Responsibilities of subject mentors, professional mentors and link tutors in secondary physical education initial teacher education

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ABSTRACT

Legislative changes in England, most notably the publication of *Initial teacher training (Secondary phase) (Circular 9/92*) by the Department for Education (DfE, 1992), have resulted in the reorganisation of initial teacher education (ITE), including the introduction of school-based ITE. In school-based ITE, the responsibilities of higher education institution (HEI) and school-based staff have been reorganised and responsibility for mentoring of students in school has become key. Although there has been much research on the effectiveness of school-based ITE, and on the effectiveness of partnerships and of school-based mentors, there has been little research on whether perceptions of staff as to their own and others responsibilities are compatible and whether these match those identified in role descriptions for various staff involved with the course. The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of which staff had major and which had supporting responsibility for specific aspects of ITE courses, for supporting students in their development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and to compare these perceptions (i) among staff and students, and (ii) with the responsibilities as identified in course documentation. Subject mentors, professional mentors, link tutors and students on four secondary physical education Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses answered a questionnaire identifying their perceptions of responsibilities for different aspects of the course. Course documentation that identified the responsibilities of the three groups of staff on the four courses included in the study was also considered. Results showed that perceptions of staff about their own and others responsibilities for different aspects of the course do not always match perceptions of other members of staff about responsibilities but perceptions of their own responsibilities generally match those identified in course documentation except in two specific areas; major responsibility for

supporting students in their actual teaching in school and supporting students to reach the standards for further professional requirements. Results are considered in relation to implications for supporting students in their development as teachers. Implications for further research are also identified.

INTRODUCTION

Legislative changes in England, most notably the publication of *Initial teacher training (Secondary phase) (Circular 9/92*) by the Department for Education (DfE, 1992), have resulted in the reorganisation of initial teacher education (ITE), including the introduction of school-based ITE. In school-based ITE, the responsibilities of higher education institution (HEI) and school-based staff have been reorganised and responsibility for mentoring of students in school has become key.

Although individual courses vary considerably, have different structures, identify and distribute responsibilities differently between school and HEI staff, and use different terminology to describe the key staff with responsibility on ITE courses, those with identified responsibility can be grouped into three main groups: school-based subject mentors; school-based professional mentors and HEI-based link tutors (who may or may not be subject tutors). This terminology is used in this article, except where a specific author/study uses different terminology.

In school-based ITE many aspects that were formerly the responsibility of HEIs have become the responsibility of schools. ITE partnerships have therefore undertaken careful planning of how best responsibilities might be shared between HEIs and their partner schools and clarification of who has responsibility for different aspects of the course, for supporting students' development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS. Consequently, much research has been undertaken on the responsibilities of staff engaged in school-based ITE. However, there has been little research on whether perceptions of staff as to their own and others responsibilities are compatible and whether these match those identified in role descriptions for various staff involved with the course. The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of which staff had major and which had supporting responsibility for specific aspects of ITE courses, for supporting students in their development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS and to compare these perceptions (i) among staff and students, and (ii) with the responsibilities as identified in course documentation.

The results of research to date suggest that schools and HEIs make distinctive and complementary contributions to supporting students' development as teachers; with schools having major responsibility for supporting students' development of practical teaching competence. Dunne and

Bennett (1997) stressed the need for those who work with students to have distinct, yet complementary responsibilities.

There are also suggestions that they make overlapping or interchangeable contributions. However, there does not seem to be a clear theory-practice divide. McIntyre (1997) emphasised that in order for partnerships to be effective, students work in schools and in the HEI should effectively be inter-related and 'this requires clearly specified, persuasively justified and mutually agreed divisions of labour between HEIs and schools and also shared understandings of how their contributions should be inter-related' (p.5). He continued that school and HEI staff should contribute what their positions make them best placed to offer 'broadly research and theory based knowledge and perspectives from HEI staff and situated knowledge of teaching and schooling and practical perspectives from school-based staff' (p.5). Shenton and Murdoch (1996) also emphasised that the planning of responsibilities of different staff must involve decisions about which group(s) have the knowledge, skills and resources to make the best contribution at the time.

Williams (1994) emphasised that although some responsibilities in ITE partnerships are interchangeable and can be taken on equally well by school-based mentors and HEI tutors, others are less interchangeable, e.g. HEIs need to be involved in support of weak students because of the time needed. On the other hand, detailed knowledge of the day-to-day working of specific schools, of classes and of individual pupils are areas where school-based staff are most able to support students.

