

# **Supporting Work-Based Mentors; Finding Solutions to the Current Issues that Surround Mentorship in Foundation Degrees**

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***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy***

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify the challenges of mentoring within the Foundation Degree arena, by exploring collected data and using the identified gaps found in literature. Whilst there was no newly defined evidence, there was a new approach and a clearer understanding of the issues that surround mentoring within Foundation Degrees and therein the opportunity to affect structural and valuable change to the support process for both mentor and vicariously the mentee.

A mixed method approach was employed to collect and analyse data. All participants were involved in mentorship within a Foundation Degree programme. Initially a qualitative approach was used in the form of focus groups; they defined perceptions of mentorship locally. There were three focus groups, university staff, Foundation Degree students and nursing mentors. The initial comparisons helped fuel the debate and provided a deeper comprehension, into the identified issues that surrounded Foundation Degree mentorship. Through the focus groups key themes were identified 'Participants' definition of mentorship', 'Mentorship expectation 'Responsibilities and support'. Detecting these themes focused the study and helped to identify the role of Foundation Degree mentors in areas such as specific mentorship characteristics and components of the role. The themes were then used to formulate a questionnaire. One hundred participants contributed to the findings, demonstrating key elements, such as assessments, knowledge, relationships and skills.

The study was able to identify key areas to improve mentorship support mechanisms within Foundation Degrees. The findings do allow the opportunity to develop identifiable structure which gives the Foundation Degree mentorship process direction and therefore a more credible chance of effectiveness. The links and involvement of Higher Educational institutions, employers and students creates a more cohesive approach and adds to the success of the improved understanding and outcomes highlighted in the role of mentorship.

## List of contents

Chapter	Contents	Page
	<b>Front sheet</b>	1
	<b>Abstract</b>	2
	<b>List of Contents</b>	3
	<b>List of Illustrations</b>	6
	List of Tables	6
	List of Figures	6
	List of Graphs	7
	List of Appendices	7
	<b>Authors Declaration</b>	8
	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	9
<b>1.</b>	<b>Aim, introduction and Rationale for the Study</b>	10
	1.1 Aim of the study	10
	1.2 Current thinking and background	10
	1.2.1 The mentor	11
	1.2.2 The historical context of the Foundation Degree	12
	1.2.3 Foundation Degree	12
	1.2.4 Work-based learning	13
	1.2.5 Foundation Degrees as work-based learning programs	15
	1.3 Situating the researcher: context of the study	15
	1.3.1 The context of the study	18
	1.3.2 The issues, elements and facts that impact on studying mentorship	18
	1.4 Starting point: thinking about mentorship in Foundation Degrees	20
	1.4.1 Initial concepts/ terms of focus to studying mentorship	20
	1.4.2 Exploring mentorship in Foundation Degrees	22
<b>2.</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>	23
	2.1 The initial literature review	23
	2.1.1 The selection of a critiquing tool	24
	2.1.2 Applying key words	24
	2.1.3 Databases used for the literature search	24
	2.1.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria	25
	2.2 Loss of the current/ future workforce due to retirement	26
	2.2.1 The need for educational development of mentors	27
	2.3 Successful mentoring	27
	2.3.1 The nature of mentorship	28
	2.3.2 The mentorship role	29
	2.3.3 Links between HEIs and employers	30
	2.3.4 The benefits of undertaking a mentor role	31
	2.3.5 Mentor preparation and support	32

2.4 Factors that influence the success of the mentor and student relationship	33
2.4.1 The characteristics of a good mentor	34
2.4.2 The perception of the mentorship role	35
<b>3. Research Methodology</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Research paradigms	37
3.1.1 Studying complex systems	39
3.1.2 Formulating the research questions	39
3.2 Qualitative and qualitative debate	42
3.2.1 Quantitative research	43
3.2.2 Qualitative research	43
3.2.3 A mixed methods approach	44
3.3 Ethical issues	46
3.4 Descriptive and interpretive research: a qualitative approach	46
3.4.1 The issue of bias	48
3.5 Selected methodology	49
3.6 Research methods	51
3.6.1 Focus groups	52
<i>3.6.1a Optimising the effectiveness of focus groups</i>	55
3.6.2 Questionnaires	55
3.7 Research design for the focus groups	57
3.7.1 Selection of participants	57
3.7.2 Sample selection	57
3.7.3 Sample size	58
3.8 Research design for the questionnaire	59
3.8.1 Design of the questionnaire	60
3.8.2 Pilot study	62
3.8.3 Sample	63
3.9 Data analysis procedures for focus groups	65
3.9.1 Reading the data: familiarising with the concepts	66
3.9.2 Challenges to data analysis	67
3.9.3 Data coding	67
3.9.4 Analysis of focus groups using the coding system	69
3.9.5 Descriptive data analysis	74
3.9.6 Interpretive data analysis	75
3.9.7 The formation of focus group themes	76
3.9.8 Returning the participant transcripts	77
3.9.9 The inclusion of the researcher's experiences in analysis	78
3.10 Data analysis procedures for the questionnaire	79
<b>4. Mentorship a baseline perspective drawn from the focus groups</b>	<b>82</b>
4.1 The variety of elements necessary for mentoring students	83
4.1.1 Role definition	83
4.1.2 Mentor needs to be identified within the organisation	85
4.1.3 Identification of mentorship learning opportunities	85
4.1.4 Individual perceptions of mentorship	86
4.1.5 Definitions of mentorship	86
4.1.6 The identification of clear learning outcomes	88
4.1.7 No common understanding	89
4.1.8 The development of clear thinking patterns	89

<b>5.</b>	<b>Exploration of the mentorship process drawn from the questionnaire</b>	<b>92</b>
	5.1 Work-based results	93
	5.2 Nursing results	97
<b>6.</b>	<b>Research findings and implications for practice</b>	<b>101</b>
	6.1 The meaning of mentorship working and supporting learners on Foundation Degrees	101
	6.2 Identification of support mechanisms for learners on Foundation Degrees	102
	6.2.1 Taking a positive approach	102
	6.2.2 Taking a more active role in learning	103
	6.3 The experiences of mentorship	103
	6.4 The core elements of the mentorship role	104
	6.4.1 The importance of the allocation of a mentor	104
	6.4.2 Taking responsibility for mentoring	104
	6.4.3 The mentor/ mentee relationship	105
	6.4.4 The application of effective teaching and learning strategies	105
	6.4.5 Identifying the needs of the mentee	105
	6.5 Some additional findings	106
	6.5.1 The issue of connectivity	106
	6.5.2 The insider perspective	107
	6.6 Implications for practice	108
	6.6.1 Summary of the study findings and implications for practice	112
<b>7.</b>	<b>Discussion and concluding reflections</b>	<b>113</b>
	7.1 Limitations of the study	114
	7.2 Final reflections	115
	7.3 Evaluation and discussion	116
	7.4 Comparisons and conclusions	120
	<b>References</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>137</b>

## List of Illustrations

### List of Tables

Table	Title	Page No.
1.1	Some initial concepts/ terms of focus in a research study	20
2.1	Inclusion and exclusion criteria	26
3.1	Example of focus group and coding analysis	70
3.2	The identification of the main codes	71
3.3	Focus group 2 and coding	72
3.4	Focus group 3 and coding	73
6.1	Demonstrates the use of findings within the SMART project and this research study	112

### List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page No.
3.1	Phases of integration model	51
3.2	Selection of the sample and response for the pilot study questionnaire	65
3.3	Initial coding system techniques	68
3.4	Identification of the main themes from each of the focus groups	77
3.5	The identification of master codes	78
6.1	Mentorship progressions	110
7.1	Educational infra structure	123
7.2	Mentorship support process	124

**List of Graphs**

<b>Graph</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
5.1	Question 'In which sector are you currently a mentor?'	93
5.2	Question 'Number of years in current post work-based mentors?'	93
5.3	Question 'How do you find out about changes in curriculum/ training on the current course you are a mentor?'	94
5.4	Question 'In which of the following sectors are you involved as a mentor?'	95
5.5	Question 'How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?'	96
5.6	Question 'How long have you been a mentor?'	97
5.7	Question 'What qualities do you think are important in mentorship in order of importance?'	98
5.8	Shows combination of question 3, 4 and 6	99
5.9	Question 'Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor?'	99

**List of Appendices**

<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1	Project information: Letter of Consent	137
2	Letter for Ethical Approval	139
3	Questionnaire: Foundation Degree Mentors	130
4	Questionnaire: Nursing Mentors	144
5	Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors	147
6	Individual Responses: Nursing Mentors	149
7	A combination of FD and Nursing Mentors	154

## **Authors Declaration**

I declare that the content of this study was conducted and completed by myself.



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*I often wonder about acknowledgements and the real necessity for these, but through my journey I have spoken to, cried and evaluated learning with so many. I want to thank a few of those people here, although in truth I should be thankful for so many more.*

*Of course my supervisors Keiran Henderson and Maurice Gledhill, they must know that some of my days have been dark, but they kept me going. My mum Loris; my son Josh; David; Zeus; Jill; Malcolm; Sharon and not least Pamela.*

*I remembered “The bird doesn’t sing because it has a song, it sings because it can” Mayo Angelou*

## **Chapter 1: Aim, introduction and rationale for the study.**

### **1.1 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to explore support mechanisms for those mentoring Foundation Degree students and use this information to inform mentoring within existing Foundation Degree programmes. The main objective of the study is to equip mentors involved in Foundation Degree programme with a more focused insight into their role. This can help empower and /or enhance the mentor's insight into their own learning needs and seek out learning opportunities for those involved in the Foundation Degree student/ mentor relationship. The outcome of the research was to develop a strategy for an improved mentorship relationship within the Foundation Degree arena.

### **1.2 Current thinking and background**

There is a variety of possible mentoring scenarios that are outlined within the literature, but currently they are not formulated specifically to Foundation Degrees. So part of the study's objective was to collect and analyse the differing positions, using these positions to inform practice and thus creating a more structured approach to supporting mentors within work based learning. Foundation Degree programmes, are delivered across faculties in various subjects and by various departments, in both Higher and Further Education Institutes (HEI and FEI) (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). These various courses may involve liaison with industry, which includes placements of individual students and involves on site mentoring. These programmes are mainly within the undergraduate pathways and require close engagement with students to ensure that meaningful liaison; mentoring and useful employment benefits are achieved (Quality Assurance Agency 2004). One option currently outlined in Foundation Degrees (FD) uses a model where the student is given work-related and assessed tasks. This model relies upon the mentee engaging with their own employers and/or organisations, using work experiences and opportunities to develop skills and understanding (Bold, 2004).

In 2008 the researcher's University identified that effective mentors were vital to the success of students on Foundation Degree programmes. In 2011 the same university sought to determine the most effective method of delivering mentorship and therein the development of education and practice.

Before exploring the literature or questioning the subject content, the researcher can assume that the lecturer, mentor and student experiences all contribute to the final learning achieved; Gopee (2010) and Stuart (2007) in their literature confirm these facts. They outline the roles, responsibilities and impact of experiences within mentorship. The researcher acknowledges this theory because the researcher is a lecturer on a mentorship programme for nursing and teaching on a Foundation Degree and therefore has an overall view of all those involved in the process. It was imperative therefore to work with mentors across the university to identify the core tools and processes necessary in the mentor's character, thereby providing recommended 'best practice' for the university and the wider sector.

#### 1.2.1 The mentor

The mentor is identified as a key stakeholder in work-based learning and as such the support mechanisms available to them should also reflect the impact on student development. An example of this is in the Society and Health faculty where over 1,400 students are enrolled in work-based learning programmes where students are required to be taught and assessed by a work-based mentors; this includes programmes as diverse as pre-registration nursing and pre-qualifying social work. In addition, there are a number of work based Foundation Degrees where students are expected to have a mentor in the workplace to support their studies; this need creates some of the issues that must be addressed in this study.

Foster-Turner (2006) describes the qualities of the mentor as an effective educator and someone who is a good listener, approachable, encouraging, understanding, considerate and honest; someone who is characterised by self-awareness and who possesses good interpersonal skills. Qualities of the mentor should also include that of a coach, role model,

advisor, problem-solver, challenger and it is these qualities that will definitely facilitate learning.

Initially it was imperative to work with mentors across the university to clarify and identify the qualities, core tools and processes necessary to enhance the mentor's effectiveness. One of the themes of the Foundation Degree is that work-based activities should create formidable learning opportunities. So, one of the questions/objectives of this study is to ensure the clear identification of core requirements. How best can we support mentors outside of the university and thus add value to the student's learning experience. The discussion, debate and analysis that ensue will help realise some of the efforts necessary to build successful intervention.

### 1.2.2 The historical context of the Foundation Degree

To give the subject context it is necessary to establish the historical context of the Foundation Degrees, as an educational tool. There was a shift in the thinking in the late 1990's and early 2000's, where the Government of the day, plus employers recognised that changes were necessary to empower and enrich the skills of the workforce. Together they wanted to create a society that reflected a more focused view of learning and it was essential that the workforce demonstrated this through more educational investment (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 2000). DfEE (2000) set out its vision in 'The Learning Age' as one that included lifelong learning. The Government saw learning as a main contributor to our economic and social policies; therefore there should be an increase in the concept and participation of lifelong learning. Further it was acknowledged that there was at the time concerns related to young people and the lack of investment within this group, also it was recognised that the university for Industry and Individual Learning Accounts were essential elements in this thinking and of course any strategy. Widening participation was seen as a more structured move to improving the workforce and developing appropriate skills for the time.

### 1.2.3 Foundation Degrees

Brennan and Little (2006) draw our attention to the following facts. FD programmes have experienced a significant increase in entrants (a 61.6% increase between 2002-03 and 2003-

2004, equating to a rise from 8,295 to 13,405). They note that there is an equal split currently between full and part time students full-time (49.3%) and part-time (50.7%). The aim was to achieve 50,000 places by the end of 2006 for FDs and 100,000 by 2012; this was achieved and also increased in some areas, (such as assistant practitioner in health care). These facts are important when we consider mentorship within this context. They facts would indicate that some structure, control and support mechanisms are important to ensure the successful transfer of skills and knowledge and thus improve the quality of the workforce.

A series of documents produced by the Department for Educational and Skills (DfES), provides the initial backdrop of literature related to the creation of Foundation Degrees and therein contributes to the process used to enable discussion. The DfES wanted to draw on the issue of 'a skills gap' and back in 2000, the Government of the time produced consultation paper, which final culminated in 'The Future of Higher Education (DfES 2003a). Surrounding this and providing a context was *Foundation Degrees: Meeting the need for higher-level skill* (DfES, 2003b).

Whilst within this period the HEFCE added to the discussion and produced an accompanying policy document, *Diversity in Higher Education* (HEFCE, 2000b), which saw the opportunity for Higher Education to bid for funding to support the skills gap initiative (HEFCE, 2003). However some of the current facts demonstrate the impact the Foundation Degrees are having on higher education. The number of people enrolled on Foundation Degrees in 2011 was in excess of 90,000 (Foundation Degree Forward, 2012). Simply by identifying the vast number of students enrolled on 1700 different Foundation Degrees demonstrates the volume and significance of this mode of delivery.

#### 1.2.4 Work-based learning

Brennan and Little (2006) and Connor (2005) both provide some depth for HEI involvement of work-based practice. They use Derby University, University of Leeds, Middlesex University, Northumbria University, Open University, University of Portsmouth, and Cleveland College of Art and Design to illustrate the issues and possible conflict. They explore the employer engagement, coupled with the HEI and the necessity of the

partnership in moving this rationale of work based learning forward. There is an issue of balance, education and ultimately the workforce. The universities identified in Brennan and Little's (2006) study have strategies locally to maximise, learning opportunities and these examples of joint working and ownership (HEI and employers) are countrywide.

The government had sought to extend learning and skills, through wider participation and the recognition of learning, alongside work-based learning. Foundation Degrees were developed using the contributions of employers, further and higher education, Doyle (2003) outlines the central element of the Foundation Degree, in that it lasted two years and differs from the traditional undergraduate programme in that there were much clearer links with industry.

As far back as 1977 the issue of lifelong learning and the need to develop both young people and some groups of adults had been an issue for the learning community, DfEE (1977) and then later Sargent (2000). In developing the concepts of the learning age, the government had provided a consultation document, 'Targets for our future' Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2003). In this document they set out methods of achieving the goals of lifelong learning, widening participation and encouraging all the stakeholders to participate in the delivery. The targets identified possible post-school achievements for young people, adults and employers. DfES (2003) considered developing the talents and skills that helped realise future potential. They identify structured benchmarks, so that improvements could be monitored. There needed to be a clear method of measuring the development of any programmes contained within the targets that had been set and both the *Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2001)* and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2000) contributed to this.

It would be prudent that the educational institution assess the learning outcomes of such work-based learning programmes within an appropriate framework of standards and levels. Employers and individuals want to see their achievements recognised in credible ways that will be valued and relevant in the employment market. This partnership between employers and educational institutions is the main stay of the debate, passing responsibility from one organisation, to a more joint playing field this is alluded to by Edge Foundation (2008)

Brennan and Little (2006). It is in this partnership that real cultural changes and differences can be resolved. Widen participation is not simply validating programmes; it is exploring the best methods of achieving the desired outcomes that transfers theory to practical implication. It is therefore essential to position the current teaching philosophies and any influences this thinking may have on teaching and learning per se.

#### 1.2.5 Foundation Degrees as work-based learning programmes

Burke *et al.* (2009) explored a variety of work-based learning programmes, examining the programmes development and delivery of FDs at Kingston University in south-west London, UK. The evaluation used data from directors and students about WBL in their particular programmes. The main results showed variation in course directors' and students' understanding of WBL, each group emphasizing how they saw the programme content and delivery. The differences were substantial 'work-based' and 'learning' differed greatly and the focus of each programme differed in the balance of both of these elements. This example demonstrates the controversy that surrounds Foundation Degree development and how particular groups view foundations degrees and the impact this has on the management and consistency within this pathway.

By collecting data from mentors working in Foundation Degree pathways and comparing this data to the views of nursing mentors views, the hope was to establish information that would aid our understanding of this phenomenon. Opportunities to develop a richer understanding of mentorship are essential in the development of any support mechanisms.

### 1.3 Situating the researcher: context of the study

To provide clarity an introduction of the researcher will give some context and provide a position to demonstrate some of the purpose of undertaking this type of study. I qualified as a specialist learning disabilities nurse in 1984; I worked as a community practitioner, until coming into education in 1998. Mentorship in one form or another was a large part of my working life; the development of those less able than the main groups in society provide a mentorship role that although unidentified at the time in hindsight was the beginning of my journey within this process. I was also responsible for the development of student nurses,

from all branches (Adult; Mental Health; Child and Learning Disabilities.) and had done the then English National Board 998 'Education in Practice'. Teaching made me consider how best to develop the skills of others and I recognised from my previous role, that teaching was not simply providing information, but also ensuring that the learner or individual had gained from the encounter.

In 1998 I began teaching and supporting Pre Qualified Nursing students in both the classroom and practice. I found discrepancies in the types of learning, the students' ability and differing levels of practice engagement. I acknowledged that for some practice experiences with an alternative field could be negative (for both mentor and mentee) as some students were unable or unwilling to engage. In 2003 I undertook my master dissertation and began to investigate why some practice experiences for students were successful and how I could exploit intelligence obtained to reinforce a more successful experience for more. The aim of the study was to explore the educational benefits of the learning disability placements within all nursing branch specialities using the students' perspective. The main outcome was the lack of information provided prior to placement and therefore there was no clarity as to why the students had been placed there. This then informed a booklet entitled 'Why am I here?' and with the newly acquired Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) element of the programme prior information was and could be clearly outlined. This was a success and students gained a sense of direction and equally mentors understood the learning opportunities necessary to make alternative placements a success in Learning Disabilities.

An extract from MA 2006 '*Why am I here?*' helps provide depth and understanding in terms of the nature of the researcher:

Six key areas threaded through the study. i. Preparation of students; ii. Expectation of students; iii. Expectation of staff; iv. Mentorship; v. Social Care and vi. Self-Directed learning. There was a lot of information around these key areas, but none that directly linked them to the learning disability placement. The respondent's data confirmed the issues outlined as key areas for change and were instrumental in identifying fundamentals that would enhance and empower the student on this part of their educational journey. The emphasis and indeed any action plan had to distinguish how these changes could be successfully implemented to maximise the necessary acknowledgement of the identified issues.



The student perspective provided a valuable source of information. The researcher was able to identify the immediate changes necessary for practice, support and development of mentors and structured preparation of students for the insight placements. Although these findings may have been acknowledged prior to the study, it is only through investigation that the researcher could illustrate the real impact of insight placements and the value of insight placements to the overall learning of the novice nurse and future practitioner.

This extract illustrates that facts are not always linked; it is the linking that helps to inform and provide changes to the way, learning activities are constructed and delivered. There was a similar possibility here, as will be illustrated within this study, although sometimes solutions are apparent, this does not necessarily lead to the appropriate action.

I began teaching on the Foundation Degree health and Social care in 2008 and this was part of the widening participation innovation. My first group had educational, social and economic backgrounds that varied immensely; I realised quite quickly that my teaching methods had to reflect this. The Foundation Degree sought to develop both practical and theoretical skills in health and social care; this means that experiences and learning opportunities need to acknowledge the differing demographical requirements of students. This was containable within the university environment, but could be a challenge when trying to implement the work element of the programme. Indeed my initial contact with possible mentors had left me with concerns, some of them had indicated that they were willing, but work commitments may prevent them from providing the required support and therefore would be looking to the university to fill the gap.

Some described the role as an extra to their already busy workloads and that this could create conflict in terms of appropriate support for the student. They provided examples of good practice, deficits as they saw them and assets, even giving examples of their previous experiences to demonstrate the gap in support for both themselves and the student. I had no managerial control over the possible 'Foundation Degree mentor market' and so could only use the knowledge I had of mentorship to engage this group.

How would collected information be used to support the mentor outside of the university parameters and therein make some kind of meaningful connection with them? How can a

relationship be formulated that would enhance the work-based development of these programmes? Learning relationships and the negative and positive possibilities therein has always intrigued me. This new issue of mentorship was curious and at the same time compelling, these relationships have been discussed challenged and explored and there still continues to be elements that do not connect. Why?

From the onset consideration was given to both the purpose of the study and the impact it could have on the wider academic community. Mentorship is a complex notion as will be evident throughout the debates and discussions within the study. However there are expected outcomes and these include the development of the Foundation Degree mentors and a deeper understanding for those who support them. Initially the scope of the study is to gather data that represent the intentions and attitudes of the participants and thereby introduce a more cohesive understanding and delivery of this controversial topic.

### 1.3.1 The context of the study

Clearly no subject, topic, or organisation stays still and therefore it is essential to explain from the onset of this study that it seeks to widen understanding and create thinking and pose an educational debate and thus open those involved to alternative thinking. It would be naive of this study to suggest that it could provide answers to all the areas that surround mentorship, but by tackling the topic and using a perspective that allows for different insight, widens and focuses the subject and therein delivers exactly what literature hopes to achieve, an expansion.

Mentorship is a subjective topic and as such, when outlined there is a multiplicity of issues that impact on the structure and functions attached to this phenomenon. Simply through the researcher questioning and evaluating literature comes the possibility to add currency to the debate.

### 1.3.2 The issues, elements and facts that impact on studying mentorship

The researcher is aware that some mentorship encounters differ even when the context of both the mentor and mentee are similar. The first issue in the debate is the experience of mentorship, both academically and practically has shown that irrespective of the support

and individuals involved that the required outcome can be unsuccessful. It is through understanding this phenomenon more closely that development can ensue. In trying to understand mentorship the controversy of the relationship begins to demonstrate the variety of possible variants and scenarios. The second issue is the question of successful mentorship and the need to acknowledge the humanistic elements that impact considerably on the relationships involved between mentor and FD student.

Other issues relate to the researcher's experience of mentorship, which identifies that even when the given contributing factors such as mentor education, identified learning outcomes, partnership curriculum development and or clear assessment guidance, this is no guarantee of a successful outcome. Therefore any further insight that combined these variables and enhances the successful possibilities adds to the extensive body of knowledge.

There are findings evident in the literature, which indicate the vast array of possibilities in understanding the subject and that also provide some of the insight and perspectives that allow the development and exploration of the topic (Allen *et al.*, 2006; Eby and Lockwood, 2005). These include the importance and significance of the mentorship role. However it is the objective and subjective nature of this topic that creates the controversy and interest that continues to fuel academic debate and the keen interest to discover further possibilities. The objective data is provided via literature, although the research processes used and areas of focus may also appear subjective, in that it is mostly interpretation of any findings that fuels the discussions. This study acknowledges the concepts of subjective and objective data and seeks to add to the debate and possibly the development of those who take on the mentorship role, as well as those who use the process to empower and develop student development.

Throughout this study the researcher was exposed to a variety of issues, elements and themes, that influence individual interpretation, group interpretation and organisational interpretation of mentorship, some of these are both known and unknown. The known that which the researcher has used to illustrate the necessity of the study and the unknown what the data collected will reveal.

## 1.4 Starting Point: thinking about mentorship in Foundation Degrees

The tools that were essential in the study, which attempts to find the unknown issues, elements and facts that influence individual, group and organisational interpretation of mentorship was the exploration of literature. This serves to inform and connect the topic of mentorship with details that would identify good practice and equally outline the current gaps. Further to use collected data and insight from participants to further understand how the participants view mentorship. The collected data to be analysed attempts to progress our understanding of the concept of 'mentor' and therein possibly gaining insight into developing the mentorship role within Foundation Degrees further.

### 1.4.1 Initial concepts/ terms of focus to studying mentorship

Clough and Nutbrown (2003) provide the researcher with some initial concepts of focus thereby addressing the proposed research study (Table 1.1). They suggest that the researcher uses four headings to address the problem with mentorship at hand and refine, the paradigm under investigation.

**Table 1.1 - Some initial concepts/ terms of focus in a research study**

Identified elements	Outline	Use in this study
Radical looking	Filling in the informal blanks	The controversy that surrounds mentorship is acknowledged
Radical listening	The researcher is asked to identify the voices that should/must be included in the study.	To develop a coherent understanding of the use of peers, policies, Foundation Degree developers were consulted and other that contribute to services in some way.
Radical reading	Critiquing the literature and ensuring the literature stood up to scrutiny.	Interpretation of the critical account and the usefulness and context of the literature that surrounds the researcher's interest in the outlined in the situating the researcher

(Modified from Clough and Nutbrown, 2003)

'Radical looking' is the initial terms coined by Clough and Nutbrown (2003) in their template of addressing any proposed study. 'Radial looking' asks the researcher to first fill in informal blanks. This process was essential for the researcher it enabled a more refined and defined

question. Literature was extensive, as was actual mentorship programmes throughout the country. What differed for this piece of research were the identified participants and their view of the subject under investigation. Whilst defining the subject and cross-examining its significance to other programmes of study and models of implementation the controversy that surrounds this phenomenon is demonstrated.

Recognising the scale of the task and identifying the question ensured that the uniqueness of the participants within this study was acknowledged. Whilst considering that their contributions to widening both the knowledge base and claim, would be realised. Foundation Degree mentors would help empower and develop skills and understanding. Thus making the student more academically able, enriched and employable, attributes that were currently key elements of a modern day qualification. Within this area of exploration it was important to be able to demonstrate that the study would be able to generalise its findings and add value to the debate.

‘Radical listening’ asked the researcher to identify those voices that should/must be included within the study and was more difficult. Not simply using information collected via interview, but through other studies and literature, to consider the social, political and economic considerations that impact on the study. To develop a coherent understanding the use of peers, policies, and Foundation Degree developers (fast forward) were consulted. This included those delivering services and those that are not mentors (identified), but manage or contribute to services in some way.

