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**The Long and Winding Road to Achievement:
Peer Mentoring as a tool for Transition into Higher
Education and its impact on Retention and Social and
Academic Integration.**

BROOKE WHITE

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Research in
Education

The University of Huddersfield

August 2018

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Abbreviations

HE – Higher Education

HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council for England

TEF – Teaching Excellence Framework

UF – Undergraduate Framework

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

Abstract

This study explores first year undergraduate degree students and undergraduate degree course leader's opinions, feelings and thoughts about the peer mentoring programme run on a collection of degrees known as the undergraduate framework (UF). The findings are extracted from a number of semi-structured interviews with course leaders and 48 questionnaires from the first year students. The methodology used was an interpretivist inductive qualitative case study, which allowed for the participant's opinions, feelings and thoughts to be acknowledged. The study aims to identify how the peer mentoring programme can aid the transition into higher education, integration into higher education and retention at the university.

Throughout the thesis it identifies the gap in research on peer mentoring and the lack of a universal definition of mentoring and peer mentoring. Furthermore, it discusses the complexity of the term integration, the transition into higher education becomes more apparent through the research data and whether the peer mentoring programme aids the immense and complex gap of transitioning. The study analyses the participants interesting responses about the peer mentoring programme and identifies where the programme may benefit from development. In particular, the key findings focus upon the three main concepts of the study; transition, retention and integration. The study's findings identify barriers to retaining students and social and academic integration as well as exploring if one type of integration takes priority over the other. The findings also highlight what the participants know about the aims of the programme, how mentors and mentees are matched, how mentees communicate with their mentors and how the university gathers feedback about the programme. It is argued that the responses from participants establish the value that mentees and course leaders attach to different types of integration. Finally, it identifies the potential improvements that, if made, might benefit the peer mentoring programme that is the focus of this study.

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the reasons behind and the motivation for the research and defines some key terms. This chapter begins with the study's objective and research questions, followed by some background knowledge about the university, undergraduate degree courses and the peer mentoring programme that is the focus of this study. Throughout the thesis the university shall be referred to as the University of Hope. Finally, the chapter ends with the structure of the thesis.

For over a decade the term peer mentoring has been acknowledged, however, as Schmidt and Faber (2016) state, there still seems to be a lack of a universal definition of the term. In addition, there is still a lack of research within the area (Schmidt & Faber, 2016). This case study will be of value and contribute to the ongoing research into peer mentoring in a Higher Education (HE) setting. My motivation for this research comes from having personal experience of a peer mentoring programme where I took on the role of a mentor. This role took place over two years of my undergraduate degree. During the second year I progressed and took the role of a lead mentor on the programme. This is where my interest in peer mentoring developed and I went on to complete my BA Honours degree dissertation in this area, and I have chosen to further my research with this study. My previous study held a focus on mentors' perspectives therefore, in this study, I am interested in gathering the perspectives of the mentees and the course leaders.

The main objective of the research is:

- To analyse if a peer mentoring programme can successfully integrate and enhance a student's university experience, with a view to making recommendations to improve the programme.

The term 'successfully' will be measured based on the data collected and the feelings and opinions of the mentees and course leaders.

Research Questions:

- How does a peer mentoring programme aid the first year mentees transition into higher education?

- What impact does a peer mentoring programme have on retaining and integrating first year mentees academically and socially?
- What are the benefits of a peer mentoring programme for the university and mentees?

1.2 About the University

The University of Hope is an inclusive academic community which serves a diverse body of students. The University's vision is to be an "inspiring innovative university of international renown" (University of Hope*, 2017, pg. 1). The reference displays an asterisk as the University of Hope is a pseudonym, this has been done throughout the thesis. This expresses the University's motivation in wanting to provide the best higher educational experience for its students. Within recent years the University of Hope has refreshed its peer mentoring programme which runs successfully across all schools at the university (University of Hope*, 2017).

The motivation behind the setting up of the programme is due to a range of evidence that peer mentoring provides positive support for students; the key literature will be addressed in Chapter Two. This has led the University to build this into their strategy map, which is made up of six different strands;

- Students as researchers
- Enterprising students
- Use of data
- Professional development of colleagues
- A safe, secure and challenging environment
- Sustainability and responsibility.

The Strategy map has three key aims one of which is to "inspire our students to enjoy an outstanding university experience" (University of Hope*, 2013, pg. 1). The University's strategy map outlines where peer mentoring fits into the University's structure and teachings. The School of Education and Professional Development have done this successfully; peer mentoring comes under the strand "A safe, secure and challenging environment" (University of Hope*, 2013, pg. 2).

1.3 About the Peer Mentoring Programme

The peer mentoring programme that is the focus of this research is offered to students on four different undergraduate degrees - Childhood Studies, Early Years,

Religion and Education and Youth and Community. Throughout this thesis the collective courses will be referred to as the Undergraduate Framework (UF). Throughout the students' time working towards their degree they will mix with students from the other three courses as they have some core and optional modules in common. Students only mentor other students working towards the same degree.

Within this peer mentoring programme, the first year students are the mentees and second and third year students have the opportunity to volunteer as peer mentors. The programme also has a mentor co-ordinator who set up the programme. The programme has an administrator and she is also the course administrator for the UF. The meetings between mentor and mentee are carried out in the students' own time, as participation is voluntary by both mentors and mentees. The one to one mentor pairs are finalised only after the mentors have received their training from the mentor co-ordinator.

When the students are allocated their mentors they are also enrolled onto the peer mentoring module on the universities Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) where students have access to documents, social media tools and assignment submission tools to support their studies (University of Hope*, 2018). This tool allows the students access to resources about peer mentoring. These cover anything from training materials to ethical scenarios one resource outlines the principles for peer mentoring at the University of Hope and these are:

- Peer mentoring projects will be designed in order that they best fit the context.
- Oversight of peer mentoring projects will be carried out by a steering group which will have a revolving chair and representation from all interested areas of the university.
- The steering group will act as a quality assurance mechanism for all peer mentoring projects.
- Peer mentoring processes will reflect the current best practices available.

- Peer mentors will be provided with a job description and job specification which will guide their participation.
- All peer mentors will be provided with training and on-going support in their roles.
- Each project will be managed by a named member of staff who will be the point of contact for both peer mentors and mentees.
- Participation of peer mentors will be acknowledged on their transcripts (University of Hope*, 2018, pg. 1).

1.4 Defining Peer Mentoring

There are strong links between peer mentoring and professional development. Laverick (2016) states that as the world develops and circumstances change, new programmes and ideas are developed, leading to the belief that there is a need for mentoring during all career stages in HE. "A good mentor must be conscious that their own professional development serves as a model" (Laverick, 2016, p 36).

In the 2011 report "Peer Mentoring Works!" Andrews and Clark (2011) found that since 2007 that there had been an increased number in peer mentoring programmes, allowing for opportunities for adaptation into a higher educational environment. Many academics including members of the University that is the focus of this research now look upon peer mentoring as an important tool (Byl, Struyven, Meurs, Abelshausen, Lombaerts, Engels & Vanwing, 2015; Clutterbuck, 2014; Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Eddy, Tannenbaum, Lorenzet & Smith-Jentsch, 2005; University of Hope*, 2013). Peer mentoring is seen as an aid to professional development, but as discussed previously, there is no universal definition for mentoring (Schmidt & Faber, 2016). In conclusion, it is challenging to define these terms for the purpose of this study (Andrews & Clarke, 2011). Fletcher and Mullen (2012) define what mentors 'should' do in relation to helping with professional development. They state that "mentors should be models of good professional practice who possess excellent subject knowledge" (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, p 63; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Tenenbaum, Anderson, Jett & Yourick, 2014).

Fletcher and Mullen (2012) also suggest a definition of peer mentoring; "... is defined as a formal relationship in which qualified students provides guidance and support to another student to enable that individual to better navigate his or her education" (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, p 383). This will be used to define peer mentoring in this study as it outlines and works in conjunction with the University's aims and principles of peer mentoring. To understand how peer mentoring relationships work, a number of different models have been developed in recent times by academics (Dawson, 2014; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Giles, Zacharopoulou & Condell, 2016; Pye, Williams & Dunne, 2016; Ring, 2015; Tenebaum & Anderson et al., 2014). One model that explains the working relationship well is the Developmental Model of Research Mentoring (Revelo & Loui, 2016), this model is reviewed in depth in the literature review chapter.

1.5 Defining Transition

Mentoring and peer mentoring alike hold unique experiences. These experiences tend to have a focus on the aspects of a transitional period, for example; adult development, typical professional career stages that people go through and the development stages in leadership (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). Transitions are a challenging period (Leese, 2010). The transition that is the focus for this research is the one that takes place when entering HE. HE students are much more diverse than they used to be and come from many different backgrounds. Students have a personal transition to make as they differ in their; religions, beliefs, ethnicities, gender, social class and age. Students also have different places that they will transition from. The majority of students are transitioning from sixth forms and colleges. Other students may have been studying other courses, working full or part time, looking after their families, unemployed or arriving from overseas.

The term transition, as used in this study, relates specifically to personal development in a new environment, where the primary outcome is the student developing into an autonomous learner (Leese, 2010). This is an area research that will be explored in this research to see if it can determine whether or not the peer mentoring programme at the University of Hope can aid students transitioning into HE. Part of this transition may take place for some students during what is typically known as 'fresher's week'. However, this experience can be rather overwhelming for some students as it is also used as an intense exchange of information (Laing,

Robinson & Johnston, 2005). This is where the use of peer mentoring may be beneficial, as peer mentoring helps students to make sense of the new information, signposting to other places or restating some of the information (Laverick, 2016).

1.6 Defining Retention

Retention is now perceived as of increasing importance to universities, particularly with the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which implements teaching and learning assessments for further and HE institutions (Teaching Excellence Framework, 2017). This is a result of retention of students in HE being a concern (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014).

Prior to the assessment, the University of Hope had already introduced peer mentoring programmes in a number of their undergraduate degrees to integrate new students into university life (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). Peer mentoring has been seen to have a positive impact on retention rates (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). Thomas (2002) stated that it was the students who were poorly prepared for the experience of entering into HE and it was the students who were held responsible for this, however, now this pressure is put on the HE institutions through the new TEF assessment. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) state that administrators within these institutions have long sought to identify the support mechanisms to help improve the retention of students in addition to their academic success and performance (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012), establishing that institutions had already started to notice the effectiveness of peer mentors in retaining first year students.

Since the TEF assessment has come into practice, the University of Hope have identified within their Teaching and Learning Strategy how they aim to retain students (University of Hope*, 2013). One way in which the university intends to combat this is through the use of peer mentoring programmes for all undergraduate degrees (Teaching Excellence Framework, 2017). The University of Hope has already been awarded a TEF Gold teaching standard which has been through the University's effective use of teaching and supporting. Its students tend to exceed the provider's benchmarks (Teaching Excellence Framework, 2017). This study will examine the participants' experience of the peer mentoring programme and how successful they have found peer mentoring in helping with the issue of retention. It

will take into account the mentee's and some of the academic staff's perspectives, thoughts and feelings.

1.7 Defining Social and Academic Integration

The notion of integration is a broad area, however, within HE there seems to be two prominent types of integration - academic and social (Tinto cited in Fletcher and Mullen, 2012). Academic integration focuses upon the academic factors within HE, for example the course content, assessments, academic writing, attendance, preparation and reading. Social integration focuses upon making friends, going to social events, having good relationships with flat mates and constructing a good support network (Davidson & Wilson, 2013). Some students may favour one type of integration over the other, but according to the literature only integrating either socially or academically reduces the student's chances of retention (Andreanoff, 2016; Boyle & Allison et al., 2011; Davidson & Wilson, 2013; Severiens & Schmidt, 2009; Thomas, 2012 and Zepke & Leach, 2005;). It is important to note the contradictions in the research. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) argue that the students who tend to academically integrate successfully are more likely to stay compared to the students who only integrate socially. In contrast, more recent research has concluded that social integration is also said to aid retention as it allows the students to feel like they belong to their course community (Chilvers, 2016). This is an important consideration for this study as it poses the question, can students successfully integrate without both social and academic integration happening alongside each other?

Mentees and course leaders shall be asked if they believe that a peer mentoring programme helps to integrate students effectively or not and if they believe one type of integration has more of an impact than the other on total integration. This is to respond to research question two and the overall objective of this study.

1.8 Structure of this Thesis

The introductory chapter explains the reasons and motivation behind why this research has taken place and explains and defines some of the key terms used in this study and how they are interpreted in this particular research.

The literature cited in Chapter Two discusses two main parts, firstly, what makes a good peer mentoring programme and secondly, what aspects of a peer mentoring

programme can aid and impact. The first part specifically discusses models of mentoring, personal skills linked to being a mentor, and planning, implementation and evaluation. The second part specifically draws on theory around peer mentoring and transitions in HE, peer mentoring and retention in HE and peer mentoring and integration in HE. The separation of the literature into these two main areas resulted from a clear division in the literature between, what makes a good peer mentoring programme and what aspects of a peer mentoring programme can aid and impact.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological approach used and why this was chosen. It discusses the philosophical approach and its relevance to the study. It specifically identifies how the data was collected and analysed, the ethical considerations that were taken into account, the sample and the validity and reliability of the research.

The data has been analysed and discussed in Chapter Four, this chapter looks back at the literature and analyses and discusses the primary research alongside it. It has two main themes that cover a number of different areas, transition, retention and integration and feedback: benefits and knowledge of the peer mentoring programme. The themes cover a number of areas - retention, transition, integration, communication, matching process, communities and support.

The final chapter concludes this thesis by revisiting the research questions and discussing whether or not they have been successfully answered. This chapter also looks back at the overall objective of the study whilst making some possible recommendations for future practice

1.9 Summary

In this chapter a number of key words have been defined, for example, transition, and they have been discussed in terms of what they mean to this research project. The terms peer mentoring, transition, retention and social and academic integration will be mentioned throughout the thesis. These are discussed in depth as they are of particular significance to this study, which is evident in the study's objective and research questions as previously stated. However, some of these key terms are complex and may hold a different meaning in different situations, which is why the need for them to be defined in this particular study is important.

The main objective of the research project and the research questions are referred to throughout this study. This has been done in order for their relevance to be clear in

each chapter. Chapter Five discusses all three research questions in depth and identifies whether or not the research questions have been answered. It follows this by drawing on some conclusions and providing some suggestions for further development in order to improve the peer mentoring programme.

Now the key areas of the study have been defined, Chapter Two, the literature review, will discuss the key literature within the area and defines some of the key terms in more depth.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature has been split into two main areas for the purpose of this study. The first part discusses and analyses the literature around what makes a good peer mentoring programme. It seeks to delve into some of the possible underpinning models of mentoring practice, a number of key skills and how to plan, implement and evaluate a peer mentoring programme. The term peer mentoring has been defined in Chapter One.

The second part of this chapter discusses which aspects a peer mentoring programme can aid and impact. Within the first part of the chapter three sub themes are discussed. These are peer mentoring and transitions in HE, peer mentoring and retention in HE and peer mentoring and integration in HE. These themes have been chosen as they are all aspects of a peer mentoring programme that can impact. This chapter helps to address the main objective of the study, which is;

- To analyse if a peer mentoring programme can successfully integrate and enhance a student's university experience, with a view to making recommendations to improve the programme.

The sub themes in part two address the study's research questions:

- How does a peer mentoring programme aid the first year mentees transition into higher education?

The literature review theme that supports this is 'peer mentoring and transitions in higher education', however, the term 'transition' is touched on within the other themes in the chapter. The term transition is identified within Chapter One.

- What impact does a peer mentoring programme have on retention and integrating first year mentees academically and socially?

The literature review sub theme that supports this is 'peer mentoring and retention in higher education' and 'peer mentoring and integration in higher education'. This research question will have more of a significance within Chapter Four, where the findings of the study are discussed and analysed.

- What benefits are there to a peer mentoring programme for the university and mentees?

Throughout the literature review chapter, the term 'benefits' is touched upon. It is important to state that most of the literature within the next chapter relates to mentoring and not peer mentoring. The research on peer mentoring is scarce, therefore the literature review chapter will be exploring the main concepts found in the literature around mentoring. In general, stating what mentoring is used for, and where relevant making a link to peer mentoring in particular. However, this chapter cannot begin without defining 'mentoring' and 'peer mentoring', something which is challenging (Andrews & Clarke, 2011). 'Mentoring' is stated to be; "...primarily about transition, about helping someone move from one stage to another." (Wallace & Gravells. 2007, pg. 15). Whereas 'peer mentoring' is stated to be; "defined as a formal relationship in which qualified students provides guidance and support to another student to enable that individual to better navigate his or her education" (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, p 383).