Cameron-Jones and O'Hara (1995) found that mentors perceived themselves as playing roles which could be viewed as complementary to, rather than duplicating, the roles of tutors. Brooks, et al. (1997) found that mentors and tutors have different roles in relation to school-based ITE. Subject mentors are usually concerned with developing students' subject knowledge, skills and application whereas professional mentors generally provide a co-ordinating role; liaising with the HEI and overseeing students' wider professional development. In a study involving 49 case study ITE courses in England and Wales, Barrett, et al. (1995) looked at students' perspectives on the nature of partnerships between schools and HEIs, in particular the respective contributions of schools and HEIs to their professional preparation as teachers. Results showed that students perceived a clearly defined role for schools and HEIs in their training and regarded both schools and HEI as essential to their effective preparation as teachers. In particular, HEIs were felt to provide students with the following key elements: theoretical perspectives; approaches to practice; appropriate pedagogies; space and safety.

Barrett et al (1995) also looked at the extent to which students perceived that there was a 'theory versus practice' divide between, or both theoretical and practical dimensions were incorporated into,

the roles of schools and HEIs and whether or not the roles of school and HEI were perceived as 'complementary and distinctive'. Results showed that students felt that schools rather than HEIs contributed significantly to the development of practical teaching competencies. The most valuable contribution made by HEIs to students' practical teaching competence was perceived to be the exposure to a range of practice and the provision of opportunities to use a range of different teaching approaches. On the other hand, students identified variability in schools contributions to the general development of theoretical elements of training. Students perceived the role of schools and HEIs in the training process as distinctive, with both being relevant and thus valuable parts of their professional preparation.

Smith (2000) used a survey to assess students and tutors perceptions of the provision made in eight areas of the University-based curriculum carried out by mentors and monitored by tutors. The area perceived by the students to be least well addressed during the course was using the Universities strengths. Progression was seen by students as being significantly better than all other areas except conferencing.

Other research has focused on the effectiveness of school-based mentoring. This is especially important if, as in a study by Hobson (2002), students perceive school-based mentoring to be a, if not the, key element of the ITE experience. Results also showed that students regarded mentors as effective and more effective than other ITE course personnel, in assisting them to develop the ability to manage pupils and maintain discipline; most effective in assisting them to develop the ability to use a range of teaching methods effectively; while mentors and subject methods tutors were rated more or less equally valuable in assisting them in developing their subject knowledge. From the 12 aspects of course provision about which students were asked, mentors were regarded as very valuable by 60% or more of respondents in relation to four aspects – observing students lessons and providing feedback, assisting with students planning of lessons, modelling teaching practice for students and learning from trial and error in the classroom. These students valued most highly supportive, reassuring mentors who were prepared and able to make time for them, to offer practical advice and ideas relating to their teaching, and to provide constructive feedback on their attempts at teaching. Results also showed that the quality of mentoring is variable and that 12 out of 16 interviewees reported some problems with at least one of their mentors. Hayes (2001) endorsed the latter point by finding that despite being in the same school during roughly the same period of time, students' experiences of tutoring and mentoring differed considerably.

Results of a study by Smith and Reid (2000) looking at the perceptions of students and mentors of the extent to which the theory and practical curriculum to be followed by students in school was delivered by the school showed that both students and mentors reported some areas of student

training in schools were delivered significantly better than others. Not all mentors were able to deliver appropriately all areas. Mentors were able to deliver best in the development of practical teaching skills but the weaknesses in school-based provision and in the mentoring process showed a narrower than expected training provision was available for students. There was also no evidence of consistency of provision across the cohort of students. Although the subject mentors had been empowered to deliver or facilitate the delivery of the whole school training programme, this study suggested that there may be relatively weak provision in this area.

In relation to compatibility between responsibilities undertaken in practice and as agreed in partnerships, results of a study by Dunne and Bennett (1997) showed that teachers, co-tutors and supervisors were carrying out in practice the differentiated role structures set out in the partnership mentoring model, therefore was focusing on those content areas consistent with their role. Class teachers focused largely on craft knowledge whereas co-tutors and supervisors focused on a wider range of areas. Co-tutors concentrated on student learning and craft knowledge as well as addressing to a limited extent areas such as teaching dimensions, curriculum knowledge and subject matter knowledge. On the other hand, supervisors focused on principle-oriented outcomes, relating more to areas such as dimensions of teaching, children's learning and theories and research on teaching processes. It would be useful to conduct more studies on whether mentors and others in an ITE partnership are carrying out the responsibilities as identified for the particular course on which they are working.