From the onset, the concept of a critical approach to the available evidence was part of the remit executed by the researcher. Clough and Nutbrown (2003), simplify this process with their interpretation of ‘radical reading’, this meant critiquing the literature and ensuring that critical analysis of the literature being employed stood up to scrutiny. The concept that collected data had a dual purpose meant that critiquing not only the literature, but understanding the usefulness and context of a given situation was imperative. This concept further expanded on the notion of the usefulness of a critical account (the identification of the researcher and context that surrounds the interest in the topic). This has been outlined in the situating the researcher, context and acknowledges subjective; however this

perception should always be challenged, as previously outlined the researcher comes with some personal value and therein some bias.

#### 1.4.2 Exploring mentorship in Foundation Degrees

Throughout this study a variety of methods and methodologies have been employed to extract a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, by using a comparative base (in terms of an already established mentorship programme and those seeking to provide mentorship support in the Foundation Degrees). The researcher aims to gain useful insight that will impact on the way work-based mentors are supported within Foundation Degrees. Through using an established mentorship programme, one that has been tried and tested, the researcher can identify key elements that contribute to the progress of 'student nurses'.

The identification of key attributes will assist in recognising the main features that will enable successful mentorship within the work-based Foundation Degree programmes. Although the study is limited to Foundation Degrees, it is the intention of the researcher to reduce the student voice and capture more of the mentors and therein develop a support mechanism that reflects more of the mentors view in terms of student support. However just like the university staff, the students do contribute to the initial development of the study. In recognising their insight, experiences and expectations, the study gains deeper and more meaningful methods of exploring work-based mentorship within Foundation Degree programmes.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The start of the study was situating the topic and investigating the possible options, gaps and thinking, the literature review would act as an objective in its own right. Literature would fuel the debates, create depth and widen understanding. It would provide context and enable a more cohesive view of the topic. At the start of any project a literature review helps to focus and enhance the necessity for the exploration. Parahoo (2006) and Aveyard (2010) are clear a literature review helps in identifying themes and possible gaps. The researcher acknowledges that a literature search is an essential and fundamental part of any current research topic. It ensures that the topic under investigation is necessary and that the work will add to the wider academic community and therefore is useful within the appropriate field (Polit and Beck, 2011; Silverman, 2011).

### **2.1 The initial literature review**

While carrying out the initial literature review, it becomes apparent that this systematic process is in itself a research methodology, Aveyard (2010) and Garrard (2011) further define a literature review as the focus and analysis of scientific materials; it requires the reviewer to evaluate each of the studies, determining the methods and scientific quality. Feak and Swales (2009) purport that this is achieved through examining the questions and answers posed by the authors, summarizing the findings across the studies and exploring the synthesis of the findings.

Through the identification of previous publications, the current study is provided with both context and structured insight. There are various concepts and contexts of mentorship and so the use of literature within this study first seeks to focus on the mentorship perspective, providing a deeper understanding of the humanistic properties of the mentorship process. The level and volume of literature is extensive so to ensure a varied, structured and diverse view of the topic, it was essential that the discussion and debate within the literature, created a platform from which to gain a holistic view of the subject.

### 2.1.1 The selection of a critiquing tool

In order to ensure the literature selected was appropriate and useful, a critiquing tool was employed. Saltikov (2012) directs the researcher and suggests that it is necessary to select the most appropriate check list; this enabled a structured and transparent evaluation of the literature. Once acknowledged it was imperative to ensure the robustness of a tool and Caldwell *et al* (2007) provides a critiquing tool that enables questioning and depth, careful examination of literature is essential for the gaps and core elements of the topic to be revealed. Hezlett (2005) further deepens the debate and suggests that this task is made difficult by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, so suggests not limiting these criteria in order ensure core elements are revealed.

### 2.1.2 Applying key words

When the topic is so wide and varied, the criteria applied must be clearly identified to ensure that the scope of the literature represents the topic adequately. A critical appraisal method was employed and key words identified. With overwhelming results for 'mentorship', as the search progressed and was refined 'Foundation Degree', work-based mentors, were also searched and combinations of key words were used to narrow the literature search further. The examination of abstracts helped to set out the structure, findings and topic content. In reviewing the literature, commonalities continue to provide focus and a platform by which the researcher could identify a variety of important themes that enable both understanding and objectivity.

Based on this criterion it was imperative that the literature exposed a wider variety of possibilities and concepts, which would not add to the inevitable debate within the project, but ensure the researcher could provide a contemporary argument that accounted for earlier paradigms within the field. Ensuring greater participation of current and previous academic research strengthened the nature of the academic argument and allowed novel paradigms to be identified with legitimacy.

### 2.1.3 Databases used for the literature search

The databases used to source the studies literature were extensive. The resources included: The Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC); Society of College, Royal College of



Nursing, National and University Libraries (SCONUL); The British Library; and the M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries. The Buckinghamshire New University catalogue was used to search for relevant articles in related journals in the BNU library, Ovid on line, Medline and CINAHL.

#### 2.1.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were difficult to achieve with such a wide and varied topic. Therefore, using the Caldwell *et al.* (2007) tool, all chosen articles were reviewed and critiqued. Using the tool distinctive words emerged to facilitate the search for research related to mentorship. The literature search terms began to emerge, these terms had a variety of labels e.g. relationships; environments; education; mentor and mentee perceptions, coaching, skills, learning opportunities and knowledge development. It was difficult to ascertain what were the most relevant and significant terms to use to explore mentorship.

Therefore abstracts were read to help narrow the search; more contemporary authors were often referring back to original works. Therefore it seemed prudent to also examine some of the cited work, so as not to exclude useful literature. Whilst exploring the current literature that surrounds mentorship, the researcher became inundated with possibilities; so extensive was the level of literature that some perimeters were necessary to ensure some focus and to further ensure more meaningful and useful examination of the available resources. This was a difficult task, as many of the current research materials and definitions have taken a more structural move to view mentorship in direct relation to an associated variable. Nevertheless, many of the articles over 10 years provided revolutionary debates on the topic and could be deemed as seminal works (Kram, 1985; Caldwell and Carter, 1993). It was essential not to exclude terms that stimulated debate and could potentially validate issues that may later be raised and facilitate confirmation. Thus the inclusion and exclusion criteria emerged as a broad set of guidelines regarding literature-searching benchmarks (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Research that used broad terms related to mentorship	Focus was not on mentorship or associated terms
Mentorship research outside of the nursing domain	Youth Mentoring
Mixed qualitative and quantitative papers involving mentorship	Family linked mentorship

There were mentorship research findings that focused on leadership, protégés', nursing, education, law, employment and the list continues to ever grow (Allen, 2003; Allen, 2004; D'Abate *et al.*, 2003; Erdem and Ozen, 2003; Garvey, 2004; Huwe and Johnson, 2003; Waters, 2003). We see from these contributions that although research continues there is an exhaustive mechanism to disseminate new understanding, challenges and further strengthen our understanding of the mentorship relationship across many professions. Much of the literature has added alternative views and re-addressed existing phenomenon, but also provided a historical context that helps place the mentorship role as viewed in supporting learners in the current context. This contributes to the meaning, diversity and reality of mentorship. Many of the authors identified issues that move towards the view that the subjectivity of the topic means that no real answer exists. Simply we see that alternatives and possibilities and working models add to our understanding and allow the topic to continue to intrigue.

## **2.2 Loss of the current / future workforce due to retirement**

The background for the combined literature topics supplied by Campbell (2009) provides important data that can be aligned to services across the country. Within the Commissioning for Administration (CfA) a qualitative research study indicates the over the next 15 years 25% of the administration workforce will be retiring and the replacements have to come from a younger employee group. The question that is raised is how will skills be passed on? The CfA are looking to mentorship to bridge the gap.

This issue of bridging the gap was also a rationale for the increased use of Foundation Degrees. The Government and employers saw the level of skills and know how diminishing and with it a possible void in some services and their delivery. This particular challenge is one that needs to be addressed and in addressing this, the work based educational possibilities come into play. Clearly the loss of skilled (older) workers impacts on the country and therefore the economy, passing the practical knowledge and skills along to the next generation enhances the possibilities.

Foundation Degrees are a chance to share academic (theoretical) knowledge and gain essential work based (practical) understanding. If a student is provided with a mentor of more experience than them then they challenge and enhance their thinking and application of tasks. Thus increasing the infra structure of an organisation and better equipping our communities to tackle the challenges of a modern day economic market.

#### 2.2.1 The need for educational development of mentors

Clutterbuck (2008; 2005; 2004) provides a variety of learning opportunities in his qualitative studies and helps in understanding the mentor and the mentorship role. The need for the educational development of a mentor and the importance of this role, on the successful completion of any educational programme, that seeks to empower the student and thus encourage a skilled practitioner. These themes seem to be essential to all identified areas of mentorship and other researchers have confirmed these findings within their work (Nursing; Bradbury-Jones *et al.*, 2010; Gopee, 2008; Bradbury-Jones *et al.*, 2007; Haigh and Johnson, 2007; Watson, 2004; Gray Smith, 2000). Caldwell and Carter (1993) argue that while commonalities are evident in accounts of mentoring. Mentoring is a dynamic practice and therefore no one process or model can be used to satisfy appropriately all situations or contexts. Indeed 'it is clear that there are pitfalls in attempting to adopt or adapt practice from one setting to another' (Caldwell and Carter, 1993, p. 205).

### 2.3 Successful mentoring

Clutterbuck's (2004b) review of mentoring research across disciplines found that successful mentoring has the following essential attributes: a supportive relationship; a helping

process; a teaching–learning process; a reflective process; a career development process; a formalized process; and a role constructed for or by a mentor. Mentoring in the teaching profession has been implemented in different ways in induction programmes across different countries. Indeed other professions have similar concepts and identify criteria that are essential in the promotion of student development and achievement of competencies that make individuals fit for purpose (Marshall and Gordon 2010). The mentorship role has been researched extensively and focuses on areas that have every intention of improving the performance of both the mentor and mentee (Allen *et al.*, 2006, Eby and Lockwood, 2005; de Janasz and Sullivan, 2004)

### 2.3.1 The nature of mentorship

The nature of mentorship implies that the mentor has a skilled ability to explore and identify learning opportunities; however what can also be noted is the equal growth opportunities for both mentor and mentee. Examples of these are demonstrated in literature where we see the development of the practitioner as central to the learner's skills development (Myall *et al.*, 2008; Taylor, 2009). Ensher *et al.* (2001) purport that the nature of mentorship may mean that different skills are necessary to enable the mentor's effectiveness. Ensher *et al.* (2001) further suggest that the structure of peer mentoring may advance psychosocial functions, while supervisory mentoring may advance career functions. Believing that the roles are interchangeable and that understanding the nature and function of these separate roles further develops the student and empowers those involved in the mentoring process. There is a whole debate about the two roles and how they differ and in fact how they achieve similarities. This creates depth in exploring the mentorship role and adds to our appreciation of the importance it plays in so many key areas, employability, skills, leaning styles and partnerships.

Allen *et al.*, (2006), Eby and Lockwood (2005) de Janasz and Sullivan (2004) all believe that mentors can enhance many areas of the mentee and thus the role and structure of the mentor role helps us appreciate the nature of an element that is only part of the learning process. Their studies focused on the individual aspects and the possible nature and nurture of the role; through their qualitative studies they demonstrate the draw backs and the solutions to expand the academic debate. They all identify the importance of good role

definition and how the identification of the role enhances the relationships and outputs achieved.

### 2.3.2 The mentorship role

Other researchers have explored the mentor role Hughes and Strokes (2004) undertook a teaching needs analysis of teaching mentors. They discovered that the mentors' felt there was a distance between the institution and themselves. The mentors saw this space as an inhibiting factor for access opportunities and any accreditation of their skills. The notion of a bridging approach was identified and this could be used to improve access and build a 'mentor community'. However, Hughes and Strokes (2004) found several problematic areas, firstly that of logistics, whereby mentors were unable to commit to the pre-determined schedule. Replacements were not identifiable until late in the first semester and this meant changes to the original structure for the development of mentorship support programmes. The area of logistics and the consequent complexity of building a mentor community is confirmed by Guest (2000) and Rawlings (2002) who recognise that the learning opportunities are extensive for all those involved in mentorship, yet difficulties occur.

These difficulties occur when the roles are not clearly identified and when the mentor, does not acknowledge their role in the development of the mentee (La Fleur and White, 2010). The recognition that a mentor is part of an organisational strategy that enables mentees to develop and compliment service improvements is essential to the growth of both the mentee and mentor. Clutterbuck (2004) found that there are growth opportunities for a staff nurse undertaking the mentor role and a move from sponsorship of a student to a more developmental model in their own professional development.

Caldwell *et al.* (2008) place boundless responsibility on mentoring and supporting students all through their placement thus ensuring that the student can gain new skills and competence in a safe and controlled environment. In nursing the environment is heightened and Bulman and Shoultz (2008) further add to the debate by suggesting that mentors provide knowledge and therefore rely on a variety of assets and opportunities to maximise the mentee's potentials and fulfil their expectations in clinical areas. This understanding of the importance of learning in the clinical environment is reinforced by

Gopee (2008). Davys and Baddoe (2008) add to the discussion by highlighting many attributes of the mentor and planning that enhance learning opportunities. Areas should explore environmental audits, identifying learning opportunities, which include clearly defined learning outcomes. This confirmation of the working environment can be mirrored in terms of importance within the Foundation Degrees, because the debate centres on the knowledge transfer in the working environment. Brodie and Irving (2006) provide similar debate in their evaluation of student learning in the work environment and the necessary skills, responsibility and expectations within the work environment.

### 2.3.3 Links between HEI's and employers

McCoshan *et al.* (2005) further demonstrate some of the controversy that surrounds the linking of academic institutions and employers providing some possibilities that may increase better engagement for all those involved in the process. Productive links it appears are dependent on the HEIs and employer's cohesiveness and any success comes from organised and agreed roles.

Work-based learning principles are fundamental to the entirety of the learning experience of those who are taking the employer-linked route. When considering Foundation Degrees, we are alerted to the necessity for structured learning outcomes. There must be a consideration of the qualification as a whole and its differing components. Boud and Solomon (2001 p.4-7) provide an in-depth outline that is useful in understanding and implementing work-based learning concepts into work-based programmes. Boud and Solomon (2001) begin with the notion that Partnership between a higher education institution and an external organisation (whether, private, public or third sector); such partnerships need to be relatively formal and even contractual for the conditions to exist within which work-based learning projects can be usefully developed. There are elements that must be considered when exploring the concepts of work-based learning; the use of off-the- shelf programmes may be less appropriate, as the learner's needs change in line with their employer or employment needs. Any programme will need to reflect the organisations priorities and must contain the requirements of the employer, the educational and institutional as such must employ teaching and learning strategies to successfully achieve favourable outcomes.

In exploring this conflict, there are mechanisms within education that help break down some of the issues that surround the phenomena. The development of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is important for work-based learning as the assessment of current competencies, informal learning and tacit knowledge is more significant as a starting platform than the possession of existing educational qualifications. In acknowledging this previously acquired learning, work-based learning is accepting the value of work experience and therefore including it within the process of academic and practical development (Barber *et al.*, 2006; QAA, 2003)

It can be argued that the development of learning projects in the workplace is a defining characteristic of work-based learning (Foundation Direct, 2008). Learning development is designed to benefit the individual and the organisation. Therefore we can explore our current methods of support and use these methods of support to enhance the learning experience and thus develop and extend the knowledge and understanding of all those involved with a work-based programme.

#### 2.3.4 The benefits of undertaking a mentor role

Through this literature review of mentorship the researcher is able to gain insight, into the possible benefits of mentorship and the combination of facts that influence and strengthen the mentorship process. Daresh (2001) believes there are social benefits that are organisational and therefore increase a network of support mechanisms, from other mentors within the organisation. Also there are the symbolic and psychological benefits such as; respect, recognition and personal prestige, providing the mentor with inside identification of the part in the development of service/industry. This notion is confirmed by Hansford, Ehrich and Tennet (2004) who debate the growth of confidence developing in the individual working as a mentor, and the impact that this has on the organisation as a whole. They suggest that the role of the mentor is not simply to support the mentee, but provides a means of understanding the complexity of this role and the nature and importance it plays in the development of not only the mentee, but the mentor and organisation.

### 2.3.5 Mentor preparation and support

Wang and Odell (2002) argue that mentor preparation has been a weak link in many mentoring programmes and an ill-conceptualized field of research. Literature seems to be using the term mentorship interchangeably with competency, coaching and protégé'. Competency, coaching and protégé could now be added under the umbrella of mentorship definitions that would help create any support mechanisms introduced. The interchangeable use of words when considering mentorship changes when new terms are included; Clutterbuck (2008) believes that mentorship has a wide and varied understanding for all those involved in the process. The introduction of coaching changes this somewhat and we see the beginnings of another debate that surrounds the role and profile of a mentor within the Foundation Degree. Clutterbuck (2006) add further to this concept of coaching, suggesting that this is a mechanism that builds on workplace learner experience and where Wareing (2008) confirms that this could be associated with performance, rather than career development.

Herman and Mandell (2004) go some way to helping us appreciate the impact of adult education and the impact that this has on mentoring, in comparison to teaching. Equally appreciating the importance of role profile and how those concerned with the development of others play a significant role in creating a wider understanding and therein a more structured and positive approach to empowerment.

It is speculated by authors such as Johnson (2001), Stuart, (2009), Williams and Thuraiajah (2009), Myall *et al.* (2008), that mentors are key stakeholders in work-based learning. Work-based programmes are diverse and vary dramatically throughout the educational system. The academic pathways that advocate work-based learning could be described as a 'mish mash' of programmes that range from photography, engineering to children and health and social care facets. The uniqueness of each individual programme is clear when module content and learning outcomes are examined. However, they all share one essential characteristic; the students on these programmes all require support in the work area. Work-based learning is not a new phenomenon and therefore the question is why these areas are not standardised and why possible mentors are still elusive. By identifying and



detailing the necessary interventions with all mentors, we hope to ensure the most effective support for work-based learning students can be provided.

Through analysis of the literature so far we are able to see that the mentor role within Foundation Degrees is complicated and that many studies (Taylor *et al*, 2006; Burgess and Shelton Mayes, 2007; Benefer, 2007; Edmond *et al*, 2007) indicate differing responses to similar questions, with this in mind, confirming what has previously been stated that mentorship is a unique phenomenon and therefore any construction of support should reflect this. The researcher having identified the possibility of constructing a guide for mentorship support in Foundation Degrees seeks to add another level of understanding in the form of a support mechanism to recognise the demands for both potential mentors and the mentee.

## **2.4 Factors that influence the success of the mentor and student relationship**

Caldwell and Carter (1993) explored issues around the relationship between mentor and mentee, determining that with differing approaches gains could be achieved. Examples of one to one relationship, clearly defined goals, identified expectations and clearly identified learning opportunities. For the most part little has changed, but the execution of this relationship and the possible success of the mentee continue to be unpredictable. It continues to be therefore of significant importance that we continue to explore this topic. Through the continued exploration of practical experiences and alternative mentor possibilities, we may be able to capture alternative insight and thus advance the subject.

Knight and York (2006) conducted a qualitative study, which identified a range of factors that influenced the success of the relationship between mentor and student within Foundation Degrees. A lack of clarity over the role of the mentor created a number of difficulties including a reduction in the adequacy of training for the mentorship role. Furthermore, other factors clearly affected the mentor-student relationship including the mentor's personal attributes, their skills and the amount of time they could earmark for the students. One important theme Knight and York (2006) identify is the adaptability of the mentor-student relationship to students who become more independent and require less support as well as students who still required frequent and consistent mentor guidance.

These issues are further compounded by Wareing (2008) whose pilot study expressed concerns about the mentorship role in Foundation Degrees. Respondents in Wareing's (2008) study indicated the complexity of the relationship and the differing levels of commitment, with some respondents describing little or no time with their mentor and therefore no real opportunity to formulate a meaningful relationship. This illustrated some of the key ingredients necessary for successful mentoring as discussed previously.

The recognition and collaborative nature of mentorship, coupled with the improvement of a more involved learning process, should ensure pathways that are clearly supported to maximise all the components necessary for successful completion of any work-based programme. Facts learnt about this process can only add value to the total learning packages provided within any work-based programme. Indeed Wareing (2008) gives insight into the changing nature of the Foundation Degree student and talks of 'communities of practice' however he suggests that there is conflict in the different roles adapted by the students, going from worker to undergraduate and therein an issue of support is exposed.

#### 2.4.1 The characteristics of a good mentor

The characteristics of a good mentor are widely reported and identified in the literature. Holloway (1985) cited in Stuart (2009: 44) and Bennet (2003) emphasise the 'special relationship' between mentor and student, which includes empathy, trust and affinity as being essential to facilitate the learning process. Williams and Thurairajah (2009) identifies that the mentor should have patience, enthusiasm, knowledge and respect to promote a positive learning environment for the student.

In addition, from the findings outlined so far in the literature, the QAA (2004), Gray (1998), Bold (2003), Conner and McKnight (2003), Barber *et al.* (2006), Edge Foundation (2008), Foundation Direct (2008) all agree that work-based learning is somewhat driven by trans disciplinary knowledge rather than discipline-specific in the way that typifies more traditional programmes of higher education study. This is not to say that academic disciplines have no role to play in the development of coherent work-based learning programmes. Indeed one of the tensions between work-based learning and HEI is that knowledge and theory in the former is always represented as context-specific where the

tendency is to construct academic knowledge as abstract and context-free. This is outlined in Solomon and Gustavs (2004) work where they suggest that learning outcomes for a work based learning programme operate on a number of levels – knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and abstraction and these are not separate concepts but are all interrelated. To achieve a high level of integration within learning outcomes for work-based learning programmes, employers must participate and be an active part of any strategy and work related element identified and implemented within the programme/ curriculum.

These findings, for the researcher, serve to acknowledge the issues that separate the links of practice and theory in mentorship e.g. no clear definition, focus on qualitative research, mentor views of the role, the contribution the mentor makes, the trans disciplinary nature of mentorship, its context specific nature and the need for high levels of employer participation. Therefore, in order to achieve a successful mentorship partnership, these issues must be addressed. It is not unknown that those involved in linking practice and theory have debated this subject for a while in a variety of other arenas. There is recognition that complexities, conflicts and differing views exist, however there are successful means of overcoming this conflict and one of these is the mentor within the mentorship role. This is the main focus for exploration in this work.

#### 2.4.2 The perception of the mentorship role

There are some difficulties around the perception of the mentorship role and for some, how the student fits into the regime. Tabbbron *et al.* (1997), Eraut *et al.* (1995) and Ensher *et al.* (2001) explore the concept of conflicting roles played by the mentor, primarily as a skills developer, mentor and assessor, they believed that when conflict of these roles occurs, that there are casualties and therefore clarity is necessary to ensure success.

Phillips *et al* (2000) in their study emphasise that students at the beginning of their courses are much more vulnerable to high levels of anxiety as they have limited experience of the process of mentor/student relationship building and therefore do not have previous knowledge to draw upon. Moberg (2008) believes mentoring is a process in which a more senior person assumes responsibility for the development of a junior person. It is a

relationship characterized by tutoring, advice giving, and actions by the mentor to advance the career prospects of the protégé.

In conclusion, the findings and themes within the literature appears to have exposed conflicting situations, many definitions and interpretations impact on the findings of the literature, and therefore influence any understanding and expectations e.g. the role of the mentor; the definition of the mentor and the responsibilities of those involved in the process. This literary conflict tends to identify that current research into mentorship focuses on qualitative methodologies, which tends to advocate a personal interpretation of the concepts reported in literature.

When exploring a notion/concept, all the literature provided had a particular preliminary position; individuals bring with them their experiences and understanding and therefore seek to explore their views of 'mentor', 'mentorship', 'mentoring' (Bennet, 2003). In this study similar principles have been identified and the researcher understands the impact of this academic material on developing a better more rounded insight into mentorship. Literature within mentorship is overwhelming and may come from the fact that within work-based arenas, professions and education, one cannot escape from the importance that mentorship has in contributing to the development of students, their knowledge base, the mentor/ mentee relationship and service delivery. Clearly the literature debate will continue and provides insight for this study.

## Chapter 3 Research Methodology

To ensure that the most significant conclusions are drawn from the research it was important that the researcher clearly acknowledged and outlined the nature of the research, aim and area of query (DePoy and Gitlin, 2005). This identification provides the foundation and parameters for the philosophical debate that ensued. The methodology used within this study draws on both qualitative and quantitative theory to underpin the data collection methods, and therein identify distinctive data analysis tools. In selecting a mixed method approach, it is essential to demonstrate the benefits/purpose of such approaches and what they offer and their usefulness. The methods used for data collection will be examined to allow the reader an insight into the sample and the focus groups, that were conducted and the methods of organisation/analysis of the data.

It is imperative that the identified task reflects clearly the chosen method and supporting methodologies; this signals exactly what the researcher wants to examine and why. Creswell (2009) alludes to the fact that the method must reflect clearly the paradigm under investigation. The more open the discussion and debate the more creditable the concepts under scrutiny become. Within the initial debate it is pertinent to explore many of the philosophical components that create the setting for investigation. Henning *et al.* (2004) defines a paradigm as the theory or hypothesis, it is the framework within which theories are built and they influence the way we see the world, our perspectives and how we connect our understanding. The paradigm gives creditability to the researcher's own area of understanding and provides scope, legitimating the limitations of the research (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

### 3.1 Research paradigms

Guba and Lincoln (1994) assist in the clarification of research paradigms; they state that three fundamental questions that help define a research paradigm are as follows:

- *The ontological question i.e. what is the form and nature of reality*
- *The epistemological question i.e. what is the basic belief about knowledge (i.e. what can be known)*

- *The methodological question i.e. how can the researcher go about finding out whatever s/he believes can be known.*

The researcher positioned the paradigms within the theory, drawing from the literature review and thereby creates an area of debate. Through identifying and analysing the paradigms, research questions emerge, so the researcher can consider the robustness and effectiveness of the selected methodology and methods of data collection. This contributes to the successful use of the chosen methodology and consequent findings. By initially addressing the exploration of the ontological question as recognised by Guba and Lincoln (1994) put it in its simplest terms is asking 'what is out there?'

In the literature review the researcher has analysed the research in an attempt to strengthen the desired position. This helps structure and focus the research topic, whilst contextualising the scene/ topic under investigation.

The epistemological question simply put, is the contextualisation of 'mentorship', which will provide a representation of group understanding and knowledge; this can only be achieved if the describing language is shared. It is therefore important to include our language and paradigms, in all areas of data collection and analysis, in addition detail how we use language to clarify the existence of the mentor. Mentorship may present as a complex field, however in order to ensure that the process and indeed the subject is given credibility, mentorship must be unified to limit division of the variety of language used to explain the concept and the varying fields in the exploration of the mentorship role.

Once an examination of the phenomena begins, the early stages of the research usually rely on a structured theory to clarify a sound starting position. Acknowledgement of advanced independent variables and or background factors will explain historical, cultural, social, political and geographical phenomena, which must be added to the notion of divisions of diverse variables to be included in the researchers thinking (Blumer, 1969; Weber, 2001). It is essential at this stage to clearly mark out the inductive and deductive debate; by so doing the development of any analytical tool will provide useful insight into the premises that are being explored.

### 3.1.1 Studying complex systems

Acknowledgement in advance of the complexity and /or the background factors of mentorship will assist the researcher to explore the influencing historical, cultural, social, political and geographical phenomena; all these factors must be added to the notion of divisions within mentorship and need to be included to enhance the researchers thinking (Weber, 2001).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that a complex system can only be studied as a unit. In the case of this project, 'Mentorship' is the unit. As soon the unit is identified the complexities begin; mentorship is attached to so many other areas. To demonstrate this examples of connective complexities for the research topic are identified as, the mentor relationships, the environments, the employers the work-based educational content and more specifically the work-based supervisor. The researcher's appreciation of the identified complexities allows for the following questioning; what is mentorship? What are we seeking to examine and why? How do we identify the meaning of mentorship for the participants and how in turn do they experience this phenomenon. This debate shapes the methodology and dictates the procedures used in data collection and analysis.

### 3.1.2 Formulating the research questions

Having researched and acknowledged the most objective philosophical notions relevant to ensure that every conceivable idea was touched upon, it was important to utilise my own subjective phenomena but at the same time acknowledge the limitations based on bias (see later).

