessions such as a differentiated approach. However in School B the approach of mentoring sessions was attributed to the mentor as there was no fixed approach. In School A some staff wanted to widen the remit of the mentoring programme to content that would contribute to the students' work-life balance. In School B the staff felt that the mentoring sessions went beyond the academic goals at times. School A and School B staff were concerned about the students who had not attended mentoring during the year but there did not seem to be a coherent strategy to improve this situation. Both schools were willing to continue to improve the mentoring programme through fine-tuning, however the lack of continuity in School A due to different heads of year 11 being responsible for the programme may prove more of an obstacle to improvement.

4.3 Personalised Learning

Personalised learning in each school was discussed in terms of its aims, definitions and activities. Evidence of personalised learning aims, definitions and potential outcomes stemmed from staff perspectives. Activities that could be classified as personalised learning were evidenced from staff and students. As different participants could provide evidence for difference aspects of personalised learning all aspects of personalised learning will be included in this section.   The link between mentoring and personalised learning is also explored.

4.3.1 Personalised Learning Definitions, Aims and Activities

This section starts with a basic analysis of perceptions of personalised learning definitions, aims and purposes, then the skills required by students and staff to full participate in personalised learning, and suggestions on how mentoring could support personalised learning.

4.3.1.1 School A

Personalised learning was viewed as an ideal by many staff which may not be feasible due to the compulsory curriculum as suggested by:

> *Personalised learning in the strictest sense should mean that every student has a course suited to them entirely which is impossible. You couldn't run seven hundred timetables so we do it piece meal and give them a bit of vocational training, a bit of this and a bit of that. So it's difficult to do, giving them a choice at fourteen at the end of year is specious really because we don't have much of a choice, little choice because most of the stuff is compulsory they have to. I suppose, as an ideal it's worthwhile, in practice it's very difficult and sounds good and it's another initiative that in five years will be down the toilet as well and we'll do something else.*
> *[Vice Principal S2]*

Definitions seemed to revolve around course choice, independent learning and using different learning styles as suggested above. Senior and middle leader tended to be more familiar with the term 'personalised learning' – not perhaps surprising considering their role was to be strategically responsible for the school's systems and structures to operationalise personalised learning. This did reveal that some leaders viewed personalised learning as an impossibility or aspiration. Most staff especially teachers and learning support assistants

were unsure or unaware of personalised learning.   A minority of senior leaders were concerned about the financial implications of personalised learning as it was assumed to be an expensive endeavour as exemplified by:

> *It should have a major impact on the future. The problem for schools is that they have, most schools are too small to offer, we haven't got economies of scale and therefore personalised learning is still very compartmentalised and the example is how does a year 9 student accessing the beauty therapy course that they'd love to do, well that's because the beauty therapy course is full but they still should be able to opt, you know. There are year 9s that we have now who should be looking at those sorts of choices. [Senior Leader S3]*

Overall there was no clear understanding of personalised learning and the school's vision for personalised learning did not seem to have been shared.

Choice and flexibility were central to a leader's view of personalised learning by providing a variety of courses, career pathways and within the classroom context, topics and timings of those topics as demonstrated by:

> *I think I've got the impression that it's like students should be given more choices what to pick perhaps at GCSE as well like the students that go to college courses here, I think they use the words personalised learning, the Government and that, to talk about introducing more things like that so each student is a bit more clear on the pathway they're heading and studying for that so I think there is two different ways the phrase can be used. I'm not entirely sure of it myself. [Head of Department H2]*

> *Is it where we say that if you take a student rather than saying to them at any particular level, say GCSE, here's our timetable, fit into that. What we do is we look at students from a more individual basis and offer them a more, a package that is more suited to what they feel they want to study. That's what I think it is. I might be wrong but that's what I think it is. [Director D1]*

However, some senior leaders and middle leaders believed that personalised learning providing choices for students was misleading due to the compulsory

nature of some subjects. Some middle leaders also viewed this approach to be part of differentiation. Teachers viewed the lesson choices associated with personalised learning to be differentiation but a minority felt that individual attention within the lesson was personalised learning. There seemed to be confusion between personalised learning, individualisation and differentiation as exemplified by:

> *... being taught in a way as much as possible that suits them and suits their style of learning and of course in the classroom that's not always that easy but that we take into account their abilities, their preferred way of learning, their interests to try and ensure that the way we teach each individual is going to be the best for them to learn. I mean differentiation to the nth degree. [Head of Year Y2]*

> *I think sometimes this sort of at the moment certainly with the system we've got it would certainly help people realise they're not alone in struggling with a certain subject at a certain time and that could be something that could be got over: it's alright for you not to be at that level now and therefore don't worry about it and don't, you know, it's ...that making acceptable for people to develop at their own rate. [Teacher T5]*

> *That [personalised learning] did crop up and all sorts of problems came up, some found they weren't getting the one..., they wanted a one-to-one sort of approach in class.[Learning Support Assistant A1]*

A minority of senior leaders felt that vertical classes were a suitable model for personalised learning as well as the 'stage not age' approach to gaining qualifications as exemplified by:

> *Personalised learning... should mean vertical teaching, it should mean very flexible opportunities across the working week and across the working day and it should mean young, anyone and it's not just personalised learning could mean as well for a school organisation I think that it is also the door should open for a whole range of other people to be there. Why aren't we as a school running A level, ASs in year 11 or year 10 for those youngsters that*

could get an A, A* in year 10 for a particular course. [Principal S3]

Teachers seemed to agree with this approach that students should be entered for qualifications when students were ready rather than linked with a specific age. A minority of teachers felt that this approach could only be accomplished when students were knowledgeable about their own learning as well as reducing the stigmatism associated with low achievement as suggested by:

> *... if they can understand the way they learn best they may often be able to ask a teacher to present things in slightly different way for them. [Teacher T6]*

> *You're making it more tailor-made to the individuals and you're setting them targets that are much more achievable by them as individuals... [Learning Support Assistant A2]*

Senior leaders and middle leaders agreed that mentoring could support personalised learning through student's guidance to support their choices and ensuring that students had an informed choice. Some senior leaders and teachers felt that this approach would provide students with ownership of their learning as exemplified by:

> *...as part of education they [students] have to take responsibility for themselves when they leave school and that's what hopefully school is preparation for so taking responsibility for your own learning in part is a good idea ...[Teacher T2]*

> *... mentoring could be in the form of the careers talks, the options evening, where students are informed so they can make the best decisions now for their future. [Vice Principal S1]*

However, the teachers approach seemed to be based on the process of getting students to the point where they are able to use the information provided to make choices rather than the end-product.

A minority of senior leaders questioned whether teachers were best placed for the type of mentoring needed for personalised learning as exemplified by:

> *There would be a high level need for your mentors to be very conversant with all the opportunities and the ranges and so on and it's not only with this particular institution but what's available all round so it's a massive task. It's a bit of a dream, I think that. But it's the right thing to have. [Principal S3]*

Their concern lay in the development of knowledge required to keep students informed and guide them to appropriate choices. This concern may be based in the belief that personalised learning was an aspiration and seeing the implementation of personalise learning within the school as challenging if not impossible.

4.3.1.2 School B

Staff believed that the aim for personalised learning was to help students gain the best academic progress they were capable of, however this was viewed as an ideal as exemplified by:

> *For me, personalised learning means making sure that there are the available choices for the students as they go through their academic career - that they have a range of experiences, that they have access to courses which would be suitable to them and their range of learning styles and experiences in the lesson, which sounds great but you can't do it for every single student all the time within a curriculum... So there's always a compromise but I think for me personalised learning is looking at the school body as a whole and seeing how much flexibility you can build into your curriculum and into your lessons to allow most individuals to find a way for themselves through it. [Senior Leader S01]*

Senior staff had a clearer view of personalised learning than other members of staff. Most other staff had heard of 'personalised learning' but a minority admitted that they did not feel that they had an understanding of the term.

The school approach to personalised learning was to work towards making it part of the culture of the school. This started with a change in vocabulary such as 'teaching assistants' becoming 'raising attainment facilitators' and forming a department of personalised learning as suggested by:

> *I'm aware of personalised learning as ... it's very structured now with a head of personalised learning and the whole team around it... [Learning Support Assistant A01]*

This approach ensured that all members of staff had heard of the term but had not led to an understanding of 'personalised learning' for all.

The year 9 option pathways were also part of the school's personalised learning strategy to provide choice and flexibility in the curriculum. The staff perceived the option pathways to be chosen through interest and the naming of the pathways as trees was to ensure that they would not be put into a hierarchy. However, students were aware of a hierarchy of subjects within the pathways and associated particular groups of students to the pathways as exemplified by:

> *The guidance is there to say look you're a very academic able person, you seem to like these types of subjects so therefore we recommend this route. I don't think they see it as being hierarchical at all. I think they see it as that's something that would interest me. That was the philosophy and the purpose behind the pathways in the first place and the sort of naming of them [the option pathways]. [Senior Leader S01]*

> *Willow was boffin... Beech was in the middle... Oak was like*
> *tardish [Student BJ2]*

A minority of staff suggested that the option pathways may be tailored but concerns were raised regarding the group of students who may be in a course, especially lower ability classes, which could be counter-productive to student progress as suggested by:

> *...obviously got individual students in mind, the little girl who's*
> *timid and shy as a church mouse, tries so hard but it's not*
> *academically able in any way, shape or form, and you give her the*
> *... the youth award and study plus pathways so she's not doing*
> *triple science. Okay, that's been tailored but it's not been personal*
> *because she's in with the behavioural, the Ritalin and the kids that*
> *are going to just bunk off after about six months... That's not*
> *personal, she'd be better off in a higher set, which is quiet and*
> *she'd actually learn a little bit more. [Teacher T01]*

Taking external exams early was also one of the schools' approaches to personalised learning as the school was trialling a two year Key Stage 3; therefore there was the potential for year 9 or 10 students to take AS level courses. However, some members of staff felt that the organisation of these exams and the inflexibility in the current system were obstacles against such a move. The personalised learning approaches at an individual-level included the flexible use of teaching assistants, and removing some students from lessons to provide targeted support.

In preparing students to participate in personalised learning, there seemed to be a division in the process. Leaders suggested that students needed to develop their learning skills across subject areas to be able to fully participate in personalised learning. However, some teachers felt that students needed to take responsibility of their learning as demonstrated by:

I think what we need to perhaps do as a staff is think about how we give our students the skills to be able to learn differently in different lessons and use different types of skills from one lesson to the next. [Director D01]

It's helping the child to realise that they have that responsibility themselves to know where they have to go, know what they can achieve. [Teacher T03]

Staff suggested that mentoring could support personalised learning through assessing student needs and meetings these needs. However, this suggested that mentoring may be on a needs-basis rather than for everyone. The confusion with regards to what constituted mentoring added to the difficulty in assessing how it could support personalised learning as exemplified by:

It's helping the child to realise that they have that responsibility themselves to know where they have to go, know what they can achieve. If you're not careful, it's teaching them the separate bits they want to learn then it becomes coaching and again it's a numbers game, you know, a lot of the students who are struggling do have learning support but I'm not sure how much they see themselves as mentored or how much they see themselves as supported. [Teacher T03]

With the diversification of education providers, mentoring could centralise the support structures and provide an overview of the student's education as demonstrated by:

...in three years time re-assess how we mentor because there will be some students who will need some extra support, guidance particularly if they're working at that higher academic level. For some of those who may be taking a different route, they'll probably need a bit of mentoring as well because they're going off to a college course, work placement. They're going to lose contact with school but if we can bring them in and do some mentoring ...'cause it's a different style of learning [Senior Leader S01]

Students felt that mentoring could help them make choices through informing them and providing tailored assistance for them to help prepare for exams.

4.3.1.3 Contrasting School A and School B Personalised Learning Definitions,

   Aims and Activities

School A and B staff felt that personalised learning was an ideal to work

towards although many had doubts to its feasibility. A clear understanding of

personalised learning in each school was elusive. School B was moving

towards a culture of personalised learning ensured that staff were familiar with

the term, however there was a lack of understanding by some staff of the

concept. School B staff's understanding and knowledge of the term

'personalised learning' varied considerably between levels of the organisation.