Purpose of the study

Although there has been much research on the effectiveness of school-based ITE, and on the effectiveness of partnerships and of school-based mentors, there has been little research on whether perceptions of staff as to their own and others responsibilities are compatible and whether these match those identified in role descriptions for various staff involved with the course. The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of which staff had major and which had supporting responsibility for specific aspects of ITE courses, for supporting students in their development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS and to compare these perceptions (i) among staff and students, and (ii) with the responsibilities as identified in course documentation.

METHODS

Sample

This study was part of a larger study involving four institutions which offered secondary physical education PGCE courses. These four institutions represented a range of institutions in different parts of the country. Four groups of people at each of the four institutions were included in the sample:

school-based physical education subject mentors; school-based professional mentors; HEI subject and/or professional link tutors (link tutors); and student physical education teachers (students).

Data collection

A questionnaire was given to all subject mentors, professional mentors, link tutors and students in each of the four institutions, either at the end of the autumn term or beginning of the spring term. Responses were received from 44 subject mentors; 28 professional mentors; 11 link tutors; and 74 students.

The questions related to this piece of research asked who had major and who had supporting responsibility for: preparing students for school experience; supporting students in their actual teaching in school; making the decision as to whether or not students have met the standards to be awarded QTS; and supporting students to reach each of the four standards required to gain QTS: subject knowledge and understanding; planning, teaching and class management; monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability; and other professional requirements. Thus, the questions related to responsibility both for supporting students' development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS.

Course documentation which identified clearly the responsibilities of staff (subject mentors; professional mentors; HEI link tutors) for different aspects of the course was also considered. For all four courses these responsibilities were clearly laid out in a course handbook, which was given to all staff working on the course and to students. This allowed a comparison to be made between perceptions of the four groups of people involved in ITE and the specified responsibilities of subject mentors, professional mentors and HEI link tutors.

Analyses

Percentages were calculated for each group of staff in relation to: (i) who had major responsibility; and (ii) who had supporting responsibility for each of the aspects of the ITE course, for supporting students' development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS, identified above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When asked who had major responsibility for preparing students for school experience, Table 1 shows that 22% of professional mentors and no subject mentors or link tutors perceived this to be their major responsibility. All subject mentors, 67% of professional mentors and 50% of students perceived this to be the major responsibility of link tutors. However, 80% of link tutors perceived major responsibility for preparing students for school experience as belonging to other staff in the

HEI. Sixty percent of link tutors, 45% of subject mentors and 27% of professional mentors perceived themselves to have supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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In summary, although preparing students for school experience was not perceived to be their major responsibility by any one group of staff; results showed that this was generally perceived to be the responsibility of the HEI. The difference between link tutors not perceiving this to be their major responsibility and all subject mentors, 67% of professional mentors and 50% of students perceiving this to be the major responsibility of link tutors could be that the link tutor is the key contact in the partnership between school staff, students and the HEI, but the preparation of students in the HEI for school experience is undertaken mostly by staff other than the link tutor him/herself.

Course documentation for the four courses in the study identified that HEIs had major responsibility for preparing students for school experience. Identified responsibilities of link tutors and/or other HEI staff include, for example: familiarising students with documentation and procedures for school experience; teaching a programme of generic and/or a specialist subject study which prepares students for work in school and supports their professional needs; and liaising with other members of the course team to ensure coherence and consistency in planning and delivery. Thus, perceptions of responsibilities match responsibilities identified in course documentation.

The findings that 22% of professional mentors perceived themselves to have major responsibility for preparing students for school experience and 45% of subject mentors and 27% of professional mentors perceived themselves as having supporting responsibility for preparing students for school experience suggests that the question may not have been clear enough to differentiate between preparation for school experience which occurs in the HEI before students start school experience and that which occurs in schools when students arrive at the beginning of school experience. The HEI has major responsibility for the former and professional mentors major responsibility for the latter. This supports course documentation for the four courses in the study whereby the major responsibility for preparing students for school experience after they arrive in school lies with professional mentors, as their responsibilities include, for example: devising an induction programme; briefing subject mentors and agreeing a programme of school-based training with them; channelling communications between all partners; and devising and co-ordinating a school-based programme in liaison with the link tutor to link with the HEI-based part of the course. This difference in the two types of preparation for school experience may have resulted in differences in responses to this question.