These definitions have been chosen as they are more relevant to the study than many other definitions. There is a more in depth explanation of what peer mentoring is and its relation to this research within Chapter One.

2.2 What makes a good Peer Mentoring Programme

2.2.1 Models of Mentoring

Models have been used over a long period of time. Models demonstrate mentoring practice and the different skills, environment and structure mentoring needs to be successful. The models that are explored throughout the literature review chapter are based around the purpose of the relationship, the expectations of the mentoring pairing and the context in which they operate. It is important that this is understood as, ideally, a peer mentoring programme should follow a model to enable good practice. This explains why there are many different models of mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2014). Due to this research being centred on the use of peer mentoring in HE, the models that are discussed are mainly peer mentoring models and one to one mentoring models. Despite the fact there are many different models of mentoring, there are not many that focus specifically on peer mentoring. Therefore, this theme of the literature review will identify the parts of the models that do relate to the study and will discuss them in detail as well as critiquing the part of the models that do not relate to this study. Specifically, each model will have a different focus,

the CLEAR model identifies the importance of contracting, the Near-Peer Mentorship model focuses on personal growth, the Developmental model discusses the journey of becoming an autonomous learning and the Sixteen Mentoring Design Elements explores the importance of training. Each of the models in this theme have been chosen as they discussed certain aspects that are important to a peer mentoring programme. Many of the models will also be compared against features of peer mentoring and not just mentoring in general as there is a lack in research in peer mentoring (Cunningham, 2012).

2.2.1 i) CLEAR Model

The first model to be reviewed is the CLEAR model, as the first stage (Contracting phase stage) holds a focus on the contract between the mentor and the mentee. The name for the model comes from the first letter of each stage. The CLEAR model is made up of five stages; Contracting phase skills, Listening phase skills, Exploration phase skills, Action phase skills and Review phase skills. The model was originally developed for coaches and supervisors, however, some of the aspects can be transferred and used in mentoring. The first CLEAR stage is about 'contracting' (Bachkirova, Jackson & Clutterbuck, 2011; Carnell, MacDonald & Askew, 2006; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Murray, 2001). The CLEAR model identifies key areas of contracting that should be covered; practicalities, boundaries, working alliance, the session format and the organisational and professional context (Bachkirova, Jackson & Clutterbuck, 2011; Carnell, MacDonald & Askew, 2006; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Murray, 2001).

The contracting stage of the CLEAR model specifically relates to the peer mentoring programme that is the focus of this research, which identifies its relevance to the study. Having a clear contract between the mentee and mentor is also the first step in the peer mentoring relationship on the programme being researched. This part of the relationship helps the mentee and mentor build rapport, as the contract is formed by both parties and it is down to them to agree upon what the peer mentoring sessions are to be used for. Furthermore, Identifying the boundaries in the working relationship is of the most importance to the peer mentoring programme, as some difficulties can arise with peer mentoring when the mentees contact their mentors at unsociable hours. Another reason for identifying boundaries is that mentors may contact their mentor too often, becoming an inconvenience. Similarly, the mentees

may rely on their mentor too much becoming dependent on them (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). The contracting stage is the only stage that was specifically relevant to this study, therefore, the other four stages will not be discussed. The CLEAR model contrasts with the Near-Peer Mentorship Model, discussed next in the chapter, which does not have a contract.

The Near-Peer Mentorship Model does not mention the need for a contract, however the sixteen mentoring design elements do (Dawson, 2014). This raises the question of how important it is to have a contact between both parties. Does it have an impact on how the relationship will work or not? Or would a skilled and experienced mentor be able to establish the boundaries without the outline of a contract? However, any contract would be seen as the 'legal' paperwork for the relationship, suggesting that the Near-Peer Mentorship Model may therefore not be a good model to follow.

2.2.1 ii) The Near-Peer Mentorship Model

The Near-Peer Mentorship Model puts an emphasis on personal growth and development. This is supposed to be done through the participants exploring topics of personal interest through methods of research, teaching and mentorship (Tenenbaum & Anderson et al, 2014).

Mentorship means:

“The guidance provided by a mentor, especially an experienced person in a company or educational institution.” (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Each level of the model is designed to build upon the participants' previous experience and is supposed to enable them to be prepared to move on to the next level (Tenenbaum & Anderson et al, 2014). This is similar to what peer mentoring programmes already do but on a smaller scale, as the programme can be used by the mentees to build on their experiences prior to HE, whether this be further education study or employment. This model may be more relevant if the programme played a big part in helping the first years move on to their second year and the same mentors stayed with them, as the model states that it is used for helping students who may have completed summer internships before starting HE (Tenenbaum & Anderson, 2014). This model has a similar objective to the Developmental Model of Research Mentoring, which is discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.1 iii) Developmental Model of Research Mentoring

This model focuses on the journey of students to become autonomous learners. It has four stages that support the transition throughout their development. However, it is stated that the model is based on helping students who collectively participate in group research (Revelo & Loui, 2016; Washington & Cox, 2016) but it will be related to on a peer mentoring basis. Stage One is all about the mentor introducing the mentee to the environment and the kind of work they will have to do which is done by the mentor giving clear directions. This stage is considered crucial in all peer mentoring relationships, as it creates a foundation for developing the relationship (Revelo & Loui, 2016; Washington & Cox, 2016). The rest of the model describes how the responsibility of their studies is passed over to them through the mentor. In practice, it is the mentee's responsibility but they need a mentor to help them develop the right skills in order to become an autonomous learner and take ownership of their studies (Revelo & Loui, 2016; Washington & Cox, 2016). Conversely, several studies have suggested that students' expectations and skills sets may not be suitable for them to achieve succession in HE due to the transition being one of several challenges and being ill prepared for HE (Laing, Robinson & Johnston, 2005; Sriver, Olesen & Clifford, 2015). This suggests that this model may not help students be successful if followed in practice by their mentor.

2.2.1 iv) Sixteen Mentoring Design Elements

Dawson's (2014) Sixteen Mentoring Designed Elements may not be regarded as a model but some of the design elements he talks about can be used as the basis for a new peer mentoring scheme. The design elements recognise a number of things that are of importance when considering setting up a new peer mentoring scheme as it discusses; objectives, roles, time, matching, resources and tools, training, rewards, policy, monitoring and termination (Dawson, 2014).

In particular, the focus is going to be on training, as this is of significant importance in making peer mentoring successful. Dawson (2014) refers to training as the necessary understanding and skills for mentoring, and how these are developed (Dawson, 2014). This model does not provide any detail of what the training should consist of. Conversely, Clutterbuck (2014) states certain aspects that training might cover. One aspect is giving the participants some information about mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2014). These training sessions define some of the differences between

being a coach and a mentor. Both roles are very similar. However, participants are more receptive to training when it is a continuous process (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Many academics believe that the training process is the key to a successful programme (Clutterbuck, 2014; Cunningham, 2012; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001; Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes & Garrett-Harris, 2006). Having trained peer mentors can help to adapt and integrate new students into their environment, which, in turn, leads to higher retention rates, eliminating as many of the negative effects the transitions may hold (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). Retention, transition and integration are all aspects that are to be explored later on in this chapter.

All these models have identified key elements to having a successful peer mentoring programme, but not one of them alone would cover all aspects. These elements are discussed again in Chapter Four, where the findings of the research will be set in context of some of the literature discussed.

The models that have been discussed were chosen because they were the most relatable to the peer mentoring programme in this study. However, there are still many others that have not been discussed for example, Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATs), Supplemental Instruction Model (Dawson, 2014), Undergraduate Research Model (Tenenbaum & Anderson, 2014), Peer Review (Ring, 2015), Students Academic Mentoring (SAM), the Apprenticeship Model, the Reflective Model, the Competency Model, Darwin and Palmer's Mentoring Circles (Pye, Williams & Dunne, 2016), Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) and Peer Assisted Learning (Giles, Zacharopoulou & Condell, 2016). I assert that these models are the alternative methods of mentoring for the peer mentoring programmes in this study, Darwin (2000) states that people should have an awareness of these alternative methods (Darwin, cited in Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Alternative mentoring methods may be touched upon to help address the transforming educational culture as this is an ever-changing process that needs to keep up with the change in society (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

2.2.2 Personal Skills Linked to being a Mentor

For a mentoring relationship to be considered successful both the mentor and mentee are required to possess certain skills, qualities and attributes (Klasen &

Clutterbuck, 2001). These skills need to be used effectively and developed frequently as mentoring is seen as a continuous process. Good mentors generally possess well developed communication skills, self-awareness and a genuine belief in the mentee's potential (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001), particularly in peer mentoring, as peer relationships tend to allow for a more open relationship. Making the use of communicating and sharing information seem to be the norm (Eddy & Tannenbaum et al, 2005). The most significant skill is the use of communication. For this reason, a sub theme has been dedicated to communication. Communication is a complex skill that is made up of many different aspects, for example, the use of attentive listening, body language, silence and summarising and paraphrasing (Clutterbuck, 2014; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001).

The process of mentoring is also beneficial in helping the mentors develop the skills that they need to possess. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) state that mentors seeing their mentees development and progression can lead to them enhancing their skills as well as developing their own knowledge in a range of areas. This is done by both encountering 'new ideas' and 'new perspectives' (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

This theme will discuss a few of the skills related to being a mentor in detail. The main focus will be on the skill of communication. This will then be followed by the use of open questioning and empathy.

2.2.2 i) Communication

The use of communication is a crucial aspect of a peer mentoring programme between mentors, mentees and the supporting staff. Since the focus by employers on transferable attributes, there has been strong evidence to suggest that employers value communication. This is a skill that mentors can identify with as it is one of the main attributes in their training and carrying out their role (Ford, Thackeray, Barnes & Hendrickx, 2015). Firstly, a few models of communication will be discussed followed by a breakdown of some aspects of communication; attentive listening, summarising and paraphrasing, body language and silence.

2.2.2 i)a Models of Communication

The transfer of communication and how it happens is not clear, therefore, a few models of communication have been briefly considered in order to help understand how this happens (Buell, 2010). Wiemann (1977) defines communication as

“The ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviours in order that he may successfully accomplish his own goals during an encounter.” (Wiemann, cited in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004, pg. 73).

Kalbfleisch and Davies (1993) developed numerous models from their research study that looked at different communication variables. Namley, a conceptual model of mentoring relationships, a model of mentee involvement in mentoring relationships and a model of mentor involvement in mentoring relationships (Buell, 2010).

Unfortunately, even though these models are based upon communication variables, they do not explore how the transaction of communication happens in the mentoring relationship. This may be due to the research being limited to examining the effects of communication between a mentor and mentee and how they influenced the relationship (Buell, 2010) and not how this actually happens in practice between the two parties involved.

To explain how communication within a mentoring relationship may happen a few models have been discussed. The Cloning Model features on the use of communication (Buell, 2010). However, an unexperienced or untrained mentor might adopt this model of practice, which could be a result of the mentor's under developed communication skills. Mentors need to have well developed communication skills in order to be effective within a mentoring relationship (Cunningham, 2012). The nature of the Cloning Model states that the mentor's lack of training results in them controlling their mentee, whereas trained and developed communication skills result in a mentor directing and supporting their mentee in the right areas and effectively (Buell, 2010). Demonstrating within practice that this model may not be as effective with 'first time' mentors. The peer mentoring programme that is the focus of the study will have a range of mentors involved, some 'first time' mentors and some mentors with increased skill development. Therefore, this model would not accommodate the different mentoring abilities.

Conversely, the Nurturing Model gives a better representation of the type of communication a mentee may need in their transition to HE (Buell, 2010). This model describes the mentor as fulfilling some of the functions of a parental figure, by creating an open and safe environment for the mentee to settle into, allowing the mentee to feel as comfortable as possible so that they are enabled to try to learn

new things and ideas (Buell, 2010). Experienced mentors are able to provide and adapt their mentoring technique based on their ability to use situational communication. Situational communication requires an understanding of different commonplace situations and focuses on the development of skills in those situations (Clutterbuck, 2014). If the Nurturing Model was to be put into the context of this study, it would be the mentor's responsibility to help equip their mentee to develop and become an independent learner in HE (Leese, 2010).

2.2.2 i)b Listening

The transaction of communication within a mentoring relationship is still not quite clear even though there is some theory around how to make communication as successful as possible. However, listening is an activity that many people cannot carry out skilfully, making it a complex skill to actively practice (Hawkins and Smith, 2013). This relates to what has been stated before that communication is a complex skill. Further reading enlightened informed the following breakdown of the different aspects to communication (Clutterbuck, 2014; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). The first aspect to be explored is the use of listening (Clutterbuck, 2014; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001), in particular attentive listening. Covey (1992) developed a series of listening stages; attentive listening is stage four in Covey's listening levels. The use of attentive listening is referred to as listening for facts and information (Covey, 1992), which allows the mentor to be able to communicate back to their mentee through the use of summarising, which in turn enables the mentor to give their mentee the correct support or guidance they may need (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). As well as attentive listening, mentors also need to use eye contact as this also reassures their mentee that they are in fact being listened to by their mentor. Furthermore, the mentor should have open body language and patience with their mentee, allowing the mentoring relationship to result in guidance, support or challenge (Clutterbuck, 2014). Failure to execute these aspects may result in the mentee not feeling supported effectively.

2.2.2 i)c Summarising and Paraphrasing

The act of 'summarising' gives the mentee more encouragement and time for them to speak for themselves. Most effective mentors will aim to place more emphasis on listening than them actually speaking (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004). This allows for the mentoring relationship to become mutual and equal (Nevins & Russell, 2000), as

peer mentoring should be. It could be argued that this is not possible in all mentoring relationships unless both parties are able to find some common ground upon which to build a rapport. The use of summarising and paraphrasing is done to fulfil a purpose, for example, if the mentor is trying to clarify for them-selves that they have understood what their mentee said and when the mentor is wanting to help the learner understand an issue better. Summarising and paraphrasing should be done after a piece of dialogue has been finished but doing this after every few sentences is considered to be extreme (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001).

2.2.2 i)d Silence

In addition to allowing the mentee time to talk, it is also important that you allow time for silence, as silence is also a major part of communicating (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). Good mentoring sessions will usually have a few natural pauses in the session, thus allowing the mentee time to think about the situation they are talking about and possibly come to their own conclusions, but it also allows for the mentor to be able to come up with an appropriate response. Trying not to fill in the pauses is what should be done, as sometimes a silence is where the best thinking occurs (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001).

Communication within a peer mentoring relationship also spreads to the use of other forms of communication, for example, email, texts and phone calls. Some peer mentoring relationships may be more virtual than face-to-face. This can be due to time constraints (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004). However, Clutterbuck (2014) states that the use of email allows for rapid responses between both mentors and mentees (Clutterbuck, 2014). Conversely, it seems that this is not always true as some participants may not like the use of email, texts or phone calls and choose not to respond unless face to face contact is being arranged. There are other limitations to 'virtual mentoring' as it does not provide the intimacy that face to face responses can allow along with the use of spontaneity in the relationship. This makes it difficult to pick up the non-verbal cues that can sometimes be key in identifying how someone is really feeling about the situation they are discussing (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004).

The understanding of communication in a mentoring relationship has been made clear but it needs to be recognised that the frequency in communication between both parties of the relationship is a way of keeping a relationship flowing. These two

aspects need to go hand in hand if the relationship is to be a success (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016).

2.2.2 ii) Open Questioning

Open questioning allows the mentor to try and find some common ground between them and their mentee. This allows the two participants to build a rapport and trust in the mentoring relationship (Megginson & Clutterbuck et al, 2006). By using open questions, it can allow the mentor to identify the mentees 'needs' and 'anxieties', which enables the mentor to devise an appropriate support strategy (Cunningham, 2012). Mentors also have to be smart about how they use their skill to openly question their mentees, for example, if a mentor questions a mentee skilfully this allows the mentee to reflect and be able to develop, so that they are able to come to their own solutions and possible conclusions (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001).

Generally, being advanced in this skill allows the mentees to feel enabled to open up more about what they wish to discuss with their mentor. It also helps the mentor to be able to identify the main point or issue for the session, eventually, allowing the session to move forward. However, this can only usually happen when the relationship has a good foundation of trust, as stated previously. Trust plays a major part in building and maintaining a rapport with a client. Without trust the relationship between the mentor and mentee can become compromised, as the mentee may not share their worries with their mentor which may still lead to the mentee considering 'dropping out' of HE. This is due to mentoring relationships being a personal experience that can be intimate, with the mentor having to deal with the sensitive issues, problems, challenges and weaknesses of the mentee (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001).

