

SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

An exploration of the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

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Abstract

In England, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are allocated an induction tutor or mentor who offer them mentoring as they transition into their teaching career. Mentors play an important role in supporting NQTs and their professional development. Mentoring can produce a variety of benefits, however, previous research suggests that a deficit-based, directive, advice-giving approach is apparent in practice, which can be detrimental to NQTs' wellbeing and development. Furthermore, despite the importance of mentoring, there is a lack of research examining the impact of mentor education programmes. This exploratory research considers whether training in Solution-Focused (SF) approaches (de Shazer, 1985) is perceived to be helpful for practising NQT mentors.

SF approaches are utilised by Educational Psychologists (EPs) within a range of contexts and EPs have a role in delivering training in such approaches. In this research, nine participants, who had responsibilities in school-based mentoring of new teachers, attended training sessions on SF approaches. The research used qualitative data collection methods and participants' views were gathered using semi-structured interviews. Interviews explored NQT mentors' perceptions of SF approaches and strategies, focusing on their perceived appropriateness for use within mentoring, alongside mentors' experiences of implementing them. Additionally, the research explored the perceived influence of the SF training and of using SF approaches on mentors' self-efficacy. The interview data was subsequently analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The findings indicate that all participants perceived aspects of SF approaches to be useful and supportive within their mentoring role, however, participants also perceived some limitations relating to using these approaches in mentoring. The findings suggest that participating in SF training or adopting SF approaches in practice can have a degree of positive influence on some mentors'

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self-efficacy within the mentoring role. They also offer insight into how training in SF approaches could support schools. The potential role of EPs in supporting school-based mentoring is considered and implications for EP practice are discussed.

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List of Abbreviations

NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
SF	Solution Focused
EP	Educational Psychologist
DfE	Department for Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PP	Positive Psychology
SFA	Solution Focused Approaches
SFBT	Solution Focused Brief Therapy
CYP	Children and Young People
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
RQ	Research Question
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
LA	Local Authority
CPD	Continuing Professional Development

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The transition from teacher training to the first teaching role is significant and is frequently referred to as a “reality shock” (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012, p.244).

Challenges associated with the complexity of learning to teach have led to an increasing focus on how new teachers can be best supported (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012).

Mentoring has gained prominence as an effective vehicle to support new teachers entering the profession (Garza, Ramirez, Jr & Ovando, 2009; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009; Hudson, 2012). As such, mentoring is a central element of induction programmes put in place to support new teachers and their professional development (Garza, Ramirez Jr & Ovando, 2009; Hudson, 2012).

Mentoring of new teachers has been asserted to have great potential to produce a variety of benefits for the new teacher, mentor and schools in general (Hobson et al., 2009). However, these benefits are not always realised and there is great variability in the practice of mentors (Tickle, 2000). Feiman-Nemser, Parker & Zeichner (1993), suggest that despite the importance of good mentoring, there is not a clear understanding as to what good mentoring entails. Based on this, Haggarty & Postlethwaite (2012) assert that focus has moved away from whether there are structures in place to support new teachers and towards developing an understanding of what occurs within these structures. This research grew from an interest in exploring new teachers’ mentoring relationships and whether Educational Psychologists (EPs) could have a role in supporting school-based mentoring.

This chapter explores the context of mentoring new teachers within England, including policy guidance and conceptions of mentoring. It introduces solution-focused (SF) approaches which inform the current research, with its aim being to explore the perceived helpfulness of participation in SF training for practising Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)

mentors. The local context of the research, the role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) and the position of the researcher are explored, alongside a consideration of the rationale of this research. It begins with a description of key terms relevant to the research.

1.2. Descriptions and Definitions of Key Terminology

Guidance for England states that teachers entering the profession should undertake a statutory induction period, which spans across their first three full terms of teaching (Department for Education, DfE, 2018). Induction is viewed as a programme of support which provides a link between teacher training and a career in teaching (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012). As part of this process there is a framework of Teaching Standards which outlines teaching competences which need to be met (DfE, 2011). Induction “combines a personalised programme of development, support and professional dialogue with monitoring and an assessment of performance against the relevant standards” (DfE, 2018, p.6). An NQT is a teacher who is undertaking their statutory induction period (DfE, 2018). In international literature, the terms ‘beginning teacher’, ‘novice teacher’ and ‘induction teacher’ are used to refer to individuals undertaking the equivalent induction programmes or who are starting their teaching career (Hobson et al., 2009). Within this research, the more general expression ‘new teacher’ is used to encapsulate these terms.

To support the induction process, NQTs are allocated an induction tutor whose role is to “provide day-to-day monitoring and support, and coordination of assessment” (DfE, 2018, p.16). The terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentee’ are used to refer to an induction tutor and new teacher respectively. This research, in accordance with the statutory induction requirements in England, refers to a mentor as a more experienced teacher who, as an additional responsibility, is formally allocated to a new or student teacher, is specifically designated to undertake the mentoring role and who works within the same school.

The term ‘mentoring’ has been argued to be problematic due to multiple definitions and varying conceptions of its practice (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ramnarain & Ramaila, 2012). The definition of teacher mentoring postulated by Hobson et al. (2009) is adopted within this research. This conceptualises mentoring as: “A one-to-one relationship between a relatively inexperienced teacher and a relatively experienced teacher, which aims to support the mentee’s learning, development and well-being, and their integration into the cultures of both the organisation in which they are employed and the wider profession” (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 207). This definition regards mentoring as an activity and process. It has the strength of recognising the role that mentoring plays in terms of both personal support and professional learning (Shanks, 2017). Furthermore it encompasses relational, developmental and contextual dimensions of mentoring which have been identified as associated with mentor conceptualisation (Ramnarain & Ramaila, 2012).

1.3. National Context

Support for new teachers has been argued to be of vital importance due to the intense pressure and significant challenges which new teachers can face and research indicating that new teachers can report feeling ‘powerless’ and ‘voiceless’ (Hobson, 2017). Rhodes (2012) states that the role of school-based mentors is particularly important in light of the current educational context. Positive mentoring relationships are acknowledged to be a significant factor in new teacher retention and job satisfaction (Ginkel, Oolbekkink, Meijer, & Verloop 2016; Hallam, Chou, Hite & Hite, 2012). This is pertinent considering reports of significant and increasing attrition rates in teaching (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus & Davidson, 2013), particularly during the initial stages of teaching (LoCasale-Crouch, Davis, Wiens & Pianta,

2012) and teacher shortages being regarded as a risk to the quality of education (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, OECD, 2005).

Mentoring has also been associated with teacher-wellbeing, another priority area within the current educational context (McCarthy, Lambert & Reiser, 2014). Mentoring and support can reduce stress, increase confidence and enhance wellbeing (Hobson, 2017; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012). Within this context, it is understandable that the topic of mentoring has received considerable attention (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban & Wilbanks, 2010). These factors, alongside the primary role of mentor support in influencing teacher development and learning, make this an area of importance within the national context of education and relevant to a range of professionals, including EPs, working with school systems. The research also sits within a wider legislative context in which recent policy reforms (DfE, 2019) propose to extend the induction year to two years of practice (DfE, 2019). It has been suggested that this will further raise the status and accountability of NQT mentors (Betteney, Barnard & Lambirth, 2018).

1.4. Mentoring

Similarly to the definition of mentoring, the conceptualisation of a mentor's role and responsibilities is debated and in some respects appears to be idiosyncratic, reflecting personal strengths and beliefs about teacher development (Sudweeks, 2005). Although mentoring has been argued to be primarily a personal relationship, relationship building is not the exclusive role or function of mentors (Sudweeks, 2005). Other activities include providing feedback, advocating for new teachers, supporting new teachers' reflections, sharing knowledge of teaching and learning strategies and acculturating new teachers into the professional culture, and modelling (Sudweeks, 2005; Hobson & Malderez, 2013). Thus, although interpersonal and communication skills are undoubtedly important for effective

mentoring due to the multiple responsibilities held by mentors, a range of other skills and strengths have been identified as important for mentors to possess and develop. Literature suggests these include conferencing, organisation, reflection, observation, conflict resolution, evaluation, self-awareness, feedback and knowledge of teaching and learning strategies (see Orsdemir & Yildirim, 2020). The range of skills involved in mentoring explains assertions that being an experienced and excellent teacher is not sufficient for being an effective mentor (Hobson et al., 2009).

A range of theoretical perspectives, which relate to learning and development, support the practice of mentoring including neo-Vygotskian and socio-cultural theories, and theories of reflective practice (e.g. Schön, 1983; Wertsch, 1991). Research has suggested that mentors and mentoring dialogues are important in supporting new teachers to complete their induction year (Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000); develop their professional knowledge and adapt their teaching practices (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002); improve their problem-solving capacities and enhance their self-reflection and self-esteem (Lindgren, 2005). However, research suggests that where the quality of mentoring is not adequate, not only are such reported benefits not present, in some cases mentoring has a detrimental impact on the mentees, for example increasing mentees' levels of anxiety and stress (Beck & Kosnik, 2000). There is variability within the conception and practice of mentoring. Despite the popularity of mentoring, Colley (2002) notes that “the meteoric rise of mentoring has not been matched by similar progress in its conceptualisation” (Colley, 2002, p.258). Colley (2002) also highlights the lack of critique of mentoring within teacher education. Concerns have been raised regarding mentoring more generally, with potential issues arising in terms of power and control to preserve dominant institutional goals and the risk of dependency (Colley, 2002; Sundli, 2007).

1.4.1. Models of Mentoring

Through mentoring dialogues, mentors have considerable influence on how and what new teachers learn (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2011). Thus, how mentors conceptualise their role is important as this will influence the approaches and styles they adopt within these mentoring dialogues. Ginkel, Verloop and Denessen (2015) state there are two main distinct conceptions of mentoring: an instrumental conception and a developmental conception.

In an instrumental conception the mentoring relationship is viewed as asymmetrical with mentors viewed as “maestros” (Graham, 2006, p.1118) who adopt the role of a corrective master teacher (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996). Such a conception leads mentors to focus on new teachers developing proficiency in the mechanics of teaching, providing mentees with tools and routines for ‘effective’ teaching, supporting their acculturation in terms of ‘fitting in’ and offering emotional support (Graham, 2006; Langdon, 2011).

However, Feiman-Nemser (2001) argues that the support offered by mentors needs to shift from the reductive view of situational adjustment, technical advice and emotional support. Feiman-Nemser (2001) advocate for so called ‘educative mentoring’ which “rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning ... They [mentors] interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiring stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 18). This argument suggests that, rather than looking to mentors for ‘solutions’, new teachers would benefit from being supported to develop learning strategies which enable them to reflect on their practices and consider possible strategies which they can transfer to other situations (Lovett & Davey, 2009). This is in line with a developmental conception of mentoring in which mentors are seen as creative partners in dialogue or ‘co-thinkers’ and mentoring is viewed as a collaborative relationship, which is symmetrical and reciprocal, with new

teachers constructing their own professional practice and identity (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ginkel et al., 2015; Graham, 2006). An emphasis placed onto how new teachers can become reflective practitioners who explore their own teaching style (Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts, 2009; Kutsyuruba, 2012) reflects a shift from the ‘deficit’ model. A ‘deficit perspective’ assumes that new teachers are “pedagogically empty and must be given ‘tools’, such as relationship-building skills, in order to be effective teachers” (Hirschhorn, 2009, p.215). In contrast, an ‘ability’ perspective empowers new teachers to build on capacities and strengths they already possess (Hirschhorn, 2009).

1.5. Rationale

Despite insight into mentoring, Haggarty & Postlethwaite (2012) assert that there remain challenges to such conceptions of mentoring being realised in practice due to the scope with which NQT mentors can interpret their role. Hobson (2016) discusses the so-called phenomenon of ‘judgementoring’, characterised as when a mentor reveals their judgements or evaluations of a mentee too frequently and practices an unnecessarily directive form of mentoring. Within such practice, mentors are likely to evaluate mentees’ practice based on their own insights as opposed to facilitating mentees’ reflections on their development and teaching practices (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). This enactment of mentoring is asserted to impede new teachers’ professional development and well-being (Hobson, 2016). Furthermore, literature highlights the importance of mentors not imposing their own values, expectations and teaching style on new teachers in a way which is detrimental to them shaping their own teaching style and identity (Orsdemir & Yildirim, 2020; Maynard, 2000). Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2012) highlight the danger of new teachers simply learning to become a teacher who belongs to a particular school or learning

to fit with a mentors' conceptualisation of learning, without recognising or exploring alternatives (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012).

Work by Schön (1983) emphasises the role of reflection both 'in-action' and 'on-action' for development. The importance of reflection has been established as an interactive way for teacher learning to occur (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012) and reflective practice is considered a key element in supporting NQTs become active agents in their own professional development (Rhodes, Nevill & Allan, 2005). Mentoring dialogues can provide an effective context for supporting mentees reflection 'on-action' (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

However, despite emphasis on the role of reflection in development (Schön, 1983), some have expressed concerns that teachers are being developed as 'technicians' as opposed to reflective practitioners, and a mechanistic approach is adopted to support new teachers instead of one which encourages reflection on practice (see Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012; Rhodes et al., 2005). Viewing mentees from a deficit perspective is likely to have influenced this approach of mentoring as it promotes the role of mentors providing 'quick-fix' solutions. The impact of this is considered by Tickle (2000) who asserts that a tendency to view NQTs within the deficit model "leads to missed opportunities to capitalize on the creative potential and professional commitments of graduate entrants to the education service" (Tickle, 2000 p.2).

Orsdemir and Yildirim (2020) postulate that mentors can lack awareness of their responsibilities and lack knowledge and skills in the mentoring process. Hobson et al., (2009) assert that the evidence base on the effects of different kinds of mentor training and support is sparse and Waterman and He (2011) note a lack of research on how mentors value the effects of the mentor education in terms of their competence. Given these concerns regarding the prevalence of deficit-based and directive approaches and a lack of research exploring mentor development, this research aims to explore whether training in SF

approaches is perceived as useful by mentors. This research is based on strength-based psychology which is explored in the following section outlining the theoretical orientation of the research.

1.6. Theoretical Orientation

This research is underpinned by Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and SF approaches (de Shazer, 1985). Bannink and Jackson (2011) highlight the similarities and conceptual connection between Positive Psychology and SF approaches when writing “both can reasonably be seen and described as part of a wave of positive approaches to change” (Bannink & Jackson, 2011, p.10). Both Positive Psychology and SF approaches are interested in describing and utilising strengths and resources and focusing on what works as opposed to focusing on problems or deficits (Bannink & Jackson, 2011). This can be considered to reflect and be consistent with a general shift within psychological practice away from a more traditional deficit model towards one which focuses on strengths and positive qualities (Meyers, Woerkom & Bakker, 2013). As such both Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and SF approaches (de Shazer, 1985) are regularly used within EP practice. The use of SF approaches by EPs has been studied by Redpath and Harker (1999) who outline how they are used in different areas of practice including working with individual pupils, consultations with teachers, meetings and training.

Positive Psychology involves inquiry into the factors that help individuals, communities and organisations thrive, and recognises the role of building on strengths and virtues for growth (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Seligman (2005) postulates that Positive Psychology approaches facilitate positive emotions, which encourage exploration, which can lead to mastery and enhances growth and learning. These approaches focus on strengths and enabling factors which supports individuals to achieve their aspirations

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(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) with research highlighting the role of Positive Psychology interventions in supporting positive outcomes. Within a working context, Positive Psychology interventions have been associated with increases in employee well-being (Meyers et al., 2013). Such approaches therefore could be considered as relevant to supporting new teachers to recognise their strengths in order to facilitate their wellbeing, development and teaching practice.

Positive Psychology does not ignore areas of difficulties but rather emphasises how these should not be the predominant focus (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). Considered in the context of this research, this is not to underestimate the challenges new teachers may face, but rather ensure this is not the sole focus. Positive Psychology underpins this research which explores whether such strength-based approaches are perceived to be appropriate and/or positively impact on mentoring relationships, from the perspective of the mentor.

Since it was developed in the 1980s, Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), as a therapeutic approach, has become widely practiced in a variety of settings (de Shazer, 1985). De Shazer, Berg and colleagues of the Brief Family Therapy Centre inductively developed the core principles and techniques which comprise SF approaches (de Shazer et al., 1986; Visser, 2010). The principles of SFBT are considered to be rooted in systems theory and constructivism and provide a conceptual framework for understanding the process of change (Khan, 2015). The Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Association state that key components of SFBT include “developing a cooperative therapeutic alliance with the client; creating a solution versus a problem focus; the setting of measurable attainable goals; scaling the ongoing attainment of the goals; and focusing the conversation on exceptions” (McGhee & Stark, 2018, p. 728). SF thinking, which has evolved from the principles of this therapeutic approach, has become a more general strengths-based approach, used in a range of contexts

including educational settings (e.g. Khan, 2015; Ajmal & Rees, 2001). For example, research has supported the use of the ‘Working on What Works’ approach (based upon SFBT) within schools, finding it had a positive impact on behaviour and relationships (Brown, Powell & Clark, 2012).

SF approaches place emphasis upon solutions and problem free talk. They assume that individuals possess the resources to solve their problems; that there are always exceptions when the problem is less; and that small changes can lead to widespread change (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995). These approaches focus on encouraging positive change, assume that individuals have the capacity for self-reflection and growth and highlight individual agency (Trenhaile, 2005). The researcher proposes that the foundation of using SF approaches in mentoring is aligned with the developmental and educative conception of mentoring. The focus on change and what is needed to achieve change (Gingerich & Wabeke, 2001), constructing a positive vision of new teachers’ futures and the emphasis on strengths and individual empowerment (Trenhaile, 2005) can be seen as in line with this conception of mentoring. In the field of counselling, Presbury, Echterling and McKee (1999) highlight how SF strategies can be used within supervision to support supervisees to develop an “inner vision” (p.146) of themselves as developing and competent practitioners which supports their professional development. This reflects the definition of educative mentoring proposed by Feiman-Nemser (2001). This research explores whether mentors perceive SF approaches, as a specific approach, to be helpful within the mentoring role. Thus, it explores whether SF approaches can offer mentors a framework, specific language and strategies to use within a developmental or educative model of mentoring. As such, the framework of SF thinking underpins this research.

1.6.1. Self-Efficacy

This research also aims to explore mentors' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be understood as an individual's perceived capability to successfully perform a behaviour required to produce certain outcomes (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy can be conceptualised as possessing two components; efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Efficacy expectations refer to beliefs regarding one's perceived capacity to perform a behaviour or skill, whilst outcome expectancy refers to the belief that the behaviour or skill will produce a particular outcome (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Thus, behaviour is influenced by both the belief one possesses the skills to perform an action and the belief that the action will result in a desirable outcome (Bandura, 1997; 2006).

Research has indicated that Positive Psychology interventions can produce positive changes in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Critchley & Gibbs, 2012). Riggs (2000) postulates that a mentor teacher's efficacy beliefs, in terms of the extent to which they believe they have the capability to positively impact new teachers' professional development, will impact on the time and effort mentors invest in the relationship. Furthermore, Sudweeks (2005) asserts teachers' mentoring self-efficacy is an important characteristic for mentoring success and that understanding mentors' self-efficacy could strengthen the quality and effectiveness of mentoring.

Self-efficacy, as a construct, is positioned prominently in training research literature which has indicated that it plays an important role in understanding and enhancing training effectiveness (Mathieu, Matineau & Tannenbaum, 1993). Given the potential importance of exploring mentor self-efficacy to support the successful impact of mentoring and in terms of training effectiveness, this research explores self-efficacy in relation to the findings of this research.

1.7. The EP role

Change is considered the “bedrock” of EP practice (Kelly, 2008, p.79) and such change should be motivated by the key function underpinning the profession which is to enhance “children’s achievement and well-being” (Beaver, 2011, p.15). Pellegrini (2009) asserts the focus of EPs’ work has widened to include an appreciation of the systems of which children are a part, and how EPs intervene and optimise their effectiveness in facilitating change has altered. Mentoring and mentors can influence new teachers’ teaching practice and wellbeing (Lindgren, 2005). As well as this being important in its own right, it also is likely to have a pervasive impact on the school system including the children within their care. Teacher wellbeing and self-efficacy is also associated with teacher effectiveness (Day, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998) and the wellbeing of the children and young people (CYP) they teach (McCallum & Price, 2010) and as such influences the school as a system. Thus, working with school-based mentors could offer a way in which EPs could work within the school system to promote pervasive and sustainable change. Furthermore, offering training is considered one of the key functions of EPs (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010).

1.8. Local Context

In line with national policy the local authority in which this research was conducted acts as an appropriate body for the statutory induction of NQTs. The local authority induction team offers support and guidance for NQTs, mentors and schools alongside monitoring and updating progress reports. They serve as a link between NQTs, schools and the Teaching Regulation Agency.

In the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) where the researcher is based as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), SF approaches are used across a range of EP work.

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In particular, SF approaches are used as a guiding framework within group, consultation based, meetings with SENCOs from local schools, which take place across the local authority. The service also offers a range of training to schools covering a wealth of topics. This research aims to explore whether training in SF approaches to school-based mentors is perceived as beneficial.

1.9. Researcher's position

Interest in this research area stemmed from the researcher's experience as a TEP on placement. This experience allowed them to develop the use of SF approaches within their own professional practice (e.g. in consultations) with perceived benefits from all those involved in the process. The researcher's initial motivations and interests within the current research topic also arose from their own experience of being an NQT. Furthermore, the researcher was interested in the concept of 'giving psychology away' (Miller, 1969) and 'psychological literacy' (Boneau, 1990 cited in Banyard & Hulme, 2015). Psychological literacy can be understood as having the ability to apply "psychological principles to personal, social, and organisational issues in work, relationships and the broader community" (McGovern et al., 2010, p.11 cited in Banyard & Hulme, 2015, p.94). Thus, the researcher was interested in the process of offering psychological thinking to schools to explore how they felt it could be applied within their roles. The research chose to explore the experiences of school mentors due to a belief in the importance of their role in shaping the experiences of new teachers entering the profession. The researcher is interested in the concept of developing teachers' strengths to support professional and personal potential, considering the influence this can have on CYP and schools as a whole.

1.10. Summary

The importance of school-based mentoring for new teachers has been established. However, research also indicates problems can occur within mentoring practice which may have detrimental impacts on new teachers' professional development, teacher identity and wellbeing. Such concerns can arise from mentors adopting a 'reductive' approach to mentoring, characterised by 'quick-fix' solutions (Langdon, 2011), the prevalence of which has been attributed, in part, to a lack of available mentor development opportunities. With growing concerns about the development and support offered to new teachers, related to issues of teacher retention and the importance of teacher development and wellbeing, EPs could be well placed to offer support to mentors and, in turn, new teachers. As such, this exploratory research aims to explore whether mentors perceive training in SF approaches to be appropriate or beneficial. It is hoped that this will provide insights into whether strength-based psychology practice could support NQT mentors and add to the evidence-base regarding SF approaches within education to inform the work of EPs. The research could also contribute to a new evidence-base as, to the researcher's knowledge, this is the only study which has explored the use of SF strategies with NQT mentors. To frame and develop this research a literature review explored mentoring of new teachers in order to understand current practice and the factors influencing the mentoring relationship.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter aims to provide a critical review of literature in order to contextualise this research within the existing evidence base. The review aims to develop an understanding of mentoring practice and analyse existing research concerning mentoring relationships, to explore opportunities for further research and highlight the rationale for this piece of research.

2.1. Parameters of the Literature Review

As outlined in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is to explore the perceived helpfulness of solution-focused approaches within the NQT mentoring relationship. An exploratory scoping literature review was initially conducted (Table 1). The searches were conducted using key education and psychology databases.

Table 1.
Initial Literature Search

Search date	16.6.19
Databases	Academic Search Complete; PsycInfo; PsycArticles; ERIC; Education Research Complete; British Education Index.
Search terms used	("NQT" OR "newly qualified teacher" OR "novice teacher" OR "induction teacher" OR "begin* teacher") AND (mentor* OR supervis* OR induct*) AND (“solution focused” OR “solution focussed”)
Parameters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer reviewed published articles 2. Published within the last 20 years 3. Written in English
Results	N = 0

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As this initial search yielded no results, a general search regarding NQT mentors, outlined below, was decided to be most appropriate and “solution focused” was eliminated from the search terms. Therefore the literature search explored the question:

What is known about the mentor-new teacher relationship?

This aimed to develop an understanding of what characterises and supports a successful mentoring relationship, as well as issues encountered, in order to consider and propose ways in which practice could be further enhanced.

Initially, searches were conducted to try to identify papers exploring the educational system and teacher induction and mentoring within the United Kingdom. This involved limiting search terms to those typically used within the UK teacher induction policy and practice, specifically ("NQT" OR "newly qualified teacher") AND (induct* OR mentor*). Due to the limited number of relevant results, however, the terms ‘beginner’, ‘induction’ and ‘novice’ teacher were additionally included. This search uses the variety of terms because, although they are not operationally defined in the same way, it allows for a broader range of relevant literature to be explored to gather a greater understanding of the current evidence base. As shown in the table below, following the initial search, the results were filtered by abstract due to the large volume of papers obtained through the general search.

Table 2.
Systematic Literature Search

Search date	16.6.19
Databases	Academic Search Complete; PsycInfo; PsycArticles; ERIC; Education Research Complete; British Education Index.
Search terms used	("NQT" OR "newly qualified teacher" OR "novice teacher" OR "induction teacher" OR "begin* teacher") AND (mentor* OR supervis* OR induct*)

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Parameters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer reviewed published articles 2. Published within the last 20 years 3. Written in English 4. Duplicates removed
Results	N=1207
Additional Parameter	5. Terms appearing within Abstract
Results	N = 230

Following this, there were 230 papers to which the inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied (Appendix A). For some of the research papers, the abstract was screened based on inclusion and exclusion criteria and others were read in full if it was unclear from the abstract whether they met the criteria.

This resulted in the identification of thirteen papers in total, two of which were reviews of literature. The papers included within these two literature reviews were hand-searched and screened based on the inclusion/exclusion criteria above. This resulted in five more papers being identified, instead of the two literature reviews. Therefore, sixteen papers were included in the review (Appendix B). Where papers explore mentoring alongside other elements, such as other features of the induction process, only the findings related to the literature search question are reported. These papers were critically appraised using checklist criteria based on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP). Additionally, criteria identified by Yardley (2000) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) which outlines core elements to be considered in the appraisal of qualitative research were referred to. A table outlining the details and findings of these sixteen studies, alongside a critical appraisal of each paper, can be found in Appendix C.

2.2. Findings of the Literature Review

The literature search explored the question:

What is known about the mentor-new teacher relationship?

Two additional guiding questions were identified from the literature to provide a framework for reviewing the literature. These provided a structure to explore the literature review question and its aim of developing an understanding of how mentoring practice could be further enhanced. The literature was synthesised under the relevant question.

1. What supports successful mentoring relationships?

This explores findings related to the elements which characterise and support a successful mentoring relationship, including strategies and approaches employed by new teacher mentors.

2. What are the barriers to successful mentorship and problems in current practice?

This explores barriers to successful mentoring relationships including findings related to mentor practice and development.

The research highlighted the variability in both the practice of mentoring and the perceptions of both mentors and mentees of their mentoring experiences. Despite acknowledging this individuality in terms of new teachers' conceptions, hopes, lived experiences and perceptions of mentoring, the literature offers insight into features of successful mentoring relationships as well as possible issues which can be apparent within mentoring.

2.2.1. What is successful mentoring and what supports successful mentoring relationships?

2.2.1.1. Relationship characteristics

The literature reviewed offers insights into what could characterise an effective mentoring relationship. Nolan (2017) explored a mentoring programme for Early Childhood Teachers and postulated that four relational elements were constant features to ensure

effective mentorship, specifically - reciprocal, reflective, respectful and responsive mentorship. This research involved a large number of participants ($N= 316$), triangulated data and included both mentor and mentee views, adding to the rigour of the study and the strength and credibility of the findings. However, mentors were selected according to set criteria and hence possessed certain prerequisite skills and attitudes which may limit the transferability of the findings. Furthermore, the mentors were engaged in a specific mentoring programme which promoted certain features of mentoring, such as, developing respectful relationships and empowering those involved in the mentoring relationship. Therefore, findings regarding which elements of mentoring were effective could, to some extent, be influenced by the premise and ethos of this mentoring programme. However, despite these limitations, these features of effective mentoring relationships are broadly supported by other research.

Nolan (2017) refers to reciprocal mentorship as promoting equality in the mentor-mentee relationship; rather than an expert-novice position, both mentor and mentee are positioned as teachers and learners. Nolan (2017) found mentors unanimously reported that their own professional development was supported through interactions with their mentee. Mentees emphasised benefits of the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship, including the support this offered and being understood and acknowledged (Nolan, 2017). The importance of a supportive, reciprocal relationship is supported by other research. Harrison, Dymoke and Pell (2006) found that beginning teachers' reports of good mentoring included someone they could collaborate with and valued mentor attributes included being a good listener, being flexible, and an ability to focus on issues to enable reflective discussions (Harrison et al., 2006). The reflective nature of the relationship also identified by Nolan (2017) is considered important in supporting professional development through collegiate discussions. Certo (2005b) found that questioning and encouraging reflection was a

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supportive element within mentoring relationships and Nolan (2017) suggests that there is a connection between deeper reflection on practice and mentee's self-confidence and professional identity.

The respectful element within Nolan's (2017) research refers to the understanding that the skills brought to the relationship by both mentors and mentees are acknowledged. This supports the reciprocal aspects of mentoring in that mentees and mentors are both recognised for the valuable knowledge and experience they bring (Nolan, 2017). Such respectful and reciprocal relationships are based on professional support and development. Related to this, research explores the role of mentors' interpersonal skills and professional attributes within successful mentoring relationships.

Grudnoff (2012) researched the perceptions of twelve new teachers in their first six months of teaching using two semi-structured interviews. This allowed participants' views to be gathered and compared over this time period adding to the richness of the data. Ten of the new teachers emphasised the importance of receiving affirming feedback from their mentors. Grudnoff (2012) suggested that positive relationships were enhanced by constructive and affirming mentor-mentee interactions early in the year which resulted in mentee's perceiving their mentor as approachable. The importance of a relationship in which mentees felt comfortable seeking support is reinforced by Hallam et al., (2012). Hallam et al., (2012) explored two different models of mentoring and what characteristics beginning teachers perceived as supportive of an optimal mentoring relationship. They found that across the models, the majority of beginning teachers expressed that an approachable personality and forming a trusting relationship were important mentoring characteristics. This research has the strength of collecting data over a period of time (3 years) to allow a better understanding of the changing role of in-school mentors and views of mentees. However, the credibility of the findings of Grudnoff (2012) and Hallam et al., (2012) can be questioned due to the

researchers not outlining whether transcripts were checked with participants or whether interpretations of data, such as the themes drawn from the research were scrutinised by another researcher. Furthermore, as the researchers do not examine their own role or position, potential bias is not explored which could undermine the confirmability of the findings.

The importance of mentor characteristics, such as those highlighted above, are however also supported by Martin and Rippon (2003). Interpersonal skills associated with ‘approachability’ were most frequently mentioned by mentees as being desirable, including being friendly, available, non-judgemental, understanding, positive, compassionate and not being domineering. Interestingly, this study also indicates that mentees were more concerned by mentors’ personal than professional traits (Martin & Rippon, 2003). One explanation for this, explored within this study, is that because feedback is an important part of mentoring, mentees were concerned about the interpersonal skills of the individual providing feedback. Mentees cited the importance of mentors not making them feel inadequate. One limitation of the research discussed above concerning the valued interpersonal skills of mentors (Grudnoff, 2012; Hallam et al., 2012; Martin & Rippon, 2003) is that the views of the mentors are not gathered and therefore there is a limited understanding of which interpersonal skills mentors perceive as important and how these are developed within the mentoring relationship.

Another important interpersonal relationship characteristic for developing respectful, reciprocal and reflective relationships relates to how the mentor values mentee’s skills. Beginning teachers in the study by Martin and Rippon (2003) highlighted the importance of being treated like a professional and involved in the mentoring process, not having it done to them. This relates to the reciprocal and respectful elements of mentoring recognised by Nolan (2017) which highlight the importance of beginning teachers not being positioned in a deficit, novice position. Furthermore, similarly to reflective elements, such intrapersonal

relationship characteristics can be seen to promote new teachers' professional development and independence. Associated with this, beginning teachers note the importance of self-evaluation (Martin & Rippon, 2003). Harrison et al., (2006) indicate that for NQTs who did not negotiate their targets there was a low level of personal responsibility in their professional development which undermined their self-determination. Lindgren (2005) highlights that mentors should seek to mutually agree mentees' individual goals and these should be reviewed and revised, suggesting that this is indicative of an effective relationship which is responsive to the needs of the mentee. However one barrier to this, explored in other research, is that mentees can lack confidence in being able to assess their own progress and development (Martin & Rippon, 2003).

The mentoring relationship is considered responsive when it is able to adapt and change to individual situations. Nolan (2017) suggests that, within their research, the dynamic nature of the mentoring relationship was evident and effective mentors were responsive to the changing needs of the mentees. Ginkel et al., (2016) recognise the need for mentors to be adaptive and explored the mentoring activities and approaches used by mentors to adaptively meet individual novice teachers' needs, alongside the characteristics of adaptive mentors. They identified four adaptive mentoring activities: aligning mutual expectations about the mentoring process; attuning to the mentee's emotional state; adapting the mentoring discussion to match the mentee's reflective capacity; building tasks from simple to complex relative to the mentee's competence level.

This research found that adaptive mentors were more likely to engage in activities intended to support the "construction of personal, practical knowledge about teaching" (Ginkel et al., 2016, p. 206). For example, encouraging mentees to think through the topics they or the mentor initiate, promoting ownership of solutions, monitoring progress on learning goals and structuring the mentoring conversation to facilitate the process of

reflection. These mentors less frequently discussed activities classed as oriented to “creating a favourable context for novice teacher learning” (Ginkel et al., 2016, p.206). These include actions intended to give new teachers the status of a ‘real’ teacher and of intervening directly in the new teacher’s relationships with students. This research explains methodological processes in detail, such as how interview probes were developed and the data analysis process, adding to the strength of the research. Noted limitations include that the research only gives mentors’ accounts of practice at one particular time, it does not seek mentee’s views and that mentor responses are likely to be influenced by the context of their specific mentoring relationship. This could influence the strength and transferability of the findings. This research is, however, broadly supported by aspects of effective mentorship outlined above, for example, the importance of mutual target setting, the importance of mentee’s reflection and self-determination and the role of inter and intra-personal skills within supportive mentoring relationships. Furthermore, the premise of the importance of being responsive to mentees’ needs can also be understood by other research which suggests that new teachers have different priorities over time and hence they benefit from evolving mentoring practice. Hallam et al., (2012) report that over time, new teachers desired and prioritised increased collaboration to increase their confidence and autonomy. Certo (2005a) notes that some mentoring activities such as listening and reassurance appeared less important for beginning teachers as the academic year progressed.

As a whole, the literature suggests a range of enabling features to a successful mentoring relationship. It highlights the role of a reciprocal relationship in which the NQT is not positioned in a ‘deficit’ position. Such relationships should involve available emotional and psychological support and be characterised by collaboration. The role of the mentor in facilitating the professional development of new teachers is also recognised within successful relationships. The literature highlights the need for reflective discussions which are collegial

and also challenging, involving critical questioning, and allowing mentees an appropriate degree of autonomy. Another key feature arising from the literature is the need for mentors to be able to respond and adapt to the individual and changing needs of their mentee. These adaptive relationships are characterised by mentors attuning to the mentee's needs, mentors offering discussions and tasks which are appropriately matched to the mentee, and mentors prioritising activities which encourage the mentee's reflection and ownership.

2.2.1.2. Strategies employed in mentoring relationships

Although the level and nature of support was variable within the research included in the review, the literature does include reference to effective strategies employed within successful mentoring relationships.

