



**Organisation:** Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

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The first section of this case study contextualises the organisational environment in which individuals engaging on initial teacher training programmes work. The text then aims to provide a detailed narrative of one individual's experience. For the purpose of the narrative account the individual will be called Jay.

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary joined the Peninsula CETT as an employee of individuals engaging on initial teacher training programmes provided by external training providers. Since then the Quality Assurance Unit within the Learning and Development Department of the organisation has been successful in achieving qualification approval through City and Guilds to deliver the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) and the Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS). Therefore as an organisation we have individuals both engaged on initial teacher training programmes provided internally and externally. It has been identified that some individuals may choose to develop or change their career path through engaging on an initial teacher training programme provided externally without Devon and Cornwall Constabulary needing to be aware. Specific mandatory requirements, for example the need to have a workplace mentor, is organised locally between the individual and the course tutor. The Quality Assurance Unit have marketed and promoted their role in supporting individuals engaged on initial teacher training programmes however this does not obligate individuals to share their own personal career ambitions. The role profile of individuals whose choose to pick up an initial teacher training qualification by an external provider could be that of someone whose main role is something other than training within the organisation. All known individuals are supported by the central learning and development department. Those whose role is primarily training have a clearly defined development programme.

At present the work based learning environment in which the 'trainers' (this is the cultural term used to identify an individual whose role encompasses teaching, training, tutoring, instructing etc.) work is not covered by the Further Education 2007 regulations. To date our training programmes do not receive Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding. However as an organisation we require that trainers achieve a minimum of a level 3 accredited qualification. In recent years the NVQ Level 3 in

Learning and Development or Certificate in Education has been chosen. Some trainers have then continued with their development and gone on to achieve the BA Education and Training programme provided locally by the University of Plymouth.

### **Jay's Experience**

Jay is someone whose main role is not teaching / training however she is responsible for regular training sessions within a formal learning environment. The reason for choosing Jay was due to the author of this document working with Jay as a workplace mentor whilst she is engaged on an initial teacher training programme provided by an external provider.

Jay is female and describes herself as academically capable having previously worked at degree level. She has a mature family whom are themselves now approaching higher education. Jay works 37 hours a week and lives some distance from her main office. It takes Jay over an hour to travel to work and then another hour to get home again. Her role is unique within the organisation and consequently she does not have any colleagues who could function as a 'subject coach' in relation to implementing subject pedagogy. The training unit in which Jay works is supportive of her aspirations to gain a teacher / training qualification.

Jay enrolled with an external provider and began an initial teacher training programme in September 2007. During her first term Jay had many unanswered questions from her weekly sessions. These were explored not only with her mentor but with her peers on the same course and a colleague who had chosen the same initial teacher training programme but at a different location. Initially Jay felt that she and her colleague would be able to support each other however the workplace discussions soon identified that each were covering different things and being asked to prepare different assessment tasks. This was not what Jay had expected; she felt that the programme should be consistent across different providers. It felt appropriate to the mentor to relate to how Jay was feeling whilst encouraging her to take ownership of her own course. The mentor's role involved assisting in interpreting the tasks that were being set and applying the learning to Jay's work based context. Jay was also experiencing a degree of anxiety in relation to the terminology used by tutors in the initial few weeks. It was important to Jay that she had individuals with whom she could talk these anxieties through with, hence the mentor meetings were a time and space for listening.

Towards the end of the first term Jay appears to be experiencing a roller coaster of emotions with regards to deciding whether or not to continue on the initial teacher training programme. Her current workload, health and domestic demands are all stretching Jay's ability to manage her personal need to dedicate time to her Initial Teacher Training programme. Jay explains that when she commits to something she needs to put her full commitment to achieve the high standard which she sets herself.

Starting the second term Jay is upbeat and pleased with passing her first formally assessed assignments. Her confidence within herself appears to have grown, she has asked to borrow some books from our small internal library. A few weeks into the term Jay becomes distant, it appears more difficult now for Jay to arrange mentoring sessions, one or two are postponed. After a couple of weeks during an informal chat Jay announces that she has decided to withdraw from the programme. Throughout this time the workplace provides opportunities for informal and formal meeting arrangements with the mentor. Upon further discussion Jay explains that her current health situation means that she is on waiting list for a major operation and could be notified at short notice to go into hospital. Jay has not dismissed the possibility of reengaging with the programme however this will not be possible for some eight to twelve months time.

Jay's experience has highlighted that the mentoring role can be time intensive and requires not only an understanding of the initial teacher training programme structure but a friendship approach to support personal circumstances. In conclusion it is appreciated that the mentoring role will need a solid network of support based within the organisation. That it is going to involve commitment in supporting the mentee and dedication towards the development of a mentoring support network group. A network group has been established within the organisation however is in its infancy. An additional approach would be to have this network engaged in regional forums organised by the Peninsula CETT. Some mentors may not have previously had the responsibility to engage in a mentoring process. This additional responsibility comes at a time when the concept of intensification is at the forefront of people's minds and it may be that mentors will question what is in it for me. To maintain momentum within the organisation it will be necessary to recognise the commitment that the mentors are making in addition to their everyday role.

Note: The views in this case study are those of the author(s).