2.2.2 iii) Empathy

Empathy from the mentor plays a big part in building and maintaining rapport (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). Oxford University Press (2018) defines empathy as: "The ability to understand and share the feelings of another." However, academics Miller and Miller (2002) define empathy as: "Understanding others and taking an active interest in their concerns." (pg. 201). The second definition by Miller and Miller (2002) has more relation to the context of this study than the Oxford University Press (2018) definition. The term "active interest" (Miller & Miller, 2002, pg. 201) specifically

identifies why mentors need to empathise with their mentees to build and maintain the rapport.

Some mentors may be willing to share anecdotes with their mentees in order to help them to sympathise with their mentee. Similarly, this may also help the mentee to feel that their mentor does understand where they are coming from and how they are feeling (Clutterbuck, 2014). Mentors should have an understanding that mentoring is a continuous learning process for them. This allows for their sessions with their mentees to be credible. If a mentor does not understand this they can become a poor role model to their mentees by not practicing what they preach, undermining their credibility (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). The notion of the mentor being a role model serves more of an importance in peer mentoring than mentoring in general, as the mentees are still trying to find their way within their higher educational experience.

It is important that mentors possess a number of skills in order to enable the mentees to develop their own solutions, make their own choices and become independent learners (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). Nevertheless, peer mentors generally have a wider role than traditional mentoring, the peer mentors need to develop a rapport with their mentees and build trust (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Peer mentors are also said to need advanced skills in helping the mentee clarify personal goals (Clutterbuck, 2014). There appears to be a contradiction between trainable skills and mentors already possessing skills that need to be developed.

2.2.3 Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

In this section the literature discusses how a peer mentoring programme is planned, carried out and evaluated. In particular, the literature discusses principles, matching, training and contracting.

2.2.3 i) Planning

In order for a peer mentoring programme to run successfully there is an important need to plan a number of different things. A peer mentoring programme needs to be integrated into the organisations values, which usually begins with setting out the programmes aims and objectives which work alongside the organisation's aims and objectives (Bryant, Aizer Brody Perez, Shillam, Edelman, Bond & Siegel, 2015; Clutterbuck, 2014). Putting these objectives into practice usually takes time and a lot

of preparation. Most peer mentoring programmes involve four main roles; line manager, programme co-ordinator, mentors and mentees. The greater knowledge of the objectives and each person's role the more successful a programme will be (Bryant & Aizer Brody et al, 2015; Clutterbuck, 2014). As well as a programme having its own objectives it usually should also fall in line with a set of broader principles for example, Clutterbuck (2014) states that these may be;

- Understanding how the culture will support or hinder mentoring;
- Ensure top management commitment;
- Adapt the programme to the company's development programme;
- Ensure commitment and participation from mentor/ mentee groups;
- Ensure that support systems are in place;
- Ensure acceptance of the time involved;
- Demystify the mentoring programme;
- Ensure confidentiality and
- Measure both processes and outcomes (Clutterbuck, 2014, pg. 68).

These aims, objectives and principles may be referred to as the architecture around a peer mentoring programme (Cunningham, 2012), which enables a peer mentoring programme's purpose which is important to establish before a programme is implemented (Megginson & Clutterbuck et al, 2006), resulting in the development of a well-designed environment for all roles involved (Cunningham, 2012).

2.2.3 ii) Implementation

When it comes to implementing a peer mentoring programme there are several different aspects to consider, for example, training, matching and contracting. These aspects come into practice when the mentor and mentee are preparing for the peer mentoring relationship to begin (Clutterbuck, 2014).

2.2.3 ii)a Training

The training that takes place in peer mentoring is crucial for both the mentor and the mentee (Cunningham, 2012), however, Fletcher and Mullen (2012) state that the training process should be formal and not informal, as they believe that formal

training is essential for success. The above statement also supports what Clutterbuck (2014) states about training - without it a peer mentoring programme has a higher chance of failure. Clutterbuck (2014) also gives an example of what should be covered in the mentor and mentee's training. The mentor's training should cover:

- Purpose of the programme;
- Benefits of the mentoring relationship;
- Information about mentoring;
- Dynamic nature of the relationship, its stages and phases;
- Core qualities and skills of an effective mentor;
- Practical tools and techniques for helping the mentee;
- Anticipating and forestalling possible problems and
- Adapting mentoring practices to particular settings (Clutterbuck, 2014, pg. 73).

The mentees training should cover:

- What the organisation expects from the programme;
- What can realistically be expected of the mentor;
- What the mentor should expect of him or her and
- What he or she can do to make the relationship deliver positive outcomes for both parties (Clutterbuck, 2014, pg. 75).

The purpose of on-going training is considered to be more effective in practice than the use of one-shot training that Fletcher and Mullen (2012) refer to, which usually takes place at the beginning of a mentoring programme.

2.2.3 ii)b Matching

Another stage of implementation is the matching process that takes place between a mentor and mentee. Ideally the matching process should follow a criteria based on the peer mentoring programmes aims, objectives and principles (Megginson &

Clutterbuck et al, 2006) but, this is not always the case. There are many different ways that the matching process may occur however, some of which are discussed below.

The first way mentors and mentees may be matched is through the students having a LinkedIn account, which is an academic searchable website. The mentees can then go through the voluntary mentor's profiles and review them before putting forward a few names to the programme co-ordinator (Bryant & Aizer Brody et al, 2015).

The second way in which mentors and mentees could be matched is through how much time they are willing to give to the programme. For example, the programme co-ordinator may put together a few different options of time scales and ask both mentors and mentees what their preferences are, and then the programme co-ordinator can match them accordingly (Bryant & Aizer Brody et al, 2015).

The matching process may not always be successful and have to be revisited when a peer mentoring relationship is not working well (Clutterbuck, 2014). Ideally, a successful match should entail a rapport between both mentor and mentee. There should be a good balance in the relationship of difference and similarity and an openness that means they both are able to make choices in the relationship (Megginson & Clutterbuck et al, 2006).

2.2.3 ii)c Contracting

Finally, the last stage of implementation is the mentor and mentee forming a contract between themselves (Cunningham, 2012). A mentoring contract needs to discuss the relationship's objectives, the mentors and mentees expectations of each other and how the relationship will be managed (Clutterbuck, 2014). The contract between both parties may be seen as them setting the ground rules of their relationship, Clutterbuck (2014) gives an example of some mentoring ground rules:

- Expectations of each other, the relationship and what we hope to learn;
- How closely expectations match;
- Core topics;
- Limits;

- Who will take responsibility for; frequency of meetings, agenda, where to meet, how long to meet for, learning goals and review of progress;
- Whether the meetings are formal or informal;
- How much trust and openness and
- Honest feedback (Clutterbuck, 2014).

2.2.3 iii) Evaluation

Lastly, evaluation is important to enable the effectiveness of a peer mentoring programme (Clutterbuck, 2014). Some peer mentoring programmes may come to an end, for example, a peer mentoring programme used in education may be reviewed and evaluated at the end of each academic year. A programme should be reviewed and evaluated on the terms of its original goals (Clutterbuck, 2014). However, Fletcher and Mullen (2012) state that evaluation should be an on-going process instead of evaluation being used as a formality for the end of a programme. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) believe that on-going evaluation helps to identify short term outcomes, which are said to result in long term impacts for a programme. According to them, these long term impacts may identify some success markers which give the evaluation process more meaning (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). An effective evaluation process should look to identify development opportunities that can improve the operation of a peer mentoring programme and opportunities for positive change (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

2.3 Aspects a Peer Mentoring Programme Can Aid and Impact

2.3.1 Peer Mentoring and Transitions in Higher Education

Transition is a key aspect to this study because peer mentoring programmes can have a positive impact. Peer mentoring programmes have previously been used as a tool for aiding a transitional period (Hawkins & Smith, 2013).

Transitions are challenging for many people but going into HE can be especially challenging. The HE environment experience is based on turning young people into independent learners. Some of the factors that make this transition challenging are meeting people from different ethnicities, genders, social class and backgrounds (Leese, 2010). Leese identifies the need for transitional tutorials for students in their first term of HE (Leese, 2010). Some students may have a larger transition to make due to the increase in people attending university and the diversity of people who go

to university; others may not have the skills or confidence to make the transition (Hussey & Smith, 2010). Mentoring claims to help reduce feelings of isolation and improve confidence and self-esteem throughout this transition period, which in turn has improved students sense of self-reflection and problem solving capacities (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

Mentoring is viewed as a craft that focuses upon the aspects of transition. It is a unique experience with a focus upon; adult development, typical professional career stages that people go through and the development stages in leadership (Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Laverick, 2016). All three aspects of the transition take place within HE. During this period, students come into adulthood or develop as adults if they are mature students. The university experience is primarily about career development and the need to develop their knowledge within a certain area of study.

Correspondingly, the use of leadership skills is important to all students in relation to their career development, even if these particular skills are not used after university they will be skills that are transferable (Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Laverick, 2016).

Becoming a peer mentor could enable the development of a student's leadership skills.

Throughout the transitional period into HE guidance is important. Students need aids to help them survive in what is at first an 'alien' academic environment. They encounter challenges such as, academic writing and the pressure and format of taking tests within this different environment. Students tend to be task motivated and having peer mentoring within this stage and environment helps the students in completing these tasks (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Peer relationships are said to create good support networks (Colvin and Ashman, 2010) which can be extremely useful to institutions as this transition is crucial to student success (Carragher and McGaughey, 2016). Developing academic skills by enabling peer opportunities could aid a student's academic integration, which is crucial to this transition and student success. Academic Integration has been defined in Chapter One.

Fletcher and Mullen (2012) believe that when building a connection with students' peer mentors tend to get better results than professionals. Many students may be struggling to cope with the transition and are finding it challenging (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Laverick (2016) backs this up by identifying the reasoning and

importance of undergraduate programmes using student mentors, as they give the students someone to go to that they may feel more comfortable with to ask questions and talk about any problems compared to professionals. Having an extra support system that is peer led is considered a comfort to many students, many of whom may be living away from their families (Laverick, 2016). Peer mentoring allows students access to talk to someone on the same level as them, who have also had the same or similar experiences (Laverick, 2016).

Hawkins and Smith (2013) defined three different stages of transition that they consider to be common. There is the unlearning stage, the liminal stage and the incorporation stage. The unlearning stage gives a focus on students sometimes hitting their “limits” (Hawkins & Smith, 2013, pg. 71), using the term “limits” loosely as skills can always be developed if enabled correctly. However, the stage identifies that even if the previous way they have worked is not working for them anymore that it does not mean they have failed, as it is a process of learning a new way in which they are able to move forward and succeed (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). Academic skills, for example a student’s academic writing, could benefit through a peer mentor’s encouragement and knowledge. This may be extremely frustrating for the student and they may lose their confidence and think they are not on the right path anymore (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). Having a peer mentor to ease a student’s worries may enable the student to feel more confident in developing their writing style. Peer mentoring is said to aid students’ confidence and self-esteem in a new environment (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014).

The incorporation stage is where the mentee has found new ways to learn and think in order for them to make their study skills more sustainable. This is the end goal of where the mentor should aim to get their mentee ‘in hindsight’. Once the mentee has adapted to this new way of learning and therefore the mentee should no longer need their mentor (Hawkins & Smith, 2013).

Collings, Swanson and Watkins (2014) suggest that first year students have higher levels of homesickness, loneliness and depression. These feelings are said to have more of a presence during the first year’s first few weeks at university. However, this study mostly focuses on commuter students and residential students, in particular residential students who have made the choice to move far away from their family

home (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). On the contrary, as mentioned previously this raises the question as to whether different students have different needs during this transitional period. Feelings of homesickness would not apply to students who have decided to commute for their studies, for example. These students may still feel loneliness but not necessarily in the same sense as a residential student (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Leese, 2012). The differences in students and their needs are an aspect of the transition the students encounter. Peer mentoring can have a positive impact on the transition, which is why for many years institutions have used peer mentoring to aid transitional periods (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

2.3.2 Peer Mentoring and Retention in Higher Education

Retention is important to a university. Retaining students can be challenging as students may leave HE for a number of different reasons. However, some of these reasons may be eliminated by the use of, and support from, a peer mentor. Mentoring can bridge the gap into HE making it seem increasingly possible to stay, ultimately retaining students and benefitting the university.

McLinnis (2000) argues that the highest rate of student attrition happens within the first year of undergraduate study (McLinnis as cited in Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). The issue of withdrawal from university is something of a concern within the UK (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). Prompting an increase in peer mentoring programmes in HE. However, it is the students that are being blamed for being poorly prepared for the experience into HE (Thomas, 2002). Peer mentors can be seen to help to adapt and integrate new students into its environment, which in turn leads to higher retention rates, eliminating many of the negative effects that transitions may hold (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014).

Thomas (2002) identifies factors that may influence retention in students in HE. One factor relates to student services within HE. This questions how universities are supporting and helping students to overcome the factors that may lead them to withdraw from university in the early stages (Thomas, 2002). Other factors that have been identified within the literature are not having a sense of belonging, financial issues, poor mental health and, as mentioned throughout this chapter, feelings of loneliness. This demonstrates that not all students who choose to withdraw do so

because of failing assessments and receiving poor marks (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). In situations like the ones described above peer mentoring could be a tool that is used to help support students and result in alleviating their need to use other support services in a university. Furthermore, another factor that influences retention rates is students successfully integrating into the university lifestyle both socially and academically. Becoming an active member of a peer mentoring programme can provide students with a community to socialise and interact with other students. Academic integration is said to aid student retention more than social integration (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012) however, social and academic integration is something that will have more of a focus later in the chapter.

Last year a new assessment was introduced by the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for further and higher educational institutions. The assessment is partly based upon retention rates from students, which now places further emphasis upon institutions to help and support students (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2017). The new assessment may also have placed a greater emphasis on Further and HE institutions devising and developing specific retention strategies, one of these being implementing mentoring and peer mentoring schemes into their environment. But, the literature suggests it had started to increase before then. As Fletcher and Mullen (2012) state, administrators within these institutions have long sought to identify the support mechanisms needed to improve the retention of students as well as their academic success and performance (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Nevertheless, this new assessment does place an emphasis on retention, but at the moment the assessment is only voluntary. However, 295 out of 231 further and HE institutions opted to have the assessment carried out (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2017). The University of Hope being one of these. Identifies one of the possible reasons as to why peer mentoring is now provided to all students in all schools of the University.

The assessment looks at retention in under the heading “learning environment” as it looks at the institutions resources, which the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) believes will aid retention in students as well as their progression and attainment. There is no other assessment like this currently and it was only introduced in June 2017 (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2017). The

assessment will allow students to make more of an informed choice on the institution they wish to study at which in turn could help retention rates in the long term too.

2.3.3 Peer Mentoring and Integration in Higher Education

Integration is important as this is an aspect of the transitional period and if both happen successfully it has an increased chance of aiding retention. Peer mentoring can aid this by helping to integrate students both socially and academically through the peer mentor's own knowledge and through them signposting their mentees to other services or resources.

Social and academic integration is a concept that appears to have only come back into the light in relation to HE in recent years. The main theorist in this area is Tinto who has carried out numerous studies. Tinto (1973) relates his work to the area of student dropout rates and he made the link between them by stating:

“Students stayed in college to the degree to which the student felt academically and socially integrated into life at the college” (Tinto cited in Davidson & Wilson, 2013).

As a result of his extensive work in this area, his studies will take the main focus within this theme.

Tinto (1998) suggests that there are two types of integration that come into play in HE for students, one being the academic side to the experience and one being the social side (Tinto cited in Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). However, these widely used concepts do lack definition (Boyle, Allison, Archibald, Smales, Hopkins, Wysocki & Stephenson, 2011). It is clear from students that some focus more on integrating socially or academically and that one aspect seems to have more significance than the other. Different students, for example, when comparing residential students to commuter students, may have different priorities and favour the opposite or the same type of integration. Commuter students may favour academic integration over social due to them choosing to commute anyway, because they do not wish to participate in the social aspect to their studies (Davidson & Wilson, 2013). Many of the studies relate to students as non-traditional students and traditional students. Bean and Metzner (1985) define non-traditional students “as being 25 years of age and older, enrolled part time and usually not living on campus” (Bean & Metzner cited in Davidson & Wilson, 2013, pg. 331). Traditional students must therefore be

under the age of 25, enrolled full time and live on campus. By being given access to a student mentor who has been through a similar situation it can increase the mentee's ability to integrate into HE (Tinto cited in Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

Bean and Metzner also found that non-traditional students' reasons for leaving their studies were completely unrelated to social factors at the institution where they chose to study. It was more about their academic performance and dedication to their studies (Bean & Metzner cited in Davidson & Wilson, 2013). The academic integration for students is seen to have a more significant part in the students first term compared to any other being described as paramount. Webb (1988) stated in his study that the performance data from the first term actually help to determine the future of their students more accurately (Webb cited in Davidson & Wilson, 2013). Traditionally, peer mentoring is also seen more of an aid for academic integration than social integration.