This may be indicative of a lack of clarity in either school's vision of

personalised learning. Matthews (2009) suggested that school leaders should

communicate a vision and approach for personalised learning that would be

successful in their context. Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that there should

be a shared understanding of what learning is within the personalised learning

approach as West-Burnham (2010) believed that all members of the

organisation including students were responsible for learning.

School A staff felt that the aim of personalised learning was to meet the needs

of different students while School B felt that personalised learning assisted

student academic progress. Pollard and James (2004) claimed that the primary

goal of personalised learning was to improve attainment for all students.

However, DfES (2004) claimed that this would be accomplished through

tailoring approaches to student's needs. Therefore both schools had aims that

fulfilled the personalised learning agenda, however School B's emphasis was on the ultimate goal while School A emphasised the process.

The activities associated with personalised learning tended to be based upon differentiation and individualised learning in both schools. In the class room School A staff felt that personalised learning took the form of flexibility in schemes of work, topic choice and timings allocated to topics. Independent learning and the use of ICT were also part of the personalised learning strategy within lessons. Some staff felt that providing individual attention within the lesson constituted personalised learning. School B staff also included the idea of flexibility but associated it with the use of teaching assistants, targeted support and developing student skills to enable students to participate in personalised learning. Each school had context specific approaches to the personalised learning agenda as suggested by Miliband (2004).

Personalised learning on a school level in School A was providing a diversity of courses and career pathways. However, staff felt that choice was limited due to the statutory curriculum. This was supported by Hargreaves (2005d) that these personalised learning reforms highlights the inflexibility inherent in the curriculum. Middle leaders felt that student interest should guide student choices, which some School B staff agreed with. Senior staff felt that vertical classes were viewed as the most suitable model to base the personalised learning strategy. School B also provided a diversity of courses through their option pathways. School B Staff believed that the option pathways were

named to avoid students making judgements about them, however students were able to make judgements relating to the type of student to choose each pathway from the subjects in the pathway. Student choice was central to the DfES (2005a) model of personalised learning. The emphasis of informed choice was important to both schools as suggested by Leadbeater (2004a).

Personalised learning in relation to external exams in School A and B was based upon the 'stage not age' approach where students would learn subjects and tackle qualifications when the student was able. School A and B had been trialling a two year Key Stage 3, therefore the potential for students to attempt higher qualifications earlier than currently available. This was a key aspect to Hargreaves' (2004b) model of personalised learning. A minority of School A staff felt that this could only be accomplished if students were knowledgeable of their learning.

In School A and B staff agreed that mentoring could support personalised learning through providing students with support to make informed choices and take ownership of these choices. DfES (2005a) claimed that the process of personalised learning would result in self-managing learners who were invested in their learning. Brooker and Macdonald (1999) suggested that student voice would also contribute to students having ownership over their learning. School B staff felt that mentoring could be one of many strategies centralise support when students are educated by a variety of providers. Providing alternatives to classroom environments was also part of the

personalised learning model suggested by Hargreaves (2004a) and seemed to have become part of the aspirational view of personalised learning.

Each school had made efforts to design a personalised learning approach that fits their situation. However, there seemed to be a fundamental lack of understanding that components of personalised learning permeated all facets of education as discussed by Hartley (2007). School B had made efforts to make personalised learning part of their culture, a strategy suggested by West-Burnham (2010).

In both schools, flexible learning options pathways were a major part of their personalised learning approaches. Underwood *et al* (2009) suggested that schools use the strategy of using flexible learning pathways to fulfil the DfES' (2004) drive to tailor by student interest, needs and aptitude to improve attainment. However, School B's efforts to guide students to pathways by interest backfired when students became aware of the relative status of the pathways.

Gilbert (2006) and Sebba *et al* (2007) suggested that parents should be involved in the learning relationship such as intervention strategies such as mentoring. Campbell *et al* (2007) suggested that personalised learning was already occurring in schools; however staff in the schools did not seem to be aware of this due to their poor of understanding of the concept. Therefore

School B were unaware that part of their mentoring strategy of involving parents in Academic Review Days and the 'Springboard to Success' evenings would constitute part of their personalised learning approach. Option evenings at both schools to inform parents and students of the learning pathways would also constitute personalised learning.

School A staff suggested that students would need to develop their ability to take responsibility, however a minority of staff felt that the current mentoring programme was sufficient to fulfil this requirement. Knowledge of learning opportunities available to students would need to be developed by School A staff. A senior leader felt that the task was too large for teachers to fulfil this requirement, however DCSF (2008b) commented that personalised learning should be teacher led. This does not necessarily preclude external agencies from providing specific services outside of teacher's expertise.

School A and B staff suggested that student skills to participate in personalised learning could be developed through mentoring. School B staff perceived that students should develop organisational skills, confidence and ability to take responsibility. In Leadbeater's (2004b) view of personalised learning, students needed to learn to become independent learners to earn the right to make educational choices. In each school, all students had the right to make those choices, however limited the choice. School A staff suggested that mentoring should start in year 7 to learn about student interests to be able to advise them appropriately. Sebba *et al* (2007) claimed that mentoring as a strategy for

personalised learning was unlikely to be related to advice and support in

schools. Jones (2007) suggested that students and parents should be involved

in the design of advice and guidance therefore their lack of input may be the

reason that mentoring was unlikely to be linked to advice and support.

At the time of the study, School A and B discussed personalised learning as

something that would happen in the future rather than a current issue.

Therefore much of the discussion was based upon what staff would like

personalised learning to be in the schools.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the finding from the data presented in Chapter 4 and findings in Chapter 5. In this final chapter, these findings are examined through the prism of the research questions in order to: draw some conclusions; to examine implications for practice, and to identify the limitations of the research.

The data was collected to address the five research questions:

1. How do students and staff understand the purpose of mentoring?

2. How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?

3. How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?

4. How do students and staff understand personalised learning?

5. What might a mode of mentoring look like to support personalised learning?

The research focussed on year 11 mentoring within two secondary schools. The first section of the chapter will use the research questions to explore the findings, noting weaknesses in the data and identifying areas for further exploration. Based on this review of the research project, the second section

consists of a number of recommendations about mentoring and personalised learning in general and its use in secondary schools. The final part of the chapter focuses on my reflections on the research process.

5.2 Research Questions

5.2.1 How do students and staff understand the purpose of mentoring?

The concept of mentoring differed across schools and was context specific (as discussed in section 5.2.1). However, due to the nature of academic mentoring programmes, most staff and students understood that the mentoring programme was for the purpose of aiding the year 11 students in their Key Stage 4 examinations. This may be due to academic mentoring occurring mainly to meet the school accountability measures (as discussed in section 5.2.1). Other explanations of the reasons behind the mentoring programme were linked to the short academic year prior to the examinations and the age of the year group; year 11 students are at the end of their compulsory education therefore a minority of students felt that their maturity warranted a different approach.

When staff and students were asked about their understanding of mentoring, their articulation of the concept was ill-defined and often confused with the multitude of roles a teacher fulfils. This is also compounded by a lack of clarity at Ofsted level where School B's Ofsted (2011) report combines

tutoring, mentoring, pastoral and academic support under the banner of mentoring. As Ofsted ensures that government education policy is enacted then at policy level the concept of mentoring may be ill-defined, and it is then unsurprising that this filters down into schools.

Although mentoring is ill-defined in governmental policy and Ofsted, within schools, the practice of mentoring was more stable as aims and expectations tended to be shared. The policy may have produced guidance for the implementation of mentoring but schools produced their own versions that fitted their circumstances and agendas.

5.2.2 How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?

The mentoring programmes in each school took a different approach. Each programme worked on the premise set by the senior leadership teams that the approach they took would assist students in achieving their target grades for their Key Stage 4 examinations. School A's mentors mainly focussed on ensuring students were aware of their current grades and the target grades for each of their courses, and whether coursework had been completed. Other strategies used were discussing revision techniques, and providing advice and support. School B's mentors were less structured in their approach, however a similarity with School A's approach was the focus on revision techniques and coursework completion. School B's mentors also asked the students to apply

their revision techniques and make revision aids to assist the individual students and the group as a whole. Coursework was also checked and mini-deadlines were set by the mentors to check coursework and ensured the coursework was completed. In addition in School B mentoring activities were seen as dependent on the student's needs and some vulnerable students were assisted in different ways such as mentors supporting students with outside school issues and, encouraging attendance at school and lessons.

Mentoring that focused on academic process and dealt with obstacles to learning was perceived by students more positively than that which 'fixated' on grades (as discussed in section 5.2.3). These approaches to mentoring seem to fit with type of organisations Fielding (2007) identified as person centred and high performance. Where mentoring fixated on grades, the high performance school uses the personal relationship for the sake of the functional such as grades, while the person centred school uses the functional relationship for the sake of the personal, i.e. focuses on the pursuit of grades as part of the personal development of the student.

The completion of coursework as part of mentoring assists students in working towards their target grade as it constitutes a percentage of the final course grade. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the other mentoring activities in each school helped students attain their target grades.

Staff in both schools believed that taking an interest in students encouraged academic efforts as supported by Bernstein-Yamashiro (2004) who claimed that if teachers demonstrated care and encouragement, student efforts would increase. Crocker and Park (2004) suggested that the resultant impact of the relationship between the mentor and mentee was an improvement in self-worth and feelings of competence, and leading to an improvement in self-esteem. Pre-existing relationships between mentors and mentees were believed to be a prerequisite to successful mentoring by staff and students in the case study schools (King et al., 2002, Komosa-Hawkins, 2012). In addition Prain (2012) found that strong relationships with peers, teachers and family lead to students being more self-reliant and independent learners as part of the personalised learning agenda. Students found supportive peers to assist them in becoming more self-reliant, there were instances where students seemed to be dependent upon their support, which does not reflect Prain's (2012) findings. Some staff and students felt that the mentoring process was for the student and did not need the involvement of parents, whether this is due to the students being more independent or self-reliant requires more research (as discussed in section 4.2.3.2).

The suggestion by a member of School A's leadership was that relationships with students could be used as leverage to get students to work harder or be more attentive to their learning. This perspective has implications for mentoring and how it is perceived by students. One student in School A felt that the school was only interested in her getting grades as opposed to caring about her as a person. This reflected the approach Fielding (2007) recognised

of a high performance organisation where the personal relationship is used for the sake of the functional or in this situation the grades to aid the schools aims. However, this approach was not reflective of all staff in School A who seemed to take a more person–centred approach in contrast to the member of the leadership's manipulative approach.

In the absence of evidence in School B of any student perception that mentoring was a way of using them to get grades for the school may suggest that School B is more person-centred (Fielding 2007). Students suggested that mentoring relationships were more enabling and were based on the person than the production of grades. However, this is contradicted in some small measure by the teacher who was willing to pay for students to gain results but this may be an aberration.

Some staff believed that exam strategies would improve confidence but did not link this to an effect on self-esteem. In addition, staff tended to believe that confidence came from a variety of other sources including improved communication skills through being mentored by an adult, exam strategies and praise.

Students in both schools felt that mentoring increased self-esteem and confidence. Students felt that being informed and the completion of coursework improved self-esteem as they felt more competent. Self-esteem is

affected by the student's belief of the source of their successes and failures. If the student can be retrained in believing their successes and failures are attributed to their actions rather than abilities, there is no adverse effect on their self-esteem (Craske 1988). However, the quest for an improvement in self-esteem has been credited with having more impact on achievement (Crocker and Park 2004).

The majority of staff and students in each school perceived that academic mentoring assisted them prior to the Key Stage 4 examinations; however it is difficult to establish more precisely the concrete mechanism by which this may occur, if it occurs. Research varies in its conclusions as to whether mentoring improves exam performance, however there is some indication in this study that coursework completion, the development of revision techniques and improving psychosocial factors was perceived by staff and students to have had an impact on exam performance.

5.2.3 How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?

There is evidence from School A that there is a difference in sources of motivation for different ability students. Higher ATL students seemed have higher levels of internal motivation than lower ATL students. Lower ATL students suggested that they were motivated by their mentors instructing them. Higher ATL students suggested that they were able to take the information

provided by their mentor and use it to motivate themselves to improve. This attribute may be present prior to mentoring these students. Lower ATL students would therefore benefit from mentoring strategies that would encourage internal motivation in parallel to the external motivation provided by the mentor.