When asked who had major responsibility for supporting students in their actual teaching in school, Table 2 shows that 17% of subject mentors, 9% of professional mentors and no link tutors perceived this to be their major responsibility. However, 77% of students perceived this to be the responsibility of subject mentors, with 8% of students perceiving this to be the major responsibility of link tutors and 2% professional mentors. On the other hand, 52% of subject mentors perceived link tutors to have major responsibility for this aspect of the course; while all link tutors and 91% of professional mentors perceived the subject mentor to have major responsibility for this aspect of the course.

Fifty percent of subject mentors perceived themselves to have supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course; while 80% of professional mentors and 60% of link tutors perceived themselves (or in the case of link tutors either themselves or other HEI staff) to have supporting responsibility.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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Course documentation for the four courses in the study clearly identified supporting students in their actual teaching in schools as the major responsibility of subject mentors. Identified responsibilities of subject mentors include, for example: informing students about ability ranges in groups, set procedures in the Department, resources and back-up materials available; supporting students to identify targets for development and offering advice about alternative strategies; monitoring the development of students' teaching files; planning and delivering collaborative teaching activities; discussing students' lesson plans and evaluations and advising appropriately; observing students teaching and providing constructive feedback; supporting students to reflect on and analyse their practice; and providing written feedback on practice.

This finding is interesting because it suggests that practice does not match responsibilities identified in course documentation, therefore although professional mentors, link tutors and students generally perceived supporting students in their actual teaching in school to be the major responsibility of subject mentors; subject mentors themselves did not perceive this to be their major responsibility.

When asked who had major responsibility for making the decision about whether or not students have passed school experience there was a considerable amount of agreement, as shown in Table 3. Eighty eight percent of subject mentors perceived that they had major responsibility. This was supported by all link tutors and 87% of professional mentors who perceived this to be the major responsibility of subject mentors. Sixty three percent of students perceived this to be a joint responsibility between subject mentors and link tutors, with 31% perceiving this to be the major responsibility of subject mentors, 28% professional mentors and 26% link tutors. Thirteen percent of

professional mentors perceived themselves to have major responsibility; although 75% of professional mentors and 80% of link tutors perceived that they had supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course. Forty five percent of subject mentors perceived that link tutors had supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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These results suggest general agreement that subject mentors have major responsibility for this aspect of the course, with link tutors and professional mentors having supporting responsibility. This finding was supported by course documentation for the four courses in the study in which subject mentors are identified as having responsibility for monitoring students' development. However, they liaise closely with other staff on the termly summative assessment of students' progress in the generic competence areas and if students are experiencing difficulties, contributing to any remediation process identified. Thus, assessment of students includes support from professional mentors and link tutors. However, further investigation is needed to determine what supporting responsibility is perceived to involve; whether it is supporting subject mentors in all decisions or whether it is only supporting decisions in relation to students who are experiencing difficulties.

When asked who had major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for knowledge and understanding, there was general agreement (as Table 4 shows) that this was the responsibility of subject mentors. Seventy six percent of subject mentors perceived this to be their major responsibility, whereas 83% of professional mentors and 60% of link tutors perceived that subject mentors had major responsibility for this aspect of the course. Fifty two percent of students perceived this to be the major responsibility of subject mentors, with 21% and 11% perceiving this to be the major responsibility of other HEI tutors and link tutors, respectively.

However, 24% of subject mentors did not perceive themselves as having major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for subject knowledge and understanding. Indeed, 19% of subject mentors perceived this to be the major responsibility of link tutors. However, none of the link tutors perceived themselves to have major responsibility. Forty percent of professional mentors and 33% of link tutors did, however, perceive themselves to have supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 4 about here

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This aspect of the course is clearly identified in course documentation for the four courses in the study as an area of responsibility for subject mentors. Identified responsibilities of subject mentors

include: discussing with students' their subject knowledge audit; observing students and discussing appropriate items of content in the lesson; supporting students to develop competence in teaching a specialist subject. The reasons why 24% of subject mentors did not perceive themselves to have major responsibility for this aspect of the course therefore need to be explored further.