The notion of integration is even more complex than originally thought Severiens and Schmidt (2009) introduced the notions of formal and informal integration. They claim that both are needed for a successful integration, and explain what formal and informal academic and social integration actually are. Formal academic integration is claimed to involve the contact that take place in regards to the students' studies and the institution they are studying at, which is where formal peer mentoring programmes come into effect. While informal academic integration is said to be the contact that happens between students and tutors outside of the learning environment for example, some students and tutors may have good relationships and discuss personal matters (Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). Their idea of formal and informal social integration is similar. Formal social integration being with peers and the interaction that takes place is wholly on matters of learning, whereas informal leads to more of a social interaction outside of the learning environment. They have merely distinguished who the interactions happen with, what they are about and where they happen (Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). Depending on what peer relationship students have may depend on whether peer mentoring is aiding formal or informal integration.

Severiens and Schmidt (2009) make a conflicting point about formal social integration which contradicts what most of the other studies state about social

integration in regards to retention. Many studies state that social has no or little impact on student retention. Some also state that academic integration either needs to happen first, or social integration has no impact (Andreanoff, 2016; Boyle & Allison et al., 2011; Davidson & Wilson, 2013; Thomas, 2012; Zepke & Leach, 2005) whereas Severiens and Schmidt (2009) state that formal integration has an effect on study progress and that students who can cooperate effectively and make friends with their peers tend to feel more at home in their institution and generally do better academically (Severiens & Schmidt, 2009).

Many studies also recognise the importance of the types of integration having to coincide with each other. As already mentioned, some studies suggest that academic integration needs to happen first for social integration to happen (Boyle & Allison et al, 2011). Boyle, Allison, Archibald, Smales, Hopkins, Wysocki, Danbavand and Sephenson's (2011) study also identifies the link between social and academic integration, as once integrated, these support the student's desires to persist with their studies (Boyle & Allison et al, 2011). Having these two types of integration working together appeared to be the foundation for the retention of students. Social and academic integration is seen as the driving ethos for the formation of retention strategies. Universities are said to see an increase in their students' integration with their studies, each other and even the institution (Boyle & Allison, 2011). More recently it has been stated that social and academic integration leads to a greater level of intellectual development, enriches students' learning and therefore improves their success (Byl & Struyven et al, 2015).

From what has already been discussed it can be concluded that peer mentoring schemes ultimately aid integration and retention in HE, but that peer mentoring schemes need the support from academic staff at institutions for maximum success. Academic staff play a key role in providing students with a sense of structure in an academic environment so that social interaction can take place, the interaction being peer mentoring (Boyle & Allison, 2011). Furthermore, it is necessary for the institution to have an understanding of what the student's needs are in this transition and in integrating them socially and academically is part of that (Boyle & Allison, 2011). Tinto (2008) states that;

“Access without support is not opportunity” (Tinto cited in Thomas, 2012, pg. 7).

Likewise, Bamber and Tett (2001) argue that:

“Higher education must accept that the implications of offering access to non-traditional students do not end, but rather begin, at the point of entry” (Bamber & Tett cited in Thomas, 2012, pg. 7).

This backs up the need for local and mature students to be given the same opportunity, to allow them to see that they also do belong, and that there are academic benefits for them when investing academically and socially (Boyle & Allison, 2011). Without these steps being taken there may be implications for students’ social and academic integration.

Zepke and Leach (2005) identify that there can also be downsides to too much social integration, as it may possibly hinder students being able to perform well in their studies (Zepke & Leach cited in Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). This is an aspect that institutions need to be aware of, as students perform ‘better’ in institutions that promote social integration (Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). Peer mentoring can be used as a type of social integration as it provides students with access to an additional community of people.

When related to retention, students that tend to academically integrate successfully are more likely to stay, compared to the students who only integrate socially (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). But, social integration is also said to aid retention as it allows the students to feel like they belong to their course community (Chilvers, 2016) and that social integration is important to first year students as it helps them to settle into university life (Byl & Struyven et al, 2015). This causes debate with what Fletcher and Mullen (2012) and Chilvers (2016) have argued. The debate is whether social and academic integration go hand in hand with each other and whether one cannot happen without the other. Ultimately each institution’s aim should be to include institutional adaptation, which is described by Zepke and Leach (2005) as:

Rather than a model that assumes that students must fit into what is often an alien culture and that they leave their own cultures. The challenge is to

develop ways in which an individual's identity is affirmed, honoured, and incorporated into the organisation's culture (Zepke & Leach, 2005, pg. 52).

The above quote reflects the potential capabilities and effects of peer mentoring.

2.4 Summary

Throughout this chapter two main topics and a number of sub themes have been used in order to help identify what makes a good peer mentoring programme and the aspects a peer mentoring programme can aid and impact. These concepts and sub themes help to justify why HE institutions use peer mentoring programmes for different reasons. It is important to this study that peer mentoring was discussed in terms of whether it can impact the aspects of transition, integration and retention as it is what they study objectified to contribute to or answer. The exploration of how this occurred is discussed in chapter four. The literature does raise a few questions. One that stands out is, whether social integration has little or no impact on student retention. This question will be discussed again within Chapter Five, the Conclusion.

Throughout this chapter a number of design elements for a peer mentoring programme have been discussed, for example, models, skills, training, matching and contracting. It was important to explain what these elements are and how they contribute to developing a successful peer mentoring programme. Nevertheless, this does not mean that every single peer mentoring programme will have incorporated all of these design elements into it, identifying that this research will not enable general conclusions to be made about how to make a successful peer mentoring programme in other HE institutions.

The next chapter goes on to discuss the methodological approach behind the study and why that particular approach was chosen, the problems the research encountered and how these were overcome, as well as defining philosophical approaches.

Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is key to understanding where this research will sit in its field. It discusses methodological concepts within education and addresses how this study has been carried out. The chapter explains certain methodological terms and what they mean to this study, how the data was collected, coded and interpreted, ethical considerations and the sample used.

The main objective of the research was:

- To analyse if a peer mentoring programme has successfully integrated and enhanced a student's university experience, suggesting possible recommendations to improve the programme.

Research Questions:

- How did a peer mentoring programme aid the first year mentees transition into higher education?
- What impact did a peer mentoring programme have on retaining and integrating first year mentees academically and socially?
- What were the benefits of a peer mentoring programme for the university and mentees?

3.2 Philosophical Assumptions

This research has been conducted using a particular epistemological stance, therefore, it is important that this philosophical approach is discussed. Firstly, the term philosophy looks at the world and describes how it is organised and possibly, how it should be organised (Newby, 2014). Philosophy expresses views and values about the world in order for the organisation to happen. Philosophy shapes what a person thinks is important, meaning it can shape how a researcher conducts and analyses their research (Newby, 2014).

The term epistemology relates to knowledge generally and the conditions for acquiring it (Hofer & Pintrich, 2012). Epistemology asks the question "how can we be sure that someone else's interpretation is correct?" (Newby, 2014, pg. 36). The word 'how' in the above question may insinuate that there are multiple ways of acquiring

knowledge, the 'how' process is of significance as knowledge can be developed, determined and acquired which, in turn determines whether the knowledge is true or false (Newby, 2014). Nevertheless, this philosophy is complex, especially when related to qualitative research as the outcomes of data may be interpreted differently from researcher to researcher but, these different interpretations and perspectives have to be accepted (Newby, 2014).

3.2.1 Philosophical Approach

The philosophical approach used for this study was an interpretivist inductive qualitative case study, with the use of qualitative and quantitative data. The key aspect to a case study is choosing the right methods that relate to my personal beliefs as the researcher, this can be linked to epistemology. Epistemology is a term that has been discussed earlier in this chapter. An interpretivist approach allows some room for subjectivity, as it usually seeks to put a positive light on a certain case (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Whereas, the positivist approach looks at facts. These facts are able to be generalised (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). The interpretivist approach was chosen over a positivist approach as the research on a peer mentoring programme that collects the feelings and opinions from participants, which is subjective data and not factual. Furthermore, the inductive approach looks at drawing a theory from the data, this was done by identifying themes and patterns (Gray, 2004), resulting in thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is not appropriate for the use of a deductive approach, which is led by a theory and then the chosen theory is applied to the data (Gray, 2004).

3.3 Methodology

The word methodology represents the way in which the researcher works and the 'rules', procedures and methods that they follow when conducting their study. However, there are limitations when choosing to work within a certain methodology. This may affect certain aspects of what the researcher wants to achieve from their study, for example, when the approach that has been chosen does not match the reality of the study (Newby, 2014).

The term methodology and a research method are seen as two different things. The methodology is the structure of research the methods that are used within a particular field. A research method is the research 'tools', which are how the

research data is collected, for example, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, observations as well as many others. Most research methods are associated with a type of methodology (Newby, 2014). These 'tools' are what are needed to carry out research. Research is sometimes defined as a problem solving activity because research cannot be predicted and sometimes problems can be anticipated whereas others cannot until the research has been started (Newby, 2014).

There are differences between qualitative data and quantitative data (Stewart, 2014). The reasons for the use of qualitative data was due to the research objective of collecting participants' thoughts, feeling and experiences about the peer mentoring programme. These are all factors that cannot be measured numerically (Stewart, 2014). However, some quantitative data was collected from the questionnaires. Qualitative research does not start with a hypothesis unlike quantitative research. This is due to qualitative researchers' believing that there is no sole answer to their research (Newby, 2014). The research was committed to showing that the participants may have different views about the peer mentoring programme but that there was not one right answer. Each participant has a different take and experience of the peer mentoring programme but each one is still valid to the research (Newby, 2014). Despite this, the research still needs to be presented as neutral as it can be, this will then allow audiences to make sense of the data (Newby, 2014).

The case study method was chosen as case studies traditionally look at one person or organisation (Bell, 2014). Their aim is to then understand a particular case in depth, whilst looking at the case holistically and within the case's natural setting. However, because of this, it is argued that a case study can be seen as more of a strategy than a method (Punch, 2011). A case study method is usually looked at in two different ways; what they can be used for and how they can be used (Newby, 2014). The case study was used to look at certain aspects that the peer mentoring programme can impact; Transition, integration and retention. How the case study was used is slightly different. The objective of the research was to make recommendations for the peer mentoring programme. There are some disadvantages to the case study method, primarily case studies have limitations (Punch, 2011). The main limitation was that the data collected cannot be generalised. This was due to the fact that all the data has been collected from one specific university. Even though other universities may have an active peer

mentoring programme in place it does not mean that the programme operates in the same way as the one at the focus of this research. However, it will be made clear that some, if not most, aspects are able to be related to other peer mentoring programmes as certain aspects will be similar if not the same (Punch, 2011).

Due to the nature of the research objective and research questions I chose to use semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with a mixture of open and closed questions to gather the data. A copy of the interview questions and the questionnaire are attached in Appendix Two and Three. This was because I was interested in the participants' current knowledge and how they identified themselves, as well as their thoughts and experience of certain aspects of the peer mentoring programme. This is a qualitative study which examines data that consists of people's relationships, character, emotions and the other ways in which people choose to express themselves. These types of sources are seen as valid to qualitative researchers as qualitative data often has an objective to gain an understanding of the world. However, the questionnaire also gathered a small amount of quantitative data. Qualitative data focuses on a very small part of the world (Newby, 2014). This was relevant to my study as it was a case study and was looking at understanding one peer mentoring programme in one school of a university.

3.4 Methods

The intention with my data collection was to collect the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the participants. The most used research tool in collecting qualitative data is interviews (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) which supports the use of semi-structured interviews. Conducting interviews is an effective way to collect qualitative data. Semi structured interviews were used as these enable the participants to elaborate on what they are thinking and what they feel is important (Denscombe, 2014). Semi-structured interviews also allow for richer data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013), and the participants in this study were knowledgeable of the peer mentoring programme. The use of interviews was effective as they are flexible, meaning that questions which may have been misunderstood can be rephrased. The use of semi-structured interviews also allowed for extra questions to be asked when a participant touched on an interesting subject that I wanted to be explored further (Newby, 2014). This, along with the use of questionnaires, proved effective in gathering the research from the chosen participants. Having a mix of

open and closed questions in the questionnaire allowed for the participant to share as much of their experience of the peer mentoring programme as they wanted (Newby, 2014). Open questions in the questionnaire also meant that the participants could express their feelings by using their own choice of words, thus giving participants their own voice (Newby, 2014). Another reason the questionnaire research method was used was due to the numbers of participants needed. Questionnaires are effective in gathering data from a larger number of people than for example, a focus group (Newby, 2014). This resulted in the collection of a small amount of quantitative data, as some of the background questions were about what course the mentees were on and what type of student they identified themselves as.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations

There are several ethical concerns when conducting research. It is paramount to ensure the research is ethically appropriate, as this is a significant aspect when conducting sound research (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010). Research and in particular case studies are used to 'make things better' and this is what drives the research forward. Ethical issues arise once it is known who may need to be involved in the research and how taking part may impact on them (Newby, 2014). It is up to the researcher to decide whether taking any risk is ethical or not. A principle which supports ethical research is informed consent from the participants (Newby, 2014).

Furthermore, it was essential that the participants were informed of what their role was within the research and how this would take place before they volunteered their time. This was done through the participant information form that was provided with each questionnaire and before each interview. To follow this the participants were then given a consent form to fill out and to sign if they were happy to participate within the research. The participant information form and consent form are attached in Appendix One. This was done as participation within the study was voluntary and informed participation is the norm for primary research (Newby, 2014). This allowed the participants to understand and agree to participation without any prior obligations (BERA, 2011).

There were a few ethical issues I needed to consider before conducting my research, firstly giving wrong incentives. For example, the use of materialistic incentives has not be used to increase participation as this may have had some

undesirable effects (BERA, 2011). To address this, the participants who agreed to participate in the research have been informed that they are able to read the research findings once it has been formally written. The participant information form states the participants may contact the researcher if they wish to see a copy of the thesis.

Furthermore, the participants have been made aware that their responses have been anonymised so that confidentiality is maintained, this has been done by giving participants numbers and through the use of pseudonyms for names and places. Each pseudonym in this thesis has been identified with an asterisk. As a participant they still have their right to privacy and it has been honoured within this research (BERA, 2011). It was also important to address the participants' anonymity as some participants were mentees who have used their mentoring sessions to share personal issues and challenges with their mentor. Anonymity is an underpinning guideline for research (BERA, 2011). In the case of a confidential issue being discussed, that data would have been discarded. Confidentiality is different to anonymity and that explains why both concepts were considered (BERA, 2011). The anonymised data from both the questionnaires and interviews has been stored and the interview recordings have been destroyed.

It is important to protect the participants from any harm, including emotional harm (BERA, 2011). Which resulted in the questionnaires providing a space for the mentees to share some of their potential worries about transitioning in HE, if they wanted to. However, the questionnaires made it clear that these responses were optional and the participants did not have to provide an answer. Minimising and managing any discomfort or stress for the participants (BERA, 2011).

When conducting semi-structured interviews and questionnaires I avoided asking or including leading questions. Leading questions may result in the research collecting data that is of a sensitive nature and can corrupt the data's validity (Denscombe, 2014). To avoid the research being seen as biased, none of my personal opinions or experiences of the peer mentoring programme have been put into the research, but these have been acknowledged as my motivation for the research. This decision has allowed for a better positionality. Positionality is a challenging aspect to qualitative research as participant's opinions can be influential to the researcher (Newby, 2014).

Another possible ethical issue is the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires resulting in biased data. This can be an issue if the researcher passes their own thoughts and feelings on to the participant (Newby, 2014). Credibility also needs to be recognised when conducting interviews and questionnaires as the participants may not be completely truthful (Denscombe, 2014). However, it is down to the researcher to determine how truthful a participant's answer is. Some participants may state an answer that is the truth but, that version of the truth was stated in order to reflect them in a better light (Newby, 2014).

