Mentoring for Work Based Training

January 2000

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

1.1 During 1997 a Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) funded a development project to explore the role of the mentor for Modern Apprentices, and to develop ways in which mentoring could be promoted to secure the active support of employers. While the findings of that work were positive in terms of the contribution the mentor could make to the learning process for the apprentice, (Cooper and Farmer, 1997) the sample involved was small. The researchers (Training and Development Matters) were commissioned to carry out a QPID study to further test and develop this earlier work with additional TECs[1]. This study reports on the details of the project, and is supplemented by a Good Practice Guide (DfEE, 1999c).

1.2 The major focus of the project was the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme, but since then National Traineeships (NT) and New Deal have been established, and this report will look briefly at the extent to which the model is appropriate for National Traineeships, and at the similarities between mentoring for these programmes and for New Deal. Contact was also made with a small number of independent mentor development projects: two run by training providers in the Care sector, and a third being supported in the housing department of a local authority.

1.3 The study took place before the publication of the White Paper "**Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning**" (Cm 4392, June 1999). The findings and recommendations will be of interest to TECs and also to the new Learning and Skills Council and its local arms when it succeeds TECs in April 2001.

What is Mentoring?

1.4 Definitions of mentoring abound. A succinct definition is that mentoring is "a constructive intervention at key transitional points … where the more experienced shall care for … the less experienced in a non-judgemental manner". (Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998)

1.5 An effective mentoring relationship is based upon:

- confidentiality;
- independence/neutrality;
- trust;
- openness;
- voluntarism; and
- guiding not directing.

1. Throughout this report the term TEC or TECs is used to represent both Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and/or Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs)

Reasons for Establishing Mentoring Within Work Based Training

1.6 The project was initiated by a concern about the context into which Modern Apprenticeships were introduced. The factors which collectively created this concern are:

a. complexity;

b. different delivery models;

c. the age of apprentices;

d. employed status; and

e. employer understanding of the programmes.

1.7 **The complexity of Modern Apprenticeship programmes**: Modern Apprenticeships were frequently more complex than previous work based training programmes, including at least a level 3 NVQ and Key Skills, (DfEE, 1994) with an emphasis on work based learning and assessment. Some also require, or strongly recommend, additional vocational education through recognised qualifications (such as BTEC First and National Certificates, GNVQ, City and Guilds Certificates etc). In some sectors, industry or professional qualifications are also included.

1.8 This complexity made considerable demands on many training providers who were being asked to create a coherent learning experience from a cluster of different qualifications. For many providers almost all aspects of the programme were new. Experience of delivering Key Skills alongside NVQs in training for young people was virtually non-existent (it had not been required before), and few providers at that time had any significant experience of delivering Level 3 NVQs[2].

1.9 Because Key Skills units were already mandatory within GNVQ, many people believed that only colleges of further education (FE) had the experience to deliver them, and that therefore all apprentices would have to turn to FE provision for the Key Skills component of their programme. There were reasons to doubt the practicality of this even then, as it was generally the case that Key Skills expertise, where it existed within FE, was not held by those people responsible for NVQ delivery. It was also focused on Key Skills achievement within full time programmes with full time students, a context very different from that of part-time students who are based mainly in the workplace. Further, the difficulties of delivering a generic skills profile within other qualifications were already being reported. In 1995 inspections and research indicated continuing difficulties for colleges in the delivery of Key Skills. (NCVQ, 1995)

1.10 **The impact of different delivery models**: Few Modern Apprentices were likely to receive entirely in-house training and assessment. Models where apprentice support and supervision are divided between a range of individuals (training advisers, tutors, Key Skills tutors, assessors, line managers, etc.), and sites, were more likely to occur. This context offered considerable potential for difficulties of co-ordination and coherence.

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2. Figures available from NCVQ for Winter 94/95 indicate low numbers of certificates awarded for most Level 3 NVQs. For example: Agriculture (96), Catering and Hospitality (119), Care (299), Child Care and Education (233), Hairdressing (610). At that time there were no certificates issued for Installing and Commissioning Electrical Systems and Equipment, Sports and Recreation, Polymer Processing and no Level 3 NVQ for Engineering Manufacture.

1.11 In certain sectors, such as Care and Business Administration, there was a growing tendency for all experience and assessment to be on-the-job, but supported by a peripatetic assessor. Training providers offering this service would now have to ensure that assessors had the skills to deliver all aspects of a framework.

1.12 **The age of apprentices**: Government funded Modern Apprentices must be under 25. Statistics relating to national recruitment profiles indicate that 16 to 18 year olds have consistently constituted approximately 60% of recruits. (DfEE, 1999b)

1.13 **Employed status**: Modern Apprentices are first and foremost employees, not trainees, and in many cases they may also be new to work. Almost all are employed, as are a high proportion of National Trainees. All have to cope with their jobs as well as their studies, and the pressures of work may detract from their needs as learners. In particular, they are quite likely, if employed by a small or medium sized company, to be lone learners.

1.14 **Employer understanding of the programmes**: At this time training provider staff were demonstrating their need for support and staff development in order to respond to the demands of the programmes. There was therefore no reason to expect employers to grasp the requirements of Modern Apprenticeships any more easily, so the challenge was to find ways of getting informed support for apprentices into the workplace in a way that would provide more frequent and regular support than training providers were either required or generally able to give.

1.15 Collectively, these five factors made it reasonable to anticipate difficulties for apprentices in making sense of the programme and achieving. They were sufficient reason at the time to justify the investigation of the contribution that employer-based mentoring could make to supporting and helping apprentices to make the experience more coherent.

1.16 Recent concerns about quality in Modern Apprenticeship delivery, the lack of integration between on-the-job and off-the-job learning (Training Standards Council, 1999) and the number of young people leaving before the achievement of the outcomes of the programme, support the case that these earlier concerns were well founded. The findings of this study will be of use to TSC and others by indicating that mentoring is an appropriate (although partial) response to the difficulties encountered by training providers and TECs in ensuring employer understanding and involvement in government funded work based training programmes.

Methodology and Aims

1.17 The study involved action research, which progressed at two levels: implementing the Mentor Development Programme itself, and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the project for the study report.

1.18 The implementation of the project consisted of a number of stages, described in more detail in Annex 1. The stages were:

1. identifying three new TEC partners;
2. recruiting mentors;
3. training mentors;

4. meeting apprentices;

5. review meetings; and

6. evaluation.

1.19 Mentor Development Programmes were established with three further TECs (while also supporting a third year of activity in the original TEC), in order to:

- provide further evidence of the value of the mentoring relationship for apprentices;
- confirm the training and development needs of potential mentors;
- explore the extent to which networking between mentors is an effective mechanism for sharing and developing employer good practice in work-based training;
- attempt to describe/define the most appropriate model of mentoring for the Modern Apprenticeship context;
- develop a diagnostic tool that would help providers, TECs and employers define the role of the mentor in each mentoring relationship; and
- explore the extent to which supporting a mentor encourages more active employer involvement in the process of developing apprentices.

1.20 Annex 1 relates the difficulties involved in recruiting mentors. Nevertheless 52 mentors attended training sessions during the course of the project, and 3 or 4 review meetings were held with mentors in each TEC area.

1.21 The study team also met with groups of apprentices in each TEC area at the beginning of the project. There was also a telephone survey among apprentices at the end of the project.

1.22 The evaluation of the project drew on feedback from mentor events, review meetings, communications with apprentices and feedback from the TECs involved in the project.