The opportunity to receive feedback and engage in professional dialogue is reported to be an essential and valued aspect of mentoring relationships (Heilbronn, Jones, Bubb & Totterdell, 2002; Martin & Rippon, 2003). Martin and Rippon (2003), however, highlight the need to use skills and strategies to offer feedback in a respectful way so that it is valued by mentees. They suggest that employing strategies including: showing a genuine personal interest in the mentee, being present, demonstrating empathy and understanding, and trust and respect are important. This is broadly supported by the research exploring successful mentoring relationship characteristic. For example, the valued interpersonal and intrapersonal skills outlined in the previous section, are reflected within such strategies. This research had the strength of collecting the views of both induction tutors and mentees. Hence, it also highlights that receiving feedback is a reciprocal process and Martin and Rippon (2003) note the attitude of new teachers to the process of feedback will also affect the impact it has on their development. However, the strength of this research is undermined by methodological processes not being outlined in detail. For example, data collection processes

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such as how face-to-face meetings were conducted or what they entailed, and data analysis processes are not outlined. Furthermore, the researchers do not explore their own position and role, which further limits the strength of the research and weight of the findings.

Certo (2005a) explored what beginning teacher and mentor pairs perceived to be the aspects of support and challenge offered through the mentoring relationship. This research was based on the conceptual model offered by Daloz (1999) which indicates that growth is limited if support and challenge are low, and therefore postulates that appropriate levels of both support and challenge should be offered to new teachers. Features identified in terms of support included “checking-in” and listening to concerns, providing reassurance, answering questions, for example, regarding school procedures and policies, sharing resources and providing structure to assist professional development, for example, by guiding classroom management and providing an initial overview of the curriculum. This is supported by research by Harrison et al., (2006) which similarly identified the best mentoring practice as including clarification of subject knowledge, assistance with activities and specific subject related discussion.

Elements identified as challenging included planning together, providing post-observation feedback, inviting experimentation and discussing the students, curriculum and pedagogy. These challenged mentees to engage in different perspectives or possibilities (Certo, 2005a). Certo (2005b) also reported on a single case-study of a successful mentor-mentee relationship. This paper revealed more regarding questioning, encouraging reflection and fostering independence. The mentor stated she preferred the mentee to “do the thinking” (Certo, 2005b, p.12) explaining if you tell the mentee “what you think she’s doing wrong (which may not be the case, by the way) what you think a quick fix is, then the next problem comes up, what if you’re not there for the quick fix?” (Certo, 2005b, p.12). However, the author does note that fostering independence is not prominent in all mentoring relationships.

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Within these studies (Certo, 2005a; Certo, 2005b) examples of challenge, as well as support, did emerge for each of the cases, which is argued to be important for professional growth (Daloz, 1999). There was no data to indicate any of the beginning teachers were over-challenged by their mentor. Although the sample size was small, these case studies offer ‘thick’ descriptions and have the strengths of gathering both mentee and mentor views, and triangulated data sources, to add to the credibility of the finding. The researcher also acknowledges that what one individual may perceive as a challenge, another may not, and discusses how this was addressed. This included the researcher verifying their understanding of the transcription contents with the participants, supporting credibility. Researcher subjectivity was monitored which further adds to the strength of the study and the confirmability of the findings. In these studies, however, the researcher aimed to offer cases of best practice and hence selected pairings likely to be successful, based on criteria including experience and mentor’s teaching skills. Within the single case study (Certo, 2005b) it is suggested that the mentor’s background in counselling and the mentorship programme of the school may have played a role in the quality and nature of the interventions and feedback the mentee received. These factors may influence the transferability to other mentoring relationships. Furthermore, another limitation noted by the authors relates to the Hawthorne Effect, for example, one mentor reported she may have been more mindful and reflective in her role and consequently enhanced the frequency and quality of mentoring discussions. This may indicate that the prevalence of such strategies may not be representative of mentoring relationships in general, however, it does not necessarily suggest that the strategies discussed within this paper are not characteristic of a successful mentoring relationship. Indeed, it may suggest that these strategies are those which reflect mentors’ and beginning teachers’ conceptions of best practice.

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Stanulis, Brondyk, Little and Wibbens (2014) describe the practice of one mentor (of three beginning teachers) who participated in a two-year professional development intervention. They focused on the practice of discussion-based teaching, which involves teachers facilitating high-level discussions which promote critical thinking. They propose that mentors using tenets of assisted performance facilitated mentees' development. These tenets were: identifying performance levels, structuring situations, and scaffolding support and preparing for unassisted performance (Stanulis et al., 2014). Despite the small number of participants, this study provides focused rich data by collecting multiple sources of data from both the mentor and beginning teachers over the course of two years. They found there was variability in mentor support, and in how mentees worked with their mentor, and theorise why the mentor was successful in this particular context. They propose that having a focused aspect of practice to develop (discussion-based teaching) and the mentor being engaged in professional development opportunities were supportive factors. They suggest the mentor's enactment of mentoring as a 'teacher educator', seeing her role as questioning and promoting practice (through scaffolding), supported the beginning teachers to learn new practices and ideas. This is supported by the conceptualisation of a 'reflective' relationship (Nolan, 2017) and can be seen to be reflected in the elements of 'challenge' postulated to be effective by Certo (2005a, 2005b) in mentoring relationships.

Stanulis and Ames (2009) examined how a teacher learned to mentor as she attended an ongoing professional development course. Their findings focused on how the mentor enacted ideas to create opportunities for her mentees. They found that the mentor used gathering evidence of strengths to support her mentee's confidence. She drew on language suggested during the professional development course such as paraphrasing, clarifying, mediating and offering non-judgemental responses during feedback. This supported the mentee to develop and assert her own teaching identity. The mentor development also

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highlighted the need for mentees to be able to articulate and own their vision for teaching and this was successful in terms of supporting the mentee and their confidence. Similarly to the need to be responsive (Nolan, 2017), this research highlighted the importance of using an individualised approach supported by a flexible repertoire of mentoring strategies in order to support an effective mentoring relationship. For example, for one mentee, over time, the mentor felt the indirect and subtle mentoring approach was not supportive. Within this study, the mentor had the opportunity to develop skills, through working collaboratively with induction leaders, which was reported to be helpful. This research has the strength of including both mentors' and mentees' experience and data sources were triangulated to add to the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, this study adopted an action-research approach and was a collaborative piece of research. The ongoing, collaborative conversations between researchers and the mentor enabled rich data to be gathered and interpretations to be checked with the mentor to increase the credibility of the findings.

Strong and Baron (2004) analysed how mentors make pedagogical suggestions to new teachers through mentoring conversations and new teachers' responses. They analysed 64 mentoring conversations and revealed that out of 206 mentor suggestions only 10 were analysed as direct. For indirect suggestions, four categories were identified: expressions of possibility or conditionality, for example, perhaps or wonder, embedded in their dialogue; suggestions posed as questions; suggestions presented as a recommended idea from elsewhere; introducing a suggestion by paraphrasing or reformulating an idea which has been expressed by the mentee. Although these responses are labelled by the author as indirect, the research does not explore whether the mentee perceives the suggestions as indirect or not. One of the examples of indirect suggestions offered by mentors was "What I was thinking was maybe if you have the vocabulary words up there it would help?" (Strong & Baron, 2004, p. 51). Although coded as an indirect suggestion, this could have been perceived by

the mentee as directive, particularly considering the possible power dynamic in the mentoring relationship. Furthermore, due to the limited number of direct responses, it was not possible to explore whether direct or indirect suggestions were more likely to engage the mentees. Therefore, it is difficult to extrapolate these findings in terms of whether such an approach promotes the success of a mentoring relationship.

Strong and Baron (2004) also suggested that these findings may be a consequence of the philosophy of the programme of which participants were a part. This programme focused on the development of teachers' cognitive autonomy, developing reflective practitioners who initiate changes in their own thinking and practice. Therefore, the training the mentors have undertaken may, as the authors postulate, have influenced the findings. Indeed, it is important to note that all of the research within this section relates to mentoring in which mentors have undertaken a specific programme of mentor preparation. Therefore, although the results offer insight into strategies which could be used to support new teachers within the mentoring relationship, they may not represent an overview of strategies which are commonly applied within mentoring conversations.

The research reviewed in this section indicates different strategies which could be employed to support mentoring relationships. These elements also reflect the successful relationship characteristics outlined in the previous section, such as, the role of reflection and reciprocity in a mentoring relationship. However, due to limitations of the literature, for example, the impact of being recorded and the context of the research, this research may not reflect mentoring relationships in general. In much of the literature, the cases selected within the research are ones categorised by the researchers to be successful; where there are successful or effective mentors, schools have good induction practices, or mentors are undergoing intervention support (e.g. Certo, 2005a; Certo, 2005b; Langdon, 2011; Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Stanulis et al., 2014). This could impact on how favourably mentoring and

mentoring relationships are presented within this section and undermines the strength of the literature base in this regard. As the section below explores, some issues which can arise within mentoring relationships are partly related to strategies enacted by mentors, which can be considered counteractive to effective mentoring.

2.2.2. What are the barriers to successful mentorship and problems encountered?

Within the findings relevant to this section, it is important to recognise that literature focusing on the elements of effective mentoring can also provide insight into unsuccessful mentoring and potential problems within mentorship. The research included in the above section is also therefore relevant. This section is separated, however, to include research findings which include a more detailed illustration of potential barriers to successful mentoring and developed accounts of new teachers' perceived problems within their mentoring relationship.

2.2.2.1. Issues in new teacher mentoring

The research recognises the variability in the nature and quality of mentoring support provided. In terms of poor mentoring, the research has suggested that some mentors provide insufficient support and in other cases are controlling, not giving new teachers enough autonomy or challenge (Harrison et al., 2006; Newman, 2010). This is illustrated within the interview extracts from Harrison et al., (2006) which suggest that a key attribute in connection with being professional was not being seen as overfriendly, a "wrap you up in cotton wool sort of person" (p.1062) or being controlling, but instead working alongside the NQT as a colleague. The authors note mentors need to navigate the "fine line between the processes inherent in 'controlling' and 'nurturing' professional development" (Harrison et al., 2006, p.1066). This highlights an area in which potential issues can arise.

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NQTs interviewed in Newman's (2010) study reported different issues they perceived within their mentoring relationship, with "being managed" (p.461) emerging as a key concern expressed by the NQTs. Newman (2010) reports that although one participant referred positively to being guided by her mentor and was happy to "be mollycoddled" (p.466) other participants perceived this negatively, for example experiencing their mentor as "controlling" (p.467) and restricting their autonomy or feeling "stifled" (p. 471) and not feeling valued. Although the sample size was small, this study gathered rich data over a period of time through multiple interviews, and transcriptions were checked with participants to ensure they were congruent with their own perceptions of the experience, adding to the credibility of the findings. However, this study did focus on three 'second career teachers' selected based on their illustration of complex needs, which could mean their views are not representative. This is, however, supported by a wider theoretical perspective which emphasises the importance of autonomy (Dunne & Bennett, 1997).

Martin and Rippon (2003) note that the dual role of assessor and supporter may be problematic for both mentors and mentees. Particularly, for example, if there is an expert-novice conceptualisation, mentees may take a passive position and accept criticism whether it is valid or not which is not compatible with their right to a supportive and mutually respectful relationship (Martin & Rippon, 2003). Heilbronn et al., (2002) reported that induction tutors accepted the need for assessment as part of their mentoring role. However, they do recognise that mentors' skills and experience are key in how these roles are balanced. Arguably, therefore, this is likely to be variable in practice. They also report on one case study of an induction tutor who highlighted the potential for tensions between the responsibilities of support, monitoring and assessment for building relationships (Heilbronn et al., 2002). This paper draws on data from a large, national project which evaluated the implementation of an induction policy and involved a large sample size and multiple data collection methods used

with a variety of stakeholders (mentors, mentees, headteachers, Appropriate Bodies).

However, within their paper Heilbronn et al., (2002) do not discuss how findings were analysed, how the findings from the initial study were selected and used within their paper or how the transcription extracts used within the findings section were selected. This therefore does not allow for the credibility of the findings to be fully understood. Findings regarding the tension inherent in possessing a dual role, which could create a barrier to successful mentorship, are however referred to in research by Langdon (2011).

Langdon (2011) found that the fourteen mentors (across seven schools) involved in their research had their own understanding of effective teaching, but did not insist that their mentees taught in similar ways. They used an open approach allowing beginning teachers to trial their own ideas and used discussion to develop understanding. Although mentors differed in their approach they referred to a “balancing act” and tension between giving instruction and offering the autonomy to mentees to implement their own ideas and discussed developing the “wisdom to gauge when to let beginning teachers go with their ideas and when to intervene” (Langdon, 2011, p.9). This tension between offering instruction and giving new teachers freedom to trial ideas was challenging for all mentors. Rich data was collected through using multiple, triangulated data sources and the data was collected over a two year period adding to the rigour of the study and credibility of the findings. However, within analysis, the researcher does not identify how patterns and outliers were identified and coded and there is no mention of whether the researcher’s understanding and interpretation was checked with participants or with another researcher which may undermine credibility. Furthermore, the schools involved in this study were purposively sampled based on set criteria related to good induction programmes and therefore this may mean that the findings, such as those regarding reported mentee-mentor interactions, may not be transferable to different contexts.

Another influencing factor in effective mentoring, related to some extent with autonomy, concerns the professional development of beginning teachers. Grudnoff (2012) suggests that explicit and shared understanding regarding the role and purpose of mentors should be further developed, highlighting the importance of not simply practical and emotional support but the mentor's role in developing new teachers' skills in effective teaching. The research reviewed raises concerns around mentors moving beyond a supportive friendly position, offering emotional and psychological support, to a role which emphasises their responsibilities in the professional development of new teachers. Grudnoff (2012) reports that only one of the beginning teachers interviewed as part of their research specifically mentioned how the mentor encouraged and challenged her to extend her teaching. Certo (2005a) emphasises that both appropriate levels of support and challenge should be offered to new teachers, however, also report only one mentor appeared to go beyond their own experiences and ideas to challenge her mentee to question her own thinking. Similarly, in the study by Lindgren (2005) only two mentees voluntarily mentioned reflection, although when directly asked about reflection, all mentees could give examples. One explanation for this may be that mentees are unaware of their reflections as this is not done explicitly and do not consider that mentoring is built on reflective talks (Lindgren, 2005), although this could be considered, in itself, a concern. Furthermore, difficulties for mentors in enacting such practice are evident in the literature, which may provide further insight into why this could present as a barrier to effective mentorship.

Stanulis and Ames (2009) examined how a teacher learned to mentor. They reported that the mentor expressed that she initially found it difficult to use collegiate discussions to extend a mentee's practice who held a different construction of teaching and learning to her's. The mentor felt "she did not have the words" (Stanulis & Ames, 2009, p.34) and wrote in a reflective journal "there is very little in our culture that models it. The language, the

parameters, the interactions, they are all new and different” (p.34). This could also link with the idea of mentor’s perceived competence which is also referred to in other research and could be a factor which impacts upon the mentoring relationship. Certo (2005a) noted that the mentees in their research reported that mentoring had greater impact than mentors perceived. This is perhaps a reflection of mentors’ feelings of competence in the role.

Within the study by Lindgren (2005) mentees highlighted aspects of the mentoring programme they would like to improve. These may either indicate aspects that were not present in the mentoring relationship or elements they felt had a negative impact. One suggestion was that mentoring discussions should address the mentee’s concerns. This links with the research above in the sense the mentee’s autonomy over their development is important, despite mentors finding it difficult to enact such practice. In this research, however, the views of mentors were not gathered and therefore how well mentors perceived themselves to address mentees’ concerns is not explored. Furthermore, the approach to data analysis is not clear and the interpretation was not checked with participants meaning such suggestions may not fully encapsulate mentees’ meaning. This does however reflect aspects of mentoring relationships previously identified as effective, such as self-evaluation and setting mutually agreed targets.

Kilburg and Hancock (2006) explored reoccurring problems within mentoring team relationships to determine challenges which were frequently encountered. Within the first year of the study, reoccurring problems included the mentor not being in the same school, subject, speciality, year group; a lack of time for observing and meeting; a poor match between the mentor and mentee; inadequate communication and coaching skills and insufficient emotional support. The reoccurring problems were similar within the second year of the study with other reported problems being an over dependency on the mentor, an unwillingness to collaborate, mentor’s lack of confidence and the mentor being too

authoritarian. All teachers identified time as the factor which was most negatively impacting on them. Multiple data techniques were used to triangulate the findings, however, how the survey data was reduced to categories and the type of analysis used to analyse qualitative data is not detailed. Therefore, although this research does highlight issues which can occur, the weight and frequency of such issues within the mentoring relationships cannot be fully understood.

When considering issues in mentoring, alongside exploring the mentor role, it is also important to consider the mentee role within the relationship. Lindgren (2005) notes that mentees need to prepare for sessions to support reflective discussions. However, out of seven mentees, Lindgren (2005) found that just two regularly planned for mentoring discussions with others viewing these interactions as more spontaneous, using the time to discuss events which had recently occurred. This could understandably impact on the quality of the mentoring conversations particularly regarding discussions to support mentee's professional development.

These findings indicate that barriers to effective mentoring or problems within mentoring can arise from the mentee's autonomy being restricted, tensions or difficulties experienced within mentoring and the mentor adopting more of a friendly supporter role which could limit new teachers' professional development.

2.2.2.2. Mentor development

Another theme which arose from the literature regarded the professional development of mentors. Professional development of mentors can be seen as part of effective practice. Heilbronn et al., (2002) note that it is important for mentors to receive good support and have access to professional development opportunities. Supporting literature emphasises the role

of mentor preparation and intervention in reducing problems encountered within mentoring practice (Kilburg & Hancock, 2006; Lindgren, 2005).

Research included in this review indicates the desire for further professional development opportunities for mentors. Langdon (2011) found that all mentors and principals involved in their research reported they would value mentor education programmes and reported that an articulated challenge for mentors was “learning on the job” (p.12). Grudnoff (2012) also suggests that the lack of requirement for mentors to participate in professional development for the role is a concern and could mean mentors are an under-utilised resource. Certo (2005a) suggests that mentor training programmes should focus on developing mentors’ questioning skills and how to support beginning teachers’ reflections. Lindgren (2005) asserts that many of the concerns raised by mentees within their research could be negated by better mentor preparation. However, the research is not unequivocal in how well mentors feel confident and prepared in their role. Heilbronn et al., (2002) report that the majority of mentors in their study felt confident they were well prepared and supported. Induction tutors did however draw on a variety of sources of support and Heilbronn et al., (2002) report the most frequently mentioned source of training and support was the mentor’s own school. This may explain this contrasting finding as it could suggest that some mentors, for example, those who are not placed within a school which offers training and support for mentoring, may lack appropriate training.

Research in this review which did include mentor preparation or development suggests this opportunity can be well received. Heilbronn et al., (2002) reported that all sources of preparation and support quoted by induction tutors were rated as useful by the majority of respondents. Within the mentoring programme researched by Nolan (2017) mentors generally reported increased confidence in their mentoring role and all but one mentor felt their participation in the programme developed their competence as mentors

(Nolan, 2017). The research by Stanulis and Ames (2009) also highlights the benefit of mentor support and development to allow mentors to learn, discuss and reflect upon the practice of mentoring conversations. Kilburg and Hancock (2006) corroborate and suggest that this can be beneficial for all those involved in the mentoring relationship. They assert that by reflecting on and verbalising their practices within intervention discussions, mentoring program coordinators, mentors and new teachers were more able to understand and deal with encountered problems (Kilburg & Hancock, 2006).

2.3. Overview of Literature Review

The literature reviewed indicates that the practice of mentoring is variable. This could be explained in part by the differences raised through this literature review including mentor's differing perceptions of their role and differences in strategy, approaches and preparation, alongside systemic differences in induction policies and practice. As a whole, the literature suggests different enabling features for successful relationships, potential issues within mentoring relationships as well as an overview of different strategies which can be used within mentoring practice. Key themes which arose from this review relate to the need for reciprocal, collaborative and responsive relationships which meet the individual and changing needs of the mentees. Another relates to promoting autonomy and supporting professional development through reflection and ownership alongside offering emotional and psychological support. It highlights the importance of new teachers actively engaging in dialogue about progress and development in which their views are perceived as valid and valued. Some mentors also mentioned contention around how best to provide assistance and promote independence with reference to tensions within their role. Differences within mentor preparation were emphasised by much of the research alongside support for the

importance of mentor professional development opportunities. Another issue raised was concerns around shared understanding of the process and aims of mentoring.

The existing body of literature has a number of strengths and limitations. The research explores the views and perspectives of both mentors and mentees and many studies involve a triangulation of data and data sources adding to the understanding of mentoring relationships from those involved. One of the frequent limitations of the literature included in this review was the selection of mentors or schools based on set criteria which could mean that only the views of a certain demographic of mentor-mentee relationships are incorporated in this review. Furthermore, often the mentors selected were those undertaking a professional development course which the researcher was involved in delivering or planning and hence this could introduce possible bias. Additionally, the impact of the professional development course is not frequently explored in detail and therefore the impact of the professional development on practice is unknown. There are also concerns around the Hawthorne effect and the idea that participants knowing, for example, that their mentoring discussions were being recorded or their practice was being evaluated, may have impacted on their practice and hence the research.

The research is more limited in terms of mentor development and mentor's perspectives of preparation and support. The literature is also missing a psychological focus, for example despite much literature alluding to the 'deficit' approach within mentoring there is a lack of Positive Psychology strength-based thinking within the literature. This is also reflected in that of the 230 papers found through the literature databases, only 45 were on the databases PsycInfo and PsycArticles. This review also included international research due to the current research base of UK based studies not being considered sufficient in terms of the research needed to explore the literature review question.

In light of this theory and literature, this research proposes to explore the potential benefits that training in solution-focused approaches could offer within the NQT mentoring relationship. This would add to the underdeveloped literature base, particularly within the United Kingdom, on mentor support. Furthermore, this research aims to gather the views and perspectives and voices of mentors and explore whether adopting a psychological focus and utilising strength-based psychology can be applied to the mentoring relationship. It also will explore whether the elements required for successful mentoring could be supported through this approach and whether it could help counteract any issues which can occur within mentoring. A theoretical description of solution-focused approaches is offered within Chapter 1. The rationale for why this approach was chosen for working with NQT mentors, is explored in the section below.

2.4. Using Solution-Focused Approaches

Solution-focused thinking, which has evolved from the principles of SFBT, is a strengths-based approach, used in a range of contexts including educational settings (e.g. Khan, 2015; Ajmal & Rees, 2001; Brown, Powell & Clark, 2012). Research has proposed and supported the use of SF approaches within supervisory relationships such as doctoral research supervision (Walsh et al., 2018) and within clinical supervision cycles with practicing classroom teachers (McGhee & Stark, 2018).

Alongside research indicating that SF practice can have a positive impact on relationships, for example supervisory relationships (see Koob, 2003), the rationale for using this approach links to its aim of facilitating individuals to build upon their competencies and resources to help them “achieve their preferred outcomes by evoking and co-constructing solutions to their problems” (O’Connell, 2003, p. 2). Specifically, solution-focused thinking was adopted due to the value placed on strengths and existing skills and the inclusion of

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approaches and tools to facilitate new teachers' individual reflections. The solution-focused model views the individual as resourceful and emphasises individuals' strengths and successes to create solutions. This is relevant to the findings of the literature review which highlight the need for a more collegial and cooperative model of mentoring.

I posit that, if SF approaches were used in mentoring relationships, it could support a more collegial relationship; promoting features found within the literature review to characterise successful mentoring relationships and counteracting some of the perceived problems within mentoring. This strength-based approach could support the reflective, reciprocal and respectful components outlined in the literature above and facilitate development by promoting mentees autonomy and ownership within their own professional development. Marek, Sandifer, Beach, Coward and Protinsky (1994) state that the process of goal setting within SF approaches allows for discussions to be set according to the needs of the individual (Marek et al., 1994). Co-creating the mentoring could support the sessions to fit with the developmental needs of mentees (see Marek et al., 1994). As such, it also promotes individuality in approach, responding to the mentees as individuals with strengths they wish to develop further; allowing mentors to seek to understand mentees' perspectives and build on their priorities. As Presbury et al., (1999) state when discussing the use of SF approaches within supervision for counsellors, "focusing on solutions emphasizes collaboration in the supervisory relationship, encourages supervisees to become curious about their own potentials, illuminates the possibilities for continued professional development, and highlights the importance of discovery in the supervision experience" (p. 148). Given the findings from the literature search, this highlights how SF approaches could benefit the mentoring relationship.

Such an approach could support the shift away from the reported 'deficit model' within NQT's mentoring practice through promoting competence and self-efficacy

(O'Connell, 2003). In discussing student therapists, Trenhaile (2005) writes that the structure of SF approaches means that it seems logical to assume that engaging in SF supervision is likely to be a positive experience for the supervisee. SF approaches could provide mentors with language and specific strategies to facilitate teacher reflection and collaboration. Although collaborative mentoring is not a new concept, frameworks such as 'developmental' mentoring do not outline specific strategies for implementation. Therefore, SF strategies could compliment this approach.

2.5. Research Purpose

This chapter has contextualised this study within research exploring mentoring relationships and provided a rationale for the present research. Although mentoring literature does not look specifically at SF approaches, issues highlighted in the literature around mentoring could potentially benefit from SF approaches. Therefore, the current research aims to offer training to NQT mentors in SF approaches in order to explore whether or not they are perceived by mentors to be helpful. If adopted and used by mentors the research also aims to explore the practice of SF approaches in school-based mentoring. It is postulated that the key principles of SF practice may provide a framework for the participants to use within their mentoring sessions. The researcher is also interested in exploring whether participation in SF training could enhance mentors' self-efficacy.

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter the conceptual framework of the research will be explored. The research questions will be outlined, alongside the research paradigm and design. This includes reference to how the qualitative data was collected, coded and analysed. Details will also be provided regarding the nature and implementation of the solution-focused training intervention which was offered to NQT mentors. Ethical considerations will also be explored.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

This exploratory study was developed from a critical realist framework. Ontology refers to an individual's views about reality and notions of truth and epistemology refers to how we know what we know (Willig, 2013). Ontology can be conceptualised as ranging on a spectrum between realism and relativism and the associated epistemological positions can be considered to range from positivism to social constructionism (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The proposed research takes a critical realist stance. Fletcher (2017) outlines how critical realism emerged from the positivist/constructivist paradigm wars. It adopts and draws on elements of both approaches and has been conceptualised as being positioned between the two opposing ends of the spectrum (Fletcher, 2017). Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018) assert that critical realism seeks to, "overcome this odd dualism (objectivism and subjectivism) by distinguishing between ontology and epistemology" (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018, p. 201). The distinction between the realms of ontology and epistemology, proposed by Bhaskar (1998), is a significant tenet of critical realism. The assertion that ontology is not reducible to epistemology (i.e. our knowledge of reality) is distinct from positivism and constructivism (Fletcher, 2017).

The critical realist stance postulates that reality and external events exist independently of individuals' subjective perceptions, but recognises that knowledge is a subjective, transitory social construction and that the rules and mechanisms behind reality are socially created (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Therefore, the existence of a social world that researchers can attempt to understand is acknowledged, alongside the understanding that some knowledge can be closer to reality (Fletcher, 2017). Critical realism appreciates the complexity of the social world and through the recognition of the role of context, this approach acknowledges that there are no obvious or clear-cut answers in the social world, disparate to the image illustrated by positivism (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2010 cited in Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018).

One key feature of critical realistic ontology is the idea of multiple, interacting levels of reality (Fletcher 2017). Thus, within critical realist research, it is feasible to posit possible 'causal mechanisms' that may not be readily observable, but can have an effect through the multiple levels of reality (Fletcher, 2017; Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Therefore, the researcher should explore observed patterns of events and strive to identify underlying mechanisms and the contexts within which the mechanisms operate (Robson & McCartan, 2016). These do not adhere to the conception of a causal law, for example, predictions such as 'whenever event x, then event y' are not possible due to the systemic openness of the social world (Fletcher, 2017). Therefore, critical realist research looks for tendencies as opposed to laws (Fletcher, 2017) and is focused on developing understanding, rather than describing (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018). Therefore, this can be seen to make critical realist research valuable for analysing social events and suggesting solutions for social change (Fletcher, 2017). By providing a greater understanding of social phenomena, critical realism can, as an approach, also inform policies and practice (Fay, 1990 cited in Brooks, 2015).

Given these assertions, the critical realist paradigm is appropriate for this research as it seeks to explore the impact that training in SF approaches has on mentors' practice and their experiences of implementing SF approaches within a specific 'real world' context. It seeks to explore their individual views of the appropriateness of SF training for their role and their own experiences of SF approaches, appreciating that individuals are likely to possess different understandings regarding SF approaches within the mentoring role, and construct different meanings from their experiences. The research does not seek to compare schools or to establish causal relationships by evaluating the impact of the programme against resulting outcomes. Rather it involves an exploration of social regularities and the mechanisms as to how SF training may influence mentor's practice, and whether and why it is an appropriate approach within a particular 'real' context.

Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) posit that within critical realistic research involving evaluation, the complexity of an intervention is acknowledged. Therefore, the researcher tries to develop an understanding of "what works for whom under what circumstances?" (Edwards et al., 2014, p.39) to explore more than simply whether an intervention works or not. In exploring mentors' experiences of SF approaches within their mentoring relationships, the research aims to consider mentors' views regarding the intervention in a holistic way. Additionally, it aims to explore what mentors perceive as the barriers and enabling influences in implementing solution-focused approaches in their NQT mentoring role. Therefore, it is aligned with the principles underpinning a critical realist stance in which context or situational influences are recognised as being crucial to an understanding of processes and emergent outcomes (Edwards et al., 2014). Indeed, it acknowledges that the SF training and practice are embedded within a 'messy' context and therefore the impact of the training is likely to be influenced by interacting mechanisms

(some of which will already be in place) and contexts occurring on different levels (e.g. individual, school, policy).

The researcher also hopes for this research to contribute to practice by exploring how training on SF approaches may support or hinder mentors' practice in order to contribute to the development of effective interventions and mentor preparation. This is in line with the critical realist perspective in which research has some potential to induce change (Edwards et al., 2014). Edwards et al., (2014) discuss that the realist commitment to emancipatory change is associated with critical realist researchers using "their ideas and knowledge in direct ways actively to produce change themselves in directions they see as valuable" (p.36). Indeed, within this study, the researcher has adopted an engaged mode of active intervention as part of the research process. This was conducted in a way in which the researcher primarily led the research effort as opposed to the participants themselves. Although not assumed, the researcher did seek to produce possible change in the practices of the participants involved in the research.

A researcher's ontological and epistemological position shapes the research design and methodology (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Vincent and O'Mahoney (2018) argue that critical realist research embraces qualitative, and a range of quantitative, research methods. In such research, methodological choices should "depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it" (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). Research methods can be flexible and adaptive and dependent on what information might provide further insight into the area under consideration (Edwards et al., 2014). The research aim and questions, which guide the research design and specific methods adopted, are outlined below.

3.2. Research Aim and Questions

Research Aim: To explore the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to use SF strategies in their mentoring role.

Research Questions:

1. What are NQT mentors' perceptions of the appropriateness of SF approaches for their mentoring role?
2. How did participation in SF training impact on NQT mentors' self-efficacy?
3. What are the experiences of NQT mentors using SF strategies in their mentoring practices?
4. What do mentors perceive as the barriers and enabling influences in implementing SF approaches in their NQT mentoring role?

3.3. Overview of the Research

Participants attended two afternoon training sessions which ran from 2pm-4pm on the dates of Wednesday 15th May and Wednesday 12th June 2019 at a local university building. These training sessions focused on SF thinking and strategies. The length of time chosen for the training sessions was supported by research which has suggested that individuals benefitted after one evening of training in SF techniques (McGhee & Stark, 2018). It also aimed to be mindful of the time commitment involved in participating in the research, particularly considering this was an exploratory piece of research with no previous research to suggest any benefit of attending SF training for NQT mentors. Following the training sessions, participants engaged in individual semi-structured interviews. These were conducted between the time period of the 1st of July 2019 and 17th July 2019. The period of time between the training sessions and interviews was thought to be adequate in terms of it

being a feasible period of time for mentors to have had the opportunity to utilise SF approaches in their practice, if they felt it would be useful.

3.4. The Solution-Focused Training Programme

The training programme, designed by the researcher, aimed to provide an insight into SF practice and offer instruction and practice in using some SF tools and techniques (Appendix D). A range of books and journals relating to SF work were drawn upon in designing the training. The strategies employed in the theoretical framework of solution-focused supervision were thought to be most relevant to this research. This is due to the characteristics of a mentoring relationship, and is based on the findings of the literature review. The models of SF supervision proposed by Marek et al., (1994) and Juhnke (1996) and based on the work of de Shazer (1985, 1986, 1991) were used as an initial foundation of the training. These models centre on strengths and resources as opposed to deficits and problems and highlight key characteristics inherent in SF supervision. These characteristics include the belief that individuals have the resources and strengths to create solutions, the importance of meeting the supervisees at their developmental level but assuming competence and supporting possibility-orientation thinking (Juhnke, 1996; Marek et al., 1994). These models suggest features of SF approaches which support SF supervision including: clear goal setting which can be supported by the use of the miracle question; seeking exceptions to the mentees' concerns so they can extend what is working well; and using scaling questions to assist the mentee to identify and evaluate progress (Juhnke, 1996; Marek et al., 1994). Thus, the training aimed to include these features of SF approaches.

The researcher refined the training through discussions with their academic supervisor and following feedback from colleagues within an Educational Psychology Service. The training, in line with the stance of the research, did not aim to prescribe recipes for change

but provide mentors with a knowledge of the structure of solution-focused practice, possible techniques, questions to explore and a space to reflect and practice. This aimed to take into account the different and changing contexts within which the mentors' practice and not suggest that 'if you do x, y will follow' independent of context and situation. This flexibility and acknowledgement of context was also useful in terms of facilitating participants to feel autonomous in choosing to apply SF techniques in their practice or not. This was important considering the exploratory nature of this research which tried to seek understanding as to whether mentors themselves perceive SF practice to be useful within the mentoring relationship. Following both sessions, evaluation feedback was gathered from participants. The researcher aimed to adapt the second training session based on the 'best hopes' (Appendix E) and evaluations received during the first training session. Although the researcher designed the training, it was delivered by an experienced EP. This was to increase the credibility of the findings by preventing the researcher adopting the dual role of trainer and interviewer (about the training), which could have impacted on interviewee responses.

3.5. Research Design

This research focused on the experiences of mentors trained in SF approaches and explored the mechanisms which support the implementation of these within a particular context. The research is exploratory due to the nature of the study and the lack of previous research into this area. It is built from a critical realist perspective and therefore it is acknowledged that there are multiple subjective 'realities' regarding the SF training and that interactions will influence mentors' experiences and perceived value. Considering this, the research design was qualitative, as the "open-ended exploratory nature" (Willig, 2008, p.20) of qualitative research allows for an exploration of mentors' experiences. The importance of context is also acknowledged and participants' perceptions of the influence of contextual

factors can be explored using qualitative methodology, rather than seeking to control these variables (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Within qualitative designs, Robson and McCartan (2016) propose that an “inductive logic is used starting with data collection” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 20) suggesting the research is data-driven as opposed to starting with theoretical ideas and concepts. However, there is a process of interpretation involved in qualitative research and the role of the researcher is valued and important (Robson & McCartan, 2016). To collect qualitative data individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data gathered through semi-structured interviews was thematically analysed to address the presented research questions.

3.6. Sampling and Participants

The research was conducted within the Local Authority in which the researcher was placed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. To recruit participants, emails were sent to the headteachers of schools, with information regarding the study’s purpose and structure. Both headteacher and participant information sheets and consent forms were attached to the emails (Appendix F, G, H, I). A non-probability purposive sample was selected as the research required a sample which matched specific criteria in order to gather “information-rich” data relevant to the research topic (Patton, 2002, p. 230 cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013). Participants were requested to be designated mentors who were responsible for mentoring an NQT.

The schools which were contacted were within the local area of the training venue due to the research being conducted in a large county. The researcher used open email addresses which had been collated by the Educational Psychology Service in which they were working as a trainee. Forty-four schools were contacted directly by the researcher. Information about the research was also shared at a local Headteacher Forum by one school in the area who had

received the initial email. Six schools replied and provided both headteacher and participant consent forms and were included within the study. Three additional schools contacted the researcher and expressed an interest in the research although they were not able to attend the training dates/times organised and therefore were not included in the research.

Congruent with the qualitative research design employed, and the stance of the researcher, the study aimed to gather “small, purposively-selected and carefully-situated samples” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.29). Other relevant factors which are considered important in determining sample size are; “the quality of data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic and the amount of useful information obtained from each participant” (Morse, 2000, p.3). The researcher was confident that the data gathered from the NQT mentors would be reflective, detailed and rich. Also, as the intention of the research was not to produce results which could be widely generalised, the scope of the study fits a smaller number of participants. Nine participants were involved in the research. Braun and Clarke (2013) state that for thematic analysis six to ten interviews is sufficient for a small project. Therefore, this number of participants was considered appropriate, particularly due to the exploratory nature of this qualitative research.