3.4.2 Validity and reliability

Firstly, the term validity shall be defined. The definition of validity is: "The quality of being logically or factually sound; soundness or cogency." (Oxford University Press, 2018). In order for research to be valid to its field it has to be representative of the matter that it is being used to investigate, which can be challenging as it means looking particularly at the way the sample for the research is chosen (Newby, 2014). This case study is representing the students who have chosen to be a part of a voluntary peer mentoring programmes, and the staff at the university that support the peer mentoring programmes. These programmes in particular have been chosen due to them being in their infancy and the recent addition of TEF awards to higher educational institutes. Another aspect to valid research is it being as complete as possible and completing what it was set out to do (Newby, 2014), which is why a series of different methods of research and triangulation were used, namely, interviews and a questionnaire as well as an extensive literature review. However, that does not mean the research still is not without its limits, validity is an important part to making a study credible to its field (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Furthermore, it is important for the research to be transparent, a lot of this aspect of validity is linked with credibility (Newby, 2014). This will be addressed in Chapter Four where the data has been analysed and critiqued.

Yet, in order for the research to be seen as reliable, the research needs to be accurate (Denscombe, 2014). The definition of reliability is: "The degree to which the result of a measurement, calculation, or specification can be depended on to be accurate." (Oxford University Press, 2018). In order to address reliability throughout the research, leading questions have not been asked in the interviews, neither were any put into the questionnaire.

In order for the research to be seen as reliable the research needs to be accurate (Denscombe, 2014). To improve the study's reliability an extensive literature review has been devised which informs with both the interviews and questionnaires, resulting in triangulation of this study.

3.4.3 Thematic analysis approach

Thematic analysis was chosen for the analysis of this research due to its accessibility in analysing qualitative data, as it allows for flexibility. In particular Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach has been used. This approach was followed as it proposes a number of phases in order for the key themes of the data to be finalised. The phases that took place were:

- Phase one, initial ideas and themes
- Phase two, emergent candidate themes
- Phase three, refined candidate themes
- Phase four, final themes

This resulted from the themes of the data to be reduced from seven to two (Braun & Clarke, 2006). How this took place has been presented in Appendix Six, Seven, Eight and Nine. A blank transcript and a coded transcript can also be found in Appendix Four and Five.

3.4.4 Sampling

The sample for this research has been taken from a peer mentoring programme run on four different degrees referred to as the UF. These degrees are part of a number of undergraduate degrees within the School of Education and Professional Development in the University of Hope. This sample method used was purposive (Denscombe, 2014) as the research required a specialist group sample. A specialist group sample is used to gain an insight on a case that only certain participants are able to provide, resulting in a richer understanding and data (Newby, 2014). This type of sampling usually requires criteria in order to select participants (Newby, 2014). However, for this research the required participants were clearly identified as first year students and course leaders who knew of or had a part in the peer mentoring programme. I had access to this sample through previous contact from my undergraduate dissertation study, which provided me with the opportunity to network with other course leaders. Through the course leaders I gained access to the first

year students. In total 4 course leaders were interviewed and 48 first year students completed questionnaires. The response rate from Early Years, Youth and Community and Religion and Education first year students was quite high, however the response rate from Childhood Studies first year students was none. The low response rate from Childhood Studies first year students may have been due to the questionnaire being sent by email and not physically handed out to students. The reason these students were contacted by email was due to a lack of time.

3.5 Summary

Within this chapter the methodology underpinning this research has been explored. The chapter started by explaining a philosophical approach. The purpose of this was to understand how the participants form their answers, as well as how these answers were analysed by me and the aspects that may have influenced how this happened. Next, the way in which the data has been collected was discussed. This identified the nature of the case study the and the types of interviews and questionnaires that were used. The chapter then went on to state the ethical considerations, as well as looking at the thematic analysis approach, validity and reliability and closes with the sample used.

The thesis will now look at the findings from the research and discuss this in depth through the format of thematic analysis.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 introduction

Throughout this chapter, the data from the research study shall be presented and analysed alongside the literature discussed in Chapter Two. The data has presented two themes which are linked to the research questions that the study aims to answer. All the research questions are mentioned throughout this chapter. Some of the connections between the content of this chapter and the themes are evident, the first theme is transition, retention and integration and the second theme is feedback: benefits and knowledge of the peer mentoring programme. Both themes have four sub themes.

4.2 covers, Transition, Retention and Integration:

- Retention and barriers to retaining first year students,
- Transition,
- Barriers to social and academic integration and
- Does one type of Integration take priority over another?

4.3 covers, Feedback: Benefits and Knowledge of the Peer Mentoring Programme:

- Feedback procedure,
- Communication, commitment and voluntary participation,
- Matching process and aims of the programme and
- Positive feedback, communities and support.

These themes came from the use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, discussed in Chapter Three. Throughout the chapter the Course Leaders have been identified as CL followed by a number. The mentees have been identified by their degree followed by a number, brief background information about the mentees can be found in the Appendix Ten. The data that has been gathered has a mixture of positive and constructive feedback from the participants, which, ultimately, has allowed for an insightful discussion.

4.2 Transition, Retention and Integration

Transition, retention and integration became an emerging theme throughout the data, a significant amount of which overlapped between each of these three areas. This was due to all three concepts impacting on each other when put into the context

of peer mentoring. This demonstrates why these areas have been grouped together as one of two of the themes within this chapter. The data presented barriers in some of these areas. The discussion on this theme aims to try and provide some solutions. Some solutions are more viable than others for the development of the peer mentoring programme. It is these solutions in particular that will be examined further within the final conclusion chapter as possible recommendations.

4.2.1 Retention and Barriers to Retaining First Year Students

Retention rates are a common reason for the use of a peer mentoring programme in HE, as discussed in Chapter Two. When the course leaders (CL) were asked about retention and if there was a link between that and peer mentoring programmes they were all in agreement that peer mentoring programme aid retention rates:

CL1: "Not this academic year but last year we lost an awful lot of students off our course almost half and one left very very quickly, and if she's had a peer mentor... I think potentially that would have been one less student who would have left."

CL2: "I think that would help massively with retention because again they feel part of a community."

CL3: "I think it would help with retention... because if you're having a wobble and you've got someone to chat to then that can only help."

CL4: "We have low rates of students leaving in the first year on this course so it may have a real benefit."

Using data from the questionnaire, it is evident that the peer mentoring programme at the University of Hope is perceived to help retain some students, 11.7% of mentees said that having a peer mentoring helped them through the feeling of wanting to withdraw from higher education.

The first potential barrier to retaining students is the information they are given with their induction period, one mentee states:

EY21: "Should have been given more information in the first week."

This demonstrates that the current induction period may not make every first year comfortable or feel ready to start their studies. It is important that the students know as much as possible about the university they have chosen to study at and how to make use of all the resources available to them. This is an aspect that will help to engage students and make them feel part of a community. The peer mentoring programme could be more effective in helping bridging this gap and aid them in

understanding the information when the students first arrive into HE. This is an aspect of university life that the University of Hope have recognised that could benefit from improvement and as a result came up with a project called the 'Flying start project'. This project aims to "stimulate academic interest, develop good student study habits and provide opportunities for students to work and engage socially." (The Guardian, 2018). The project has already been introduced to a number of degree courses at the University of Hope however, one course leader stated:

CL1: "We are talking about doing Joanne Smith's thing... where you have an extended induction."*

This project may help the students on the UF courses to be more inclined to carry on with their studies within those first few weeks.

Another aspect that may lead to a potential barrier is an unskilled mentor. This is an aspect that is discussed further later on in this chapter. However, the response from CL3 specifically talks about skills:

CL3: "If you're matched with someone um, you know who's got those good listening skills and can explain to you lots of reasons why hanging on in there, or if you are feeling um, down about things, you might be able to go and chat to your mentor, if they are skilled enough to have that sort of conversation then fine but um, how do we know, how do we know that the mentors are skilled in that way, yeah?"

Referring back to Chapter Two, under the heading 'personal skills linked to being a mentor'. The Nurturing Model is discussed and linked to the skill of communication, it identifies that the first year student may need a skilled and experienced mentor (Clutterbuck, 2014) in order for an open and safe environment to be created, similar to what a parental figure may provide (Buell, 2010). It is part of the mentor's responsibility to equip their mentee to be able to learn and develop within a higher educational environment (Leese, 2010). However, as previously discussed not all mentors, regardless of the training they receive, may be able to provide this for their mentee.

4.2.2 Transition

The data revealed that transitions are a predominately important area. This was due to there being a higher amount of data generated in this area about the transition itself and how it happened, how the mentees felt through the transition and how the course leaders thought the transition may turn out for the majority of students. From

the questionnaire, 19.6% of mentees stated that they feel that having a mentor helped them through the transition into higher education.

It was evident that there are a lot of different variables when it comes to a transitional period, making the experience unique for each person (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). CL3 states that it is because of these variables that the mentors need to be aware of their mentees needs:

CL3: "In terms of transition if the relationship, if the relationship works I think there's lots of different ways in which the relationship could work, it doesn't necessarily mean they have got to meet loads or loads of times or have lots of in depth conversations, I think a light touch could also be helpful."

This quote specifically relates to the transitional period into HE, but knowledge and the need to know a mentee's needs will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Having someone else's experience to fall back on may aid and give them reassurance that what they may be thinking or feeling is the 'norm' due to the magnitude of this transition into HE. During this transition, students may meet people from different ethnicities, genders, social class and backgrounds (Leese, 2010). However, not everyone will find it comfortable confiding their feelings and thoughts in a stranger, for example:

EY8: "I understand that they have been where I was but everybody has different feelings and experiences and I don't think a stranger would have made me feel better."

The above statement demonstrates that a good and effective mentor should also be able to identify when a mentee either does not want, or need the help they are offering (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). This is what peer mentoring is about and why programmes should be voluntary, because the mentors only have basic training which allows them to give guidance and advice but does not mean that the mentee has any obligation to follow the advice given (Carragher and McGaughey, 2016; Colvin and Ashman, 2010; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012).

Peer mentoring programmes help to give first year students a sense of belonging, CL3 explains:

CL3: "If the relationship works in terms of transition um, yeah I think it could be helpful in giving, in giving the new ones a sense of identity here or a sense of beginning to navigate a way of how their student identity might be formed."

Because the university experience is an independent experience, many students go through an important stage of their adult development, which may be referred to as 'finding themselves' and 'discovering who they are' (Laverick, 2016). This stage of adult development could be argued as a separate transition from the one into HE, instead of being seen as part of the transition into HE (Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Laverick, 2016). It also allows the first year student to discover how they are going to navigate their way through the university experience, as not all students will be happy to use their peer mentor for this and may decide to seek guidance and advice elsewhere (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Nonetheless, the first year students may not always be sure of where that support is going to come from and worry about this for example, the first year students were asked if they had any worries before coming to university and some chose to share their worries:

EY10: "Making friends."

EY20: "I was worried that I would not have friends."

Many of the students 'need' or 'want' for friends could link back to them being students who would prefer to friends help support them through the transition into HE. It could also be that the first years are looking for acceptance into an environment that they are experiencing for the first time (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Peer mentoring may be crucial in this instance as it allows a sense of community to be opened up to the mentee. Part of the transition for some students could include moving away from home, the questionnaire data revealed that, 17.6% of mentees identified themselves as residential students.

Even though the data shows that they are only a small proportion of students who have this part of the transition to make too, it does not mean that the peer mentors and staff should not support them as CL3 explains:

CL3: Do you know what else is really important is accommodation, if students, particularly those that have moved away from home, if they're in accommodation that is, that they are enjoying that... but, if they are in accommodation that they are finding difficult to manage that can be quite challenging."

This statement emphasises that a successful transition will be supported by the students having a steady and stable place to live (Leese, 2010; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012), regardless of whether they are residential students or not. From the questionnaire, 60.7% of mentees identified themselves as commuter students.

The worry of not have a steady or stable place to live also expressed by participants:

YC5: "Living away from home."

EY1: "Moving away from home not really knowing what to expect."

It could be argued that residential students have more complex needs when it comes to the transition, as they may not just seek acceptance from their course friends but also from their house or flat friends (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Leese, 2010). If they do not connect and gain acceptance, it may lead to the students wanting to leave HE but, peer mentoring can help to reduce these feelings by integrating into the peer mentoring community, as it opens them up to interacting with more students which may result in the student wanting to stay in HE:

CL1: "If you start on the course and you don't hook into your group or the wider Youth and Community work group or the school or the university if you don't feel connected... and you don't feel part of that group yeah, that is the likelihood that it's greater that you'll leave."

The variables of transition are not the only challenges as the transition into HE is also seen as a very big transition to make (Leese, 2010). These feelings are expressed by CL2:

CL2: "I think that's a huge transition and not just academically, emotionally, mentally and I think that's where they really struggle."

Some of the peer mentors have been effective in helping the first years with this transition:

EY15: "They have helped with adapting with the change from college to university, what is expected from me and also looking at deadlines."

4.2.3 Barriers to Social and Academic Integration

Some degree courses are more intense on their timetabling than others. This may be a factor affecting students and their ability to socially integrate into the university environment. CL3 explains the impact of this:

CL3: "Our course because we have essentially students who have to spend four full days either in university or on placement for the entire three years, if they have to earn money to feed themselves or to buy clothes or to socialise that's another day or two days, if they have got kids which often they do, that's another."

CL3 explains how intense the course she leads can be for the students, which means some students may not have time to socially integrate like others students

do. This is a primary factor in how one type of integration can take priority over another (Byl & Struyven et al, 2015; Chilvers, 2016; Severiens & Schmidt, 2009). When the student's degree course is so intense sometimes, students may miss out on their social integration:

CL1: "It's a missed opportunity because part of university should be about opening you up to a whole range of different ideas and experiences and perspectives."

Many students come into HE from further education institutions which can be extremely different. In further education they may be taught one method of how to carry out a task and when they come to HE and the same task may be taught in a completely different way and that they can no longer use the method that they were taught in further education. Peer mentoring can help to show how they can begin to change and develop this by discussing coursework and signposting to other services at the university, as CL2 observes:

CL2: "They often come and they have been told to write in a certain style for their A levels for example, and they come to us and we are like 'no you can't write like that'... it might take you a year to change that style of writing."

CL2 was correct in stating that a writing style may take a long amount of time to rectify and change, which when informed, some students may see this as a tedious task that they are not committed to completing. They may believe that they can make it through HE without working on changing their writing style. However, sometimes new students may receive a comment about their writing style better from a peer mentor who they know has had to overcome this challenge themselves. Eventually their writing style may change anyway through development and a continuation of reading academically, or it may not and therefore may hinder their grades. The mentors are there to help their mentees with a situation like this and may need to signpost to other support services if this is a task the mentor is still working on themselves, as CL2 explains:

CL2: "If they don't get a particularly effective mentor... and if they're not really developing academically and only sort of scraping through you've got to think about that then, then sort of I suppose how they're going to support their mentee more academically."

This situation is not something that has been found amongst the literature, however as stated above this would have to be supported by the mentor through them signposting their mentee to other support services.

4.2.4 Does one type of Integration take priority over another?

The term of social and academic integration is one that is rather complex due to the number of different aspects that it includes. Even though they are two separate terms they both overlap, which explains that when asked, the course leaders could not clearly identify which one may take priority for the students. CL3 wrestles with this idea:

CL3: "Academic and social um, the which, it's difficult to say which might take a priority because I think that really depends on student personality but when push comes to shove students are not doing well on their assignments then motivation tends to drop a bit."

CL3 starts well by backing up what the literature states about not knowing which type of integration will take priority for the students, but, then goes on to contradict themselves by linking the student's motivation to their academic attainment. The student's academic attainment is the aspect of integration that the course leaders thought the peer mentoring programme aided over social integration. Nevertheless, they come back and identify how important the social side to integration is too, seeing the benefits to both types of integration, as CL3 observes:

CL3: "The social side is really important as well, do you know what else is really important is accommodation."

It may be that the students themselves do not see the link between the two types of integration and see both as separate activities, as CL2 speculates:

CL2: "I do think they are linked you know in terms of... a student becoming engaged within university erm, but I think they see them as two completely different things so they have got their academic side of it and then they've got the social side of it and I don't think they see the two mixing to be honest."

Most students have spoken about how their mentors have helped them academically:

YC4: "To help me understand the degree."

EY5: "They are used for our placement portfolio module, in regards to our progress and support with what needs completing next."

EY6: "Talking about different modules, asking for advice, helping with referencing."

EY21: "Has supported me with coursework in terms of referencing and what should be included within assignments."

RE4: "Yes helped me a lot, received feedback on coursework, in order to improve work."

The students were not the only participants to not see the connection between academic and social integration, as these course leaders demonstrates:

CL2: "I've never really thought of it in that way I suppose I always just think of it in an academic way."