1.23 The findings of the study are presented under the original aims. They are however not easily compartmentalised in this way, and many of the points made cross-reference to a number of aims.

2. SUMMARY

The Value of the Mentoring Relationship for Apprentices

2.1 **Making a difference**: All of the 21 apprentices interviewed at the end of the project were positive about the benefits to them of having a mentor.

2.2 **Retention and achievement**: Many of the mentors said that the attention they had been paying their apprentice had resulted in improved performance or progress through their qualification, sometimes in the context of earlier concern at the lack of progress being made.

2.3 **A positive contribution to all stages of the apprenticeship**: Apprentices benefited from the support their mentor could give them at all stages in their development. Mentors can make a significant contribution to helping apprentices negotiate major transition points in their apprenticeships.

The Training and Development Needs of Potential Mentors

2.4 All of the mentors responded positively to the opportunity to explore or review the skills needed for effective mentoring such as listening, questioning, giving feedback, and being non-judgemental. They also confirmed that they needed help with initiating and structuring the relationship.

2.5 Providing opportunities for mentors to learn the range of skills and knowledge requires both initial and ongoing training and development. However, this provision must be tailored to the needs of busy working people, for whom mentoring is a subsidiary activity within their overall job role.

Networking Between Mentors is an Effective Mechanism for Sharing and Developing Employer Good Practice in Work Based Training

2.6 Many of the mentors valued the opportunity to meet each other at the training or progress meetings, yet there are few existing mechanisms to allow such networking to take place. Where they do exist they are generally sector specific (e.g. Engineering) or focus mainly on NVQs and assessment. This included how to make others in the organisation more aware and supportive. The meetings need to have a clear programme and focus to maintain their usefulness.

The Most Appropriate Model of Mentoring for Modern Apprenticeships

2.7 Defining this model is not straightforward. Every apprentice has a variety of people who are responsible for some aspect of their training or supervision – tutors, assessors, line managers, training advisers, etc. What makes true mentoring distinctive in this context is its ability to take into account all aspects of the apprentice as an individual, to take a long term view of the needs and potential of the apprentice, and to be independent of the requirements to impose discipline or make judgements (which are key components of the other roles).

2.8 There are two key points:

- **Avoiding role conflict**. The individual appointed as mentor should not, wherever possible, be the line manger or assessor of the apprentice. This view was supported strongly by the evaluation of the apprentices. At the beginning of the project the individuals recruited as potential mentors did include a significant number of line managers and assessors (about one third) but a number of these had decided by the end of the project that they were not in the best position to be independent and to fully explore the potential of mentoring, as they had become aware that it could inhibit the scope of the relationship.

- **Coaching and mentoring**. Many models of mentoring link it closely to coaching. Within the work based training context, many of the individuals who would make appropriate mentors for apprentices are also vocationally knowledgeable and experienced. It is therefore sometimes relevant and helpful for them to offer specific coaching to the apprentice and where this happened it was particularly valued by the apprentice. This is not to say however that coaching and mentoring are synonymous: not all coaches can mentor, and not all mentors can coach. Individuals who can provide coaching to an apprentice should therefore be offered training to help them develop their own understanding of the additional requirements of the mentoring relationship.

Helping Providers, TECs and Employers Define the Role of the Mentor in Each Mentoring Relationship

2.9 The project confirmed the fact that Modern Apprenticeships are being pursued in a variety of more or less supportive contexts and within quite different delivery models. It is therefore necessary to try to take account of this variety and acknowledge that the range of support needed by any apprentice will be made available to them in different ways, and by different people, depending on their local circumstances. A diagnostic grid (See Annex 2) was developed which lists all of the types of support, and allows organisations then to consider which of the usual key players in the training of the apprentice could, or currently does, undertake each one.

Supporting a Mentor Encourages More Active Employer Involvement in the Process of Developing Apprentices

2.10 The mentors involved in this project clearly learned much from it, and used it as a resource to find out about the areas of work based training which they were still unable to understand. In some cases resulting changes of practice within the employing organisation were reported. Many of the mentors said that that they had developed a better understanding of the needs of apprentices, of how the system worked and the qualifications. Companies which employed more than one apprentice/trainee, or recruited additional trainees (including New Deal and National Trainees) during the course of the project, generally went on to provide mentoring support for all of them.

Other Findings

2.11 The concept of mentoring appeared to be poorly understood in the majority of the companies approached, and an appreciation of the potential of the relationship developed slowly (with experience) for most of the mentors on the programme. Not surprisingly, therefore, the most difficult stage in Mentor Development Programmes is the initial recruitment. The main reasons given by companies who decide not to participate were the time requirements and the lack of perceived benefit to their apprentices.

2.12 Employer reluctance to provide mentors for work based apprentices may be related to lack of employer awareness about the intended nature of the Modern Apprenticeship (and now National Traineeship) as developmental programmes. This lack of awareness emerged as a theme within the project. Despite the fact that each TEC was strongly promoting the Modern Apprenticeship programme, none of the mentors or apprentices within the project groups identified strongly with the Modern Apprenticeship "brand", and tended to refer to the programme as NVQ2 and then NVQ3 (in their occupational area), with Key Skills still only on the horizon.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The recommendations from this study are aimed at TECs and their partners. However, the findings and recommendations will, in the longer term, be relevant to the Learning and Skills Council, and its local arms.

3.2 **Training and Enterprise Councils should**:

- consider carefully the potential to develop mentors within the companies which employ Modern Apprentices and National Trainees, and recognise the benefits that can bring to all aspects of, and parties to, work based training programmes;
- commit resources to encouraging the development of mentors for as many work based trainees as possible. This should provide both for the training and continued support of mentors, in a format (such as a network) which allows for flexible access and roll-on roll-off involvement;
- clarify in their own understanding and that of their contract managers and advisers the difference between mentoring, assessing, coaching and supervising; and
- ensure that companies which employ MAs and NTs are aware that mentoring has a significant contribution to make to other business development initiatives, such as the learning organisation and Investors in People.

3.3 **National Training Organisations should**:

- ensure that they give clear and consistent messages about the responsibilities of mentors within their frameworks and guidance documents; and
- consider, where they have access to groups of employers, supporting the development of mentors within a sector focussed network.

3.4 **Careers Services should**:

- promote the value of mentoring to employers and providers.

3.5 **Government Offices should**:

- encourage TECs and training providers to develop ways of integrating support and training for mentors within the package of services they offer employers who employ work based trainees.

4. DEFINING THE MENTOR'S ROLE

4.1 The earlier (1997) project had started to consider the most appropriate model of mentoring for this context. This was important, as the definitions of mentoring within Modern Apprenticeship frameworks at that time frequently tied the role to that of coaching and assessing, or suggested the mentor could be a line manager of the apprentice, or even a member of training provider or TEC staff. There was no discussion in these documents of the different forms that mentoring could take, no consensus about how best to encourage the development of mentors, nor any indication that there might be role conflict for mentors who were also assessors or line managers. The exception to this was the Guide to Mentoring published by the National Retail Training Council, although here again tight links are made between Mentoring and the Training and Development Lead Body standards.

4.2 The different definitions of mentoring found in the Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship frameworks seem to have their origins in the different concepts of mentoring already in operation in other contexts. Eric Parsloe (Parsloe, 1995) suggests three different types of mentoring:

- **Mainstream** - guide, adviser and counsellor at various stages in someone's career, from induction on.
- **Professional qualification** - someone required by a professional association to be appointed to guide a student through their programme of study.
- **Vocational Qualification** - to guide a candidate through a programme of development and the accumulation and presentation of evidence to provide competence to NVQ standard.