In School A, higher ATL students perceived themselves to be more resilient than lower ATL students. School B staff linked low resilience to low confidence and felt that mentoring would assist improve student confidence through assisting with exam strategies and using praise. In contrast, Dweck (2000) found that confidence itself is not sufficient for academic success. This may be because students with high confidence more easily doubt themselves when having to deal with problems. Rodriguez-Planas' (2012) mechanism for improving resilience was not echoed by School A staff. Rodriguez-Planas (2012) suggested that a positive relationship with a mentor could improve self-worth and competence, which would then impact positively on resilience. These findings were echoed by School A staff but not reflected in School B staff responses and needs further research.

Irving *et al* (2003) suggested that higher ability students would not benefit from mentoring as much as lower ability students; however this study has shown that higher ATL students may benefit from mentoring in a different way than lower ability students and the mentoring strategy should reflect this.

Higher ATL students in School B suggested that mentoring should be offered on a voluntary basis for them.

In School B middle ATL students felt that other students gained better mentors. This is reflected by the claim from higher ATL students that interventions are mainly aimed at borderline and underachieving students. However, School B mentors did not tend to make this distinction. The students' perceptions may reflect the 'first come, first served' method of mentees choosing mentors where they feel that the more able students would be the first to approach teachers.

5.2.4 How do staff understand personalised learning?

The Personalised Learning agenda was understood best by senior leaders in each school as they were responsible for operationalising the strategy in their school context. The majority of staff outside the senior leadership had no clear understanding how they should interpret the term 'personalised learning' if indeed they had heard of it (as discussed in section 4.3.1). In School A, 27% of staff had not heard of the term 'personalised learning', however 14% of staff in School B were in the same situation. This may also indicate that the vision for 'personalised learning' in each context had not been shared.

School A senior leaders felt that personalised learning centred around course choice, independent learning, differentiation and learning styles at different

levels within the school. They viewed personalised learning as an aspiration that was limited by the compulsory curriculum and financial implications. The mechanisms they suggested for personalised learning were to introduce 'stage not age' approach to curriculum design and vertical form groups. School A teachers felt that the 'stage not age' approach would only be feasible if students were knowledgeable about their learning and the stigma associated with lower attainment was reduced. This may also apply to higher attaining students.

School B's approach to personalised learning differed from School A. School B staff believed that personalised learning was ideally to help students make the best academic progress. School B's mechanism to personalise learning was initiated by a change in vocabulary, for example referring to learning support teachers as Raising Attainment Facilitators (RAFs), however this has not led to greater understanding of personalised learning. The year 9 option pathway was part of their personalised learning strategy. Senior leaders believed that students were unaware of the hierarchy of the option pathways. However students classified the option pathways by the type of student likely to take it. This finding undermined the senior leaders' efforts to make the option pathways seem equal in status. Concerns were raised as to the effect of grouping certain students together and the potential for this to be counterproductive to student progress. School B were trialling a 'stage not age' approach to the curriculum through a 2 year KS3, and used RAFs, flexibly to target students for support.

School A staff felt that students needed to take ownership for their learning to allow them to make informed choices. Teachers felt that providing students with information would allow students to make informed choices, however, a minority of senior leaders felt that teachers had insufficient knowledge to inform students fully. The School B senior leader felt that students needed learning skills; however teachers felt that students needed to take responsibility for learning first. Black *et al* (2006) found that 'learning to learn' skills would facilitate the development of academic responsibility in students.

Each school's approach aimed to contextualise personalised learning for their school, this fits with the 'school-by-school development' of personalised learning advocated by Miliband (2004). There are some similarities between the schools in the theme of the 'stage not age' approach to the curriculum and course choice. However, due to the large range of practices that represent personalised learning, there seemed to be a lack of a systematic approach to the application of personalised learning practices (Campbell *et al* 2007, Pollard and James 2004), or agreement on the skills and characteristics that need to be developed by and taught to students to participate in learning that is personalised. Campbell *et al* (2007) suggest that personalised learning is already occurring in schools but until there is an audit of what is happening in schools, many schools will waste time developing new systems and products to satisfy the personalised learning agenda.

Although the official Personalised Learning agenda has moved on, 'personalisation' has become part of school's vocabulary. Maguire *et al* (2012) found that in four case study schools in England, personalised learning was not directly referred to instead, activities were recognised as personalised learning as part of the Standards agenda. However, many participants, especially teachers and support staff, still had difficulty in understanding the term. This may be due to a lack of shared vision between management and staff (as discussed in section 4.2.1.2).

5.2.5 What might a mode of mentoring look like to support personalised learning?

The models of personalised learning suggested that students should be enabled to make informed choices. Staff from both schools suggested guidance and information were needed, and this could be accomplished through mentoring. When students are educated in a diversity of contexts such as school, college, and placements, School B staff felt that mentoring could be a method of centralising support structures to ensure a level of continuity and communication. School B staff also felt that mentoring could be used as a means of assessing the needs of individual students and assisting in meeting those needs. This view reflected Hargreaves' (2005c) belief that mentoring may not be appropriate for all students, which is supported by some higher ATL School B students' perspectives that their teachers supported this belief that higher ATL students did not need mentoring. In contrast, School A staff and students felt that all students would benefit from the process as long as it

was tailored to their needs. However, the reasons behind teachers choosing to be mentors should be recognised. Most teachers chose to be mentors for mainly altruistic reasons. However, some teachers mentored students as the student's grades would reflect upon their teaching, which may narrow the students mentoring experience (as discussed in section 4.2.2). There was also doubt from some staff and students as to whether teachers were the best people to be mentors due to teachers' tendency to instruct rather than mentor (as discussed in section 4.2.4).

To enable students to make informed choices, School A senior leaders believed that students needed to take individual ownership of their learning and choices. However, School A teachers felt that students first needed to develop the skills to enable them to use the information provided to make informed choices. School B's practice of allowing students to choose their mentors best supported personalised learning and develops student's ownership of their learning (as discussed in section 4.2.2.3). However, further development of practices would need to ensure that no student was left without a mentor either intentionally or accidently. Brooker and Macdonald (1999) suggested that student voice would contribute to students having ownership over their learning. Karcher and Nakkula (2010) also claimed that mentees that were involved in making decisions would gain most from the mentoring relationship.

The activities occurring in mentoring meetings in both schools went beyond the advice and support identified as a role for mentoring (Hargreaves, 2005c) and matched many of the strategies used to support personalised learning identified in literature such as:

- removing barriers to learning (Johnson, 2004a);

- agreeing personal learning targets (DfES 2005b, Littkey and Allen 1999, Younger *et al* 2005);

- supporting learning strategies (West-Burnham 2010, Younger *et al* 2005);

- tracking academic progress (Christenson and Thurlow 2004);

- providing a limited level of careers advice (Younger *et al* 2005), and

- discussing personal issues (Herrera 2004).

However, other aspects were missing and may not have been part of the year 11 mentoring programme but part of another member of staff's role. These aspects include:

- Engaging with absentee students (Rudduck *et al*., 2006, West-Burnham, 2010), tended to be part of the role of a tutor initially, this may then be followed up by another member of staff.

- Providing access to wider school opportunities for disadvantaged students (Campbell *et al*., 2007); however this tends not to be part of the role of a mentor but part of a whole school strategy.

- Mentoring at risk students due to anti-social behaviour (Roberts *et al*., 2004); however some School A teachers sought out those students to mentor.

DfES (2005a) claimed that the process of personalising learning would result in self-managing learners who had ownership of their learning. Many of the strategies in place may help the student part way along the path to self-managing their learning; however other emotional and social characteristics may need to be developed to get students to the point where they feel confident in self-managing their learning (Harris 2008). Literature has identified common characteristics that would be beneficial for students to develop for their learning and their future such as:

1. autonomy (DfES 2005a),

2. confidence (Hargreaves 2005a, Sebba *et al* 2007, Wikely and Bullock 2008),

3. responsibility (Campbell *et al* 2007, Hargreaves 2005a),

4. social skills (including communication skills) (Beere 2009, Humphrey *et al* 2010, Sebba *et al* 2007, Wikely and Bullock 2008), and

5. self-regulation (includes planning, evaluation, motivation and engagement) (Beere 2009, Campbell *et al* 2007, Humphrey *et al* 2010, Sebba *et al* 2007, Wikely and Bullock 2008).

Empathy, self-awareness, engagement and resilience were identified as additional advantageous characteristics to be developed in students (Gilbert 2006, Hargreaves 2005a, Pykett 2009, Sebba *et al* 2007).

The school staff and students suggested that talking to an adult within a mentoring context develops the students' communication and social skills (which links to point 4 above). Some staff in School A also identified the need to develop resilience especially in lower ATL students (as discussed in section 4.2.3). Pintrich and Schunk (2002) defined resilience as the ability to succeed by adapting despite the obstacles. Staff thought that by using praise in combination with improving student's exam strategies, students would develop resilience and improve confidence. This is supported by Rodriguez-Planas (2012) who claimed that improved self-worth and feelings of competence stemmed from a positive relationship with a mentor. However, resilience is also impacted by perceptions of intelligence (Mangels *et al* 2006). Some students were motivated through mentoring especially when made aware of their progress (point 5 above). Enabling students to take responsibility seemed to be addressed by some mentors through supporting students to develop their own solutions and strategies to deal with issues; however this was not consistent throughout the mentoring programmes (which link to point 3 above).

Some of the characteristics that would be advantageous to develop in students were in some part tackled by the mentoring programmes in each school. There

is scope to develop those characteristics further and integrate other characteristics such as autonomy within the mentoring programme and across the school.

In summary, the current modes of mentoring occurring in these schools could support personalised learning in a limited way by providing opportunities to develop some of the characteristics and skills discussed in this section. However, developing these skills over the short period of the academic mentoring programme is unlikely to be successful. To enable the mentoring programme to develop these skills in a more purposeful manner would require mentoring to be a long term endeavour that has a more consistent approach with mentors who are aware of how to develop these skills. There were some outcomes that could also support the personalised learning agenda and students that may not be possible to address through mentoring such as reducing student alienation (Brooker and Macdonald 1999) and in different contexts. However, mentoring is only one part of the personalised learning model, therefore other aspects of the personalised learning model such as teaching strategies and student voice, for example, may be used as part of a wider school approach to personalised learning.

5.3 Contributions to Knowledge

In Chapter 1 of this thesis I argued that there is a gap in knowledge about the link between academic mentoring and personalised learning. Although

mentoring was viewed as part of the personalised learning models by Hargreaves (2004a) by providing an avenue for stakeholders to gain advice and support, and by the DCSF (2008b) as part of the extended curriculum, intervention and supporting children's wider needs components, there was very little information as to how this would or could be accomplished. After a comprehensive review of literature, I felt there was a need to understand how mentoring could contribute to and support the personalised learning agenda, and how mentoring would have to change to fulfil this need.

To be able to answer the research questions, I needed to know how students and staff perceived the current programmes of academic mentoring and the outcomes that were believed to be achieved. The qualitative methods used provided 'thick and rich' descriptions of the contexts. In addition, the literature review provided an exploration of the skills and characteristics that would be beneficial for students to develop to enable them to participate in personalised learning.

This thesis contributes to existing knowledge regarding academic mentoring and personalised learning. More importantly, the thesis explores the interconnection of skills and psychological characteristics between academic mentoring and personalised learning that would be beneficial to develop in students through mentoring that would better prepare them for learning

5.4 Implications and Recommendations

At policy level, mentoring supporting personalised learning has the potential to support other policy initiatives such as the Standards agenda and the Big Society policy. This type of mentoring is not a short term solution; the skills and characteristics that students develop would benefit them beyond school life.

