

## Small scale Development Project Report

**Project Title:** Mentor support for part-time PGCE/Cert Ed students

**Date of report:** 31.03.2008

**Author:** John Watson

**Email contact:** [JGWatson@bicton.ac.uk](mailto:JGWatson@bicton.ac.uk)

**Organisation:** Bicton College

**Role in Organisation:** Staff Development and Mentoring Co-ordinator

### Background:

- Bicton College is a land-based college set in 200 hectares of parkland and offers a wide range of Further and Higher Education vocationally based courses.
- Bicton College has an established mentoring support policy for mentors of the full time PGCE/Cert Ed students. OfSTED feedback in July 2007 highlighted the strength of the:  
*“Carefully structured range of developmental experiences undertaken by pre-service trainees on placement at the college.”*  
In addition it emphasised the quality of:  
*“Management of the placement experience of pre-service trainees and their mentoring.”*
- The OfSTED summary identified shortcomings in the:  
*“Quality assurance and support of mentors of trainees not employed by the college”*

### Project aim:

To address these shortcomings, the project aimed at supporting mentors of part-time students on the PGCE/Cert Ed programme. In addition to act as flying mentor for those students who did not have access to a nominated mentor in their teaching practice.

### Description of Project as Undertaken:

The author visited 16 identified part-time student mentors in their workplace from October to December 2007. An additional 13 mentors within the college were visited. At this meeting the roles, models and responsibilities of mentoring were discussed.

In addition, clarification of the administrative tasks, teaching observation requirements, termly reports and mentoring meeting log was undertaken.

A visit to the workplace also an ideal opportunity to get a feel for the nature and appropriateness of the student teaching practice. It will also hopefully identify any potential problems at an early stage, which in turn, assists both student retention and achievement.

The author is also acting as a pedagogic flying mentor for one student who finds this relationship to be particularly valuable.

### **Outcomes/Findings**

Direct feedback received by the author emphasised the importance of a personal visit and the availability of support during the mentoring process. The complex nature of the mentor's administrative responsibilities in the new programme could also be more easily communicated.

### **Recommendations:**

The new mentor video training materials/resources are a welcome addition. It is felt that these should be used to supplement a personal visit (wherever possible), not to replace it.

It is essential that the part-time student mentors feel fully supported in their role and that a personal contact must also be offered.

### **List of references**

Armitage A, et al (2003) *Teaching and Training in Post-Compulsory Education*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Baker C (2007), *Managing Inspector – Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) for Further Education Teachers*: National Awarding Body Qualifications.