Elliot and Timulak (2005) provide insight here and the possibility of innovation; they suggest questioning the formulated methods of qualitative research and ask the researcher to consider the alternatives available to them. By exploring research methods in an open and accessible way, this provides a flexible thinking and application process; this skill empowers and ensures a unique approach to both the final methodology and thereby the methods employed for analysis. This newly found flexibility extends the researchers possibilities and

gives the researcher a fluidity to move around the qualitative arena in a more adaptable way. Sandelowski (2000) and Caelli *et al.* (2003) provided debates that summarise the researcher's own internal research struggle. They question the use of qualitative approaches outside of the traditional format and ask how the application can be coherent, if the basis of the method is somewhat excluded. Through this clarification the possibilities within qualitative and quantitative methodologies become more visible; the researcher learns that any internal dilemmas when selecting the appropriate methodological approach must be transparent.

Within this study the researcher identified key areas of investigation, using the researchers own knowledge and experience of the lived world 'Mentorship'. However although it is essential to acknowledge the researchers own bias, equally this may prove useful in linking and binding the scope of the subject (Elliott, 2000). In order to keep the theories and concepts identified through the exploration of the methodologies and methods, it would be essential to use theories that recognise the possibilities of Guba and Lincoln (1994) research paradigms, the ontological question, the epistemological question and the methodological question to underpin the research questions for the study. Linking to this is Elliott (2000) idea, where he views the following types of research questions e.g. the ontological question as the definitional the nature of the phenomenon, the epistemological question as the descriptive aspects of the phenomenon, the epistemological question as interpretive history and progress of the phenomenon.

Moving this idea forward more robust questions for this study emerge:

- What does mentorship mean for mentors working and supporting learners on a Foundation Degree and how does this compare with mentors supporting another group in particular nursing?
- What are the current support mechanisms for those supporting learners on Foundation Degrees?
- What is the narrative or sequence of the mentors, e.g. their experiences of mentorship?
- What are the core elements of the mentorship role, what has influenced the mentors understanding of the role?



By considering the questions to the ideas presented by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Elliott (2000) this helped to explore further the role that is played by the researcher as a means to developing a meaningful methodological tool. The exercise of answering the outlined questions adds a depth to the methods applied to this study and provides a pathway to the issues surrounding trustworthiness and rigor. Clough and Nutbrown (2003) noted that research must be purposeful and political, by using this theory a series of questions were explored prior to the commencement of the research study (Chapter 1). These facts coupled with the developing understanding of the use of methods and methodology helps to focus and structure the researcher's thinking, planning and organisation. In order to find the truth and to ensure that rigor and trustworthiness are evident within the study, initial consideration was given to how the researcher would cover this. In considering bias, the researcher's explores his thinking and recognises the adjustment that allows for the awareness of truth. Trustworthiness and truth are main features within qualitative and quantitative research and the method of analysing evidence and its presentation are key, to the successful outcome of the topic under scrutiny.

It is important to demonstrate how truth and trustworthiness will contribute to the confidence of the methodology employed. Guba's (1981) model identifies four aspects of trustworthiness, both being useful in qualitative and quantitative approaches. First truth value (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and asks if the researcher has established confidence in the findings and method, this will be evident in the return to participants for clarification. The next area is the applicability of findings, the generalisability of findings to other similar groups. Consistency through use of tools and processes, data collection methods and the possible replication of the techniques employed, to achieve the similar findings. Then finally the issue of neutrality within rigor, this is where the findings truly reflect the participant's perspectives and motivations (Silverman, 2011: Sandelowski, 2000). All these elements will be applied throughout this study.

### 3.2 The Quantitative and qualitative debate

To choose an appropriate formula as the vehicle to enable deeper understanding and meet the aim and answer the research questions posed of the study, it is necessary to simply outline the qualitative and quantitative definitions. The most simplistic differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are that the latter uses numerical calculations and the former utilises individual experiences in the form of language (Flick 2006). Baker *et al.* (1992), and Henwood and Pidgeon (1994) best distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research outlining that, if our understanding becomes too simplistic then the dichotomy between the approaches can be problematic. In reality the possibilities produced by both methodologies can add real value to the phenomenon being explored. Although there are differences in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, there are also some clear similarities.

Yet further analysis clearly points to a deeper dichotomy based on the actual method used to analyse the data (Creswell, 2009; Libarkin and Kurdziel, 2002; Pahoo, 2006). The studies that use numbers have been instrumental in demonstrating significant facts that pertain to the subject under investigation and have therefore demonstrated their usefulness in understanding a research topic (Parahoo, 2006). Those studies that use the lived experiences of the participants provide some depth of feelings, experiences and emotion, giving human insight into the topic (Polit and Beck, 2011).

Research requires expertise, involves rigor in implementation and results in the generation of scientific knowledge, whether it be in quantitative or qualitative studies (Parahoo, 2006; Polit and Beck, 2011). However, the debate regarding the efficacy and value of these polar positions in providing evidence that impacts on practice and therefore contributes to the development of our understanding, which continues to create the necessary debate. This debate essentially hinges on what can be considered fact or the truth (Brewer, 2000). Therefore, it is essential there is a meaningful understanding of the chosen underpinning methodology related to either the qualitative or quantitative approach.

### 3.2.1 Quantitative research

It is interesting to note that Streubert and Carpenter (1995) suggest that any phenomenon must be devoid of subjectivity and must be empirical in nature. This stance is useful as Polit and Beck (2011) argue along the same empirical lines, pointing out that only evidence gathered directly or indirectly through human senses can be called facts. The empirical process therefore provides a basis for generating knowledge and thus identifies the phenomena. However, there are areas of controversy within this argument as many researchers feel that some concepts such as social support and satisfaction are not truly empirical and cannot be studied as such. Parahoo (2006) discusses the use of these concepts in empirical research and provides evidence of such studies, reaching the conclusion that both traditions gather and analyse external evidence that is subjected to the researchers' senses and can still be considered empirical.

However, it is essential to note that quantitative research purports to use hard or precise science, which is strongly based on rigour, objectivity and control. Quantitative research methodology is based on logical positivism and functions using strict rules of logic, truth, law, axioms and predications (Flick, 2006; Parahoo, 2006; Polit and Beck, 2008). These outlined facts add to the decision making process involved within this study, providing insight and transparency for the process involved in data collection and of course the most appropriate and useful data.

The positivist movement promotes the concept of a true objective account and states that this can provide an accurate means of measuring phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). To ensure that quantitative research and positivism are truly reflective of a rigorous research method any research must be separate of personal values, feelings and perceptions; this adds to the complete objectivity that is necessary to ensure purposeful, measurable and meaningful data. Silverman (2005) argues that in order to locate the right instrument for accurate measures this format must be adhered to.

### 3.2.2 Qualitative research

However, education takes a more holistic view of the phenomena being researched and often adopts a more flexible, humanistic, insider perspective. The exploration of

phenomena is an essential part of educational research and the study being undertaken needs to address the perceptions of mentors as to the value of their role. For this reason a qualitative method has been also employed. For many, qualitative research is considered to lack the hard scientific rigour of a quantitative perspective and is deemed by many as less reliable.

Qualitative methodology is thought to lack the structure of its counterpart and explores phenomena in the behavioural and social science arena (Polit and Beck, 2011; Parahoo, 2006; Silverman, 2005). However, Fielding (1993) and Streubert and Carpenter (1995) view evidence differently and describe the nature of qualitative studies as humanistic, interpretative and naturalistic pointing out that their main function is to examine the meaning of social interaction rather than establish an absolute fact. They go further and discuss the complexity and dynamic nature of phenomena illustrating that the truth is both of these elements and that for understanding there must be acknowledgement of the interaction between the subjects and their natural environments.

Grbich (1999) puts this argument succinctly and argues as follows that quantitative researchers presume that there is a singular truth that exists independently out in the world and needs only to be discovered. Whilst on the other hand qualitative researchers believe that truth lies in gaining an understanding of the actions, attitudes, beliefs and values of others from within the respondents' own frame of reference; the latter having been socially and historically constructed. These truths are then captured and evaluated through the researcher's views, context and time.

### 3.2.3 A mixed methods approach

The strategies that underpin quantitative research were points for consideration. The researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon and therefore requires the methodological tool to best represent the nature of that activity. In this case the identified topic seeks to explore, understand and expand our knowledge of mentorship within a relatively new arena. Foundations degrees are a means of widening participation and therefore the possible groups are varied and widely spread. The Foundation Degrees are attached to a variety of employment and educational programmes and a method of legitimising skills and

knowledge and thus possibly empowering the learner and advancing a specific area. It may also be possible to increase or develop the profile of a given profession, by attaching some academic achievement that illustrates the potential of the chosen group to advance in terms of recognition and increase the profile of the degree content as well as the focus subject. By exploring the possible approaches available we can ascertain the characteristics of each methodology. This gives the researcher an opportunity to interpret the value and construct of the different approaches and also creates a debate that extends the possibilities available in terms of constructing a methodology that reflects the topic and the need to extract data that is useful in the obvious exploration of an established but controversial paradigm 'Mentorship'.

The researcher wanted to guarantee that both concepts of deductive and inductive reasoning were acknowledged and that the main points of contention surrounding these concepts were included within the data analysis (Denzin, 1989). This was because the nature of deductive and inductive reasoning are polar opposites, but are useful in that they position the researchers thinking, ensuring that all assumptions examine the generalizability of the theory. Either by exploring the assumptions or by confirming said assumptions. An example here is the notion of the mentor's role and the impact that it has on the student's ability to learn, for some involved in the study this was implicit, for others there were elements of other characteristic such as curriculum development and assessment that contributed to success. Assumptions about the participant's views were identified and recognised as inductive in the main. In understanding this theoretical base, the analysis of the data becomes clearer.

The use of the reflection in exploring thinking and developing themes, linking narratives and thereby creating a basis from which to identify opportunities to understand or at least gain some insight from the findings, is essential. Interpretation, and to some extent reflection, but the methodology sought to examine lived experiences and people perceptions; it seems only right that some part of the analysis should mirror the collection technique. Interpretation comes in a variety of forms and helps to create a deeper understanding within academic growth, so could enhance the researcher's interpretation of the data provided.

The beginning of an appropriate approach to data collection with the insight that later would be needed to interpret data starts the methodological debate. In acknowledging a more traditional focus helps with an understanding of later actions within the project. To continue the research ethics approval was sought.

### **3.3 Ethical issues**

Holloway and Freshwater (2007) suggest that, before undertaking research, informed consent from all participants should be obtained, and this was granted by all participants who volunteered to take part (Appendix 1). Walford (2009) consider the issue of anonymity in research, but in this study this could not be guaranteed as transcripts were returned to participants to confirm the findings. However, although all participants could be identified, they were assured that if they wanted to be removed from the research, the researcher's contact details were available. Ethical approval was obtained from the university to solicit students, staff members and mentors to take part in focus groups and undertake a follow-up questionnaire. An ethics application detailing the subject the processes and the suggested methods was scrutinised by a panel and ethical approval was given in April 2011 (Appendix 2).

### **3.4 Descriptive and interpretative research: a qualitative approach**

The qualitative exploration believes that experience of life gives a particular meaning to the respondents' perception of a particular phenomenon (DePoy and Gitlin, 2005; Parahoo, 2006). The process involves the researcher helping the informant to describe lived experiences without leading the discussion. Through in-depth conversations, the researcher strives to gain entrance into the informants' world; to have full access to their experiences as lived. Sometimes, two separate interviews or conversations may be needed. Typically, all qualitative studies involve a small number of study participants often fewer than 10. With the focus groups it was not the number of participants, but their interaction; how they responded to each other; how they used language and their mutual understanding of both theme being debated and language used to describe an identified concept.

Elliot's (2000) descriptive and interpretative approach underpins the researcher's ability to challenge and question and helps to demonstrate the processes used to formulate the approach that best represents the study and the researcher's adaptability. When considering Elliot's (2000) philosophy the researcher benefits from the framework this approach provides, in both organising and developing the study methodology.

The researcher examined 'enlightenment' as described by Kant (1784) to help focus the issue and asks: what can be known, what can we do and what can we hope for? Only by challenging the prevailing metaphysics and ontologies could enlightenment be useful in determining terms of knowledge, action and understanding that interprets life and acknowledges the considerations of those around us. The philosophy of enlightenment is useful here because it allows questioning and provides a platform from which to explore a phenomenon, whilst recognising the complexity of human nature and insight.

Mentorship is not an unknown phenomenon to the researcher and there are a variety of its elements that are both known and understood, as was demonstrated within the introduction and literature review. What is imperative is how the researcher can apply reason and empirical reflection, to ensure that the evidence provided is strategically organised to both discover and realise an underlying reality. These outlined thoughts capture the background of thinking used within this project.

Clough and Nutbrown (2003) have provided support with a modern take on the question of ontology; they structure social research into four domains. Persuasive being the first; the question is why an individual would carry out a piece of work if not to persuade someone of its value. Purposive ensures that you are clear of the aim and want to achieve some sort of result. Then there is positional, which provides a perspective and the impact of the research in the form of generalisability. Finally political which focuses on the changes that come as result of the research? These four distinct areas are threaded through the research study and underpin many of the decisions made and the general thinking and direction of the researcher.

### 3.4.1 The issue of bias

As the researcher it is imperative to identify areas of possible bias and experiences, to ensure that these biases are included in both the study and the analysis of the data collected. The researcher's present role involves actively teaching and supporting mentors within both a professional context 'Nursing' and 'Work-based programme Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care'. The possibility of bias occurs as a result of the insight and knowledge that the researcher has, through his experience of working within this field. Consideration was given to conjecture and supposition; it is not always possible to discount these elements, as they form regular occurrences in everyday life. The issue is further exacerbated when one considers that bias is not limited to one area, but all areas of a study, the design, data collection and of course data analysis (Polit and Beck, 2011; Silverman, 2005; Creswell, 2007). The first steps to overcoming any bias is the awareness that the possibility exists, therefore active steps are taken that acknowledge bias, in the form of its recognition and the possible impact it may have in all areas of the study.

For the researcher the practical considerations and the academic challenges of mentorship are regularly outlined for consideration in both the classroom and within practice. This means that the question of mentorship is an active part of the researcher's everyday working life. However it may be that this notion of researcher bias is misplaced. As it would not be unusual for a scholar working in a particular field to question and seek answers to some of the phenomena that are created within a researchers area of interest. Indeed it is good academic foresight to challenge understanding and thereby improve the perception of an issue, thus creating further depth within a chosen topic. Silverman (2011) and Cuff *et al.* (2006) add to this debate, outlining that the epistemological perspective, as proponents of this thinking they assume that a single reality can only be achieved through total objectivity. Meaning that the researcher has to discard or make all efforts to prevent their values, beliefs and preconceptions from influencing the research process. This clearly is a difficult task, as the researcher has tried to outline. However the recognition that some value comes from objectivity or positivism, means that inclusion of this concept adds value to the methodological approach and therein enables a more transparent view of the phenomena.



### 3.5 Selected Methodology

The study used mixed approaches to data collection, focus groups and questionnaires. The study would reflect both qualitative and quantitative approaches. From the previous debate a theoretical approach was adopted using descriptive and interpretive methods for the qualitative element and a questionnaire for quantitative. This would direct the study and address the developing truth, value and trustworthiness issues within the work; these were data collection, analysis and the elements that provide rigor when the process is put under scrutiny. Creswell (2007) is useful here providing an explanation to justify the process adapted, once the methodology has been selected and rationale explored, then the researcher needs to clarify the mixed method approach and logic.

The methodology draws on qualitative theory to help determine data collection and analysis methods and is thus instrumental in directing both the data and the researcher. Differences within the qualitative fields were established and thus the components and techniques used to examine the data were recognized. The methodology acknowledges the impact of descriptive and interpretative approaches and far from making the methodology complicated and rigid the adapted approach makes the data collection and analysis fluid and malleable. Previously there has been an acknowledgement of the nature of human experience and that this experience underpinned data analysis and would enhance the expansion of identified themes. For the work to demonstrate this level of understanding it had to understand and appreciate the underlying philosophies of the qualitative methodological systems. Appreciating the human significance and psychological understanding that individuals attach to a given situation. Here the researcher would ask questions attempting to establish the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the individuals concern (DePoy and Gitlin, 2005).

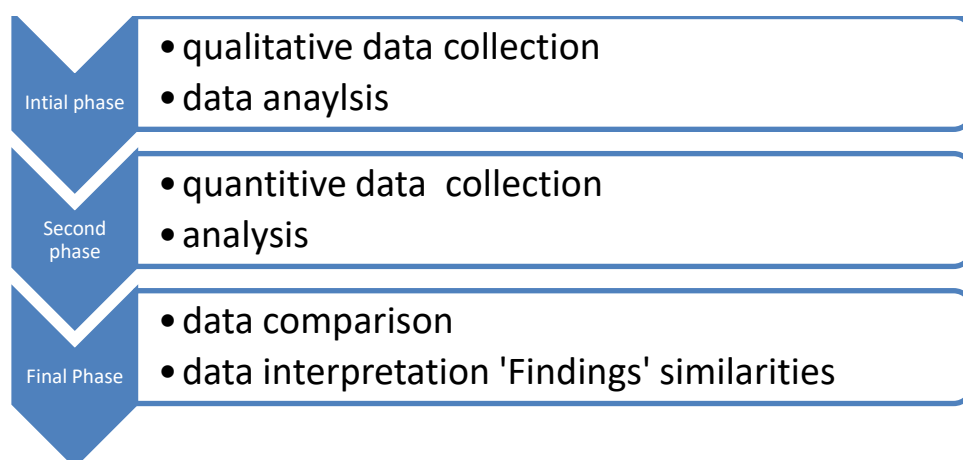
The issues within this study are the application of qualitative principles and the understanding of the movement and flexibility of these principles, for many years the concepts behind qualitative methods have sought to develop more robust principles. These principles are put in place to demonstrate an increase in trustworthiness of the process and thereby adding creditability to the data and findings that come out of this process. To

explore the lived experience of any participant will help us understand some aspects of the phenomenon. The interpretative researcher assumes that this essence can be understood in much the same way that the ethnographer assumes that culture exists. In the interpretative approach there is a belief that truth is grounded in peoples' life experiences and that an understanding of this truth leads to an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Parahoo, 2006). For the quantitative component of this study, the selected questionnaire had two roles, there was the possibility of interpretation of data and the evidence presented in the responses. These allowed the researcher to gauge the factual responses and thus evidence, some of the responses to enhance the understanding of participants view of a given (Giorgi, 1997; Creswell, 2007)

The developing nature of education and the research therein, has roots in symbolic interactionism simply because educationalists seek to explore methods of improving educational/learning opportunities. The researcher believes that a mixed method provides a worthwhile approach to the research of educational phenomena and so the selection of this methodology has been based on the need for outcome and knowledge to be based clearly with the phenomena and not with any individual interpretation of data. As indicated earlier Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe theories must be induced from data rather than being proceeded by them.

Having outlined the basis of the methodological approach and its application, the final conclusion is the researcher's actual mixed method. It is this ideal that will enable the flexibility, openness and movement that will help capture ideas, themes, ideologies and outcomes. Creswell (2007) suggests a sequential exploratory strategy, this allows the researcher to use the findings of the qualitative data then collect quantitative data. The findings of both phases are then integrated, during the interpretation phase of the model. This enables the depth of understanding to become apparent as the analysis process ensues.

**Figure 3.1 Phases of the Integration Model**



**Diagram modified from Creswell (2007)**

This straightforward approach supports the researcher in developing and reporting findings, as well as providing a tool that will help draw useful conclusions further on in the study. There is an expectation that the researcher has insight and understanding of language and uses this to identify the commonalities; hence the analysis is based on reflective ability and recognition of theme context. The techniques outlined in the analysis process, word identification and then identified interchangeable words, followed by sub themes and then grouped to form actual themes, could become complex, so a simple coding system that is transparent was essential. Analysis of the transcripts was central in delivering a cohesive interpretation of the data.

### **3.6 Research methods**

Focus groups were formed, the data from these groups would help the projects understanding locally, provide a starting point and confirm how those involved in mentorship perceived the topic. It was envisaged that four focus groups would be organised, educationalist, students, work-based mentors and for further comparative possibilities nursing mentors. However because of the varied work patterns and differing priorities, the work-based mentor focus group could not achieve the minimum quota required.

### 3.6.1 Focus groups

By exploring the concept of focus groups, it was imperative that the research techniques recognised the importance of structure, formulation and organisation of these groups. Whilst also acknowledging the reality of possible outcomes afforded by employing this method of data collection. There are a variety of structures that can be employed in the development and management of focus groups. Goldman and McDonald (1987) examine the phenomena that helped with the creation of focus groups suggesting that it is a rich stew of socio-psychological psychotherapeutic traditions and techniques. However focus groups and the concepts behind them are not a representation of a melting pot, it is the acknowledgement of all the ingredients that contribute to the theoretical basis behind the concepts of focus groups.

Whilst contemplating the positive possibilities of focus groups, criticisms are likely to be evident too. Both Kitzinger (1994a) and Morgan (1997) suggest we question the participant's involvement within the group, their knowledge and understanding of the task. This leads onto the question of group dynamics, as well as differing personalities, language and communication skills. The discussions within the group may not provide all the understanding of the individual's opinions, experiences or practical knowledge of the topic. These possibilities have been accepted to a greater degree and focus groups were a large part of the methodology and method being used to examine this topic. It is inconceivable that all aspects of any phenomena can be captured. However focus group data collection and analysis provides a platform for further exploration. Focus groups acted as a connection for this studies understanding of mentorship.

This was not an interview although the concept and theme was predetermined, the groups direction was self defined. The basic premise of focus groups is the possibility of yielding rich data that will inform the project and subject under investigation. Initially thoughts from Pollock (1955) were useful here, providing context for the focus groups and legitimising the method. Pollock (1955) believes that focus groups provide insight in completely different ways to interviews. Focus groups formulate attitudes, opinions and practices, within a more humanistic and natural context. If we are to understand this theory then we must appreciate that opinions within focus groups generate, more

complete examples of the subject under discussion. Examples of this are the internal validation of points raised, the challenges presented by other group members and therefore a more validated insight into the topic. The group then acquires self-defining structure, acting as a tool that reconstructs opinions. More importantly is the concept of problem solving and brainstorming. These attributes ensure that the subject under investigation becomes more analytical.

Blumer (1969) reinforces this concept and suggests that a small group given the responsibility of examining a topic is more valuable, than indeed a representative sample. He suggests that the probing nature of the interaction be more useful and expedient. These concepts therefore demonstrate the value of group discussion, in setting up a diverse understanding of a given topic. Possible pitfalls with focus groups are the dynamics that surround the individual groups and the comparability of each group. How the members interpret the question/subject, how each member of the group responds to the subject, their experiences. There must be an acknowledgment of the various backgrounds and knowledge bases of the different members.

As a moderator it was essential that the researcher was able to clearly illustrate the position and method of moderation that would be used within the focus groups. A difficult task simply because the data required should be not be influenced, otherwise the rationale for the focus groups would be lost. The development of each focus group used the following criteria. Each group would be homogenous; this would ensure a nondirective style of moderating. It was also important that all members of each group were not inhibited and so the moderator would be a facilitator, thus stimulating more narrative descriptions of the topic and therefore more descriptive data for analysis. Equally the use of narratives could stimulate the issue described, within problem solving, opinions and attitudes (Green and Hart, 1999; Litosseliti, 2003).

Clearly there are human elements that impact on group interactions that cannot be considered prior to group discussion. The group members are uncontrollable phenomena in their own right. To restrict and structure individual members would in itself limit the productivity of useful data. Further there may be difficulties when considering the

reliability and trustworthiness of data collection, the research issues of scientific rigor, in both process and analysis. The issue of scientific rigor is an important element of research; it is the cornerstone of validating findings, of analysis data and providing trustworthiness of the entire research process used. In this form of qualitative data collection, the researcher acknowledges the volatility of rigor and accepts that to a large degree, that some flexibility is necessary within analysis. This leads to another issue that of subjective opinions, when we consider objectivity of an issues and then apply our own understanding, there should be some method of recognising that there is both a subjective and objective view of any issue (Krueger and Casey 2000; Morgan 1997). If the researcher explores these issues and includes an understanding of their existence, then there are opportunities to adjust any field notes that accompany the data.

It is Important to note that the focus groups could never repeat the same response to the same question. This is simply because those participants of the focus groups are living freethinking beings. The reaction to a sentence/narrative by another individual would never be the same again, thinking, reflecting and considering facts changes those facts and gives them a different perspective each time (Pollock, 1955; Blumer, 1969; Green and Hart, 1999; and Litosseliti, 2003). The transcripts from the focus groups provided a wealth of knowledge from educationalist, student and nursing insight. The analysis of the rich data proved fruitful in first describing some salient points for deliberation.

The study seeks diverse understanding of mentorship, and therefore seeks to explore how different people across different programmes, from different walks of life, understand their relationship to this concept. Based on literature reviewed and the findings discussed within this project, mentorship', includes those aspects of student development that are shared and work-based or work related. Different people may draw a line between the concepts that surround mentorship. However we do not want to presuppose any individual understandings. Although this is a very loose term, it fits in well with the current methodology, which allows for the individual to use all aspects of their understanding and experiences. But, however they perceive mentorship, the project wants to understand what mentorship is for them. It is interested in capturing their reflections about what matters in 'mentorship'.

### *3.6.1a Optimising the effectiveness of focus groups*

In comparing the focus groups bracketing the topic would be useful in and helping the researcher develop and capture areas of understanding that would impact on topic understanding. Members of each focus group had a different perspective because their starting points were different. Consideration was given to the individual lived experiences and thereby, provided a more rigorous analysis. The focus groups could help to illustrate some of the differing levels of understanding that would create useable findings. Now that the research process had established categories (through literature searches), the probes and prompts used in the focus groups enabled the researcher to explore more deeply, issues relating to the work-based mentor's perspective of the students placements. The initial elements of the focus groups provided a pathway for further understanding via the questionnaire.

The richness of data from the focus groups meant that phase two of this study (the quantitative questionnaire) could target specific areas that had been identified. Focus groups were an initial method of making contact and also developing an initial understanding of mentorship in a wider context. It was imperative that those involved with the topic provided some firsthand experiences for the debate on the mentorship.

There was a brief introduction to each focus group with an outline of the purpose:

- To gain some basic information about mentorship.
- For you to talk about the types of things you might be interested in telling us, with regards to mentorship and any support mechanisms etc.

This approach served to encourage the natural flow of participants and the group's natural development of and feel for the subject. There would only be intervening questions, if the focus group appears to be limited and the focus moves away from 'mentorship'.

### **3.6.2 Questionnaires**

The focus is on the mentor and their understanding of the empirical world rather than that of the researcher. To add further credibility for this chosen approach it is essential to note that

qualitative research usually seeks to understand both the person and the phenomena, which enables the researcher to explore previous events although the moment has passed. Whilst quantitative methods add a more structured 'snap shot' of the phenomena before the examination of the participant's view. Within this study the question of what is known is as essential to the research as the perceptions of the phenomenon. Qualitative insight does provide more in depth analysis; however there is also equal value in exploring a series of insightful questions that enable the researcher to gain a current and initial insight into the phenomenon under investigation.

Grbich (1999) puts this argument very plainly and argues as follows that quantitative researchers presume that there is a singular truth that exists independently out in the world and needs only to be discovered. Whilst on the other hand qualitative researchers believe that truth lies in gaining an understanding of the actions, attitudes, beliefs and values of others from within the respondents' own frame of reference; the latter having been socially and historically constructed. These truths are then captured and evaluated through the researcher's analytical view, context and time.

The strategies that underpin quantitative research were the first point for consideration. The researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon and therefore requires the methodological tool to best represent the nature of that activity, as previously outlined.

It was important to ensure reliability, validity and trustworthiness, so in acknowledging these facts, a pilot study was established to check the rigor and trustworthiness of the questionnaire. Through understanding the impact and importance of reliability and validity (Polit and Beck, 2011), the researcher sought to create a questionnaire that explores the principles that were identified by the focus groups.