4.3 These different definitions of mentoring seem to function in a rather muddled way within the Modern Apprenticeship context. The authors carried out a survey of NTOs in December 1998 which indicates some increase in the emphasis on mentoring within their programme documentation. However, the expected role of the mentor within these frameworks is still generally far from clear.

4.4 Thirty-seven NTOs responded to the survey. This group included the highest recruiting Modern Apprenticeship frameworks: Administration; Engineering; Hospitality and Catering; Health and Social Care; Retail; Early Years; and Motor Industry, and therefore represents at least 60% of all apprentices and trainees. Of these 37, just under half (18) had Modern Apprenticeship frameworks which make reference to the need for a mentor, and 15 referred to mentors in their National Traineeship frameworks.

4.5 Thirteen Modern Apprenticeship frameworks and eight National Traineeship frameworks suggest who could undertake the role of mentor. The most frequently suggested is the line manager/supervisor (seven for each) followed by the assessor (three for each), and then someone who has no specific formal relationship with the apprentice/trainee (three for each).

4.6 The message that TECs and training providers are therefore most likely to encounter with regard to mentoring is that the most appropriate person to be the mentor is someone who is already assessing, coaching or in a line management relationship with the trainee. This position is closest to the Vocational Qualification definition of mentoring.

This definition implies an element of coaching, and indeed it is sometimes suggested that the TDLB Units C25 (Facilitate Individual Learning through Coaching) or C26 (Support and Advise Individual Learners) are appropriate to accredit the activity of the mentor. The Vocational Qualification model however does not assume that the person undertaking to guide an individual in the process of collecting and presenting evidence is also responsible for assessment. Models which cast the line manager or assessor as mentor are not supported by the literature on mentoring as being the model most likely to succeed (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1995) (Stead, 1997). The extent to which mentors can supervise, assess or coach their mentee successfully is one of the issues explored by this study.

Defining the Most Appropriate Model for Young People in Work Based Training

4.7 Forms of mentoring are present within many aspects of business and training. However, less attention seems to have been paid to mentoring for work based learning for young people than the other possible partnerships. A search of the Internet revealed little in the way of information about activity in Britain. There are a number of American sites, but these focus primarily on mentoring for "disaffected young people", which is also the predominant focus for Education Business Partnership Mentoring projects in England and Wales.

4.8 A literature search also identified a minority of resources which focus on work based training. Information and papers about the other types of mentoring partnerships dominates.

4.9 Examples of mentoring partnerships most frequently encountered include:

A: Across organisational boundaries	B: Within the same organisation
Business people and school children.	Senior executives and women managers.
Business managers and head teachers.	Established managers and management trainees.
Advisers and ex-offenders.	Trainee school teachers and teacher mentors in schools.
Large company managers and budding entrepreneurs.	

4.10 In the Modern Apprenticeship context, the individual being mentored is regarded primarily as an employee of the company, yet the training is, in the main, being provided by an external agent. It is therefore slightly different to either of the types of relationships in lists A and B above. List A type relationships cross the boundaries between organisations and do not necessarily require the mentor to have an intimate knowledge of the context in which the mentee is functioning. Type B relationships are contained within one organisation, but do not generally involve significant training provided by external providers. The Modern Apprenticeship context is most like that of the Established Manager/Management Trainee model, but only where an external provider provides the training. Where mentors for Modern Apprentices are expected to coach and/or assess, the model is closest to that of the Trainee Teachers in School mentoring.

4.11 However, the model most frequently suggested within the frameworks seems to be based on the assumption that there is in-house coaching and/or assessment available. As we know that in the majority of apprenticeships this is not likely to be the case (DfEE, 1999a) it was important to explore the model and role definition of mentoring that *did* fit the context of the majority of apprentices.

4.12 The 1996/97 project had confirmed the need (albeit of a small number of mentors) for a basic understanding of the Modern Apprenticeship programme, of NVQs, and of the roles and responsibilities of the partners in the training (The TEC, provider, employer, apprentice).

4.13 Because of the central role of the training element, there are a number of other players who have significant relationships with the apprentice/trainee. Whatever the delivery model, this would involve at least a training adviser, line manager and assessor. In some cases the line manager would also be the assessor. In others there would also be a college tutor. Some providers were proposing separate assessors for Key Skills and the NVQ. Clarifying the most appropriate model of mentoring for this context also involved exploring the relationship between the mentor and the other players who would be key to an apprentice's experience.

4.14 The Modern Apprenticeship mentoring model therefore appeared to have three significant factors to be addressed in the recruitment and training of mentors:

- the extent to which individuals who already had assessment and/or coaching or supervisory responsibility for an apprentice could also be a successful mentor;
- the mentor's understanding of the programmes and the respective roles and responsibilities of the key partners – the TEC, the training provider, the employer; and
- the need to clarify the relationship between the mentor, the assessor, the line manager/supervisor and the training adviser (if there is one), all of whom work across the boundary between the off-the-job learning and the on-the-job work/learning experience.

5. THE VALUE OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP FOR APPRENTICES

Apprentices' Concerns and Prior Knowledge

5.1 The introductory meetings with apprentices gave them the opportunity to discuss their experiences of work based training. Twenty-two apprentices attended. When asked to articulate one particular concern for a "Worries in a Hat" activity, about half of them had none to offer, and were positive about the programme and their jobs. They particularly valued the opportunity to work and gain qualifications at the same time.

5.2 The issues for concern that MAs did raise related particularly to the value of the programme, the appropriateness of their choice, and their prospects.

Apprentices' concerns:

- "I'm concerned that the course we are doing will not be very recognised in years to come."
- "Don't know whether this is the job for me."
- "That we don't get paid enough money. Basically are used as cheap labour."
- "Will the company have a job for me when I've finished my Modern Apprenticeship?"
- "There's a lot of change, but no one tells us about it. My friend's supposed to be doing the same as me, but it's different from what I did. Is my qualification going to be as accepted as his is?"

5.3 When asked how they saw themselves, they all replied in terms of their occupation first ("I'm a secretary", an engineer etc.) and then in terms of being an apprentice.

5.4 When asked who their mentor should be, five of them said that they would have no difficulties having their line manager as mentor, but none of them felt happy with the idea of their assessor being their mentor.

5.5 Despite the fact that the TECs involved all used promotional literature which stressed the brand name of "Modern Apprenticeship" none of the apprentices identified strongly with the concept of apprenticeship. When asked what apprenticeship they were doing, they all replied in terms of the NVQ, usually including subject and level. Key Skills were still poorly understood, and in most cases had not yet been tackled.

Having a Mentor did Make a Difference

5.6 Twenty-one apprentices responded to the final tele-survey. The overlap between this group and the groups who attended the initial meetings was about 50%.

5.7 Three quarters of the sample gave positive responses to the question "Has having a mentor made any difference?" (Yes (15) No (6)). However, the six apprentices who gave a negative response went on to provide evidence of benefits in their answers to other questions. For example, they said that their mentor had given them support with their studies and encouragement to use other colleagues and contacts as a resource.

What apprentices say about having a mentor:

- "She looks out for me all the time."
- "It's nice to know there's someone there."
- "Yes, he sorts out things (training) more quickly and efficiently than I could."
- "Without one I wouldn't have got anywhere."
- "If I'd had a mentor in my last job I wouldn't have left."