At implementation level, schools would benefit from advice and guidance for the development of mentoring programmes and personalised learning within schools to fit their contexts. An overview of personalised learning practices and mentoring practices nationally and within their local education authority would allow best practice to be shared. Additionally I would also include the potential for the data from the study to be organised in blocks showing specific opinions and concerns, and then to be offered as a resource to schools wishing to evaluate or start up mentoring programmes. If they used a block of statements about mentoring processes, for example, they could hold discussions about the principles with key stakeholders without any implied criticism of individuals within the organisation

At the school level, the structures of school mentoring programmes may benefit from being formalised to allow for student involvement in mentor-mentee matching. The sharing of the aims and purpose of mentoring programmes would aid staff and students. When a mentoring relationship stops or is no longer feasible for a number of reasons, there may be negative

consequences for mentees. Mechanisms in place to counteract this situation would be prudent to avoid any of those negative consequences for the mentee and their learning. Some of the skills that would benefit students, need to be developed over longer periods of time that the present mentoring programme's length, therefore it may be advantageous to expand the mentoring programme to include earlier year groups or be part of the curriculum. As part of an ongoing process of evaluation, the mentoring programme would benefit from planned evaluation to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

At the mentor level, the expansion of outcomes for students would require a more flexible approach to meet the needs of individual students as well as giving students the scope to work as part of a group. Students and staff preferred group mentoring but for differing reasons, however some students would like the option for one-to-one mentoring to discuss personal issues (as discussed in section 5.2.5).

The role of mentor is not defined in isolation but as part of the multitude of roles a teacher fulfils as tutor, teachers, facilitator, motivator, maintainer of discipline, etc (as discussed in section 5.2.4). This has implications for mentors' training needs. As part of personalised learning, the mentoring programme may become part of a larger network of service providers that could provide the expertise to develop students. Mentors may benefit from using relevant information about their mentors to enable them to adapt their mentoring practices as well as accumulating information from other sources

such as this study to inform further practice. To personalise mentoring, mentors would need to be aware of other sources of information to refer students to when the relevant assistance required is beyond their expertise. Mentors would also be best placed to assist in the evaluation of the mentoring programme periodically by providing feedback and the instruments used in this thesis could be adapted for that purpose.

At the mentee level, a form of training may benefit students to inform them of expectations, objectives and provide a background to mentoring, even though staff and students from the schools had not suggested this. Mentees may need assistance in participating through student voice in decision making with regards to the mentoring programme and mentor-mentee matching. These strategies may gain more benefits for mentees and give them greater ownership of their learning. Students are also in the position to be able to assist in the evaluation of the mentoring programme periodically by providing feedback as well as potentially providing input to how the programme could be changed for the better.

School staff have made great efforts to operationalise mentoring to benefit their students and the school's standing. While some staff have had difficulty with personalised learning concepts, the main efforts have come from senior leadership to incorporate personalised learning into the school's practices. The present research study suggests some answers to the research questions regarding academic mentoring and personalised learning from the perspectives

of staff and students, however many other questions remain unanswered around the 'fuzzy' concepts of mentoring and personalised learning, which could usefully form the basis of future research in the field.

There is a danger that mentoring would become a panacea for the development of desirable student skills and characteristics. However, the intention of mentoring programmes in schools tend to be linked to the Standards agenda and may be viewed as a low cost method of improving grades. In reality, mentoring may continue as a means to improve grades and coursework, and learn how to revise as this provides a solution to the pressures on schools to maintain and keep improving student grades.

The semi-structured interviews from staff and students provided interesting perceptions relating to mentoring and personalised learning. However, the current education policy situation has moved on from the Personalised Learning Agenda and other priorities have become more important. A suggestion would be to take this research further by returning to the case study schools with the purpose of investigating the existence of any fragments of the Personalised Learning Agenda and how this sits with the current focus on ensuring pupil progress within the practices of the school and how this impacts upon staff and students. Further research regarding mentoring of students and how the mentoring programme and practices have changed, as well as how far the current agenda is focused only on academic achievement as opposed to the 'soft' areas of motivation well-being and resilience may shed light on the

impact on academic achievement. Another suggestion for further research would be to compare how the personalised learning ethos of School B has developed and the impact this has had on students and staff in comparison to School A.

5.5 Reflections on the research process

- My strengths at the start of the study were that I was able to convince other members of staff and students to invest their time and energy in my study. Through my connections with other members of staff I was able to gain access to historical documentation that was not generally available.

- My development areas at the start of the study were my lack of experience of writing academically at length and of gathering and analysing qualitative data. I was very uncertain about making any false moves in the qualitative process. The research process was particularly challenging during the analysis phase but since then I have learnt to trust and have confidence in my interpretations of data.   I have gained skills in using qualitative analysis software (NVivo) and, the process of organising and managing a long-term qualitative research project. Transcription of the interviews was a long laborious process but this process ensured that I knew the data very well and this helped immensely in the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data.

- I hope this study succeeded in accomplishing what it set out to show but also that it stimulates further research in the areas of mentoring and personalised learning to serve the needs of the schools, staff and students.

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Appendix 1: Comparative Key Stage 4 Data of Case Study

Schools

Comparative Key Stage 4 Data of Case Study Schools

This section describes the trends in data relating to percentage 5 A*-C grades and contextual value added for each school.

Graph to show Contextual Value Added
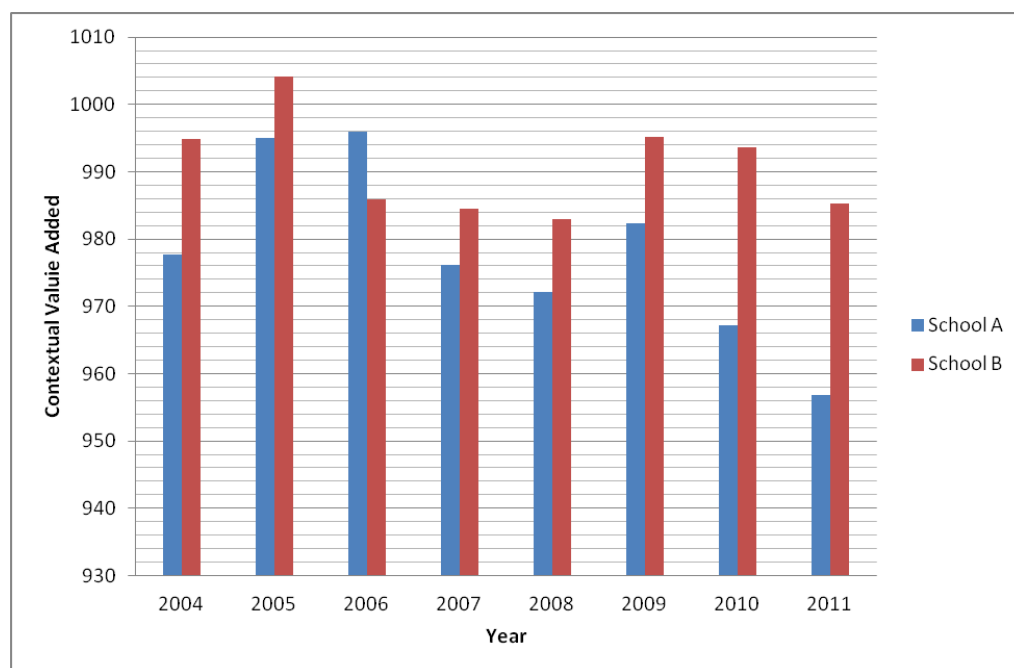
Contextual value added is a measure of the progress on average pupils at each school. The measurement is centred about 1000. If the school makes more progress on average than pupils nationally, their contextual value added measure will be above 1000. However, if the pupils on average make less progress then the contextual value added measure will be below 1000. From 2006-2011, both schools have had a contextual value added measure lower than 1000 with the exception of School B in 2005. In 2006 School A had a

higher contextual value added measure than School B. However, for every

other year School B has had a higher contextual value added measure.

Graph showing percentage of 5 GCSE A*-C grades

(DfE 2012)

331
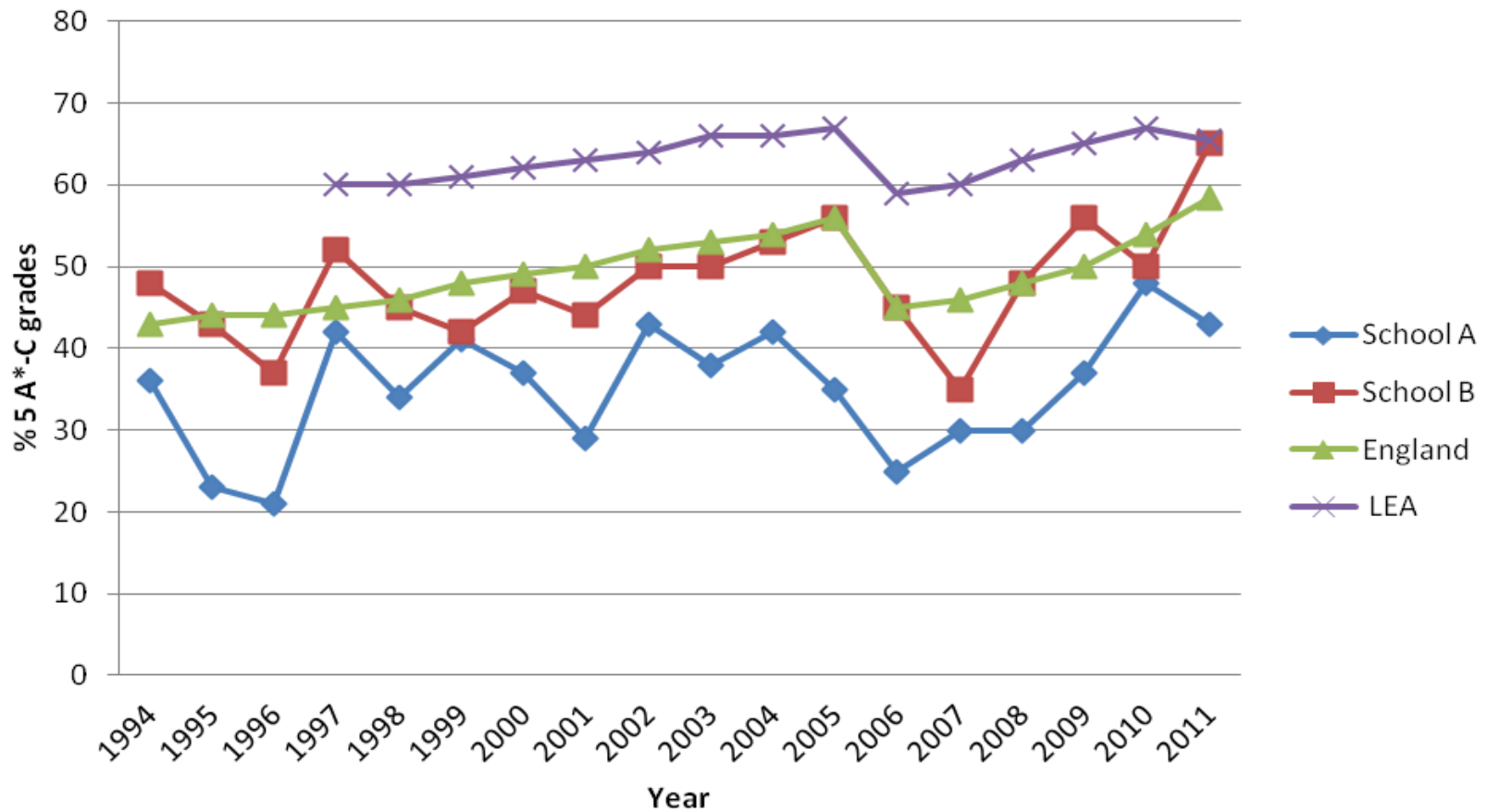
From the graph, both schools seem to be following the national trend. The LEA is also mirroring this trend but at a higher percentage. However, School B is following this trend more closely than School A. School A has greater fluctuations in its trend. School B's trend is increasing at a greater rate than School A.

In 2006 there is a dip in trends for all sources of data. This is due to a change in the measurement, which from 2006 also included GCSE English and maths. However, there is also a dip in trend for both schools in 1996.

The changes in achievement from 1994 to 2011 were due to many factors, including changes in staff. However, this data may provide context to the issues being researched and the interpretation of the qualitative data.

Appendix 2: Example of Staff and Student Interview

Schedules

Teacher Interview

- *Introduction:* This is school (A or B).

- *Purpose of interview*:

In my letter I said I was interested in GCSE mentoring. By GCSE mentoring I mean the mentoring of year 11 students to prepare them for their exams.

- *Importance of views*:

Your views and experiences are important to inform the programme and may help other students.

- *Assurance of confidentiality:*

The interviews are confidential, however, if you mention something that is illegal then I must report it.

- *Permission for recording of interview:*

I also mentioned in the letter that I would be recording the interviews. Would you still be happy with this?