CL3: "I guess my focus is more on the academic um achievement."

CL4: "I don't know of any instances that the peer mentoring has helped in social integration... I see peer mentoring as being a support for academic work and settling into university life rather than a social thing."

Even though students on an intense degree course may miss out on or struggle to integrate socially the course leaders believe there may be ways around it and improve the social integration for these students. Peer mentoring may only be able to aid individuals but to help social integration it may need a more collective approach for example, group mentoring. Evidently, this may be down to the course leaders alone to get something started. CL1 considers this option:

CL1: "Right I'm committed at doing something so there's the three year out I'm going to put something in place, it might only be once a month as an evening or... to give them a chance to interact... so that gives them more chance to hook into the university."

A change in intense degree courses like the above would also positively impact each students sense of belonging and the construction of their own communities that have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

4.3 Feedback: Benefits and Knowledge of the Peer Mentoring Programme

Feedback about the peer mentoring programme provided many positives and negatives about how the programme is performing. The data presented a number of benefits for the mentors, mentees and the university. The feedback has also provided insight into what the course leaders and mentees knowledge about the programme. This allowed for opportunities to discuss possible developments. Some of these opportunities for development have been discussed further if they are viable and have been made as recommendations.

4.3.1 Feedback Process

Resulting from the course leader interviews, it was evident that there does not seem to be a procedure for feedback in place. It seemed of particular importance that the

programme has a feedback procedure in place so that the staff at the University of Hope could identify if they thought the programme was running successfully. Having a feedback procedure could then provide opportunities for development and improvement of the programme in order for the peer mentors to successfully support their students through the transition and integration into HE. The course leaders demonstrate its lack of feedback:

CL3: "I've not had any official feedback from students."

CL2: "You know I haven't actually particularly had a lot of information back from students."

There is clearly no official or formal way for the university to gain feedback from the students about the peer mentoring programme. Usually a peer mentoring programme used in education is evaluated at the end of the academic year (Clutterbuck, 2014). CL3 goes on to state that the peer mentoring programme has not been mentioned in other situations where the students can feedback to tutors about anything at the university:

CL3: "It's not something that comes up on student panel and that might be worth considering you know putting it on student panel agendas."

Evaluation is a significant part of enabling the effectiveness of a peer mentoring programme (Clutterbuck, 2014) therefore is it important that the University of Hope develop a formal procedure to gain the feedback from students, as this is something that the course leaders kept stating in their interviews:

CL3: "But there doesn't seem to be any structured mechanism to get feedback or to sort of acknowledge how it's going course level."

Having a formal feedback procedure is crucial for the success of the peer mentoring programme.

4.3.2 Communication, Commitment and Voluntary Participation

Participation within a programme is advised to be voluntary (Clutterbuck, 2014). Despite this peer mentoring programme following the literatures guidelines on participation being voluntary, a few mentees still experienced a lack of effort from their mentors:

YC7: "Due to having no contact with my mentor I feel as though the programme is not quite running as it could."

YC10: *"It would be a good programme if the peer mentors actually made an effort."*

EY1: *"My peer mentor didn't really seem very interested in being my mentor, however I didn't feel I required a mentor at the time. We tried to arrange a meeting but they cancelled and we didn't rearrange."*

EY11: *"Mine stop replying to me, so not good."*

EY19: *"Bad because she never replied back to my email to meet and talk about work."*

EY24: *"I think the mentors are actually too busy to find time to meet with mentees."*

Even though many of these responses are negative, they reflect Clutterbuck's (2014) statement about mentoring demanding time and effort. In order for a programme to run successfully, all parties involved need to be committed. It should be made clear to the mentors before they volunteer how much time and effort is needed to instigate and develop a peer mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck, 2014). From one mentees response it is unclear whether the mentors are aware of what is expected of them:

EY2: *"My mentor seemed like they were just doing it for something to put on their CV, never was no sincere concern to want to help a first year. It's a good job I felt confident enough myself that I didn't need one."*

The mentee states that the mentor does not have any *"sincere concern to want to help a first year"*. Relating this statement to the literature, again it demonstrates that the mentors need to be committed, yet, it also demonstrates the need for the mentor to have the skill of showing empathy. Empathy is a part of a mentor building and maintaining a rapport with their mentee (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001), which is unfortunately what EY2's mentor seemed to be lacking or they did not portray their empathy across to their mentee effectively. Mentors who do not understand the importance of empathy can indirectly become a poor role model to their mentee (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). This did not happen in this situation as the mentee felt confident enough not to need that support.

Another point that was fed through the interviews was that the communication does not seem to be as effective as it could be between the programme co-ordinator, the administer, the mentors and mentees. One course leader stated that:

CL1: *"I probably haven't committed enough time to it to make sure that it's worked."*

The issue of parties being committed to the peer mentoring programme is discussed later in this chapter however, it has not been discussed in terms of course leader's commitments. This lack of commitment from course leaders and the lack of knowledge and awareness of what is happening may be a result of ineffective communication. This is also an aspect that was fed back from the mentees:

YC6: "I have never heard from my mentor, I don't even know who it is."

YC7: "No contact at all from my mentor."

These responses may highlight the fact that not every second and third year students are capable to effectively mentor a first year student. Clutterbuck (2014) states that mentoring is a set of trainable skills, conversely for a mentoring relationship to be considered successful both the mentor and mentee are required to possess certain skills, qualities and attributes (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2001). CL2 reflects:

CL2: "When it works well that's how it works but I'm not saying it always works like that, would concern me if they didn't get a very effective mentor you know if it was somebody that had signed up thinking oh yeah I can do this I'll be really good but then the communications not very good."

Communication is a key skill in a peer mentoring relationship, which is also a skill that the supporting staff of a programme should also possess and use effectively (Ford & Thackeray et al, 2015). Communication is a complex skill which supports Klasen and Clutterbuck's (2001) above statement about mentor and mentees requiring to already possess certain skills. Furthermore, developing these certain skills, qualities and attributes to become an effective part within a mentoring relationship supports Clutterbuck's (2014) solo statement about mentoring being a set of trainable skills. The next response from a mentee makes it evident that all mentors possess or practice effective communication skills:

YC2: "The first email was rude and basically said she didn't want to meet to do it and she'd only meet me if she really had to."

This also links to the above points about the importance of communication and commitment for succession of a peer mentoring programme.

4.3.3 Matching Process and Aims of the Programme

One of the important parts of the interviews and questionnaires was to ask the participants about their knowledge of the peer mentoring programme. This was

important as it portrayed more of an insight holistically of the programme. Firstly, how the matching process takes place is discussed, this is where and how the mentors are matched and paired up with their mentees.

Chapter Three has already discussed some of the literature around the matching process within a peer mentoring programme, however, now some of that literature will be revisited and linked closely with the findings of the research. The matching process that the programme uses is shown to be random, CL3 states:

CL3: "Tina one of our admin support... she uses the registers to match second and third years up with first years um, and then nominates a mentor for everybody and then it's that mentor's role to get in touch with their mentee and make initial contact."*

This statement demonstrates that the only form of criteria for them to be eligible to be matched is that the students are enrolled onto one of the UF degree courses. This does not necessarily result in successful matches being made as CL1 states:

CL1: "Peer mentors were allocated so that was good but not every first year has had successfully engagement with their mentors."

The reason for an unsuccessful engagement may be due to the incompatibility of the mentor and mentee, which is why the literature around setting up a peer mentoring programme suggests to use set criteria when matching. Megginson and Clutterbuck et al. (2006) state that ideally the matching process should follow the criteria based on the peer mentoring programmes aims, objectives and principles. Matching based on criteria can lead to mentor and mentee having something in common during the first meeting in order to be able to build rapport (Bryant & Aizer Brody et al., 2015). However, it seems that the matches on this peer mentoring programme are only between people on the same degree, so there is no overlap in courses. As one of the course leaders stated:

CL4: "The aim is that all first year students are allocated a mentor from the 2nd or 3rd year of the course."

However, it may be effective for mentors to be matched with students from the other UF degrees as some of the course leaders expressed in their interviews about the shortage of mentors on their degrees:

CL1: "when I set it up in the summer quite a lot students' because it's an opt out thing were opting out."

Nevertheless, three out of the four modules of the first year's study overlap, which means that spreading all volunteered mentors across all UF degree courses could potentially result in more successful relationships. Matching students based on criteria may help to eliminate some of the experiences that the mentees discussed within their questionnaire responses:

YC2: "I personally have had a bad experience but I haven't been phased by it. I think first impressions count and my mentor started off on the wrong foot so therefore made me feel like a burden which led to me not want to ask for a meeting."

YC5: "My first mentor was not very good. I had difficulty contacting her. I changed mentors and the second mentor is excellent."

These two mentees experiences were not extremely positive, and looking at the data there seemed to be a general feeling from a number of the mentees that they did not have an extremely positive experience which may be due to the lack of commitment from mentors and mentees.

The aims and objectives of a peer mentoring programme have also been discussed in Chapter Three, the literature states that a peer mentoring programme needs a group of set aims and possibly a main objective, which can be referred to as the 'architecture' for a programme (Cunningham, 2012). The participants who were interviewed were asked what they thought the aims of the peer mentoring programme were. The course leaders stated:

CL1: "Help first year retention, to help students who identify as struggling or have got particular challenges."

CL2: "I know it's for developing students even further really and developing their success."

CL3: "I think the aims of the programme are about student retention, student achievement, student community building... students sort of scaffolding a support... it's about building confidence, responsibility."

CL4: "The aim is that all first year students are allocated a mentor from the second or third year of the course."

Some of the responses are richer than others, however, it is not clear from the responses the full aims of the programme. Clutterbuck and Megginson et al (2006) state that in order for a programme to be planned and implemented successfully that it needs a set of clear aims. The aims for the programme are also not attached to the resources provided on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which may have

led to the difference in responses from the course leaders. In order for the aims to be clearer to those who participate in the peer mentoring programme they could be attached to the resources within the VLE. They may also be stated within the training that the mentors receive so that their role is also made clearer to them. Making the aims clearer results in a better environment for all roles and allows opportunities for development to be better received as everyone has an increased confidence of what is happening around them (Cunningham, 2012).

4.3.4 Positive Feedback, Communities and Support

Most of the feedback received was constructive, however, some of the feedback was positive and many of the participants could see the positive impact a peer mentoring programme can have for the university and themselves. CL2 had seen an extremely positive turn of events for one of her students:

CL2: "She said to me how invaluable that support had been from her mentor... and actually her grades have increased this year as well."

It is evident that the increase in this particular student's grades may not have been solely a result of the peer mentoring programme as the University of Hope have a lot of different resources for the students to access in terms of their individual attainment (University of Hope*, 2013). Yet, it does demonstrate how a peer mentoring relationship can go well and the results this may have when a mentee is paired with a committed and effective mentor. Likewise, the peer mentoring programme also works for mentees who may not need or want as much support as the former, YC3 states her mentor's interest as:

YC3: "Just asking how I'm doing on the course."

Sometimes this may be all the support a student needs from their mentor due to their individuality and how they have transitioned and settled into the university environment. This supports why mentoring is seen to usually be used and focused on a transitional period of time because it is a unique experience (Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Laverick, 2016). Another two students go on to state that knowing they had the support from a mentor if needed gave them reassurance:

YC1: "I feel that support was there if I needed it."

EY15: "Good, it's nice to know someone's there if they are needed."

Earlier in Chapter Two transitions were discussed. Within the transition theme it discusses student feelings of loneliness, homesickness and maybe even depression. These feelings are said to have more of a presence within the first few weeks of the first year students time at university (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). The above two statements acknowledge the impact that a peer mentoring programme can hold as they help to integrate and adapt new students to the university environment, which in turn helps to alleviate and eliminate these feelings of homesickness and loneliness (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). The questionnaire revealed that 58.8% of mentees stated that they had worries or felt anxious before starting university. Having a sense of belonging within the university community helps to overcome these anxieties (Thomas, 2012).

Primarily there should be benefits from a peer mentoring programme that impact the mentor, mentee and the university.

One benefit that impacts all parties at the same time is the construction of community and networking. Validating the use of the theory of Communities of Practice, the course leaders also make reference to the use of the peer mentoring programme helping to establish and develop a community:

CL2: "I just think it's really beneficial particularly for that peer learning as well."

CL3: "I think the benefits are strong, I think it's a good way for new students in so the students feel part of a bigger community and to start to look outside, you know the confines of their class groups or their close knit social peer networks."

The students who are a part of the peer mentoring programme are joined together by their enrolment on the same degree course, which is what Community of Practice theory states (Chilvers, 2016). The programme supports the Communities of Practice theory by giving the students the opportunity to branch outside their certain groups and create their own communities, in which they are able to develop into a unique community to fit their needs by surrounding themselves with the right resources and people (Chilvers, 2016). Part of this community may include using the peer mentoring programme community to branch out, for example one mentee participant stated:

YC5: "She helped me feel a little less isolated by access to the swimming club."

The peer mentoring programme and the students being able to construct their own unique community allows them to nurture their own sense of belonging (Chilvers, 2016)

Referring back to Chapter One to revisit the definition peer mentoring in the context of this study; "Peer mentoring is defined as a formal relationship in which qualified students provides guidance and support to another student to enable that individual to better navigate his or her education" (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, p 383). This definition relates strongly to a number of responses from course leaders and mentees with regard to the support from mentors relating to the coursework of their chosen degree course:

CL2: "I think they can gain as much from a mentor programme like this as they can gain from feedback and advice from tutors as well. Erm, I don't know if they take it a little better sometimes off a student that's already been through it."

CL3: "I think it's good for first years because it gives them a good sense of what's coming up... understanding, yeah making relevance and understanding of what's coming up."

CL4: "I believe that first year students value the peer mentoring programme because it helps them to get help with things that worry them about university. They do not always want to ask personal tutors or module tutors questions."

These responses demonstrate the comfort of having a peer mentor to a new student, some first year student might not always feel comfortable asking academic staff questions. This may be due to the students thinking that the academic staff do not have time for them, that their question is irrelevant amongst other reasons. Furthermore, some students may receive and take feedback better from a peer than a tutor because they know the peer has gone through the situation they are now currently in. Another reason that first years many take feedback from their peer mentor better than an academic member of staff is because, the University of Hope's academic staff either have a PhD qualification or are working towards it. This may be intimidating to first year students, where as a second or a third year students might be seen as 'more on the same level'. Here are a few mentee responses that support the above statement:

EY14: "She gave me guidance, support and advice on assignments."

EY6: "Helpful to get advice off someone who has been where we are now."

RE5: "She assured me what it would be like for second and third year and made me look forward to it."

The mentee responses link closely with the course leader's responses about how the peer mentoring programme has worked this academic year. CL3 goes on to add,

CL3: "I think it's nice that they have another voice to talk to outside of what they, think they feel as sort of staff because although we say to them there's academics and none academics that you can talk to we are all still staff at the end of the day so having a student point to chat to can be really helpful for them."

The data from the questionnaire showed that 13 students out of 48 stated that having a peer mentor helped them feel more supported in their studies.

All these responses demonstrate the many benefits to a peer mentoring programme.

4.4 Summary

The chapter has analysed the findings of the research by identifying two themes and a number of sub themes that have been discussed. The data has presented a lot of opportunity for recommendations and development, which is an aspect that will take the main focus of Chapter Five, the conclusion. This chapter has aimed to discuss the themes and the data in order to help answer the research questions:

- How does a peer mentoring programme aid the first year mentees transition into higher education?
- What impact does a peer mentoring programme have on retaining and integrating first year mentees academically and socially?
- What are the benefits of a peer mentoring programme for the university and mentees?

Whether or not these research questions have been successfully answered will be discussed in depth in the next and final chapter of the thesis, which is where the study is concluded. Nevertheless, it is evident from the data that there are a number of improvements that can be made in order for the programme to be more successful for all the parties involved. Potential improvements can increase how the peer mentoring programme can aid transition, retention and integration.

Chapter Five – Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

During the final chapter of this thesis the objective and research questions for this study are revisited. They will be discussed in depth and a response to each research question will be presented. The chapter highlights how the findings responded to the research questions supported by the literature. The chapter has been broken down into the research questions with some possible recommendations at the end before finally concluding the thesis.

The motivation for this research came from my undergraduate dissertation, which was also on peer mentoring in HE. It became of particular interest to me as before and throughout my undergraduate dissertation I was a peer mentor for first year students. It was during that role that I discovered how important my impact might be on another person who may turn to me for help and guidance. This is why I chose to research a peer mentoring programme in order to try to improve other people's experiences when they first become a part of a university environment.