What the Mentors did

5.8 There was a high level of agreement on some of the key accountabilities of a mentor. All apprentices mentioned listening and offering advice or encouragement. Answering questions and supporting specific studies and qualifications were also frequently mentioned. 'Looking out for you' was a popular theme and often used to sum up the more diffuse activity of helping the apprentice understand the politics and culture of the organisation. A small number of apprentices mentioned a wider role, such as supporting job and career development, facilitating problem solving and helping the individual develop more effective personal resources to assist them in the world of work.

What did MAs talk about with their mentors?

- How the job is going generally.
- Relationships with other colleagues.
- Handling potential conflict situations.
- Current studies.
- Encouraging me to think issues through and develop my own solutions.
- Social activities and 'office gossip'.
- Job/Career development.

Helping Apprentices Stay and Achieve

5.9 Rates of retention and achievement are a major national concern. None of the apprentices or trainees who were being mentored completed their apprenticeship during the course of the project, so it is not possible to say in quantitative terms that having a mentor ensured the likelihood of success.

5.10 However, many of the mentors said that the attention they had been paying their apprentice had resulted in improved performance or progress through their qualification; sometimes in the context of their having expressed earlier concern at the lack of progress being made. Apprentices also frequently made positive comments about the help their mentor gave them in making progress with their training, or sorting out difficulties in their job.

5.11 Responses to the question "**What do you think you have done for your apprentice?**" included:

- "Given confidence, help in gaining qualification."
- "I've watched him grow in confidence and competence. He has become a happy effective member of the team."
- "I gave them confidence to work with others and on their own. Found them suitable work placements to suit their preference and aims for the future."
- "Provided more stability. Induction is not as traumatic. Before apprentices just went from one site to another. When they went to college they were "gone for the day." Now someone is interested in what they are doing."
- "I've been a listening ear – helping her to take her own decisions and actions."

5.12 Only one of the apprentices being supported by an active mentor left during the course of the project. However, this incident generated an interesting discussion at one of the review meetings, as the mentor explained the situation and sought the views of other mentors as to how to deal with it. When the apprentice did leave it was only after a number of opportunities to remedy the situation had been offered, and considerable effort was then given to supporting the individual as they left the organisation.

5.13 It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that having a mentor, particularly one whose role addresses all aspects of the apprentice's working life and circumstances, provides considerable support that is motivating and encouraging.

When a Mentor is Needed

5.14 Some of the mentors thought that they would only be needed at the beginning of an apprenticeship. In fact it became evident that mentors were of value at all stages. For example:

- with new apprentices;
- when apprentices hit blocks with their progress, which could be at any stage, even up to the last NVQ unit to be achieved; and
- towards the end of an apprenticeship, where mentors could help apprentices focus on their next steps, and on establishing themselves as a fully trained employee, rather than a trainee, within the company.

5.15 The mentors' experience therefore demonstrated that mentors have a valuable role to play at all stages in an apprenticeship, often being uniquely positioned to help the apprentice successfully negotiate major transitions and developments in their career and status within the organisation.

The Needs of Apprentices as Mentees

5.16 Despite the fact that the training discussed how to introduce the mentoring relationship, none of the apprentices had been clear how they could benefit from mentoring before their first mentoring meeting with their mentor. Indeed a small number were still struggling to understand its value at the time of the final tele-survey, especially where the contact was entirely informal or the mentor was their line manager or assessor. The apprentices suggested it would be helpful to have information in advance about the role of the mentor and how they should behave as mentees.

5.17 The need of apprentices and trainees for timely and continuous information, pitched at their level and interests, began to emerge as a minor theme of this study. In some instances this was related to changes in context, such as the comments made by Engineering apprentices that no one had discussed with them the significance of the changes to the Engineering Modern Apprenticeship. In other instances it was due to the assumption that other people would take responsibility, such as for providing the apprentices with written information about the Mentor Development Programme.

5.18 Despite the fact that the need for structure had been emphasised within the training, a number also mentioned that they felt they needed some formal structure to provide clarity about the areas in which a mentor could support them and as a format for meetings.

6. THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF POTENTIAL MENTORS

6.1 Fifty-two potential mentors were trained during the course of the project. The first training session in each TEC took a full day, but subsequent training was confined to three-hour sessions, as feedback indicated that some employers felt that a full day for training was time consuming.

6.2 The shorter sessions precluded most of the practical activities that had been included in the full day, as certain items, such as basic information about Modern Apprenticeship and NVQs, and setting up and managing the mentoring relationship, could not be left out or reduced. Evaluations of all the training events were positive, although the shorter sessions prompted reference to the amount of information that had to be absorbed in a short period of time. The literature search indicated that other Mentor Development Programmes had encountered similar problems. (Garvey, 1995)

6.3 A partial remedy was to give all mentors a full pack of training materials to take away with them, and many of them continued to refer to this resource as they were reflecting on their own experiences. Towards the end of the project, one mentor even worked through it with his mentee when they were together evaluating how useful the experience had been. Mentors were also offered telephone contact with the trainers. This was rarely taken up, although in two of the TEC areas the TEC representatives in the project were regular visitors to the companies involved, and reported that they used these visits to follow up on queries about the mentoring.

6.4 It was evident from the discussions at the training events, and the evaluations, that many of the mentors needed more support than the training alone would provide. Review meetings with mentors were already planned as an integral part of the programme, and a decision was made to include additional training and development for mentors within these meetings, as well as using them for mentors to feedback their experiences and views on the progress of their mentoring relationships.

6.5 Levels of existing understanding and familiarity with the programmes varied enormously. About one third of the mentors already had a working knowledge of NVQs, and quickly filled in their gaps of understanding about the programmes. One had been a Modern Apprentice herself. Two were assessors who were intending to act as mentor to apprentices that they did not have assessment responsibilities for.

6.6 Within each group there were also people who were relatively new to work based training, and had been sent along by line managers or training managers. Often it was the intention of their managers to train these individuals as assessors. In one instance, the training manager from a large local authority Leisure Department attended the briefing. She was responsible for about 20 Sports and Recreation Modern Apprentices, and was in the process of setting up an assessment infrastructure within the department. She hoped the Mentor Development Programme would contribute to this process. As it was however, she only managed to get five of her would-be assessors to attend the training, and none of them attended further review meetings. Similar groups appeared in all three TECs. In each case it was obvious that the trainee mentors were new to NVQs, and not sure what their role would be. Mentoring in this instance appeared to be a “step too far” for the individuals concerned, and an adjunct to assessment in the minds of the training managers.

6.7 A small number of mentors were still confused about the content and purpose of the apprenticeship, despite the fact that Apprenticeship Training Plans had been drawn up for each apprentice, and that these plans are expected to be the outcome of negotiation and agreement between employers, training providers and apprentices.

6.8 The mentors who attended the review meetings used them to find out more about the programmes. They asked for and were provided with a range of information, such as:

- Key Skills update;
- Modern Apprenticeship Case Study summary;
- Modern Apprenticeship /National Traineeship factsheets;
- resources for use with the apprentice to look at career planning and learning styles;
- resources for the mentors to assess their questioning and responding styles;
- information about the responsibilities of the various partners in the training process, and the respective roles of the TEC, training provider, awarding body and employers; and
- advice and guidance as to how to gain the support of management and/or colleagues for their activities as mentors.

7. SHARING AND DEVELOPING EMPLOYER GOOD PRACTICE

7.1 Mentoring development projects have to address the issue of who mentors the mentors. In this project, the main mechanism for this was the programme of review meetings, held every eight to 10 weeks in each of the TEC areas, and to which all mentors were invited.