When asked who had major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for planning, teaching and class management there was general agreement that this was the responsibility of subject mentors, as shown in Table 5. Eighty four percent of subject mentors perceived this to be their major responsibility and 83% of professional mentors and all link tutors perceived this to be the major responsibility of subject mentors. Eighty four percent of students perceived subject mentors to have major responsibility for this aspects of the course, with 4% each perceiving professional mentors or link tutors to have major responsibility. In addition, 56% of professional mentors and 75% of link tutors perceived themselves to have supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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Course documentation for the four courses in this study identified supporting students to reach the standard for planning, teaching and class management to be the responsibility of subject mentors. Identified responsibilities included: monitoring students planning and preparation; discussing lesson plans and evaluations and advising accordingly; observing students teaching and helping them to reflect and analyse their practice; organising opportunities for students to observe and reflect on the work of other teachers; monitoring the development of students' teaching files; discussing specific teaching targets with students.

Reasons for those subject mentors who did not perceive this aspect of the course to be their major responsibility need to be investigated further. In addition further investigation is needed into the contradiction between results that subject mentors have major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for planning, teaching and class management and the result that showed that only 17% of subject mentors perceived that they had major responsibility for supporting students in their actual teaching in school.

When asked who had major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability Table 6 shows that 92% of subject mentors, 92% professional mentors, 84% of students and all link tutors perceived that subject mentors had major responsibility. In addition, 56% of professional mentors and 75% of link tutors

identified themselves as having supporting responsibility. Further, 32% of students identified link tutors as having supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 6 about here

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In relation to responsibilities identified in course documentation for the four courses in this study monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability are subsumed within subject mentors' responsibilities for supporting students to develop competence in teaching a specialist subject; discussing specific teaching targets; informing students of profiling pupils' progress within a class; teaching collaboratively; supporting students in planning and preparation; and other such descriptions.

When asked who had major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for other professional requirements results were more mixed, as shown in Table 7. Ninety percent of subject mentors as well as 64% of professional mentors perceived themselves as having major responsibility. No link tutors perceived themselves to have major responsibility, but 50% perceived this to be the major responsibility of professional mentors. On the other hand, 27% of professional mentors perceived subject mentors to have major responsibility for this aspect of the course. Students perceptions of who had major responsibility varied, with 45% perceiving subject mentors, 25% perceiving link tutors and 17% perceiving professional mentors as having major responsibility.

Sixty percent of link tutors, 41% of subject mentors and 43% of professional mentors perceived link tutors to have supporting responsibility for this aspect of the course.

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Insert Table 7 about here

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Course documentation for the four courses in the study identified supporting students to reach the standard for other professional requirements as the major responsibility of professional mentors, whose identified responsibilities include, for example: being responsible for devising and co-ordinating a school-based programme; facilitating discussions with students about aspects of the teachers' role and school life and issues of whole-school significance; devising and providing a professional programme to include content such as legal responsibilities, school policies on discipline, pastoral matters, health and safety, information and communications technology, special educational needs, records of achievement, responsibilities of Governors, equal opportunities, applying for jobs and opportunities for involvement in whole school life, for example, staff meetings, parents evenings, INSET, form tutoring. On the other hand, subject mentors' responsibilities in

relation to supporting students' development is described in relation to their specialist subject. These mixed results need to be investigated further.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study must be treated with caution in light of several limitations of the study. These limitations include the small sample of HEIs and each group of respondents on the courses in the four HEIs.

Brooks et al (1997) suggested that differences in ITE courses make it difficult to ascertain whether results of studies are the product of particular circumstances, i.e. are context-specific, or whether they are of wider significance. The results of this study are hard to interpret because of different structures operating in the four courses in the sample. Specifically, two of the courses utilised subject specific link tutors, whereas the other two courses utilised general professional link tutors. Responsibilities of link tutors may be different when they come or do not come from the same subject as students; i.e. between subject or general professional link tutors. Shenton and Murdoch (1996) suggested that where link tutors do not come from the same subject, the role of subject mentors in supporting students' subject development becomes more critical. Differences in backgrounds of link tutors could give rise to different models of mentorship in practice which could result in different perceptions of responsibilities. This may account for some differences in results. Despite these limitations, results were similar across the four HEIs, suggesting that despite differences in structure, the way responsibilities are assigned to staff on each course are very similar.