The questionnaire had two functions data collection: firstly to pinpoint where mentorship was in regards to work-based learning and secondly to act as a mechanism for connecting with work-based mentors. In order to further understanding mentorship within work-based learning, a comparative study was also disseminated to nursing mentors. In this way the



researcher could identify and isolate themes and with this data progress the support mechanisms that would subsequently be useful in developing a support tool.

In summary, the use of a mixed methodology would capture some of the key elements of mentorship and so the focus groups would help construct a more comparative element, which could be used to further develop insight and advance the topic. The researcher was aware that the use of comparisons would strengthen the process and provide a more robust investigative examination of the topic. Through identifying the process and clarifying the impact and understanding the researcher used and applied, increased the creditability of the study and itself acted as a means of scrutiny within the methodology itself. .

### **3.7 Research design for the focus groups**

The research design for this study included the accessing the appropriate participants for the focus groups, which involved inviting them to attend focus groups, the educational group consisted of eight people. The nursing group had five and the student group had a total of nine.

#### **3.7.1 Selection of participants**

The sample selection for the focus groups was produced using the notion 'research population', in that they all possessed suitable value and characteristics that were essential to the topic under review (Streubert and Carpenter, 2011). The sample selection was important in that those involved in the development of the topic needed to have some vested interest, experience and or understanding of mentorship. Within each focus group all the members had access to similar experiences and work, or studied on similar programmes within the Foundation Degree pathway.

#### **3.7.2 Sample selection**

The sample selection for this study was purposive, although it was equally a convenient sample (Parahoo, 2006). The sample criterion was important to strengthen the issues of reliability and validity; all the participants had to be involved in the development

mentorship, through experience and or understanding of Foundation Degrees. Gerrish (2015) suggests that purposive sampling takes assumed elements of the population into consideration, therefore, the results are not specific to the population as a whole and can in some cases be considered biased. Streubert and Carpenter (2011) point out however that in the process of obtaining a sample this method of selection was important in establishing a greater depth to the sample and to demonstrate and reduce further possibilities of bias.

Ryan *et al.* (2007) explores and defines qualitative sampling, suggesting that choosing participants, according to their past experiences and relationship to the phenomenon in question, adds value to the data and thus develops the debate and findings. This acknowledgement ensures depth and believability of the piece of research. It helps the research achieve the creditability that is essential when security of the study is undertaken.

When one considers that sampling is a central part of a project then the methods used to select and determine a participant becomes imperative in ensuring that possible elements of bias or participant contamination is reduced. In order to clarify the participants role within the study and the impact that this has in terms of finding themes and insight, informs how we put samples together. The sample process must be transparent, so that any review of this element and the processes used can be easily identified, replicated, reproduced and explained.

Sampling allows the study of the population without having to survey the whole population, reducing time spent, workload and cost (Health Knowledge, 2009). It was envisaged that later within the study that a questionnaire would be constructed, using information and analysis of the data. In this way the findings of this chapter would help continue the investigations and development of the topic. Therefore the sample should at least reflect those involved in Foundation Degrees to some degree.

### 3.7.3 Sample size

The total sample size for this element of the project was twenty two. Each of the educationalists came from an academic background that involved working and teaching students participating in a work-based programme. The Nursing group were all active

mentors within a nursing programme and the students came from a Foundation Degree in early years. Although age and sex may have been issues, these were discarded, because of the nature of the sample collection and the fact that the groups were naturally formed and all participants had agreed to take part in the process.

### **3.8 Research design for the questionnaires**

From the focus groups there had been areas that clearly demonstrated the impact of mentorship and the questionnaire should continue to focus on these identified themes to ensure consistency, continuity and of relevant data for analysis. The questionnaire consisted of fourteen questions, which looked at length of time in current role. It explored a number of mentorship experiences and to encourage some further abstract thinking questions that asked for the mentor's perceptions of importance in student development. The questionnaire created an atmosphere for the further investigation and therefore an opportunity for some participants to further outline issues that could also cover more rich data for analysis. The notion of closed questions provided a structured approach to data collection and would be more easily used in the comparative analysis proposed for later use within the dynamics of the questionnaire.

The development of the questionnaire was seen by the researcher as an opportunity to engage with the participants at a basic level and thus created a pathway to further discussion. With this concept in mind the organisation and development of the questionnaire should follow some fundamental principles. The selection of the research population had been identified, although contact had been made with some of the possible participants, it was not achievable in the first part of this study.

The researcher could draw some conclusions from his initial contact with the Foundation Degree mentors the central one being that as there were limited numbers in this group, it would be more useful to test the questionnaire on a pool of participants. In light of the limited level of engagement so far from work-based mentors, the researcher felt that a simple method of engagement was essential. SNAP's online functions allowed a variety of accessible questions that limited the extent to which the participant became involved. This meant that it

may be more likely to collect data, without the difficulties associated with postal questionnaires. The design mode supplied by SNAP was flexible and this meant that the order of the questions the links and information collected could be analysed far more easily. There was a need to capture the similarities that would eventually support our understanding of mentorship at this local level and thus be able to transfer understanding and more importantly generalise the findings. This was as previously mentioned the first contact with Foundation Degree mentors and as such need to engage them if the study was to be useful and progressive.

First there is the possibility of non-engagement from the participants, who may not complete the questionnaire if they felt it, was too complicated. This issue was initially identified in trying to establish contact with some of the work-based mentors, to organise the focus groups. Secondly the information collected needs to have the ability to demonstrate rigor, reliability validity and trustworthiness. This could not be achieved if participants failed to understand or engage in questions that they perceived did not address their issues (Sandelowski, 1993).

When selecting a questionnaire and method of data collection, the researcher wanted something that required limited time and could be easily accessible and on return could also be easily analysed. 'SNAP'- Questionnaire design and analysis provided this and the issues identified with online surveys were researched. This model had been used in other projects before so came recommended and was simple and structured and enabled clear indication of closed questions as well as being easily returnable for participants. This would be confirmed when introduced as a pilot questionnaire.

### 3.8.1 Design of the questionnaire

In developing the questions, the themes, knowledge and understanding, which were identified within the focus groups, were then used to gain further insight into identified themes. It is important to note that the possibility of a 'work-based' focus group was not achieved and so contributions from this group were not included in the development of the questionnaire. The researcher had however; been able to talk to some of the work-based mentors and so had 'unconfirmed' understanding of some of their views on mentorship. In

selecting the questions, it was important that the information collected would be useful in developing resources. However it was also imperative that the data was useful in understanding and gaining a snap shot of mentorship within work-based programmes. Questionnaires provide a limited view of a phenomenon and therefore could act as a catalyst for deeper investigation. However, through initial contact by the researcher there had already been reluctance to be involved; work-based mentors were hesitant to engage with this research activity. There was no use of incentives; this was simply an opportunity to extend our understanding of mentorship within the Foundation Degree. The questionnaire would provide details as to, what the work-based mentors gain from this process and it was more conducive that the respondents supplied information freely.

‘SNAP’ was an integrated software package it allowed the researcher to design a questionnaire that could be either printed on paper or accessed via the web. When completed snap survey results were then analysed using the internal table or chart procedures and was excellent for further analysis. ‘SNAP’ allowed flexibility with the structure of the questions and provided a variety of options for data collection. The design options available for data collection were examined using the type of information identified in the themes. However at any early stage of question development, it is impossible to outline everything that you want to know in the future and in this case the best possible scenario for useful data is agreed and a questionnaire compiled.

First the fourteen questions were identified using the data supplied from the analysis of the focus groups. The researcher then printed off a copy of the questionnaire to see the view that both internet accessible questionnaire and paper view would appear for the participant. It was forwarded to the pilot group; this would help with understanding data analysis, method of collection and appropriateness of questions asked.

This was the first questionnaire ever compiled by the researcher, so the learning curve was extensive and not having experienced this prior called on the advice of those who had either used a questionnaire or had used online surveys to collect data. The feedback from those who assisted was useful, but the final decision was the researcher’s, who considered that any successes or faults needed ownership.

### 3.8.2 Pilot Study

The basis for the pilot study was to ascertain the feasibility of the questionnaire, to explore possible advance signs of flaws or issues of protocol that may need adjustment prior to the submission of a full survey, within the study. This pre-testing or trying out (Baker 1994) provides early insight and the possibility to review responses and therefore reduce the likelihood of a flawed questionnaire. Prior to the pilot study a draft questionnaire was sent to a select few members of the focus groups, to check content and adjust any minor errors in structure, method and type of question. Some minor adjustments were made simple areas as in 1-5 and 5-10; this would have meant the respondents who had 5, as their answer would have been able to check two distinct areas of a single question. The focus of the questions and the possible answers, the questionnaire would have some areas that needed depth and it was hoped that this would create catalysis for the respondents who then would engage in order to develop their feelings and lived experiences further.

The questionnaire was sent out to 5 nursing mentors; the identified mentors used were ones outside of the locality of the study and therefore would provide a possible unlinked view of mentorship in their current location. All the pilot participants had been mentorship trained; this information provided initial links to qualities of mentor and role profile in developing students.

It was imperative to explore mentorship with no clinical or academic links to the researcher's investigative locality, in this way there could be a true indication of the usefulness of the questionnaire. There would be no legitimate rationale for unbiased completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire needed to collect data that would provide insight into mentorship and allow a minimal level of engagement. This it was hoped would encourage those required in the main study to acknowledge their input and engage in the questionnaire and study in a more meaningful way.

These were returned and analysed, the format was simple; the questionnaire provided clear mechanisms within this research process, for data of role, engagement and any other links found through analysis. To engage mentors, provide useful insight and data, whilst

establishing some further elements of understanding the phenomena, that would be useful in exploring in-depth understanding from the interviews proposed in the following chapter.

Questions made inquiry of the mentor's current sector, professional role and length of time as a mentor in addition the questionnaire was intended to explore, the number of times the mentor role was undertaken, whether the mentor had been trained, how they determined what learning opportunities to expose students to, show how significant they felt their role and thereby addressing the role or part the student plays within the relationship. A series of questions were then included to extract further insight into the relationship between mentor and student. The researcher decided that if this questionnaire had left some questions or opinions unanswered for the participant themselves, these could be further explored, through additional research.

Feedback from the questionnaire had proven positive in terms of stimulation and engagement and thus the necessary elements to progress the study had been achieved. What was useful was the level of understanding that the mentors had of the questions and the simplicity that they had in answering the questions. Verbal feedback was also used if the pilot participants had been unsure of how to respond or had felt a question was ambiguous or most importantly they felt that they needed another area for a question that was not represented within the questionnaire. Final questionnaires for FD and nursing mentors can be viewed in Appendix 3 & 4.

### 3.8.3 Sample

At the beginning of this study the researcher had identified 14 currently functioning work-based programmes, however this did not mean that students had an identified work based mentor and as in some cases the university provided the work-based support. 30 work-based learning mentors were identified; 158 nursing mentors also received questionnaires (Figure 3.2). The questionnaires were sent out via online medium (SNAP). Finding the total number of current work-based mentors was not as easy as was envisaged by the researcher. Contact with those identified on the systems of the work-based learning programmes was informative. However some of the work-based mentors have only done the process once and were not

repeating it. Other mentors had more employees to be trained and so could see the benefits to them in developing students within their current area of practice.

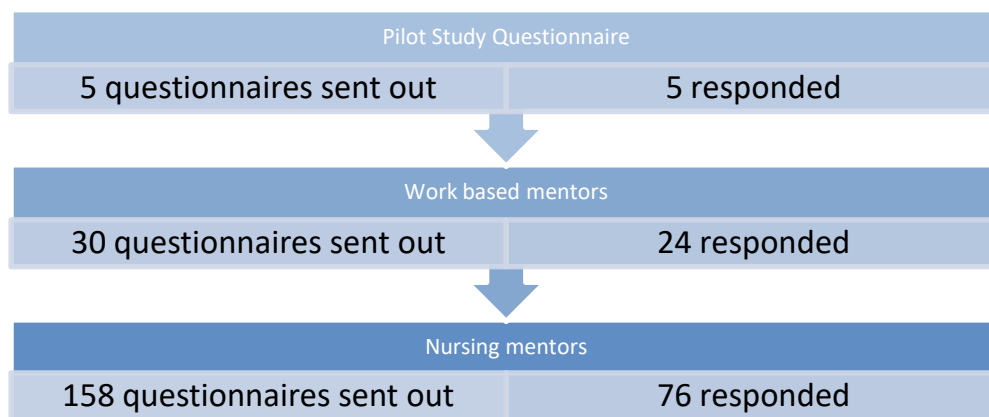
A selection of multiple choice and rank order questions were used to cover a variety of areas of interest. The questionnaire used 24 mentors from work based learning programmes provided within the researcher's institution and 76 from professional nursing mentors from various areas within the NHS; community, mental and hospital based environments. The response rate was 80% for work-based programmes and 48% for the NHS (discussed in chapter 5).

There is a difference between level of responses with the sent out number of questionnaires and this may be as a result of the time limit. However this was the first contact with the Foundation Degree mentors and they responded well. Their varied organisations and differing role may have also contributed to the level of response. It is important to note that nursing responses that were sent after the end date were not included.

A major issue for the questionnaire was the format, several requests were made for paper copies and although these were sent out to possible respondents, only 4 were returned. The delivery of the questionnaire was structured to be friendly and accessible, and although for many this was achievable for some the mere mention of online was impossible. The researcher spoke to 2 or 3 people who explained that they were unable to complete the questionnaire, because of access to a computer. They explained that they did have internet, but were not proficient enough to make use of the technology. The discussion with these respondents may have been an indicator of the difficulties some of the other respondents were experiencing. This seems to suggest that, individual perceptions of an activity may sometimes create its own barriers. The respondents, who had taken the time to contact me, seemed to want to engage, but felt that they lacked some ability to engage meaningfully through this medium. However those who did respond did so within a 24 hour period, although the questionnaire was open for four months.



**Figure 3.2 Selection of the sample and response for the pilot study questionnaire**



The reason for the specified time period was to ensure a meaningful conclusion to this element of the process, as without a fixed end time the questionnaire could continue indefinitely. As a researcher there came a point when the sample size achieved was the actual population available to the study. To continue to elicit further respondents only put the data collection and analysis in jeopardy and therefore the validity and reliability of the data already collected.

There were possibly two types of sampling methods applied, stratified and snowballing (Burns *et al.*, 2013; Silverman, 2011). In that particular features were essential to take part in the research and then those identified connected with other possible respondents that could contribute to the debate. This eclectic method of sample collection was the most productive method available to the researcher; it ensured that any other possible appropriate respondents could access the questionnaire and thus widen the possible participation.

### **3.9 Data analysis procedures for focus groups**

Previously the researcher outlined the philosophy underpinning the methodology and the thinking that would impact on the analysis of the data. To provide identified and useful themes from the data meant using tools and understanding that clearly reflected the concepts provided by the focus group members. Although interpretation is a central component of data analysis, the checking of the interpretation through further discussions with group members acts as a method of achieving clarity and internal checking

mechanism, that allowed the researcher to acknowledge the identified themes with some confidence. Language and the interpretation of language is an important element within analysis (Schilling, 2006). Yet nonverbal cues cannot be legitimately reported but can to some degree be included if the field notes support some particular emphasis on a word or a sentence. The focus groups provided a challenge; this challenge was in ensuring that the rationale for the group and the subject for debate were clearly identified to ensure a clear pathway in developing themes.

In order for true data analysis to be realised, the researcher must be engaged in a process of trying to see the world with an openness and freshness, thereby becoming more active in the addressing and examining the participant's views (Van Maanen, 1990). Also to ensure that analysis addresses some of the more robust elements of the data examination, Dahlberg *et al* (2001, p. 97) described an open stance: "Openness is the mark of a true willingness to listen, see, and understand. It involves respect, and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility." Openness therefore provides the researcher with the ability to be stunned, shocked, and generally open to whatever may be revealed. A reminder that none of us, whether researchers or participants have privileged access to the 'reality' of our lived experiences expands our interpretative possibilities.

### 3.9.1 Reading the data: familiarising with the concepts

The researcher found that it was very useful to read the text carefully to become familiar with context, which would promote the comparative and contrasting nature necessary to expose the phenomena and address the social science queries provided by the participants. Then the researcher considered the intentional analysis of linguistic features, metaphors, transitions, and connectors. Recognising that the use of language differs in different groups was important for this study, as the individual participants come from differing backgrounds and worked and socialised in different groups. Therefore we can argue with some certainty that the language used and the emphasis would differ.

### 3.9.2 Challenges to data analysis

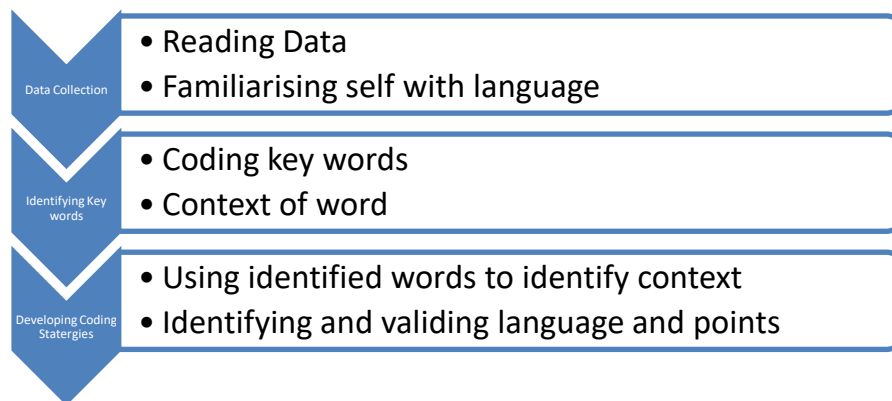
Following the reading through of the data the challenges to the analysis began to emerge. One was that it was impossible for the researcher to ignore his own previous knowledge and experience and although every attempt to counteract this bias and not to influence the data collection process. The researcher thinks this is impossible to achieve in analysis and in some way was beneficial to the data analysis process, adding a humanistic view necessary to make the findings more realistic. In order to achieve a structured research direction, data analysis has to demonstrate the arduous process used in developing an analytical tool. The researcher engaged in a process of seeing the world with an openness and freshness, thus becoming more active in addressing and examining the participant's views.

This research sought to explain mentorship support and the data analysis used represented the best method of reporting, demonstrating and illustrating findings that would contribute to this end. As the linguistic features, metaphors, and connections began to emerge, so did the initial coding. Although the concept of categorising would appear to provide alternative solutions it is important to be reminded of the nature of the study's methodological construction, which directs us to explore the lived experience and the participants own view of the world and the phenomena under investigation.

### 3.9.3 Data coding

The coding system employed had no roots in one particular data analysis method (Figure 3.3). The researcher was mindful of the rich text provided by the participants and wanted to capture their emotions, feelings and understanding of the phenomena under investigation. It is easy to make this sort of sweeping statement, when considering the richness of the text generated. It would be naive not to be considering the various learning opportunities, obvious and surprising had a coding system not been employed. Therefore the complex journey of the researcher must be acknowledged and recorded to ensure that the analysis, can withhold the rigor necessary to give the work structure and meaning (King, 1998).

**Figure 3.3 – Initial coding system techniques**



**(Modified from King 1998 initial analysis)**

Figure 3.3 outlines the techniques that were considered the most useful; the descriptors provided ensure those reviewing the analysis process could follow the pathway used.

The most important initial descriptor came from the concept of word analysis, the use of word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in contexts. By analysing the text the repetition of words, demonstrates some meaning to the participant and therefore is of importance in the points being made within the interview. This form of analysis enables the researcher to identify key themes and key ideas that help understand the phenomena and give insight into the thinking of the participant. It was useful however to have considered other methods of data analysis, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) highlight qualitative content analysis suggesting that the researcher can interpret data by systematically applying codes and thus developing themes or patterns. With this in mind the researcher considered the intentional analysis of linguistic features, metaphors, transitions, connectors. Accepting that the use of language differs in different groups was important for this study, the individuals that were used come from differing backgrounds and worked and socialised in different groups. This is recognising that although language/ identified words are clear they still a possibility of misinterpretation and so marking, context all enable the researcher to identify and relate back to initial themes.

#### 3.9.4 Analysis of focus groups using the coding system

The first focus group was examined using identification of key words, once the words were identified, then grouping of similar wordings and meanings were attached. Through thorough examination of the transcripts, it became apparent that validation of key words was achieved. By introducing a naturally and reflective developing code, regular themes began to emerge. Once the participant point was highlighted a code was attached. The codes naturally appeared as the researcher transcribed the text and as previously outlined the language and context of the statements were central to linking keywords. The coding process began to create a more structured insight into the keywords and highlight the need to clarify words and context that may have been ambiguous. This general code would later provide a further method of deeper analysis with each code leading to the development of the large incorporating themes. Initially key words were identified, but this became less useful as the meaning attached could sometimes be different, based on the context of the word and its link to the discussion that ensued. Therefore a broader approach was adapted and the use of the statement and its context was considered. This proved successful; it now meant that in the context of the statement or point real meaning could be attached (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 demonstrates the formulation of sub themes, this analytical and methodical technique allowed the researcher to revisit the transcript for clarification. The identification of sub themes meant that this labour intensive approach to data analysis did not overlook any potential themes and later would be useful in providing an indication of the master themes that would be developed. Regular exploration of the data, a back and forth process ensured that no possible evidence could be missed and was therefore useful in deepening the researchers understanding of some of the findings.

**Table 3.1. Example of focus group and coding analysis**

Transcript Text/Note	Sub Theme	Page/Line Number
<p>"I am the collaborative portfolio leader for the Foundation Degrees in the faculty and collaborative provision generally"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Defines creditability of knowledge via role</i></li> </ul>	Role	P1- 35
<p>"How the health service is going to be delivered and in about two years' time nursing is going to become an all graduate profession."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The necessity of the mentor within organisation</i></li> </ul>	Function	P2-21
<p>"Many people out there working as healthcare assistants...."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The end result and need for mentorship</i></li> <li>• </li> </ul>	Educational outcome	P2- 24

*Source; After Crabtree and Miller (1999)*

This method of coding allowed the development of the applied coding system and enabled the following main codes (Table 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4). Following the initial coding and the generation of identifiable coding descriptors, the data from the remaining focus groups were analysed in the same way. The coding extracts were used in conjunction with the identified 3 major themes:

Extract 1 from focus group 2 transcript:

*'I'm really lucky because my mentor at my setting is **head of early years** so knows quite a lot about what **I need to know** and does **help me a lot**'.*

This extract emphasises the importance of experience of a mentor and their position and organisational role. The extract below recognises the importance of academic support, learning opportunities, experience and role profile of the mentor and some of the positive aspects of mentor role. What is not clear from the extract is the type of experience the mentor has had in the past.

**Table 3.2. The identification of the main codes**

Code	No. of occurrences
Academic support	10
Positive aspects of mentorship role	4
Organisational Role	4
Organisational Structure	20
Challenges	17
Negative aspects of mentorship role	3
Learning opportunities	14
Educational Qualifications	5
Expectations of mentorship role,	22
Relationship	10
Values	2
Resources	3
Support	14

*(Source; After King 1998)*

Extract 2 from focus group 2 transcript:

*'She looks at my work and goes through it with me and gives me advice and lends me books that I can work with. I know she's had experience in the past so I know that she knows what she's talking about'.*

Extract 3 from focus group 2 transcript:

*'Working in the early years system, she's up to date with all the changes and policies and things. I know whatever she says is correct. I'm happy and fortunate'.*

This extract identifies the mentorship relationship, organisational structure, the potential for learning opportunities. It also starts to detail some of the expectations and positive aspects of the mentor role.

**Table 3.3: Focus group 2 and coding**

Transcript Text/Note	Sub Theme	Page/Line Number
<p>"He's our boss the owner of the business"</p> <p><i>Defines creditability of knowledge via role</i></p>	Role	P 1 19
<p>"I need to be someone that know what you are talking about"</p> <p><i>The necessity of the mentor within organisation</i></p>	Educational outcome	P 2 20
<p>"My mentor is really good"</p> <p><i>The end result and need for mentorship</i></p>	Function	P3 5

Code	Examples
Academic Support	4
Positive aspects of mentorship role	1
Organisational Role	5
Organisational Structure	10
Challenges	12
Negative aspects of mentorship role	0
Learning opportunities	6
Educational Qualifications	6
Expectations of mentorship role,	4
Expectations Students	2
Relationship	11
Value	0
Resources	0
Support	0



**Table 3.4: Focus group 3 and coding**

Transcript Text/Note	Sub Theme	Page/Line Number
<p>“Working on a Renal Ward for the last four years”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Defines creditability of knowledge via role</i></li> </ul>	Role	P1- 7
<p>“I have memories of mentorship that have shaped the way I address my mentees”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The necessity of the mentor within organisation</i></li> </ul>	Relationship	P1-19
<p>“It’s about clinical expertise and patient care”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The end result and need for mentorship</i></li> </ul>	Educational outcome	P2- 18

Code	Examples
Academic Support	4
Positive aspects of mentorship role	5
Organisational Role	9
Organisational Structure	7
Challenges	9
Negative aspects of mentorship role	2
Learning opportunities	5
Educational Qualifications	9
Expectations of mentorship role,	5
Expectations Students	5
Relationship	9
Value	2
Resources	3
Support	2

Extract 4 from focus group 2 transcripts:

*‘You are, **he’s our boss the owner of the business**, he has **no idea** what our work involves, how much time it takes, what the curriculum is. If ever we say we need additional help or additional time to do anything his response is **‘Welcome to my world’ that’s his answer** ‘I’m very busy, you’re very busy let’s just get it done’. There’s **no guidance or help at all**, I feel like I’m working in the dark when it comes to*

*that. He's not from an early years background, he only took the business over 4 years ago so he's learning on the job as well so maybe he's not in a position to help but there's no support whatsoever'.*

In contrast this extract details some of the potential negative aspects of the mentorship role and the specific need for academic support. In addition, it highlights the significance of a mentorship role profile, the organisational structure in which mentoring takes place and the role of the organisation in the mentor role.

By applying the coding system, refining and checking the language and meaning, the next stage of the analysis determined the emerging themes.

In addition the descriptive and interpretative approach allowed and encourages the researcher to return to participants for clarification. This to-and-fro process gives strength to the data and allows the researcher to ensure transparency, as well as trustworthiness and rigor. The researcher went through reflection and participant clarification (where necessary), meaning and explanatory notes were made. The benefit of this process was that the researcher could identify any 'word repetition' or 'indigenous categories'; a thinking process that enables comprehension of possible themes within the data.

### 3.9.5 Descriptive data analysis

The most important initial descriptor emerged from the concept of word analysis, the use of word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in contexts. By analysing the text the repetition of words, demonstrates some significant meaning to the participant and therefore is of importance in the points being made within the focus groups. This form of analysis enables the researcher to identify key themes and key ideas that help understand the phenomena.

What was useful within Sandelowski's (2000; 2010) debate was the analysis; here the author alludes to the interpretation and impact of those analyzing the data. This recognises that descriptions always depend on perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities and the sensibilities of the describer. This may introduce a structure that is restrictive and conformed feeling to a process that should in reality change with development of the research being undertaken.

However these concepts only add to the researcher's predisposition towards more traditional forms of qualitative methods. Thus, ensuring that all the elements outlined for data analysis are achieved, word repetition, reading and that the contributions of the participants are reflected within the findings (Rolfe 2006).

The researcher outlined the philosophy behind the methodology and the thinking that would impact on the analysis of the data. To provide identified and useful themes from the data meant using codes that clearly reflected the concepts provided by the focus group members. Although interpretation is a central component of data analysis, the checking of the interpretation through further discussions with group members acts as a method of clarity and internal checking mechanism (Van Maanen, 1997; Sandelowski, 1986).