7.2 The mentors who attended review meetings were very positive about the value of them. They often said that there had been personal learning from their involvement in the programme. They valued meeting each other and improving their skills in working with trainees and apprentices. Those who attended regularly (about 40%) also gave their own time and thought to developing resources, such as revised review recording sheets, which they shared with each other.

7.3 The development of the mentor's interpersonal skills is also a benefit to the organisation, and is often promoted as such in other mentoring contexts. (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1995)

What mentors said about review meetings.

- "Meeting other mentors at review meetings was extremely helpful."
- "Very important. I feel it was particularly useful to hear about other people's ways of dealing with apprentices from other industries as all the information they gave me helped me learn."
- "They were important for me to gain expertise in my role."
- "In the beginning it was good, but I feel it would be good to meet with mentors from our industry too."
- "It helped to stop a blinkered approach to mentoring."
- "It should not be mandatory to attend each meeting. Perhaps three to four times a year, mixed with a guest speaker, some additional training plus networking."
- "No specific input needed, I just enjoyed discussing anything and everything about the role."

7.4 Attendance at review meetings tended to decline through the programme. Mentors ascribed this to a number of factors.

- For some, two or three meetings was sufficient to feel they had exhausted the potential of the group, and felt they could either carry on alone or would like the stimulation of meeting new people, or working with a group of people from their own sector.
- Some had difficulty justifying the time away from their workplace to their colleagues or manager, and a few had difficulties with transport.

7.5 The mentors who responded to the end-of-project postal questionnaire were all intending to continue mentoring, and were very positive about the need for a mechanism that allowed mentors to continue to meet each other.

7.6 The timescales of the project did not create the best structure for the mentors who were interested in sustaining their mentoring relationship. The recruitment of trainees to government funded programmes can occur at any time of the year, so potential mentors should have access to training at times when they need it. Mentors also varied in the extent to which they were able, or wanted, to attend review meetings, but they all said they valued them as opportunities to test out their ideas and compare notes with others.

7.7 The study team, and the TECs, reached the conclusion that some form of open network (Garvey, 1995), which had regular, well-publicised meetings throughout the year, could be the best form of support to offer mentors. This would allow for roll-on roll-off membership, as well as allowing mentors to attend meetings in convenient locations (if these were moved around the TEC area) and when topics of interest were on the agenda. Such a model would of course require the commitment of a certain amount of TEC resource, but this could be a maximum of ten to twelve working days per year if well managed.

8. THE MOST APPROPRIATE MODEL OF MENTORING FOR MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS

8.1 Different models of mentoring were discussed during the training, and the potential for role conflict was highlighted. Some of the trainee mentors who joined the programme were already working as assessors or line managers to their apprentices. Although the general view of the study team, in line with a number of authorities on mentoring, (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1995) was that it was generally inappropriate, or at least more difficult to combine these roles, recruits in this position were accepted. The training alerted them to the potential role conflict.

Grasping Subtle Differences: Mentoring, Supervising, Assessing, and Coaching

8.2 For some mentors the emphasis was very much on supporting their apprentice(s) through specific vocational or academic qualifications. This was particularly true when the mentor was also a line manager or assessor. For others the support offered was more wide ranging and included developing effective working relationships, handling conflict situations, facilitating improved communication skills and wider job development. There was agreement between all apprentices on some of the areas covered at meetings with their mentor. These included how the job was going, current studies and their personal well being.

8.3 The scope of the discussion and support was narrower when the mentor was an immediate line manager. Apprentices in this situation disclosed that there were some areas in particular that they felt inhibited from raising with their mentor, such as relationships with their boss, other team colleagues or areas of personal weakness. Research into mentoring in teacher training contexts reveals similar difficulties.(Stidder and Hayes, 1998)

8.4 The Mainstream Model of mentoring defines a relationship which goes beyond the immediate needs of the mentee as a candidate for a qualification. During the initial training many of the mentors who were line managers already, but not directly involved in assessment, expressed the view that the Mainstream Model, although most appropriate to their circumstances, seemed little different from good supervisory practice: “It’s what I already do”. This view disregarded the factors of confidentiality, impartiality and the longer-term view of the needs of the apprentice which should be defining ingredients of the mentoring relationship. There was also some evidence that mentors who were line managers were more likely to act on behalf of their apprentice, in a way that is not entirely consistent with the expected behaviour of a mentor.

8.5 Where the role is limited to the “Vocational Qualification” model the mentors appeared to think it was working. However, in the view of apprentices, it failed to offer the relationship the breadth of perspective that they were looking for, and again inhibited discussion.

8.6 Limiting the role to the Vocational Qualification model may also have an impact on the recruitment of potential mentors. Where the role is a more general role, as in the Mainstream Model, it is open to people who have, or are prepared to develop, a working knowledge of the programmes, but are inexperienced in the technicalities of NVQ assessment. There are already difficulties in securing work based assessors for most

apprentices (DfEE, 1999a). Suggesting that assessors could also be the mentor runs the risk of adding additional requirements to the role of assessor which are difficult to fulfil, while missing the opportunity to recruit and train other members of a company who would make effective mentors, but do not want or have the skills to assess. Indeed, one of the possible benefits of mentoring for TECs is that it can help them establish someone within a company who knows, or is learning, about work based training, where they have not yet secured a work based assessor.

8.7 Some mentors can and do coach, but not all coaches can mentor. Many of the mentors, particularly in Engineering, Care and Hairdressing contexts, offered specific coaching in occupational skills or in Key Skills. One of the Care mentors actually generated suitable evidence for her TDLB Unit C25 portfolio from some of the work she had carried out as a mentor, using some of the paperwork provided by the project. All of these mentors, however, brought more to the relationship than coaching.

Who the Mentor Should be: The Mentors' View

8.8 Initially the mentors who were also line managers or assessors did not anticipate any difficulties. Where the emphasis within the mentoring role was limited to NVQ support the mentors themselves felt that they had been successful, but where a broader view of the role of the mentor was adopted they did, over time, start to experience role conflict. When this happened it was often raised for discussion at review meetings, and could lead to the search for different people within the company to be the mentor. One is quoted as saying:

> "It makes it difficult for the apprentice to complain about the assessing methods to his mentor, as I am both" (Engineering mentor)

A mentor in the Care sector said:

> "I think I can wear different hats, and it doesn't cause me a problem, but I think now that the apprentices, because they're young, do find it difficult. I'm thinking of looking elsewhere for mentors, perhaps even amongst the lay visitors to the home."

Who the Mentor for Work Based Trainers Should be: The Apprentices' View

8.9 Earlier reservations expressed by apprentices about having line managers or assessors as mentors were borne out by the views of the tele-survey group as to who the mentor should be. Those with line managers or assessors as mentors (seven of the 21) said that they had experienced no change in the relationship, and therefore couldn't see that it had added any value. They also said that it had inhibited discussion.

Apprentices' views on line managers or assessors as mentors

- "Working relationships are tricky because she is my line manager. I sometimes think it would be better if my mentor was not in the same team. I don't want my boss to think there is something I can't do."
- "We just focused on my NVQ. It tended to be a line manager role."

- "For me a mentor was not really a great help because she was my line manager and we had a good relationship anyway."

Where the mentor was not the line manager: more positive comments

- "Independence is important to get the most out of the relationship."
- "It's better that she (mentor) is not related to what I do, she's independent."