[Research Question 1: How do staff and students understand the prupose of mentoring?]

- Warm up – As I said I am interested in the mentoring of year 11.

- What do you think mentoring is about?

  Probe: What did you do in mentoring sessions?

- Why did you choose to be a mentor?

- Part 1: Mentoring Processes

  [Research question: How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?]

  o   Why do you think year 11s are mentored?

  o   How do you feel about how mentors are matched with mentees?

  Probe: Did you know your mentee before mentoring?

  Why do you think they chose you/ you chose them?

  If you could change your mentee, would you change them? Why?

  o   How do you think mentoring helps the students?

  Prompt: Do you think anything has changed because you mentored?

  Probe: How do you think it will help them in school? Outside school?

      o   What do you think mentoring involves?

Prompt: What did you have to do for mentoring?

      o   Have you had any feedback from parents?

Prompt: How do parents know about mentoring?

      o   How do you think the students feel about mentoring?

Probe: Do you agree with what they have said? Why?

Part 2 - Personalised questions based on questionnaire – ██████

[Research Question 2: How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their target?

Research Question 3: How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?]

- I see that you have mentored a number of different people. How do the skills needed for new staff and trainee teachers compare with GCSE students?

- You had mentoring training for new staff in 1995. How has that been helpful?

- Has it given you insight into what is happening when you were mentored?

- How helpful was that insight?

- How do you see the mentoring programme at ▮ evolving in future years?

Part 3 - Personalised learning

[Research Question 4: How do staff understand personalised learning?]

- How would describe your view/vision of personalised learning

Prompt: What is personalised learning?

[Research Question 5: What might a mode of mentoring look like to support personalised learning?]

- How do you think mentoring could be part of what we do for personalised learning?

Probe: Why?

- It has been suggested that pupils take exams when they are ready. Would mentoring be of use in this context?

Probe: How do you think mentoring could be used in this context?

Probe: How would mentoring need to change to meet this need?

- How do you think the present mentoring scheme could be improved?

Probe: Why?

- *Final Questions (Cool off)*

  o Is there anything else you want to say about this topic that I haven't asked you?

  o Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

- *Final statement and show of appreciation*: We are now at the end of the interview. Your responses have been very useful in helping me understand what your think about mentoring. Thank you very much for your time.

Focus Group Student Interviews

o   *Introduction:* This is school (A or B).

o   *Purpose of interview*:

In my letter I said I was interested in GCSE mentoring. By GCSE

mentoring I meant the mentoring of year 11 students to prepare them for

their exams.

o   *Importance of views*:

Your views and experiences are important to inform the programme and

may help other students.

o   *Assurance of confidentiality:*

The interviews are confidential, however, if you mention something that

is illegal then I must report it.

o   *Permission for recording of interview:*

o   I also mentioned in the letter that I would be recording the interviews.

Would you still be happy with this? Give your names and allocate

yourselves numbers

[Research Question 1: How do students understand the purpose of

mentoring?]

- Warm up – As I said I am interested in the mentoring of year 11.

- Have any of you ever been mentored or anything, before, inside school or outside?

  Probe: Where were you mentored and why?

  - What do you think mentoring is about?

  Probe: What does/did your mentor do?

  What do/did you do in mentoring sessions?

- Part 1: Mentoring Processes

  [Research Question 2: How does academic mentoring help students to achieve their targets?

  Research Question 3: How does mentoring work effectively for different types of students?]

  o Why do you think year 11s are mentored?

  Prompt: Is this an important year for you? Why?

  o How do you think your mentor was matched to you?

  Probe: Did you know your mentor before mentoring?

  How did you know them?

  Why do you think they chose you/ you chose them?

  If you could change your mentor, would you change them? Why?

o How do you hope mentoring will help you?

Prompt: Do you think anything has changed because you are being mentored?

Probe: Will it help you in school in any way? Outside school in any way?

o What do you think mentoring will involve?

Prompt: What do you think will you have to do for mentoring?

o Have you told your parents about mentoring?

Prompt: do they know about mentoring? how?

o What do you parents think about mentoring?

Prompts: Have they had any experience of mentoring?

What do they think it will involve?

What do they think it will achieve?

o What do your friends say about mentoring?

Prompt: Have any other students said anything about their mentoring?

Sixth formers? Previous year 11s?

Probe: Do you agree with what they have said? Why?

- *Final Questions (Cool off)*

o   Is there anything else you want to say about this topic that I haven't

asked you?

o   Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

- *Final statement and show of appreciation*: We are now at the end of the

interview. Your responses have been very useful in helping me

understand what your think about mentoring. Thank you very much for

your time.

Appendix 3: Details of Analysis Nodes and Themes

Appendix 3: Analysis Nodes and Themes

School A: Student Individual and Group Interviews

Evidence from each student source is shown below.

Interviews	Words of Data
Group: ATL 1 ATL2 ATL3	5509 3869 2850
Individual: ATL1 ATL2 ATL3	4650 3450 0
Mixed Groups	3086

The data were initially organised into free nodes. When I analysed the ATL1

group interviews, I got 27 free nodes:

Anti-mentoring sentiment	friends and mentoring
Effect of mentoring on others	change as a result of mentoring
Grouping	match mentors mentees
Mentor	mentor actions
Mentoring outcome	other year group mentoring
Parents and mentoring	personalisation
Post friends and mentoring	post mentor actions
Post mentor matching	post mentoring feelings
Post mentoring outcomes	post parents and mentoring
Prior ideas of mentoring	purpose of mentoring
Reasons for mentoring year 11	relationship w mentor
Structure of mentoring	student involvement
Suggested improvements	others opinion of mentoring
repetition	

I then analysed the ATL2 group interviews and added extra nodes; 38 free

nodes. The additional nodes have been highlighted in red.

Anti-mentoring sentiment	friends and mentoring
Effect of mentoring on others	change as a result of mentoring

Grouping	match mentors mentees
Mentor	mentor actions
Mentoring outcome	other year group mentoring
Parents and mentoring	personalisation
Post friends and mentoring	post mentor actions
Post mentor matching	post mentoring feelings
Post mentoring outcomes	post parents and mentoring
Prior ideas of mentoring	purpose of mentoring
Reasons for mentoring year 11	relationship w mentor
Structure of mentoring	student involvement
Suggested improvements	others opinion of mentoring
Repetition	behaviour support
define mentoring	frequency of meetings
giving expected responses	mentor status
mentoring feelings	planning for future
self-conscious	providing resources
communication with parents	ulterior motives for mentoring

Then I analysed the ATL3 group interviews and added further free nodes to reach a total of 48. These additional nodes have been highlighted in red.

Anti-mentoring sentiment	change as a result of mentoring
Effect of mentoring on others	friends and mentoring
Grouping	match mentors mentees
Mentor	mentor actions
Mentoring outcome	other year group mentoring
Parents and mentoring	personalisation
Post friends and mentoring	post mentor actions
Post mentor matching	post mentoring feelings
Post mentoring outcomes	post parents and mentoring
Prior ideas of mentoring	purpose of mentoring
Reasons for mentoring year 11	relationship w mentor
Structure of mentoring	student involvement
Suggested improvements	behaviour support
communication with parents	define mentoring
frequency of meetings	giving expected responses
mentor status	mentoring feelings
others opinion of mentoring	planning for future
providing resources	self-conscious
ulterior motives for mentoring	repetition
communication w friends	end of mentoring
enthusiasm	post change due to mentoring
reputation of mentor	prior exp of mentoring
time out of class	requirements to be a mentor
beyond school	post define mentoring

The mixed ability interviews were analysed together but separate from the

individual interviews. Mixed ability interviews provided an additional 2 free

nodes, bringing the total free nodes to 50.

Anti-mentoring sentiment	post define mentoring
Effect of mentoring on others	friends and mentoring
Repetition	change as a result of mentoring
friends and mentoring	time out of class
Grouping	match mentors mentees
Mentor	mentor actions
Mentoring outcome	other year group mentoring
Parents and mentoring	personalisation
Post friends and mentoring	post parents and mentoring
Post mentor matching	relationship w mentor
post mentor actions	student involvement
post mentoring feelings	behaviour support
purpose of mentoring	giving expected responses
define mentoring	self-conscious
mentoring feelings	beyond school
planning for future	end of mentoring
Post mentoring outcomes	post change due to mentoring
Prior ideas of mentoring	requirements to be a mentor
Reasons for mentoring year 11	indifference to mentoring
Structure of mentoring	Suggested improvements
others opinion of mentoring	communication with parents
providing resources	frequency of meetings
ulterior motives for mentoring	communication w friends
prior exp of mentoring	enthusiasm
group size issues	mentor status

The individual interviews for each of the ATL groups were analysed together

but separate from the group interviews. With the addition of extra free nodes

from the individual interviews, there were 71 free nodes.

Mentor	mentor actions
Mentoring outcome	other year group mentoring
Parents and mentoring	personalisation
Post friends and mentoring	post mentor actions
Post mentor matching	post mentoring feelings
Post mentoring outcomes	post parents and mentoring

Prior ideas of mentoring	purpose of mentoring
Reasons for mentoring year 11	relationship w mentor
Structure of mentoring	student involvement
Suggested improvements	behaviour support
communication with parents	define mentoring
frequency of meetings	giving expected responses
mentor status	mentoring feelings
others opinion of mentoring	planning for future
providing resources	self-conscious
ulterior motives for mentoring	beyond school
communication w friends	end of mentoring
enthusiasm	post change due to mentoring
prior exp of mentoring	reputation of mentor
time out of class	requirements to be a mentor
indifference to mentoring	post define mentoring
anti-mentoring sentiment	group size issues
intentions	school reputation
learning from experience	moving on
issues with teachers	trust
sacrificing time	feelings of being victimised
relationship w parents	competing
respect	inconsistency
self motivated	comparing w others in mentoring
relationship w friends	formality in mentoring
changes in behaviour	confidence
	relating to age

The free nodes relating to similar themes were merged into larger categories

and related to larger ideas and concepts. The themes and the free nodes they

comprise are shown below:

Purpose of mentoring	Relationships	Mentoring Processes
confidence	formality	Match mentors mentees
Purpose of mentoring	Relationship w friends	School reputation
Self-motivated	Relationship w mentor	Ulterior motives for
Post mentoring outcomes	Relationship w parents	mentoring
Post define mentoring	Issues with teachers	Requirements to be a
Mentoring outcome	Communication with	mentor
Prior idea of mentoring	parents	Other year group
Prior exp of mentoring	Relating to age	mentoring
Define mentoring	Enthusiasm	Reasons for mentoring year
Suggest improvements	Trust	11
Moving on	Respect	Post mentor matching
Learning from experience	Feelings of being victimised	Student involvement

Time out of class Beyond school Change as a result of mentoring Mentor actions Planning for the future Post change due to mentoring Post mentor actions Student involvement Behaviour support Changes in behaviour	Parents and mentoring Post friends and mentoring Post parents and mentoring Friends and mentoring	Mentor actions Post mentor actions Frequency of meetings repetition
Teacher/Mentor characteristics Relating to age Enthusiasm Mentor Mentor actions Mentor status Providing resources Reputation of mentor Post mentor actions	**Students/Mentees** Changes in behaviour Moving on Sacrificing time Giving expected responses Self-conscious Student involvement Confidence competing	**School/ Lesson Processes** Inconsistency Intentions Competing Ethos of lessons Feelings of being victimised Effect of mentoring on others School reputation
Group Group size issues Grouping Comparing w others in mentoring Formality in mentoring Frequency of meetings Self-conscious Suggested improvements	**Opinions on mentoring** Anti-mentoring sentiment Indifference to mentoring Mentoring feelings Post mentoring feelings Other opinion of mentoring End of mentoring Parents and mentoring Post friends and mentoring Post parents and mentoring Friends and mentoring	**Personalisation** Personalisation Confidence Self-motivated

Teacher interviews

The table below shows the number of words of data collected from the teacher

sources of evidence.