All nine participants received both training sessions and completed an interview. One participant received the first training session on a 1:1 basis, within their school, as he was not able to attend the first training session but wished to continue to be part of the research project. This was delivered by a Trainee Educational Psychologist working within the local Educational Psychology Service who was given the opportunity to discuss the training with the researcher and the Educational Psychologist who delivered the training sessions. Five of the participants were female and four were male. Five of the participants worked in a mainstream primary schools and four worked in mainstream secondary schools. All of the participants had some experience of mentoring. However, this experience was mixed with

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participants possessing different mentoring roles and positions, such as being lead mentor within a school (overseeing all mentors) or being responsible for mentoring students in teacher training alongside mentoring NQTs. Two participants were primarily responsible for mentoring students undertaking postgraduate qualifications in teacher training. Another participant was not, at the time of the research, responsible for mentoring an NQT but had previous experience in this role and was adopting the NQT mentor role again the following academic year. The researcher did not meet directly with the participants until the interview stage of the research and this information was not gathered until this stage. The researcher decided to include their views and experiences as all of these participants were in roles responsible for promoting new teachers' professional development, alongside providing support, and were able to provide insight into the role of the SF approaches within school-based mentoring roles. Furthermore, due to new more school-based routes into teaching in England, the distinction between the roles of these mentors is less clear (Hobson et al., 2009). Participant characteristics are displayed within the table below.

Table 3.
Participant Characteristics

Participant Number	Type of School	Mentoring Position Held in School (at time of training/interview)
1	Primary	Mentoring an NQT
2	Primary	Mentoring a PGCE student (no prior experience mentoring an NQT).
3	Primary	Mentoring student teachers and involved in mentoring an NQT (but not designated mentor).
4	Secondary	Involved in mentoring student teachers (previous experience mentoring NQTs).
5	Secondary	Mentoring an NQT
6	Secondary	Mentoring NQTs and Lead Mentor for the school.
7	Secondary	Mentoring NQT (joint mentoring/not designated mentor)
8	Primary	Mentoring an NQT
9	Primary	Mentoring NQTs/student teachers and Lead Mentor for the school

3.7. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather the mentors' views of their experience. These interviews were held face-to-face and all took place within participants' respective schools. Semi-structured interviews were chosen due to this method allowing rich data to be gathered regarding participants' perspectives. This process also allows for meaning to be checked with participants throughout the interview which can increase the credibility of the findings. The researcher decided to use individual interviews as opposed to a focus group to support participants to share a diversity of views regarding the usefulness of solution-focused approaches and allow the interview to be guided by whether they felt it was useful for their practice or not.

3.7.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Nine participants completed semi-structured interviews which explored their views and experiences regarding SF approaches. The researcher used an interview guide (Appendix J) which was developed using the research aim and questions. Semi-structured interviews are well-suited to a critical realist orientation (Willig, 2013). They allow participants to provide rich and detailed information reflecting their views and experiences, whilst maintaining a structure relevant to the research aims (Creswell, 2003). Adopting the critical realist stance, the researcher recognises that interviews are a fluid, interactive process which are influenced by the research agenda (Edwards et al., 2014). Furthermore, in contrast to a constructionist view, the 'knowledge' created through the interview can be interpreted as referencing a wider reality, with the stance that participants are sharing accounts and perspectives of external events and experiences which represent different aspects of a complex social reality (Edwards et al., 2014). This technique, through using directed but open-ended questions, ensures participant's responses are valued and meaning is co-constructed (Robson & McCartan,

2016). The researcher aimed to remain sensitive to the participants during the process and therefore the schedule could be adapted to elicit additional relevant data.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The interview recordings lasted between 20 minutes and 50 minutes in length. They were transcribed verbatim although some verbal utterances such as ‘errm’ ‘ok’ ‘like’ were not included within the final transcripts. For example, when the researcher uttered phrases such as ‘mmm’, as a way of showing engagement with what the interviewee was saying, this was not included, unless it appeared to alter the interviewee’s response. The transcriptions also do not provide detail regarding intonation, pauses or other non-verbal features. The researcher checked the transcriptions against the original recordings for accuracy.

3.8. Data Analysis

Qualitative research focuses on meaning and hence the analysis involved interpretation as, “interpretation is considered to be about shedding light on meaning” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.408). The data collected through semi-structured interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across data with regards to research questions, in order to interpret and make sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is used to identify repeated patterns of meaning from the experience of the mentors, as well as considering the differences in the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis allows for flexibility in methods of data collection and theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Thematic analysis was deemed the most suitable method for data analysis as the researcher sought to identify patterns across datasets as to how mentors perceived and experienced using SF approaches. Thematic analysis is considered an appropriate match to a critical realist stance (Wood, 2016). Robson and McCartan (2016)

write that thematic coding analysis, “can be used as a realistic method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants” (p.467). Furthermore, the research aimed to explore experiences, enabling factors and barriers linked to the training and implementation of SF strategies across the data, rather than to phenomenologically understand participants’ individual experience of it, which would be a priority within research adopting Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, et al., 2009). Thematic analysis was also deemed more appropriate as this research was exploratory. Therefore, it aimed to explore factors and mechanisms but not necessarily explain these in order to gain the understanding required to generate a theory ‘grounded’ in the data. This research used an inductive approach to thematic analysis in which the aim was to create the analysis from the data as opposed to the analysis being guided by an existing theory (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher aimed to explore the views of those involved with the SF training without expectations as to which aspects of the training, if any, were meaningful to participants.

The six-phase process for thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed.

3.8.1. Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data.

Following transcription, the researcher familiarised themselves with the data by listening to the audio-recordings several times and reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, in order to begin to reflect on the meaning of the data. Following this, the researcher also checked each transcription whilst listening again to the recording which enabled them to fully familiarise themselves with the data. Any initial “noticings” of potential interest (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.204) and ideas for the analysis were recorded.

These included overall impressions of the data and general ideas which were expressed across interviews, as well as specific points and a reflection on the use of language.

3.8.2. Phase 2: Generating initial codes.

For the process of coding the data, the approach adopted was “complete coding” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 206) in which the researcher aimed to identify and code everything relevant to the research question. Codes can be identified as being either semantic or latent (Braun & Clarke, 2013). “Data-derived” or “semantic codes” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207) aim to reflect the semantic meaning of the data. In contrast, “researcher-derived” or “latent” codes aim to identify implicit meanings within the data and hence involve an interpretative frame (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.207). Braun and Clarke (2013) assert that “the separation between semantic and latent codes is not pure; in practice, codes can and do have both elements” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.207). Therefore, within the coding, although the codes were primarily “data-derived” codes, in line with the inductive approach taken within this research analysis, some codes did reflect an element of researcher interpretation in that the assumptions and meanings underpinning the data were reflected within the code. The process of coding was completed on the software NVivo which enabled the researcher to collate all instances of text where codes appeared in the data. The researcher systematically went through the transcripts and noted items of relevance to the research questions. These items were ascribed an initial code which aimed to capture its essence. An example of initial coding of data can be seen in Appendix K. Codes were refined throughout the coding process and some codes which overlapped were placed within broader codes. A list of example codes can be found in Appendix L. Coding of extracts of transcriptions was also discussed with another Trainee Educational Psychologist to support the process of refining codes and the researcher’s reflexivity.

3.8.3. Phase 3: Searching for themes.

After the codes were refined, the codes and associated data were reviewed to identify similarities between them. They were examined for potential patterns and combined and shaped into themes using NVivo. A theme “captures something of interest or importance in relation to your research question(s)” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.468). After initial themes had been identified, the researcher used colour coded notes to support sorting themes into potential overarching themes and subthemes. Using NVivo, the relevant data was collated under each potential theme and subtheme. An example of codes sorted into a theme is shown in Appendix M. The codes and themes were continuously reviewed throughout the process to ensure a fit with the transcribed data.

3.8.4. Phase 4 and Phase 5: Reviewing, defining and naming themes.

Through the developing analysis, the overarching themes, themes and subthemes were refined and reviewed, a process which was supported through discussions with peers and with the researcher’s academic supervisor. They were reviewed to ensure a fit with both the overall data set and the coded extracts. This process supported the researcher to examine the scope of each theme, the distinctions and relationships between them and hence define the overall picture illustrated by the analysis. The researcher also referred back to the transcripts to ensure the chosen themes and subthemes adequately described both the content of the data and the codes they represented. A thematic map was created to present the identified themes and also associations and relationships between themes (see Chapter 4).

3.8.5. Phase 6: Writing up.

A description of each overarching theme, theme and subtheme was written into this thesis (Chapter 4), alongside the thematic map. Relevant extracts from the transcripts were selected to illustrate the content of the themes and subthemes.

3.9. Trustworthiness

Validity is defined by Willig (2013) as “the extent to which our research describes, measures and explains what it aims to describe, measure or explain” (Willig, 2013, p.24). In qualitative research, instead of validity, researchers commonly refer to the idea of the ‘trustworthiness’ of the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Several definitions and criteria of trustworthiness exist, but one prominent set of criteria, outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) refers to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. To enhance the validity/trustworthiness of this research, certain measures were taken.

Credibility concerns the congruency between the findings and reality; it refers to the truth of the findings and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Cope, 2014). Within the critical realist paradigm adopted within this research, credibility relates to whether the findings accurately reflect each participant’s reality of their experience. This study focuses on mentors’ experiences and the data collection methods chosen aimed to address issues of trustworthiness and enhance the understanding of these experiences (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to check their understanding with the participants and for the participants to comment further on information. Such checking is considered an important means to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interviews were audio-recorded so they could be accurately transcribed and capture the completeness of the data collected through interviews. Measures

were also taken in terms of the interpretation to enhance credibility and address threats to trustworthiness (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Although mentors' self-reported experiences are pivotal to this study, it is acknowledged that the credibility of these could be criticised; considerations, such as the building of rapport, were important to reduce potential response bias (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In addition, the researcher did not deliver the training themselves which was considered to minimise likely response bias, particularly regarding the usefulness of the training.

The concept of transferability, rather than generalisability, is relevant in this research which aims to develop an understanding of a phenomenon by exploring how individuals experience or make sense of it (Kornbluh, 2015). Transferability refers to how the research findings can be applied to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of a qualitative design facilitates the 'thick description' of the research, including information on participants and context, to strengthen the transferability of the findings (Mertens, 2010). Furthermore, although external generalisability is not a key issue within this research, Robson and McCartan (2016) note that having a non-representative sample does not necessarily "preclude some kind of generalisation beyond the specific setting studied" (p.173). This means the current research, using a critical realist standpoint, may be able to generate evidence for different factors (influencing the impact of SF training and use of SF approaches within mentoring) and the contexts in which they operate which could be generalised to other school mentoring teams.

Dependability can be considered to refer to the constancy of the data over similar conditions (Cope, 2014). Due to the underpinning epistemology and exploratory design, this research is somewhat context and time specific. Dependability in this research relates to how the methods used could be replicated and whether the same conclusions would be drawn from the dataset if the analysis process was repeated. As such, dependability can be enhanced

through the researcher's process and descriptions (Koch, 2006). The researcher has aimed to provide detailed descriptions of the processes involved in the research, including the process of analysis, and outline the thinking underpinning their decisions. Furthermore, the researcher's discussions with their academic supervisor and peers, in which decisions at each stage of the research process were discussed, supports the dependability of the research (Cope, 2014). These factors also support the confirmability of this research.

Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate the findings represent participants' responses as opposed to the researcher's biases or beliefs (Cope, 2014). The methodology and analysis adopted within this research are described. Robson and McCartan (2016) assert that, regarding interpretation of data, "the main threat to providing a valid interpretation is through imposing a framework or meaning on what is happening" (p.170). This research adopted an inductive approach to analysis which aimed to derive findings directly from the dataset and meant that a framework or theory was not imposed on the data which may influence interpretation. Within the analysis, the researcher aimed to ensure the coding and interpretations of the transcripts were constructed from "raw information" present in the transcribed responses (Boyatzis, 1988 cited in Hellsten, Prytula & Ebanks, 2009). This approach aimed to be transparent as to how interpretations were reached from the data, including how data was dealt with which did not 'fit' and searching for disconfirming data. Chapter 4 includes extracts from the participants to illustrate emerging themes to support the confirmability of the findings (Cope, 2014).

The researcher also created an audit trail, including raw data and researcher notes for transparency and to maintain reflexivity, important for confirmability. Qualitative research is recognised to be a "subjective process; we, as researcher, bring our own histories, values, assumptions, perspectives, politics and mannerisms into the research" (Braun & Clarke,

2013, 36). Considering this, Braun and Clarke (2013) highlight the importance of being reflexive within qualitative research and “critically reflecting on the knowledge we produce, and our role in producing that knowledge” (p.37). Therefore, within this research, the researcher strove to be reflexive about their biases and assumptions at each stage of the research process (Edwards et al., 2014). To support reflexivity, the researcher kept a research diary (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and used supervisions to discuss aspects of their research. Furthermore, to limit personal biases, a peer independently reviewed sections of the coded thematic analysis transcripts, and discrepancies were discussed (Hellsten et al., 2009).

3.10. Ethics

Approval for this study was gained from the University Ethics Committee (Appendix N) and from the Principal Educational Psychologist of the relevant Local Authority. To ensure the interests of participants were safeguarded, the relevant professional codes of conduct were adhered to (British Psychological Society, 2018; Health & Care Professions Council, 2016). Informed consent was gained from participants in which they were briefed, through an information sheet, on the purpose and structure of the research including a description of what the training involved.

Participants were given the opportunity to ask the researcher questions before, during and after the research. Schools and individual participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage, and were reminded of this at the beginning of each training session and immediately prior to the interview. During the interviews, the researcher was sensitive to non-verbal cues indicating that participants were uncomfortable. In this, the researcher understood that negotiating consent is ongoing, as opposed to something that is simply obtained and achieved (Mukherji & Albon, 2018). The interview, as a method of data collection, aimed to allow participants to freely share their views. As such, it was

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acknowledged that participants could have discussed sensitive or upsetting experiences which was an ethical consideration. The set-up of the interviews were designed to support and minimise any potential risk to participants and reduce potential power dynamics. Interviews were conducted within quiet, confidential settings which participants were familiar with and the researcher used their interviewing skills to enhance participants' agency and comfort within the setting. As discussed above, the researcher's reflexivity also promoted ethical practice as it supported the researcher to reflect on their role and position and monitor their practice. Participants were debriefed at the end of the interviews. This confirmed participants' right to withdraw their data up to three weeks after the data collection interviews and provided the researcher's contact details to allow for follow-up contact and information (Appendix O).

Basic 'ground rules' were covered within the training sessions and confidentiality (and the limits of confidentiality) were featured in these. One ethical consideration which arose from the training sessions was ensuring that participants were aware of their right to opt out of any of the activities. The information sheet explained that the training would involve active participation, however, did not outline the activities in detail. During the sessions, one participant raised that they felt uncomfortable about engaging in a role-play activity. This raised an ethical concern and participants were offered the choice to opt-out of activities.

Qualitative data was anonymised at the point of transcription through the use of pseudonyms. Although identifying data was not included, participants were made aware of the small number of participants who took part and the impact this may have on complete anonymity, particularly as the participants were involved in group training session and therefore had some awareness of each other. How the data was stored was detailed within the data management plan submitted to the university. This outlines that the data was stored securely on either a password protected drive, on an encrypted USB stick or in a secured

cabinet. In line with the obtained consent, data gathered from this research will be appropriately destroyed after a maximum of 5 years.

3.11. Summary

This chapter has outlined the research paradigm, design and methodology. It has provided an overview of the present research including an outline of the conceptual framework and the nature and implementation of the SF training. The procedure for data collection and analysis has been discussed.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1. Overview

This chapter outlines the findings of the research. It presents the key themes and subthemes identified through the analysis. The identified themes are illustrated in a thematic map and explored in turn using extracts of the interviews. This chapter is organised in relation to these themes, as opposed to the research questions, in line with the inductive nature of the analysis. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings.

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

Through the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) a number of overarching themes, themes and subthemes were identified from the data set. These can be seen in the table below (Table 4.). Due to nature of the interviews and the richness of the data, there are some overlaps and associations between themes and subthemes. These are identified within the descriptions of the themes.

Table 4.

Overarching Themes, Themes and Subthemes Identified through the Process of Thematic Analysis

Overarching Theme	Theme	Subtheme
How SF principles and approaches support the role of the mentor	SF thinking offering new approaches and influencing mentors' mindsets.	
	Applying SF techniques within mentoring.	Questioning
		Scaling
	Promoting positivity and focusing on strengths	
	Encouraging ownership and autonomy and empowering new teachers	

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	Relieving responsibility of mentors	
	Mentees sharing their ideas is mutually beneficial	
Impact of training in SF approaches	Mentors' self-efficacy and confidence	Mentors' existing feelings of self-efficacy
		Mentors seeking professional development opportunities
		Impact of training on mentors' self-efficacy and confidence.
	Benefitting from training experience	
	Wider impact of training	
	Scope of the training	The length of the training
		Training needs to be better embedded to promote consistency
Mentors' perceptions of barriers to implementing SF approaches	Time pressures	
	Need to use a range of approaches in mentoring including more directive approaches.	
	Individual differences between mentees influencing the use of, and response to, SF approaches.	
	Concerns over new teachers setting their own targets and devising their own solutions	
	Persevering with questioning	

A thematic map was created to illustrate the themes identified through the data analysis as shown in Figure 1 below.

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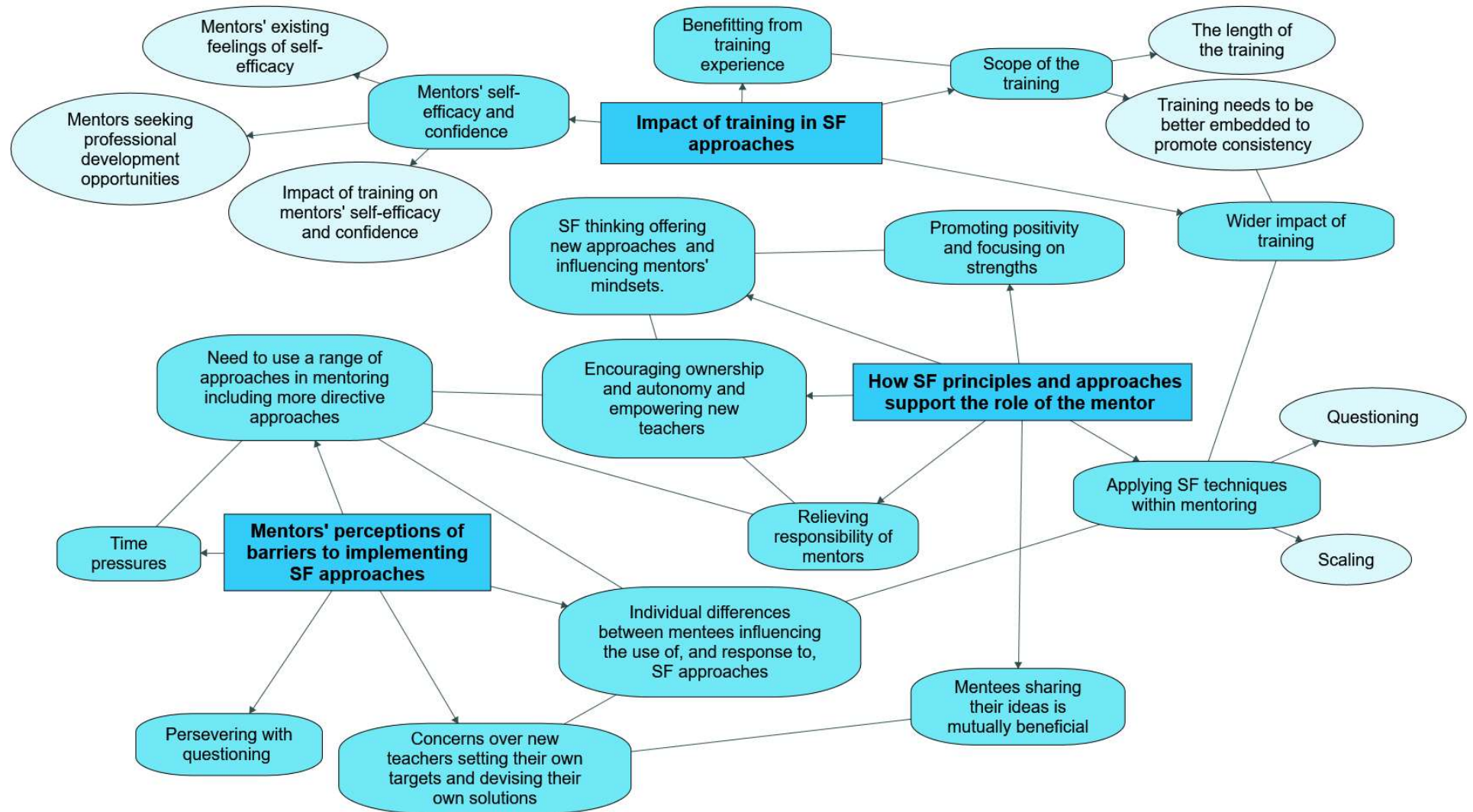


Figure 1. A thematic map illustrating the identified overarching themes, themes and subthemes within the data

4.3. How SF Principles and Approaches Support the Role of the Mentor

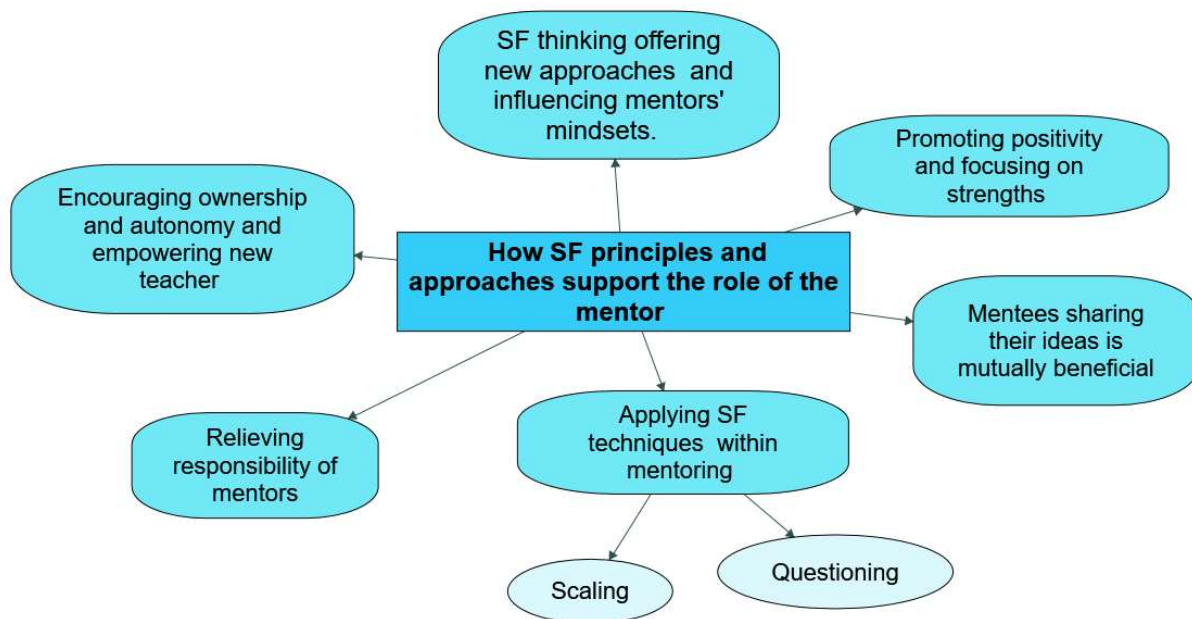


Figure 2: Section of thematic map illustrating themes and subthemes linked to how SF principles and approaches support the role of the mentor

This overarching theme includes themes exploring the ways in which mentors perceive SF approaches to be appropriate and useful within their mentoring role. All participants commented on some ways in which SF approaches could benefit mentoring practice within schools.

4.3.1. SF Thinking Offering New Approaches and Influencing Mentors' Mindsets

This theme includes comments referring to how the training in SF approaches supported participants' role as mentor, influencing their perceptions and mindsets through offering new approaches, language and ideas. David commented about how he was aware of SF practices through reading, however, all of the other participants expressed how aspects of SF thinking and approaches were a novel idea or approach for them, or how they had not considered

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using SF approaches within their mentoring relationships. This is illustrated through the example below:

“Not heard of it. Not really, the idea of um, most of the techniques that were come up with I was very new to it essentially.” (Mark lines 44-45).

Some participants reflected on how SF thinking is a broad approach, or a mind-set, and how it could offer a *“different way of thinking”* (Sarah lines 56-57).

“It is that general, it’s a whole, I think it’s a mindset isn’t it, the solutions focused, it’s a mindset and we are not as human beings very solution focused. Maybe we are but we’ve become very problem focused. We focus on the problem....And I think it’s that flipping it and reminding myself to do that as well” (Mary lines 290-294).

Some participants referred to how it involved a change to habits or automatic processes they had adopted within their mentoring roles. These changes involved encouraging mentee autonomy and promoting positivity which are features referred to within separate themes (see 4.3.3 and 4.3.4).

“....So it was getting out of the habit of just giving them the answer and actually using the questioning and getting them to come up with the solutions themselves. It took a bit of a mind shift for me as well but I found it really useful” (Grace lines 58-61).

Other participants also reflected on how the training had broadly altered their perception of the mentoring role. Within this, they conceptualised their role as being more of a facilitative, supportive coach and therefore, this is linked to themes of encouraging ownership and autonomy for mentees and relieving responsibility of mentors (4.3.4 and 4.3.5).

“I think it felt more of a supportive role (...) I think it’s more as your role being like a supporting person rather than someone who just tells them what to do.” (Eva lines 235-237)

4.3.2. Applying SF Techniques within Mentoring

Participants identified SF techniques which they felt to be appropriate within the mentoring role and discussed their experiences of using SF approaches within their practice. Most

participants had implemented features of SF approaches into their mentoring practice. One participant, Paul, explained how his experience of implementing the approaches was, “*very minimal*” (Paul line 88) as he had not had the chance or the time.

Participants reflected generally about finding the training useful and perceiving SF thinking to be “*a very useable approach*” (Grace line 96). Many mentors spoke positively about their experiences of using SF approaches within their mentoring role. They reflected on how they wish to continue using these approaches within new mentoring relationships.

“It’s something I’m keen to persevere with next year as well” (Paul line 70).

Alongside positive comments, when asked what they felt was not appropriate or relevant to the mentoring role, none of the participants raised any aspects which they felt, in general, were not appropriate within mentoring.

“Nothing really stands out as such that I thought “Oh that was a waste of time” I thought every, both sessions were really useful.” (Mark lines 55-56).

Although within this theme participants discussed the aspects they felt were useful for the mentoring role in general, participants did refer to the role of individual differences in determining on an individual level how useful and appropriate approaches would be. This is explored within a later theme (see 4.5.3).

4.3.2.1. Questioning

Participants reported how they liked some of the questioning techniques used within SF approaches and how they perceived that these could be useful within their mentoring relationships. Participants reflected on how the training had broadly developed their questioning skills and they all gave examples of SF questioning techniques within their interviews, using language associated with SF approaches. They spoke positively about having “*new slants on questioning*” (Paul line 137) and reflected on how the questioning could positively develop their practice through effectively involving the mentee. Participants

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commented on their own experience of using the SF questioning techniques within the training sessions; Grace expressed how some of the questioning in SF approaches can be quite hard to answer but provoked thinking.

“She kind of went “how will people know that there’s been a change?” And that question because she was asking me that and I was like “That’s quite a hard question to answer actually” (...) it is quite a hard question to answer straightaway but I’m going to start dropping that into people and get them to think, even if they don’t answer it drops that kinda little seed...” (Grace lines 247-249 and 254-256).

Some participants identified specific questions which they thought would be particularly useful. Paul spoke about bringing ‘the other’ into questioning.

“Some of the questioning I really like. “How would others see that?” “What would your children in your class say about x,y and z?” I love the idea of that because it offers another view.” (Paul lines 71-73).

They identified the miracle question as a useful and effective SF technique which is appropriate to the mentoring role.

“I quite liked the, I call it the Magic Wand rather than the miracle...” (Mary line 118).

Rachel mentioned how she felt the coping questions were useful and how they had a positive impact on her mentee. Additionally, Rachel reflected on the impact of using the miracle question within her mentoring relationship.

“That miracle question was very very good for her and I’ve used that actually quite a lot (...) I think for her that helped her with her own expectations because that helped bridge the gap (...) she was able to then figure out how to make it happen...” (Rachel lines 75-76, 87-88 and 99)

Participants discussed how they thought it was useful for mentees to set and review their targets so that they can refer back to these throughout the year. They commented on how they liked techniques to explore a mentee’s preferred future and how this could support a mentee to reflect to think of ways to meet their targets and reflect on their progress.

“I think progression would work really well with it. And they’d have their goals and I think they’d have their preferred futures and you could say every time “How close are you? Has your future changed?” sort of thing” (Eva lines 344-346).

4.3.2.2. Scaling

All participants referred positively to scaling and discussed how it is relevant to the mentoring role. They expressed how they perceive the scaling technique and associated questioning to be interesting and useful. Some participants expressed how scaling was the main aspect of the training they had benefitted from and had used the most. Participants spoke positively about scaling in the mentoring role and their experiences of uses it.

“As I say, the thing that really has worked for me is the scaling.” (Mark lines 249-250).

They reflected on how they had used scaling in practice, in which contexts and for which purpose. Participants spoke about how they used scaling following lesson observations and within assessment mentoring meetings when setting targets.

“Yes so we, if she’d done an observation....we’d use the scaling, and talk about how, what she’d want her next lesson to look like if she used that preferred future. And like how she could improve on what she needs to improve on.” (Eva lines 414-418).

Participants discussed how scaling supports new teachers’ reflections. They expressed how it supports new teachers’ understanding of their progress, helps them to assess their practice and supports mentors to monitor progress by gaining, *“a firmer understanding as to what it is they have improved on but also things that they still need to work on as well” (Rachel lines 142-144).*

“And then literally with just a question of “Why is it not a 7?” or “Why were you over half way?” “Why is it not a 7?” she was able to go on to explain what it would look like in terms of how it would move up, how she would move up the scale in terms of how she felt and she came to it all from there.” (James lines 178-181).

Participants expressed how the discussion associated with scaling can support new teachers to

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evaluate themselves through justifying their thinking and suggested that this can support the mentoring relationship. For example, Rachel commented:

“I think this has definitely helped because she’s been able to evaluate herself but also justify where and why she should be in that certain place in that certain area.”
(Rachel lines 184-186).

Mary spoke about how scaling can help individuals express or explain themselves when situations can feel overwhelming. Mentors also reflected on how positively mentees embraced the approach and how their experiences of using scaling supported mentees’ confidence.

“I think especially the scaling that we looked at (...) I think that has definitely helped her confidence because she’s able to look at the positives in what she’s doing (...) So that has definitely helped her.” (Rachel lines 56-61).

Participants also reflected on more specific aspects of scaling which they felt were useful through their experiences of using it. Participants reflected on how the setting of small achievable targets was a useful part of scaling which was beneficial for new teachers and supported their confidence in achieving next steps by breaking it down “into those small chunks” (Grace line 185).

“And I went “Just do 1 step” And they’re like “Oh ok, so I don’t need to get to 10 straightaway” And I was like “No you can just move up one number. How are you going to do that?” or “How do you stay at the same point rather than going backwards” and that seemed to work really really well.” (Grace lines 52-56).

Mentors reflected on how scaling provided a discussion tool and provided “a really good conversation starter when you’re giving that feedback for NQTs” (Sarah lines 104-105).

Sarah spoke about how scaling adds focus and can support mentors in not simply offering advice, which is associated with the theme exploring how SF approaches encourage autonomy in new teachers. She also reflected on how scaling promotes positivity and can be used to have positive conversations, even when mentees may have moved down the scale or when there is disparity between the mentor’s and mentee’s assessment of practice.

“I think they’re a 3 and they think they’re a 6 (....) you can have a positive conversation to the disparity between a 3 and a 6 for example.” (Sarah lines 194-195 and 199-200).

Participants spoke about how scaling can support collaboration and how they liked the fact that scaling offered a visual tool to refer to.

“It involved me doing little talking in terms of literally drawing out the line and then just said then just said “Where would you be put on?” (James lines 174-175).

David discussed how scaling is useful as it values an individual’s experience and this helps them move forward.

“...it’s invidious to compare one person’s experience with another, because what they feel is what they feel and we have to recognise that that is their reality. But if we can put it in their personal scale and see that actually it’s not a 10, it’s a 1 or a 2 and they breathe and then they can move on and over. Without that we’re very much stuck at that point.” (David lines 98-102).

4.3.3. Promoting Positivity and Focusing on Strengths

This theme refers to participants’ perceptions regarding the lack of strength-based work in teaching and how SF approaches can support positivity within mentoring practice. Participants noted that conversations can be, *“problem focused as opposed to solution focused”* (Mary lines 5-6) and that teachers can focus on the negatives as opposed to the strengths within their practice.

“We don’t do it. As teachers we do not focus on our strengths. We often don’t recognise they exist.” (David lines 284-285).

Some mentors reflected how there is a lack of strength-based practice within teaching, for example, James stated:

“I think student teachers can go through with so much chucked at them about it not being good enough. I think so often as teachers (...) you can get used to being told “That’s not right, that’s not right, that’s not right.” (James lines 120-123).

Participants expressed how SF thinking is a positive, strength-based approach. They discussed how they, *“like that it had a positive spin on it”* (Eva line 84) and spoke about how SF approaches involve turning or flipping situations on their head to focus on the positives and solutions.

“And I like the idea that if people say “I’m only a 1 at that” it’s turning on its head and saying “What are you doing to get to that 1. What are you doing that’s preventing it from being a zero?” And it’s all positives.” (Paul lines 79-82).

Many participants discussed why they felt that a positive strength-based approach is useful within the mentoring role. James referred to how the approach *“could only result in the mentee feeling more positive about things and feeling actually I can do this and I am going to get the solution”* (lines 188-190). Participants reflected on how the training in SF approaches had supported them to focus on the positives and the impact of this on their practice.

“It helped me frame it in a more, in a pleasant way and I think that’s the upside with this is the fact that it is focusing more on the positives (.....) I think by framing it in a positive way it helps me with that relationship with her as well” (Rachel lines 152-154 and 161-162.)

4.3.4. Encouraging Ownership and Autonomy and Empowering New Teachers

Participants discussed how SF thinking and approaches could promote new teachers’ autonomy and offer a sense of empowerment. Mentors commented on the importance of promoting autonomy within the mentoring relationship and the strength of new teachers devising their own solutions. Participants recognised negatives associated with not allowing mentees autonomy and how directive advice giving *“deskills the teacher”* (Mary line 98).

“if you can find your own way through something with a bit of guidance I think it’s much more powerful than you just mimicking somebody else’s style.” (Mary lines 90-92).

Participants reflected on how SF approaches offer empowerment and ownership for new teachers as well as make discussions more collaborative. They spoke about how the

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techniques and the “*subtle language changes*” (Mark, line 80) supported new teachers’ autonomy and offer mentees control.

“...they take more ownership of that and they are able to identify and focus on things themselves. And probably tell us what they need to improve on...” (Sarah lines 43-45)

Mentors discussed how such approaches can support new teachers to, “*feel more empowered in the decisions that they’ve made*” (James lines 141-142) and reflected on how this supports mentees’ ownership, confidence, self-esteem, their understanding of the type of teacher that they want to be and their reflective skills.

“I think it built her confidence as well because, I think, if I’d just sat there and said you need to do this, you need to do that, she might not even understand why she was doing it...” (Eva lines 96-98)

“...by getting them to lead themselves to the answers it will help them to see the type of teacher that they want to be or the type of lessons they want to deliver or how they want to structure it or things like that.” (James lines 146-149).

Participants discussed how due to the nature of the support new teachers receive, it is important for them to “*take control*” (Sarah line 52) in reflecting on their practice during their NQT year in order for them to practice independently as a qualified teacher and, “*cut the apron strings and emerge from that into themselves*” (David lines 228-229). Alongside this, mentors reflected on how solution-focused approaches could offer new teachers confidence in coming up with their own solutions following their NQT year and how they could continue to use the tools autonomously.