### 3.9.6 Interpretative data analysis

The researcher aimed to guarantee that both concepts of deductive and inductive reasoning were acknowledged and that the points of contention surrounding these concepts were included within the data analysis. Ashworth (1996) talks of three areas of presupposition that need to be addressed, if not set aside, firstly the scientific theories, knowledge and explanations. Second do participants make the claims of truth or falsities? Finally, the personal views of the researcher may influence the descriptions of the phenomena under investigation. Clearly these positions make it difficult to form any real conclusions at the initial stage of analysis and so the researcher felt that to take one of these dogmatic approaches could exclude findings that would add a deeper understanding to the phenomena. Assumptions about the participants' views were identified. In understanding this theoretical base, the analysis of the data comes clearer.

The use of reflection in exploring thinking and developing themes, linking narratives and thereby creating a basis from which to identify opportunities to understand or at least gain knowledge from the findings, is essential. Interpretation, and to some extent reflection similarly seek to extricate findings, but the methodology sought to examine lived experiences and people perceptions; it seems only right that part of the analysis should mirror the collection technique. Interpretation comes in a variety of forms and assists in the creation of a deeper understanding within academic growth, could enhance the

researcher's interpretation of the data provided (Ashworth and Ashworth 2003). Of equal importance is the notion of triangulation Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline the concept here and discuss creditability, they suggest that member checking allows for confirmation of data, analysis of categories and the ability to draw conclusions. The process applied included the triangulation of data methods as detailed by Knafl and Breitmayer (1989), where collected data is used to confirm findings. Smith and Noble (2014) and Sandelowski (1993) agree that the research literature provides no universal accepted terminology or criteria, but does outline the imperative nature of including strategies that add to the true value of the data.

Once of these strategies, reflection is used to deepen learning and therefore it should naturally deepen awareness. A variety of authors (Driscoll, 1994; Gibbs, 1988; Schon, 1983) have used Dewey (1933) process of reflection in a similar manner. Within education and for many humanistic educational programmes reflection has been a means of enabling and empowering the individual to question and validate their understanding of a given situation. Giorgi (2008) starts the debate for the researcher, suggesting that the number of participants provide variations and therefore the typical essence of the lived experience. By differentiating idiographic details Giorgi (2008) states that idiographic analysis forms only part of the process and that the real aim is to elicit and eidetic neutrally.

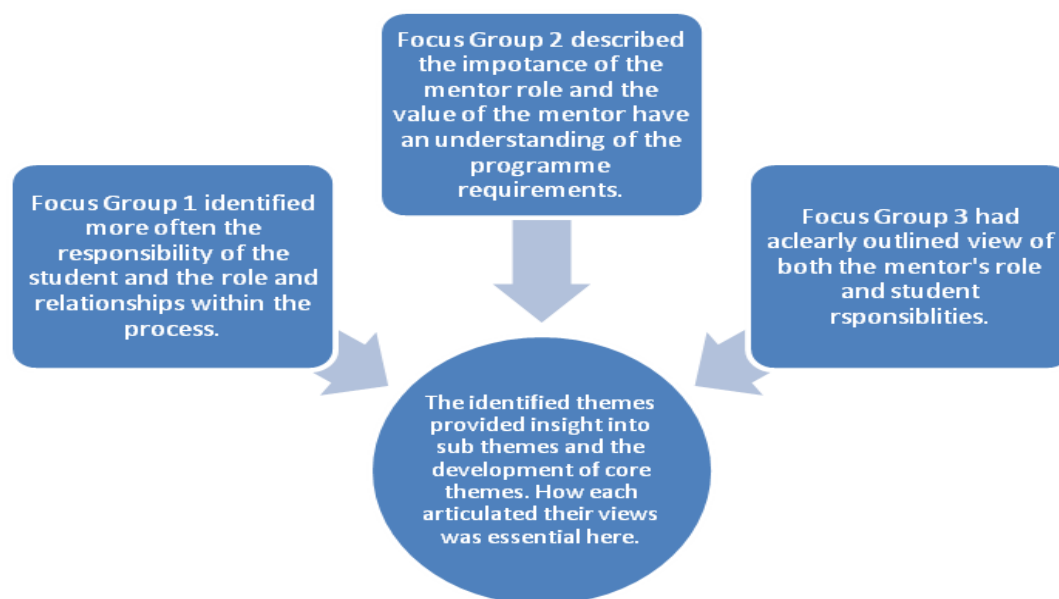
### 3.9.7 The formulation of focus group themes

In formulating the focus group themes, Halling *et al.* (2006) provided a safe and understandable approach. Suggesting that the researcher must use a process that was comfortable and transparent, this then ensures that data analysis probes the phenomena at useful points and thus gains real opportunity for learning and advancement of the topic under scrutiny (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 indicates the main themes identified by each focus group. From this we can begin to create an initial understanding and starting point for analysis. The techniques used to identify themes, were clear and yet complex in terms of time and interpretation. The starting point acknowledge of analysis was word identification and then the process moved

to context of word and checking that the language and sentence structure was contextual and not merely a personal interpretation by the researcher of language. Although taxing endeavours the insight and reflection proved useful, the researcher was an integral part of the analysis process, using experience from a variety of encounters, both personal and professional.

**Figure 3.4: Identification of the main themes from each of the focus groups**



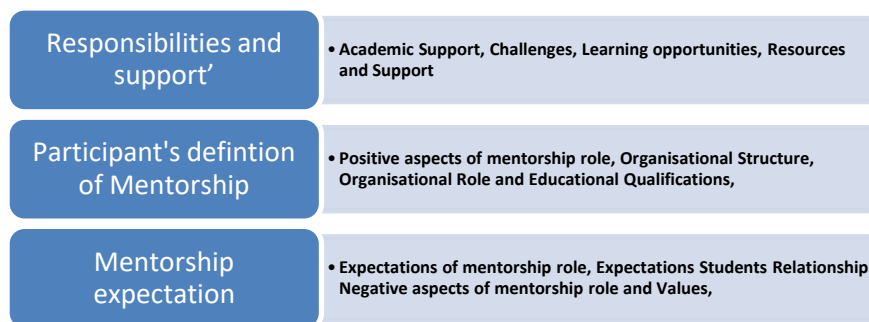
### 3.9.8 Returning the participant transcript

The ability to return the participant transcript and confirm the interpretation was extremely useful and helped confirm some of the themes identified and thus gave the analysis more credibility. Equally it was important to recognise the context of the focus group members and the fact that individual responses offered were resultant of points identified by other members and so the context was also specific to the period shared within the group (Slevin 2002). In hindsight a word used may have a different meaning when one is asked to recall the situation and discussion. The use of field notes and observations of group interaction aided the development of the areas for the researcher and added a level of interpretation that helped create the necessary themes that would add to analysis.

### 3.9.9 The inclusion of the researcher's experiences in analysis

The researcher's professional experiences have included a variety of individuals having contact over 30 years with both mentors and mentee. It would be humanly impossible to discard this and therefore it should be acknowledged. Repeated analysis of the data provided a variety of focuses, as can be seen in the tables provided. What was useful at this point was refining the codes and a re-examination of the data, would lead to a reduction in the volume of codes and the creation of 'master codes' that in themselves become themes role insight; mentorship characteristics; and role components (Figure 3.5).

**Figure 3.5 The identification of master codes**



*(Source; King 2012))*

Examples of the formation of master codes come through reformulating the initial codes and examining, to determine if these codes had relationships with other identified codes. Within the codes of academic support, challenges, learning opportunities, resources and support a link to what the mentor should be striving for in the development of the student could be seen. Positive aspects of mentorship role, organisational structure, organisational role and educational qualifications, could be developed to demonstrate the skills behind successful mentorship. In addition, expectations of the mentorship role, expectations in the student's relationship with the mentor, the negative aspects of the mentorship role and values, were clearly used to define and outline some general features of the role.

### 3.10 Data analysis procedures for the questionnaire

By analysing the pilot content, understanding could be gained and equally conclusions could be drawn. The training of mentors had an impact on views as to both mentor and student involvement in the relationship. Culture (organisational, educational and personal) although not asked in this way, it was evident when data was analysed that these elements also contributed to the success or failure of a mentoring relation. Mechanisms that informed the mentor's ability to carry out the task may have been linked to how available information pertained to the employment opportunities and educational demands of the curriculum (Boud and Solomon, 2001).

Appendix 3 demonstrates that there is a connection between training and the role's played within the mentorship process. There is also a link between curriculum development and knowledge of the expectations and processes used to develop students. Students and mentors share the responsibility of any developmental opportunities and indeed, this relationship impacts significantly on knowledge and skills development.

The data collected do provide some statistical evidence; however it proved more useful to further analyse the data through a more qualitative pathway as well. Whilst examining the data it was the comparative nature of the study that exhumed a deeper understanding of the actual prevalence of mentorship and useful comparative data that created more meaningful understanding of how mentorship worked in various areas of employment. However in order to demonstrate this fact, it was essential to first demonstrate the statistical significance if any, rather than merely leaving the possibilities in a state of suggestion (Chapter 5).

The researcher was mindful of the debates within research that believe social research because of its very nature cannot be tested in the same way as a purer numerical study. Polit and Beck (2011) and Creswell (2007) agree that there is a debate that surrounds quantitative and qualitative methods, that of delivering meaningful measurements. In natural and social sciences the probe to achieve 'truth' is conducted and/or applied in data collection here the type and focus of the questions and also within the aim the research intends to answer. This was evident in both quantitative and qualitative data collection. In quantitative data analysis,

statistical evidence can generate more rigorous findings and conclusions, giving it closer links to a more scientific and empirical observation. In this small scale study the issue becomes one of sample size, which in this instance was only 24 out of an identified 30 for Foundation Degree mentors and 76 out of a possible 7,000 + nursing mentors within the same locality. As a result of this the researcher returns to percentages and closer examination of individual responses (Appendix 5 & 6).

Although questionnaires cannot replace interviewing for depth and focus they do provide a snapshot of current thinking, validity and reliability to the topic (Shaughnessy *et al* 2011). It is this current thinking and the collation of that thinking that will help inform and develop mentorship within Foundation Degrees. The data provided within the pilot continues to confirm and inform identified areas of understanding and therefore based on these criteria, the questionnaire was sent out generally. As for validity it was important to ensure that the measure being used represents the issue it is purporting to measure (Silverman 2011). In the initial examination of the validity of the questionnaire and its relationship to the topic under investigation, it can be assumed that this element is being addressed through the construction of the questions. The questions were formulated from the focus group themes. The researcher had not met any of the participants at the time of the questionnaire which ensured there was no nexus between the researcher and participants.

In considering content validity this acts as a stimulus and therein, seeks to gain insight into the topic and areas of surrounding interest. The structure and content of the questions recognised the stimuli and did indeed acknowledge that that this was an important part of ensuring further creditability within the study. In the consideration of creditability, transferability, dependability and confirmation, the questions related to perspectives of not only the mentor, but those of the mentees were important (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Smith and Noble 2014). In asking particular questions of the mentor, the researcher wanted to capture the mentor's view of themselves and their view of those they mentored (Questions 7, 8 and 9).



In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates a descriptive and interpretative approach to the research using focus groups and a questionnaire. It takes a mixed method approach to data collection. The use of focus groups encouraged mentors, educators and students to speak freely about their experiences and so obtaining a rounded view of the role of the mentor and how this can be taken forward. The questionnaire allows further evidence to support the examination of mentorship within 'Foundation Degrees'.

## **Chapter 4: Mentorship a baseline perspective drawn from the focus groups**

This chapter explores the data provided through the focus groups; the datum is examined to identify any anomalies that can contribute to a deeper understanding of mentorship within Foundation Degrees. Throughout the literature review there were many examples, solutions and possibilities to help develop the learner and mentor. In the literature review we were able to provide examples of good practice using a variety of methods and a variety of professions. The focus groups captured insight that provided comparisons and confirmation of the current thinking, which would help with any implications for practice. As an educational arena Foundation Degrees are unique in that their conception is new and was identified to increase educational diversity and wide participation. Equally the demographic of the learner would mean a higher level of engagement and the development and extension of employability. The notion of widening participation and encouraging a more skilled workforce, a concept outlined in the introduction of this project.

There are topical areas outlined in chapter 1, which form a platform for critical thinking and to provide the reader with a sense of the approach used to gather and process information. In order to first establish a baseline for the study, there was a need to identify some of the thinking that currently existed, not only in literature but within practical elements of this phenomenon. The focus groups will be used to identify areas of common understanding and thereby can be used to direct the study.

Through the reviewing and idiographic examination of data, it is apparent that the deeper the analysis, the more identified themes can be linked and thus demonstrate commonalities. Having outlined the descriptive and interpretative methodology and methods, the researcher was able to approach the analysis in a structured and rigorous technique, using thoughts and exploring options that could contribute to an enhanced understanding of the data (Giorgi 1997). Statements found within the data, demonstrated the types of complexity associated with language. The use of context and notes created through the researcher's analysis of the data would yield some interesting facts.

After coding and the development of themes, which included member checking reflection and analysis (Lincoln and Guba 1985) three underlying concepts became apparent to the researcher, that of the definition of mentorship, expectations, responsibilities and support. The research considered how the knowledge identified within the data would contribute to these areas. The themes are therefore a means of either enabling, developing or encourage these keys points and act as a guide in determining how the data could impact on Foundation Degree mentor development.

#### **4.1 The variety of elements necessary for mentoring students**

There are a variety of elements necessary for mentoring a student and although there has been a large proportion of work carried out in professional fields (for example; Nursing, Law and Teaching), there is little evidence of the impact mentorship has on work-based learning students. Higher Education seeks to develop skills and knowledge, whilst in some areas identifying and assessing actual competencies. The achievement of these components comes via a combination of factors, lifelong learning, problem solving and critical thinking. The development of these academic skills would also empower the student's ability to become employable and understand how to access employment opportunities. The aim of mentorship is to provide support mechanisms that enhance the students experience and thus enhances the learning process. However, literature indicates that there are learning opportunities for both the student and the mentor. These will be explored later, but it would be useful to note that the mentor, mentee relationship, their actions and the actual engagement, creates a mutual recognition of commitment.

##### **4.1.1 Role definition**

Statement context would demonstrate that some participants were securing their skills and understanding, to ensure that their contribution has academic creditability and differentiates their understanding from that of a novice. However it also demonstrates the importance of seeing the wider picture, identifying the complex nature of support systems and indeed why those involved with mentorship need to have clearly defined roles. Not only can the researcher make personal claims to the depth of these statements, but

reflectively it is clear that the concept of partnership, role definition and responsibilities come via a variety of pathways, as is evident in the initial coding charts.

*'One of the roles of the mentor is to change that way of thinking from a taught subject to a learning subject and that's something you find right up to virtually the last year of the degree is when the students get to grips with this process of learning' (FG1 participant 4)*

*'So you are aware of how to mentor and understand that to make good nurses skills have to be passed on. I suppose because of us all being one profession, it is clear what the end mentee should grow up to look' (FG2 participant 2)*

*'He's our boss the owner of the business, he has no idea what our work involves, how much time it takes, what the curriculum is. If ever we say we need additional help or additional time to do anything his response is 'Welcome to my world' that's his answer 'I'm very busy' (FG3 participant 2)*

*'It's got to be a safe environment for the mentee, they feel they can work, they've got to be clear in what they do, they've got to take charge for their own learning, thats what we expect of the mentee, how can we encourage that from the mentee, we know that as mentors' (FG1 participant 6).*

The identification of these pathways provides further evidence of the openness alluded to earlier, this concept of alternative pathways ensures that there is a limited possibility of overlooking significant issues. Demonstrating the depth that is essential in capturing the participant's contribution as well as not over reaching the examination of the points identified. Further clarification with some participants confirmed that although their statements were merely to demonstrate their own experience and to confirm their understanding. It did indeed provide some insight into the complexity of language and therefore the concept of meaning was not purely in the statement, but the issues that surrounded the statement. What must be acknowledged is the nature and context of the statement and how the analysis should inform understanding. To simply analyse words, does not mean that the interpretation of the meaning is achieved. By closely examining text, the researcher expands his understanding of context and thereby extends his understanding and analysis of the data. In providing this context and highlighting specific areas new or further understanding is achieved. Through the data it becomes clear that both role profile and content of the role are significant in our understanding and the

participant's interpretation of mentorship. We can see through the data that acknowledging the participant's role equates to an integral element of the relationship.

#### 4.1.2 Mentor needs to be identified within the organisation

Further by identifying their role, it differentiates them. The focus groups were clear in that the mentor needed to be identifiable in the organisation and thereby have some creditability in terms of mentoring and supporting. Once this was established positive experiences were recounted and thus empowerment and respect was achieved. For example extracts state that:

*'I'm the Collaborative Portfolio Leader for the Foundation Degrees in the faculty and collaborative provision generally.'* (FG1 participant 1)

*'.....has been running a course for mentors, and I'm looking at all sorts of areas at things around work based learning .....'* (FG1 participant 2)

*'.....I'm head of Enterprise within that, but am portfolio leader for Enterprise and basically co-ordinate the Foundation Degrees which we have a couple of Excel Foundation Degrees with BMW which is a work based learning Foundation Degree.....'* (FG1 participant 4)

*'I am an AandE Nurse and have been qualified for 6 years. For me the role of the mentor has always been a part of nursing; I was a mentor before I got my mentorship course. I have memories of mentorship that have shaped the way I address my mentees.'* (FG2 participant 3)

*'She looks at my work and goes through it with me and gives me advice and lends me books that I can work with. I know she's had experience in the past so I know that she knows what she's talking about.'* (FG3 participant 1)

#### 4.1.3 Identification of mentorship learning opportunities

A variety of mentorship learning opportunities were illustrated within the groups, most participants had considered their experiences useful and important to share. Personal mentorship training and the mentor's role have had a positive outcome and in the main participants had considered that they had learned a great deal from the process and this had generally assisted them in the execution of their professional roles and the developments of skills and knowledge for those for whom they had some responsibility. However what is apparent are the types of experiences that appeared to have value for

focus groups members, these were the roles and interventions that the individual participated in.

*'We have professional responsibilities to the public and our professional organisation. It sounds like a lot when you think of clinical expertise, patient care, professional responsibility but it's all necessary. We all need to be supporting and recognising the skills that are needed to make a nurse a nurse' (FG2 participant 3)*

#### 4.1.4 Individual perceptions of mentorship

This indicated that individual perceptions of mentorship were seen as an extension of an academic role rather than being confined to a defining and separate responsibility. The concepts of partnership, enabled support mechanisms to work more smoothly, indeed partnerships based on mutual respect, which in turn were based on work role and academic achievement empowered those involved in the process.

This further confirms the idea and perception that this participant is establishing focus, generating a deeper understanding, although delivered in a simple and effective way. The meanings behind this sentence establish the structural nature of mentorship and the role that those involved play, in its success. This interpretation of the data has been confirmed, by revisiting this participant for clarification.

*'we work in a school and we have an early years department which is the first reception at school and the teacher there or my mum works there and I wondered if someone like that could help or does it have to be someone in your setting. In some ways it would be good and some ways bad. It needs to be someone that knows what you are talking about. An allocated person, where part of their responsibilities are to mentoring and support' (FG 2 participant 4).*

#### 4.1.5 Definition of mentorship

In relation to the definition of mentorship, the researcher is provided with vast amounts of data. However, although clearly stated by the participant, there is a need to ensure that the language used, its meaning and structure are clear. Here we see the dual possibilities of statements, the fact that responsibility can shift, as can the focus and with this comes a

completely different interpretation. These facts must be considered important, especially in light of the back and forth nature of a focus group.

As was initially outlined the researcher was aware of the group dynamics and the possibility of each member acting as a prompt for other members to put their views forward. A keynote here was the unsaid elements that could be identified within the section. The identification that co-ordination plays a vital role in mentorship begins a deeper level of understanding and asks questions, as to whether this additional role in some way increases the chance of success. This brings into question whether (a) the mentoring relationship requires monitoring and (b) that it is more structured than alluded to in the statements (below) and if so does the mentorship relationship require monitoring and is more structured than is alluded to in the statement. The participant is from the educational focus group and therefore is directed by the notion that measurable elements are necessary to demonstrate achievement. In comparison the nursing focus group have a similar agenda, based on their need for professional identity.

*'I am an A and E Nurse and have been qualified for 6 years. For me the role of the mentor has always been a part of nursing; I was a mentor before I got my mentorship course. I have memories of mentorship that have shaped the way I address my mentees. I did the MIPP course 2 years ago and although very enjoyable, there was nothing new for me. I knew that there had to be structure in the way I help the student develop both academically and practically', (FG3 participant 4).*

*I think there should be a meeting before you start with the mentors to say what's expected of them and us and what their role entails as a mentor showing them the curriculum that we'll be doing, how much work goes into it and what support we need beforehand. (FG2 participant 5)*

*I'm still looking at the mentee, 'a strong desire to learn new skills and abilities' I like that one, but the one that leaps out in my mind having had a discussion with a student yesterday is 'if you know where you're going people are willing to help you'. I think that that is key to it, key to the whole thing because it's not the mentor controlling the mentee, it's a partnership'. (FG1 participant 5)*

These statements also to some extent confirm the connection of the previous point and add to the debate that surrounds mentorship and the role that participants/mentors play in achieving success. Throughout the transcripts there are examples of the role definition

and identity. The emergence of responsibilities is a clear indicator of how both mentor and mentee should perform and this adds further insight into how, the process of support can be expanded through understanding. The most telling issue is that of allocated mentor, this seems to underpin many statements. Although not always obvious there is an underling notion that an allocated mentor creates a more positive element to learning.

#### 4.1.6 The identification of clear learning outcomes

Clear identified learning outcomes and an agreed common framework for these outcomes forms a stronger relationship. Although the focus group members described an area of debate using personal language, it was still easy to identify how the word or theme used by a participant could be married to another participant in a different group.

*'I do think that all the rest are very accurate. I'm still looking at the mentee, 'a strong desire to learn new skills and abilities' I like that one, but the one that leaps out in my mind having had a discussion with a student yesterday is 'if you know where you're going people are willing to help you.....' (FG1participant 1)*

*'I'm a qualitative researcher, and something we talk about a lot in our mentoring workshops is the relationship between the two and how important is that, there is an effective relationship between the mentor and mentee because some of the problems we currently have is when there is a breakdown of relationship between the two and each one is probably working to their own ideas of those roles but as person to person there are problems.....' (FG1 participant 2)*

*'She looks at my work and goes through it with me and gives me advice and lends me books that I can work with. I know she's had experience in the past so I know that she knows what she's talking about' (FG3participant 1).*

*'I need to be someone that knows what you are talking about' (student participant 3)*

*'Sometimes I think mentors find it more of a hassle. I don't know what the role of a mentor is, and I don't think he knows. No-one's told me.' (FG3 participant 5)*

*'It sounds like a lot when you think of clinical expertise, patient care, professional responsibility but it's all necessary (FG2participant 5).*

What the data creates is not only examples of the role and responsibilities, but the partnership and the relationship that also add to the development of the mentorship



process. The need for clearly defined roles and clearly understood responsibilities ensures the functioning of this phenomenon. The nursing focus group was very structured in its approach to this topic, as a professional group, it is important that an identity is established that demonstrates a cohesive cluster.

#### 4.1.7 Common understanding

Whilst our understanding of mentorship takes a variety of forms, none is as clear as the responsibility of the mentor and the grouping together of common understanding.

*'I have been working on a renal ward for the last four years and I was a mentor when I started,( FG3 participant 1)'*

*'I have working in surgery for past eight years, I mentor lots of students, but no one calls it that until I did my MIPP last year', (FG3 participant 2)*

*'I am an AandE Nurse and have been qualified for 6 years. For me the role of the mentor has always been a part of nursing; I was a mentor before I got my mentorship course. I have memories of mentorship that have shaped the way I address my mentees. I did the MIPP course 2 years ago and although very enjoyable, there was nothing new for me. I knew that there had to be structure in the way I help the student develop both academically and practically.'* (FG3 participant 4)

These examples can indicate a pattern and a common understanding, in that although experiences are from different places and at different times, they can lead to a common understanding and therein a common theme. An understanding that comes as a sense of belonging, although not clearly visible in the transcript there can be a common bonding, a comradeship. This unknown camaraderie comes from a sense of sociological belonging.

#### 4.1.8 The development of clear thinking patterns

The development of a deeper understanding comes from comments below which to some extent indicate a clear, thinking pattern, a future point that illustrates the necessity of mentorship and its impact on student development.

*'I think that's a very good point, I can only relate this back to people I work with at the moment perhaps I can't project to the future, but I'm going to talk about nursing and general health requirements that all our students, even the ones in Social and Health which is nothing to do with nursing, have to reach*

*particular competencies and their whole rationale in the workplace is to succeed, succeed and succeed.'* (FG1 participant 5).

*'What I think I take from what you are saying, the risk taker is really that the mentor should provide an environment of safety for the student to gather the experience necessary which they most probably would normally take if they could 'get away with it' they just have to reach the competence'* (FG3 participant 3)

*'You are aware of how to mentor and understand that to make good nurses skills have to be passed on. I suppose because of us all being one profession, it is clear what the end mentee should grow up to look and its part of who we are as nurses'* (FG3 participant 3)

*'He's our boss the owner of the business, he has no idea what our work involves, how much time it takes, what the curriculum is'* (FG2 participant 2).

*'My boss hasn't got any qualifications at all in child care, it's his wife that owns the business and he just pops in now and again but he was supposed to be my mentor but I'd say things to him and ask him a question and he didn't understand what I was asking, so I made the decision that he wasn't going to be any use to me as a mentor in any way if I had to explain myself and my question so I have now got a girl whose just finished the degree as my mentor'* (FG2 participant 5)

The reflective approach highlighted previously was evident here, there was clearly a need to recognise any previous knowledge, because this can impact on the researchers' ability to control any bias and thus extend or limit the understanding of data content (focus group debates and discussions). The researcher understood the value of the differing perspectives that then formulated emerging themes and believed that this can add further depth in developing supportive resources.

However it is essential to note that a descriptive and interpretive analysis of data did not necessitate a complex level of variety but instead utilise a more in-depth analysis of rich data. The outcomes are discussed in depth in the discussion segment of this chapter.

In conclusion, mentorship is a controversial role and this as became apparent throughout this research, it takes on a high status in terms of learning and a suitability of the placement in provides a variety of experiences. The participants were very clear when they spoke about either a positive or negative experience and clearly indicated that mentorship was a

fundamental part of learning. Some participants noted that mentorship is 'key' in making the placement a success or not.

The members of the focus groups identified the functions of mentorship. The role and responsibilities of a mentor the profile of the mentor and the relationship, literature confirms similar understanding (Clutterbuck, 2008, 2004; D'Abate *et al.*, 2005; Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2006). This connection to literature was a revealing the fact that the study's findings confirm that the local views of mentorship and its role had commonalities. In some cases the participants have a great deal of academic experience, knowledge and understanding and their evidence came through experience and expectations.

## **Chapter 5: Exploration of the mentorship process drawn from the questionnaire**

In this chapter, the use of the questionnaire provided insight into the present position of mentorship within the university Foundation Degree work-based learning programmes; it allowed comparisons with nursing mentors and highlighted some of the areas for further investigation in the comparable groups. A variety of closed and discursive questions were formulated based upon the emergent findings of the focus groups.