5.2 Objective and Research Questions

The main objective of the research study was,

- To analyse if a peer mentoring programme can successfully integrate and enhance a student's university experience, with a view to making recommendations to improve the programme.

This was then followed up by three research questions that are discussed below. They are discussed in terms of how the literature and data contributed to answering the questions and draw to some conclusions.

5.2.1 How does a peer mentoring programme aid the first year mentees transition into higher education?

It cannot be stated that this study has answered this research question completely, however, from the results it can be said that this peer mentoring programme has enabled some students to make the transition into HE less daunting. The magnitude of the transition into HE was reflected within the findings of the data and analysed in chapter four. This supports the mentees need for support during the transition, which was another aspect that the literature in Chapter Two discussed.

HE is said to present challenges for students however some face more challenges than most (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012), one course leader states in Chapter Four how important accommodation is for the students that have chosen to move away from home. This is just one additional challenge that some students faced when making the transition. Subsequently, the literature contributes to the research question by stating that peer relationships are seen as crucial for success (Carragher & McGaughey, 2016). Furthermore, this was another aspect of the literature that was reflected in the data.

Laverick (2016) stated in Chapter Two that some students might feel more comfortable speaking to a student mentor over a staff member. Even if this peer support was not necessarily from a mentor but just a peer as some students seeked acceptance into the HE environment (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Collings, Swanson & Watkins (2014) stated in Chapter Two the benefit that peer mentors can have on student's confidence and self-esteem. However, discussed earlier not all students will need the same level of support, CL3 identified this in Chapter Four. It is then down to the mentors to identify their mentee's needs, not every mentee may want the support from their mentor (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Due to the variation in mentee's needs, the programme could incorporate the use of the Developmental Model of Research Mentoring (discussed in Chapter Two), the model has four stages that enable transition (Revelo & Loui, 2016; Washington & Cox, 2016). Using a model that is targeted specifically at transition should enable a rise in successful transitions which would also result in a rise in retention rates.

In conclusion, this aspect of peer mentoring being able to be tailored to each mentees needs is why peer mentoring programmes could be seen to aid the transition process for HE institutions. It is evident that at the University of Hope the peer mentoring programme research has aided some of the students' transition, as discussed in Chapter Two. It discussed this within the context of peer mentoring aiding the transition and stated that mentoring is seen as a craft. This craft usually focuses on a transitional period, which may include adult development and professional or career stages (Hawkin & Smith, 2013; Laverick, 2016), supporting the University of Hope's method of implementing peer mentoring schemes, however, this conclusion cannot be generalised to all peer mentoring programmes as the same sample would not be used.

5.2.2 What impact does a peer mentoring programme have on retaining and integrating first year mentees academically and socially?

Throughout the research it has been challenging to determine exactly how much impact peer mentoring may have on retention and integration but it has been clear through responses that the impact has been positive.

Collings, Swanson and Watkins (2014) stated in Chapter Two that peer mentors can help to adapt and integrate new students, leading to higher retention rates. Both these terms have been explored and analysed alongside each other as they are connected. The most complex idea that was presented in Chapter Two was which type of integration has more of an impact on retention? The literature mainly looked at how academic integration impacted retention but there was a smaller amount that acknowledge that social integration had an impact too. Revisiting some of the statements made in Chapter Two, Thomas (2002) and Fletcher & Mullen (2012) were some of the theorists that suggested academic integration made an impact whereas, Davidson and Wilson (2013) suggested that social integration makes the bigger impact. This led to a debate over which was more likely to be the better case.

Course leaders struggled to see how peer mentoring may aid social integration as they mainly saw it as an aid for academic integration. However, one course leader explains in Chapter Four how intense a degree can be. Resulting in the peer mentoring programme providing the only aspect of social integration that some students have time to receive. Impacting on some students' social integration (Severines & Schmidt, 2009; Chilvers, 2016; Byl & Struyven et al, 2015). It became apparent throughout the research that the type of integration to take priority depends on the student and what they wish to gain from their experience in HE. Which demonstrates that the type of integration that is more likely to retain a student all depends on the individual. However, if both types of integration are supported and a student is able to access what they need to aid their integration there is no evidence in this study to suggest that the peer mentoring programme does not aid integration. The data and literature on the term integration has allowed for a definition of integration to be formed for this context: "Integration is the combined social and academic factors that enables a student to actively participate in a higher educational environment." It could be argued that the definition is broad but this has been influenced by the findings of the study, as CL3 states in Chapter Four (pg. 59)

the uncertainty of knowing which type of integration may take priority for the students. The word “combined” has come from Tinto’s (1973) notion in Chapter Two identifying that social integration and academic integration are interlinked. Chapter One identifies a number of different social and academic “factors” that students may experience and finally the need for the term “actively participate” stems from Tinto’s (1973) quote in Chapter Two (pg.38) linking integration with student dropout rates.

Integration aids retention as without a student feeling integrated they are less likely to want to stay in HE. The peer mentoring programme was described as another community for the students to become involved in. The answer to the research question is not one that can be measured due to the nature of qualitative data, but, it is evident that peer mentoring does have an impact on both integration and retention. It is also evident that without a successful integration that retention does not happen.

5.2.3 What are the benefits of a peer mentoring programme for the university and mentees?

Discussed above in the other two research questions it is clear that there are many benefits to a peer mentoring programme. Throughout Chapter Four most participants pinpointed a number of personal benefits. The data highlighted a number of benefits from the peer mentoring programme for the mentee and the university, the mentee valued the support which might have led the mentee more inclined to stay in HE. The benefit for the university would be the improvement in her grades leading to better attainment.

One mentee expressed the impact having a peer mentor had. Some students expressed that having the reassurance from their peer mentor is really important in them feel comfortable and settled in HE. Regardless of whether they need any support at the time or not, it is essential that they are aware that the support is there if it is needed. This is providing the mentee with the benefit of extra support, which might result in decline of negative feelings, for example, homesickness and loneliness (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014).

Finally, the last benefit discussed impacts the mentees, mentors and the university. Communication and networking, CL2 touches on this and CL3 discusses it in terms of a community. The idea of networking allows the students to have created a unique

community for themselves to help nurture their sense of belonging in HE. It is clear from the literature and findings that there are a number of benefits to a peer mentoring programme and that these benefits impact mentees and the university. Throughout this study, the benefits for the university and the mentees are more apparent than the benefits to the mentors. This is due to the mentees and course leaders being chosen as the participants for this study, the reason for why they were chosen has been discussed in Chapter Three. That does not mean that there are less benefits for mentors but they just have not taken as much as a focus in this study. Through answering the first two research questions in this chapter it is evident that transition, retention and integration are a number of the benefits.

5.3 Recommendations for Potential Improvement and Development

Throughout the data collection process a number of ideas were raised around potential improvements for the peer mentoring programme however, some of these ideas did not directly relate to the peer mentoring programme itself but the term 'integration' which has provided an interesting discussion in this thesis.

The first recommendation is that the matching process for matching mentees and mentors would benefit if developed. This was the most important recommendation in order to possibly increase the succession of the peer mentoring programmes peer relationships. From the data it was clear that there was not a set criteria for matching mentees and mentors, the only criteria seemed to be that they were a student on one of the UF degree courses. The literature suggests that in order for successful matches there needs to be a set criteria. Ideally this criteria should match the aims of the peer mentoring programme yet, as discussed in Chapter Four that all the course leaders were unsure of the programmes aims and that the aims were not able to be found on the university's VLE. The UF degrees all have similar modules in their first year and one course leader expressed how many students were choosing to opt out of the programme because of the way the programme operates. It may be possible to try matching across the different UF degrees in order to cover this short fall in some of the other courses.

This leads onto the next recommendation, commitment was found to be a significant factor into why some of the programme was not running as well as it possibly could. This lack of commitment seemed to stem from the mentors. One course leader also

admitted he might have not been as committed to the peer mentoring programme as he needed to be in order for it to be more successful.

The literature suggests that in order for success that all parties need to be committed and have time to dedicate to a mentoring programme (Clutterbuck, 2014). If course leaders do not feel as though they have the time to commit to the peer mentoring programme it may be an idea to see if other members of staff would want to dedicate their time to it. Another suggestion may be passing the responsibility on the progress tutors in the school that the University of Hope use. They look after and monitor students who may be deemed 'at risk'. This may mean that the peer mentoring programme fits better into their professional role. It was evident from the data that the peer mentoring programme was not operating as well as it could. The impact peer mentoring programmes can have on transition, integration and retention for some students is crucial. One particular reason that was presented from the data was that having a peer mentoring programme can help new students to understand all the information they are given within 'freshers week'. Alongside this the UF degree courses may benefit from an extended induction period that has been piloted on other degree courses at the University of Hope. If the UF degree courses were to integrate an extended two-week induction period, it could benefit students greatly by incorporating this into the peer mentoring programme. This could potentially increase the positive contribution that the peer mentoring programme makes to successful transition, integration and retention. It may also increase second and third year student's engagement with the peer mentoring programme as it may be perceived as more of an important aspect to their studies that it has previously been perceived. This would then also positively impact the short fall of mentors on some of the UF degree courses. This potential improvement would carry benefits for the university, mentors and mentees.

5.4 Summary

In conclusion, this study has successfully explored all the proposed areas that it set out to do. Some of the research questions were not as challenging as others to answer. However, I think it is fair to say that this peer mentoring programme does help to successfully integrate new students and has the potential to improve more students' time and experiences at the University of Hope. I do believe that the peer mentoring programme is a good tool for transition into HE but, I do think this could be

improved, possible improvements have been discussed previously in the chapter. One of the limitations of this research is not including mentors as participants as it would have been interesting to gather their perspectives as mentors but also as former mentees.

This research will be available to the University of Hope and the participants through access provided through the University of Hope's repository.

Finally, I want to end with a statement from one mentee. I think it is a worry that everyone has at some point, but it demonstrates how much pressure some mentees may be starting university with and why the transition into HE may be one of the most challenging. Entering HE is something that is a choice. It is no longer classed as compulsory education, which is why I think this response is significant:

EY8: "Worried of failure."

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Appendix One: Ethics Forms

Participant Information Form

Research project title: The long and winding road to achievement: Peer mentoring as a tool for transition and its impact on retention and social and academic integration.

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. May I take this opportunity to thank you for taking time to read this.

What is the purpose of the project?

The research project is intended to provide the research focus for my Masters Thesis. It will attempt to analyse if a peer mentoring programme can successfully integrate and enhances student's university experience.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you are part of or know about the peer mentoring programmes that are the focus of the research, or your role at the university is relevant to the peer mentoring programmes. Your role as a mentor, mentee or staff member is what will be discussed throughout the research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, so please do not feel obliged to take part. Refusal will involve no penalty whatsoever and you may withdraw from the study at any stage without giving an explanation to the researcher.

What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in a focus group, interview or questionnaire that will take no longer than 30 minutes of your time.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There should be no foreseeable disadvantages to your participation. If you are unhappy or have further questions at any stage in the process, please address your concerns initially to the researcher if this is appropriate. Alternatively, please contact the research supervisor Dr Wayne Bailey School of Education and Professional Development, University of Huddersfield.

Will all my details be kept confidential?

All information which is collected will be strictly confidential and anonymised before the data is presented in my major study, in compliance with the Data Protection Act and ethical research guidelines and principles.

What will happen to the results of the research of the research study?

The results of this research will be written up in my Masters Thesis and presented for assessment by the end of August 2018. If you would like a copy please contact the researcher.

Who has reviewed and approved the study, who can be contacted for further information?

The research supervisor is Dr Wayne Bailey they can be contacted at the University of Huddersfield.

Name and contact details of researcher:

Brooke White

brookewhite.2396@gmail.com

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Study: The long and winding road to achievement: Peer mentoring as a tool for transition and its impact on retention and social and academic integration.

Name of Researcher: Brooke White

Participant Identifier Number:

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant Information sheet related to this research, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes No

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

Yes No

I understand that all my responses will be anonymised.

Yes No

I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

Yes No

I agree to take part in the above study

Yes No

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

Appendix Two: Interview Questions

Interview Questions – For course leaders

Background Questions: First, I am going to ask you some questions about you.

1. What is your name and official title?
2. Which degree do you teach on?
3. Which other degrees does this one mix with? In terms of students and subject knowledge during the first year?
4. What do you know about the peer mentoring programme? (aims, benefits, any feedback from students or other staff members)

Transition/ retention: Now, I am going to ask you about peer mentoring in the context of transition and retention

5. In your opinion, what do you think about the benefits and draw backs of peer-mentoring programs in helping first year students transition?
6. In your opinion, do you there is a connection between peer mentoring and the retention of students? (Help eliminate feelings or withdrawal)

Integration: Next, I am interested in finding out about the relationship between peer mentoring and academic and social integration

7. What do you know about academic and social integration? Do you think there is a connection between this and peer mentoring? (Benefits)
8. How much impact do you think peer mentoring has on academic integration? (benefits, improvements, other academic support available) (Noticed an improvement)
9. How much impact do you think peer mentoring has on social integration? (Benefits, improvements, events)
10. In your opinion, do you think social and academic integration is important to helping students transition?
11. Do you think social and academic integration has an impact on the retention of students?

12. Any further comments?

Appendix Three: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

- 1. Have you had any contact with your mentor? (This can be anything from an email to face to face meetings)**

Yes

No

- 2. If no and you wish you give any feedback as to why, please use the comments box below.**

If you have had contact with your mentor, please complete the rest of the questionnaire.

3. Which degree are you currently studying on?

Early Years

Youth and Community

Childhood Studies

Religion and Education

4. What type of student are you? (May circle more than one)

Residential Student (Living in halls/ Student accommodation near campus)

Commuter (Traveling from home)

Mature Student (Over the age of 25)

International Student (Moved from overseas)

5. How many face-to-face meetings have you had with your peer mentor during the programme?

0

1

2

3+

6. How do you choose to communicate with your peer mentoring away from the face-to-face meetings?

Email

Text / Phone calls

Through a social media platform

Other, please specify

7. How often are you in contact with you peer mentor?

Few times a week

Weekly

Fortnightly

Monthly

8. What has been the general topic of conversation in the peer mentoring sessions?

Social

Course work

Signposting things on campus

Other, please specify

9. How have your peer mentoring sessions worked, in regards to what you and your mentor use them for?

10. Were you worried or feeling anxious about anything before coming to university?

Yes

No

Further Comments (If you wish to share some of things you were worried or anxious about, please use this space)

11. What were your expectations of university before you started?**12. Did you feel prepared when the time came to come to university?**

Yes

No

Further comments (if you wish to share the reasons why you may or may not have felt prepared please use this space)

13. Do you think having a peer mentor has helped you with your transition into higher education?

Yes

No

Further Comments (If yes, please explain how you feel having a mentor helped)

14. Throughout this transition period, did you seek out support from other services at the university? For example, student services, personal tutor, progress tutors.

Yes (Please list who)

No

15. At any point during this transition period, did you want to withdraw from university?

Yes

No

16. If you answered yes to question 10, do you think having a peer mentor supported you through this decision?

Yes (please explain how you feel like they helped)

No

Found support elsewhere (Please explain where from)

17. Does having a peer mentoring make you feel more supported in your studies at university?

Yes

No

Further Comments

18. Have the mentoring sessions helped you with your confidence and self-esteem since starting university?

Yes

No

Further Comments

19. Do you think having a mentor has helped you develop any other skills?

Yes

No

If yes, please identify the skills

20. What are your thoughts about the peer-mentoring programme you have experienced? (Good and Bad)

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix Four: Transcript not Coded**CL1**

Me: First, I am going to ask some questions about you, so what's your name and official title?

CL1: CL1*, erm I'm a senior lecturer in leadership and management or course leader in Youth and Community work.

Me: *Laughs* Which degree do you teach on?

CL1: Mainly Youth and Community work but I have done some Childhood Studies myself.

Me: Alright

CL1: Because it's the undergraduate framework isn't it so some of it is for everybody.

Me: Which other degrees does this one mix with?

CL1: Yeah, Early Years, Childhood Studies, Religion and Education.

Me: erm, what kind of subject knowledge does I like mix together within the first year, is there anything in particular or?

CL1: Subjects, I don't have any knowledge, subject knowledge. Erm, its theories around professional practice I suppose in work with children and young people that would cross the thing. So in third year you are looking at leadership and management, this is me and first year you are looking at practice.

Me: What do you know about peer mentoring?