The value of knowing about the programmes and something of the work and occupation that the apprentice did

- "I think it would be better to have someone in your own department so that they can monitor your progress more closely."
- "To be honest he (mentor) doesn't know much about the area I'm in. It would have been better if he knew what I was doing."

The need for some formality

8.10 All apprentices had met with their mentor but the frequency of the contact varied considerably, from informally every day (10) up to formally every four months. For most it was a mix of informal and more formal meetings. For three apprentices the meetings were infrequent or confined to chats in the coffee room.

8.11 Mentors varied considerably in the degree of formality that they had brought to the relationship. The training had stressed that although the form and content of the discussion could be formal or informal, it was important, certainly at the beginning of the relationship, to create a formal structure. It was also suggested that some record be kept of the meeting, at least to the extent of recording actions that both the mentor and mentee had agreed to take before the next meeting. Reactions to this suggestion varied. Some line managers and assessors felt it was superfluous when they already saw their apprentices frequently. However, the apprentices within these mentoring partnerships were the ones who struggled most to identify any changes or personal benefits from their manager or assessor becoming their mentor. Other mentoring projects have encountered the same difficulty (Garvey, 1995)

9. HELPING PROVIDERS, TECS AND EMPLOYERS DEFINE THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

9.1 The relationship between mentors, assessors, training advisers and line managers was often raised and discussed. Many of the mentors were still confused about the distribution of responsibilities, expected lines of reporting between these people, and relative authority. This was occasionally exacerbated by the expectations of some companies that the mentor would and should become more involved in the regular review meetings of the apprentice's progress held with the training provider and/or TEC.

9.2 The study team started with the view that the context within which each mentoring relationship would be formed would differ, and that it would therefore be impossible to state precisely what the responsibilities of any individual mentor should be.

9.3 A "who does what" grid (Annex 2), was developed by the study team after discussion with mentors at review meetings, and taking account of the requirements of the Training Standards Council and awarding body quality frameworks. This grid lists all the types of support that an apprentice might need, and then allows individual companies to decide which responsibilities to assign to each of the individuals working with the apprentice. Some are clearly the responsibility of assessors, others of line managers and others of mentors. For example mentors are best placed to help the apprentice

- take a longer term view when considering options or how to deal with a current issue;
- learn how to work within the cultural norms and expectations of the organisation; and
- maintain an effective balance between their private lives and work life.

There are, however, areas of overlap, where more than one person could carry out the duty (for example, celebrating success!) and others where a choice is possible. For example, advice about managing time or dealing with people could reasonably be within the remit of a number of people.

9.4 The project did not explore in more depth the management of the relationship and communication between the mentor, supervisor, assessor and training adviser, but this is an important area that would merit further clarification.

10. ENCOURAGING MORE ACTIVE EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPING APPRENTICES

10.1 Engaging employers in this process has at least two major stages. The first challenge is to get them on board at all; the second is finding the right individuals to be mentors.

10.2 Because of the experimental nature of the project, only selected employers, in relatively small numbers, were invited to participate. Even then, the identification of potential companies, and contact with them, was often through training providers. The TECs involved were disappointed that the response was not greater, and agreed that any future work should attempt to broadcast throughout the year the availability of mentor training widely to all appropriate employers, perhaps by providers as they recruit trainees and apprentices.

10.3 The TECs had some concern that despite good political and practical reasons to work through training providers to promote the Mentor Development Programme, a number seemed reluctant to support it. This might be because they feared their pastoral relationship with apprentices would be usurped (about one third of the providers approached said they felt they provided enough of this sort of support already). Two providers implied that they had reservations about bringing employers into a situation where they would be fully informed about all aspects of the programme, or where employers working with different providers would meet each other. Only anecdotal evidence exists to support this view, but the study team did encounter difficulties in gaining provider support. In one or two cases, large providers promised numerous employer contacts, but in the end only came forward with one or two. They were often slow to respond to requests for names, or insisted on handling the contact with employers, who then declined to be involved. This was true whether it was the study consultants or the TEC representative that was their main point of contact.

Attendance at the Briefings

10.4 The individuals who did attend the briefings held a variety of roles within their organisations. In five instances these were training managers from fairly large organisations, who had come along hoping that they could use the programme to develop the interpersonal skills of individuals they were already training as assessors. Of the rest, most were line managers or assessors of apprentices. A minority were individuals who did not already have some formal relationship with the apprentice. Companies who responded ranged from large organisations such as telecoms, local authorities and awarding bodies, to smaller businesses such as nursing/care homes and hairdressers.

The Patterns of Recruitment

10.5 The correlation between those who attended the briefing and the numbers who went on for training is difficult to calculate, as in a number of cases the people who turned up for the training had been sent by a manager who had attended the briefing. As the project progressed other mentors joined for training who had been briefed individually, usually by the TEC representative on the project.

10.6 A telephone survey of the companies who had had some involvement in the project, but not continued, demonstrated that for the majority the barrier was the time

commitment required. Other reasons given were that the project was not relevant as the company only had one apprentice or that the timing was not appropriate (for pressure of work reasons).

10.7 There were key themes which emerged in discussion with these companies. These were:

- **Short-term focus**. In almost every case the contact was the direct line manager of the apprentice. Their focus was on training and managing the individual to meet the immediate requirements of the business. Mentoring was perceived as an element of training and as not directly impacting on the day to day business it could be postponed or ignored.

- **Business Size**. A number of respondents emphasised they were a small business and had little resilience if one member of staff left the premises to attend briefings or training. Where the individual who expected to attend was the line manager of the apprentice, the point was also made that their attendance would leave the apprentice unsupervised for the day.

- **Perceived Benefit**. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of what would be involved in the briefing or training and what the direct business payback would be for their organisation. Again this was most evident with the smaller organisations and where there was only one apprentice.

The Importance of Organisational Support

10.8 The mentors who had the active support and endorsement of their organisations were the most successful. This was most likely to happen in organisations which regarded the training and the apprentice(s) as valued and important, and were keen to be doing something to help. The organisation's support both legitimises and recognises the activities of the mentor, and also makes it possible for sufficient time and privacy to be made available to the relationship.

10.9 Some mentors reported difficulty in carrying out their role because their own organisation was not supportive, and time with their apprentice was not given priority over other work-related commitments. Where this happened the mentor was likely to leave the programme, and it had clearly been a factor for those people who had declined to participate after the initial briefing. Other mentors reported difficulties with other colleagues, or with other trainees or members of staff who resented the extra attention being given to the apprentice.

10.10 It would seem from this research that the presence of a mentor in a company can, and should, add to the number of people who know about and take an interest in the apprentice, particularly if the mentor is not the line manager already responsible for the apprentice. By taking an active interest there is potential for the mentor to ensure that a common understanding of the purpose of the programme is being developed within the company. The mentoring relationship, where it is independent of line management structures, can also provide an element of continuity and stability for the apprentice.

10.11 Mentor development can be less resource intensive and technically demanding than assessor training. Mentoring, where it is supported by the company, has the potential to bring about greater employer involvement and awareness than assessor training alone has succeeded in achieving.

11. WIDER RELEVANCE, AND THE BENEFITS TO TECS

11.1 Four of the mentors assumed responsibility for National Trainees and New Deal trainees during the course of the project, and appeared to assimilate them within their mentoring duties with no difficulty. In fact, in some ways it seemed to make life easier for them, as focussing only on Modern Apprentices, as they had done at the beginning of the project, sometimes created difficulties, jealousies and tensions with other trainees. One employer was reluctant to join the project until it was clear that it could be extended to cover all his work based trainees, as he said that within the company they did not differentiate significantly between the trainees, whatever programme they were on.