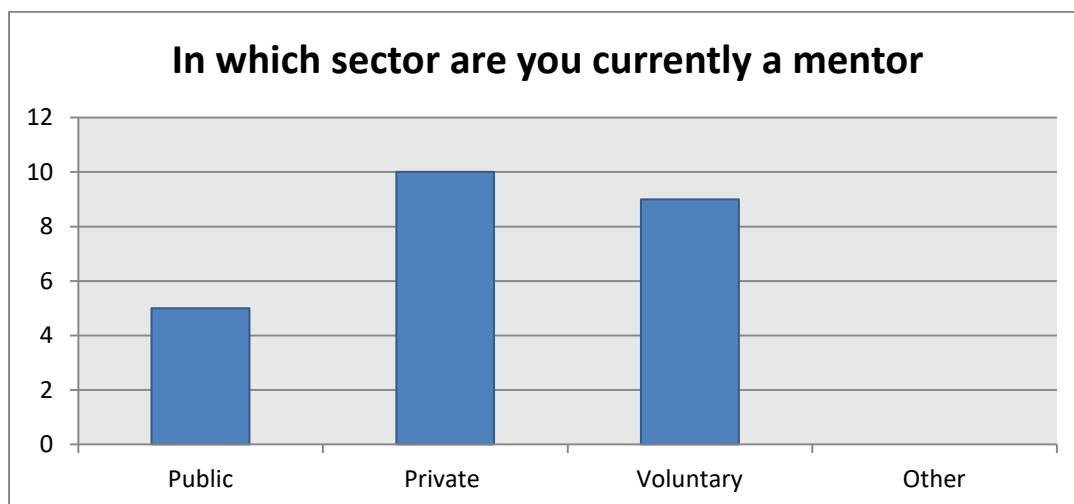
Sixty five percent of respondents were actively involved with a mentee at the time. More than 50% understood the role of a mentor and of this group another 65% had received formal mentorship training. In the Foundation Degree work-based learning arena 55% had only mentored once. This was completely different for the nursing mentor group where 80% had mentored in excess of 10 times. There was agreement from both groups about the role of the mentor and the participation of the student, it was also apparent that mentors/students play a vital role in skills development. Of those who had received formal training it was clear that there was recognition of the need for support for all parties involved in the mentorship process.

Through developing a coding system the following initial codes had been identified. Academic Support, Challenges, Learning opportunities, Resources and Support finally became a main theme of definition of mentorship role. Positive aspects of the Mentorship Role, Organisational Structure, Organisational Role and Educational Qualifications, became Role profile, and finally, Expectations of mentorship role, Expectations Students Relationship. Negative aspects of mentorship role and values; focused on content and the role therein. The identified codes allowed the questionnaire to gain some understanding into the mentor's perceptions, through exploring variables that could and may influence an outcome. In recognising this Creswell (2007) suggests that a series of questions is compiled; the individual results of these deliberations are seen in Appendix 5 & 6, a combination of both can be viewed in Appendix 7.

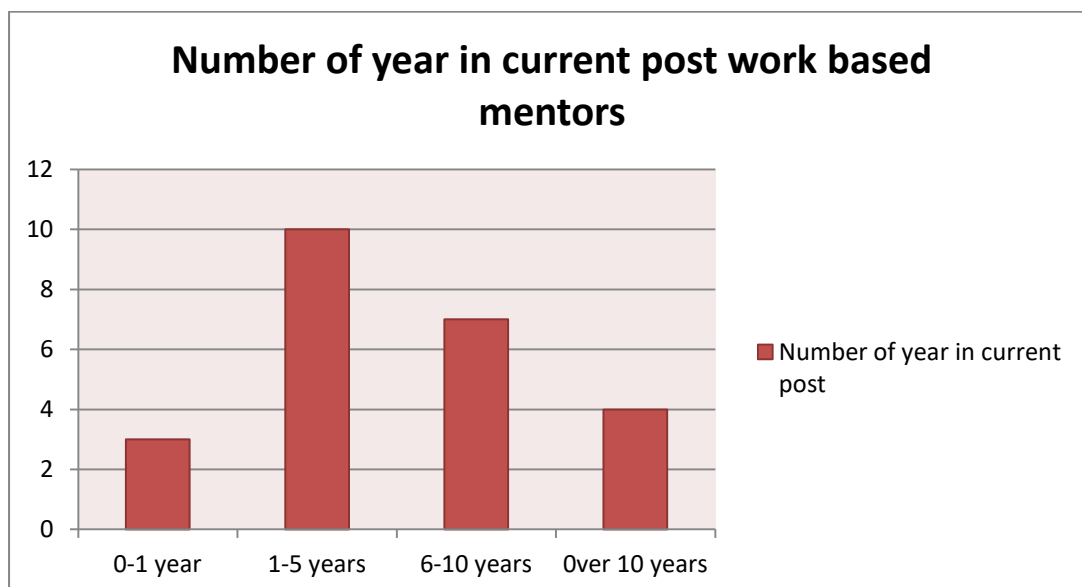
A return to the individual responses would also reveal some more useful information (Appendix 5). By collating all the responses a variety of questions could still be asked and therein-qualitative assumptions could be made. For example of the 100 respondents 31 believed that assessment was the most pivotal role they had in mentorship of these only 1 (4.1%) of the Foundation Degree mentors agreed. 25% said knowledge 45.8% and 20.8% said student development were the most important. Similar facts continue to provide useful analysis and some of these are captured within the charts below.

## 5.1 Work-based results

**Graph 5.1 Question ‘In which sector are you currently a mentor?’**



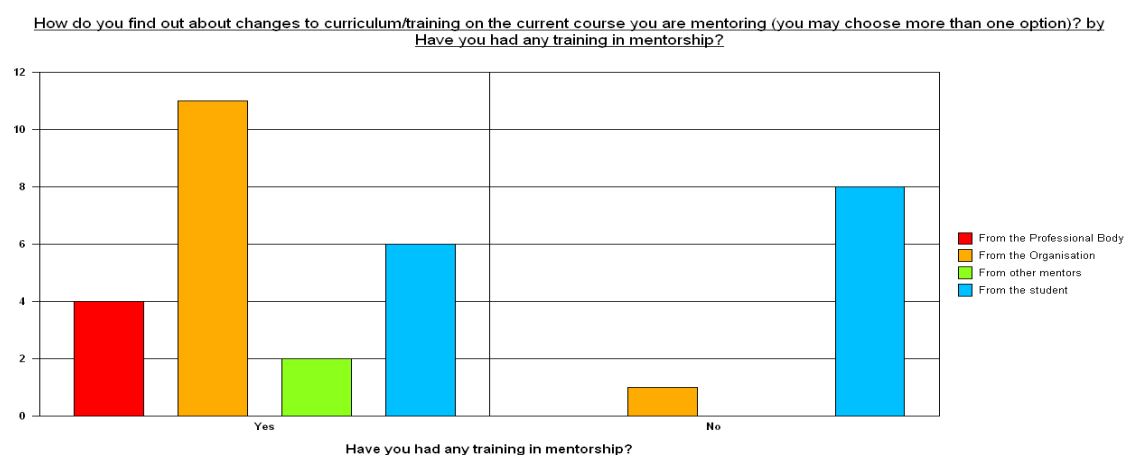
**Graph 5.2 Question ‘Number of years in current post work-based mentors?’**



From the data presented in Graphs 5.1 and 5.2, the mentors' previous experience and their identified learning environments had a specific impact on their confidence and this contributed to their overall mentorship style. Data provided by the questionnaire, indicated that where mentors had different experiences these also had a significant impact on their perception of the mentorship process. Demonstrated by the fact that some of the mentors appear to have higher confidence levels than others and were able to operate in a different manner to their peers. Results from one question prove interesting and provided insight into a mentor quality 'How long have you been in your current profession? Interestingly, Maslow's hierarchy of needs as discussed by Welsh and Swann (2002) place 'confidence' towards the top of his pyramid and so it is possible that these mentors were able to 'fast track' their relationships within their placement, because of their length of time in their role and thereby optimise the learning opportunities.

Further examples are evidence generated by the question 'How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (Table 3.3)? By using another question of 'Have you had any training in mentorship?' In this question combination we are able to see the mentor's level of curriculum insight and their ability to connect to content of the programme. This confirmation and acknowledgement of learning opportunities and outcomes provides for a snap shot of the mentor's own perceptions of both training needs and curriculum contributions to learning and the identified skills and knowledge development.

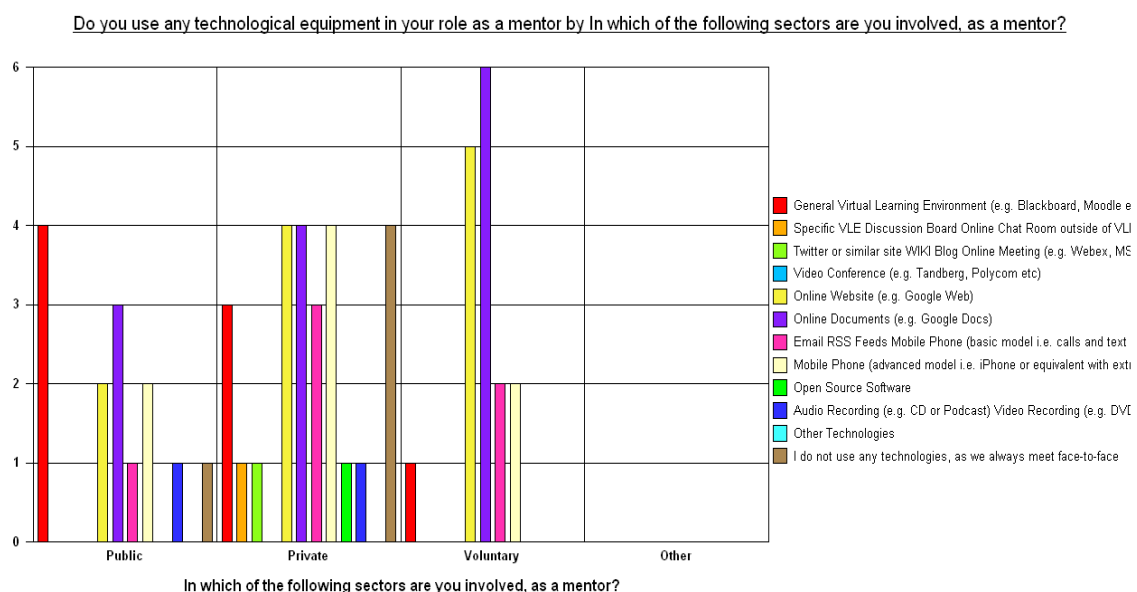
### Graphs 5.3 Question 'How do you find out about changes in curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring?'



Graph 5.3 demonstrates the differences in those who have had training from those that have not. The difference in methods of obtaining information is varied for those with training and indicated a more structured means of acquiring the necessary programme objectives. There appears to be a cohesive means of informing mentors about changes to Foundation Degrees in their own areas, the student. This means the method of detailing the curriculum content is limited to student interpretation. The mentor is relying on student perception to inform the learning pathway, this reinforces the need for a more cohesive approach to communication within fields and or at least some central method for understanding and appreciating the links between employers, education and student.

The work-based mentor needs to be clearly informed in terms of the current academic requirement and to see where and how this requirement fits into their work area. Curricula is developed through linking education and employers, however not all employers can be represented and therefore wider consultation must be achieved or a more universal approach to collating employer requirements. Appropriate teaching and learning strategies make this possible and the questionnaire helped to focus some of the areas that need to be covered in any support mechanism to make this a real possibility.

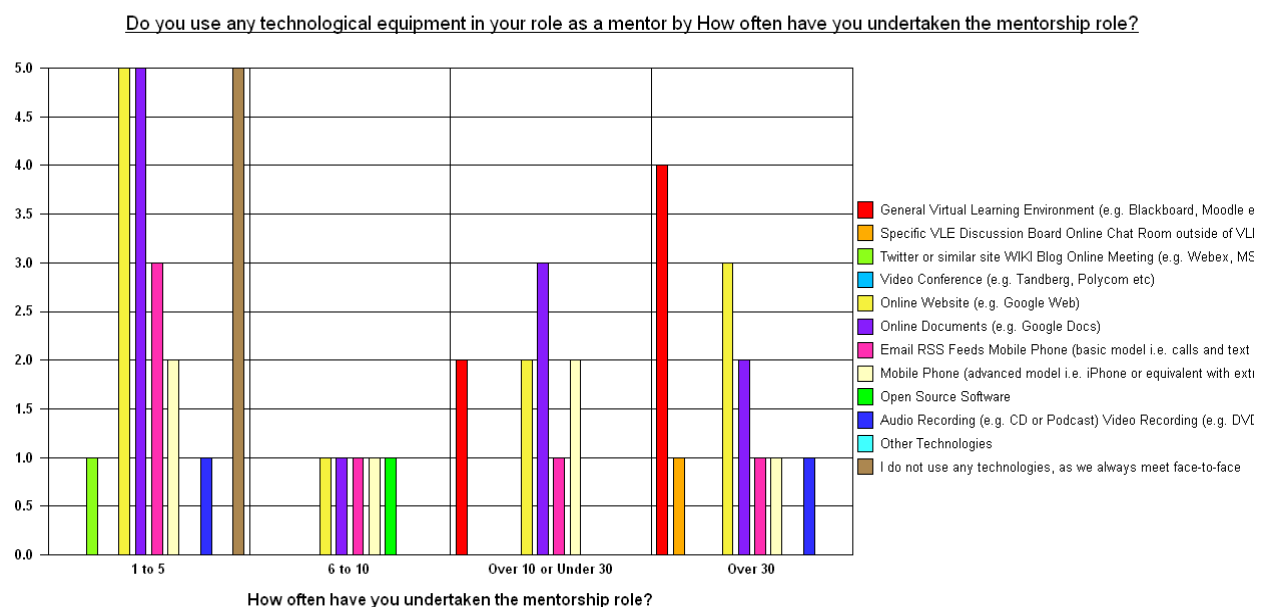
**Graph 5.4 Question 'In which of the following sectors are you involved as a mentor?'**



What is important in Graph 5.4 is the identification of mechanisms used by mentors to promote their role. The lengths and methods used to enable their role is informative, we can conclude that although the level of engagement is poorly represented within the Foundation Degree, when it is represented the mentor uses a variety of means at their disposal to achieve a level of support that enables both them as the mentor and the student to grow.

Graph 5.5 demonstrates the methods used by mentors to support and access information, to facilitate learning. Currently the Foundation Degree mentors have a variety of options available to them in accessing relevant support material giving them a pathway that could be used in developing the support mechanisms to enhance this element of educational advancement. Through accessing search engines and other online opportunities, there seems to be places where common understanding and achievement can be both informative and delivered.

**Graph 5.5 Question ‘How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?’**



It seems that those who have undertaken the role of mentor between 1-5 times have been able to utilise more areas. Similarly those who have been a mentor over 30 times through experience have accessed more resources. We can only assume that after repeating the mentor process that experience enables some to problem solve and the mentor find ways to



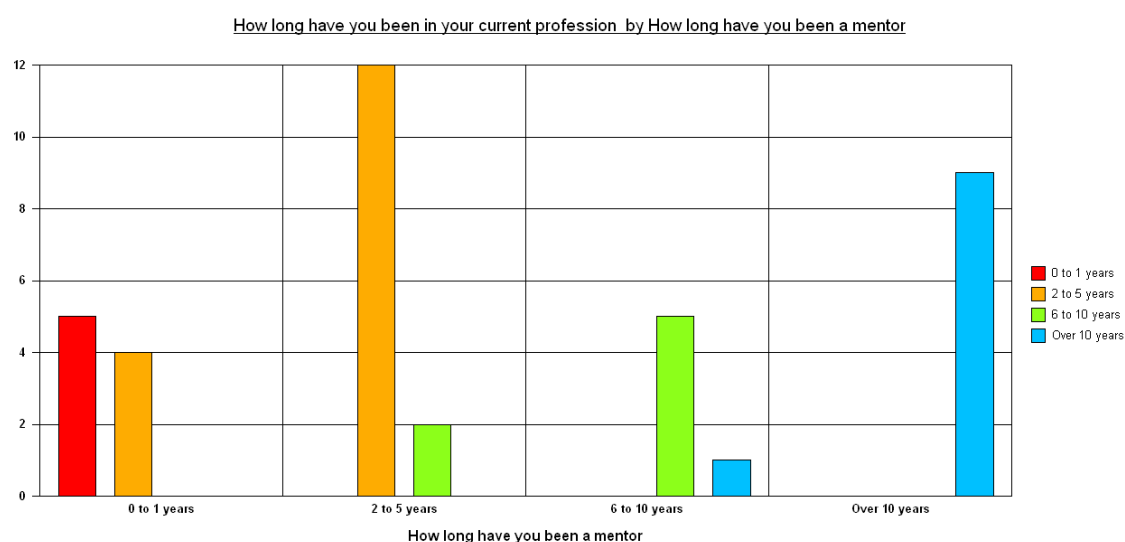
access information and then finds alternatives to resolving issue of support and understanding.

In the literature we have alluded to support structures and the possible impact that they have as a resource. The responses to the question, 'Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor?' provide further evidence that technology is a very important way forward. Some assumptions can be drawn from the evidence presented in the questionnaire. Those who have mentored in excess of 30 times appear to use and have access to virtual learning sites. How this is achieved is not fully possible to explore here, but in the following chapter we can gain some insight into the support mechanisms that may enable a positive approach to mentoring within the Foundation Degree programmes.

## 5.2 Nursing Results

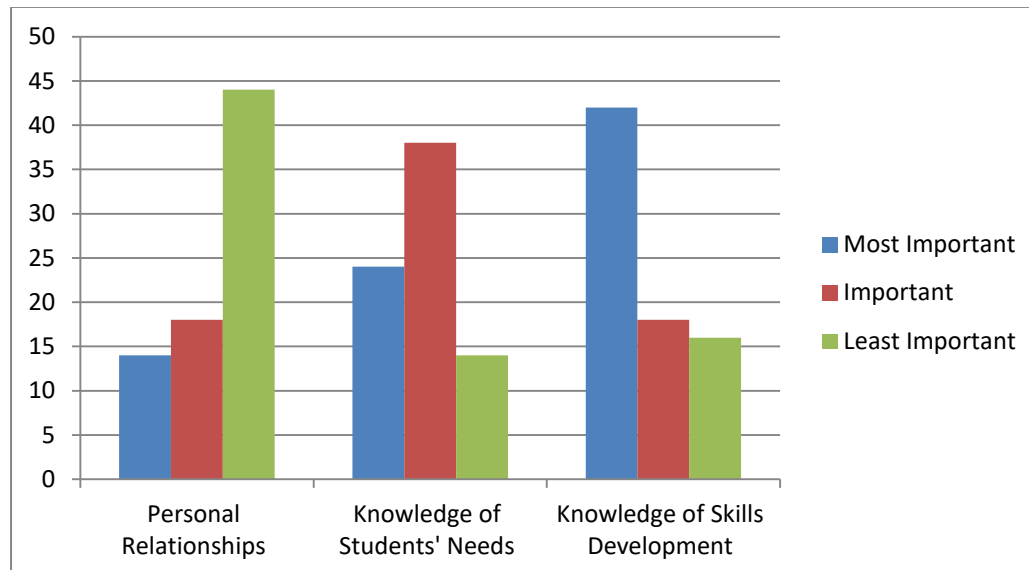
The findings suggest tenuous links between time in the profession and mentorship experience, the data exposes professional responsibilities and student development. There is an indication of the nature of the professional role and mentoring expectations and gives the study an opportunity to identify a possible generalisable finding to develop the mentor role within Foundation Degrees.

**Graph 5.6 Question 'How long have you been a mentor?'**

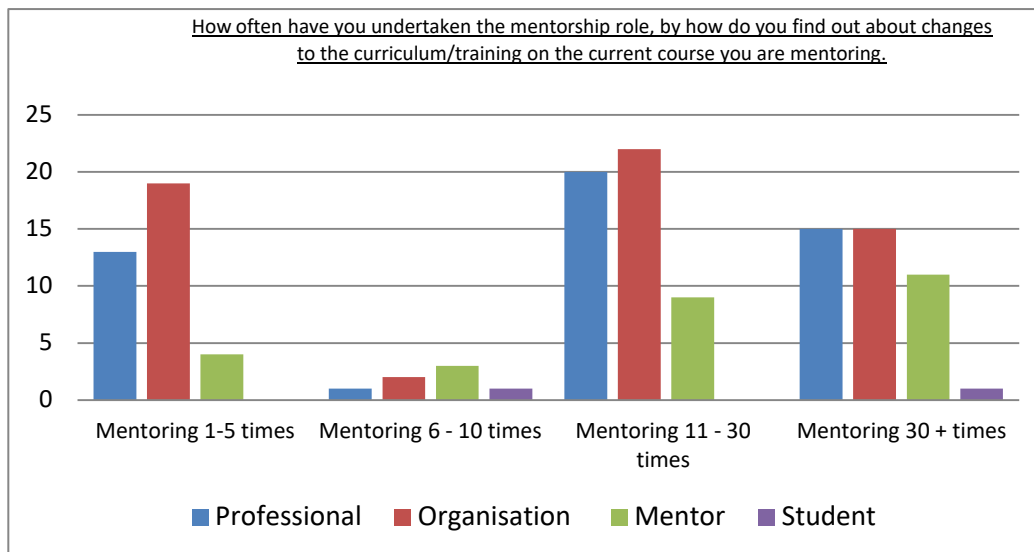


Alternatively Graph 5.7 demonstrates the impact of the nursing mentor's perspective and is instrumental in helping the researcher gain some insight into the mentor's own understanding of the role and the place it has in mentorship. Through the identification of their current role, length of time in said role, some assumptions can be made. All those in the nursing group came from public sector arenas. When this factor is linked to their current role we see that there are similarities in number of participants for each section. Below there are similar findings for question 9 'What qualities do you think are important in mentorship in order of importance?' in terms of personal relationships; student's needs; skills development. For nursing respondents skills development was the most important and personal relationship the least. This would suggest that the issue of learning environment, teaching and learning strategies have a significant role in the development of nursing students. These elements link to a possible awareness within the profession and later in the analysis we will see further illustration of the link (Question 12).

**Graph 5.7 Question 'What qualities do you think are important in mentorship in order of importance?'**

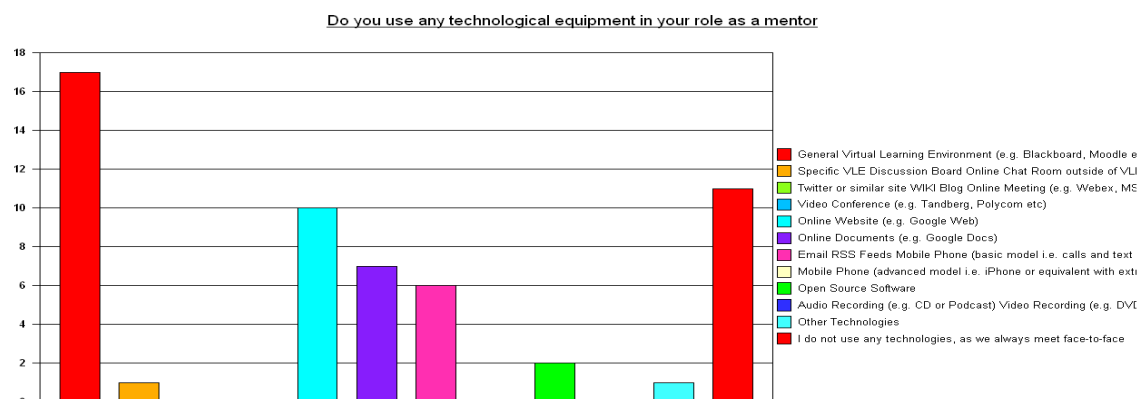


**Graph 5.8 Questions ‘How do you find out about changes to the curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring?’**



There is further evidence illustrated in Graph 5.8 that adds depth to nursing mentorship and explores how the mentor formulates their understanding and thus the development of the students; where do they go to acquire information? Where or from whom do they collect the necessary knowledge related to student progression? The numbers indicate that the majority of mentors, irrespective of number of times they have mentored, minimally use the student. A significant majority use other mentors, but organisation and professional body are the main areas that nursing mentors use to develop their knowledge around the curriculum.

**Graph 5.9 Question ‘Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor?’**



The use of technological support was highlighted previously and mentioned question 12 'Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor?' The graph demonstrates access to and understanding of online materials. As a professional and coherent group, there are a variety of support options available to the nurses and therefore both understanding of resources and access is identified within the evaluation of this question. It would appear that those in the over 10 and 30 years experience groups have a larger area of accessibility and therefore one could assume that this is for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless it is clear that technology provides an important method of support for nursing mentors and this factor will help in the development and understanding of the Foundation Degree mentors.

In establishing links between training, relationships and role, the questionnaires were able to demonstrate some interesting, important and valid points. The connection between training and role profile has a significant impact on the mentorship relationship. Although these are not unexpected facts they do inform the development of mentorship within the Foundation Degree programmes. Any future developments, in the form of training, curriculum, employability and personal growth must be considered as an essential part of mentorship planning.

This quantitative exploration of mentorship and the views provided by Foundation Degree mentors are instrumental in our understanding of their perception of the topic. How this information translate to developing support services is significant, in two ways as the initial connection with the Foundation Degree mentors and their view of the mentorship process. The data is clear in many areas Foundation Degree mentors; see the role and the expectations in a similar way to the comparison group. The challenge is how these differences are used and what comprehensive knowledge now exists to enable a successful encounter. The task now is to capture this understanding and make use of it in developing any processes that provides support.

## **Chapter 6: Research findings and implications for practice**

The following sections of this chapter set out to answer each of the four research questions. These are worth restating before exploring the research findings in greater detail:

- What does mentorship mean for mentors working and supporting learners on a Foundation Degree and how does this compare with mentors supporting another group in particular nursing?
- What are the current support mechanisms for those supporting learners on Foundation Degrees?
- What is the narrative or sequence of the mentors, e.g. their experiences of mentorship?
- What are the core elements of the mentorship role, what has influenced the mentors understanding of the role?

Through the analysis of the data, links were detected between mentorship within professional groups, implementation of learning and knowledge sharing. The collected research data sought to examine 'mentorship and the mentor' within Foundation Degrees, using a comparison of nursing mentors. Triangulation provided a strategy for enhancing creditability of research (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and using the two methods of data collection, focus groups and questionnaires, there was an opportunity to view different perspectives of the topic. Field and Morse (1985) suggest that utilising different perspectives helps to minimize distortion and confirm findings found within the data.

### **6.1 The meaning of mentorship working and supporting learners on a Foundation Degree**

Using the participants' anecdotes helped to characterize the definition of mentorship. These experiences were extensive and instructive in the exploration of both the role of mentorship in the learning process and the topic as a whole; they not only included the responsibilities of a mentor but explored a wide range of topics including leadership, partnership and mutual insight. As the data were explored and the emerging themes were created, the researcher recognised the themes and was aware of the meanings in

comparison to his own interpretation of mentorship. Koch and Harrington (1999) believe that In recognising previous knowledge and experiences of mentorship, the researcher not only acknowledged his own familiarity but ensured greater objectivity in the data analysis

The findings represented the most current views of mentorship across a variety of experiences and theoretical concepts. Indeed, each focus group built on the individuals own diverse experiences and their individual understandings. A return to the issue of group dynamics was a key feature in determining meaning and understanding of how the concept of mentorship was developed and articulated by participants. Differing personalities, language and communication skills, acted as an enabler in situations. The fact that the researcher is a nurse lecturer provides a valuable perceptiveness for the insights provided within the groups. Guba (1981) and Sandelowski (1986) suggest that to ignore the researchers own perceptions can have implications for the neutrality of the collection and analysis of any data.

## **6.2 Identification of support mechanisms for learners on Foundation Degrees?**

Most participants referred to the importance and success of the mentor in making and ensuring that all placements were both enjoyable and a useful learning experience.

### **6.2.1 Taking a positive approach**

Rather than showing dissatisfaction with the process of mentorship, some participants, merely noted the importance of a positive approach to the understanding and their appreciation of the opportunities that arose from it for both the mentor and mentee. The field notes record that the researcher noted the positive messages that these participants communicated. They appeared to have been able to generate their own learning experiences with the support of their mentors with whom they reported to have had good relationships. The researcher suspects that it is probably easier for, what could be construed as novice mentors, to relate to students who generate positive, non-verbal communication messages rather than those who present more negatively. The latter could simply create barriers to effective relationships, learning and ultimately, the mentorship process as a whole. This type of positive report, as an ability to form good student/mentor relationships,

was evidenced in the focus groups and the researcher, with reference to his field notes, suspected that there was a link between the participant's positive attitude towards the placement and their perceptions of the success of their student/ mentor relationship culminating in a meaningful learning experience. A positive approach, or regard towards the placement, is within the control of the student and is congruent with the philosophy of the process of adult learning.