Interviews	Words of Data
Teacher	44680

The data were initially organised into free nodes allowing 63 free nodes to

emerge.

advising parents	Approval
careers advice	contact w parents
coursework	early GCSEs
effectiveness of mentoring	encouragement to mentor
family information	feedback
feedback from parents	form tutor mentoring
frequency of mentoring	grouping
impact of mentoring	impact of mentoring in future
importance of PL	incentives
individual interviews	intervening for students
lesson learnt from mentors mentoring	logistics
logistics mentoring early GCSEs	matching mentee mentor
mentee participation	mentee preparation
mentor preparation	mentor training
mentor training experience	mentoring barriers
mentoring defn	mentoring feedback
mentoring future	mentoring guidance
mentoring information	mentoring process
mentoring purpose	mentoring skills
mentors	mentors mentor
mentors mentoring experience	other factors
other mentoring programmes	PL defn
PL feedback	PL link with mentoring
PL logistics	PL mentoring GCSEs
PL process	programme organisation
reasons for being a mentor	reasons for choosing mentees
relationships	staff involvement
staff student mentoring comparison	student feedback
student feelings about mentoring	student mentor training
subject mentoring	taking responsibility
targeting specific groups	work experience
yr 11 mentoring outcomes	

The free nodes relating to similar themes needed to be merged into larger

categories and related to larger ideas and concepts as shown below.

Mentoring purpose	Relationships	PL purpose
mentoring defn mentoring purpose work experience yr 11 mentoring outcomes taking responsibility coursework targetting specific groups subject mentoring careers advice other factors other mentoring programmes	approval advising parents feedback from parents reasons for being a mentor reasons for choosing mentees relationships mentoring feedback contact w parents	PL defn PL process early GCSEs importance of PL
PL and mentoring PL link with mentoring PL logistics PL mentoring GCSEs PL process PL feedback **Mentors** lesson learnt from mentors mentoring mentors mentoring experience matching mentee mentor mentor preparation mentor training mentor training experience mentors mentors mentor mentors mentoring experience reasons for being a mentor staff involvement staff student mentoring comparison student mentor training	**Mentoring Process** approval mentee participation mentee preparation mentor preparation mentoring defn mentoring guidance mentoring information mentoring process mentoring purpose mentoring skills incentives individual interviews intervening for students effectiveness of mentoring matching mentee mentor grouping careers advice contact w parents family information frequency of mentoring	**Mentoring effectiveness** mentors mentoring future mentoring feedback mentoring barriers student feelings about mentoring student feedback logistics grouping feedback from parents impact of mentoring impact of mentoring in future mentoring future other factors other mentoring programmes

subject mentoring targetting specific groups mentoring guidance	other factors other mentoring programmes programme organisation logistics	351

Documents

The data were initially organised into free nodes allowing 47 free nodes to emerge.

Informed	Planning
Reflection	Timings
Responsibility	Aims
Exam technique	Revision techniques
Outcomes	Materials
Organisation	Parent involvement
Target setting	Additional academic mentoring
Appreciation	Coursework strategy
Data driven	Dealing w parental issues
Evaluation	Expectations
Identify problems	Improving timing of sessions
Mentee selection	Extra tuition
Mentor actions	Mentor support
Mentor location	Mentoring priorities
Mentoring strategy	Mentors
Pre mentoring activity	problems
Programme timings	Progress
Reasons for not mentoring	Requested improvements
Student perceptions	Time keeping
Support contact information	Strategy
Accountability	evaluation
Self-esteem	Motivation
Form tutor mentoring	Reading mentoring
Stress relief	

The free nodes related to similar themes to those identified in the interviews
and needed to be merged into larger categories. The themes and the free nodes
they comprise are shown below:

Outcomes	Process	Approach
Informed	Exam technique	Informed
Time keeping	Revision techniques	Aims
Outcomes	Mentor actions	Strategy
Student perceptions	Mentor support	Planning
Reflection	Mentoring location	Timings
Responsibility	Mentoring strategy	Organisation
Organisation	Pre-mentoring activity	Parent involvement
Evaluation	Problems	Additional academic
Identifying problems	Programme timings	mentoring
Stress relief	Progress	Coursework strategy
Accountability	Target setting	Data driven
Self-esteem	Reasons for not meeting	Evaluation
motivation	Dealing w parent issues	Identifying problems
	Expectations	Improving timings of
	Identifying problems	sessions
	Improving timing of	Mentee selection
	sessions	Reading mentoring
	Materials	Form tutor mentoring
	Coursework strategy	Extra tuition
Mentors	**Improvements**	
Mentor support	Requested improvements	
Support contact	Improving timing of	
information	sessions	
Mentors		
Appreciation		
Dealing w parent issues		
Expectations		
Identifying problems		
Improving timing of		
sessions		
Mentee selection		
Reasons for not meeting		

Further Analysis – A psychological dimension

All evidence collected was analysed with the psychological link between

personalised learning and mentoring in mind, which produced 23 free nodes.

Aspirations	Challenge
Autonomy	Confidence
Connectedness peers	Connectedness family
Connectedness teachers	Connectedness parents
Connectedness school	Control of learning
Evaluation of learning	Engagement
Motivation orientation	Resilience
Self-concept	Responsibility
Self-efficacy	Self-esteem
Self-esteem	Self-regulation

The nodes were then arranged into themes that would be used in association

with the literature review and research questions.

Motivation	**Self-esteem**
Connectedness peers	Self-concept
Connectedness parents	Self-esteem
Connectedness school	Self-efficacy
Connectedness teachers	Confidence
Connectedness family	
Engagement	
Resilience	
Motivation orientation	
aspirations	
Self-regulation	**Autonomy**
Control of learning	Evaluation of learning
Evaluation of learning	Responsibility
Self-regulation	Self-regulation
challenge	autonomy

School B: Student Group and Individual interviews

The table below shows the number of words of data from each source of

student evidence.

Interviews	Words of Data
Group: ATL 1 ATL2 ATL3	4575 3914 2912
Individual: ATL1 ATL2 ATL3	9818 6132 6320

The data were initially organised into free nodes. When I analysed the ATL1

group interviews, I got 69 free nodes:

why teachers would be good mentors	type of learning
tutor input	timing of mentoring sessions
timing of mentoring programme	target setting
sustainability of programme	suggested improvements
stress response to exams	staff support
school reputation	school planning
reward systems	retrospective
responsibility_dependence	response to high stakes exam
resilience	relationships with
reasons for not having a mentor	reasons for grouping
reason for mentoring GCSE students	purpose of mentoring (pre)
purpose of mentoring (post)	priority
opinions of mentoring (pre)	participation of students
personalised activities (pre)	personalisation
perceived parent opinion of mentoring	planning
parental understanding of mentoring	parent support
parent support of mentoring	motivation and tiredness
other current mentoring (pre)	moral choice
non academic outcome (pre)	motivational attributions
methods used to improve	mentoring outcomes
mentoring for extremes of ability	mentoring choice
mentoring as dependence	mentoring activities (pre)
mentoring activities (post)	learn to learn
learn from mistakes	knowledge of mentoring
informed parents	inclusion
familiarity with mentoring	experience of mentoring

expectations	enthusiasm
engagement	academic motivation
effect of mentoring sessions on others	advice
definition of mentoring	current peer mentoring
counselling	control
collaboration with others	career plans
best group for mentoring (pre)	avoidance tactics
assertive	asking for assistance
anticipated outcomes	

I then analysed the ATL2 group interviews and added extra nodes highlighted

in red; total of 86 free nodes.

why teachers would be good mentors	type of learning
tutor input	timing of mentoring sessions
timing of mentoring programme	target setting
sustainability of programme	suggested improvements
stress response to exams	staff support
self conscious in tutor group	school reputation
school planning	reward systems
retrospective	responsibility_dependence
response to high stakes exam	resilience
reputation of teacher	relationships with
relationship with parents	reasons for not having a mentor
reason for mentoring GCSE students	purpose of mentoring (post)
purpose of mentoring (pre)	reasons for grouping
priority	pride
positive comment prior to mentoring	planning
positive comment about mentoring	personalised activities (pre)
personalisation	participation of students
perceived parent opinion of mentoring	non academic outcome (pre)
parental understanding of mentoring	option subjects
parent support of mentoring	parent support
other mentoring experiences	other current mentoring (pre)
opinions of mentoring (pre)	motivational attributions
negative comment about mentoring	motivation and tiredness
moral choice	methods used to improve
mentoring outcomes	mentoring for extremes of ability
mentoring choice	mentoring as dependence
mentoring activities (pre)	mentoring activities (post)
learn to learn	learn from mistakes
knowledge of mentoring	informed parents
inclusion	grouping
form tutors as mentors	form tutor mentoring activities
familiarity with mentoring	fairness in mentor choice
experience of mentoring	expectations

enthusiasm	engagement
effect of mentoring sessions on others	definition of mentoring
current peer mentoring	coursework issues
counselling	control
competing	communication with parents
collaboration with others	career plans
bragging in group	best group for mentoring (pre)
avoidance tactics	assertive
asking for assistance	anticipated outcomes
advice	academic motivation

Then I analysed the ATL3 group interviews and added further free nodes to the

total of 97.

why teachers would be good mentors	type of learning
tutor input	timing of mentoring sessions
timing of mentoring programme	target setting
sustainability of programme	suggested improvements
stress response to exams	staff support
sexuality	self conscious in tutor group
school reputation	school planning
sarcasm	reward systems
retrospective	responsibility_dependence
response to high stakes exam	resisting mentoring
resilience	reputation of teacher
relationships with	relationship with parents
reasons for not having a mentor	reasons for grouping
reason for mentoring GCSE students	purpose of mentoring (pre)
purpose of mentoring (post)	priority
pride	previously taught by mentor
positive comment prior to mentoring	planning
positive comment about mentoring	personalised activities (pre)
perceived parent opinion of mentoring	personalisation
participation of students	parent support
parental understanding of mentoring	other current mentoring (pre)
parent support of mentoring	opinions of mentoring (pre)
other mentoring experiences	non academic outcome (pre)
option subjects	motivational attributions
non academic priorities	moral choice
negative comment about mentoring	mentors appearance
motivation and tiredness	mentoring for extremes of ability
methods used to improve	mentoring as dependence
mentoring outcomes	mentoring activities (post)
mentoring choice	mentoring activities (pre)
meetings w mentor	learn to learn
learn from mistakes	knowledge of mentoring

informed parents	inclusion
grouping	friend influence
form tutors as mentors	form tutor mentoring activities
feelings of being abandoned	familiarity with mentoring
fairness in mentor choice	experience of mentoring
expectations	enthusiasm
engagement	disaffected
effect of mentoring sessions on others	definition of mentoring
current peer mentoring	coursework issues
counselling	control
confidence in ability	competing
communication with parents	collaboration with others
career plans	bragging in group
best group for mentoring (pre)	avoidance tactics
assertive	asking for assistance
anticipated outcomes	advice
academic motivation	

The individual interviews for each of the ATL groups were analysed together but separate from the group interviews. With the addition of extra free nodes from the individual interviews, there were 115 free nodes.

academic motivation	advice
anticipated outcomes	asking for assistance
assertive	attitude
avoidance tactics	avoiding disappointment
best group for mentoring (pre)	boredom
boundaries_rules	bragging in group
career plans	collaboration with others
communication with parents	competing
confidence in ability	confrontation
control	counselling
coursework issues	current peer mentoring
definition of mentoring	disaffected
effect of mentoring sessions on others	effort from teachers in lessons
engagement	enthusiasm
expectations	experience of mentoring
fairness in mentor choice	familiarity with mentoring
family support	feelings about school
feelings of being abandoned	form tutor mentoring activities
form tutors as mentors	friend influence
grouping	inclusion
inconsistency	informed parents
interest	knowledge of mentoring
learn from mistakes	learn to learn

listened to	meetings w mentor
mentoring activities (post)	mentoring activities (pre)
mentoring as dependence	mentoring choice
mentoring for extremes of ability	mentoring outcomes
mentors appearance	methods used to improve
mood	moral choice
motivation and tiredness	motivational attributions
negative comment about mentoring	non academic outcome (pre)
non academic priorities	opinions of mentoring (pre)
option subjects	other current mentoring (pre)
other mentoring experiences	parent support
parent support of mentoring	personalisation
participation of students	planning
perceived parent opinion of mentoring	previously taught by mentor
personalised activities (pre)	priority
positive comment about mentoring	purpose of mentoring (pre)
positive comment prior to mentoring	reasons for grouping
pride	relationship with parents
purpose of mentoring (post)	reported review
reason for mentoring GCSE students	resilience
reasons for not having a mentor	response to high stakes exam
relationships with	retrospective
reputation of teacher	sarcasm
resisting mentoring	school reputation
responsibility_dependence	school planning
reward systems	self image
parental understanding of mentoring	staff support
self conscious in tutor group	stubbornness
sexuality	suggested improvements
stress response to exams	target setting
student reputation	timing of lessons
sustainability of programme	timing of mentoring sessions
teaching style	type of learning
timing of mentoring programme	tutor input