The questions asked who had major and who had supporting responsibility for different aspects of the course, for supporting students' development as teachers and to meet the standards for the award of QTS, but did not allow for reasons, explanations or supplementary material to be provided. They also did not probe more deeply into each aspect. Further detail would suggest reasons for the results and whether the results of this study are specific to the four courses included in the study or whether they are relevant for a wider number of courses.

Despite the limitations of the study there are some interesting findings. First, responses to all questions identified more than one group of staff perceived to have major and supporting responsibility for each aspect of the course and students' development included in the study. No one group of staff in these four partnerships was perceived to be entirely responsible for any one aspect of the course or for supporting students' development. Link tutors were perceived to have supporting responsibility for school-based parts of courses and for supporting students' development to reach the standards for the award of QTS. Likewise, subject mentors or professional mentors were

perceived to have supporting responsibility for HEI-based aspects of the course or aspects of the course for which the other was perceived to have major responsibility. This result confirms the importance of school-HEI partnerships and that both schools and HEIs are playing a full part in ITE in all aspects of the PGCE courses included in this study, supporting Williams (1994) when she emphasised that it is important to ensure that both schools and HEIs are fulfilling their responsibilities in any one ITE partnership. However, these results do not identify what contribution was made by staff with major and supporting responsibility in each aspect of the course. This needs to be explored further.

Second, in the majority of aspects of the course included in the questions the perceptions of major responsibility matched responsibilities as identified in course documentation. Other studies (e.g. Barrett et al, 1995; Dunne and Bennett, 1997; Williams, 1994) identifying the effectiveness of mentoring arrangements have also shown that partnerships between schools and HEIs are generally working effectively in terms of responsibilities of different partners. However, in this study, in all aspects of the course there was not 100% agreement. Therefore, further investigation is required to find out why in each aspect of the course there were some staff who did not perceive they had the major or supporting responsibility identified in course documentation and whether, as a result, students are receiving the support they require. This should include looking at whether there are gaps in knowledge and experience or, alternatively, unnecessary overlap in what is covered, as suggested by Shenton and Murdoch (1996). If ITE partnerships are to continue to develop it is important that any mismatch is addressed. This may result in a need to clarify responsibilities or to reconsider and redefine the responsibilities of different staff in ITE partnerships.

Although the results of this study suggest little confusion over responsibilities generally, they do suggest differences between perceptions of responsibilities and responsibilities identified in course documentation in two specific aspects of the course. These are discussed further below.

First, although course documentation for the four courses in the study identified clearly supporting students in their actual teaching in school as the major responsibility of subject mentors, only 17% of subject mentors perceived themselves to have major responsibility. On the other hand, 91% of professional mentors, 100% of link tutors and 77% of students perceived this to be the major responsibility of subject mentors. Results of other studies have clearly identified supporting students in their actual teaching in schools as the major responsibility of subject mentors. One explanation for why 83% of subject mentors did not perceive themselves to have major responsibility for supporting students in their actual teaching in schools might be that subject mentors perceived students to have major responsibility for their own development. Another explanation could be that subject mentors did not have enough time to spend with students on school experience; their major responsibility

being to the pupils in the school. In a study by Brooks (2000) the time demand created by ITE in secondary and primary schools was the single most important cost of involvement in school-based ITE. Approximately half of those teachers who had a designated mentoring role did not have designated time in which to carry it out and the role of the mentor was much bigger than had been acknowledged.

This result might be tempered by the fact that 84% of subject mentors perceived themselves to have major responsibility for supporting students in reaching the standard for planning, teaching and class management. It is not clear why there was a different response to these two results. Further work is needed to look at differences in these perceptions. However, further research is also needed to look at why the majority of subject mentors did not perceive themselves to have major responsibility for this aspect of the course. Further, this result is worrying. The implications of subject mentors not perceiving themselves to have major responsibility for supporting students in their actual teaching in schools need to be explored further to ensure that students are receiving the support they require in schools.

Second, 90% of subject mentors perceived themselves to have major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for further professional requirements. However, course documentation for the four courses in the study identified this as the major responsibility of professional mentors. One explanation for the perception that subject mentors have major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards for further professional requirements could be the timing of the questionnaires (at the end of the autumn term/beginning of the spring term of the course). The timing may have meant that the focus of students' work in schools was on developing practical competence in teaching the subject; with the focus on further professional requirements being limited. Booth (1993) found that students want a training that is strongly practical in its orientation in the first instance. Although they also want time to consider broader issues, these issues may be tackled once students have acquired a degree of subject confidence and confidence in the classroom. Thus, supporting students in reaching the standards for further professional requirements at this stage in their course may have been limited to that which had been undertaken by subject mentors in relation to the subject itself.