#### 6.2.2 Taking a more active role in learning

The concept of adult education and students taking responsibility for their own learning was highlighted by members of the focus groups who suggest that learners must shift their perceptions of their role as learners and adopt a more active role in their learning. Stuart (2009) confirms these findings suggesting that the traditional role of the learner is one of dependency and purports that students who are used to this approach are perceived both by themselves and others to be dependent on the mentor as they adopt a more passive role in the process. In so doing they are ceding responsibility to others (Myell *et al* 2006). The role of the adult learner is one that makes optimum use of learning opportunities and resources. Through debates within the focus groups, it was observed that the mentor has a role to play in the development of the learner and has to possess certain attributes as well as an understanding of educational requirements to promote a successful learning environment. The characteristics of a good mentor are widely reported and identified in the literature review section.

### 6.3 The experiences of mentorship

Through the consideration of these factors, the researcher was able to confirm some of the following. Individual mentors enjoyed sharing their experiences of mentoring; they appeared to be genuinely interested in the anecdotes and experiences of each other. Examples that were raised seem to encourage and develop experiences, memories and knowledge. There was clearly a focus of what the groups felt mentorship was about. Just as in the findings of Ehrich *et al.* (2004) and Daresh (2001). The findings appear to suggest that some participants believed that learning was something that both mentors and

mentees had within their control and offered examples of proactive preparation thus indicating that they had a basic understanding of some key issues presented.

## **6.4 The core elements of the mentorship role**

Findings highlight the core elements of the mentorship role in a variety of ways.

### **6.4.1 The importance of the allocation of a mentor**

The data revealed that an 'allocated mentor' was a preferred model to facilitate the learning for these particular students rather than being assigned to the learning environment without a member of staff being identified as the mentor. Furthermore some participants had expected to be allocated to one person in particular and this had not happened. They appeared to have anticipated a mentoring experience that they felt reflected the course requirements to promote development of their understanding. Moreover, statements indicated that a small minority of students appeared to feel that the lack of an identified mentor had negatively impacted on their experiences.

The lack of individual mentoring has previously been identified by Higgins and McCarthy (2005) who found that students experienced difficulties in settling into the placements areas if they were not allocated a named mentor this led them to become preoccupied with 'fitting in' with the group dynamic and learning the routines and social norms. The allocation of mentor, or lack thereof, raised an important point of discussion regarding the mentor themselves and the importance of the role.

### **6.4.2 Taking responsibility for mentoring**

Who should be a mentor has increasing importance as the 'Widening Participation' approach to learners' recruitment has created a greater shift from the archetypal student. This often means that members of staff are responsible for the mentoring and in some cases they have no understanding or insight into the academic elements required for the successful completion of the programme and specific academic work. Many of the participants with experience of both educational requirements and mentorship view the relationship as a two way process. In that the learner has equally important responsibility and should contribute



to the learning process and the maintenance of the mentor/mentee relationship. As noted on the literature review Stuart (2009) states that, mentors need to possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the supervision and assessment of students who may be undertaking a training course that is different from their own. It is worth noting that the data indicates similarities to much of the available literature in as much as the profile of the mentor and the expectations of the learner need clarity to successfully achieve a desired outcome.

#### 6.4.3 The mentor / mentee relationship

The role of the mentor is intrinsically linked to the mentee and to the elements of theoretical discovery. The data analysis supports the fact that both the mentor and mentee's perspective describe the development of knowledge and skills as essential. In exploring the role within comparative groups a picture of the issues that surround the role within different professions and different work-based programmes can be seen. In identifying the support mechanisms, we are struck by the changing and adaptive needs of the mentor. The focus group members had a clear direction when considering the role of the mentor.

#### 6.4.4 The application of effective teaching and learning strategies

Teaching and learning strategies seem to be an underlying factor of the discussion. Although only implicit, teaching and learning appeared to be evident within the role profile in terms of skills. It was unfortunate that a work-based mentors group could not be organised, but this shortfall influenced the reflective process, as it then demonstrated the wide range of challenges that existed in coordinating this group. What became apparent later from the questionnaire was the issues that impacted on work-based mentors and their responsibilities within the work force. How they managed mentorship and the mentee's contributions to both service and knowledge within the workplace.

#### 6.4.5 Identifying the needs of the mentee

Through the data the needs of the mentee and the perceived role of the mentor, a picture began to emerge. It becomes apparent that there was a linked responsibility for all those involved in the mentorship process. Literature had already outlined this feature, but

confirmation from the focus groups, ensured that the project progression reflected the needs of those being supported in work-based Foundation Degrees. There was a general consensus within the focus groups, an understanding, an undertaking, a given that someone will mentor. However from the researcher's anecdotal experience this does not appear to translate to Foundation Degree programmes (this point can only be concluded in the context of the focus groups).

## **6.5 Some additional findings**

The analysis of the themes identified a central issue, one of connectivity, using the findings and the project definition of mentorship. This connectivity is highlighted by identifying the expectations of each group, also recognising the level of knowledge and experience, but most notably understanding and appreciating the language used to reveal points of interest. The researcher acknowledges the impact of the insider view point regarding mentorship. To combat this the strategies employed throughout the study for trustworthiness and rigor (Slevin 2002; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Sandelowski 1993;) were applied with attention to clarity in all areas, selection of sample, data collection, data analysis and peer reviewing.

### **6.5.1 The issue of connectivity**

This connectivity was an underlying element within the comparisons of the focus groups. Each focus group provided different directions for mentorship whilst also providing commonalities. By starting with a different ideology or experience, each focus group took different directions but ended up at similar points. The idea that mentors were responsible in some way for the educational and professional improvement of the learner was clear. The method, which each group used to achieve this, was important in understanding, both the economic, social and political elements attached to this phenomenon. The participants were free to express themselves in a manner that reflected their own views, values and beliefs.

### 6.5.2 The insider perspective

It was important that there was not a specific brief, to ensure the issue of trustworthiness in data collection. Through the acknowledgement of the insider perspective, there was recognition of the researcher's possible bias. Focus group 1 'university staff' managed issues without an agenda and it wasn't difficult for them to debate and discuss the purpose of mentorship and how it could be defined. For those actively participating in programmes that involved work-based learning, it was clear that they have formulated agendas. Through analysis of the session it was evident that many of the university staff were actively involved with mentorship in a variety of ways. Their contributions came from experiences that had helped or focused their understanding of individual responsibility. It had been more productive to find a position that reflected their views and so the session was free flowing to ensure that the researcher captured the insider perspective rather than allowing the researcher's personal interpretation to dilute the strength of the findings. By utilising various techniques designed specifically to ensure effective focus groups, i.e the type of questions, identifying the required outcome, the session was soon fully able to move in its own natural direction (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2002).

The group that was represented by the HEI began by pontificating the definition and nature of mentorship. This group provided a diverse variety of anecdotes and metaphors, these were used to stimulate and strengthen discussion. They outlined mentor definitions and gave examples of the working definition and even provided literature to support their thinking.

These findings, determined through data analysis, identify that for the majority of the participants mentorship was an essential part of any placement and believed that this relationship, both at a personal and professional level, would have an impact on learning. Participants viewed the mentorship role as being the cornerstone of their development and professional growth and again many identified this as the key to either a negative or positive outcome. Although not always clearly outlined the participants felt that the mentor had a significant role in whether or not knowledge and understanding was achieved.

## 6.6 Implications for practice

Throughout this study the goal has always been to identify current good practice and align this knowledge to the support of Foundation Degree mentors. The issue is inherently complex given that mentorship itself creates a variety of differing approaches and outcomes based on the mentor and the learner. Within the literature, the humanistic elements of this relationship demonstrated the complexities involved and the diverse nature of the roles, responsibilities and expectations created within the subject, which is also pinpointed by Allen *et al* (2006). What is significant is the role each member of the partnership plays in the relationship and the expectations of each other. It is naive to believe that one option fits all the possibilities and so it is our moving understanding that will influence the outcome of the journey for both of the main parties. There were identified differences of opinions and both literature and collected data support a variety of implications for practice. As was discovered within the body of this work the emerging themes, mirrored the existing understanding, however it was the overlapping and difficulties in separating themes that was the most telling.

The study conclusions can be formulated to impact on any future support mechanisms that would or may enhance the process. Although the literature and findings support what is known, the real issue is how can this knowledge ensure a more involved and productive partnership. The research has identified that the role and content of the role are significant in the relationship. The pre-project stance of an accepted definition of mentoring proved complex within work-based degrees. As a result each of these areas (pre-project 14 different work-based programmes) provides a significantly different approach to work-based learning and support for students 'mentoring'.

Equally the literature and findings demonstrate a more scattered approach to mentors in the Foundation Degrees and although the evidence suggests a variety of options, there is nothing cohesive. There needed to be a drawing together of knowledge and a reduction in the current dispersed appearance of mentorship.

One such finding was that of connectivity and the ability to engage work-based mentors that function outside of the university parameters'. The focus groups identified a number of

themes and this knowledge could be added to benefits mentorship delivery. Further some elements of the focus group discussed clarity in terms of what the student is studying and expectations of the programme, learning outcomes and course work (i.e student and mentor time management, key features of assignments, identifying real links to work-based environment and how the mentor can be better prepared in the development of student skills). These identified elements came through in a sometimes unclear way, with the focus of assessment being the student's perspective, but the transfer of skills and knowledge being the mentor's role. However we must be mindful of these conclusions and set them against the findings within Chapter 5; namely, where the mentors had a clear sense of function and their role within the programme. But it is essential to note that the principles identified and key themes generated insight and the researcher was able to draw significant conclusions from some of the responses and the comparative nature of the data collection and analysis.

**Figure 6.1 Mentorship progressions**

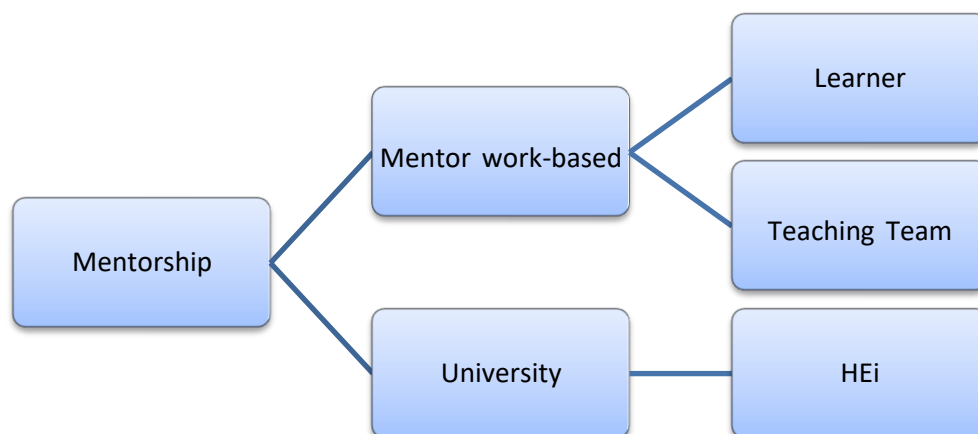


Figure 6.1 demonstrates a snapshot of the current logical progression of mentorship. It provides us with the opportunity to clearly see those involved and helps with the suggestion of how each component links in order to achieve a successful outcome in terms of mentorship within work-based arena. The project has also impacted on those involved in work-based programmes; the language used to include mentors should be work-based friendly. Increased recognition by staff of the importance of mentors and exploring a variety of methods to encourage active involvement.

The profile of the mentor has been increased as a result of the project and the identification of key skills and methods of support have been identified which cross academic and work-based boundaries. The research has shown that understanding of the mentors' experiences has been enhanced and clarified. The researcher feels that the struggle expressed pertaining to the transferring of skills and knowledge from one area to another was revealing and although identified in the literature has not been fully recognised by curriculum planners. The expectations of HEIs and the expectations of the work-based student differ in some ways yet they do agree on the necessity of the mentorship process. The researcher is also mindful that the 'attitude' of the mentor to the work-based experience was the determining factor to the success, or otherwise. The relationship with the 'mentor' plays a significant role and therefore the ultimate contributor to the optimisation of learning. The data exposed several other issues, as debated in the findings and discussion chapters, which have generated recommendations for practice. Further research would add to the Foundation Degree mentor's perspective and therein help develop their role.

It was clear from the onset that mentorship had a valid place in the work-based programmes, but only the Foundation Degree work-based mentors themselves determined how it was implemented. By recognising key elements of the mentor's role they can be both equipped and empowered.

Table 6.1 is used to demonstrate findings both within the project (SMART) and this research study. The study emphasized several areas of both current and future development, by supporting mentors, student development and learning opportunities within the work place can be enhanced. Other key areas that the project has highlighted have been appropriateness of the work setting to support the student's study. This means that teams within a work-based environment must identify skills and use team members to help facilitate learning.

**Table 6.1 Demonstrates the use of findings within the SMART project and this research study,**

SMART's Main Benefits	
Learners	<p>Clarity of expectations of student and mentor relationship - as the 'modus operandi' is reinforced by all mentors</p> <p>Improved consistency in expectations of mentors</p> <p>Improved time management – more frequent mentor dialogue</p> <p>Improved engagement – greater use of collaborating technologies with mentors</p> <p>Maximising sense of support from mentor</p>
Teaching Teams	<p>Improved partnership interaction with work-based mentors</p> <p>Development of high level interactive rich media learning technologies capability</p> <p>Improved embedded and good practice in work-based education</p> <p>Better efficiency and effective modes of delivery match to business sector requirements</p> <p>Increased recognition by staff of the importance of mentors</p> <p>Increased confirmation and identification of key skills and methods of support for mentors have been identified</p>
University	<p>Evidence of 'sector good practice' in work-based education and programme delivery resulting in the transformation of understanding of mentor support practices</p> <p>Internal dissemination exploring a variety of ways to get mentors actively involved in work-based programmes</p> <p>Improved learning experience for distribute students</p> <p>Raising of staff 'technology-enhanced Learning' programme development and delivery capability</p> <p>Development of new model of teaching delivery methodology</p> <p>Peer-reviewed publications opportunities</p> <p>Opportunity for income stream revenue e.g. in commercial consultancy, customised client development etc.</p>
Mentors	<p>Clarity of what the student is doing and expectations of the programme, learning outcomes and course work</p> <p>'Just In Time' supporting accessible online resources</p> <p>Low investment of time and financial cost at resource entry point resulting in high cost/benefit realisation e.g. minimal training/technology knowledge requirement</p> <p>Secure development of a 'community of practice'</p> <p>Improved communication with teaching team</p>
HE Sector	<p>Sound evidence for learning innovation strategies in work-based learning delivery</p> <p>Opportunity for extensive dissemination of curriculum enhancements and research findings</p> <p>A new and powerful approach to enhance flexible learning design</p> <p>A technology platform on which to build and customise programme/course development to suit 'own' requirements</p> <p>Increased mentor role profile</p> <p>Identification of key skills and methods of support have been identified which cross academic/work-based boundaries.</p>

**Diagram provide courtesy of SMART project Bucks New University and JISC (2011)**

#### 6.6.1 Summary of the study findings and implications for practice

Although mentorship within work-based settings exists in a variety of forms, there is no structured method of containing the process (in Foundation Degree programmes). Information is provided, but engagement is haphazard. It is difficult to engage mentors, where there is such a diverse group of programmes and what the programmes perceived as different needs. Mentor movement within the work setting changes dramatically i.e. many identified mentors at the start of the project had changed by the time the study had concluded.

Language plays a significant part in the development of any system, Foundation Degree mentors needed to understand, comprehend and recognise what activities they are involved with. There have been unspoken agreements for commitment of the employer/work setting. As discovered within the research, there are a variety of different approaches to mentorship. Any future support mechanisms must include these findings and then provided a system that acknowledged all the various areas of focus. The research has tried to identify mentorship in its purist form and thus attempts to address the functions and skills necessary to support mentors, whilst they engaged with the student. There does need to be an acknowledgment for a centralised support mechanism, which encompassed all the various work-based programmes. Finally there does appear to be a need for a sense of community for a group that had no natural links.

It is also essential to note that throughout the study the relationship between mentor and mentee has been one of obvious empowerment. The acknowledgement of this empowerment gives the researcher a unique and innate ability to answer the questions that have been outlined by the study and to probe the overall objectives, which were determined by findings within each chapter. There is not a finite response or a fixed approach, but there is new understanding, identified possibilities have been and outlined in 8.1. Using the outlined elements further examination could increase our understanding and implementation of mentorship within this field further.



## Chapter 7: Discussion and concluding reflections

The researcher concludes that the mentoring may be compromised both by the expectations of the learner and the limited insight of what can be termed 'developmental needs', on both parts of this relationship. Inevitably this means that to provide a mentor with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the mentorship role, the mentor needs to be actively involved with the curriculum and not simply gaining information via student interpretations. The need for the mentor to access all aspects of the curriculum is essential, programme content, learning outcomes and assessment is probably not totally at ease with the nature of current learning needs or the requirements of individual curriculum. They may not be fully aware of how the work-based placement fits in with the wider picture of the curriculum and the student's preparation as a whole.

There was evidence of the cascading response and overlapping of theme content, in the questionnaire the importance of skills development was the most important for nursing, where as the Foundation Degree mentors rank it second to personal relationships. Foundation Degree mentors appeared to have no central curriculum knowledge point, (although we did see that from the other methods of informing their role that they did utilise many technological resources). In developing curricula there must be a link between education and employers (Brennan and Little 2006), within this study the findings indicate that consultation must be wide spread and the distribution of curriculum content more available.

Mentorship is a controversial role and this has become apparent throughout this study, its status is elevated in terms of learning and a suitability of the placement in providing a variety of experiences. The participants were very clear when they spoke about a positive or negative experience and clearly indicated that mentorship was a fundamental part of learning. Some participants noted that mentorship played a 'key' role in making the placement a success or not. The issue of empowerment and support, although not directly described by the participants, became a reflective element of the researcher's own knowledge and interpretation of the data. The role, the expectations and responsibilities are

all made much more significant when the application of empowerment and support mechanisms are attached to each identified theme. Mentorship knowledge and understanding within the Foundation Degrees, requires a central commonality that allows for the sharing of experiences and the awareness of the application of learning opportunities and therein the development of the role itself. Through the identification of the mentors own skills, student leaning needs, the partnership will develop. If both parties are aware of the expectations and commitment necessary for successful engagement then the identified themes are more likely to be achieved.

### **7.1 Limitations of the research**

In hindsight it may have been more useful to use the Likert Scale for some of the questions posed in the questionnaire. The Likert scale provides a five point function, which extends from strongly agree to strongly disagree. However the type of responses from work-based mentors prior to the development of the questionnaire and insight provided by the focus groups indicated that the questionnaire needed to be simple and straightforward. The method of data collection only used a four point level which did provide the necessary information. For many the question of statistical significance and the question probability may be limited. However the findings within chapter 5 provide some insight and contribute to the debate, which adds value to significance of the data.

Recognising the limitations of the questionnaire was an important part of reviewing the data that was collected. In order to analyse and gain useful meaning from the data it was useful to have a comparison 'nursing' where the comparison would inform possible themes and thereby provide insight into the phenomena that was mentorship. Through the extensive literature review, the researcher was able to ascertain a variety of concepts, some of which were already known and others that were confirmed through exploring other researcher's findings.

The question is: if once the mentor is aware of the skills necessary to develop a student does this have a significant possibility of impacting considerably on the outcome for both student

and mentor? Equally the role of mentor includes a variety of components and this suggests that the mentor is not merely a supportive resource but part of the learning process too. The corollary is that at points throughout this process the mentor must also adapt to the role of learner. In order for the mentor to comprehend their functions and how to achieve the most successful partnership means they must acknowledge methods of self-development and the impact they have on encouraging and extending student understanding. With this knowledge in mind there are occasions when the mentor is referred to as a learner and the concept of building and structuring a useful and productive alliance becomes a useful concept in taking forward any insight into the role.

The size of the sample used for the questionnaire makes it difficult to provide real statistical significance. The possibility of options and pathways could engage the Foundation Degree mentors and help us understand some of the necessary components to help support the mentor within a work-based setting. Literature has also been used to identify academic and employer examples which can be used in developing understanding and thereby ensuring that any mechanism provided is useful.

Generalisability of any findings is also another limitation in that the measures of validity and reliability of the tool cannot be confirmed. However, the results have been successful and so we can therefore confirm there is trustworthiness in the data. The study sought to examine the relationship between Foundation Degree mentors and their students. The findings linked wanted the skills used, applied and developed in another area to identify methods of learning and this could improve methods of interaction and knowledge. In order to achieve this the researcher captured the views of nursing that already uses mentorship with some success. Exploration of how the nursing mentors, understand, prepare and develop the mentorship role lead to some core in-depth understanding of criteria necessary to progress mentorship in Foundation Degree programmes.

## **7.2 Final Reflections**

Reflectively the researcher can draw some conclusions from the findings within both the focus groups and questionnaires. However, there had been no face to face contact with any of the

work-based mentors at this time and so, it was difficult to gain a truly and robust insight into how work based mentors perceived the concept of mentorship. It was essential to return to the initial remit, which was to develop a mechanism to support the work-based mentor. Clearly we already had an acknowledgement that mentorship is a partnership and that within this partnership are a variety of variables. What information was captured and how this would be disseminated was crucial to ensuring the success of any knowledge created. Many of the issues identified demonstrated a link between the knowledge of the work-based mentor, understanding of the mentorship role and the development of the student.

At the beginning of the study there had been recognition in relation to the quantity of literature and the various focuses that the literature addressed. However there was limited literature for mentorship within the Foundation Degree and the development and progressing of these types of programmes, there is a necessity to explore learning opportunities and the relationships involved.

### **7.3 Evaluation and discussion**

The initial question within this study was what has been learnt that would add or develop understanding of the phenomenon. The study acknowledges the main components of mentorship the different perspective of the participants provide depth to the topic. The content, discussion and debates illustrated many of the diversities that exist within the phenomena that is mentorship. The introduction of a descriptive and interpretative approach was instrumental in exploring mentorship from a more lived and humanistic experience whilst capturing the individual notions of its core concepts; this provided opportunities to understand how knowledge can inform practice. This fragmented mirroring of literature, coupled with the research data, suggests that although knowledge is already available, new perspectives can demonstrate the movement within this phenomenon.

Clutterbuck (2013) provides an up to date commentary of mentorship, exploring the research that currently surrounds the topic and finds that although it may be perceptive that the volume of literature is extensive, this he believes is far from the truth. There are

far more quantitative research papers than qualitative ones' and further points out that mentoring is not single readily classified phenomenon or a set of activities. This study has concluded similar facts and had started the process with the definition of mentorship locally, a point Clutterbuck (2005; 2008; 2013) confirms is essential in develop the topic and in prompting successful outcomes within the relationship.

Poulsen (2013) in her review of mentorship using her experience of over ten years of programmes both in design and delivery, also demonstrates some of the facts found within this study. What was interesting within this research was the use of learning potential for mentors, not simply a mechanism to enhance the mentee. Wareing (2009; 2011) has illustrated similarities in that his qualitative studies, identifying the need for learning opportunities for all those involved in this process and alluded to the complex nature of all the relationships involved.

Clutterbuck (2013) continues to challenge the thinking within mentorship and seeks to develop new understanding through more diverse and structure to mentoring in the future. The identified themes outlined in this study have captured this thinking and the data supports much of the current concerns and debates. Poulsen (2013) found that learning for mentors is still not fully understood, giving credence to the findings with Foundation Degree mentors. The focus groups identified the role of the mentor and in some areas the responsibility of the mentee, whilst the student focus group outlined the need for the mentor to have skills and knowledge to enable their understanding and therein academic and professional development.

The main area identified by participants was the functions of mentorship and this creates the discussion necessary to develop understanding. The focus of the findings were the role and responsibilities of a mentor the profile of the mentor and the relationship; literature confirms a similar understanding (Clutterbuck 2008; 2005 and D'Abate *et al* 2005). This connection to literature was a revealing fact and a confirmation that the local views of both mentorship and its role had commonalities.

The perception of the mentor's role is diverse and this is not simply from one individual group's perspective but an identifiable theme throughout the study. The fact that no focus group could be organised for the work-based Foundation Degrees, in itself reflects some of the concerns that sparked the project. Contact with the work-based mentor group was erratic and when initial contact was made many were unresponsive. However the project sought to use the information/data provided to establish a clearer pathway to engagement. Within professional groups there is an understanding that the mentorship role is imperative and fundamental in the development of future and current practitioners. A working definition from those involved with the focus groups was the first position that was identified as a theme. From the focus groups data it is clear that a similar understanding existed. The gap occurs with the implementation of mentorship: If each group has an identifiable definition, unless the definitions are consistent, how can the process of mentorship move forward?

Although often used as synonyms in the colloquial sense, it became apparent that the concept of support and empowerment are not interchangeable. One can make some clear assumptions from the student focus group descriptors. Most importantly are the relationships and the fact that an individual can be supported, but not empowered. Perhaps further discussion of the dichotomy between support and empowerment would enlighten our understanding of mentorship further. For example, is it justifiable to presume that empowerment is more significant than support in a successful mentorship relationship?

Such questions force us to focus on the true objectives of mentorship *per se*. Whether a mentee being supported will be enough to achieve the objectives of the mentorship relationship may depend on the nature of the situation. For example, nurses may require the full extent of empowerment for a 'successful outcome' to be achieved given their role will require them to be a mentor in the future. Within the analysis this area of debate has been an underlying theme, and although clearly alluded to throughout, it was essential to keep some of the common themes of role definition and role identity separate, so as not to miss the micro or macro elements of the data.

For many of participants both in the focus groups and questionnaires, it is clear that the role of the mentor is one in which it is achieved by recognising the skills necessary for the individual providing the support as well as having an understanding of their own skills. This may require the undertaking of appropriate training and an acknowledgement of their role and the organisations role in developing the mentee. Each group was clear in their definition and understanding of expectations, the marriage of mentee (student) and mentor (work-based learning based supporters) that there were responsibilities on all sides. Therefore the researcher can make some clear recommendations from the data.

Once the reflective process of exploring with the analysis of all three focus groups, it was apparent that to engage all parties a set of rules should be applied. Mentorship for all needed a clearly defined role; however all those involved in the process must ensure that they are aware of expectations. Not personal or professional expectations that can be limited to individual players but of all expectations: academic, practical, employer or developmental. A mentor must have the ability to demonstrate their skills and understanding of their area of expertise and thus support the novice in their quest to find both academic and theoretical understanding as well as the development expertise to achieve usefulness within their chosen area of study and employment.

The focus groups agreed and recognised that a good mentor/mentee relationship allowed for the sharing of knowledge between the two individuals and that the mentor is expected to facilitate learning opportunities and utilise the student's learning experience. This was apparent in the initial coding with the identification of codes such as; academic support; resources; organisational structure and role; negative and positive aspects of mentorship role. A total of ten main themes were identified and then provided the core themes for examination. They also agreed that identifying and formulating outcomes enhanced the experience, as well as the agreed components of a professional relationship. The focus groups were useful in the comparative and contrasting views of how to achieve this criteria and where the responsibility lay.

An understanding of the students' developmental needs was also an issue that evolved during analysis. Knowledge for all parties was paramount and this manifested itself in a

variety of ways. Identifying links between the HEi, mentor and the mentee, assessment criteria that were understood by all involved. Clearly identified and workable learning objectives, this meant a closer relationship between the HEi and the mentor. These themes would provide insight into the mentors own ability to contribute to the development of student. How this would be achieved would come via the support mechanism that could be developed and employed to strengthen the mentorship relationships. Recognition of the limits and challenges that impact on student and service development must be identified within the academic and employment arena. This recognition acts as a means of empowerment for again those involved within this complex and dynamic relationship.

#### **7.4 Comparisons and conclusions.**

The comparisons were useful in comprehending mentorship within work-based Foundation Degrees; by examining the responses to the questionnaires, similarities and anomalies were identified. The research methodology allowed the data usage to explore evidence of the impact of the lived experience. Although in the questionnaire there was no opportunity to question the responses directly given the anonymity of the process, conclusions could be drawn from the findings provided from the responses. The respondents indicate their own experiences, their views and therefore their perceptions of mentorship. The researcher was unable to question the respondents further whilst using this method of data collection but assumptions can be made to indicate strong associations. These assumptions were formed through responses and the level of percentages created through the consolidation of numbered responses.