“....So in a few years, into her teaching, if she comes up with a problem or notices something isn’t going right when she reflects she could think about what questions I asked and come up with her own solutions.” (Eva lines 438-440)

Although participants discussed the importance of promoting new teacher autonomy, mentors also recognised that this can be difficult to do and that there are times when mentoring needs to be more directive and therefore more limiting on new teachers’ autonomy. This is

explored further in the theme referencing the need to use a range of approaches in mentoring, including more directive approaches (see 4.5.2).

4.3.5. Relieving Responsibility of Mentors

Participants expressed how mentoring is a responsibility and how SF approaches can support to relieve this responsibility as a mentor by emphasising new teachers' autonomy. It is therefore linked to the theme of encouraging ownership in new teachers although with the primary focus on the mentors. Participants reported how, within mentoring, mentors can do all of the *"legwork"* (Paul line 142) and have the responsibility of ensuring teachers' progress – *"the ownership you always feel's on you"* (Sarah lines 260-262). They referred to how mentoring is, *"a lot of responsibility because you're almost expected to make them a fully trained teacher"* (Sarah lines 311-312). Participants reflected on the pressure of providing answers and feeling accountable for mentees. Sarah discussed how this responsibility can be detrimental and is associated with feelings of guilt and failure, particularly if mentees do not pass their induction year.

"No one's going 'I'm a mentor. It's a really important job' because that means if that person fails, does that then mean you're a failure because they failed?" (Sarah lines 344-345).

Participants referred to how SF approaches have resulted in a "shift" which relieved the responsibility and pressure they feel in terms of providing answers or holding the accountability for new teachers' progress. Some participants expressed how it had given them more confidence in not holding all the responsibility and allowing NQTs the opportunity to practice autonomy, for example Eva stated, *"you'd feel more confident in yourself as a mentor to let them have the reins as such."* (lines 246-247). Mentors spoke positively about this change for both themselves and mentees and in terms of the collaboration in the mentoring relationship.

“I’ve in the past kinda put a lot of pressure and go I need to have the answers for them (...) and I’ve kind of gone well actually they need to be doing it to develop (...) so yeah I’ve put more on them so that I can step back a little bit which is quite nice” (Grace lines 142-145 and 147-148).

“And it’s nice to shift the onus...Because you can be in a NQT meeting and you feel like you’re giving and giving. And they sit there and listen. But this gives you the opportunity for it to be a two-way thing which is I think, so much better..” (Sarah lines 289-293).

4.3.6. Mentees Sharing their Ideas is Mutually Beneficial

In line with the principles underpinning SF thinking, participants discussed how new teachers possess their own ideas, skills, strengths and resources. Participants recognised how there is variability in teaching and different ways to be an effective teacher. They expressed how it is mutually beneficial to collaborate to share ideas in mentoring. This included participants referring to what they had learnt or gained from mentoring.

“..that they are seeing things with new eyes and they come up with ideas and with solutions that just wouldn’t occur to me” (David lines 30-32).

Participants also reflected on how SF approaches supported this sharing of ideas and collaboration.

“But I think, for me, I picked up things that she did well that I’m going to take that on board for when I teach (....) And I think through these discussions you pick up more things.” (Eva lines 429-432).

Related to principles underpinning SF approaches, Grace also spoke about how valuing new teachers’ ideas is important in building relationships.

“Some people, they expect them to get on with them and I’m like “But you talk to them like crap” Just showing them the respect because they’re teachers as well. Yes they’re earlier in their career but it doesn’t mean they haven’t got the ideas to take part and share and their ideas are just as valid as everyone else’s.” (Grace lines 309-313).

Although the comments within this theme support the concept that new teachers demonstrate

the ability to devise their own solutions, some participants did raise concerns over new teachers' capability to set their own targets and devise their own solutions to problems which is explored within another theme (see 4.5.4).

4.4. Impact of Training in SF Approaches

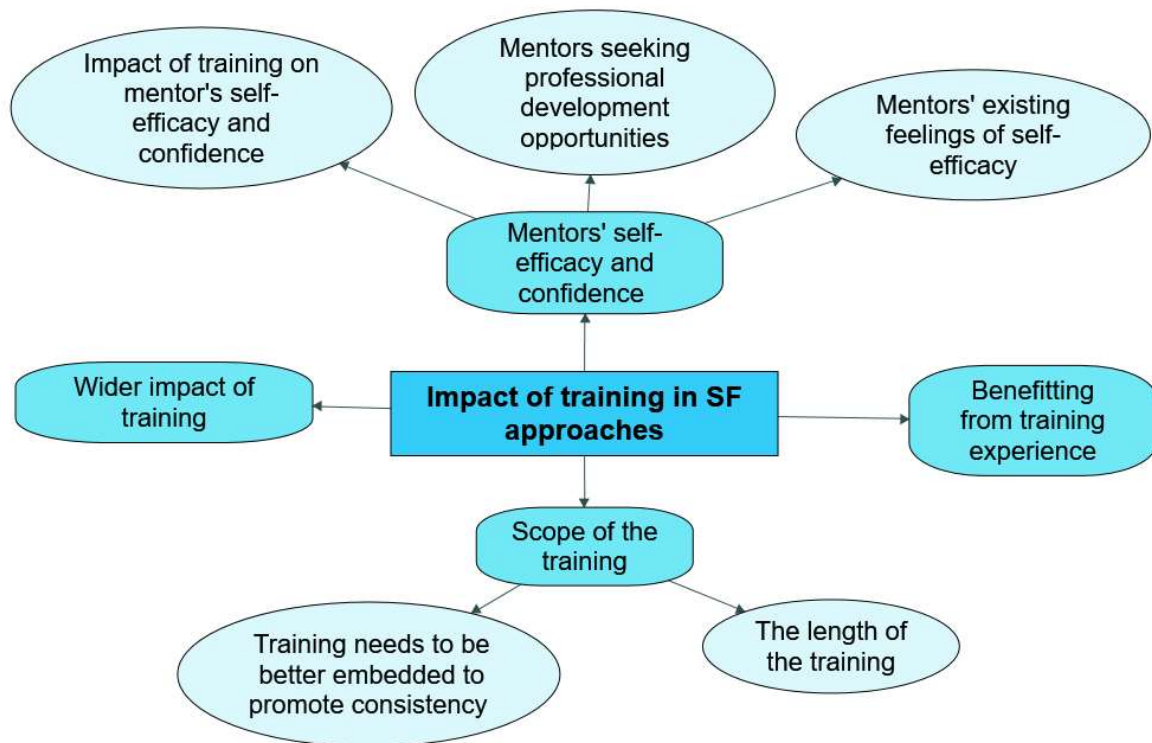


Figure 3: Section of thematic map illustrating themes and subthemes linked to the impact of the training.

This overarching theme includes themes which explore how the training in SF approaches impacted on participants. It includes themes related to how participants experienced the training, and the impact on their confidence as a mentor.

4.4.1. Mentors' Self-Efficacy and Confidence

Self-efficacy refers to a mentor's perceptions that they are able to be successful within their mentoring role. The theme explores comments reflecting mentors' existing feelings of self-efficacy; mentors' motivation to seek professional development opportunities; and how the training in SF approaches impacted on mentors' reported confidence and self-efficacy.

4.4.1.1. Mentors' Existing Feelings of Self-Efficacy

Participants' comments reflected mixed views regarding their existing levels of confidence and self-efficacy in their mentoring role. Some participants expressed how they felt quite confident in their role, this appeared to be related to experience and training.

"Yes, because I think all it does, I mean I'm fairly confident in it anyway I'm used to it I know what I'm doing." (Mary lines 208-209).

When discussing their practice, other mentors appeared to question the strength of some of their practice, referring to being unsure of their practice or finding the experience hard.

"I didn't feel going into it that she necessarily was getting the best from me in terms of getting her to, not push herself out of her comfort zone, but just to get the most out of our time basically." (James lines 62-64).

4.4.1.2. Mentors Seeking Professional Development Opportunities

Mentors raised that they were interested in seeking more professional development opportunities which would offer them new or different ways of approaching their mentoring sessions. This is linked to the concept of self-efficacy as it suggests that mentors feel that they want to further develop their practice in order to feel more successful within their, or their schools', mentoring practice.

"I went in hoping for new ideas, hoping for different approaches." (David lines 243-244).

Linked to this, some mentors also referred to how they felt previous training they had received had not provided them with techniques or approaches to use within mentoring sessions. This could have influenced their feelings of self-efficacy within their mentoring role.

“It just almost went through the procedural side of it more than anything else (...) It didn’t really give me approaches to use.” (Grace lines 117-118 and 120).

4.4.1.3. Impact of Training on Mentors’ Self-Efficacy and Confidence

Subtheme 4.4.1.1 explored the variability in mentor’s existing feelings of self-efficacy and confidence. This subtheme explores how the training impacted on mentors’ self-efficacy and confidence. Not all participants reported that it altered their level of confidence in their mentoring role, although they did feel it had provided new tools.

“I don’t think it’s necessarily altered my confidence, it’s just given me other options, other ways to do it which I like because one size doesn’t fit all in many parts of life” (Paul lines 150-151).

Some mentors also expressed that the training provided validation in the sense that some of the tools they were already using were linked to the SF approach and so the training offered support for their current practice.

“.....I don’t know I just feel like sometimes you are probably doing it already without even realising. So it’s actually nice just to know that you’re doing something well already. Like you’ve already done some parts of it.” (Eva lines 404-406).

Some participants also reported that having new approaches and tools influenced the level of confidence they felt in their mentoring role, or with aspects of their mentoring role.

“So the fact is I feel a lot more confident because I’ve got more tools behind me to help her.” (Rachel lines 188-189).

“So yeah, I feel a lot more confident being able to tackle difficult situations and conversations with them from the off now I think (...) When they’re not doing well I

feel like a little bit more accomplished that I can go in there and do it now, yeah.
(Mark lines 88-89 and 94-96).

Grace spoke about how the training meant she was more willing to try a different approach and how it was confidence-building in the sense that, *“I could see that automatic or immediate kind of impact and say ‘ah this is great, I can do this’”* (Grace lines 172-173).

Rachel also reported that her increased confidence impacted on her interactions with her mentee.

“And I think for her, she’s definitely seen that confidence because she’s been a lot more open in terms of what it is that she’s talking about.” (Rachel lines 171-173).

4.4.2. Benefitting from Training Experience

Participants expressed varied ideas about the training and which aspects of the experience they had enjoyed or not enjoyed. One common feature related to benefitting from the opportunity to discuss practice and network with other mentors. This was perceived to be beneficial and influenced what participants felt they gained from the training.

“I felt like once I went to there, I had my student for a few weeks after and I thought that worked, I felt more confident doing it because I was talking to other teachers seeing what they’d done so like the networking side of it.” (Eva lines 320-323).

“Yeah that really helped. Talking to other people, finding out what they were doing (..) It was really nice to meet other people, discuss how you would use it or not and then having those chats and then being able to role play....” (Sarah 270-273).

“...a lot of it was the conversations with the other staff that had signed up as well and sort of listening to their experiences. As I say, I’m fairly new to the idea of it so it was just listening to experienced people, what would they do in this situation.” (Mark lines 56-59).

Although the opportunity to discuss practice was positively received, some participants expressed that they would have liked more time to do this as explored within the theme relating to the scope of the training (see 4.4.4.).

4.4.3. *Wider Impact of Training*

This theme includes participants' comments regarding how pervasive the impact of the training was on their practice. It explores the wider impact of the training in terms of participants' comments regarding disseminating the training to other staff and to other areas of practice outside of their mentoring role. This theme is therefore related to comments capturing how participants plan to continue using SF approaches in their mentoring role explored within theme 4.3.2.

Most participants spoke about how SF approaches are relevant for a range of staff and pupils within school. As Mary stated:

"So specifically I have found it a very useful tool in lots of spheres, not just of in the concept of mentoring the student because a lot of what I do is with teachers and parents and children. So I could use it across all areas." (Mary lines 22-24).

Many participants felt that these approaches would be appropriate and beneficial for established teachers and student teachers, as well as NQTs.

"Well it's supporting people whether they're a NQT or a student or even another colleague you know. There might be a teacher who would benefit from that approach in terms of whether they're doubting themselves on a particular area....." (Paul lines 92-94).

Most participants reflected on how these approaches could be used with pupils they teach. As Rachel reflected, *"not only has it helped me in terms of mentoring but it's also helped me in terms of being a teacher as well"* (Rachel lines 407-408). Some participants offered examples of how they had used the approaches with pupils within school.

"I've used some of it with my children getting them to look at it and be more reflective for themselves as well. So I've used it in class." (Grace lines 193-194).

Mark also spoke about how he had adopted these approaches, in particular the scaling question, in meetings with parents. Some participants expressed how they had used these

approaches to support themselves.

“I’ve used that one myself since if I’ve got a particular thing I think how would I know that has stopped or that it’s improved so that you can start to pitch up those small things...” (Mary lines 129-131).

Some participants reported how they had communicated with other members of senior staff within the school regarding the training, in terms of developing its use within school or how they had shared it with other members of staff.

“And I was telling our assistant head about it and he was saying we could do it as a staff meeting to the other staff as well.” (Grace lines 173-174).

“... I then thought ‘Well, I could then pass that onto a member of my department who’s got the other NQT and that has worked wonders.’” (Rachel lines 112-113).

4.4.4. Scope of the Training

This theme reflects participants’ thoughts regarding the scope of the training. This theme includes participants’ reflections on how the nature and length of the training impacted on what they gained from the training; and how this training could be better embedded to allow for consistency across mentoring practices.

4.4.4.1. The Length of the Training

There was variation in how mentors experienced the training. Although some mentors felt the sessions to be well timed, others expressed that they would have liked more time and that this had an impact on their experience of the training and what they gained from it. This is linked to the theme of benefitting from the training experience (4.4.2) which highlights how participants benefitted from the opportunity to discuss practice within the training sessions. Participants noted that more time for these discussions and practice, as well as the opportunity to explore case studies during the session, would have been beneficial for them.

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“As I said I think if we’d had more time to role play and to practice doing it, that would have been useful.” (Paul, lines 165-166).

Mark described the experience of the training as *“a bit of a whirlwind”* (Mark line 269) and impacted on what he gained from the training.

“I felt if I was to reflect on the course it was almost like I left absolutely shattered because I’m thinking “I’ve taken this on and I’ve just done so much” and I haven’t taken half of it in because I’m just like trying to write it all down and listen and engage in conversation and I’m just “Oh we’re at the end. OK” (Mark lines 256-260).

Grace also referred to the gap between the training and using approaches in practice and how she needed to consolidate the learning from the training over time. This could have been influenced by the length and nature of the training.

“But using that, the questioning where we were given a load of examples, getting that in my brain so I can use it more consistently, because I was a bit like ‘What am I meant to say?’ at some points. So I just need to get used to the language of it” (Grace 267-270).

4.4.4.2. Training needs to be Better Embedded to Promote Consistency

Some participants raised concerns regarding the lack of consistency within mentoring practice.

“I just think the support is fairly autonomous process depending on whichever school an NQT is at perhaps and maybe there’s not a level playing field.” (Paul lines 192-194).

Related to this, participants discussed how the SF training would benefit from being better embedded to promote consistency across schools and mentors.

“And I think this approach would be great if it was consistent amongst all mentors” (Eva lines 197-198).

This subtheme is linked to theme 4.4.3, as achieving this consistency would involve extensively sharing the training information. However, within this subtheme, participants reflected more on the wider ways in which this training could be delivered or disseminated

which did not only involve them directly informing others about the training they had received. Some participants explored different ways they thought this could be achieved, for example, by it being part of the initial training available for mentors or used within teacher training courses so that new teachers are familiar with the approach. Within the school level, participants spoke about the possibility of video-taping or observing mentoring sessions in which mentors are using SF approaches.

4.5. Mentors' Perceptions of Barriers to Implementing SF Approaches

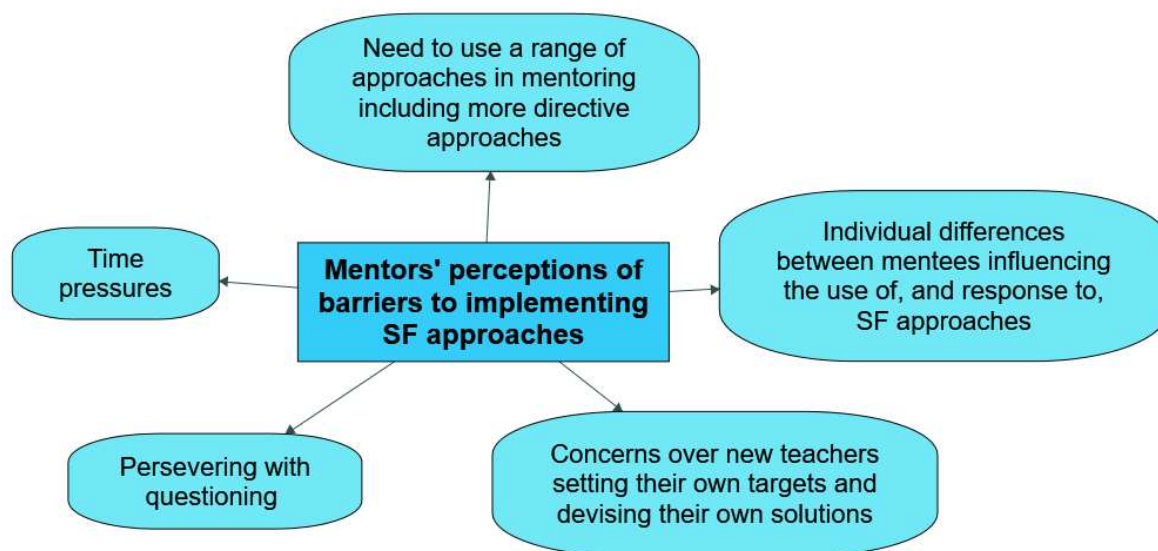


Figure 4: Section of thematic map illustrating themes linked to mentors' perceptions of barriers to implementing SF approaches.

This overarching theme includes themes relating to participants' perceptions of the barriers to implementing SF approaches in practice. This theme includes reference to both barriers participants had experienced when using SF approaches as well as potential problems which may arise in future practice.

4.5.1. Time Pressures

Many participants spoke about the influence of time pressure within mentoring discussions.

Some participants reflected on how this could be a barrier to effectively implement SF approaches.

“I think it relies a lot on regular meetings which I know you have to have anyway but obviously sometimes timetable structure and everything you can’t” (James lines 190-192).

Time was considered to be a systemic problem and therefore not a problem distinct to the implementation of SF approaches.

“But I think that’s with pretty much anything you try to bring into school. Someone will go ‘Haven’t got time to do it’.” (Grace lines 345-346).

Sarah also spoke about how time was a barrier to further developing SF approaches within school and being able to discuss practice.

“The other things I want to try and implement next year as well through some of my CPD. It’s just being able to have those opportunities to discuss it, which I think sometimes we don’t tend to have as teachers” (Sarah, lines 265-268).

Participants also spoke of how time pressure and deadlines may influence the approach they adopt. They reflected on how they sometimes might not have the time to effectively use SF techniques. Within these situations, participants referenced the need to be more directive in offering solutions and therefore this links with the theme below exploring the need to use a range of approaches in mentoring including more directive approaches (4.5.2).

“Sometimes you’re so under time pressure that you haven’t got the time a) to coach properly and sometimes the student just needs to get on and do it.” (Mary lines 176-178).

4.5.2. Need to Use a Range of Approaches in Mentoring Including More Directive Approaches

Mentors discussed how they use a range of different approaches or parts of different approaches within mentoring and how SF approaches would need to be used alongside other approaches.

“But there’s no one tool I think that’s going to be a panacea. You have to adopt a number of approaches.” (David lines 128-129).

Related to using different approaches, many mentors spoke about being aware of, or using, coaching within school. For example, Mary stated, *“So in our school we have a whole philosophy of coaching”* (line 51). Mentors drew distinctions between mentoring and coaching with the two being defined in different ways and associated with different approaches. Some participants also drew similarities between coaching and the SF approaches and referred to the training being *“more like coaching”* (Paul lines 32-33).

“The coach will talk you through to facilitate you to find your own solution. So it is solution focused but I’ve not heard it mentioned like that before (...) So I felt that some of what we were doing on that training was coaching training as opposed to mentoring training.” (Mary lines 57-59 and 68-69).

Distinctions were made between SF approaches and more directive approaches. Many mentors spoke about the need to use more directive approaches with mentoring and the importance of recognising this. Such approaches were often positioned as more limiting to new teachers’ autonomy and therefore this is associated with the theme, ‘Encouraging autonomy and empowering new teachers’ (4.3.4). Using more directive approaches was sometimes associated with time and the need for new teachers to sometimes have to *“just get on with it.”* (Mary line 74). Participants referred to the need for a balance in practice.

“...you have to be flexible as a mentor so I thought it would work and if there is a situation where you need to just go actually you need to do this, it’s fine because you

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need to find that balance between almost the mentoring and coaching isn't it." (Grace lines 92-95).

Despite the recognised need for a balance of approaches, James referred to how it can be difficult to know how to achieve this balance in terms of knowing when to be more directive.

".... so if things need to change where would the cut off in time be to when you say "well no, actually it needs to be" I think I would personally find that hard...." (James lines 219-221).

Mary also referred to the skill involved in knowing when to adopt each approach.

"I think there are times when you can say "Do you know what? There's a really easy solution to that. You just need to do this" (...) And I think it's having the skill to be able to see which is which." (Mary lines 92-95).

Although as previously discussed many mentors spoke positively about how SF approaches relieved responsibility (see 4.3.5), participants also referred to how it can be difficult not to fall into a directive or advice-giving role as a mentor.

"And I think sometimes maybe as mentors we do that. We give our ideas rather than letting them come up with their own solutions." (Eva lines 423-424).

They also discussed how new teachers can position them in an advice-giving role. However, this was also considered to be influenced by individual differences between new teachers in terms of some new teachers being *"very reliant on being told what to do"* (Grace lines 200-201). Such individual differences between new teachers is explored within the theme 4.5.3.

"But equally if my NQT comes to me saying "I want to do this but I don't know how to" (...) Then there is that responsiveness as well." (David lines 194-196).

Alongside being more directive, participants also spoke about the role of constructive criticism, particularly for teacher's progress.

"So I think there's got to be a very fine balance (...) I think sometimes you need that, not negativity in a way, but you need that constructive criticism to help them progress,

otherwise if we're too focused on being positive all the time they'll think that there's nothing that needs to be improved and nothing will be." (Rachel lines 293 and 310-313).

4.5.3. Individual Differences Between Mentees Influencing the Use of, and Response to, SF Approaches

This theme reflects the mentors' views of the differences between new teachers and how this could impact on the use of SF approaches within mentoring relationships. Although within the theme, 'Applying SF techniques within mentoring' participants identified SF approaches which they felt to be appropriate within the mentoring role, they also recognised that the success of these approaches could depend on their mentees. The analysis highlighted the variability mentors perceive in new teachers and how this influences the approaches they adopt within the mentoring sessions. Participants discussed their understanding that different strategies would work for different new teachers and this may change over the course of the year and depending on the focus. They highlighted the need for mentors to be responsive to this. This theme is therefore associated with the theme above exploring the need to use a range of approaches in mentoring. As Mary expressed:

"No I think that the more strategies that you have the better. Because some will work for some and some will work for others and on different times and on different things that you have a focus on at that point." (Mary lines 138 -140).

Alongside this, mentors also recognised that the mentees' responses to the use of SF approaches within their mentoring sessions could also vary and that this would have an impact on how effective the approach would be within the mentoring session.

"Maybe a lot depends on the mentee in some respects because I don't know whether people would clam or would search deeper" (Paul lines 177-178).

"She was almost on the defensive when I asked her, as if I was trying to find something out about it." (Grace lines 212-213).

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In terms of the variability mentors perceive in new teachers, mentors identified different ‘types’ of new teachers and reflected upon how the characteristics of mentees could influence the appropriateness of SF approaches for them. One frequent way in which mentors distinguished between new teachers was related to the level of confidence they perceived the new teacher to possess. Many mentors referred to ‘over-confident’ new teachers and questioned how SF approaches could be adapted for these teachers. This appeared to be particularly problematic when mentors perceived that a mentee’s confidence was not justified in terms of their own assessment of their practice. The extract below highlights a mentor’s concerns regarding the use of SF approaches with new teachers who are ‘over-confident’.

“If you do get someone who is very overconfident because that’s just how they are, it can be very difficult because of the approach if they see themselves as a 10 and you see them as a 5, how do you then say that to them?...and that completely defeats the object of you having this positive outlook...” (Rachel lines 279-283).

Despite mentors discussing mentoring an ‘over-confident’ new teacher and finding this experience difficult and questioning the use of SF approaches for such new teachers, there was still variability in whether SF approaches were thought to be appropriate in this mentoring relationship.

“And also when I have a NQT who perhaps thinks they’re better than they are, I find that difficult sometimes. And I’m hoping this, the solution focused approach will benefit me there.” (Paul lines 17-19).

Related to the concept of confidence of new teachers, some participants expressed how they thought that SF approaches are useful for teachers who they perceived to be self-critical, as the extract below exemplifies:

“.....one would definitely be good for solution focused practice, definitely. She is a very strong teacher, very very strong but she is very hard on herself I think. Very very hard on herself....”(Rachel lines 53-55).

Another individual difference between mentees which participants discussed in relation to SF

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approaches regarded mentees' ability to reflect on their practice. Mentors highlighted that new teachers would need to be able to reflect on their practice to engage in SF techniques. They raised how some new teachers, "*aren't very reflective*" (Grace line 17) and how some new teachers prefer to be directed and told what they need to do. Participants described how mentees may want to be told what to do as they do not want to take responsibility.

"You do get people who just want to be told what to do. And then when they're told what to do and it doesn't work it's not their fault. It's your fault because you told me to do that and that's what I did." (Mary lines 167-169).

There were also mixed views about how well the SF approaches would work with different mentees based on the strength of their teaching. Participants spoke about how SF approaches could be beneficial for both the mentee and mentor when working with new teachers who are struggling or in a "*negative mindset*" (James line 79).

"But I think it would have a massive impact on mentees that are maybe struggling or aren't quite there (...) I think it shows more of an investment in them as opposed to 'We've given up on you. We're just going to tell you how to do it'" (James lines 193-196).

James also spoke about when a new teacher was a 'strong' teacher, then SF approaches were useful.

"I basically as well have had a really strong NQT, so I was hoping, and it has really helped, of ways to try and push her who's already doing really really well." (James lines 55-57).

Despite variability in new teachers, some participants felt that elements of SF approaches could be appropriate and catered to different individuals.

"elements of it will work with everybody but not all of it" (David lines 161-162).

Alongside individual differences, participants also reflected on how differences in individual mentoring relationships are important to consider in implementing SF approaches.

“I guess issue with relationships. It would rely on a relationship where the mentor and mentee do get on well. I think that would be a barrier to it working...” (James lines 209-210).

4.5.4. Concerns over New Teachers Setting their own Targets and Devising their Own

Solutions

Related to the principles underpinning SF approaches, mentors discussed the ability of new teachers to set their own targets and devise their own solutions to problems. Despite some mentors expressing how new teachers possess strengths, resources and ideas and how SF approaches can support them to reflect, assess and evaluate their own progress, participants raised concerns over new teachers' ability to realistically assess their practice. This is also explored within the individual differences theme (4.5.3), in which mentors refer to some mentees appearing over-confident in their perceptions of their teaching abilities. This was frequently captured when discussing the scaling question where some participants referred to new teachers placing themselves higher up the scale than they perceived them to be.

“Because often they'll say, um they have to rate themselves, self-assess, and sometimes they're quite unrealistic and they think they are really outstanding now.” (Mary lines 282-284).

David expressed how it is the role of the mentor to identify areas of development because new teachers can find it difficult to identify these.

“Yes as the mentor I should be spotting where there are areas for development because when they're coming in, they may be at the stage of either conscious incompetence or conscious competence. And either way we should be helping them to see where there are areas for development when perhaps they can't see that themselves.” (David lines 190-194).

David spoke of his concern regarding the appropriateness of solutions that new teachers may come up with.

“Solutions that someone comes up with may be inappropriate for a particular situation. And if I could foresee that there would be problems with that particular

solution further down the line it would be wrong, it would be immoral to allow the person to pursue that” (David lines 334-337).

Rachel discussed how her mentee found it difficult, particularly at the beginning of the year, to come up with varied solutions to problems.

“...like my NQT at the beginning of the year who their solution to every behaviour problem, contact community, contact community...” (Rachel lines 230-231)

Grace also commented on how, at the beginning of the academic year, she would have been more concerned about a mentee’s ability to be autonomous in finding and implementing solutions.

“But yeah it would be different from September I think because I wouldn’t have known him at all and if I just go “Off you go” I don’t know which way he would go. So yeah it would be very different.” (Grace lines 166-168).

4.5.5. Persevering with Questioning

As discussed many participants reflected positively on the questioning techniques associated with solution focused approaches (4.3.2.1). However, associated with this, participants spoke about the need to persevere with questioning or, *“not giving up the relentlessness of the whole approach”* (Paul line 172) when using SF approaches in mentoring. They reflected on the impact of this for both mentors and mentees. Participants reflected on how the importance of persevering with questioning could be a barrier to SF approaches working in practice. For example, Grace stated:

“ The only way I’d see it not working or if people kind of give up half way and then give the answers anyway, from the mentors point of view if they suddenly go ‘Oh you know what, just do this’. I think the student would realise and would just go ‘Well if I keep saying ‘I don’t know, I don’t know’ they’ll just give me the answer in the end.” (Grace lines 301-305).

Participants also highlighted challenges within this and discussed how aspects of the approach may feel uncomfortable and be difficult for both the mentor and mentee. Eva

reflected on how she had found this difficult within the training although spoke about her mentee finding it more comfortable over time.

“I think it was like you were asking them questions so “Why do you think that?” And it was quite hard when we were role playing like how to keep it up because you just want a break (...) And I used that with her a bit. I think she seemed to like it. She found it uncomfortable at first. But I think it is a thing that you’ll get used to if you use it every meeting or every observation” (Eva lines 179-185).

Similarly, Grace also spoke about how these questioning approaches could initially feel uncomfortable for mentees.

“He didn’t like it when I just kept saying “What else?” to start with but he got used to me doing it and then he almost pre-empted it because he knew that I wasn’t going to just go, “do this, this and this.” (Grace lines 73-76).

Associated with the need to persevere with questioning and the challenges this may present, James and Grace spoke about the mentor having to not be afraid of silence and how this could be uncomfortable with mentoring for both the mentor and mentee.

“.....with these conversations and this approach you’ve got to be willing particularly as the mentor to just wait it out sometimes and not be afraid of a long pause or not be afraid of silence I guess....” (James lines 104-106).

4.6. Summary

The thematic analysis identified three overarching themes, fifteen themes and seven subthemes. Overall, the participants spoke positively about the role of SF approaches within mentoring. They perceived both the principles of SF thinking and specific SF techniques to be relevant to their mentoring relationships. They identified how the positive and solution-based focus was useful within the mentoring role in terms of supporting new teachers’ confidence and development. Participants reflected on the role of autonomy and ownership for new teachers. They recognised the importance of offering new teachers autonomy for their own professional development and perceived SF approaches to support them to offer

new teachers autonomy. Similarly, many mentors referred to the responsibility they feel as a mentor and how the SF training benefitted them in terms of not feeling the pressure to hold all of the accountability and allow new teachers more ownership over their own progress. However in terms of barriers to this, participants also considered that there is a need to use a range of approaches in mentoring, including more directive approaches, in order to support new teachers. They also referred to how new teachers can position them within an advice-giving role. There were varied views regarding new teachers setting their own targets and devising their own solutions. Although some participants expressed concerns regarding the ability of new teachers to do this, they also offered examples of new teachers holding their own ideas and resources.

Prior to the training, most participants were not aware of SF approaches and, for some, the training affected their feelings of confidence and self-efficacy. Participants expressed varying levels of confidence in their mentoring role. Many felt that the training had increased their confidence in aspects of their practice through offering new tools which offered structure to their mentoring sessions. As a result of the training, many participants had begun to use SF approaches in their practice and were able to reflect on their experience of using them. They spoke positively about the impact these approaches had, and reflected on how they would continue to use them. Scaling was referred to by all participants and this appeared to be the technique which most participants had used in practice. Participants identified other areas of their teaching practice in which they hoped to use SF approaches, outside of their mentoring role. One key theme which arose when discussing using SF approaches related to individual differences between mentees. Mentors felt that these practices could vary in suitability depending on the mentee and may be more difficult to use when they had “over-confident” new teachers.

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In terms of the training experience, participants identified that the time and space to reflect together and share ideas was an important feature of the training which impacted on what they had gained from the training. Some participants felt that they would have benefitted from more time to do this and the short length of the training sessions limited the scope of the training in terms of their depth of knowledge. They also reported a lack of consistency in mentoring practice and subsequently discussed how the training would be more effective if it was embedded more thoroughly in mentor practice. Other identified barriers to implementing SF approaches within mentoring were the time for mentoring meetings and acknowledging that some mentors and mentees may find aspects of the approaches uncomfortable.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

The data analysis elicited a number of key themes; this chapter will begin by relating these to the initial research questions. It will consider how this research is associated with existing literature and explore how the findings relate to relevant psychological theory and the context and discourse around school-based mentoring. The limitations of the research will be outlined followed by a review of the implications for future research and EP practice. The discussion will include plans for the dissemination of the findings and researcher's reflections on the process of research. A summary of the research and its implications will conclude this chapter.

5.2. Discussion of Research Questions

To explore the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to use SF approaches in their mentoring role, this research sought to address four research questions. The themes identified through the analysis can be used to address these questions.

5.2.1. What are NQT mentors' perceptions of the appropriateness of solution-focused approaches for their mentoring role?

The findings suggest that, overall, mentors perceived solution-focused approaches to be appropriate within their mentoring role. Mentors discussed how the principles underpinning SF approaches and skills and specific tools associated with SF approaches were useful within mentoring. It was considered that SF approaches have the potential to support aspects of mentoring which were perceived to be important and valued, including promoting

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positivity and new teachers' autonomy and the task of setting, reviewing and reflecting on targets in order to monitor progress. Mentors did not perceive anything included within the SF training to be inappropriate or not relevant to their mentoring role. Any concerns around applicability arose from perceived individual differences of new teachers as opposed to the pertinence of the overall approach (see RQ4). The appropriateness of SF approaches is further supported by mentors' positive experiences of using specific SF techniques and tools, such as questioning techniques and scaling (see RQ3). Mentors also reported that they had shared the training with other members of staff; indicating they perceived it to be both appropriate and useful.

Mentors' responses demonstrated the importance of strength-based approaches within mentoring alongside a recognition that these can sometimes be lacking in teacher development. As a result, the usefulness of the approach pertained to changing mentors' perceptions and approach to the mentoring role; with implications for both mentee and mentor. Mentors identified how SF approaches could support mentees' feelings of positivity and motivation, encourage new teachers' empowerment and promote their autonomy. Mentors suggested exposure to SF approaches could support new teachers' problem-solving ability and confidence and offer them tools and skills which would support their independent practice following the NQT year.

Some mentors expressed the responsibility they felt regarding ensuring new teachers' progress and feeling accountable in terms of their development needed to pass their induction year. Some mentors expressed how this can create feelings of pressure and result in feelings of failure and guilt if new teachers appear to be struggling within their teaching role. Some mentors perceived SF approaches promoting new teachers' ownership created a positive shift which relieved their feelings of responsibility as well as benefiting mentees. Additionally, promoting a collaborative partnership relieved the pressure that mentors could feel to provide

answers. The training provided some mentors with the confidence to let mentees “*have the reins*” and provided validation for mentees possessing more ownership over their own development.

Whilst SF approaches were deemed appropriate and useful as a whole there were situations for which they are not perceived to be the most helpful approach. This is understandable given the complexity of the role of mentorship and individual differences. Mentors highlighted the need to use a flexible repertoire of approaches and suggested that alongside SF approaches, more direct approaches involving instruction giving were necessary to use, with a balance in approach. The role of constructive criticism was also postulated to be an essential aspect of effective mentoring, in terms of supporting new teachers’ development. Some mentors raised concerns regarding new teachers’ ability to set their own targets, assess their own progress and development and devise their own solutions, particularly at the beginning of their NQT year.