Tinning (1996) stressed that subject mentors help students to develop competencies through the pedagogy of the practicum. Likewise, Williams (1993) emphasised that subject mentors support students to reach the standards. Therefore, another explanation could be that subject mentors work closely with students in school, including helping students to complete their professional profiles to ensure they have met the requirements for QTS. Aspects of standards for further professional requirements may be raised by students with subject mentors; thus, subject mentors may perceive

themselves to have major responsibility for supporting students to reach the standards, including those for further professional requirements. This reason may also account for 45% of students identifying subject mentors as having major responsibility for this aspect of their development as teachers. Students may not fully recognise the role of professional mentors or link tutors in supporting them to reach the standards for further professional requirements. Alternatively, professional mentors and link tutors may be contributing in a way that students have not recognised as contributing directly to the development of competence to meet the standards, including standards for further professional requirements, e.g. underpinning theory, practical principles, developing the ability to reflect critically in or appraise the effectiveness of their own teaching.

This study only looked at major and supporting responsibilities of those staff with defined responsibilities in the four ITE courses included in this study. However, students are equally important partners and must take responsibility for their own development as teachers. Students perceptions of their responsibility for their own development and how this interacts with responsibilities of those staff with identified responsibility for supporting their development needs to be explored further. An area in which further work is required is therefore the major responsibility which students must take for their own development.

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Table 1: Preparing students for school experience

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
Own responsibility	0%	45%	22%	27%	0%	60%		
Other people responsible	100% link tutor	23% link tutor	67% link tutor	33% other HEI staff	80% other HEI staff	20% subject mentor 20% other HEI staff	50% link tutor 21% other HEI staff 17% subject mentor	36% other HEI staff 22% subject mentor 16% link tutor 11% prof mentor

Table 2: Supporting students in their actual teaching in school

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	17%	50%	9%	80%	0%	20%		
other people responsible	52% link tutor	14% link tutor 14% prof mentor	91% subject mentor	20% link tutor	100% subject mentor	40% other HEI staff	77% subject mentor 8% link tutor 2% prof mentor	35% link tutor 19% prof mentor 15% subject mentor 10% other HEI staff

Table 3: Making the decision about whether or not students have passed school experience

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	88%	10%	13%	75%	0%	80%		
other people responsible	8% link tutor	45% link tutor	87% subject mentor	25% link tutor	100% subject mentor	20% prof mentor	63% joint decision 31% subject mentor 28% prof mentor 26% link tutor	

Table 4: Supporting students to reach the standards for knowledge and understanding

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	76%	8%	4%	40%	0%	33%		
other people responsible	19% link tutor	62% link tutor	83% subject mentor	33% link tutor	60% subject mentor	33% subject mentor	52% subject mentor 21% other HEI staff 11% link tutor	28% subject mentor 23% other HEI staff 22% link tutor

Table 5: Supporting students to reach the standards for planning, teaching and class management

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	Major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	84%	24%	9%	65%	0%	75%		
other people responsible	11% link tutor	53% link tutor	83% subject mentor	29% link tutor	100% subject mentor	25% prof mentor	69% subject mentor 10% prof mentor 7% link tutor	29% link tutor 20% other HEI staff 18% subject mentor 11% prof mentor

Table 6: Supporting students to reach the standards for monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	92%	10%	0%	56%	0%	75%		
other people responsible	4% link tutor 4% prof mentor	35% link tutor	92% subject mentor	38% link tutor	100% subject mentor	25% prof mentor	84% subject mentor 4% link tutor 4% prof mentor	32% link tutor 18% subject mentor 18% prof mentor

Table 7: Supporting students to reach the standards for other professional requirements

	subject mentors		professional mentors		link tutors		students	
	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting	major	supporting
own responsibility	90%	18%	64%	29%	0%	60%		
other people responsible	5% link tutor 5% prof mentor	41% link tutor	27% subject mentor	43% link tutor	50% prof mentor	20% prof mentor 20% other HEI staff	45% subject mentor 25% link tutor 17% prof mentor	37% link tutor 18% subject mentor 17% prof mentor