Through analysis and comparison we gain an understanding of commonalities and can identify any new or unique attributes identified. The differences in questionnaire uptakes of 80% for work based mentors and 48% for nursing cannot be ignored and may impact on the results. However this doesn't reduce the implications for the comparison; by using only the percentages we are able to isolate and compare any findings that could influence the much needed support mechanisms with the Foundation Degrees. The study is alert to the ways that mentors find out about changes and the comparisons drawn are particularly informative. 58%



of Foundation Degree mentors 58% find out about any changes from the student, nursing is 2.6%, this is significant in terms how this data can be used and how it should influence our planning. However, evermore reassuring is the similarity of information provided by the organisation, 50% FD and 66% nursing.

Furthermore, the datum has demonstrated the importance of role profile, teaching and learning strategies that act as components that inform our understanding of the mentorship process and provide a coherent evaluation of the impact knowledge and understanding has on the mentorship delivery, insight and usefulness within the process. The questionnaire and feedback indicates that the mentors have a variety of methods to gain information. This then creates a method of developing the mentee whilst utilising the mentor's levels of experience and their wealth of knowledge. Also identified was the relationship between mentor and mentee and the interplay between roles and this will help in developing and understanding the mechanic of this subjective process. The findings demonstrated that the foundation of a relationship is formed by an agreement; both parties need a clear understanding of their expectations. Foundation Degree mentors has an alternative method of organising and executing learning and any strategies must reflect the changing nature of teaching and learning theories. However the university staff focus group in the chapter 4, demonstrated some key factors in this essential relationship and the questionnaires provided a vehicle to both confirm and illustrate these facts.

An important distinction between the two groups (Foundation Degree mentors and nursing mentors) was their expectations, how they formulate relationship and how they understood the role of a mentor. There was agreement in many areas but the main difference was the level of mentorship training. Namely, 97.4% of nursing respondents have had training as opposed 45.8% of FD mentors. If participant's expectations differ it is safe to assume that these differences impact on the individual's view of all themes. Although this concept is not particularly revolutionary, it is an important element in our understanding of mentorship. It is this understanding of expectations that will help us formulate new methods of engagement and thus develop the role in an area that currently appears under represented locally. Within nursing there are centralised support mechanisms, there is a professional body that helps create a cohesiveness that informs all those involved with any student support.

Clinical environments have a central register that identifies mentors and their current status, i.e. mentorship training updates and any specific skills that will enhance student experiences and learning. This is an area that creates the biggest challenge for Foundation Degrees, there needs to be a platform that includes the necessary cohesiveness, similarly to the nursing structure.

The recognition that students need direction within the work based arena is pivotal to changing the nature of the work based mentor's relationship with them. Within nursing there are clearly outlined learning objectives. Although this is the case within the Foundation Degrees how these objectives are centralised varies and not all mentors may be aware of the current thinking. This in part may be due to the changing nature of some areas of employment and the fact that one representative may see or interpret the learning objectives differently; the same could be true of a student. Therefore clearly outlined learning objectives agreed prior to placement could counteract this issue; this direction must come centrally.

**Figure 7.1 Educational infra structure**

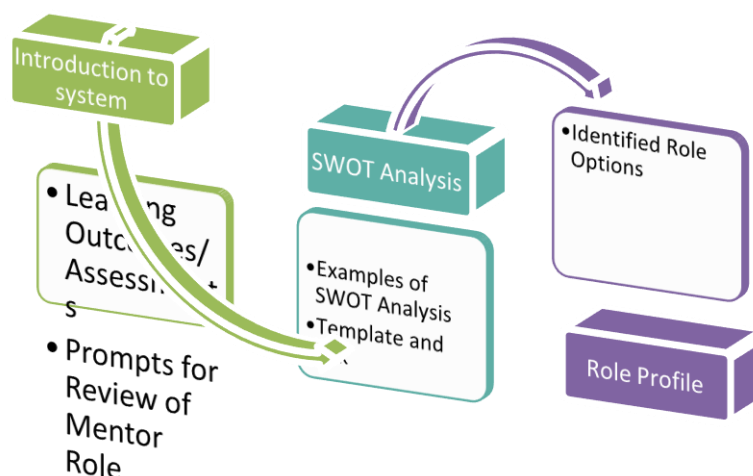


Figure 7.1 demonstrates the possible educational infrastructure. This suggestion provides for the identification of a process, that if included in the structure of the work based programme could help mentors identify their own role within the educational programme. This would help to assemble the mentor's contributions and help deliver the agreed learning outcomes.

**Figure 7.2 Mentorship support process**

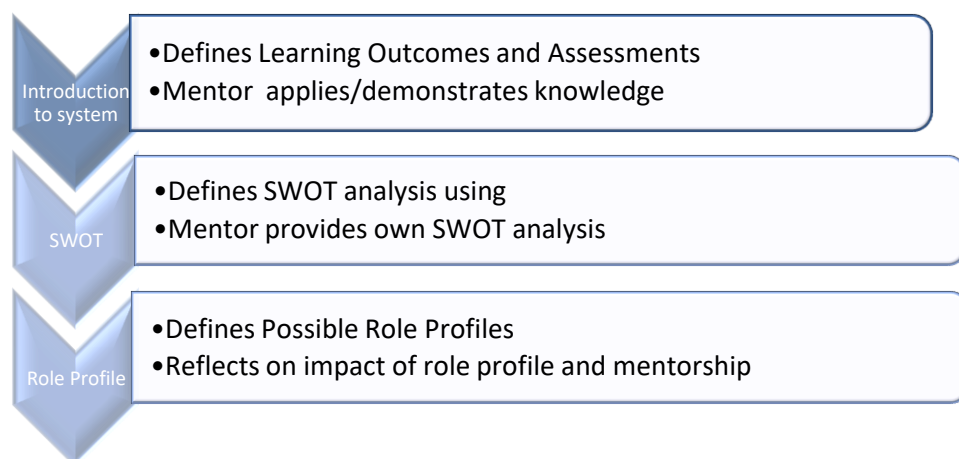


Figure 7.2 demonstrates that by analysing the roles played respectively by both mentor and mentee it is fundamental to understanding the mechanics needed within this process. The mentorship relationship is experiential in nature and is founded upon the transference of knowledge and experience from a more experienced party to one with less experience. In order to achieve this, the diagram above has identified a pathway that may help in both the structuring and developing of the mentor. By following these agreed steps the mentor is able to personally identify factors that impact on the relationship. Once the mentor identifies his/her own role, plans can be organised to ensure that the necessary resources are available to support both the mentor and the mentee.

It cannot be emphasised enough how significant the understanding of the role of the mentor is and how the clear identification of its components enhances the success of mentorship *per se*. Therefore any plans or structure must reflect this and no more so than in the possible development of Foundation Degree mentors.

The final conclusion of this chapter is to note that new meaning has been attached to mentorship in a group or series of groups (within various Foundation Degrees) that suggest core elements can be used to develop all mentors and that a support mechanism should be developed to include diverse groups. The end of this Masters of Philosophy is not the completion of the project but further investigations using data (semi structured interviews) from the Foundation Degree mentors contributed to the final support mechanisms

employed. The data collected from the study was instrumental in understanding the specific needs of the Foundation Degree mentors. The mentorship development within this sphere is understandably an ongoing academic debate and subject for investigation. Further research can only enhance this topic and with new understanding comes new depth. The future of learning and work-based programmes continues to grow and so mentorship will continue to develop, it is only through investigating the topic that any necessary change can occur.

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## Appendices 1

### Information leaflet and Consent

Title of Study: Supporting mentors & resource transformation (SMART)

Supporting mentors & resource transformation project seeks to investigate, develop and implement processes and tools to help develop the mentorship role within work based learning. The project seeks to find methods of supporting the work based learning programmes, particularly through technology and with the aid of identified core elements of the mentorship role. The project seeks to produce a model that considers the Management of changes and in so doing supports the mentorship role. This consideration may help develop and organise ways of improving the experience for work-based learning students.

The University has identified that effective mentors are vital to the success of students on work-based programmes. Therefore by identifying and working with those who provide support for students, the project hopes to capture some of the skills and support mechanisms that will enhance the work based process.

The University acknowledges the implicit role of the work based programmes and is aware of the need to utilise areas of expertise that already exists, both in within the university and by employers. The project will acts as a platform that respects and takes account of the essential relationship of education and academia. The aim is to collect evidence of best practice and use technology to support and enhance work based programmes. Providing mentors with additional support and further means of enabling support for the process as a whole.

The collection of data and the use of information collected via interviews is of vital importance. This information ('Use Cases') will act as a training method that will develop mentor skills within the project. 'Use Cases' are models used to show the users of the system the main functions and 'user-interaction' of the identified system.

By detailing the necessary interventions with mentors this will ensure the most effective support for work-based learning students. The project will also include location-independent information provision and staff development.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be interview by myself. The interview will be audio recorded, so that we capture your views and insights of the mentorship process. You will be given the opportunity to discuss the experience that you have within your present role and how you feel mentorship can be improve so that it becomes more useful as a tool for learning and growth.

Your views are important in this process and so your information will be shared to provide a wider and clearer picture of strategies to enhance the mentorship process.

Consent: I confirm that ;

I understand that taking part in the project is entirely voluntary

I understand what the project is about

I have read the information leaflet

I have discussed the project with the researcher

I have been able to ask questions and understood the answers

I understand I am free to stop the interview at any time, without having to give a reason

Signed

Name

Date

## Appendix 2



25 August 2016

Michael Farquharson  
Bucks New University  
106 Oxford Road  
Uxbridge  
UB8 1NA

Dear Michael

### **Ethical approval**

I am writing to confirm that ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Society and Health Ethics Committee of Buckinghamshire New University on 29 April 2011 for your project:

"Supporting mentors & resource transformation (SMART)."

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Nakisa".

Dr M. Nakisa  
Secretary to the University Research Ethics Panel  
Research and Enterprise Development Unit

## Appendix 3: Questionnaire Foundation Degree Mentors

### Mentorship and Technology

#### 1. In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?

22.7%	Public
45.5%	Private
40.9%	Voluntary
0.0%	Other

#### 2. Please answer the following statements:

	0 to 1 years	2 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	Over 10 years
How long have you been in your current profession	9.1%	40.9%	31.8%	18.2%
How long have you worked in your current role	19.0%	33.3%	38.1%	9.5%
How long have you been a mentor	52.4%	23.8%	9.5%	14.3%

#### 3. How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?

63.6%	1 to 5
4.5%	6 to 10
13.6%	Over 10 or Under 30
18.2%	Over 30

#### 4. Have you had any training in mentorship?

59.1%	Yes
40.9%	No

#### 5. If you answered yes to the question above, please provide further details below (e.g. Length, Provider and Method of training used)

100.0%

**6. How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (*you may choose more than one option*)?**

19.0% From the Professional Body

57.1% From the Organisation

9.5% From other mentors

66.7% From the student

**7. How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?**

55.0% Very Important

40.0% Important

5.0% Quite Important

0.0% Not Important

**8. How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?**

90.9% Very Important

9.1% Important

0.0% Quite Important

0.0% Not Important

**9. What qualities do you think are important in mentorship in order of importance**

	Most important	Important	Least important
<b>Personal Relationships</b>	45.5%	36.4%	18.2%
<b>Knowledge of Students' Needs</b>	40.9%	59.1%	0.0%
<b>Knowledge of Skills Development</b>	40.9%	18.2%	40.9%

**10. Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:**

4.5% Assessment

31.8%	Knowledge
40.9%	Skills Development
22.7%	Student Empathy

**11. How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?**

55.0%	Very Important
45.0%	Important
0.0%	Quite Important
0.0%	Not Important

**12. Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor**

27.3%	General Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle etc)
4.5%	Specific VLE Discussion Board Online Chat Room outside of VLE Social Networking Group (e.g. Facebook, MySpace etc)
4.5%	Twitter or similar site WIKI Blog Online Meeting (e.g. Webex, MSN, Skype etc)
0.0%	Video Conference (e.g. Tandberg, Polycom etc)
50.0%	Online Website (e.g. Google Web)
50.0%	Online Documents (e.g. Google Docs)
27.3%	Email RSS Feeds Mobile Phone (basic model i.e. calls and text messages only)
27.3%	Mobile Phone (advanced model i.e. iPhone or equivalent with extra abilities than basic calls and text)
4.5%	Open Source Software
9.1%	Audio Recording (e.g. CD or Podcast) Video Recording (e.g. DVD or YouTube etc)
0.0%	Other Technologies
22.7%	I do not use any technologies, as we always meet face-to-face

**13. Would you be willing to take part in a short interview to allow us to follow up on some of your responses?**

59.1%    Yes

40.9%    No

**14. If you responded 'Yes' above please provide your contact details here:**

100.0%

**Thank you for giving your time for this important research.**

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire Nursing Mentors

### Mentorship and Technology

#### 1. In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?

76 (100.0%)	Public
0 (0.0%)	Private
0 (0.0%)	Voluntary
0 (0.0%)	Other

#### 2. Please answer the following statements:

	0 to 1 years	2 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	Over 10 years
<b>How long have you been in your current profession</b>	10 (13.2%)	32 (42.1%)	14 (18.4%)	20 (26.3%)
<b>How long have you worked in your current role</b>	22 (28.9%)	30 (39.5%)	12 (15.8%)	12 (15.8%)
<b>How long have you been a mentor</b>	18 (23.7%)	28 (36.8%)	12 (15.8%)	18 (23.7%)

#### 3. How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?

12 (15.8%)	1 to 5
14 (18.4%)	6 to 10
30 (39.5%)	Over 10 or Under 30
20 (26.3%)	Over 30

#### 4. Have you had any training in mentorship?

74 (97.4%)	Yes
2 (2.6%)	No

#### 5. If you answered yes to the question above, please provide further details below (e.g Length, Provider and Method of training used)

74 (100.0%)

#### 6. How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (*you may*



***choose more than one option)?***

46 (60.5%) From the Professional Body

66 (86.8%) From the Organisation

28 (36.8%) From other mentors

2 (2.6%) From the student

**7. How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?**

76 (100.0%) Very Important

0 (0.0%) Important

0 (0.0%) Quite Important

0 (0.0%) Not Important

**8. How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?**

76 (100.0%) Very Important

0 (0.0%) Important

0 (0.0%) Quite Important

0 (0.0%) Not Important

**9. What qualities do you think are important in mentorship in order of importance**

	<b>Most important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Least important</b>
<b>Personal Relationships</b>	14 (18.4%)	18 (23.7%)	44 (57.9%)
<b>Knowledge of Students' Needs</b>	24 (31.6%)	38 (50.0%)	14 (18.4%)
<b>Knowledge of Skills Development</b>	42 (55.3%)	18 (23.7%)	16 (21.1%)

**10. Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:**

32 (42.1%) Assessment

24 (31.6%) Knowledge

20 (26.3%) Skills Development

0 (0.0%) Student Empathy

**11. How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a**

**mentee?**

74 (97.4%) Very Important

2 (2.6%) Important

0 (0.0%) Quite Important

0 (0.0%) Not Important

**12. Do you use any technological equipment in your role as a mentor**

34 (44.7%) General Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle etc)

2 (2.6%) Specific VLE Discussion Board Online Chat Room outside of VLE Social Networking Group (e.g. Facebook MySpace etc)

0 (0.0%) Twitter or similar site WIKI Blog Online Meeting (e.g. Webex, MSN, Skype etc)

0 (0.0%) Video Conference (e.g. Tandberg, Polycom etc)

20 (26.3%) Online Website (e.g. Google Web)

14 (18.4%) Online Documents (e.g. Google Docs)

12 (15.8%) Email RSS Feeds Mobile Phone (basic model i.e. calls and text messages only)

0 (0.0%) Mobile Phone (advanced model i.e. iPhone or equivalent with extra abilities than basic calls and text)

4 (5.3%) Open Source Software

0 (0.0%) Audio Recording (e.g. CD or Podcast) Video Recording (e.g. DVD or YouTube etc)

2 (2.6%) Other Technologies

22 (28.9%) I do not use any technologies, as we always meet face-to-face

**13. Would you be willing to take part in a short interview to allow us to follow up on some of your responses?**

14 (20.6%) Yes

54 (79.4%) No

**14. If you responded 'Yes' above please provide your contact details here:**

14 (100.0%)

**Thank you for giving your time for this important research.**

# Appendix 5 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S					How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
ID	Sectors	Yrs Profn	Yes Role	Yrs Mentor	no of Times	Training	n/a	P	O	M	S	Imp You	Imp Stu	Relnshp	Know Needs	Know Skills	Pivotal	RespOfMtr
19	Voluntary	4	3	4	30+	Y	0-S	N	Y	N	Y	I	V	I	I	I	SE	V
21	Voluntary	4	4	4	1-5	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V
23	Private	4	4	4	30+	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	Q	V	I	M	I	SD	V
24	Private	4	3	4	30+	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	I	SD	V
7	Public	3	3	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	M	M	L	K	I
9	Public	3	3	3		Y	M	N	N	Y	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V
10	Public	3	2	1	1-5	Y	M	N	N	Y	N	I	V	M	I	L	K	I
15	Voluntary	3	3	1	1-5	N	P	Y	N	N	N	V	V	I	I	L	SD	V
18	Voluntary	3	3	2	1-5	Y	0-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	I	M	SE	V
20	Voluntary	3	3	3	3	Y	0	N	Y	N	N	I	V	L	I	I	SD	V
22	Public	3	2	3	1-5	N	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	I	L	SD	V
4	Public	2	2	1	1-5	Y	0-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	I	M	K	V
5	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	0-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	I	M	K	I
6	Private	2	2	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	L	M	M	K	I
8	Private	2	2	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	M	I	L	SE	I

# Appendix 5 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S					How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
12	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	I	L	I	M	SD	I
13	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	L	I	L	SD	V
16	Public	2	2	1	1-5	N	P-S	Y	N	N	Y	I	I	L	I	M	SD	V
17	Voluntary	2	2	2	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	I	I	I	I	M	SE	V
1	Private	1	1	1	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	M	M	A	V
2	Public	1	1	1	1-5	Y	P-O-S	Y	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	M	M	K	V
3	Private	1	1	1	1-5	Y	P-O-S	Y	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	M	M	K	V
11	Public	1	1	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	L	I	M	SD	I
14	Voluntary	1	1	1	1-5	Y	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	I	I	L	SE	I

**Appendix 6 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
19	Public	4	3	4	4	Y	OM	V	V	I	L	I	K	V
21	Public	4	4	4	1	Y	OM	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V
23	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	OM	V	V	I	M	I	SD	V
24	Public	4	3	4	4	Y	O	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V
62	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V
63	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V
64	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PM	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V
65	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	M	SD	V
66	Public	4	2	4	4	Y	PM	V	V	M	M	M	SD	V
67	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
68	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
69	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
70	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
71	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
72	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	O	V	V	L	M	I	SD	I
73	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	SD	I
74	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	OM	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V
75	Public	4	4	4	4	N	P S	V	V	L	I	I	SD	V

**Appendix 6 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
76	Public	4	4	4	4	N	OM	V	V	L	I	I	SD	V
7	Public	3	3	2	1	Y	PO	V	V	M	M	L	K	V
9	Public	3	3	3	1	Y	PO	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V
10	Public	3	2	1	1	Y	PO M	V	V	M	I	L	K	V
15	Public	3	3	1	1	Y	P O	V	V	I	I	L	SD	V
18	Public	3	3	2	1	Y	O M	V	V	I	I	M	K	V
20	Public	3	3	3	3	Y	OM	V	V	I	L	I	SD	V
22	Public	3	2	3	1	Y	OM	V	V	M	I	L	SD	V
55	Public	3	1	3	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
56	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
57	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
58	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
59	Public	3	3	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
60	Public	3	3	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
61	Public	3	2	4	4	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V
4	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	O-S	V	V	I	I	M	A	V
5	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	O-S	V	V	M	I	M	A	V
6	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	V	V	I	M	M	A	V

**Appendix 6 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
8	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	V	V	M	I	L	SD	I
12	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	P O	V	I	I	I	M	SD	V
13	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	PO	V	V	I	I	L	K	V
16	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	V	I	L	I	M	SD	V
17	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	PO	V	I	I	I	M	K	V
31	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	P M	V	V	M	L	I	A	V
32	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	O	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
33	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	OM	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
34	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	OM	V	V	M	L	I	A	V
35	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	I	L	M	A	V
36	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	I	L	M	A	V
37	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	I	L	M	A	V
38	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	M	L	I	A	V
39	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	A	V
40	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	A	V
41	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	M	I	A	V
42	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
43	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V

**Appendix 6 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
44	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
45	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
46	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PM	V	V	L	M	I	A	V
47	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PM	V	V	L	M	I	K	V
48	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	O M	V	V	L	M	I	K	V
49	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	OM	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
50	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
51	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
52	Public	2	2	2	4	Y	P M	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
53	Public	2	2	2	4	Y	PM	V	V	L	I	M	A	V
54	Public	2	2	3	4	Y	PM	V	V	L	I	M	K	V
1	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O-M	V	V	I	M	M	A	V
2	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P-O	V	V	M	M	M	A	V
3	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P-O	V	V	I	M	M	A	V
11	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	V	V	I	I	M	SD	V
14	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P O	V	V	I	I	L	K	V
25	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	V	V	I	L	M	A	V
26	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	V	V	L	L	M	A	V



**Appendix 6 – Individual Responses: Foundation Degree Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession	How long have you worked in your current role	How long have you been a mentor	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring ( <i>you may choose more than one option</i> )? P-O-M-S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?
27	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P M	V	V	L	L	M	A	V
28	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	O M	V	V	M	L	I	A	V
29	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	O M	V	V	L	L	M	A	V
30	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	P M	V	V	M	L	I	A	V

**Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
							P-O-M-S												
1	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O-M	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	I	M	M	A	V	Y
2	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P-O	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	M	A	V	Y
3	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P-O	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	M	M	A	V	Y
4	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	I	M	A	V	Y
5	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	I	M	A	V	Y
6	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	M	M	A	V	Y
7	Public	3	3	2	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	L	K	V	Y
8	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	M	I	L	SD	I	Y
9	Public	3	3	3	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V	Y
10	Public	3	2	1	1	Y	PO M	Y	Y	Y	N	V	V	M	I	L	K	V	Y
11	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	I	I	M	SD	V	Y
12	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	P O	Y	Y	N	N	V	I	I	I	M	SD	V	Y
13	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	I	L	K	V	Y
14	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P O	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	I	L	K	V	Y
15	Public	3	3	1	1	Y	P O	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	I	L	SD	V	Y
16	Public	2	2	1	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	I	L	I	M	SD	V	Y
17	Public	2	2	2	1	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	I	I	I	M	K	V	Y

**Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
18	Public	3	3	2	1	Y	O M	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	I	I	M	K	V	Y
19	Public	4	3	4	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	I	L	I	K	V	Y
20	Public	3	3	3	3	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	I	L	I	SD	V	Y
21	Public	4	4	4	1	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V	Y
22	Public	3	2	3	1	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	M	I	L	SD	V	Y
23	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	I	M	I	SD	V	Y
24	Public	4	3	4	4	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V	Y
25	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	I	L	M	A	V	Y
26	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	L	L	M	A	V	Y
27	Public	1	1	1	1	Y	P M	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	L	M	A	V	Y
28	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	O M	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	M	L	I	A	V	Y
29	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	O M	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	L	M	A	V	Y
30	Public	1	1	1	2	Y	P M	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	M	L	I	A	V	Y
31	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	P M	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	M	L	I	A	V	Y
32	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	v	L	I	M	A	V	Y
33	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	v	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y
34	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	M	L	I	A	V	Y
35	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	L	M	A	V	Y

**Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
36	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	L	M	A	V	Y
37	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	I	L	M	A	V	Y
38	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	M	L	I	A	V	Y
39	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	A	V	Y
40	Public	2	1	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	A	V	Y
41	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	A	V	Y
42	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
43	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
44	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
45	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y
46	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	M	I	A	V	Y
47	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	M	I	K	V	Y
48	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	O M	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	M	I	K	V	Y
49	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
50	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y
51	Public	2	2	2	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y
52	Public	2	2	2	4	Y	P M	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y
53	Public	2	2	2	4	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	A	V	Y

# Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
54	Public	2	2	3	4	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
55	Public	3	1	3	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
56	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
57	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
58	Public	3	3	3	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
59	Public	3	3	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
60	Public	3	3	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	K	V	Y
61	Public	3	2	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V	Y
62	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V	Y
63	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V	Y
64	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	L	I	M	SD	V	Y
65	Public	4	2	4	3	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	M	SD	V	Y
66	Public	4	2	4	4	Y	PM	Y	N	Y	N	V	V	M	M	M	SD	V	Y
67	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y
68	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y
69	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y
70	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y
71	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y

**Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
72	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	I	Y
73	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	PO	Y	Y	N	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	I	Y
74	Public	4	4	4	4	Y	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	M	I	SD	V	Y
75	Public	4	4	4	4	N	P S	Y	N	N	Y	V	V	L	I	I	SD	V	Y
76	Public	4	4	4	4	N	OM	N	Y	Y	N	V	V	L	I	I	SD	V	Y
77	Private	1	1	1	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	M	M	A	V	N
78	Public	1	1	1	1-5	Y	P-O-S	Y	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	M	M	K	V	N
79	Private	1	1	1	1-5	Y	P-O-S	Y	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	M	M	K	V	N
80	Public	2	2	1	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	I	M	K	V	N
81	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	M	I	M	K	I	N
82	Private	2	2	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	L	M	M	K	I	N
83	Public	3	3	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	M	M	L	K	I	N
84	Private	2	2	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	V	V	M	I	L	SE	I	N
85	Public	3	3	3		Y	M	N	N	Y	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V	N
86	Public	3	2	1	1-5	Y	M	N	N	Y	N	I	V	M	I	L	K	I	N
87	Public	1	1	1	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	L	I	M	SD	I	N
88	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	I	L	I	M	SD	I	N
89	Public	2	2	2	1-5	N	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	L	I	L	SD	V	N

**Appendix 7 – Combination of FD and Nursing Mentors**

Participants	In which of the following sectors are you involved, as a mentor?	How long have you been in your current profession?	How long have you worked in your current role?	How long have you been a mentor?	How often have you undertaken the mentorship role?	Have you had any training in mentorship?	How do you find out about changes to curriculum/training on the current course you are mentoring (you may choose more than one option)?	P	O	M	S	How important do you feel your role is in the development of the student?	How important do you feel the student role is in their own development?	Personal Relationships	Knowledge of Students' Needs	Knowledge of Skills Development	Please select what you consider to be the most pivotal role in mentorship:	How important are the responsibilities of a mentor to the development and professional training of a mentee?	Nurse?
90	Voluntary	1	1	1	1-5	Y	S	N	N	N	Y	I	V	I	I	L	SE	I	N
91	Voluntary	3	3	1	1-5	N	P	Y	N	N	N	V	V	I	I	L	SD	V	N
92	Public	2	2	1	1-5	N	P-S	Y	N	N	Y	I	I	L	I	M	SD	V	N
93	Voluntary	2	2	2	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	I	I	I	I	M	SE	V	N
94	Voluntary	3	3	2	1-5	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	V	V	I	I	M	SE	V	N
95	Voluntary	4	3	4	30+	Y	O-S	N	Y	N	Y	I	V	I	I	I	SE	V	N
96	Voluntary	3	3	3	3	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	I	V	L	I	I	SD	V	N
97	Voluntary	4	4	4	1-5	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	L	SD	V	N
98	Public	3	2	3	1-5	N	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	I	L	SD	V	N
99	Private	4	4	4	30+	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	Q	V	I	M	I	SD	V	N
100	Private	4	3	4	30+	Y	O	N	Y	N	N	V	V	M	M	I	SD	V	N