5.2.2. How did participation in solution-focused training impact on NQT mentors’ self-efficacy?

Overall, the findings suggest that mentors perceive that training in SF approaches had some influence on their feelings of confidence and self-efficacy. There was wide variation in mentors’ feelings of confidence regarding their mentoring role and this was seemingly associated with experience and previous training. Another explanation for this variation could be ambiguity within what defines successful mentoring. Comments from mentors suggested different indicators of successful mentoring practice which were used to evaluate their effectiveness within the role. These included new teachers’ progress regarding the Teaching Standards, new teachers’ ability to manage classrooms, how teachers were challenged in terms of their practice and professional development, the fluency of their mentoring meetings

and the strengths of the mentoring relationship. These diverse perceived measures associated with mentoring success highlight an issue in terms of development and maintenance of self-efficacy beliefs in mentoring. Shifts in mentors' conceptualisation of the mentoring role relating to perceived feelings of responsibility and new teachers' ownership (see RQ1 discussion). This could have implications for mentors' self-efficacy by changing how successful mentoring is measured. Mentors could have moved away from measuring their success as a mentor against new teachers' practice and progress towards how well they provided a space for reflection within the mentoring session. This would enable a measure of self-efficacy which is more directly within mentors' perceived control.

Although not all participants reported changes in confidence, those who did report changes in levels of confidence in aspects of their mentoring role attributed this to SF approaches offering new tools or techniques which could be utilised within mentoring practice. This could impact on changes in self-efficacy beliefs if mentors perceive their previous training opportunities did not well equip them with strategies to use within mentoring. Participants referred to how the structure, questioning, language and specific strategies associated with SF approaches supported their confidence in feeling able to effectively utilise the time within mentoring sessions and tackle situations they perceived to be difficult. This could influence how mentors' perceive their performance within mentoring sessions and their self-efficacy beliefs.

5.2.3. What are the experiences of NQT mentors using solution-focused strategies in their mentoring practices?

Mentors discussed their experiences of using SF approaches within mentoring. The analysis revealed that SF approaches influenced NQT mentors' practice through offering new approaches, language and ideas. The findings suggest that for some mentors the principles

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underpinning SF thinking altered their mind-set and conceptualisation of mentoring and shifted discussions from a problem saturated discourse. Some mentors discussed how their experiences of using SF approaches resulted in a shift in habits or automatic process they recognised they had adopted within mentoring, such as just giving mentees the answer and framing questions in terms of problems encountered. One mentor also identified that through using this approach, mentoring felt more of a “*supportive role*” instead of a directive, instruction giving role.

Mentors reflected on using specific SF techniques and tools and reported positive experiences of using these. Although mentors reported needing to get used to “*the language of it*” the training was considered to have broadly developed their questioning skills. This increased understanding of questioning techniques was considered useful in terms of engaging and involving the mentee, promoting reflection and supporting new teachers’ thinking. Techniques such as the miracle question and coping questions were specifically identified by some mentors as useful in situations where new teachers felt overwhelmed.

Participants unequivocally identified scaling as being useful. It was perceived that scaling supports new teachers’ to reflect on their progress and supports the development and maintenance of a positive mentoring relationship. Mentors reported contexts in which they found scaling useful (e.g. assessment mentoring meetings) and discussed how scaling and the associated questioning provided a useful framework for collaborative discussions. They noted how in these discussions new teachers took the lead and how this framework supported them to not fall into advice-giving. They reflected on how the setting of incremental, achievable targets within scaling supported their practice.

Overall, there was variability in experiences in terms of mentees’ responses to these approaches. Some mentors reflected on how their mentees had positively embraced the approach and felt it had supported their mentees’ confidence. However, mentors did discuss

more difficult experiences in using the approach with certain mentees. They attributed this to individual differences between mentees with some mentees showing a preference for being instructed or showing reluctance to engage in the approach.

5.2.4. What do mentors perceive as the barriers and enabling influences in implementing solution-focused approaches in their NQT mentoring role?

The analysis revealed factors perceived to be enabling or constraining in implementing SF approaches within mentoring. Theme 4.5 explores mentors' perceptions of barriers to implementing SF approaches. This theme includes contextual constraints surrounding the role of mentoring, such as time, as well as issues which could arise in using the approach based on personal and professional attributes. Mentors did not explicitly identify enabling influences other than when findings analysed under barriers were positively worded, for example, more time. Interpretation, however, revealed contextual and individual enabling factors, such as mentors' positive reactions to the potential of the training.

One enabling influence supporting mentors to implement SF approaches was the structure of the training providing the opportunity for discussions which were identified as beneficial by all participants. They raised how this space supported their understanding of the approach, offered time to practice and develop confidence in the tools and provided the opportunity to learn from each other. Mentors' positive reactions were an enabling factor, influencing mentors' enthusiasm to initiate using the approaches in different areas (e.g. teaching) where they perceived it to be appropriate. Discussing the training with other members of school staff can also be identified as enabling participants to implement SF approaches, this is linked to the idea of 'school culture'.

In terms of barriers to implementing SF approaches, constraints on time was the most frequently mentioned factor. The point of the year in which the training was held was

identified as a possible contextual factor which could influence implementation. Another barrier identified by some participants was the limited length of the training and lack of follow-up support or opportunities to consolidate learning from the training. Other barriers identified by mentors related to the personal and professional attributes of both the mentor and the mentee. Several mentors identified the mentor as having to not be afraid of silence when utilising SF approaches, and mentor discomfort with this aspect could influence implementation. The new teachers' ability to reflect on their practice was also identified as a factor affecting implementation. Mentors highlighted that some new teachers "*aren't very reflective*" and can prefer to be directed and may not engage with the approach in a way which is needed for success. Although there was discrepancy between different mentors' viewpoints, there was some agreement in the approach being more suitable for teachers who doubted their ability or were perceived as self-critical.

5.3. Existing Literature Links

This section explores how the findings relate to existing literature including research reviewed in Chapter 2. Alongside this research, practitioners have reported ways in which SF approaches can be utilised within educational settings (e.g. Durrant 1995; Redpath & Harker, 1999; Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995). Additionally, solution-oriented approaches are considered well established within EP work (Harker, Dean & Monsen, 2016) and there is literature that concerns the development of solution-oriented work with schools. The literature search terms focused on SF approaches as opposed to solution-oriented search terms. Similarly to SF thinking, Solution Oriented theory (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989) and solution-oriented approaches have drawn from, and been influenced by, the work of deShazer and colleagues and SFBT (Harker et al., 2016). Ioan Rees outlines a solution-oriented model for EP practice (Rees, 2008) and developed the Sycol Solution-Oriented School Programme

(Sycol, 2007) which uses solution-oriented principles and approach to provide a framework for whole-school development. These programmes and associated commentaries highlight how training related to solution-oriented practice is evident within schools. Although the development of SF approaches and solution-oriented cultures within schools has been explored, literature related specifically to NQT mentoring appears limited. The researcher was interested in looking specifically at the relationship between NQTs and NQT mentors, however, it is acknowledged that there are established solution-oriented programmes for schools as a whole, involving staff and therefore new teachers and their mentors.

5.3.1. Mentoring and SF approaches

The research included in the literature review highlighted potential problems which can occur within mentoring. These included mentors providing a lack of support, mentors being controlling, mentees' autonomy being restricted, and new teachers not being sufficiently challenged in terms of their reflective practice and professional development (Harrison et al., 2006; Newman, 2010). The findings within this research suggest that mentors perceive some of these factors, such as a restriction of autonomy, to be detrimental to the mentoring relationship. They perceive value in SF approaches and how they can facilitate new teachers' ownership, empower new teachers, support them to develop their own teaching style and develop mentees' confidence.

The findings indicate that mentors perceived SF approaches to be supportive of many of the factors of successful mentorship identified within the literature review including promoting reciprocity (see Nolan, 2017) reflection (Certo, 2005b; Nolan, 2017), recognising and valuing new teachers' strengths (Martin & Rippon, 2003; Nolan, 2017); and setting, agreeing and reviewing targets and self-evaluation for mentees (Harrison et al., 2006; Lingdren, 2005; Martin & Rippon, 2003). Similarly to the mentors' reflections in Certo

(2005a), mentors recognised the importance of fostering mentees' reflections in finding their own solutions to support them to become more independent practitioners. In terms of target-setting, Martin & Rippon (2003) suggested that mentees can possess a lack of confidence in being able to assess their own progress and development. Although this did not seem to be a shared reflection by mentors included within this research, they did raise concerns regarding new teachers' ability to assess their own progress and set realistic targets.

Similarly to this research, research by Stanulis & Ames (2009) supported the use of mentor training in providing mentors with language and specific strategies to facilitate teacher empowerment and confidence, and also found that mentors perceived the need to adopt different approaches to meet the needs of different mentees. The findings suggest that mentors possess some awareness of times when they have struggled to respect new teachers' ideas and tried to connect them to their ways of teaching. Research has demonstrated examples of mentors which are focused on new teachers emulating their teaching style (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). However, although some mentors referred to "*habits*" of providing answers, solutions and ideas with the intention of helping, they also recognised an awareness of this and the value of new teachers' taking ownership.

5.3.2. Individual differences between mentees

The findings of this research highlight that mentors perceive differences between new teachers in terms of their professional development, skills and personal attributes. The need to be responsive and adaptive within mentoring was a key theme in the research reviewed in Chapter 1 (Nolan, 2017; Ginkel et al., 2016). The findings indicate that many mentors recognised the need for mentoring approaches to be individualised according to the mentee.

Alongside differences between individuals, within the findings of this research and other literature, there is a recognition of needing to use different approaches within the same

mentoring relationship due to individuals' changing needs or the area of focus. The conceptual model offered by Daloz (1999) in Certo (2005a) indicates that appropriate levels of support and challenge should be offered to new teachers. Certo (2005a) identifies key features associated with the concepts of support and challenge which highlights the range of techniques involved in effective mentoring, from reassurance, sharing of resources and guiding classroom management to inviting experimentation and challenging mentees to engage in different perspectives. The findings of this research suggest that mentors hold different priorities for mentoring depending on a range of factors. Mentors also recognised the need for an evolving mentoring practice utilising a range of approaches which are implemented at certain points. The findings suggest that mentors' reflections regarding the time of the year or stage of professional development when SF approaches could be most beneficial show some consistency with mentees' reflections reported by Hallam et al., (2012) which indicated that, over time, new teachers desired and prioritised increased collaboration to increase their confidence and autonomy.

5.3.3. Self-efficacy

Similarly to the research included in the literature review there was disparity between individual mentors' feelings of confidence regarding their mentoring role. This research broadly supported the findings reported within the literature review that indicated mentors desire further professional development opportunities with more focused attention on developing mentor questioning skills (Certo, 2005a; Langdon, 2011). As identified in the literature review, the lack of specific professional development opportunities for mentors can impact on their confidence. This research adds further support to the importance of development opportunities which offer practical strategies and differing techniques to use within mentoring (e.g. Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Stanulis et al., 2014).

Orsdemir and Yildirim (2020) postulate that the lack of training opportunities to develop skills underpinning mentoring impacts on feelings of confidence due to self-evaluations of preparedness. Literature exploring self-efficacy explains how perceived preparedness has been theoretically associated with the development of self-efficacy as it is the feeling of being prepared which is important in the development of confidence in ones' ability to perform a behaviour (Giallo & Little, 2003).

The analysis provided insight into how training can influence self-efficacy and feelings of competence through offering new approaches for mentors to use. This supports existing research indicating that mentor development can increase mentors' confidence and their feelings of competence as mentors (Nolan, 2017). The findings also highlighted how mentors reported they benefitted from the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon their mentoring practice. This supports the research by Stanulis and Ames (2009) and Kilburg and Hancock (2006) and could partly explain how mentors' self-efficacy beliefs may have been influenced through engaging in the SF training. This may be particularly pertinent given the assertion by Ginkel et al., (2016) that mentors frequently work in isolation and there are limited opportunities to learn from the mentoring practices of peers.

5.3.4. Factors influencing mentoring

This research, in line with the critical realistic stance, acknowledges the complexity of an intervention and tries to develop an understanding of "What works for whom under what circumstances?" (Edwards et al., 2014, p.39). Literature highlights that availability of time and the frequency of contact are related to the success of the mentoring relationship (e.g. Fletcher, Strong & Villar, 2008; Heilbronn et al., 2002). However, in line with the findings of this research, the time needed for mentoring sessions has been identified as a difficulty within mentoring (Heilbronn et al., 2002; Hobson et al., 2009; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006).

The idea of ‘school culture’ which was considered in relation to the enabling influences and barriers to implementation is established in existing literature. Heilbronn et al., (2002) noted that school culture can influence mentee support and how mentors are valued. Within a meta-analysis, Aspfors and Fransson (2015) assert that factors including the moral support of leadership and colleagues can influence the application of knowledge gained from mentor education.

5.4. Links to Theory

As outlined in Chapter 1, this research is underpinned by Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and SF approaches (de Shazer, 1985).

The researcher proposed how the foundation of strength-based mentoring is aligned with developmental and educative mentoring (see Chapter 1). They both involve a focus on individual growth and self-affirmation with NQTs coming to an understanding of their experience (including challenges and accomplishments) on their own terms. Within this research, the principles of SF thinking form the foundation of the research aims and design. Therefore, the findings are inextricably interwoven with SF theory and offer support for the perceived applicability of this theory to the mentoring role. Elements of SF theory have been discussed in relationship to the findings with regards to features of SF thinking which mentors perceive to be useful within the mentoring role. Generally, SF approaches were perceived positively by school-based mentors and were embedded within their mentoring practice. Some participants implemented SF approaches pervasively across their practice and referred to SF as a ‘*mindset*’. This highlights how a strength-based intervention, through social interactions and building relationships, could influence the development of school culture.

This section explores other theoretical links to develop a better understanding of the findings, although links to SF approaches and Positive Psychology are included throughout the following sections.

5.4.1. Professional development and conceptions of mentoring

Mentoring is underpinned by psychological theories relating to learning and development. These include neo-Vygotskian and social-cultural theories (e.g. Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976; Wertsch, 1991), reflective practice (e.g. Schön, 1983; Zeichner, 1994) and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The importance of engaging in shared dialogue and reflection on practice is based on constructivist principles that individuals are active in their own meaning-making and develop personal meaning from individual experience and experiences with others (Erickson, 2010). This involves a process of reflection in line with assertions by Schön (1987) which emphasise the role of critical reflection in addressing complex problems arising in practice.

Mentors can draw on both instrumental and developmental conceptions of mentoring (see Chapter 1) simultaneously (Ginkel et al., 2015). Versatility in mentoring involves being able to use directive as well as non-directive skills (Ginkel et al., 2016), both receiving mentees' initiations and also guiding and initiating conversations. The findings from this research support the suggestion that mentors draw from different mentoring modes and highlighted mentors' recognition of this. Mentors appeared to dichotomise the relationship between SF approaches and directive approaches through stating the need to use both. The researcher proposed that SF approaches fit with developmental conceptions of mentoring and thus aimed to give strategies for mentors to use when working from this frame. Mentors reported how SF approaches support principles of educative and developmental mentoring

through enabling mentees to set goals, reflect on practice and evidence and have their ideas listened to and valued in a collaborative mentoring style.

The need for working within an instrumental conception and offering practical advice has been noted, particularly due to the emotionality and challenges of starting as a teacher (Haggarty & Postlethwaithe, 2012; Hobson, 2017). Considering the difficulties which can be experienced by new teachers, it is understandable that mentors within this research highlighted the need to include more directive mentoring approaches utilising their experience in pedagogical practice and knowledge of school policy and procedures. Such factors are likely to mean the focus is on new teachers ‘fitting in’ which could limit the use of SF approaches. Perhaps mentors perceive SF would not be appropriate when using a more instrumental conception of mentoring. However, the need to adapt approaches is recognised within SF models as Marek et al., (1994) state regarding their SF supervision model “depending on the supervisee’s stated goals and their believed ability to reach them, the supervisor will simultaneously integrate the solution focused model with an educational component” (Marek et al., 1994, p.59). This research aimed to explore NQT mentors however, some of the participants within this study were responsible for mentoring student teachers (Table 3). This may have influenced the findings regarding the developmental levels of mentees and hence the role of directive approaches within mentoring. Furthermore, although SF models of supervision highlight the need for goals to be set at the developmental level of the supervisee (Marek et al., 1994), external constraints may have influenced mentor conceptions of what mentees developmental level ‘should be’ and hence influenced their use of the approach.

As referenced by one mentor within the research, Burch’s (1974) Four Stages of Competence Model is also important to consider as novice teachers may be within the first stage - unconscious incompetence – in some areas of practice and as such require support

from a mentor to identify areas to develop proficiency. This stage may also provide an explanation for mentors' perceptions of 'over confidence'. Based on this model, perhaps SF approaches would be most effective in mentoring settings in areas of practice in which teachers have moved beyond the stage of unconscious incompetence.

The findings suggest that mentors see value in SF approaches supporting new teachers' confidence and ability in problem solving which could support their continued professional development following their NQT year. Feiman-Nemser's (2001) proposal of 'educative mentoring' is in contrast with a view of mentoring which focuses on supporting new teachers' entry into teaching by assisting them with immediate questions and doubts, providing them with 'ready-made' tools and routines, and supporting their acculturation in terms of 'fitting in' (Langdon, 2011). This runs the risk of mentees relying on mentors which could cause a sense of 'learned helplessness' (Seligman, 1972) in that mentees start to believe they have limited control and restrict professional learning. Positive Psychology emphasises the importance of using tools for helping people to thrive and flourish and highlights the importance of positive emotions in growth and development (Fredrickson, 2003). The findings of this research highlight how mentors perceive mentees' creative ideas, feelings of confidence and motivation can be supported by mentors using SF approaches to focus on strengths and empower mentees. Frederickson (2003) asserts that finding positive meaning within current situations is a key way to support the development of positive emotions and suggests ways this can be achieved, for example, finding benefits within adversity and by effective problem solving. This highlights the importance of mentors' reflections that SF approaches focus on positives within situations and support new teachers to recognise their strengths in problem solving.

The findings suggest mentors perceive SF approaches to offer learning strategies to empower new teachers to reflect on their practice and devise their own 'solutions' and

conclusions which they can transfer across situations and into the following years. This supports NQTs capacity to adapt to different challenging circumstances. The importance of this is recognised in learning theories, for example, Haring and Eaton's (1978) Instructional Hierarchy highlights the importance of acquiring skills and concepts to the extent they are retained over time and can be used with increasing fluency and the role of generalising and applying newly acquired skills, knowledge and concepts to real life problems. Furthermore, mentors recognition that SF approaches support NQTs' ability to manage their own continued development should reduce the possibility of experiencing reality aftershock (Hobson & Ashby, 2012) which is characterised by challenges experienced when the formal programmes of mentoring and induction come to an abrupt end (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

5.4.2. Self-Efficacy

Section 5.3.3. explored how the findings relate to existing research and literature on self-efficacy. Within this section, how the findings relate to the theoretical construction of self-efficacy is explored. Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory conceptualises behaviour as being influenced by both the belief one possesses the skills to perform an action and the belief that the action will result in a desirable outcome. Bandura (1997) asserts that self-efficacy beliefs are formed or changed by interpreting information from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. This section explores the findings in light of self-efficacy theory and literature surrounding the development of self-efficacy beliefs.

In terms of mastery experiences, changes in self-efficacy beliefs result from cognitive processing of information that an experience conveys regarding capability; experiences interpreted as successful tend to increase self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). The findings indicated that many mentors perceived that adopting SF approaches had a positive impact on

their mentoring sessions, their mentee relationships and was in line with principles they perceive to be important within mentoring. These self-perceptions regarding positive change could have facilitated a shift in self-efficacy beliefs. Indeed as one participant outlined, using this approach was confidence-building as they could observe an *“immediate kind of impact and say ‘ah this is great, I can do this’.”* Bandura (1997) also asserts that individuals base efficacy judgements, in part, on the extent to which they perceive their performance was attributed to their abilities and efforts. Therefore, using a new range of skills and approaches within mentoring sessions could have influenced individuals’ perceptions of themselves both as a mentor and as a user of SF approaches and therefore increase self-efficacy.

Vicarious experiences influence self-efficacy beliefs by providing the opportunity for model learning (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). Within the second training sessions, participants were given the opportunity to discuss how they had experienced using SF approaches (if they had chosen to utilise the approach). This could have provided the opportunity for vicarious experiences which provided information about modelled attainment of others and impacted self-efficacy beliefs by demonstrating and transferring competencies (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). Furthermore, vicarious experiences are understood to have a greater impact in terms of self-efficacy development when individuals have limited prior experience in the domain being evaluated (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). Considering the majority of participants reported having limited awareness of SF approaches prior to the training this may be particularly relevant.

Such discussions could have also resulted in verbal persuasion in which others within the training group supported people to recognise their capabilities. The opportunities for mutual encouragement, the sharing of success and reflection of practice are associated with self-efficacy through providing sources of vicarious learning and verbal persuasion. Participants reflected on how these discussions supported their confidence in both using the approach and more generally, with some identifying discussions as *“reassuring”*. As all of

the individuals within the group had a mentoring role, arguably they would be perceived as a credible source, holding an understanding of the demands of the role, which is likely to increase the impact of such persuasion (Bandura, 1997).

Physiological and affective arousal states can impact self-efficacy as they provide information which is interpreted as an indicator of capability. In this research, it is possible that the training which offered additional skills and ‘tools’ supported mentors feelings of ‘preparedness’ going into mentoring sessions meaning they experienced less physiological and affective states associated with stress or anxiety.

This discussion highlights how SF training had the potential to influence self-efficacy beliefs through the four sources asserted to impact on the development of such beliefs. Although this is an interpretative analysis, it is based on participants’ comments within the interviews and can offer a possible explanation as to how training in SF approaches influenced mentors’ reported confidence and self-efficacy beliefs. However, due to a lack of an operationally defined construct of mentor self-efficacy and with no reliable measure for mentor self-efficacy or its sources, understanding the development of self-efficacy beliefs in school-based mentoring is limited.

5.4.3. Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a theory of motivation and wellbeing which posits that there are three innate psychological needs which, when met, enhance motivation and well-being: the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy. Competence refers to the sense of efficacy individuals hold with respect to the tasks in which they are engaged; relatedness refers to feelings of closeness and connection to others; and autonomy characterises experiences of volition as opposed to external control (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT posits that if these needs are satisfied, motivation will shift from a controlled

position to an autonomous one (Visser, 2010). Research has shown that autonomous motivation, as opposed to controlled motivation, is associated with positive outcomes in relation to performance, persistence, learning, creativity and wellbeing (Visser, 2010).

Visser (2010) outlines how SF approaches concur strongly with SDT through SF thinking supporting individuals' autonomy, competence and relatedness. This theory is relevant to the findings in two ways, firstly offering an explanation as to why the findings of this research are important to new teacher development and secondly providing a frame to interpret and understand mentors' positive reports of the training and its impact.

5.4.3.1. Supporting new teacher development

The findings of this research indicate that mentors recognise the importance of elements of self-determination in relation to new teachers. Mentors discussed the benefit of empowering new teachers and promoting their autonomy, the importance of the relational elements of mentoring and valuing new teachers' strengths to facilitate feelings of competence and engagement with their work. They also highlighted a role for SF approaches within this. Ryan and Deci (2000) postulate that autonomous motivation and the experience of autonomy, as opposed to controlled motivation, is important for growth and well-being. The role of autonomy in relation to new teacher development is understandably a point of discussion considering both theoretical and research-based links with teacher wellbeing, behaviour and personal accomplishment (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon & Kaplan, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teachers' sense of autonomy can be supported by facilitating exploration of professional identity (Assor & Oplatka, 2003). Solution-focused tools included within the training, such as 'preferred future' could provide a space for teachers to explore their hopes and values regarding teaching and hence promote teachers' sense of autonomy. This would be further fostered by mentors (and the school culture) supporting

new teachers to realise such visions (Roth et al., 2007). This indicates that if mentors could support mentees' autonomous motivation with regards to their professional development, this could support them to initiate and maintain change more easily and enhance their conceptual thinking.

5.4.3.2. Impact of the training on mentors

SDT also offers insight into how the training in SF approaches could have impacted on mentors' practice and perhaps their positive interpretations of the training. Mentors' could have felt increased feelings of autonomy within this training than typical on professional development courses. The training was voluntary and offered choices to facilitate open discussion and support mentors' agency in deciding whether or not the training and approaches were relevant to them and their role. Furthermore, mentors understood the aims of the research and their views regarding whether SF approaches could support their mentoring or meet their needs were listened to through the interviews. This may have fostered an increased sense of empowerment which may have also influenced participants' choices to disseminate the training within their own practice and schools. In terms of relatedness, the findings suggest two-fold benefits. Some mentors reported how the approaches had supported their mentoring relationship and the connections formed within the training group may have supported feelings of relatedness as stated by one participant *"I thought it was really good to get together with likeminded people."*

As previously explored, the training could have also increased feelings of competence and self-efficacy within mentoring through offering a new approach. The reported shift in conceptualisation of the mentoring role supports mentors' self-determination in that it emphasises collaboration, relieves feelings of responsibility and changes measures of success and thus development of self-efficacy. Such benefits to self-determination could have

positive benefits for mentors' wellbeing as well as for the mentee through supporting mentors motivation in mentoring. Thus, the training was introduced in a way which supported mentors' needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. This was particularly important considering the training was in part aimed at promoting autonomy-supportive mentoring relationships. As such, it was important not to restrict mentors' own autonomy through the training or in implementing SF approaches.

5.5. Contextual Considerations

Within mentor education, alongside the individual and school context, the wider educational and cultural context in which the mentor education is developed plays an important role (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). This section explores the findings in relation to the wider context in which the research occurred. This aims to develop a more in depth understanding of the findings and consider factors which could be influential when exploring the role of SF approaches within mentoring relationships.

5.5.1. Discourse and conceptualisations regarding mentoring

The literature review highlighted the complexities inherent within mentoring and researchers including Grudnoff (2012) and Sudweeks (2005) have recognised a lack of clarity around the role of mentoring, its purpose and its responsibilities. The role of the mentor as implied through policy is to offer development support and to monitor and assess NQTs' progress to ensure they are meeting the required Teaching Standards. Therefore, mentors hold a dual role as both supporter and assessor (Martin & Rippon, 2003), with Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen (2014) referencing mentors as "Gatekeepers of the Profession" (p.163).

The duality of holding responsibilities for both assessment and support can lead to tensions between the two aspects. The evaluative component potentially creates a power

imbalance and can be considered at odds with espoused values within mentoring literature regarding teacher autonomy and versatility in the support that mentors can provide. Thus SF approaches were often conceptualised by mentors as one of a range of approaches that could be used within mentoring. As discussed regarding the framework of educative or developmental mentoring, literature highlights the conceptualisation of a mentor as ‘co-thinkers’ or ‘co-learners’ who engage in joint knowledge construction with mentees (Ginkel et al., 2015). However, mentor’s role in assessing whether NQTs’ practice is ‘good enough’ implies an expertise from the mentor and a hierarchy within the relationship. This may lead to mentees not being open with mentors about their development needs (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016).

The practice of mentoring has been asserted to frequently be ‘deficit-based’ which influenced the rationale for this research. SF approaches have the potential to move away from a deficit-based mentoring approach. However, if SF approaches are implemented within an assessment model, the process is still arguably ‘deficit-based’ with the aim of the mentors’ role being to ‘fix’ shortcomings in relation to areas of the Teacher Standards. Furthermore, new teachers need to show strengths in areas mentors perceive to be an enactment of the skills outlined within the Teaching Standards. Within this research, regarding scaling, mentors raised concerns about mentees placing themselves higher up the scale than where they perceived their capabilities. The idea that the number is somewhat arbitrary was not recognised although mentors did discuss how scaling framed discussions. This may be influenced by measures they are used to using in terms of monitoring progress in learning. These comments appeared to suggest that mentors perceived the numbers to correlate with an objective set of behaviours in which there was a shared understanding of what the numbers represent. This is understandable considering how mentors do assess teachers’ progress, for example against the Teaching Standards.

A premise of this study was to explore whether SF approaches support openness and collegiality within dialogue where new teachers' views and strengths are valued. Although some evidence was found to support this position, barriers to this may originate from the wider socio-political factors surrounding education and teaching in general. A focus on 'high stakes testing' (see Ryan & Sapp, 2005) and narrow measures of attainment have been criticised as restricting pedagogical practice, and a culture of 'performativity' threatens teachers' autonomy (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017). The practice of 'performativity' involves monitoring and inspections of school and teacher performance against stated criteria (Ball, 2003). Following this through to the mentoring relationship, the focus on evaluation and accountability throughout education may be a barrier to schools adopting SF mentoring practices. Hobson (2017) identified how such factors likely impact the prevalence of 'Judgementoring'. This culture may have had an impact on mentors who commented on the role of constructive criticism in development, and discussed how this appeared incompatible with SF approaches but an important element *"If we're too focused on being positive all the time they'll think that there's nothing that needs to be improved and nothing will be."* Such conceptions of mentoring may be a reflection of the educational context in which mentoring is embedded.

A potentially important factor related to the context around NQT mentoring in England is that it is mandatory. This has the potential to create difficulties within mentoring as mentees can be appointed to a teacher who is available as a mentor in school, typically with no real choice for the mentor or mentee or considerations of factors such as teaching beliefs, stages of development or expectations for the mentoring relationship (Ginkel et al., 2016; Hobson & Malderez, 2013). This means that much of the responsibility in terms of the 'match' between the mentor and mentee falls onto the mentor and their ability to adapt to the mentee and to differences between new teachers (Rajuan, Beijgaard, & Verloop, 2010). The

findings of this research highlight mentors' perceived differences between new teachers in terms of professional development, willingness to be mentored, the skills they possess and personal attributes. This variability was perceived by the mentors to be a potential barrier to implementing SF approaches.

5.5.2. Psychology and Education

Some mentors within this study discussed how the use of SF approaches could be uncomfortable for both the mentor and mentee. They commented on SF approaches as '*relentless*' and discussed challenges with persevering with questioning and sitting with silence. This is perhaps again influenced by the wider context surrounding this research in which feelings of accountability, attainment and pressure in education has meant that silence in response to a question is not interpreted as a 'reflective space' and is difficult to endure. Furthermore, time pressures within teaching are likely to impact on their perceptions of time for reflective space for new teachers.

Participants involved in this research referred to how they had experienced their own NQT year and indicated that there is a lack of strength-based practice in relation to teacher development. Comments such as "*you can get used to being told "That's not right, that's not right, that's not right"*" suggest that deficit-based development is something which is perceived as embedded within educational practice and discourse. However, the findings suggest that mentors do think that it is important to focus on strengths of new teachers and explain how this can positively impact motivation and confidence. The questions surrounding why this is therefore not more commonplace are likely to be best understood when considered in relation to the wider educational context. As noted, specific ideas of what teaching ought to look like are likely to influence mentors adoption of an approach which values and starts from a point of new teachers' ideologies and strengths. If the

outcomes are pre-determined, this undermines some of the principles underpinning Positive Psychology and presents barriers for implementing SF approaches in mentoring.

Interestingly however, many mentors did express an awareness of ‘coaching’, with some highlighting how their schools adopt a coaching approach. Coaching can be considered an approach rooted in Positive Psychology and, as identified by the participants, does share similarities with SF approaches in terms of theoretical foundations and underlying principles (Adams, 2016). Within the responses mentors offered their insight into how coaching differed as a construct from mentoring which suggests that an NQT mentor holds different connotations for practice than an NQT coach or even perhaps an NQT supervisor. However, Hobson and Maldarez (2013) discuss how coaching is part of mentoring not separate to it. Again this highlights how the all-encompassing role held by NQT mentors currently does impact on practice and the difficulties of the term ‘mentoring’ being ascribed multiple meanings.

5.6. Limitations of the Research

There are a number of notable limitations to this research which should be considered when interpreting the findings. This research, by its nature and design, did not intend to produce results which could be objectively measured or widely generalised. It aimed to explore the possible benefits of training in SF approaches for mentors through examining their individual views and experiences within individual school contexts at one particular point in time. This limits the conclusions which can be drawn from this research. Although the findings could be indicative of the potential role of SF approaches within new teacher mentoring to inform future practice, they are understandably limited in their scope.

The small sample size of participants limits the generalisability of the findings. Participants had a range of mentoring experience and differing responsibilities including

mentoring student teachers, mentoring NQTs and overseeing schools' mentoring programmes and represented both primary and secondary teaching levels. This is likely to produce a varied data set and enhance the degree of transferability to some extent. However, factors which could influence perceptions of SF approaches within mentoring such as levels of mentoring experience, mentees level of teaching experience or cultural differences were not considered within the scope of this initial explorative study.

Importantly, participants volunteered to engage in the research and the findings indicate that many were motivated to participate in the training as a professional development opportunity. Research has indicated that when individuals choose to participate in a training programme they report more positive reactions and greater satisfaction with the programme as well as greater motivation to learn (e.g. Hicks & Klimoski, 1987; Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas, 1992). Research has also indicated the positive influence of choice on self-efficacy in that when individuals chose to participate in a training course they are more likely to develop increased self-efficacy during training (Mathieu, Matineau & Tannenbaum, 1993). This may have impacted on the findings and again the generalisability of the findings and should be considered when exploring the implications of this research.

The data collection method of semi-structured interviews was adopted to ensure that the interview could be adapted based on participants' responses or interests. However, the interview schedule, which likely influenced the content of some of the interview responses, was developed by the researcher. Additionally, individually interviewing participants regarding their experiences of the training may have influenced the findings due to social acceptance bias. The researcher having not delivered the training sessions was intended to mitigate this and support participants to feel less inhibited within the interviews, for example, to express negative views about the training. This design also reduced the researcher's involvement and possible bias when delivering the training. However, participants were

aware that the training was related to this doctoral research project which may have still introduced some bias. Furthermore, this did mean that the researcher was not aware of any group dynamics within the training sessions which could have impacted on participants' responses. Although the interviews were conducted individually there is still the possibility of a 'groupthink' (Janis, 1972) mentality. This could have arisen from the training sessions having provided the opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback regarding SF approaches which may have influenced participants' responses to the training.

This research adopted thematic analysis to analyse the interview transcripts. The analysis involved elements of researcher interpretation which could influence the reported findings. The transcripts did not include non-verbal communication and therefore aspects of participants' responses were excluded, limiting the data which was interpreted. The transcripts were not checked with participants to verify meaning, which would have strengthened the credibility. The research design was such that mentors self-reported on their practice and the impact of the training on practice was only explored through mentors' perceptions. Due to the nature of this research, SF approaches were not adopted by mentors in a standardised way within their practice. Their reflections of their use in practice are therefore likely to vary based on a range of factors, one perhaps being fidelity to the approach. Whether participants implemented the approaches included within the training sessions with fidelity to the approaches was not explored. It is understood that this research cannot be used to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of using SF approaches within mentoring. Furthermore, the views of the mentees on SF approaches was not sought. Therefore one significant limitation of the research is that it does not explore whether mentees perceive SF approaches to be appropriate or useful within the mentoring sessions.

Another limitation relates to the role of self-efficacy in this research. Self-efficacy is considered important due to its role in training effectiveness (Mathieu et al., 1993), its

associations with behaviour and work performance measures, such as adaptability (Khan, 2015; Riggs, 2000), as well as theoretical considerations of how SF approaches can shift individual's beliefs regarding their perceived capabilities and strengths. However, it was not within the scope of this research to use a reliable and valid measure of mentor self-efficacy in line with Bandura's (1997) definition of the construct. Unlike the operationally defined construct of teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), school-based mentor self-efficacy has not been operationalised. This research only explored mentors' self-perceptions of change as opposed to utilising a measure of self-efficacy per se. Therefore, within this research, the concept of self-efficacy and confidence are used somewhat interchangeably, despite self-efficacy being distinct as a theoretical construct from the more colloquial term of confidence (Bandura, 1997). Although the research examined the theoretical construction of self-efficacy in relation to the findings of this research, it is important to note that during the interview and therefore within the analysis, the term confidence was used, with the researcher using their understanding of self-efficacy to develop questioning.

Complexities associated with 'real-world' research impacted on the timescales of this research and contributed to the length of the training sessions, small sample size and the time in the academic year in which the training was undertaken. It is important to note that one participant did not attend the first training session and instead a trainee EP colleague delivered the content within a 1:1 session. As they also identified, this was likely to impact on their individual experience of the training.