11.2 National Trainees will be facing many of the same pressures as Modern Apprentices, but are likely to be on average even younger (as National Traineeships are aimed mainly at 16 to 18 year olds). Providing mentoring support for them would offer them many advantages, both during their traineeship and in the transition to employment without training or into a Modern Apprenticeship.

11.3 New Deal trainees may already have had a mentor assigned to them while they were in The Gateway, so it would be important to check whether or not this was the case, and whether that mentor expected to continue to support them. However, only a small proportion of New Deal trainees elect to have mentors, so the chances are that an individual recruited through New Deal would not yet have had access to this support, and would benefit from having a mentor assigned to them from within their employing company. The challenges facing apprentices still apply. New Deal trainees are expected to cope with work and achieving qualifications, and possibly with fewer advantages in terms of recent experience of education and training or employment.

11.4 The development model used within this project would be suitable for the New Deal context.

The benefits to TECs

11.5 The TECs were all positive about the project and hopeful about continuing with the Mentor Development Programme into the future. In their view mentoring for work based trainees offers a number of benefits in terms of driving up the overall quality of work based training, such as:

- better employer support for trainees which should encourage them, thereby improving retention and achievement;
- the opportunity to create more employers who are informed about work based training, thereby creating more discerning customers of training; and
- providing a further way of engaging companies in activity which could lead to interest and relevant experience for Investors in People commitment, or as evidence of further development for companies approaching re-assessment.

11.6 In one TEC additional training has already taken place, and plans are in motion to apply for ESF funding for next year's work. Another of the TECs is moving into direct contracting with employers, and is hoping to build a clearer requirement for mentoring support for apprentices into its contracts. The third TEC also hopes to continue. They all expressed concern at the difficulties encountered with recruitment, and feel that a model which is more tightly integrated into their general processes for recruiting and supporting apprentices and trainees is likely to be more successful.

11.7 The most resource intensive aspect of the programme from a TEC perspective was recruitment, but this was made more difficult by the circumstances (see Annex 1). As long as TECs work directly with companies, or have the support of their training provider network, recruitment to mentoring could be built into the routine contacts with employers as trainees are taken on. With the right information and support mechanisms in place, mentors could join a programme at any time of the year.

11.8 There is also potential for individual training providers to consider supporting the development of mentors within their own employer base, thereby avoiding the potential commercial disadvantages to them of a mentoring development model that brought together employers working with different providers.

Conclusions

11.9 This study confirmed what is often said about mentoring: that it is essentially a simple activity which has considerable potential to motivate and encourage, and, in the work based training context, to support the retention and achievement of young learners. In doing this it also helps them to mature as individuals, and become more effective employees.

11.10 The most valuable mentors appear to be those who have no other responsibilities for the apprentice. Line managers and assessors may feel they benefit from training in, and applying, the skills associated with mentoring, but this does not mean that they become mentors, and their apprentices do not identify any significant change in the relationship.

11.11 Where mentoring is successful, everyone gains. Mentors value the personal development opportunities it offers. Companies gain by having trainees who are more likely to stay and achieve, from the development of the interpersonal skills of the mentor, and from a better understanding of work based training. They may even be helped through this process to become the "discerning customers of training" that are perhaps needed to underpin a commitment to the learning organisation and lifelong learning.

11.12 These business benefits, however, are not so widely recognised yet that they easily overcome employer resistance, and recruitment is the most difficult stage of the process. Future developments in mentoring should therefore work alongside the efforts of TECs, NTOs and other government agencies to promote the business case for work based training.

Annex 1

IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

Identifying TEC Partners

A.1 The project started in November 1997. As outlined in Chapter 1, it had been agreed that the work would be based on partnerships with three more Training and Enterprise Councils, working through them to recruit and support mentors. Experience from the original project indicated that the process of recruiting mentors can take several months. This project started well into the "autumn term" after the majority of new recruitment had taken place. Rather than approach all TECs with an invitation to collaborate, a number were approached individually. The choice of TECs attempted to satisfy a number of criteria. The TECs should be:

- in different regions;
- known to be interested in pursuing development projects; and
- working within different contractual models.

A.2 It was important that TEC partners had a full understanding of what would be involved. A preliminary visit was made to the TECs which had expressed interest, and the final group consisted of three TECs, each in a different region. Once agreement to go ahead had been secured, an action plan was drawn up for contacting employers to start the process of recruiting mentors.

Recruiting Mentors

A.3 The recruitment of mentors was not an easy task. Despite the fact that all three TECs had listings of all or most of the employers who had taken on MAs, none of them felt it was appropriate to mail directly to all of these employers. The two TECs who contracted mainly through training providers acknowledged providers' sensitivity about TECs contacting their employers directly. Preferred methods were to:

- work through training providers, asking them to identify and contact appropriate employers; or
- work with selected companies who had direct contracts with the TEC, or were known to the TEC through its role as Managing Agent.

Leaflets and information were given to providers to pass on to their employers. In one case a member of the project team visited a Careers Exhibition to brief provider staff directly and elicit support.

A.4 Providers were then asked to write to or otherwise contact (perhaps through Training Advisers) a number of companies to invite them to send a representative to a briefing meeting. These meetings were planned for breakfast or lunchtime, in an attempt to make them accessible to most employers.

Briefings

A.5 Breakfast Briefings were held in December of 1997. Each TEC supported and attended their local meeting. Numbers at the first briefing were:

TEC 1 - 12 TEC 2 - 10 TEC 3 - 8

A.6 All the TECs had hoped for a better response to the initial invitation. It was generally felt that recruitment would be healthier if providers had had time to promote the Mentor Development Programme alongside their general marketing activity. This was also not the best time of the year (December/January) as it meant that providers had to work within relationships with employers which were already established in a certain pattern.

Training Mentors

A.7 Fifty-two mentors attended training sessions during the course of the project.

A.8 Feedback from initial briefings indicated that some employers felt that allowing a full day for training was too great a demand on their time. The first training session in each TEC took the full day, but subsequent training events were confined to three hour sessions. These shorter sessions did preclude a lot of the practical activities that had been included in the full day, as priority was given to focusing on the information and understanding needed to get the mentoring relationship started.

A.9 Evaluations of all the training events were positive, and continued to be positive despite the reduction in the time given to the session. However, mentors who attended the shorter sessions were more likely to comment on the amount of information they had to absorb, and the trainers were conscious that it was more difficult to find time to allow the group of mentors to get to know each other in the way that the full day had permitted.

A.10 The content of the one day workshop covered:

- the structure and purpose of Modern Apprenticeships;
- an overview of NVQs and Key Skills (as appropriate to the group);
- definitions and models of mentoring;
- initiating a mentoring relationship;
- managing a mentoring relationship; and
- reviewing communication skills and active listening.

Practical activities were used to help mentors consider the situation of the apprentice, and remember what life is like when you are 16 or 17. They were also asked to discuss their hopes and fears about the relationship.

A.11 Such a programme is typical of mentoring training sessions except for the information about Modern Apprenticeships and NVQs. This was included because the mentors in the original project, who had not been given specific training in the content of the Modern Apprenticeship or the workings of NVQs, had subsequently identified a need to be familiar with these subjects.