The free nodes relating to similar themes needed to be merged into larger

categories and related to larger ideas and concepts as shown below:

Relationships	Purpose of Mentoring	School Processes
Relationships with		School planning
Relationship with parents		Timing of mentoring
Friend influence	Purpose of mentoring	sessions
Confrontation	(pre)	Timing of mentoring
Boundaries_rules	Purpose of mentoring	programme
Control	(post)	Timing of lessons

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Expectations Inconsistency Feelings of being abandoned Non academic priorities Interest Mentoring choice	Definition of mentoring Current peer mentoring Familiarity with mentoring Experience of mentoring Knowledge of mentoring Mentoring for extremes of ability Non academic priorities Other mentoring experiences Other current mentoring (pre) Suggested improvements	Reward system Option subjects Reason for mentoring GCSE students Sustainability of programme Effect of mentoring on others Fairness in mentor choice Feelings about school School reputation
Personalisation	**Grouping**	**Parents and Family**
Asking for assistance Friend influence Option choices Moral choice Target setting Counselling Type of learning Listened to Personalisation Self conscious in tutor group Personalised activities (pre)	Collaboration with others Bragging in group Competing Grouping Best group for mentoring (pre) Inclusion Reason for grouping Suggested improvements Participation of students	Relationship with parents Family support Parent support of mentoring Communication with parents Perceived parent opinion of mentoring Informed parents Parent support Parental understanding of mentoring
Mentoring Outcomes	**Mentoring Process**	**Teacher/ Mentor Characteristics**
Academic motivation Advice Anticipated outcomes Definition of mentoring Career plans Responsibility_dependence Non academic outcomes (pre) Coursework issues Mentoring as dependence Counselling	Target setting Mentoring activities (post) Mentoring activities (pre) Form tutor mentoring activities Counselling Experience of mentoring	Enthusiasm Disaffected Control Expectations Effort from teacher in lessons Inconsistency Why teachers would be good mentors Previously taught by

Experience of mentoring Engagement Knowledge of mentoring Learn to learn Planning Mentoring outcomes Resilience Meeting w mentor Priority Other mentoring experiences Other current mentoring (pre) Suggested improvements	Control Inconsistency Knowledge of mentoring Learn to learn Learn from mistakes Retrospective Type of learning Methods used to improve Listened to priority	mentor Reputation of teacher Sexuality Mentors appearance Teaching style Meetings w mentor Form tutor as mentor Tutor input Mentoring choice Staff support
Opinions of Mentoring Positive comment about mentoring Opinions of mentoring (pre) Positive comment prior to mentoring Reported review Negative comment about mentoring	**Student/ Mentee Characteristics** Assertive Avoiding disappointment Boredom Confrontation Avoidance tactics Attitude Enthusiasm Disaffected Confidence in ability Expectations Student reputation Self image Resilience Pride Retrospective Type of learning Mood Stress response to exams Motivational attributions Response to high stakes exam Motivation and tiredness Stubbornness Sarcasm Reasons for not having a mentor Resisting mentoring Participation of students	

Teacher Interviews

The table below shows the number of words of data from teacher evidence

sources.

Interviews	Words of Data
Teachers	25609

The data were initially organised into free nodes.   When I analysed the teacher

interviews, I got 95 free nodes:

additional outcomes to mentoring	add to mentoring
add to PL	alternative mentoring
attainment	C_D borderline grades
class sizes vs PL	coursework - purpose of mentoring
Early GCSEs	failure of NQT mentoring
home situation	identifying problems
improve programme	information about subjects
innate mentoring ability	L2L skills
mentor matching	mentor support
mentoring - compare staff and student	attendance
mentoring + exam prep	mentoring activities
mentoring and PL	network
mentoring expectations	mentoring profile
mentoring purpose	mentoring skills
mentoring timing	mentors feelings
need for training	obstacles to mentoring students
organisation of meeting mentors	outcome - teacher perspective
parent involvement	perception of other students not in
perceptions - 6th form	mentoring
PL and behaviour	perceptions of teachers
PL and curriculum	checking up
PL and parents	PL and exams
PL and SEN	PL and pathways
PL and system	PL and staff deployment
PL purpose	PL in lessons
purpose of mentor	preconceptions of students
relationship w other teachers	reasons to be mentor
staff programme	sixth form mentoring
student behaviour to mentoring	staff support of PL
study skills needed to gain C	student feedback
subject specific PL	subject mentoring
teacher_pupil relationship	teacher experience as mentee

training content	training for NQT mentoring
tutors and mentoring	training for mentoring
consistency	anecdotal evidence (of mentoring)
differentiation and PL	data (evidence of student attainment)
evaluating actions	emotional support
mentor effectiveness	inevitably of PL
recruitment of mentors	procedures
school structures and PL	school
time scale or period	self-motivation
PL and attainment	tutor- pastoral care
PL and extra tutorials	PL and careers
PL and teaching	PL and support
PL expectations	PL definition
PL vs individuality	PL idealism
Necessity of mentoring	mentoring experience

The free nodes relating to similar themes were merged into larger categories

and related to larger ideas and concepts shown below:

Logistics	Mentoring outcomes	PL outcomes
Class size vs PL	Attainment	PL and attainment
Consistency	Attendance	PL and behaviour
Differentiation and PL	Anecdotal evidence of	PL and careers
Early GCSEs	mentoring	PL and choice
Mentor matching	Add outcomes to	PL and curriculum
Mentor effectiveness	mentoring	PL and exams
Mentoring profile/ status	C_D borderline grades	PL and extra tutorials
Mentoring timing	Checking up	PL and parents
Obstacles to mentoring	Coursework – purpose of	PL and pathways
students	mentoring	PL and SEN
Organisation of meeting	Data (evidence of student	PL expectations
mentors	attainment)	PL idealism
PL and staff deployment	Emotional support	PL in lessons
PL and support	Evaluating actions	PL purpose
PL and system	Home situation	Differentiation and PL
PL vs individuality	L2L skills	L2L skills
Procedures	Mentoring – compare staff	Self-motivation
Recruitment of mentors	and students	
Schools structures and PL	Mentoring expectations	
Staff support of PL	Mentoring purpose	
Time scale or period	Outcome – teachers	
	perspective	
	Purpose of mentor	
	Study skills needed to gain	
	C grades	

	Identifying problems (tutor)	
Types of Mentoring Alternative mentoring Inevitability of PL Information about subjects Sixth form mentoring Staff programmes Subject mentoring Subject specific PL Teacher experience as mentee Tutor- pastoral care Tutors and mentoring	**Mentor Support** Mentor support Mentor feelings Network Perceptions – 6th form Perceptions of teachers Training for NQT mentoring Training content Training for mentoring	**Mentoring Skills/Attributes** Innate mentoring ability Mentor effectiveness Mentoring + exam prep Mentoring activities Mentoring skills Need for training Perception of teachers PL vs individuality Reasons to be a mentor Training content Training for mentoring
Parents/ Home Home situation Parent involvement	**Link between PL and mentoring** Early GCSEs Mentoring and PL	**Data** Data (evidence of student attainment) Early GCSEs
Other strategies Add to mentoring Add to PL Alternative mentoring	**PL definition** PL definition Subject specific PL PL and teaching	**Status/Value** Necessity of mentoring Mentoring profile/status School
Teacher- Student Relationships Home situation Identifying problems Failure of NQT mentoring Relationship w other teachers Teacher_pupil relationship Mentor matching	**Barriers to learning** Emotional support Information about subjects Parent involvement PL idealism Preconceptions of students	**Feedback on mentoring** Mentoring experience Perception of teachers Student behaviour to mentoring Student feedback
Evaluation Improve programme Perception of other students not in mentoring Perception – 6th form		

Documents

The data were initially organised into free nodes. When analysed, 18 free

nodes emerged.

Other mentoring programmes	Parent involvement
Strategy	Academic mentoring
Sixth form mentoring	Subject mentoring
Outcomes	Prep for GCSEs
Responsibility	Independence
Other mentoring programmes	Progress
Mentoring process	organisation
Parent advice	planning
Organisation	Target setting

The free nodes related to similar themes to those identified in the interviews

and needed to be merged into larger categories as shown below:

Mentoring Approach	Outcomes	Process
Other mentoring programmes	Prep for GCSEs	Progress
Parent involvement	Outcomes	Prep for GCSEs
Strategy	Responsibility	Mentoring process
Academic mentoring	Independence	Other mentoring programmes
Sixth form mentoring	Other mentoring programmes	Academic mentoring
Subject mentoring	Academic mentoring	Sixth form mentoring
Planning	Sixth form mentoring	Subject mentoring
Parent advice	Subject mentoring	
	Target setting	
Vision		
Planning		
strategy		

Further analysis – The Psychological Link

All evidence collected was analysed with the psychological link between personalised learning and mentoring in mind. The 17 free nodes produced from this analysis are shown below.

Aspirations	confidence	connectedness family
connectedness parents	challenge	connectedness peers
connectedness school	engagement	connectedness teachers
control of learning	resilience	motivation orientation
evaluation of learning	social skills	responsibility
self-concept		self-esteem

The free nodes from the analysis of data from the psychological link between personalised learning and mentoring perspective was organised into themes as shown below.

Motivation	Self-regulation	Self-esteem
Connectedness parents	Control of learning	Confidence
Connectedness peers	Evaluation of learning	Self-concept
Connectedness school	Responsibility	Self-esteem
Connectedness family	challenge	Social skills
Connectedness teacher		challenge
Engagement		
Motivation orientation		
Aspirations		
resilience		

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form

Participation Information Sheet for Children

Dear Student

WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL?

There are many ways to improve your school…the school council, through your form

captains and **now** through being involved in school research.

In conjunction with ████████████, I would like to invite

you to participate in a study, which I am conducting as part of

my Doctor of Education postgraduate degree studies at the

University of Nottingham. The research is called *Evaluating year*   **A student being mentored**

11 Academic Mentoring. The purpose of the research is to investigate the mentoring

programme that takes place in your school during year 11. Please take time to read the

following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to

contact me or ████████████ (Head of Year 11) if there is anything that is not clear

or if you would like more information (see contact details at end of sheet).

What we would like you to do and confidentiality

Some year 11 students are involved in mentoring prior to GCSE examinations. If you

agree to be involved in the research, you will be asked to participate in the completion

of three questionnaires and three 30 minute interviews where I will ask you some

questions about academic mentoring. With your permission, these will be audiotaped. The timing of the questionnaires and interviews will be before the mentoring process, during the mentoring process and after the mentoring process. All research data will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1999.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time and withdraw any data that has been gathered to that point. Access to data will be restricted to my supervisor and me.

Benefits of the Research

You will have the opportunity to voice your opinions of year 11 academic mentoring in a productive manner. This research may provide a basis for future decisions on the development of year 11 academic mentoring at your school. Findings from this study will be published in a thesis and possibly published in educational journals. We will not use your name or the schools, and you or your teacher will not be identified in any part of the research. A summary of the research findings will be available to you on request.

ETHICS REVIEW

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research, you can contact my University Supervisor, Professor C Day on 0115 951 4423, and any complaints may be directed to Dr. Hobson, the University Ethics Coordinator, on 0115 951 4417.

If you would like to be involved after discussion with your parents, please keep one copy of the consent form for your records and complete the other copy of the *participants consent form* and return it to ████████████████████████.

Please return the forms in the stamped addressed envelope provided by the Friday 19th September 2008.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Lorraine Smith, MA(Ed) ████████████

████████████████████████ ████████████████████

████████████ ████████████████

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Project title: Evaluation of Year 11 Academic Mentoring

Researcher's name: Miss Lorraine Smith

Supervisor's name: Professor Christopher Day

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential (Data Protection Act, 1998).

- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.