5.7. Implications for Future Research

Whilst acknowledging the limitations explored above, this research broadly offers some support for the perceived applicability of SF approaches within the mentoring

relationship. As ongoing concerns regarding the retention of new teachers and teaching quality continue to hold a prominent position within discourse, the support that new teachers receive can be considered an important area for continued study. Modifications in scope and design would develop a greater understanding of the potential of SF approaches within school-based mentoring relationships to guide future mentoring practice.

Further research could explore the longitudinal impact of the training in terms of whether it had a continued influence on mentors' approach to their mentoring without ongoing support. Furthermore, considering questions regarding the fidelity to the approaches which were utilised within this research, it would be informative to have analysed mentoring interactions (e.g. using video recording) to further understand the fidelity to the approaches used within practice following short training sessions. This could also be explored in relation to the long-term impact of the training and whether fidelity to the approaches or any reported changes in self-efficacy beliefs are maintained. Research highlights that fidelity to intervention is a key factor influencing outcomes (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Alongside this, research providing subsequent support and training sessions to mentors could explore whether implementation alters as mentors gain more experience in practising and using these approaches.

Related to the limitations noted earlier, future research including mentees' voices could explore whether mentees perceive SF approaches to be useful within the mentoring sessions. Although arguably mentors do dictate to some extent the approaches utilised within mentoring sessions, such approaches need to be viewed as positive and helpful for mentees before being advocated for use within mentoring sessions. This would also provide further insight into whether SF approaches have value within a mentoring relationship in developing collegial, strength-based, developmental discussion.

This research highlighted how mentors perceived a strength of the training being the opportunity to meet, network and converse with mentors from other schools. This highlights questions regarding how much the positive impacts reported in the findings, for example around self-efficacy and professional development, are a consequence of the training in SF approaches per se or result from the opportunity to meet and discuss practice with colleagues. This warrants further research in terms of whether holding a structured space for mentors to discuss practice may be perceived as or more positively than being offered training within a particular approach. Finally, a study specifically of the formation and sources of mentors' self-efficacy beliefs would be a useful step to inform mentor development programmes which foster mentor self-efficacy.

5.8. Implications for EP practice

This research has offered support for the role of EPs offering training from a psychological perspective to school-based mentors to support their understanding and skills. It highlights how such opportunities can be positively received by those participating in the training and how EPs may be able to offer a different perspective to existing training available for mentors. For example, participants relayed a desire to learn new approaches to use with their mentoring relationships and as Mary stated *"the fact it was part of somebody else's training I think it felt like it might be fresh"*. This highlights the role which EPs play in introducing different psychological concepts to education through training. In this research, the findings suggest that mentors benefitted from a developed understanding of the role of language. Developing awareness of language, perhaps at a whole-school level, is suited to the EP role.

This research has highlighted benefits of applying a strength-based approach to educational contexts. Participants involved in this research referred to a lack of strength-

based practice within teacher development. Considering the challenges associated with teaching and concerns around teacher well-being this is an important consideration relevant to the practice of EPs given their role in supporting schools as systems to benefit the stakeholders of the system. Approaches which could benefit teacher wellbeing should be prioritised for development within the EP role (Cook, 2017). This research suggests that mentors perceive benefits of training in this approach for themselves and for mentees. The current research therefore has implications for EPs developing strategies to systemically support schools.

The EP's role involves facilitating change at different levels. This research offers some support for EPs' role in helping establish SF approaches in mentoring practice which are empowering for both the mentor and mentee. As noted in the introduction, research has suggested that new teachers consider mentors to be one of their most important sources of support. Achinstein and Athanases (2006) postulate that mentors can have insufficient access to professional development opportunities and a limited understanding of the ideas underpinning teacher learning and development. They relate this to the prevalence of 'reductive' approaches to mentoring. Given this, EPs, with their understanding of communication styles, strength-based practice, principles of attunement, psychological wellbeing, motivation, learning theories, supervision structures, developmental models and reflective practice, are well placed to support mentors to support new teachers. Support for in-depth, reflective preparations for mentors is an area in which EPs could make a unique contribution. EPs' role in raising awareness of mentoring practices based on collaboration and reflection is important given that reflective practices have been postulated to foster new teachers' resilience when coping with future challenges (Shoffner, 2011).

Given mentors existing awareness of coaching and the potential of coaching to support new teachers development and well-being (Adams, 2016), EPs could have a role in

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supporting mentors to utilise their coaching skills within their mentoring role. EPs could support the implementation of approaches following training or work with schools to embed training at a more organisational level. Supporting the development of school cultures which feature strengths-based approaches within a learning community could be a role which utilises EPs knowledge of organisational change and systems work. Ioan Rees and colleagues have developed a Solution-Oriented School Programme (Sycol, 2007) which emphasises building school capacity to support staff, pupils, parents and stakeholders to support the development of solution-oriented cultures in school.

Some participants raised concerns regarding the lack of consistency within mentoring practice. They proposed that the training could be part of the initial training available for mentors or used within teacher training courses. Such comments are likely to reflect concerns over the adequacy of existing mentor development alongside beliefs regarding the potential role of SF approaches within mentoring. This highlights a potential role for the EP service to work more closely with training providers (including the local authority and universities) to provide comprehensive support to mentors.

Within an increasing culture of accountability which has led to a focus on EPs demonstrating the effectiveness of their interventions (Pellegrini, 2009) this research has provided the starting point to inform an evidence base regarding the role of training in SF approaches for NQT mentors in relation to mentors' experiences. It has also explored theoretical and contextual factors surrounding the research in aiming to explore "What works, for whom, under which circumstances?" (Edwards et al., 2014). This not only highlights the importance of collating qualitative information in considering the potential effectiveness of an intervention for EPs but also informs considerations for wider generalisations of these findings to EP practice. This has provided an understanding of what mentors perceive as possible within the practical limitations surrounding their role which could inform

discussions within schools regarding how mentoring could better support new teacher learning and development.

Within the policy framework, schools have some autonomy with regards to how induction programmes are implemented and the mentoring programmes new teachers participate in. Mentoring which focuses on ‘fitting in’ supports the status quo and this serves to entrench current practice and, as such, increases challenges to reforming teaching and learning (Sparks, 2005). Similarly, Willis et al., (2019) explains how mentors shape what a new generation of teachers might perceive as teacher and teaching quality. Given that the EP role can be conceptualised as facilitating change, the fact that mentoring may entrench unhelpful practices or not foster new teachers’ abilities to advance social reform means this could be an important point of intervention in terms of meeting CYP’s needs.

5.9. The Dissemination of Findings

A short report outlining the main findings of the research will be disseminated to the schools and participants involved in the research. The results will also be shared with the Educational Psychology Service and the written thesis will be available in the public domain. The researcher also hopes to have the opportunity to verbally feedback the findings to a local university (within the LA) which offers a mentor development programme within their School of Teacher Education and Development. The university works in close partnership with the LA and local schools and provides events and CPD opportunities for both mentors and NQTs.

5.10. Reflexivity

This research was influenced by the researcher’s interest in support and development for new teachers based on their own teaching experiences. For example, when becoming

familiar with the data and beginning to notice interesting features of the data, the researcher was aware of how these reflected their own biases in the sense that aspects which initially stood out often resonated with them as they were relatable. The researcher also holds beliefs regarding the value of SF techniques within their own practice, and more generally, a regard for strength-based practices. Undertaking the transition from teacher to Trainee EP they have been struck by contrasts in the conceptualisation of professional development within these professions. Such beliefs and thoughts have the potential to have impacted the research from choice of topic to data analysis and interpretation of findings.

Throughout this research process, the researcher's values and experiences had an influence and they strove to be transparent and explicit in this. Reflecting on these processes and reactions further supported the researcher to become aware of these and consider the impact on practice.

Throughout the research, the researcher kept reflective notes to record thoughts and feelings regarding the research process and acknowledge points in which they became aware of their own bias and how this could influence the findings. During the data collection, within the first interview the researcher was aware of how one section of the questioning could have been interpreted as prompting the participant. This reflection-in-action supported the researcher to monitor their position for the rest of the interview and following the interview they reflected upon how questions could be followed-up in a more 'neutral' manner. The researcher reflected on how their own belief in SF approaches could influence their interview questions, which led to adaptation of their questioning style. They reflected on how to respond to the potential situation in which participants could have implemented 'SF approaches' in ways which may be perceived by the researcher as not true to their understanding of the approach.

'I think I may have prompted the participant in terms of framing a suggestion as a question or, at least that was an underlying intention when asking the question. I am worried my views and ideas regarding how SF approaches could be utilised within the mentoring relationship may have 'leaked through' in questioning. I must also reflect on how to respond if participants discuss situations and how they are implementing SF approaches which I perceive as in opposition to the foundations of the approach'

Reflective diary entry July, 2019

The researcher's position is acknowledged to be an active one when considering the data analysis which involved a level of researcher interpretation.

'Are some comments shared by participants resonating with me in a way which is influencing my interpretation? I have almost become more aware of my pre-existing expectations going into this research through the process of data analysis. Is the analysis involving interpretation which is moving away from what the participants intended? I am concerned I am not representing the participants voices in an authentic way in terms of the weight assigned to certain points within the interview. Is there the consistency in the transcripts in a way which is reflected within the findings?'

Reflective diary entry January, 2020

Supervision was used to reflect on the researcher's decisions throughout the research, consider elements influencing such decisions and minimise the risk of bias in terms of identifying themes. Peer checking was used during the coding process to help monitor and reduce the influence of the researcher's views and position on the reported findings.

5.11. Conclusion

Flores (2004) emphasises the importance of providing new teachers with support and opportunities for professional development to promote high quality teaching and

learning. Considering that mentoring is a crucial part of this support, there is a need to focus on concepts which can impact NQT mentoring. EPs knowledge of school systems and their understanding of psychological constructs underpinning mentoring make them well placed to consider this. The literature reviewed within this research indicated that the practice of mentoring is variable, with mentors holding differing perceptions of their role, enacting different strategies and approaches and having different opportunities to receive support, training and preparation for the role.

This research explored whether NQT mentors perceive SF approaches to be helpful for their mentoring role and whether mentors' self-efficacy within their role was perceived to have been influenced by participation in SF training or through using SF approaches. The research found that SF approaches were generally perceived as an approach which could benefit the mentoring relationship, develop mentors' practice and support new teachers' ownership and development. Specifically, it was perceived that SF approaches created a mutually beneficial positive shift that both relieved the responsibility mentors felt, whilst simultaneously supporting new teachers' ownership over their teaching practice and development. This could influence mentors' perceived self-efficacy and some mentors reported increased self-efficacy and confidence within their mentoring role. Such gains in self-efficacy were also attributed to the training providing new approaches, strategies and tools. Mentors identified the SF technique of scaling and the questioning used within SF approaches as particularly appropriate and useful to their mentoring practice.

Moving away from a deficit approach to one building on strengths for professional learning and developing mentees problem-solving ability was perceived as positive for both the mentoring relationship and the mentee. This can be considered crucial given the expectation of independent practice following the NQT year. Although barriers were reported, these centred around the variability of individual differences in new teacher

mentees, suggesting that SF approaches could be part of an arsenal of techniques available to mentors to ensure high quality, appropriate mentoring of new teachers. Thus, the findings also provide support for the assertion by Willis et al., (2019) that one approach to mentoring is not sufficient to fulfil the multi-layered development of new teachers.

This research highlights the importance of new teachers being constructively involved in their own professional development and being offered support which facilitates their self-determination. It suggests that the importance of such opportunities is recognised by mentors, however they may not always feel they have the tools or support needed to enact this. Mentors in this research initially lacked an awareness of strength-based approaches and perceived training in this to be beneficial. This indicates that, based on mentors' perceptions, training in SF approaches could add a positive new dimension to existing NQT mentoring provision. However, it is postulated that even with this training, challenges in enacting such practices may still persist due to incongruence with aspects of current educational context and culture.

The role of EPs in facilitating systemic change, coupled with the importance of mentor education in supporting new teachers (Hobson et al., 2009), suggests the potential benefit of EP involvement in NQT mentoring training. As an exploratory study, further research in this area is needed, in addition to research on NQT mentees' perceptions of SF approaches. This would build on the perceived benefits found in this study of EP training for mentors in using SF approaches in the NQT mentoring relationship.

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Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, 15(2), 215-228.

Zeichner, K. M. (1994). Conceptions of reflective practice in teaching and teacher education.

In G. Harvard, & P. Hodgkinson (Eds.), *Action and reflection in teacher education* (pp. 15–34). New Jersey: Ablex.

Appendices

Appendix A

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
The mentoring relationship between teacher mentors and new teacher mentees must be explored explicitly and be a primary focus within the research. Papers which focused on other aspects of teacher induction (e.g. assessment standards), on policy development, on what a particular programme looks like (without exploring perceptions of mentoring aspects), on expectations for mentoring (as opposed to the reality of a mentoring relationship) or on the impact of mentoring (e.g. on teacher retention) were excluded.
The research must refer to mentoring as a formal arrangement, in which experienced individuals are designated to undertake a mentoring role. Research exploring different ways of mentoring, for example, peer support groups or web-based electronic conferencing were not included.
The paper must be a research study.
The paper must be concerned with the mentoring of new or beginning teachers. Research exploring the mentoring of teacher educators or student teachers/interns was excluded. Research which explored the mentoring of agricultural teachers was also excluded.

Appendix B

List of the Studies Included in the Systematic Literature Review

Studies Identified Through Systematic Literature Search
Certo, J. (2005a). Support and challenge in mentoring: A case study of beginning elementary teachers and their mentors. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education</i> , 26(4), 395-421.
Certo, J. (2005b). Support, challenge, and the two-way street: Perceptions of a beginning second grade teacher and her quality mentor. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education</i> , 26(1), 3-21.
Ginkel, G. V., Oolbekkink, H., Meijer, P.C., & Verloop, N. (2016). Adapting mentoring to individual differences in novice teacher learning: The mentor's viewpoint. <i>Teachers and Teaching</i> , 22(2), 198-218.
Grudnoff, L., (2012). All's well? New Zealand beginning teachers' experience of induction provision in their first six months in school. <i>Professional Development in Education</i> , 38(3), 471-485.
Hallam, P.R., Chou, P.N.F., Hite, J.M., & Hite, S.J. (2012). Two contrasting models for mentoring as they affect retention of beginning teachers. <i>NASSP Bulletin</i> , 9(3), 243 -278.
Harrison, J., Dymoke, S., & Pell, T. (2006). Mentoring beginning teachers in secondary schools: An analysis of practice. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 22(8), 1055-1067.
Heilbronn, R., Jones, C., Bubb, S., & Totterdell, M. (2002). School-based Induction Tutors: A challenging role. <i>School Leadership and Membership</i> , 22(4), 371-388.
Kilburg, G.M., & Hancock, T. (2006). Addressing sources of collateral damage in four mentoring programs. <i>Teachers College Record</i> , 108(7), 1321-1338.
Langdon, F. (2011). Shifting perception and practice: New Zealand beginning teacher induction and mentoring as a pathway to expertise. <i>Professional Development in Education</i> , 37(2), 241-258.
Lindgren, U. (2005). Experiences of beginning teachers in a school-based mentoring program in Sweden. <i>Educational Studies</i> , 31(3), 251-263.
Martin, M., & Rippon, J. (2003). Teacher induction: Personal intelligence and the mentoring relationship. <i>Journal of In-Service Education</i> , 29(1), 141-162.
Newman, E. (2010) "I'm being measured as an NQT, that isn't who I am": An exploration of the experiences of career changer primary teachers in their first year of teaching. <i>Teacher and Teaching: Theory and Practice</i> , 16(4), 461-475.
Nolan, A. (2017) Effective mentoring for the next generation of early childhood teachers in Victoria, Australia. <i>Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnerships in Learning</i> , 25(3), 272-290.
Stanulis, R.N., & Ames, K.T. (2009). Learning to mentor: Evidence and observation as tools in learning to teach. <i>The Professional Educator</i> , 33(1), 28-38.
Stanulis, R.N., Brondyk, S.K., Little, S., & Wibbens, E. (2014). Mentoring beginning teachers to enact discussion-based teaching. <i>Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning</i> , 22(2), 127-145.
Strong, M., & Baron, W. (2004). An analysis of mentoring conversation with beginning teachers: suggestions and responses. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i> , 20(1), 47-57.

Appendix C

Literature Review Table

The research included within this review is mainly qualitative, with some of the papers adopting a mixed-design. There are currently no commonly agreed criteria for assessing qualitative research studies, although instruments developed to support quality appraisal of qualitative research usually share some basic criteria (Hannes, 2011). The researcher chose to assess papers using criteria for qualitative research based on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018). This criteria consists of a number of questions with prompts to assist in extracting critical information in a standard manner. Alongside this checklist criteria, the researcher referred to criteria described by Yardley (2008) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) which outlines core elements to be considered in the appraisal of qualitative research. These more flexible criteria were adopted to allow the researcher to further reflect when critically appraising the research and consider dimensions and factors outside of methodological procedures and soundness, in more depth. Together, this offered a multidimensional framework of criteria which allowed consideration of aspects, such as the quality of reporting, conceptual depth and rationale for decision making to analyse the quality of the research (Hannes, 2011). It was used to appraise the research to provide both the researcher and the reader with an understanding of strengths and limitation relevant to determining the quality and impact of the research.

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Study Title/Authors /Year	Research Purpose/Aims	Participants	Design and Methodology	Main Findings	Critical Appraisal
Nolan, A. (2017) Effective mentoring for the next generation of early childhood teachers in Victoria, Australia. <i>Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnerships in Learning</i> , 25 (3), 272-290.	This research aimed to explore which elements of the mentoring programme (the State-wide Mentoring Program for Early Childhood Teachers (SWMP) in Victoria, Australia) were perceived most effective in supporting beginning early childhood teachers. It explores the impact of the programme on mentors' and mentees' professional development and identity.	The study involved participants of the SWMP over four years of the programme. There were 316 early childhood teachers – 236 as mentees and 80 as mentors. All but one participant were female.	Participants engaged in the SWMP. This programme included specific training, face-to-face workshops, on-line forums and resource packs. The focus of the mentoring relationship was reflective practice with the topic decided by the mentee. This topic was used to engage in an action research cycle. Data used included archived pre- and post- mentoring programme surveys, evaluation surveys from the workshops and reflection by mentors and mentees as part of their action research experience. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data to explore participants' experiences of the programme. Within this process, codes were used to search, review and define themes.	The findings indicate the importance of reciprocal, reflective, respectful and responsive elements in mentoring. Reciprocal elements – The programme was designed to foster equality in the mentoring relationship as opposed to an expert-novice mentoring position. The authors note many examples of mentors learning from and with their mentees and of mentees benefitting from the reciprocal nature of the mentoring experience. Reflective elements – In the programme mentors were tasked with facilitating mentee reflection. Mentees reported how they had reflected on their practice at a deeper level with positive benefits. Respectful elements – the author suggests that having initial mentor criteria was worthwhile to select suitable mentors. They suggest that data indicates that the aim of having mutually respectful mentoring relationships was met. All mentee cohorts also appreciated that their mentees were from outside their own workplaces. Responsive elements – mentees were involved in action research on his/her own practice and this was noted by the	The research appropriately employs a qualitative methodology to explore the subjective experiences of mentees/mentors and their perspectives of which aspects of mentoring are effective. The research design is appropriately justified. The researchers discuss how they selected participants and why. However, mentors were selected for the SWMP according to set criteria, including: having three years of experience; having heightened sensitivity to the personal and professional issues faced by new teachers; breadth of knowledge and experience; and active participation in on-going professional development. This could have affected results as the mentors attending the programme possessed certain prerequisite skills and attitudes. This could also reduce the transferability as the sample mentors only represent mentors who possess these certain criteria. The research is placed in the wider contexts with reference to the SWMP programme. However, this programme promotes certain aspects of mentoring, such as, developing respectful and responsive relationships and empowering

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				<p>majority of mentees as relevant and meaningful to them.</p> <p>Other notable findings were that mentee's feelings of isolation crippled innovation and a lack of confidence influenced practice. The greatest impact on mentees participation in the programme was in the areas of professional identity and self-efficacy and a growth in self-confidence. Working on the action-research project built knowledge and expertise in the mentee.</p>	<p>those involved. Mentors were participating in this programme and therefore the findings regarding which elements were found effective in mentoring may, to some extent, be influenced by the premise of this programme. This limits transferability and also, due to not being explicitly acknowledged in relation to the findings, may introduce concerns around transparency and credibility.</p> <p>The type of data analysis, thematic analysis, is outlined; however, there is no mention of whether the researchers understanding and interpretation was checked with participants or with another researcher which may undermine credibility.</p> <p>Where points are made within the findings they are frequently well illustrated by examples of interview extracts.</p> <p>The conceptual framework underlying the study is explored adding to the rigour of the study.</p> <p>This study involves a large sample size and triangulation of data sources increasing its credibility. Information was gathered from both mentors and mentees to increase the rigour of the study and allow for a more in-depth understanding of the topic.</p>
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					<p>The researcher does not discuss their own position. The author is noted to work for the School of Education at Deakin University. This is one of two universities who won the tender to design, deliver and evaluate the new SWMP, a programme that received “significant funding” (p.275) and hence there were specific aims which needed to be addressed. Therefore, this could introduce bias and introduce concerns regarding confirmability.</p> <p>The data sources, although noted, are not described in detail which could influence the dependability and transparency.</p> <p>The aims of the research were clearly outlined, alongside a clear justification for the importance of these.</p>
Newman, E. (2010) “I’m being measured as an NQT, that isn’t who I am”: An exploration of the experiences of career changer primary teachers in their first year	The research aimed to explore the experiences of three second-career teachers in their NQT year to contribute to the literature on how NQTs come to identify with, and through, the culture of the school.	Three participants formed part of an opportunistic sample of self-defined career changers or second career teachers. One of the participants was female and two were male. The participants had trained on a	The experiences of the participants’ first year of teaching were explored through a constructive grounded theory methodology informed by life history methodology. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant during their NQT year. Analysis was initially inductive involving searching the data for emerging explanations and developing theory. Analysis then drew on	<p>The research found that participants were highly individual in their responses. The research reports on the “story” of each NQT. Within this, the findings regarding the mentoring process and relationship are focused on, due to this being the topic of the literature review conducted.</p> <p>Participant 1 – Rachel – Within the school, NQT induction was seen as important. Her mentor worked with her and discussed with her critical incidences in a way which boosted her confidence. Her mentor’s experience, care and sensitivity was invaluable in terms of work/life</p>	<p>The aim of the research and the importance of this is clearly outlined by the researcher with reference to contextual information and previous literature.</p> <p>This study has a small sample size although it does explore the experiences of the participants and justifies and explains the approach (phenomenological) and conceptual framework underpinning the research, arguing the data is local and detailed. Four interviews were conducted with each participant to gather ‘thick’ descriptions over a period of time</p>

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<p>of teaching. <i>Teacher and Teaching: Theory and Practice</i>, 16 (4), 461-475.</p>		<p>PGCE primary programme at a university in England all meeting the teaching standards as good/excellent at the end of their PGCE year. Participants were chosen because they illustrate some of the complex needs, linked with previous career experience, that have to be met by schools. The participants had the common expectation that a primary teacher should be a creative autonomous individual, choosing how they work.</p>	<p>work on situation learning and communities of practice and their significance for job satisfaction.</p>	<p>balance. Rachel was happy “to be guided by those more experienced”.</p> <p>Participant 2 – Ed – Ed had an initial negative experience in which his mentor “gossiped” about his homosexuality. He found his mentor “controlling”, “keeping me under surveillance” which limited his autonomy. He also found his mentor unsympathetic and unaware of the challenges he reported to her.</p> <p>Participant 3 – Arthur – Arthur appreciated the support from his mentor on social pastoral issues but reported no support with what he felt were the more demanding aspects of teaching: planning or assessment.</p> <p>The research found that ‘being managed’ was a key concern for the participants and postulates that a one- size mentoring/induction programme is unlikely to fit anybody. Participants found their positioning in relation to their previous work experience was significant in achieving job satisfaction. There is also the suggestion that being ‘different’ – in this study, a male or gay teacher - was problematic.</p>	<p>informed by life history methodology. The ‘thick’ descriptions are described within the research findings as illustrations of evidence.</p> <p>The approach to data analysis is clearly outlined. Transcriptions were checked and amended by participants to ensure they were an accurate recording of their experience as they perceived it. This supports the credibility of the findings. The data is detailed and allows for an exploration of wider contextual factors which could influence participants’ perspectives. The researcher is also sensitive to findings which arise from the data, initially using inductive analysis; this could support the credibility and confirmability of the research.</p> <p>The researcher outlines their position, including the context and their values, increasing confirmability. The participants were selected based on their illustration of complex needs. The research also focuses on second-career teachers. These factors could influence the transferability of findings to beginning teachers in general.</p> <p>The authors discuss the implications of the findings for teacher educators and NQT mentors as well as for wider school cultures and communities.</p>
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<p>Certo, J. (2005a). Support and challenge in mentoring: A case study of beginning elementary teachers and their mentors. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education</i>, 26(4), 395-421.</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to report findings from a qualitative study involving three elementary first year teachers and their mentors. The researcher aimed to address the perceptions of beginning teachers and their mentors on the kinds of support and challenge being offered in a mentoring relationship and what the impact of these interventions are on beginning teachers' thinking and professional development.</p>	<p>Participants were three Virginia elementary first year teachers and their mentors.</p>	<p>Participants were interviewed at three points – September, December and February. Beginning teachers also kept reflective journals about the challenges they faced and the presence, nature and impact of mentoring activities. Perceptions of mentor activities and their perceived impact are described using Daloz's (1988) support and challenge model. Data was analysed using a commercial software program where the data was coded. The researcher reviewed all the coded data to assign categories such as 'support', 'challenge' or 'impact'.</p>	<p>The findings indicate that mentors provided a balance of support and challenge activities and new teachers reported the impact of mentors in various ways, including classroom management and instructional approaches. Support activities included listening, reassuring, answering questions, sharing of self, sharing instructional resources and materials and providing structure. Challenge activities included planning together, inviting experimentation and providing post-observation feedback. Mentors' and mentees' accounts provide examples of these activities and of their experiences of them. The perceived impact of mentoring was also analysed. The research indicates that the beginning teachers perceived more impact than the mentors. Mentees expressed that their mentors helped them maintain positive attitudes and keep perspective, improve classroom management and student discipline, adopt or modify instructional approaches, increase level of efficiency and improve their confidence in teaching skills. None of the mentors perceived they had an impact on their mentees with respect to adoption or modification of instructional approaches. Within this study, the concept of challenge did emerge beyond support for each of the cases, which is argued important for professional growth (Daloz, 1999). There was no data to indicate any of the beginning teachers were over-challenged</p>	<p>The sampling procedures are clearly explained and justified. The researcher aimed to offer cases of best practice and hence selected pairings likely to be successful based on criteria, including experience and mentor's teaching skills. This is unlikely to be representative of other mentor-mentee pairings. The researchers also questioned mentors if they were willing and enthusiastic to assume their mentor role during initial telephone calls; this impacts on the transferability of the findings.</p> <p>Information sought from both the mentee and mentor for triangulation of data to establish credibility of the findings. Data sources were also used to triangulate the data, for example, journal data from journals kept by the mentees.</p> <p>During the data analysis, there was a focus on searching for disconfirming evidence to increase reflexivity.</p> <p>The data analysis undertaken is outlined and the researcher acknowledges that what one individual may perceive as a challenge, another may not, and discusses how this was addressed. This included the researcher verifying their understanding of the transcription contents with the participants, supporting credibility. Strategies were used to monitor and evaluate researcher subjectivity, including</p>
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				<p>by their mentor. In terms of encouraging reflection, however, only one mentor appeared to go beyond their own experiences and ideas to challenge her mentee to reflect on her own thinking through questioning.</p>	<p>a field log and cross-examination of data which impacts on the confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>The authors note that beginning teachers and mentors participated in the interviews separately and thus diffusion is a threat to the validity of the data, as discussions about the content of interviews were not able to be controlled.</p> <p>Another limitation, noted by the authors, relates to the Hawthorne Effect, for example, one mentor reported she may have been more cognisant and reflective in her role and consequently enhanced the frequency and quality of mentoring interventions. A similar effect may have influenced beginner teachers.</p> <p>The findings of this paper are explored in relation to a conceptual model, and how this paper adds to the research base of existing research which uses this model, is clearly justified.</p> <p>This study involved three first year teachers and their mentors. This is a small sample size although the paper appropriately adopts qualitative methodology to offer 'thick' descriptions with a range of sources of data to add to the rigour of the research. Detailed extracts are offered to support or illustrate findings.</p>
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					<p>The research is placed within the context of existing research and the importance and implications of the findings are discussed.</p> <p>The data collection occurred over six months to add to the understanding of the changing perception of participants over time.</p>
<p>Certo, J. (2005b). Support, challenge, and the two-way street: Perceptions of a beginning second grade teacher and her quality mentor. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education</i>, 26(1), 3-21.</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to report on a single-case of a successful mentor-mentee pairing derived from the larger qualitative study outlined above (Certo, 2005a). Similarly to above, the research questions addressed were:</p> <p>What are the perceptions of the beginning teacher and her mentor on the kinds of activities or interventions occurring in the mentoring</p>	<p>The participant was a Virginia elementary first year teacher and their mentor.</p>	<p>This participant pairing is a single-case study from the study above and consequently shares the same design/methodology as above. One noted difference is that the documents describing the school's mentorship program were additionally analysed to support the researcher to understand the administrative structures that supported the mentoring relationship.</p>	<p>The findings reported reflect the support and challenge activities reported by Certo (2005a) above. For example, checking-in, listening and reassuring were reported as support activities along with providing information and structure, answering questions and sharing instructional resources and supplies. The challenge activities also reflected the results above, including planning together, inviting experimentation and providing insight and feedback. Within the challenge activities, additional information is provided on questioning and encouraging reflection in which the mentor reports she prefers her mentee to, "do the thinking". This was achieved through questioning and was developed through mentor training. Again, the mentor's professional development was explored. The author discusses mentor characteristics with regards to the mentor's competence, maturity and background in counselling and also the mentorship programme of the school in terms of the role this may play in the quality and nature of the interventions and feedback the mentee received.</p>	<p>Single case study. This qualitative approach is justified and provides rich and detailed qualitative data, although it may limit the transferability of the research. This is particularly true as the authors selected this case study based on it being a "successful" relationship.</p> <p>Detailed contextual information is provided. The mentor had a previous background in counselling which the author suggests may have influenced her approach and hence this again may influence transferability.</p> <p>The implications of this paper are clearly outlined as well as areas of future research.</p> <p>The critical appraisals related to methodology outlined above are relevant.</p>

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	relationship? What are the perceptions of the beginning teacher and her mentor on how those activities impact thinking and professional development in first-year teaching?				
Grudnoff, L., (2012). All's well? New Zealand beginning teachers' experience of induction provision in their first six months in school. <i>Professional Development in Education</i> , 38(3), 471-485.	This research aimed to explore first-year teacher's perceptions of their induction experiences and mentoring experiences in their first six months of teaching to explore the nature of support that novices experience when they start teaching.	This research involved 12 first-year New Zealand primary teachers. The participants were all graduates of a three-year, undergraduate, primary teacher education degree. One participant was male and the others female.	This study was part of a larger research study. The primary sources of data drawn on were two semi-structured interviews undertaken in participant's first six months of teaching (one after one month of teaching and one undertaken after they had been teaching for six months). An inductive approach to analysis was taken in which the researcher coded transcripts to identify comments that related specifically to participants' induction and mentoring experiences. Analysis was undertaken in two phases: the first was vertical analysis in which transcripts were analysed separately and the second phase was a constant	This study found that the induction experiences of the new teachers were diverse and variable. The findings are reported under three headings: the 0.2 time allowance; the provision of a mentor teacher; and, school approaches to the professional learning of the beginning teachers. Within this, the findings related to mentoring are focused upon as they are the most relevant to the current literature review. Participants strongly believed having a mentor was important and welcomed the emotional support gained from regular contact with their mentors. Ten of the participants highlighted the importance of receiving affirming feedback from their mentors. The frequency of formal meetings had decreased by the end of the six months. Developing a positive relationship with their mentor was important to new teachers and was supported by constructive and affirming	<p>The research used qualitative methodology to appropriately explore new teachers' perceptions and experiences.</p> <p>The sampling procedures used are outlined and justified.</p> <p>Two interviews were conducted at different time points so participants' views could be gathered and compared over a period of time. This also adds to the richness of the data and the rigour of the research, particularly considering the relatively small sample size (n = 12).</p> <p>Mentor views were not gathered and therefore results were not triangulated in this sense.</p> <p>The researcher does not examine their own role and hence potential bias is not</p>

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			comparative method of analysis used to identify common patterns and differences that led to the development of themes.	interactions. The data suggested that the more emotional support and encouragement received, the more the mentees grew in confidence as teachers. Two participants reported less positive relationships with their mentor and subsequently reduced confidence. Many participants viewed mentor's observations and feedback as 'most useful'. Participants' comments suggest mentors primarily use strategies to boost confidence. Only one teacher reported how her mentor encouraged and challenged her to extend her teaching practice.	<p>explored which could undermine confirmability.</p> <p>The importance and implication of the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature.</p> <p>How the data was analysed is outlined, however this is not very detailed and information, such as how contradictory data is dealt with, is not included. The researcher also does not discuss whether transcripts were checked with participants or whether the themes or data analysis have been scrutinised by another researcher which could indicate difficulties in terms of credibility.</p>
Hallam, P.R., Chou, P.N.F., Hite, J.M., & Hite, S.J. (2012), Two contrasting models for mentoring as they affect retention of beginning teachers. <i>NASSP Bulletin</i> , 9(3), 243 -278.	This study aimed to investigate mentoring models in two school districts to examine how mentoring characteristics and types of support may moderate the relationship between the mentoring model and the retention of	This study involved 23 beginning teachers from two different school districts in the same state.	This study examined two distinct mentoring models, regarding the types of support that most benefit the development and consequent retention of beginning teachers. It followed the participants over their first three years of teaching. Both quantitative survey data and follow-up qualitative data were collected and analysed. Survey data provided background on critical elements involved in mentoring and retention and qualitative interview data added understanding of how	<p>The findings of the following two research questions are the focus of the current literature review due to their relevance: In terms of the mentoring processes in each mentoring model, what mentoring characteristics do beginning teachers think are necessary for an optimal mentoring relationship? In terms of mentoring processes in each mentoring model, what sources of support and mentoring experiences do beginning teachers think are most beneficial to assist them during their first three years?</p> <p>With regards to the question concerning the optimal mentoring relationship, the research found that, across districts (and models), characteristics including an</p>	<p>The aim of the study and why this is an important area of research is clearly outlined in the context of existing literature.</p> <p>How they define beginning teachers in this study is operationally defined. The qualitative and quantitative methodological choices are justified alongside how they provide appropriate information to explore the research questions. Qualitative data was gathered alongside quantitative data to provide rich detailed data to support understanding of the quantitative findings.</p> <p>The sampling procedure is clearly outlined to increase dependability. The context of</p>

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	beginning teachers.		<p>each of these two mentoring models provided support and increased retention.</p> <p>Participants were interviewed once during their first year of teaching and once during their third year. Two teachers did not participate in Year 3. A survey was also conducted in participants' third year of teaching. A software programme was used to analyse the data and key concepts and relationships were systematically identified. Themes were identified when coded responses included more than 50% of participants. Both within-case and cross-case analyses were used.</p>	<p>approachable personality and a trusting/caring relationship were key mentoring characteristics. The frequency of other characteristics changed over time, for example, communication decreased, whereas by year three the majority (more than 80%) of participants reported a desire for increased collaboration and proximity.</p> <p>With regards to the sources of support and mentoring experiences that beginning teachers perceived to be most useful, data demonstrated that mentoring had been valuable for both development and communication. Findings in year 3 indicated that the emotional experiences were related to how new teachers felt regarding their sense of autonomy, confidence, job satisfaction and stress.</p>	<p>the study and participants' school and mentoring program is also detailed.</p> <p>How the data was analysed, including the software used and the percentage of responses needed for themes to be identified, was outlined within the study.</p> <p>There is no mention of whether the researchers understanding and interpretation was checked with participants or with another researcher which may undermine credibility.</p> <p>The researcher does not examine their own position or role which may undermine confirmability.</p> <p>The survey used to gather the quantitative data is included in the research paper to increase the replicability of this aspect of the research. The interview probe sheet is also included.</p> <p>Longitudinal data was collected to gain a better understanding of the changing role of in-school mentors.</p> <p>The authors outline key recommendations for practice as an outcome of this research, as well as areas for future research.</p> <p>This research focused on the perceptions of beginning teachers and did not gather the views of mentors.</p>
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<p>Langdon, F. (2011). Shifting perception and practice: New Zealand beginning teacher induction and mentoring as a pathway to expertise. <i>Professional Development in Education</i>, 37(2), 241-258.</p>	<p>This study aimed to explore how induction and mentoring work to shift beginning teachers from a focus on survival and self to student learning.</p>	<p>Seven schools were purposively sampled selected for their good induction programmes based on set criteria. Thirty five participants from these seven schools were included: 7 principals, 14 beginning teachers and 14 mentors.</p>	<p>This paper is a cross analysis of seven case studies. The primary source of data was 35 interview transcriptions (one from each participant), three focus groups (conducted 9 months after the interviews, one each with principals, mentors and beginning teachers) and documentation collected over a two-year period. Analysis occurred at three levels to identify the learning experiences of beginning teachers, search for patterns and outliers and the focus group data was analysed on expectations and improving beginning teacher learning.</p>	<p>The results provide an illustration of the way in which the school culture, principals and mentors provide leverage and benefit to the beginning teachers to focus on student learning. Mentors and principals were perceived as key levers in affecting beginning teachers to shift their concerns from themselves as teachers onto student learning. An assumption was made that mentors would have the skills to help beginning teachers focus on student learning. All mentors and principals reported they would value access to mentor education programmes. The mentors had their own understanding of good teaching but did not insist beginning teacher's taught in similar ways and beginning teachers could trial their own ideas. Mentors were aware of a "balancing act" between listening and questioning and offering direction. This tension between instruction to ensure survival and offering new teachers freedom to trial ideas was a challenge to all mentors. Mentees' trialling ideas were supported by articulation of fallibility by the mentors as well as discussions to enhance learning. Common strategies utilised by mentors included goal setting, observation, feedback and reflection.</p>	<p>Schools were initially purposively sampled based on set criteria related to good induction programmes. Therefore, this data may not be transferable to different contexts.</p> <p>This study consisted of seven case study schools. Rich data was collected through using multiple data sources and the data was collected over a two year period adding to the rigour of the study.</p> <p>The research triangulated data sources (interviews/focus groups/documentation) and participants (mentees/mentors/principals) to ensure the weight of evidence to confirm or disconfirm findings, enhancing credibility. The context of the study is detailed alongside descriptions of the schools involved. The inclusion of school principals also adds further richness in terms of understanding the school contexts.</p> <p>The analysis of the data is described, however it does not detail how, for example, patterns and outliers were identified, coded and dealt with. There is no mention of whether the researcher's understanding and interpretation was</p>

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				Mentors asserted that reflection and evaluation required modelling.	checked with participants or with another researcher which may undermine credibility. The researcher does not examine their own role and hence potential bias is not explored.
Stanulis, R.N., Brondyk, S.K., Little, S., & Wibbens, E. (2014). Mentoring beginning teachers to enact discussion-based teaching. <i>Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning</i> , 22(2), 127-145.	This paper describes the practice of one mentor as she assisted three beginning teachers to shift their practice to a greater understanding of discussion-based teaching.	This study involved one mentor and three beginning teachers. The mentor participated in a two-year university-led professional development intervention. This involved preparation on how to support new teachers to learn to lead classroom discussions and support provided included study groups, monthly coaching and email communication. The beginning teachers had all	This study is a qualitative, longitudinal descriptive case study. Mentors documented beginning teachers' development and collected data over two years. Data sources included records of practice, videotaped lessons and mentor-mentee conversations, observation field notes and reflections written by mentors. The mentor also presented an action research project. Researchers undertook observations of beginning teachers and interviewed them based on their observed lesson. Each data source was initially coded and the ways in which mentee's implemented (or not) elements of discussion-based teaching were examined. The way the mentor worked with the beginning teacher was also examined. An interpretivist approach was used to account	The research reports on stories related to each beginning teacher. These stories describe how one beginning teacher used her mentor as a thought partner and another highlighted the role of modelling and providing concrete resources. The ways in which the mentor integrated tenets of assisted performance were analysed with regards to the three beginning teachers which were deemed helpful to mentees' development. The authors theorise that the success of the mentor was influenced positively by having a targeted focus for practice, assuming a position as a teacher educator and leader as opposed to a buddy and her willingness to seek, and take advantage of, support.	Participants were purposefully sampled based on their gains in teacher effectiveness and their unique goals and approaches. This could influence the transferability of findings as such mentee characteristics are likely to influence the mentoring relationship. Furthermore, the mentor was engaged in a specific professional development programme which aimed to develop their approach. Therefore, the findings related to approaches and practice may not be transferable to mentors within other contexts who have not undergone such preparation. This study has a small sample size and explores the practice of one mentor. It adopts an appropriate qualitative methodology over a course of two years to gather a rich, 'thick' description of their practice. It gathers both the perspective of the mentor and of the mentees. The research used multiple sources of evidence - interviews, direct observations, and documentation to triangulate data to increase credibility.