Trainee mentors were also given:

- a pack of materials, which included a checklist for the first meeting, and sample review forms for recording the outcomes of meetings with mentees and factsheets summarising the content of their own Modern Apprenticeship; and
- a brief opportunity to raise questions and concerns about NVQs, Key Skills and assessment.

Meeting Apprentices

A.12 At the beginning of the project, meetings were held for the apprentices in each TEC area. At this stage there were about 30 apprentices linked to the mentors who had been trained, but not all of the apprentices were able to attend. Those who did (21) were told about the project, and invited to tell the group about themselves and the apprenticeship that they were doing. They were also asked to play "Worries in a Hat". Each apprentice was given a slip of paper on which they had to complete the statement: "My main concern about being a Modern Apprentice is …". The folded slips were then placed inside a hat and mixed together, and then each apprentice removed a slip and read out the statement it contained, so that the whole group could discuss it. This activity gave the apprentices the opportunity to articulate anonymously any concerns they had about their apprenticeship, as well as serving as a useful ice-breaker to stimulate discussion. The results of the activity were collated and shared with the mentors at the next appropriate meeting.

Review Meetings

A.13 Three or four review meetings were held with each group of mentors at intervals of eight to ten weeks. In all cases the first review meeting with each group was used as an opportunity to provide training for newly recruited mentors, by adding a short training session in the morning, inviting all mentors to lunch, and then having the review meeting immediately after lunch. The meetings provided each mentor with the opportunity to report their experiences and raise issues for discussion, and were facilitated by a consultant from the project team. Minutes were made of all meetings and circulated to members of the group, together with any new materials which were prepared for them by the project team or by the mentors.

A.14 There was considerable discussion about the most appropriate timing of meetings to facilitate the mentors' attendance. Suggestions included early morning and twilight sessions. However, it was found that mentors who had made a commitment to the programme were generally able then to attend meetings at any time of day, and usually opted for early to mid afternoon. Attendance was most likely to be affected by sector (hairdressers for instance could find it difficult if it was a peak time of activity for them, such as just before a bank holiday).

Evaluation

A.15 Information for the final evaluation of the study was drawn from a number of sources:

- the evaluation of the mentor training events and minutes of review meetings with mentors;
- feedback from apprentices gathered through a telephone survey carried out in December 1998 and January 1999, to which 21 apprentices responded; and
- a postal questionnaire sent to mentors, to which 10 responded.

A.16 Discussions with TECs were ongoing throughout the project.

Annex 2

SUPPORTING THE WORK BASED TRAINEE: A GUIDE TO WHO DOES WHAT

Task/aspect	Mentor	Line Manager	Assessor	Training Adviser
Advice about dealing with people				
Advice about managing time				
Advice about suitable assessment opportunities in the job				
Advice about the NVQ assessment process				
Advice about the suitability of evidence				
Celebrating success				
Help with formulating career goals				
Help with negotiating future opportunities				
Helping apprentice deal successfully with times of change and transition				
Helping apprentice find the discipline to achieve				
Helping apprentice find the personal motivation to achieve				
Helping apprentice link off-the-job and on-the job learning				
Helping apprentice overcome isolation or stereotyping				
Helping apprentice to access the complaints procedure				
Helping apprentice to contribute effectively to programme review and quality assurance activity				
Helping apprentices take a longer term view when considering options or how to deal with a current issue				
Helping the apprentice learn how to work within the cultural norms and expectations of the organisation				
Helping the apprentice maintain an effective balance between their private lives and work life				
Helping the apprentice understand how the organisation works				
Imposing sanctions related to non-attendance at training or insufficient progress				
Imposing sanctions related to non-attendance or poor performance in job				
Induction to the job				
Induction to the programme				
Providing constructive support for slow progress/failure				
Provision of suitable development opportunities in the job				
Reviewing progress within job role				
Reviewing progress within specific qualification or NVQ				
Reviewing progress within training programme				

Annex 3

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"**GNVQ Assessment Review**", NCVQ (1995). National Council for Vocational Qualifications

"**The Manager as Coach and Mentor**", Parsloe, E (1995). Institute of Personnel and Development

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"**Reaching New Standards: Annual Report of the Chief Inspector 1998-1999**", Training Standards Council (1999).

Contacts/Further Reading

Copies of Modern Apprenticeship framework documents may be obtained from the relevant NTO.

ANNEX 4

QFAD PUBLICATIONS

QPID Study Report Series

Study No.	Title	Published	Prolog Product Code
61	Modern Apprenticeships: Emerging Good Practice	February 1997	
58	A Stocktake of Education Business Link Mechanisms.	February 1997	QPID-58
56	Study of Modern Apprenticeships and People from Ethnic Minorities	July 1997	QPID-56
64	Financial Appraisal and Monitoring: Contact with Trainees	July 1997	
53	Achieving Investors in People Recognitions: Factors Affecting Conversions from Commitments to Recognitions	July 1997	
68	A Stocktake of National Targets Task Forces	February 1998	QPID68
69	Funding Sources for Projects for Disaffected Young People	February 1998	QPID69
70	Work Based Assessment : National Vocational Qualifications and Youth Programmes	December 1998	QPID70
71	Modern Apprenticeships and Gender Stereotyping	March 1999	QPID71
72	Leaving TFW - Trainees who do not Achieve a Payable Positive Outcome	March 1999	QPID72
73	Training for Jobs - Job Outcomes from TFW	March 1999	QPID73
74	Modern Apprenticeships in Licensed Premises	April 1999	QPID74
76	Tackling Early Leaving from Youth Programmes	September 1999	QPID76
77	Entry to Work Based Training for Adults	September 1999	QPID77
79	TEC/CCTEs and Lifelong Learning	November 1999	QPID79
80	Use of the Business Excellence Model in TEC/CCTE Licensing	December 1999	QPID80

QPID Good Practice Series

Family/Title	Published	Prolog Product Code
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TECs and CCTEs Working Towards Achieving Social and Economic Inclusion	December 1998	GPGSI
Equality Assurance - Self-Assessment for Equal Opportunities in Training	April 1999	GPGSI/2

Family/Title	Published	Prolog Product Code
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		
Using Management Development to Help Small Businesses Grow	March 1999	GPGWD/1
Mentoring for Work Based Training	April 1999	GPGWD/2
RAISING STANDARDS		
TEC/CCTE Activities to Promote National Vocational Qualifications	October 1999	GPGRS/1
Health and Safety on Work Experience	November 1999	GPGRS/2
Modern Apprenticeships and People with Disabilities Resource Pack	October 1999	RP/1
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH		
ROAMEF - An Evaluation Strategy	November 1994	GPG5/7
ENTERPRISE AND THE TEC		
Planning Management Development Provision	May 1997	GPG6/5
Making the Link - TECs and Business Links Working Together to Deliver Training Messages	May 1997	
Developing Joint Training Initiatives in Business Clusters	March 1998	GPG6/7
Developing Joint Training Initiatives in Business Clusters (Case Study)	March 1998	CS2
Key Worker Development in Small Firms	March 1998	GPG6/8
MARKET RESEARCH		
Planning TEC Market Research	December 1990	GPG7/2
Producing a Labour Market Assessment	January 1992	GPG7/3
An Overview	February 1992	GPG7/1
TRAINER TRAINING		
A Strategy for Trainer Development (Revised)	March 1996	
OTHER GUIDES		
A Guide to Recruitment and Succession Planning in TEC and CCTE Boards	July 1998	GRSP
TECs/CCTEs and Schools Working in Partnership	September 1998	GPG3/1

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