- I understand that data will be stored securely. Paper records will be kept in secure storage area either in school or at Miss Smith's home. Electronic data will be password protected, or encrypted. Access to interview data and questionnaires will be granted to Miss Smith and on request to Miss Smith's project supervisor(s). On

request, participants will have access to their data. Teachers within the school, and local educational authority representatives, on request, may access academic assessment data.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed …………………………………………… (Research participant)

Print name ………………………………… **Date** …………………………………

Parent's/ Guardian's Signature……………………………………………

Contact details

Researcher: Miss Lorraine Smith

           Telephone number: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

           E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Supervisor: Professor Christopher Day

           E-mail: Christopher.Day@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:

andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk

The University of Nottingham

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET - COLLEAGUE

Dear Colleague,

In conjunction with ███████████, I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting as part of my EdD postgraduate degree studies at the University of Nottingham. The purpose of the research is to investigate the academic mentoring process and outcomes. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to contact me or ██

██████ (Head of Year 11) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information (see contact details at end of sheet).

Commitment of Participants and Confidentiality

If you choose to be included, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and, if you agree, participate in a 30-minute interview during the academic year 2008-09 to ascertain the factors that have influenced the progress of students in year 11. With your permission, these will be audiotaped. I also wish to conduct a 30 minute interview with a number of students about their response to mentoring. Confidentiality is assured, and the school, you and the students will not be identified in any part of the research. All research data will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1999. Access to data will be restricted to my supervisor and me.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time and withdraw any data that you have provided to that point.

Benefits of the Research

This research may provide a basis for future decisions on the development of year 11 academic mentoring. Findings from the study will be published in a thesis to the University of Nottingham and possibly published in educational journals. A summary of the research findings will be available to participants on request.

Ethics Review

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research, you may contact my University Supervisor, Professor C Day on 0115 951 4423, and any complaints may be directed to Dr. Hobson, the University Ethics Coordinator, on 0115 951 4417.

If you would like to be involved, please keep one copy of the consent form for your records and complete the other copy of the *participants consent form* and return it to me via ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ in the envelope.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Lorraine Smith, MA(Ed)

Appendix 5: Interview Composition and Project Timeline

Student Interviews

School A				
Date	**Type of Interview**	**ATL**	**Group consists of...**	**Participants**
Dec 2008	Group	1	3 males	AA1, AB1, AC1
	Group	1	2 females (1 female was absent)	AD1, AE1
	Group	2	3 males	AH2, AG2, AI2
	Group	2	3 females	AJ2, AK2, AL2
	Group	3	3 males	AN3, AM3, AO3
	Individual	3	male	AO3
	Individual	2	female	AJ2
	Individual	1	male	AA1
Jan 2009	Mixed group 1	mix	6 females	AU1, AP1, AQ1, AV1, AW2
	Mixed group 2	mix	4 females 2 males	AX2, AY1, AZ2, AAA1, AAB1, AAC1
	individual	2	1 male (1 female was absent)	AAD2
May 2009	Individual	1	1 male	AA1
	Individual	2	1 female	AJ2
	Individual	3	1 male	AO3
May 2009	Group	1	3 females	AD1, AE1, AF1
	Group	1	3 males	AA1, AB1, AC1
	Individual	1	1 female	AD1
	Individual	1	1 male	AC1
	Group	2	2 males	AM3, AN3
	Group	2	1 female 1 male	AG2, AK2
	Group	2	2 females	AK2, AL2
	Group	3	2 males	AM3, AN3
	Group	mix	2 males	AI2, AO3

School B				
Date	**Type of Interview**	**ATL**	**Group consists of...**	**Participants**
Jan 2009	Group	1	3 females, 3 males	BA1, BB1, BC1, BD1, BE1, BF1
	Group	2	3 males, 3 females (1 male absent)	BG2, BH2, BI2, BJ2, BK2, BL2
	Group	3	1 male (2 females and 1 male failed to attend)	BM3
Jan 2009	Group	3	2 females, 1 male (1 male was absent)	BN3, BO3, BP3
Jan 2009	Individual	1	1 male	BD1
	Individual	1	1 female	BC1
	Individual	2	1 male	BJ2
	Individual	3	1 female	BO3
May 2009	Group	1	2 females	BB1, BC1
	Group	2	1 male, 2 females	BJ2, BI2, BM2
	Group	mix	1 male, 1 female	BM3, BL2
	Individual	1	1 female	BB1
	Individual	2	1 male	BJ2
	Individual	2	1 female	BL2
	Individual	3	1 male	BP3

Appendix 6: Example of Staff Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

I am doing some research on the mentoring of year 11 pupils in order to understand and help to improve the mentoring experience for mentors and mentees. I am very interested in your views on the process and I would like to establish what mentoring experience you've had. At this point in the project, I would like to know about your professional experience as a member of the school and as a mentor/ potential mentor. You will not be identified in any part of the research, and access to data will be limited to my supervisor and me. I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire within the next two weeks. I have attached an envelope for you to submit your questionnaire to maintain privacy. Feel free to contact me to discuss any aspect of this research.

Thank you for your help.

Lorraine Smith

ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN ITALICS TO HELP YOU DISTINGUISH THEM FROM THE QUESTIONS.

When going through the questionnaire, please put a tick in the box corresponding to your answer, like this

Yes	✓
No	
Don't know	

Sometimes you are asked to write the answers in the spaces provided.

Section 1: Professional Information

This section will collect information about your professional experience.

Please write in spaces provided

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Q1. How long have you been part of this profession? _____

Q2. How long have you been working at █████████████? _____

Section 2: General Mentoring Experience

This section is about your experiences of mentoring as a mentor and mentee,

and any training you may have had to prepare you for being a mentor.

Q3. Have you ever been mentored?

Tick the appropriate box   Yes

                                                        No

If yes, were you mentored as…

Tick the appropriate box   school pupil

(You may tick more than one box)   part of your profession

                                                        Other

If other, please give details:

Q4. Have you ever been a mentor?

Tick the appropriate box   Yes

                                                        No

If yes, who have you mentored?

Tick the appropriate boxes	Year 11 school pupils	
(You may tick more than one	School pupils in other year groups	
box)	Student teachers on teaching placement	
	Newly Qualified Teachers	
	New member of staff	
	Other	

If other, please give details:

Q5. Have you had any training to prepare you to be a mentor?

Tick the appropriate box   Yes

                                               No

If yes, please give details below.

(e.g. INSET, Training course, on the job)

Nature of Training   Date   Length of training   Where___

Please give any comments on the training you have attended.

Section 3: Mentoring Year 11 Students

The section is about your experiences of mentoring at █████████████ .

Q6. Have you mentored year 11 students at █████████████████

either this year or in previous years?

Tick the appropriate box   Yes

                                             No

If yes, how long have your mentored year 11 students?

_____

If no, why? (e.g. too busy, didn't know about it, not interested)

_____

_____

_____

Q7. Have you had any training to prepare you to be a year 11 mentor?

                                             Yes

Tick the appropriate box   No

If yes, please give details…**(e.g. INSET, Training course, on the job)**

Nature of Training   Date   Length   Where___

Q8. What are your views on the current mentoring system for year 11 students

█████████████████████████████?

If you have any other comments, please write them below.

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.

Lorraine

Appendix 7: Responses from Staff Questionnaire

School A Staff Questionnaire Responses

Interview completed Y/N	Code	Q1 How long in profession (yrs)	Coded how long	Q2 How long School A	Q3 Ever been mentored (y/n)	as a pupil?	part of profession?	other?	Q4 Ever been a mentor (Y/N)	yr 11?	Pupils in other yr?	Student teachers?	NQTs	New staff	Other
y	T1	6	6	6	y	y			y	y		y	y	y	y
y	T2	12 yrs	12	7.5	n				n						
y	T3	1yr 2 months	1	1	y		y		n						
y	S1	10	10	2	y		y		y	y		y	y		
y	H1	11	11	9	n				y	y		y	y	y	
y	T4	28	28	15	n				y	y		y	y	y	y
y	D1	3	3	3	y			y	y	y			y	y	y

y	S2	28	28	15	n				y	y		y	y	y	
y	T5	5	5	5	y		y		y	y		y			
y	A1	18.5	18.5	8.5	y		y		y	y	y				
y	Y1	8	8	3	y		y		y	y	y	y		y	
y	H2	8	8	7	y		y		y	y	y	y	y	y	
y	Y2	28	28	28					y	y	y				
y	A2	3	3	3	n				y						y
y	H4	19	19	8	y		y		y	y	y	y	y	y	y
y	T6	7	7	7	y		y		y	y		y			
y	S3	18 mths/20 years	20	1.5	y		y		Y	y	y	y	y	y	

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Interview completed Y/N	Code	Q5 Any training to be mentor? (Y/N)	nature1	length1	nature2	length2	nature3	length3	Q6 Mentored yr 11 at School A (Y/N)	if yes, how long (years)	Q7 Any training for yr 11 mentor (Y/N)	nature 4	nature 5
y	H8		11	11	0.1	n			Y	y		y	y
y	A3		16	16	16	y		y	Y	y	y		y

Interview completed Y/N	Code	Q5 Any training to be mentor? (Y/N)	nature1	length1	nature2	length2	nature3	length3	Q6 Mentored yr 11 at School A (Y/N)	if yes, how long (years)	Q7 Any training for yr 11 mentor (Y/N)	nature 4	nature 5
y	AT1	n							y	5	n		
y	AT2	n							n		n		
y	T3	n							n		n		
y	S1	n							y	1	n		
y	H1	n							y	3	n		
y	T4	n							y	9	n		

y	D1	y	Training course	1 day					y	<1	n		
y	S2	y	INSET	1 day	INSET	1 day	Training on job	1 day per month	y	4	n		
y	T5	y	Training course	1 day					y	2	n		
y	A1	n							y	4	y	Only paperwork explaining procedures and forms to fill in.	
y	Y1	n							y	2	n		
	H2	y	Training course to mentor PGCE students	2 hours	Mentoring training for teachers	2 hours			y	4			
y	Y2	n							y	6	y	training for staff about six years ago. It consisted of going through a package of materials and it was	

												done in a focus/forum session.	
y	A2	n							y	1	y	Mentoring pack	
y	H4	y	Training courses	too many to remember	On the job	too many to remember			y	3	n		
y	T6	y	Several 1/2 day courses/ seminars at University to mentor a student on the GTP						y	3	n		
y	S3	y	Induction training for new staff	2 days					n		n		
y	H8	n							n		n		
y	A3								y	3	n		

School B Staff Questionnaire Responses

Code	Q1 How long profession (yrs)	coded how long	Q2 How long School B	Q3 Ever been mentored (y/n)	pupil?	profession?	other?	Q4 Ever been a mentor (Y/N)	yr 11?	Pupils in other yr?	Student teachers?	NQTs	New staff	Other
D01	7 years	7	7	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	
A01	30 years +	30	7.5	n				y	y					
S01	20 years	20	6.5	n				y	y	y	y	y	y	
T01	6 years	6	6	y		y		y	y	y			y (previous career)	y (previous career)
D02	35	35	20	n				y	y		y		y	
	24 years	24	8	n				y	y					
T02	6 years	6	4	y		y		n						
	3 weeks	0.25	3 weeks	y		y		n						

	Age													
	7 years	7	3 weeks	y		y	y	y			y		y	y
T03	36 years	36	18	n				y	y			y		
H01	29 years	29	7	y		y		y	y		y	y	y	

Interview y/n	Code	Q5 Any training to be mentor? (Y/N)	nature1	length1	Nature 2	Length 2	Nature 3	Length 3	Where 3	Q6 Mentored yr 11 at School B (Y/N)	if yes, how long (years)	Q7 Any training for yr 11 mentor (Y/N)	Nature 4
y	D01	y								y	all year every year	no	no serious training received
y	A01	y								y	approx 6 months	y	as before
y	S01	y	Mentoring teacher training	2 days						y	7 years	no	internal guidance
y	T01	y (previous career)	Postgraduate diploma personnel management	1 year						y		no	

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y	D02	n									y	5	no	
		n									y	2 years	no	
y	T02	n									n		no	
y	T03	n									y	3 months	no	
y	H01	y and N	training course run by college tutors	1 day							y	2 months	no	

Note: Details from the questionnaires of participants who were not interviewed have been removed from the table and any details that would allow traceability of participants have also been removed.