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		made gains in their teaching effectiveness on pre-post measures and were selected because they were described as having unique learning styles and goals for teaching.	for and explain events in which ideas and connections between field notes, interview transcripts and ideas from theoretical materials were recorded. Tenets of assisted performance, namely: identifying performance levels, structuring situations, scaffolding support and preparing for unassisted performance, were used to analyse the mentoring approach used.		<p>The researchers outlined the recursive process involved in their data analysis. The researcher compared their findings against initial propositions and theoretical materials to revise their thinking and challenge suppositions. However, the research does not mention checking interpretations with participations.</p> <p>One limitation noted by the authors is the potential risk for bias as they adopted the roles of researchers and participant observers.</p> <p>Other noted limitations are that the field notes were not collected from the monthly mentor study groups and beginning teachers were not interviewed in their first year of study.</p> <p>The researchers theorise why the mentor was successful in order to impact on mentoring practice.</p>
Stanulis, R.N., & Ames, K.T. (2009). Learning to mentor: Evidence and observation as tools in learning to teach. <i>The Professional</i>	This research aimed to examine how an experienced teacher learned to mentor as she attended ongoing professional development and worked with first-and	The participants were one mentor, a teacher with 13 years of teaching experience, and two mentee beginning teachers assigned to the mentor. One,	This study was a collaborative action research project in which the researchers engage in collaborative conversations with the mentor. Data was collected through observations of the mentoring cycle and the beginning teacher's classroom instruction and through bi-weekly mentor study groups. Data collected through	Throughout the year, the mentor learned the value of gathering evidence from the beginning teacher's practice to guide her continued learning, and about observation as a tool for mentor and beginning teacher learning. Within this, examples are given of how the mentor recognised her mentee's self-esteem was decreasing and how she needed support to develop her voice and identity as a teacher. The mentor collated evidence of strengths in the mentee's	<p>One of the researchers led the design and implementation of the professional development programme and the other coached the mentor, providing feedback and support in the development of her practice. Although this dual role is acknowledged and explicit within the research, it may introduce bias and impact upon confirmability.</p> <p>The study includes reference to both mentor's and mentee's experiences.</p>

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<i>Educator, 33(1), 28-38.</i>	second-year teachers across one school year.	entering their first year of teaching and one, their second. The mentor was engaged in ongoing professional development.	observations included field notes, recorded dialogue and obtained artefacts. Data was also gathered through interviews with the mentor. The mentor also kept a reflective journal. Data collection occurred throughout the year. Data analysis was iterative. The mentoring observation and interview data were reviewed during the study and after, and sources of data were then reread to make notes and form initial codes. Discrepancies were examined and individual cases were constructed to illustrate mentor learning.	practice and drew on language suggestions including paraphrasing, suggesting and mediating during feedback conversations. The mentor's professional development included the notion that teachers need a vision of good teaching which they can articulate and own which was reflected in mentoring conversations to support a mentee. With one of the mentees, the mentor expressed concerns that she did not have the words to help the mentee reconsider his assumptions about teaching and learning, particularly considering the newness of the relationship. During the year, the mentor reconsidered her mentoring approach. With the support of a coach, she developed her confidence and strategies and developed her directedness. The mentor used differentiation, bringing a flexible repertoire of strategies to her work. She was supported through collaborative conversations with other mentors and induction coach.	<p>Data sources were triangulated to add to the credibility of the findings.</p> <p>This study adopted an action-research approach and was a collaborative piece of research. The ongoing, collaborative conversations between researchers and the mentor, enables rich data to be gathered and thinking and interpretation to be checked with the mentor to increase the credibility of the findings.</p> <p>This study involved a small number of purposefully selected participants. The mentor was engaged in a specific professional development programme which aimed to develop her learning as a mentor. This therefore provides a detailed account of learning to mentor, although limits the transferability of findings to other contexts.</p> <p>The researchers detail the implications of their research and areas of future research.</p>
Strong, M., & Baron, W. (2004). An analysis of mentoring conversation with beginning teachers:	This study aims to explore how mentor teachers make pedagogical suggestions to beginning teachers during mentoring	This study involved 16 mentor teachers and their mentee beginning teachers.	Mentors were given audio-recording equipment and requested to record a pre- and post-observation conversation on two occasions. One towards the beginning of the school year and one towards the end. 64 mentoring conversations	<p>This study found that out of the 206 suggestions identified in the transcriptions, 10 were coded as direct suggestions and the rest indirect.</p> <p>Indirect suggestions, in order of frequency, were: those embedded within an expression of possibility or conditionality; suggestions posed as a</p>	<p>The authors include how they define and categorise suggestions as direct or indirect which adds to the dependability of the research.</p> <p>The researchers do not outline a clear recruitment strategy. They identify the program from which they selected mentors but do not identify why they</p>

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<p>suggestions and responses. <i>Teaching and Teacher Education, 20(1), 47-57.</i></p>	<p>conversations and how beginning teachers respond.</p>		<p>were examined and analysed. All conversations were transcribed with a focus on content and reviewed for all instances of suggestions offered by mentors. Suggestions were then categorised as direct or indirect, with further categories for the different forms of indirect suggestions. Beginning teacher responses were identified as acceptances or rejections, with elaborations or alternative suggestions coded separately.</p>	<p>question; recommended ideas which had been seen elsewhere, read or heard about; a suggestion with a reformulation or paraphrasing of a teaching idea or strategy previously described by the teacher.</p> <p>Other features identified in mentor's suggestions were praise and therapeutic language.</p> <p>The beginning teachers accepted their mentors' suggestions four times more often than they rejected them. About one-third of the time the teachers' responses, whether accepting or rejecting a direct or indirect suggestion, included elaboration or the postulation of an alternative idea.</p>	<p>selected mentors from this program or how the participant mentors were selected (or whether all participated).</p> <p>The researchers do not outline their own position and own role or any potential bias and influence which could impact on the confirmability of the research.</p> <p>Although labelled by the author as indirect, the research does not explore whether the mentee perceives the suggestions are indirect or not. This means that some of the suggestions, categorised as indirect, could still be perceived by the mentee as more directive. One of the examples of indirect suggestions offered by mentors was, "what I was thinking was maybe if you have the vocabulary words up there it would help?" Although coded as an indirect suggestion, this could have been perceived by the mentee as directive. This is not explored within the paper and therefore it is difficult to understand the weight of the data supporting the findings.</p> <p>How transcripts were coded is clearly outlined and both researchers reviewed the coding of transcripts discussing and resolving any initial disagreement, increasing credibility.</p> <p>The authors do discuss contextual factors, both situational and at the conversational</p>
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					<p>level which may impact on the findings. The participants were associated with a particular program which focuses on developing thoughtful and reflective practitioners. This contextual factor may influence the findings and their transferability. The authors note that the conversations requested to be recorded were not random dialogues and more of an open-ended interview than naturalistic conversations. The mentor is guided by a protocol. This again may influence the transferability of the findings. The mentoring conversations could have also been influenced by the fact that the participants know they are being recorded. This could undermine the credibility of findings. The authors also discuss the possible impact of the prevailing culture on the findings.</p> <p>The impact and importance of the findings is not clearly outlined either as a study or with reference to existing knowledge. However, further areas of research are explored.</p>
Ginkel, G. V., Oolbekkink, H., Meijer, P.C., & Verloop, N. (2016). Adapting mentoring to individual	The aim of this research was to explore the mentoring activities through which mentors intended to adapt to the	Eighteen mentors (11 male and 7 female) participated in this study, who were from different programs for	Data was collected through semi-structured interviews following mentoring conversations. The mentoring conversation was audiotaped and so the interviewer was able to use specific probes in their mentor interview. Interview transcripts were	Twenty-nine activities were identified and organised into four overarching mentoring functions. The four adaptive mentoring activities identified were: aligning mutual expectations for mentoring; attuning to the mentee's emotional state; adapting discussions to match the reflective capacity of the mentee; building tasks	<p>The aim and purpose of the research is clearly outlined with reference to existing research and the importance and potential impact of the study.</p> <p>The sampling strategy was explained and justified, for example, the purpose of selecting a sample to include highly adaptive, as well as non-adaptive,</p>

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<p>differences in novice teacher learning: The mentor's viewpoint. <i>Teachers and Teaching</i>, 22(2), 198-218.</p>	<p>individual beginning teacher, and characteristics of adaptive mentors.</p>	<p>Initial Teacher Education in the Netherlands. Mentors were selected due to holding strong, or weak, developmental and instrumental mentoring conceptions (based on survey responses gathered in a previous study). 7 mentors reported having had no training for their mentoring role, and 11 reported having had training once or more.</p>	<p>analysed using a two-level hierarchical coding template, developed to describe mentoring activities within a software programme. The coding template was developed and refined through coding the interview transcripts until saturation was reached. Adaptive mentoring activities were identified when the code description of the activity included an intention to match or adapt an aspect of the activity to a characteristic of the individual beginning teacher. Mentors were also assigned an adaptiveness score based on the sum of the mentoring activities they mentioned. Mentors who mentioned 3-4 adaptive activities were defined as highly adaptive and defined as non-adaptive if they mentioned none. Correlation coefficients (using Kendall's tau-b) were calculated to explore distinctive features of adaptive mentors. These were between participant's adaptiveness score and both their combined scores for groups of activities and for individual mentoring</p>	<p>from simple to more complex based on the novice's competence.</p> <p>Mentoring activities articulated most frequently (starting with the highest frequency) were initiating and affirming, encouraging, facilitating, and imposing. Mentoring activities articulated least frequently were (starting with the lowest frequency) providing novice teachers access to mentor thinking and addressing novice teacher's motivation.</p> <p>Individual mentors reported up to three adaptive mentoring activities. Six mentors mentioned a total of three adaptive activities each and subsequently recognised as highly adaptive mentors. Correlations identified two distinctive features of adaptive mentors, specifically, that they articulated relatively more activities oriented at the construction of personal practical knowledge (e.g. encouraging novices through questioning to think through topics and promote ownership of solutions); and they articulated relatively few activities oriented at creating a favourable context for novice teacher learning (e.g. Organising access to learning experiences for the novice or intervening directly in the relationship between the novice teacher and students).</p> <p>Highly adaptive mentors could be distinguished into more 'cognitively</p>	<p>mentors. This increases the dependability of the study.</p> <p>How the interviews were conducted and how the interview probes were developed is explained within the research. The interview topic list is presented within the paper.</p> <p>The process of data analysis is explained in detail and the coding template is included within the research. How mentoring activities are identified as adaptive and how mentor adaptiveness is scored is included alongside the analysis to determine the distinctive features of adaptive mentors. The approach adopted (Kendall's tau-b) is justified. Analysis involved two researchers and disagreements on coding were discussed until consensus was reached increasing the credibility of findings.</p> <p>The authors note a limitation as being that mentors' accounts of practice were collected at one point in time. Another noted limitation is that the activities mentioned by mentors are likely to be influenced by the context of the specific individual mentee within the relationship. However, the authors assert that these factors were compensated for by explicitly asking the mentor to compare the recorded mentee-mentor interaction with other conversations.</p>
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			activities. Contrasts in patterns of mentoring activities expressed by adaptive and non-adaptive mentors were also examined.	adaptive' and more 'emotionally adaptive' mentors. Differences were associated with gender.	<p>This research only explores the mentor's viewpoint and does not examine the mentee's view which could influence the findings as mentees may view different activities as being adaptive.</p> <p>The results are explored in relations to previous research. Suggestions for future research are made based on the context of the research. The implications of the findings in terms of how they could benefit mentors and mentoring are detailed.</p>
Lindgren, U. (2005). Experiences of beginning teachers in a school-based mentoring program in Sweden. <i>Educational Studies</i> , 31(3), 251-263.	This study aims to explore the impact of the mentoring process for novice teachers in Sweden during their first year of teaching.	Seven novice teachers who were receiving mentoring in schools in Sweden participated in this study. The sample consisted of five women and two men from both elementary and secondary schools.	<p>Participants were interviewed four times. Three times during their induction year and once when the mentoring had ended. The interviews were semi-structured and the questions were largely the same each time they were interviewed.</p> <p>Transcriptions were read multiple times to find patterns and similarities and the results were organised according to the questions of the study.</p>	<p>Only the findings of the interviews which concerned mentoring are reported.</p> <p>Frequency of mentoring – five mentees reported meeting their mentor weekly or fortnightly for one or two hour discussions. One mentee changed mentor and one established a cooperative relationship with another teacher (as opposed to their mentor).</p> <p>Contents of the mentor meetings – five mentee participants used the time to talk about things that had recently happened and two regularly planned for their discussions with their mentors. The mentees were not provided with suggestions for possible discussion topics, only informed that the discussions should focus on their own needs. Five participants noted that they mainly talked to their mentor about the different tasks</p>	<p>There were a small number of participants, which may limit transferability, however, the purpose of the research was to gather an in-depth understanding, through the participant perspective, of the effects the mentoring had, had on them. The researcher demonstrates a commitment to providing detailed description to facilitate this understanding. This study uses an appropriate qualitative design to obtain the mentee perspective of the effects of mentoring.</p> <p>The researcher does not discuss their own position or acknowledge any potential bias and influence during the research which could introduce concerns around confirmability.</p> <p>The research is placed into the local context in terms of historical details of</p>

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				<p>of a teacher (e.g. cooperation with parents, problems with colleagues). Only one mentee mentioned discussing teaching questions and only two mentees voluntarily mentioned reflection. When asked directly about reflection, all participants could provide examples. Two suggested they should have reflected more than they did.</p> <p>Mentee development – after one year, six mentees could identify aspects of growth, one mentee was unsure of his development due to the nature of the discussions. Three participants indicated that the mentor had been particularly important for professional development. Three others noted they received both personal and professional support.</p> <p>Significant experiences of mentoring – three mentees stated the opportunity to talk confidentially with an experienced teacher was significant. Two most appreciated the help and support from mentors. All mentees were satisfied with their experience but noted the following improvements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The aim of mentoring must be clearly defined. 2. Mentors must be motivated. 3. The mentees must take responsibility for productive mentorship. 4. The discussions must address the mentee's concerns. 	<p>mentoring and provides some details about the mentoring programme the participants were engaged in. Contextual information, such as participant characteristics (e.g. previous teaching experience) is explored.</p> <p>There was clear criterion to select participants and the researcher transparently describes issues in participant selection.</p> <p>The participants were interviewed at four points over the year so the research encapsulates their views at different points over the year to capture changing views and increase the credibility of the findings.</p> <p>The approach to data analysis is not clear, other than patterns and similarities were found and that the results were organised according to the research questions. It does not explain how themes were drawn or what happened to data which did not 'fit' with the initial research questions. This may indicate issues regarding sensitivity to the data, transparency and confirmability.</p> <p>Understanding and interpretation was also not checked with participants following transcription which could undermine the credibility of the findings.</p>
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					<p>The views of mentors weren't gathered, so their perspective is not included within the research.</p> <p>The impact of the research is outlined in the context of previous research and used to suggest recommendations for future mentoring programmes as well as areas for further research.</p>
<p>Martin, M., & Rippon, J. (2003). Teacher induction: Personal intelligence and the mentoring relationship. <i>Journal of In-Service Education</i>, 29(1), 141-162.</p>	<p>This article aimed to suggest ways in which the professional relationship between a probationer/mentee teacher and induction tutor/mentor could be enhanced by recognising the importance of their interpersonal skills.</p>	<p>271 final year teacher training students were involved in a questionnaire survey.</p> <p>Some volunteers participated in a focus group to explore issues arising from the questionnaire data (number not specified).</p> <p>A group of 20 students agreed to continued communication with the researcher over their induction year.</p>	<p>Two Scottish universities collaborated to gather the data. Questionnaires including open and closed questions were used to gather the data from final year students on teacher training courses. 7 of the 12 question items allowed open responses. Responses to these were used to identify common themes. The data was coded to categorise responses under appropriate headings. Quantitative responses were analysed using SPSS.</p> <p>Focus groups were conducted and the interview schedule was based on the issues arising from the questionnaire data. Sessions were transcribed.</p> <p>To probe the findings in more depth, 20 students continued</p>	<p>The argument in this research is based on the notion of personal intelligence (interpersonal and intrapersonal) postulated by Gardner (1983). Three of the dimensions of emotional intelligence identified by Goleman (1996) are also postulated to be relevant to this study. These are self-awareness, empathy and social skills. These two perspectives on personal intelligence and its potential development are noted to illuminate the findings of the research and inform analysis.</p> <p>The study highlighted the importance of a quality mentoring relationship. There was a focus on the nature and extent of feedback. Mentees were more concerned with personal than professional traits of their mentor. 'Approachability' was mentioned most frequently as seen as desirable (86% of respondents noted this). In this category, the words given included friendly, available, understanding and not domineering.</p>	<p>The questionnaire was piloted before a revised version was used in the study.</p> <p>The authors note the limitations of the sample size/response rate for the survey (11% response rate).</p> <p>Both quantitative and qualitative responses were gathered using the survey to allow for triangulation of data to enhance credibility.</p> <p>The time of, and number of participants in, the focus groups was not identified.</p> <p>The paper noted how data was collected from students over their induction year but it does not detail, for example, what the face-to-face meetings entailed (e.g. whether there was an interview schedule or how they were structured).</p> <p>The authors do not identify the type of quantitative analysis used for quantitative survey responses, just the software used.</p>

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			<p>to participate in their induction year. They engaged in 5 face-to-face meetings and regular email contact.</p>	<p>In terms of feedback, mentees were interested in the interpersonal skills of the individual giving the feedback as well as the quality of the feedback. There were differences in responses as to whether the same person should undertake the supporter and assessor role. Respondents noted the role of both formal and informal feedback and the importance of how feedback is delivered. They recognised the role of criticism delivered in an understanding way. This is explored within the context of theory which postulates the way criticism is delivered impacts the effectiveness, satisfaction and productivity of the person at work (Goleman, 1998). The authors note some techniques which can be employed to enhance dialogue when giving feedback using theory and previous research.</p> <p>Participants noted the importance of being fully involved in mentoring and being valued. They noted the need for feedback to be a two-way process involving real dialogue. Their comments included being involved in self-evaluation. However there was also a lack of confidence about their ability to be objective about their own performance. Several mentioned the tendency to be over-critical.</p> <p>The authors also note the new teachers' role in receiving feedback in terms of</p>	<p>How the qualitative survey responses were analysed is outlined in some detail.</p> <p>The focus group interview schedule was designed to explore the issues arising from the questionnaire. How the focus group data was analysed is not clear. The authors also do not state how the data collected through following the students over their induction year was analysed. These factors influence the credibility, dependability and confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>The focus groups and continued communication with 20 students added richness to the data.</p> <p>The authors identified an analytical framework for the data analysis which was based on Gardner's (1983) personal intelligences and the concept of emotional intelligence proposed by Goleman (1996). These theories were used to "illuminate the findings of this study" and to "inform the analysis and discussion". The authors do not outline explicitly how these theories were used to inform data analysis or the process when data did not 'fit' these theories.</p> <p>The authors link the findings with existing research throughout the results section. Extracts of transcriptions are used to support the statements of findings.</p>
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				<p>being open to feedback and being willing to learn from it.</p> <p>The authors conclude that both mentees and mentors require training to understand the complex set of skills required for mentoring relationships to be a success.</p>	<p>The researchers do not discuss their own position or role which could impact on the confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>The importance and impact of the findings in terms of developing mentoring practice are discussed.</p>
<p>Kilburg, G.M., & Hancock, T. (2006). Addressing sources of collateral damage in four mentoring programs. <i>Teachers College Record</i>, 108(7), 1321-1338.</p>	<p>The research aimed to explore the types of problems encountered by mentoring Teams; to determine which problems occur on a regular basis; and explore what impact intervention procedures have on mentoring team members.</p>	<p>This study involved mentors and new teachers from 149 mentoring teams across four school districts over a two-year period.</p>	<p>A qualitative approach was used involving multiple data collection techniques. Data was gathered from fieldwork by spending time in the same setting as participants, providing first-hand accounts and using survey and interview data.</p> <p>Data was collected over a two-year period with the survey and interview processes being repeated with a new cohort of new teachers.</p> <p>Participants (both mentors and new teachers) were asked to assess the mentoring program at four points through the year. Surveys included open-ended questions. Participants also discussed their comments on the survey. Surveys were analysed to identify common</p>	<p>The first year - Of the 44 mentoring teams, 33 reported that they had no problems and 11 teams identified a range of problems in their mentoring relationships. Time was typically a common factor in problems. Reoccurring problems included lack of time; mentors not being in the same school, subject, speciality, grade level; poor match between the new teacher and mentor; poor communication and coaching skills; and lack of emotional support.</p> <p>The second year – from teams within two new school district, 17 out of 78 teams indicated they experienced problems in their relationships. From the districts who had participated in the first year, 7 of the 27 new mentoring teams reported problems. 10 mentoring teams reported encountering reoccurring problems. 3 of the 7 teams who had participated in the first and second years of the study reported encountering regular problems. These problems appeared consistent over the first and second year of study. Reoccurring problems highlighted in the</p>	<p>The purpose of the study is clearly outlined.</p> <p>Multiple data collection techniques were used to triangulate the findings increasing the credibility.</p> <p>Data collection was coordinated by the principal researcher who designed the school districts mentoring programs and was also the trainer for the four school districts' programs. This may introduce concerns around confirmability.</p> <p>The researchers report that, because the assessment process was part of an ongoing evaluation of the mentoring program, there was no intent by the researcher to prompt the participants to answer in any specific way. This should increase the credibility of the findings.</p> <p>The researcher does not outline how the survey was developed.</p> <p>When identifying common problems from the surveys another trainer was</p>

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			<p>problems. The information gathered during the discussions was analysed and reduced to a list of categories of problems encountered by mentoring teams. Reoccurring problems were then identified.</p> <p>Mentoring team members that had identified reoccurring problems in the surveys were interviewed either individually or in small groups over the school year to develop an understanding of the impact of the reoccurring problems on the mentoring relationship. Field notes were taken by the interviewer and transcribed.</p> <p>The research team then determined which problems could be addressed through intervention. Selection was based on the frequency of the problem (over time and between mentoring teams). The researcher assisted the mentoring coordinators in deciding intervention strategies. After implementation, the mentoring team members were interviewed about the</p>	<p>second year of the study included: lack of time; mentor and new teacher not in the same building or subject; having a shared mentor; poor match between new teacher and mentor; poor communication and coaching skills; lack of emotional support; personality conflict.</p> <p>Teachers' response to intervention procedures – mentoring teams provided updates of the effectiveness of intervention strategies. All of the 35 teachers who reported encountering problems identified time as the factor most negatively impacting them. The use of email, telephone conversations and meeting outside school were suggestions. The impact of these were variable, for example, one new teacher ignored the interventions and three mentors stated that they could not respond in a timely way to mentees (e.g. via email/telephone). Most mentoring teams understood time would be an issue and most members were willing to work through the time management concern. Some specialist teachers felt they were not given the necessary support. Seven teams experienced personality conflicts and required mediation by mentoring coordinators to resolve this conflict. Only one of these teams reported that the mediation process did not work for them. Twelve mentors were not in the same school as their mentees. Intervention involved providing a new mentor at the</p>	<p>consulted, increasing the credibility of the findings.</p> <p>How discussions regarding the survey were conducted is not outlined and how the survey data was reduced to categories is not detailed, i.e. the type of analysis (including what happened to data that did not 'fit'). This impacts on the transparency, credibility and confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>Interviews were conducted to add a greater depth and richness to the data collected.</p> <p>The structure of the interviews is not detailed.</p> <p>How the transcription data from interviews/field notes was analysed is not detailed. This impacts on the transparency, credibility and confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>How problems were selected for intervention is clearly outlined.</p> <p>The researcher was involved in developing intervention strategies and this may introduce concerns regarding confirmability.</p> <p>The researchers note that the data reduction for the second year of the study occurred one year after the first and therefore there was no conscious attempt</p>
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			strategy to determine its success or failure.	school in which the mentee was teaching. Seven did not have experience teaching at the same grade level as their mentee. In these cases, the mentor with experience in the grade level mentored alongside the original mentor. All 35 of the new teachers reported emotional support was a critical aspect of the mentoring relationship. Some felt they were not receiving this support but almost all mentors felt they were providing emotional support. Interventions included problem-solving time or work with coordinators.	by the researcher to replicate the commonly occurring problems. This may increase the credibility of the findings. The paper outlines the importance and impact of the findings and recommendations for future research.
Harrison, J., Dymoke, S., & Pell, T. (2004). Mentoring beginning teachers in secondary schools: An analysis of practice. <i>Teaching and Teacher education</i> , 22(8), 1055-1067.	This paper aims to examine beginning teachers' perceptions of particular aspects of mentoring experiences during their first year of teaching.	Thirty subject induction tutors from three Education Authorities in England participated in three intervention meetings aimed to provide strategies to support the reflective practice of beginning teachers. 85 beginning teachers participated in	This paper presents some empirical research from a two-year funded project exploring the professional development of subject induction tutors. It also reports on questionnaire data from beginning teachers and semi-structured interviews with sub-samples of beginning teachers. The questionnaire was administered at the start (October) and end (June) of the induction year and contained both open and closed questions. Questionnaires were coded to track changes across the year for each participant.	The findings related to exploring the mentoring relationship are focused on, as these were the most relevant to the literature review question. The questionnaire data revealed three broad teacher 'types' based on their experiences of induction and mentoring. These were Type 1 teachers who were receiving relatively poor induction training and support, Type 2 teachers receiving adequate levels and Type 3 teachers receiving much better training and support. At the end of the year the scores correlated with the start of the year indices for the different types ($r=0.34$). There were very few discriminatory variables between the groups of participants and any which did occur were not maintained later in the year. This indicates the intervention programme did	The induction tutors involved in this study were part of an intervention group aimed to support reflective practice and therefore the results may not be transferable to others not involved in this professional development programme. Both questionnaires were piloted with a small number of beginning teachers. The semi-structured interview questions were developed from questionnaire data. They were trialled with a few beginning teachers and discussed with academic colleagues. Questionnaire responses were examined for discriminatory variables to support the validity/credibility of the findings.

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		<p>the questionnaire data collection at the beginning of their induction year and 61 responded at the end of their induction year. This included beginning teachers being mentored by induction tutors who participated in the intervention (Group 1) and those being mentored by tutors not engaged in the intervention meetings (Group 2).</p> <p>A stratified sample of 35 participants were involved in interviews.</p>	<p>Responses were analysed using SPSS, including being examined for discriminatory variables between groups. A scoring system was devised to provide an index score based on responses.</p> <p>The 'types' of teacher distinguished from the questionnaire data was used in the stratified sampling strategy for telephone interviews. Thirty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the induction year with beginning teachers. The postal survey data and emergent themes were used to devise the semi-structured interview schedule.</p> <p>The grouping of responses to the open-ended questions was conducted by one of the authors by checking key points arising from the survey data against the recordings. This provided an opportunity to identify general and unique themes in relation to mentoring function for the interviews.</p>	<p>not result in beginning teachers reporting noticeable, short-term changes in mentor practice.</p> <p>The beginning teachers' reports of good mentoring indicated someone they could collaborate with over marking/moderation and a role model for the planning and delivery of work in the classroom. Specific mentor attributes were noted which included interpersonal skills and professional attributes. A key attribute in connection with being 'professional' was not being seen as 'controlling' and working alongside the NQT as a colleague. The level and nature of support was variable. Best mentoring practice included specific subject related discussion, clarification of subject knowledge and assistance with activities. For teachers who reported a more unsupportive start to their induction year, collaborative, collegial and supportive ways of working appeared to compensate for the lack of formal mentoring. Although mentors were largely described in positive terms, there were negative experiences. In such circumstances some NQTs discuss 'self-monitoring'.</p> <p>There was variation in the extent to which mentees could negotiate their targets and 58% of respondents at the end of the year reported being pro-active in asking for observations/feedback.</p>	<p>The authors outline how they developed a classification system for teacher 'types' from the questionnaire data, enhancing the dependability.</p> <p>The sampling strategy adopted (following the analysis of questionnaire data) is clearly outlined.</p> <p>35 interviews were conducted to collect 'rich' qualitative data. Within the findings section, this qualitative data is used to explore and elaborate the findings, for example, extracts of transcription are used to explain or develop findings.</p> <p>The researchers note that activities such as clarifying meaning and drawing conclusions at a review meeting of all interviewers aimed to eliminate interviewer bias and, "identify general and unique themes" for all interviews. How themes are identified (i.e. the type of analysis used) is not outlined in detail.</p> <p>Steps were taken to reduce interviewer bias (e.g. through interviewer review meetings). However, the researchers do not outline or explore their own position or role which could impact on the confirmability of the research. The findings are considered in association with existing literature and theoretical frameworks.</p>
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SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

					The impact and importance of the results for mentoring practice is considered and recommendations are suggested.
Heilbronn, R., Jones, C., Bubb, S., & Totterdell, M. (2002). School-based Induction Tutors: A challenging role. <i>School Leadership and Membership</i> , 22(4), 371-388.	The article aims to critically examine the key role of the school-based induction tutor in managing the induction process.	<p>An NQT, induction tutor and the head teacher from 24 schools participated in the interviews.</p> <p>Eighteen Appropriate Bodies (i.e. Local Education Authorities/Independent Schools Council) participated in interviews. Three case study schools were identified from each of eight Appropriate Bodies.</p> <p>568 NQTs from the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 induction</p>	<p>Case studies comprising semi-structured interviews, field notes, school produced documents and questionnaire surveys were used.</p> <p>An NQT, induction tutor and the head teacher from 24 schools participated in two interviews at the beginning and end of the induction year.</p> <p>Telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from 18 Appropriate Bodies. Eight Appropriate Bodies were then asked to identify a 'best practice' school for induction. The researchers then selected a further two case study schools from each of the eight Appropriate Bodies.</p> <p>A large number of NQTs, induction tutors and head teachers completed surveys and were selected using DfES databases. Semi-structured</p>	<p>Most NQTs interviewed in the research believed their induction year had provided them with professional development opportunities. They noted their development as teachers as not resulting from being assessed against standards but from professional dialogue on practice with an experienced mentor. Head teachers and induction tutors overwhelmingly agreed induction helped NQTs become more effective teachers with relation to measured outcomes. Induction tutors recognised the need for standardised assessments of NQTs without losing their perspective on their dual role in professional development and assessment. The qualities, skills and experience of induction tutors influenced how the two strands were successfully balanced. A case study induction tutor illustrated the possibilities for tensions between the functions of support, monitoring and assessment. The induction activity rated most highly was lesson observation, both of and by the NQT, accompanied by dialogue about practice. The authors note that the way NQTs expressed they learn best fits with 'reflection-on-action' (Schon, 1995).</p>	<p>This paper draws on empirical data from a large, national, DfES-funded project which evaluated the implementation of an induction policy. This provides a large sample size and there were multiple data collection methods used with a variety of stakeholders (mentors, mentees, head teachers, Appropriate Bodies) to allow for triangulation of data. This increases the credibility of the findings and the sample size and geographical spread increases transferability.</p> <p>How the findings were analysed is not outlined. How the findings from the initial study are used within the paper, for example, how they were selected is not clear. How the researcher determined the heading/subheadings within the findings section of the paper is not clear. There are some transcription extracts supporting points within the sections, however, how these were selected, and what happened with data that did not 'fit', is not outlined.</p> <p>The findings section primarily uses previous research or policy as opposed</p>

SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

		cohorts, 238 induction tutors and 247 head teachers completed surveys.	interviews with key personal in supply teacher agencies were also undertaken.	<p>NQTs valued the individual setting of targets or objectives. The successful induction tutors interviewed in the 'best practice' schools were enthusiastic, committed to new teacher development and valued the opportunity to be mentors. They felt they could learn from NQTs and one reflected that preparing work for NQTs supported whole school development. They noted the need for empathy within the mentoring relationship.</p> <p>Induction tutors drew on a variety of sources for preparation for their role. The majority of respondents felt confident they had been well prepared and supported in their mentor role. The authors note that many induction tutors appear to have managed to gain training, or to train themselves to be competent assessors. The researchers note that this is not surprising given induction tutors seniority of their position within school, but note that support and training should be a fundamental entitlement for the induction tutor. In terms of sources of support and preparation, the most frequently mentioned resource was the tutors' schools. 72% of tutors noted they had received training from their Local Education Authority, with 2 out of 3 participants reporting the quality and appropriateness of Appropriate Bodies' support was useful.</p> <p>Schools with successful induction practices had a shared understanding and</p>	<p>transcription extracts/survey data to develop points.</p> <p>The researchers do not outline their own position or role which impacts on the confirmability of the findings.</p> <p>The implications of the paper for future practice are outlined.</p>
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SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

				<p>ethos of the learning environment and supportive staff.</p> <p>The main issue for induction tutors was finding the time to fulfil the role, particularly when NQTs needed extra support.</p>	
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Appendix D
Training Session Slides

Session 1 Slide 1



Session 1 Slide 2




Session 1 Slide 3

INTRODUCTIONS AND BEST HOPES

Introductions

What are you hoping to get out of this session?



Session 1 Slide 4

AIMS OF SESSION

- To develop an understanding of solution-focused thinking
- To have the opportunity to practice some solution-focused techniques

Session 1 Slide 5

SHARING POSITIVES

What have you been pleased with in your work recently?

Is it useful/helpful to share positives?

"People think better throughout the whole meeting if the very first thing they do is say something true and positive about how their work or the work of the group is going" (Kline, 1999, p.107).

Session 1 Slide 6

SOLUTION-FOCUSED THINKING

- Solution-focused practice is a strengths-based approach: positive psychology.
- The principles underpinning Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (de Shazer, 1985) are:
 - Developing a cooperative relationship -adopting a 'not knowing stance' to promote the client taking an 'expert' position
 - Creating a solution rather than a problem focus
 - Focusing conversation on exceptions – looking for 'what's right' and 'what's working'
 - Setting measurable attainable goals
 - Scaling the ongoing attainment of goals

(McGhee & Stark, 2018)

- Solution focused thinking arose from the principles of this therapeutic approach

Session 1 Slide 7

SOLUTION-FOCUSED THINKING CONTINUED.....

- Assumes competence
 - Emphasises individual's strengths and resources
 - Treats individuals as experts in their own lives
 - Facilitates individuals to build on their competencies and resources
 - Supports individuals to explore/achieve their preferred futures/outcomes
 - Collaborative

(O'Connell, 2003)

- Self-determination theory – there are three psychological needs which need to be met – autonomy, competence, relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000)
- Why might these ideas be helpful?

Session 1 Slide 8

MENTORING

- What do you enjoy about being an NQT mentor? What else?
- What skills/qualities do you bring to each of these areas of enjoyment?
- What do these skills/qualities look like in practice? Can you give examples?
-


Session 1 Slide 9

RESOURCE ACTIVATION

- **Resource Activation** – People have strengths/capabilities/resources which they utilise
 - Look for resources not deficits
 - Explore what is already contributing to individual's successes/coping
- **Example** – identify a change you have made (e.g. in your practice) which you are pleased with.
 - Can you describe the change?
 - Which skills/qualities that you possess have supported this?
 - What is it about you....?
 - Where else have you used these skills/resources/qualities

Session 1 Slide 10

Break



Session 1 Slide 11

PLANNING

- What are your best hopes/outcomes?
 - From this meeting/from our work together

Or...

- What are your best hopes within this outcome?
- Establishes a mentee-led contract:
 - Looks forwards/takes the individual seriously/assumes motivation

Session 1 Slide 12

SCALING

- The process begins in the future (Shennan, 2014)
- Solution-focused scales (0-10) are outcome focused with 10 being the presence of what it required rather than the absence of problems.
- Scales can:
 - Elicit what is already working well
 - Trace possible ways forwards towards the outcome/goal
 - Measure progress over time
 - Focus in on multiple problems by working with several scales (e.g. different teaching competencies)
 - Useful supervision tool for assessing development and competency.

(Brief.org.uk)

Session 1 Slide 13

SCALING

- If we have a scale from 0 to 10, and 10 is (outcome) and 0 is (the opposite of 10). What point on the scale are you at/would you see things now?
- What is making it a...now, compared to a 0? What are the differences? What is it that you have done/are doing that has helped you get from a 0 to ...? What else?
- If 0 – what are you doing which is helping it not becoming worse? Or, if appropriate – can you say when you were higher up the scale, even a little bit?

Session 1 Slide 14

SCALING

0 10

Opposite of 10/ worst possible Best Hopes

Present Position:
What have you done to reach this point?
How did you do that?
What does that say about you?
Who would agree?
What else have you done?

Session 1 Slide 15

SCALING CONTINUED

Focus on moving just one point – small signs of progress:

- How might you know that you have moved (one point higher)? What might be the first small sign?
- What will move you one point up the scale?
- What might you be doing/thinking/feeling differently?
- Who else might notice?

- While you aspire to get to a 10, where might be a 'good enough' point on the scale to get to, on your way there? (Shennan, 2014). How will you know you are there?

Session 1 Slide 16

SCALING

Realistic Aim: Where would you need to reach in order to feel well enough satisfied?

0 ————— 10

Present Position + 1: If you moved up one point on the scale:
What might you notice different?
What else?
What will others notice about you?
What would they see?

Session 1 Slide 17

SCALING PRACTICE EXAMPLE

In pairs, can one person identify a current project (e.g. at work). Describe what you have done already towards the project (this can be supported through your partner's questioning).

With your partner, use a scale to identify where you are now (in terms of the project) e.g. 10 = completion of the project/outcome 0 = opposite (e.g. when you first thought of the project/outcome)

Use questioning to explore the gap between 0 and where they are now to focus on what your partner has already done – use questioning to explore what they have done/what skills and resources they have used. Remember to keep questioning e.g. anything else? N.B. Don't try to change the behaviours of your partner.

Then explore what the next step would look like when it is done? What will they notice first? Who else will notice?

Summarise – reflect back the qualities and resources discussed and what the next step will look like.

Session 1 Slide 18

REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

- Questions
- What could you take forward into practice? When could you use these techniques?
- “It's simple, but it ain't easy” (de Shazer & Berg, 1997)
- Not “solution-forced” (Shennan, 2014)
- Next session – 12th June
- Evaluations

**THANKS
FOR
LISTENING**

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- <https://www.brief.org.uk/>

Session 2 Slide 1



A presentation slide with a white background. At the top, there is a horizontal bar divided into three segments: dark teal, light green, and grey. Below this bar, the title "SOLUTION-FOCUSED THINKING" is written in a large, dark teal, sans-serif font. Underneath the title, "SESSION 2" is written in a smaller, light green, sans-serif font. The lower half of the slide is occupied by a large, solid dark teal rectangle.

SOLUTION-FOCUSED THINKING

SESSION 2

Session 2 Slide 2



A presentation slide with a white background. At the top, there is a horizontal bar divided into three segments: dark teal, light green, and grey. Below this bar, a dark teal rectangular box contains the word "HOUSEKEEPING" in white, sans-serif font. Underneath this box, a list of six items is presented, each preceded by a small green square bullet point.

HOUSEKEEPING

- Fire exits
- Toilets
- Break
- Practice activities
- Research project
- Right to withdraw

Session 2 Slide 3

AIMS OF SESSION

- To provide opportunities to reflect on practice
- To further develop an understanding of solution-focused thinking
- To have the opportunity to practice some solution-focused techniques

Session 2 Slide 4

RECAP OF BEST HOPES

- Best Hopes
- What are your best hopes for today's session?
- Any questions?

Session 2 Slide 5

PRACTICE DISCUSSION

- Reflections on practice – what has gone well?
 - Observations
 - Examples
 - Problem-solving opportunity

Session 2 Slide 6

RECAP – KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SOLUTION-FOCUSED APPROACH

- Establishing a context of collaboration
- Developing a sense of competence and resourcefulness
- Includes ideas of professional development
- Scaling questions
- **Exploring the preferred future**
- **Determining coping skills**
- **Determining what is working well – exception finding**
- Constructive feedback

Session 2 Slide 7

PREFERRED FUTURES

- What are your best hopes/outcomes ? Or...What are your best hopes within this outcome?
- How might the individual know that these hopes have been realised, and what difference may this make?
- What progress is the individual making towards their hopes
- Focus on description
 - Make it concrete
 - Sequential descriptions – from first signs
 - What would you notice rather than what would no longer be
 - Tangible/observable
 - From the perspective of others – what would someone else notice

Shannen (2014)

Session 2 Slide 8

THE MIRACLE QUESTION

Session 2 Slide 9

THE MIRACLE QUESTION

The miracle question (de Shazer, 1985) helps the individual around the obstacle of “what to do?” to “suppose it’s done”

Imagine that tonight, while you are asleep, a miracle happens and your hopes from coming here are realised (or the problems that bring you here are resolved), but because you are asleep you don’t realise the miracle has happened. What are you going to notice that is different about your life, when you wake up, that begins to tell you the miracle has happened?

Session 2 Slide 10

Break



Session 2 Slide 11

COPING QUESTIONS

- Acknowledgement
- So things are very overwhelming/difficult/tough for you at the moment.....
 - What are you doing that is helping you keep going?
 - How are you getting by?
 - How are you managing to get through?
- Focus on what individuals are doing which is currently helpful for them

Session 2 Slide 12

EXCEPTIONS

- An exception refers to a time when a person does not follow the problem 'rule'.
- What they do instead is follow an alternative path, potentially a pathway to 'solution'.
- Exploring and amplifying 'exceptional' behaviour is a way to help a person to find their own solution.
- Building on parts of the preferred future that are happening already.

Session 2 Slide 13

EXCEPTION FINDING

- When doesn't it happen?
- When is that just a little bit better?
- At what moments is.....?
- When is it easier to cope with?
- When doesn't it last as long?
- Persistence – Lipchik (1988) – Not even a little bit, sometimes?

Session 2 Slide 14

QUESTIONS ABOUT EXCEPTIONS

- How did you do that?
- What did you do that helped that to happen?
- What else did you do that helped? What difference would that make? What difference has that made? What difference is that making?
- Future orientated – supposing you continue to... , what other differences might you notice?

Shennan (2014)

Session 2 Slide 15

PRACTICE REFLECTION

- Think of a mentoring session or a recent discussion you have had with a NQT/student teacher.
 - Could you use solution-focused strategies/techniques? How?
 - What impact do you think they could have?

Session 2 Slide 16

STRUCTURE

Concentrate on what has happened differently between meetings which is helping the individual to work towards their outcomes – What's better?

- What have you noticed that is different? What changes have happened since last session? What has been better? What have you noticed yourself doing that tells you things are going in the right direction? What else?
- If positive response – How did you do that? What did you do to achieve this? What does that say about you? What qualities did you draw on? What difference did that make? Is that making? How have you been able to tell? What effect has this had on those around you? What else is better?
- If negative response – Acknowledgement / Coping questions - How did you cope with that? / How have you stopped it getting worse? / Explore exceptions /eliciting differences – better parts

Session 2 Slide 17

STRUCTURE

Scaling Revisited

- Can we go back to the scale we used last time, where 10 is you've reached your outcome, and 0 is the worst point – where are you now? Is there anything else that puts you up at e.g. 5, other than what you have already described? What is the next step for you? What comes next to move up one point on the scale? (get a concrete description) What will tell you that you're moving further up the scale...?

Ending

- Give feedback on skills, strengths, resources which the individual has discussed.
- Highlight what the person is already doing which is useful. Summarise the exceptions and signs of the preferred future/outcomes which are already happening.
- Consider whether it would be useful to give the individual a task (noticing or doing)

Session 2 Slide 18

THE PROCESS


- Listening
 - Really **hearing** what the supervisee/mentee is saying
- Exploring
 - Gaining information on both surface and underlying factors
- Agreeing action
 - What (if anything) is to happen next?
- Reviewing
 - Taking the opportunity to revisit and check

Taken from the CLEAR supervision model (Hawkins and Schoet, 2012)

Session 2 Slide 19

REFLECTION AND QUESTIONS

- Questions
- Have your best hopes been met?
- What could you take forward into practice?
- “It’s simple, but it ain’t easy” (de Shazer & Berg, 1997)
- Evaluations
- Interviews



Session 2 Slide 20

KEY REFERENCES

- De Shazer, S., Berg, I.K., Lipchik, E., Nunnally, E., Molnar, A., Gingerich, W. & Weiner-Davis, M. (1986). Brief therapy: Focused solution development. *Family Process*, 25(2), 207-221.
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- Shennan, G. (2014). *Solution focused practice: Effective communication to facilitate change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Appendix E

Participants' Best Hopes

- To develop strategies to support reflection by the NQT.
- To develop contacts with others who are also NQT mentors.
- Strategies to develop NQT confidence.
- Building confidence in the role of mentor.
- Strategies for the NQT who doesn't "get it".
- Ways to support NQTs to be the best they can in order to get the most out of their year.
- Ways to support other NQT mentors.
- Development of practice: Finding new methods to share with NQT mentor to support NQT.
- Networking with other professionals
- Assistance and guidance in supporting trainees/NQTs outside of the classroom.
- To support the NQT through good quality discussions.
- To offer alternative experiences to develop teaching styles.
- Alternative approaches that develop the NQT's independence.
- To help other NQT mentors in our school and collaboration.
- How to support an NQT who is struggling with their career.
- Finding methods to support an NQT for the last part of their training and beyond.
- To help NQTs achieve well. To encourage NQTs to ask for help.

Possible Groupings

Supporting NQTs: developing practice:

Reflection/confidence/independence/achievement:

- To develop strategies to support reflection by the NQT.
- Strategies to develop NQT confidence.
- Ways to support NQTs to be the best they can to get the most out of their year.
- Assistance and guidance in supporting trainees/NQTs outside of the classroom.
- To support the NQT through good quality discussions.
- Alternative approaches that develop the NQT's independence.
- Finding methods to support the NQT for the last part of their training and beyond.
- To help NQTs achieve well. To encourage NQTs to ask for help.

Supporting NQTs facing difficulties:

- How to support a NQT who is struggling with her career.
- Strategies for the NQT who doesn't "get it".

Supporting other mentors: developing practice:

- To help other NQT mentors in our school and collaboration.
- Ways to support other NQT mentors.
- Development of practice: Finding new methods to support NQTs to share with NQT mentors.

Personal development:

- Building confidence in the role of mentor.
- To offer alternative experiences to develop teaching styles.

Networking:

- To develop contacts with others who are also NQT mentors.
- Networking with other professionals

Appendix F

Head Teacher Information Sheet

Head Teacher Information Sheet

Hello,

My name is [NAME], I am currently attending the [EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE] to train as an Educational Psychologist and I am working for the [LOCAL AUTHORITY] Educational Psychology Service. I am carrying out a research study to explore the potential benefits of using solution-focused approaches in NQT mentoring.

You are invited, as a school, to be involved with this research and the following letter provides more information about what is involved. Please spend some time reading the letter before deciding whether you would be happy for mentors in your school to be involved in the training and research. If you are happy to participate, please could you sign and return the attached consent and pass on the relevant information sheet and consent forms to the designated mentors within your school. Their individual consent, as well as the school's consent, will be required for participation.

Title of research:

Developing collegial mentoring in schools: Exploring the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

What does the study involve?

This study involves participants (designated NQT mentors) attending two short training sessions (approximately 2 hours in length). It is planned for these training sessions to be delivered by an Educational Psychologist and take place on [DATE] and [DATE] at [LOCAL VENUE] (there will be no cost for the training sessions). These training sessions will explore solution-focused approaches and their potential use in mentoring sessions. Solution-focused approaches are strengths-based and aim to facilitate individuals to build upon their competencies and resources, emphasising individual's strengths and successes to create solutions. They will involve input on solution-focused principles and strategies, for example, exploring strategies such as seeking exceptions to mentees' concerns so they can extend what is working well and using scaling questions to assist the mentee to identify and evaluate progress (Juhnke, 1996). There will be a mix of delivery methods with both, information giving alongside more active participation. Participants will be asked to complete a short self-report scale measuring feelings of self-efficacy both before and after the training. They will also be invited to take part in semi-structured interviews which will explore their views and experiences regarding the appropriateness of solution-focused approaches, their influence on practice and the effectiveness of their use within particular contexts.

Why am I carrying out this research?

I am interested in the perceived helpfulness of participation in solution-focused training for practising NQT mentors. Research has suggested induction mentors play an essential

role in the professional development and support of NQTs and that this mentoring practice has great potential to produce a variety of benefits for the mentee, mentor and schools in general (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009). However, evidence also suggests that these benefits are not always realised (Tickle, 2000) and the preparation of mentors has been suggested to be a priority area for those concerned with the development and well-being of new teachers (Hobson et al., 2009). The current evidence base on the effects of different kinds of mentor training and support is relatively sparse (Hobson et al., 2009) and therefore this research hopes to add to the research on mentor education and additionally offer mentors specific training related to their role. I hypothesise that training in solution-focused approaches may develop practice by supporting mentors with the language and specific strategies to facilitate teacher reflection and collaboration. I also suggest that such training may enhance mentor's feelings of competence.

What will happen with the information?

Once I have gathered the information, I will analyse the data and write it up as part of my doctoral research. This will contain the information gathered but will not include the school's name or any other information which may identify individual participants. Individual participants will be given a different name within the report so that they remain anonymous (N.B. due to the size and nature of the study there may not be complete anonymity between participants). Information gathered from the study including audio recordings and any notes will be stored in a safe place and destroyed after a maximum of five years.

Your right to withdraw

You have the right to withdraw your consent or decide not to continue with participation at any point during or before your participation. You can also ask for any data collected as a result of your participation to be withdrawn and destroyed on request for a period of up to three weeks after participation. After this point it will not be possible to identify and remove individual data due to the process of analysis used. Individual participants will also hold this right to withdraw.

Any questions?

If you would like to discuss anything in this letter or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on [TELEPHONE CONTACT] or at [EMAIL ADDRESS] and I will be happy to speak with you.

If you would like to be involved in this research project, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me by post to: [LOCAL AUTHORITY] Educational Psychology Service [ADDRESS] or a scanned copy to the email address above.

Thank you,

Appendix G
Head Teacher Consent Form

Consent Form for Head Teacher

This consent form relates to the following research study:

Developing collegial mentoring in schools: Exploring the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

PLEASE SIGN YOUR INITIALS IN ALL BOXES

1. I have read the attached information sheet about the research study which the school has been asked to participate in. It has been explained to me what the purpose of the research is and I understand what it will involve. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any details. ☐
2. I understand that any data gathered within this study will remain confidential. I understand how any data will be stored and what will happen to the data once the research is over. ☐
3. I understand that I am able to withdraw the school from the research study at any time, without the school facing a disadvantage or being obliged to provide a reason. I also understand I can ask for the data to be destroyed up to three weeks after collection. ☐
4. I hereby give my consent for the school to participate in this research study and to be contacted by the email address provided for the purpose of this research. ☐

Head Teacher's name _____

Head Teacher's signature _____

Thank you for your time.

Appendix H
Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Hello,

My name is [NAME], I am currently attending the [EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE] to train to become Educational Psychologist and I am working for the [LOCAL AUTHORITY] Educational Psychology Service. I am carrying out a research study to explore the potential benefits of using solution-focused approaches in NQT mentoring.

You are invited to be involved with this research and the following letter provides more information about what is involved. Please spend some time reading the letter before deciding whether you would be happy to participate in the training and research. Your individual consent, as well as the consent of the school in which you work, will be required for participation (there is a separate information sheet and consent form for Head Teachers).

Title of research:

Developing collegial mentoring in schools: Exploring the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

What does the study involve?

This study involves participants (designated NQT mentors) attending two short training sessions (approximately 2 hours in length). It is planned for these training sessions to be delivered by an Educational Psychologist and take place on [DATE] and [DATE] at [LOCAL VENUE] (there will be no cost for the training sessions). These training sessions will explore solution-focused approaches and their potential use in mentoring sessions. Solution-focused approaches are strengths-based and aim to facilitate individuals to build upon their competencies and resources, emphasising individual's strengths and successes to create solutions. They will involve input on solution-focused principles and strategies, for example exploring strategies such as seeking exceptions to mentees' concerns so they can extend what is working well and, using scaling questions to assist the mentee to identify and evaluate progress (Juhnke, 1996). There will be a mix of delivery methods, with both information giving alongside more active participation. You will be asked to complete a short self-report scale measuring feelings of self-efficacy both before and after the training. You will also be invited to take part in semi-structured interviews which will explore your views and experiences regarding the appropriateness of solution-focused approaches, their influence on your practice and the effectiveness of their use within particular contexts.

Why am I carrying out this research?

I am interested in the perceived helpfulness of participation in solution-focused training for practising NQT mentors. Research has suggested induction mentors play an essential role in the professional development and support of NQTs and that this mentoring practice has great potential to produce a variety of benefits for the mentee, mentor and schools in general (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson, 2009). The preparation of mentors has been suggested to be a priority area for those concerned with the development and well-

being of new teachers, however the current evidence base on the effects of different kinds of mentor training and support is relatively sparse (Hobson et al., 2009). Therefore, this research hopes to add to the research on mentor education and additionally offer mentors specific training related to their role. I hypothesise that training in solution-focused approaches is relevant to the practice of mentoring and that it may offer strategies which can support mentors to further facilitate teacher reflection and collaboration.

What will happen with the information?

Once I have gathered the information, I will analyse the data and write it up as part of my doctoral research. This will contain the information gathered but will not include your school's name or any other information which may identify you as an individual participant. You will be given a different name within the report so that you remain anonymous (N.B. due to the size and nature of this study you may not be completely anonymous to other participants). Information gathered from the study including audio recordings and any notes will be stored in a safe place and destroyed after a maximum of five years.

Your right to withdraw

You have the right to withdraw your consent or decide not to continue with participation at any point during or before your participation. You can also ask for any data collected as a result of your participation to be withdrawn and destroyed on request for a period of up to three weeks after participation. After this point it will not be possible to identify and remove individual data due to the process of analysis used. The school will also hold this right to withdraw.

Any questions?

If you would like to discuss anything in this information sheet or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on [TELEPHONE CONTACT] or at [EMAIL ADDRESS] and I will be happy to speak with you.

If you would like to be involved in this research project, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me by post to: [NAME] , [LOCAL AUTHORITY] Educational Psychology Service, [ADDRESS] or a scanned copy to the email address above.

Thank you,

Appendix I
Participant Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants

This consent form relates to the following research study:

Developing collegial mentoring in schools: Exploring the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

☐

PLEASE SIGN YOUR INITIALS IN ALL BOXES

☐

1. I have read the attached information sheet about the research study which I have been asked to participate in. It has been explained to me what the purpose of the research is and I understand what it will involve. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any details.
2. I understand that any data gathered within this study will remain confidential. I understand that my involvement may be audio recorded. I understand how any data will be stored and what will happen to the data once the research is over.
3. I understand that I am able to withdraw myself from the research study at any time, without needing to provide a reason and that I can ask for my data to be destroyed up to three weeks after collection.
4. I hereby give my consent to take part in the research study and to be contacted by the email address provided for the purpose of this research.

Participant's name _____

Participant's signature_____

Thank you for your time.

Appendix J

Interview Guide

Overarching Research Question:

To explore the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

Research Questions:

1. What are NQT mentors' perceptions of the appropriateness of solution-focused approaches for their mentoring role?
2. Did participation in solution-focused training impact on NQT mentors' self-efficacy?
3. What are the experiences of NQT mentors using solution-focused strategies in their mentoring practices?
4. What do mentors perceive as the barriers and enabling influences in implementing solution-focused approaches in their NQT mentoring role?

Semi-Structured Interview:

To ensure the follow points are included:

- Introductions
- Thanks for participating
- **Reminder of purpose of research**- This research aims to explore the perceived helpfulness of participation in solution-focused training for practising NQT mentors. Research has suggested induction mentors play an essential role in the professional development and support of NQTs, however the current evidence base on the effects of different kinds of mentor training and support is relatively sparse (Hobson et al., 2009). Therefore, this research hopes to add to the research on mentor education and additionally offer mentors specific training related to their role. I hypothesise that training in solution-focused approaches is relevant to the practice of mentoring and that it may offer strategies which can support mentors to further facilitate teacher reflection and collaboration.
- **Right to withdraw** - As this is a research project, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any point. You can also ask for the data collected today to be destroyed for up to three weeks after today's date. After this point, it will not be possible to identify and remove individual data due to the process of analysis that will be used.
- **Data collected** - The collected data will be written up as part of my doctoral research. This will not include your school's name or any other information which may identify you as an individual participant. You will be given a different name within the report so that you remain anonymous (N.B. due to the size and nature of this study you may not be completely anonymous to other participants). Information gathered from the study including audio recordings and any notes will be stored in a safe place and destroyed after a maximum of five years.
- **Confirm consent for interview to be audio recorded** - Are you happy for today's session to be audio recorded?
- Any **questions** at this stage?

SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

- Remind participants briefly about the training they attended by giving a brief summary of the training objectives and very brief summary of what was covered

Interview Schedule:

Introductory Prompts:

- How long have you been mentoring?
- Can you tell me a bit about your mentoring role?
- What aspects of mentoring do you enjoy?
- What influenced you to choose to take part in the SF training and this research? What did you hope it would offer?
- How have you found taking part in the SF training? Were there aspects you would have changed? Which aspects were most useful? Least useful?
- What is your view of solution-focused work?

Research Question 1: What are NQT mentors' perceptions of the appropriateness of solution-focused approaches for their mentoring role:

Possible Prompts:

- **Do you think solution focused approaches are useful to your mentoring role?**

Positive response:

- In what way do you think they are relevant/useful?
- What did you find most valuable in the training?
- How are they useful/relevant?
- Which aspects do you think are most useful/relevant?
- Are there aspects which are not as appropriate?
- What other models/approaches do you find useful?
- Are these more useful? In what ways?

Negative response:

- Can you tell me more about why you feel they are not useful?
- What would have been more helpful?
- Are there any particular parts which you feel are least useful?
- Are there models/approaches which you do find useful? What models/approaches do you find most useful?

Research Question 2: Did participation in solution-focused training impact on NQT mentors' self-efficacy?

Possible Prompts:

SOLUTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES IN NQT MENTORING

- **Has taking part in the training changed how you feel about being an NQT mentor/your mentoring role? Has taking part changed how you perceive your mentoring role?**

Positive response:

- In what ways?
- What was it about the training do you think influenced this change?
- Is this a positive change?

Negative response:

- Can you tell me more about how you feel about being an NQT mentor?
- Were you expecting the training to make a difference to how you feel about being an NQT mentor?
- **Has taking part in the training changed the level of confidence you feel as an NQT mentor?**

Positive response:

- To what extent? How? Would others notice this change?
- Does this change have an impact on your mentoring practice?
- What was it about the training do you think influenced this change?

Negative response:

- Were you hoping the training would make a difference to how you feel about being an NQT mentor?
- Are there any aspects of the mentoring role which you feel you would benefit from support in?

Research Question 3: What are the experiences of NQT mentors using solution-focused strategies in their mentoring practices?

Possible Prompts:

- **Has your participation in the training (on solution-focused approaches) influenced your practice in any way?**

Positive response:

- How? In which ways? What does that look like in practice?
- How is that different from prior to the training?
- Is this a positive influence?

Negative response:

- Were you hoping it would?
- Were there any you would have liked to have used but have not had the opportunity to use?
- Are there any aspects of your mentoring practice which you feel you would benefit from support in?

Research Question 4: What do mentors perceive as the barriers and enabling influences in implementing solution-focused approaches in the NQT mentoring role?

Possible Prompts:

- **Did any issues come up for you when implementing solution-focused approaches?**

Positive response:

- Can you tell me more about these issues?
- What impact did these issues have?
- Do you think these would always be an issue?

Negative response:

- Can you think of anything you did which helped prevent issues arising?
- **What helped you implement solution-focused thinking into your mentoring role?**
- **Was there anything which made it harder to implement solution-focused approaches?**
- **Would additional support have been useful? What would that look like? What further training or support would help you in your role?**

Additional prompts

- Can you tell me more about that? Anything else?

Ending:

- Is there anything I haven't asked you about this training/research topic which you would like to share?
- Thank for taking part
- Check for questions
- Give participants **debrief sheet** including details of their right to withdraw their data (3 weeks after today's date)/how their data will be stored and used/researcher's contact details.

Appendix K

Example of Initial Coding of Transcript Extract

Int	In terms of what the training focused on, do you think there was anything in the solution focused approaches that are useful to your mentoring role?	
G	<p>So some of the strategies and things they talked about. I really liked the number line thing. I found that really useful. I quite like a visual. So I tried it with the NQT and one of the students as well and I just went “Where are you at the moment? Where do you want to be?” And because they just want “Oh actually” I could break it down and it made it more manageable for them as well because actually they’ve looked at somebody goes “How do I get better?” And I went “Just do 1 step” And they’re like “Oh ok, so I don’t need to get to 10 straightaway” And I was like “No you can just move up one number. How are you going to do that?” or “How do you stay at the same point rather than going backwards” and that seemed to work really really well. I like that. I found it quite difficult, it’s getting out of the habit because you have to sit there and kind of go “What else? What else?” rather than just go after a point “Or just do this” So it was getting out of the habit of just giving them the answer and actually using the questioning and getting them to come up with the solutions themselves. It’s a bit of a</p>	<p>Some strategies useful to the mentoring role.</p> <p>Scaling = “number line”</p> <p>Liked scaling</p> <p>Like visual</p> <p>Framing conversations using questioning</p> <p>Progress orientated process</p> <p>Making it more manageable for NQTs</p> <p>Making NQTs feel better about their practice and framing progress in a realistic way.</p> <p>Scaling questions = NQTs feeling better</p> <p>Scaling worked well.</p> <p>Asking questions = not directive</p> <p>Asking questions = different approach</p> <p>Breaking habit of ‘advice giving’ – “mind shift” = useful.</p> <p>Training provided questioning</p> <p>Getting more from NQT = good.</p> <p>Got more from the NQTs and they took more responsibility/ownership and were more reflective.</p> <p>NQT taking more control</p>

	mind shift for me as well but I found it really useful. I got more from my NQT which was good because some meetings he's, how should I describe, he's a people pleaser I guess so he'll just go "Oh yes, I'll do this. What do you think I should do? Do you want me to do this, this and this?" And I'm like "What do you want to do?" And he's actually become more reflective in it and he's now going "Well actually I want to do this because it's worked. I'll do this to move up the scale and things" So it's been useful.	NQT using what has worked NQT using scaling tool to support reflection.
Int	Ok so it kind of supported him to reflect as well.	
G	Yes.	
Int	How do think he found using it?	
G	I think to start with we found it weird when I just drew a number line in front of him. But I'm lucky he's willing to try these things and he did find it useful. I've spoken to him about it and he liked that number line, breaking it down. He didn't like it when I just kept saying "What else?" but he got used to me doing it and then he almost pre-empted it because he knew that I wasn't going to just go, "do this, this and this. That will solve your problems and whatever" He went "Right I need to do this, this is the impact" So he started pre-empting which was really nice because it meant that I had to do a bit less prep for that session because he was doing it already.	Initially weird Different way of practicing NQT willingness to try NQT found it useful Breaking it down = useful NQT didn't initially like being asked questions Getting used to process Mentor not giving answers Shift in NQT mindset NQT moving to not expecting advice Pre-empting and taking ownership Time involved

Appendix L

Examples of Initial Codes

Barriers		0	0
Can't be positive all the time, need constructive criticism		2	2
Concerns with new teachers identifying their areas for development		0	0
Difficult to let new teachers have the responsibility		4	4
Difficult to put aside own ideas		3	3
Difficult to retain strategies covered in the training		1	1
Expectations of mentors giving advice		4	5
Hard relinquishing control		2	3
Have to be ok with silence		2	2
Important to know where to go with the questioning		2	2
Need to persevere with questioning		0	0
NQTs can ask for direct advice		3	4
Receiving SF approaches can feel difficult and uncomfortable		3	9
SF approaches feel more comfortable over time		1	1
SF approaches rely on a positive relationship		2	4
Some new teachers could put up barriers to using the approaches		1	1
Takes a while to get used to questioning and language		1	1
Thinking of preferred future can be hard		1	2
Time pressures		6	17
Would need to be comfortable with the approach		2	2
Promotes autonomy		5	11
Provides focus = less wordy		2	4
Provides visual		2	2
Breaking it down into small steps of progress was helpful		1	1
Useful how SF focuses on solutions		1	1
people coming to own solutions = beneficial		1	1
Scaling can support people to feel this can progress		2	2
Scaling providing discussion tool		6	11
Suggested questions = useful		1	1
SF support reflection		5	8
Supports NQTs to feel more positive		4	9
Goal setting was useful		1	1
SF approaches show an investment in new teachers		1	1
Supporting new teachers to see strengths		2	3
Instills belief in the NQT		2	2
SF can build confidence		6	7
Supporting self-assessment		3	3
Useful to monitor progress		4	6
Offered structure to mentoring meetings		2	4
Can frame conversations		4	4

Appendix M

Examples of Codes Organised Under a Theme

Relieves responsibility from mentor	3	11
Mentor doing the legwork	2	2
Mentoring is a responsibility	5	13
Feeling guilty if new teacher is not doing well	1	1
Journey for mentor and NQT	1	2
Mentors are important in offering support to new teachers	2	3
Shifted balance in mentoring relationship	1	1
New teachers ownership shifts onus	2	3
Takes away pressure to give answers	4	5

Individual Differences	5	13
Difficult to use for over-confident new teachers	3	6
Some new teachers just want to be told	4	4
Some people may not give a lot away	4	4
Would work with NQTs who aren't as strong	4	8
Some NQTs able to reflect	2	2
Some new teachers struggle to reflect	3	4
Would work if new teachers are hard on themselves	1	1
Using SF to challenge strong new teachers	1	1
Some new teachers easier to mentor than others	1	1

Appendix N
Ethics Committee Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Sonya Dineva

SUPERVISOR: Lemarra Walker and Pandora Giles

STUDENT: Lucy Golding

Course: Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology

Title of proposed study: The potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to use solution-focussed strategies in their mentoring role.

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research

takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):

Please specify the following:

- How will you ensure confidentiality in case the interviews take place in participants' workplaces?
- What is the starting point of data analysis (i.e. an approximate date or period after data collection)?
- How will you protect your online identity, e.g. contact participants using your student email address only?

Please make sure you obtain the consent of the Principle Educational Psychologist of [LOCAL AUTHORITY] before you start collecting data.

Major amendments required (for reviewer):

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments (for students):

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name (*Typed name to act as signature*): Lucy Golding
Student number: 1724874

Date: 15.03.19

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐

IUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☒

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature):* Sonya Dineva

Date: 07.03.2019

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix O

Debrief Sheet

Debrief Sheet

Developing collegial mentoring in schools: Exploring the potential benefits of supporting mentors of Newly Qualified Teachers to use solution-focused strategies in their mentoring role.

Thank you for participating in this research which is intended to explore the perceived helpfulness of participation in training in solution-focused approaches for practising NQT mentors. The information collected will be analysed and the findings written up as part of my doctoral thesis which is due to be completed by [DATE].

The information you have given will be anonymised, used and stored securely according to The Data Protection Act 2018.

You have the right to ask that your individual data be destroyed within three weeks from today, without giving a reason. After which, it will no longer be possible to identify your individual contribution due to the process of analysis used.

Should you have any questions about this research, require support as a result of taking part or would like to request that your data is destroyed, you can contact me on, [TELEPHONE NUMBER] at [EMAIL ADDRESS] or at [LOCAL AUTHORITY] Educational Psychology Service, [ADDRESS].

Thank you for your time,