CL1: Erm, well I did want to have a peer-mentoring programme for Youth and Community work because when I was at Sunny University* they had one there that was very effective. Didn't manage to do anything until this academic year so I have set one up this year with Warren* and Tina* as support.

Me: What are the aims of the programme?

CL1: Of the peer-mentoring programme? Erm, to help, well suppose being honest to help with first year retention, to help students who identify as struggling or have got particular challenges they've got a point of contact who can help them or someone they can flag up from the source of help from tutors and all that kind of stuff.

Me: Erm, have you had any feedback from students' or any other members of staff so far this year?

CL1: Yeah, even today I had some not that there's anything wrong with the idea, er, I probably haven't committed enough time to it to make sure that its worked. So for example, when I set it up in the summer quite a lot students' because it's an opt out thing were opting out.

Me: Right

CL1: And I was really angry because it's a Youth and Community work degree and they shouldn't be they should be; this is part of their professional development.

Me: Yep

CL1: And I couldn't understand why they didn't see this is an important part of that, so I was a bit annoyed. So getting over that hump, every first year who wanted a peer mentor was allocated one so that was good but not every first year has had successfully engagement with their mentors.

Me: Okay

CL1: Some situations it's the mentors haven't engaged or responded sometimes its because the first years have disengaged.

Me: Okay, erm I'm going to ask you some questions about peer mentoring in the context of transition and retention. Erm, so in your opinion what do you think about the benefits and draw backs about peer mentoring programmes in helping first years transitions?

CL1: Transitions into the course?

Me: Yeah

CL1: so the potential benefits I think are huge because it, the transitions big if you're coming, a lot of our students are coming back to education so it's totally unknown quantity and other students are coming from colleges and sixth forms and there is a shift in emphasis to self-directed learning much more than in previous learning. So that transitions quite big and I think the potential for somebody who's been through that to provide support to them could be really good and you asked it in the context of retention didn't you?

Me: Er, this was transition.

CL1: Erm, right okay so the transition then, but for that to work they need to have their mentor up and running right from day one.

Me: Yeah

CL1: In fact, before day one but we didn't do that.

Me: Would you say there's any draw backs to peer mentoring in transition or not?

CL1: Not in theory because anybody who's still here has transitioned.

Me: Yeah

CL1: And there will be different degrees of success in how they do, how they are attaining but they have actually all transitioned and they have gone through to second and third year so that means that they should be in a position to share their experiences with the mentees' about er, the challenges they face and some that they have approached and overcome.

Me: Erm, in your opinion, do you, do you think there is a connection between peer mentoring and the retention of students'?

CL1: So, again I think there could be, last, not this academic year but last year we lost an awful lot of students off our course almost half and one left very very quickly and if she'd had a peer mentor, because I think she just found the transition particularly difficult so if she'd have had a peer mentor I think potentially that would have been one less student who would have left. Erm, and yeah I think, I think because you can't get the support off people in the same situation as you if it's the transition you are all struggling then you all potentially going to sink so having somebody who has been through it might give you the extra impetus to stay and not quit. When you are facing challenger, so yeah I think it offers huge potential for them.

Me: Erm, next I am interested in finding out about the relationship between peer mentoring and academic and social integration. So, what do you know about academic and social integration?

CL1: Yeah, I know it's very important.

Me: Yeah.

CL1: So academic integration I guess is the idea that students on a particular course from a particular school feel connected to and part of that academic community er, and one way that I would like to strengthen that but haven't been able to because of timetable issues really is by all three years being able to come in and do things together.

Me: Yeah

CL1: to feel you are part of a Youth and Community work family of one hundred students who are all at different levels who have all got different experiences and I have done stuff in other places where they have all come together and I can see the benefits, I can see students' feeling connected to the course much more than they are here.

Me: Yeah

CL1: So that's academic integration, social integration is the same kind of idea but it's sort of committed to your group, or that some part of the university you feel you're in and you've got a group of friends. Erm, and again our course because we have essentially students' who have to spend four full days either in university or on placement for the entire three years, if they then have to earn money to feed themselves or to buy clothes or to socialise that's another day or two days, if they have got kids which often they do, that's another. Caring, work, study balance on this course is scud really badly, our students don't get the social integration that others do they can't join clubs and societies because they just don't have the time to go to them.

Me: Okay

CL1: Yeah, one or two might be in the swimming club or football club but so few of our students do it and it's a real, it's a real problem, because they don't, they are a group of maybe thirty maximum people.

Me: Yeah

CL1: And then you break that down into maybe four or five different little friendship groups, it's a very, that's there only connection socially to the university, five people, I think that

Me: Yeah

CL1: one it's a missed opportunity because part of university should be about opening you up to a whole range of different ideas and experiences and perspectives, so that's lost and also if your friendship group stumbles or if you have an issue, what other source of support do you have? You might then just drop out and if you fall out with your gang of mates you might just stop coming. Erm, so yeah really potentially both or those are really important.

Me: Do you think there is anyway of improving the social integration for Youth and Community students?

CL1: Yeah, well I've thought again, at the student panel today I was talking with them about, right I'm committed at doing something so there's the three year out I'm going to put something in place it might only be once a month as an evening or, I don't know how we will do it whether they all come together for something that's a bit of fun and a bit stimulating and a bit whatever, just

Me: Yeah

CL1: to give them the chance to interact and maybe show a film and then have a discussion about it afterwards, you know a topical film. Erm, we are talking about erm doing Joanne Smith's* thing, erm what's it called week for something start, where you have an extended induction so that you are working really hard at giving the group an identity, they do lots of group activities and go out and do fun stimulating things and make them talk to each other and develop at least that social integration within the group and commit them to the group from that very early stage.

Me: Yeah

CL1: So we already have quite an intensive one-week induction but I think this, one week would plus an extra two allows, the second two weeks to strengthen the group and that first week we can relax it a bit which will allow them to engage perhaps in groups and societies as well.

Me: Yeah

CL1: so that gives them a more chance to hook into the university and the other two weeks to really work on the group dynamic.

Me: Yeah, from your experience then would you say that the peer mentoring this year has had an impact on helping the integration or necessarily?

CL1: To be honest I don't think it's, I haven't managed it particularly well so I think it's been in individual cases yes it has been successful and helpful but I think as a scheme it has not received as much as I would have liked it

Me: Yeah

CL1: to have done unfortunately.

Me: Okay, erm, do you think that social and academic integration has an impact on the transition aspect?

CL1: Yeah definitely, if you're, if you start on the course and you don't hook in to your group or the wider Youth and Community work group or the school or the university if you don't feel connected it's not going to take a lot for you, if you have a wobble whether that is academically you struggle or you have a social problem or something goes wrong at home and you don't feel part of that group yeah that's the likelihood that its greater that you'll leave.

Me: Yeah

CL1: And if you did have a strong connection bond

Me: Yeah

CL1: And I have got two or three first years who appear to be very individual possibly by choice

Me: yeah

CL1: personality, the starting one is very strong and very self-reliant personality another possible a little bit insecure, has the headphones on when the other students come in sort of creates a physical barrier and then another two have visible disabilities and I think people skirt around those and I think that's practically unfortunate, I think the group should take real responsibility of making sure that those individuals around them are hooked into the group.

Me: Yeah

CL1: and they are not doing that and that's practically unfortunate on a Youth and Community degree course because that's part of your job is to spot young people when you are working with a group, that guys an outlier I need to go and do a bit of work with him. They are not doing it in their own group so erm, there's work for us to do with that group. Just repeat the question because I slightly

Me: It was just to do; you've answered it to be fair

CL1: Just say, no say it

Me: Erm, about social and academic integration

CL1: Yeah

Me: Helping transition

CL1: Yeah, so it does, so I think yeah if you've come and you are one of those people who maybe are a bit on the outside and you are struggling with this new place and that's a really big library or the way courses are laid out or the way you are expected to do weekly reading is alien to you. Yeah, being able to talk to your peers about that immediately and to realise you are not the only one is going to make it less likely that you'll leave.

Me: What other services has the university got to help support students?

CL1: Generally?

Me: Yeah

CL1: In relation to dealing with the kind of problems we have identified here?

Me: Yeah

CL1: Well they are all there aren't they, there's the student, upstairs got the study skills tutor, along the corridor the support tutors which provide really good one to ones helping students identify what to develop and give them pointers, if they are struggling beyond that you've got the wellbeing service, there's a whole range of stuff there, they are hugely hugely, all of them are hugely oversubscribed.

Me: Yeah

CL1: They are great services but they are no good if I've got students crying in front of me and I ring up and they say yeah I can see them in three weeks.

Me: Yeah

CL1: For these now they need to be seen now.

Me: So are you aware that your students are using those services or trying to use those services?

CL1: So, some have and waiting and got in and used them successfully, some have been knocked from one to the other, so they might go to the health centre and they tell you go up there and then they go back to that centre and they are not being signposted and helped with access for services quickly.

Me: Okay, do you know if the services are communicating with each other or not?

CL1: There is some degree of communication er, it varies on a case to case basis.

Me: Okay, have you got any further comments on the peer mentoring?

CL1: Erm, yeah I mean, specifically for Youth and Community work I think it should be opt out I think that the right model.

Me: Okay

CL1: because I think they should see the value of it especially by the second and third year they should know that having on your cv that I was a peer mentor for three first year students and being able to talk about how you worked with them is going to enhance your employability, if nothing else.

Me: Yeah

CL1: It's the right thing to do if that's the profession you are signing up for so yeah I think the opt out is right er, I have been disappointed with my students the second and third years too many opted out and then even those who didn't, didn't respond some of them didn't respond to some of the first years and then that sort of maybe falls back to me, Warren* and Tina* to be more proactive in setting them up.

Me: Yeah

CL1: In May/ June introducing them to their mentees before the beginning of term so that on day one they are up and running and they are just doing it.

Me: Yeah

CL1: So there's no space to just think oh I'm not going to bother with that just make it happen.

Me: How are they made aware of the peer mentoring programme?

CL1: initially we, well I've discussed it with them in teaching and then formally they were all sent emails saying that the peer mentoring's coming up this is how it's going to work here's some training

Me: Yeah

CL1: Warren* did some training wasn't practically well attended so we had to do it again I think we had to put it on three times to make sure we covered everybody that might be worth reflecting on is the training right is it pitched at the right level and is it the right times does that make people want to disengage from it. But yeah its worth, it's definitely worth persevering with.

Me: Okay

CL1: But it needs some dedication, you know Warren* and me and Tina* have all got other things to do this is, so are we the right people to be pushing it maybe that's one of the things that could be part of what the support tutors do, I'm not saying they haven't got enough to do but maybe it sits more naturally with what they are doing and if they were supported.

Me: do you know if there's any lead mentors? Because I know in the past

CL1: Lead mentors?

Me: Yeah, there's been lead mentors erm, for like last year on Childhood studies

CL1: Yeah

Me: I was a lead mentor

CL1: Oh right

Me: Just to try and help

CL1: Is that because you had done it in second year

Me: Yeah

CL1: and the going into third year so it's like being a senior student or something who's runs

Me: Yeah

CL1: coming behind it for a bit of support. Now I wasn't aware of that and that might be because this year is our first year

Me: Yeah

CL1: Maybe next year people like well, some of our second years might be identified as role models for the year coming up behind them

Me: Okay

CL1: What did you call them?

Me: Lead

CL1: Lead mentors and again look at that on your cv not just a peer mentor, a lead peer mentor, all these little nuggets add up don't they

Me; Yeah

CL1: When you fighting in a jobs market that's overcrowded and you have to stand out, I'm the one who went that extra mile, yeah so.

Me: Okay, thank you.

Appendix Five: Transcript Coded

CL2

Me: So, first I'm going to ask some questions about you.

CL2: Okay.

Me: Erm, what is your name and official title?

CL2: CL2* erm, official title is senior lecturer in Early Years but I'm now also a course leader for the full time route that we have got, so full time course leader as well.

Me: Which degree do you teach on?

CL2: Erm, I teach on the BA Honours Early Years full and part time route. So we've got a full time and a part time route and I also teach on the post graduate certificate in higher education.

Me: Which other degrees does this one mix with in terms of students and subject knowledge in the first year?

CL2: Er, particularly Childhood Studies because there is some overlap with Childhood Studies probably more than any other course but also they are taught with other students from Religion and Education and Youth and Community studies so it's the undergraduate framework but I would say the course most commonly probably mixed with and in terms of content focus would be Childhood Studies.

Me: What do you know about the peer mentoring programme run on the undergraduate framework?

About the Peer Mentoring Programme

CL2: Erm, suppose I know what I have been told by Tina* really and Warren*, Warren* did come into speak to our students at the beginning of this year. So I basically see it as more experienced students so our second and our third years particularly third years supporting the less experienced students erm, and providing them some with the academic support but also them providing things like experiences they've been through so, if they are maybe struggling with something erm, particularly to do with their degree I think it's a really good way of a student whose sort of been through that to be able to talk about it, so very much an equal relationship between the mentor and the mentee erm, in terms of being able to share experiences and take on advice and guidance.

Me: Do you know about the aims of the programme?

CL2: Yeah I couldn't tell you them but I know why we've obviously got it in place.

About the Peer Mentoring Programme

Me: Yeah

CL2: I know it's for developing students even further really and developing their success.

Benefits

Me: Do you believe there is any benefits to the programme?

CL2: Yeah definitely. Yeah, erm, I think it's, I don't think there's any down sides to be honest to it I think it's all beneficial. Erm, it's something that I've believed in for a long

time probably even before I worked here. Erm, I used to run degrees in a college environment and we already had mentor programmes running. So, I'm not saying that everybody always engaged with it, it wasn't compulsory, I mean it's not compulsory here is it? Erm, but it probably wasn't run as tightly we just did it per course so I was like course leader for my course. Erm, and I would allocate so it wasn't done on a bigger scale erm, so I allo, so I would basically ask for volunteers who wanted to become mentors. Erm, they did a little bit of training with us and then they were allocated people within years below them. So, I have run with it before.

Me: Right

CL2: And I just think it's really beneficial particularly for that peer learning as well erm, and I also think that and I'm sorry if I'm starting to answer some of your questions

Me: Your fine

CL2: that you're going to ask me. Erm, but I think the students together can have a very different relationship than with their tutors and they can talk about different things and ask different questions so, I think the relationship is very different but I think they can gain as much from a mentor programme like this as they can gain from, from feedback and advice from tutors as well. Erm, I don't know if they take it a little bit better sometimes off a student that's already been through it and somebody that maybe is more in their age group and that sort of catchment area as well from somebody that they might see as being older and a bit *laughs*

Me: Yeah

CL2: Erm, you know might not be as understanding so yeah I think it's really beneficial.

Feedback and Improvements

Me: Have you had any feedback from students or any members of staff?

CL2: No, to be honest that's one thing that actually really made me think about when you contacted me for an interview, you know I haven't actually particularly had a lot of information back from students. I've had information from like Tina* about if we've had struggle getting students to become involved in it or if students aren't really engaging with it but I did once get one student that came in and she's a student that she's in year two and she's got a mentor in year three but she's a student that, she does need quite a lot of support well, she thinks she needs a lot of support but actually she's quite capable, she is very good. Er, but due to with some of the sort of baggage that she's come to university with she feels that she needs that support. Erm, and she'd just come in one day and was just chatting to me and she would just, she said to me how invaluable that support had been from her mentor in year three so that was from a year three to a year two. Erm, and she, she said just the way that she could talk to her mentor erm, and actually her grades have increased this year as well, whether or not that's something to do with it, I don't know and it's only one point of view from a student that had said that she got on really well they had a really good relationship. They emailed with each other, they met with each other and that's

how I think, when it works well that's how it works but im not saying it always works like that.

Me: Yeah erm, now im going to ask you some questions about peer mentoring in the context of transition and retention.

CL2: Okay

Me: Erm, in your opinion what do you think about the benefits and draw backs of peer mentoring programmes in helping first year's transition?

Benefits

CL2: Again I think, again its beneficial, more beneficial than anything that's sort of negative, think. I mean, sorry do you means transition from year one into?

Me: Transition from wherever they've come from

CL2: Oh so like college or sixth form

Me; Yeah, into year one

CL2: Oh yeah again I think it's massively beneficial I suppose the only thing that would concern me is if they didn't get a very effective mentor you know if it was somebody that had signed up thinking oh yeah I can do this I'll be really good but then the communications not very good or it even worries me things like if they are not very high achieving and I'm not saying high achieving even if they are mid achievers you know if somebody's signed up, a mentors signed up for it because anyone can sign up for it I suppose if you get a mentor not fully engaged in their academic side of work particularly it worries me that, that might I suppose then feed into, I suppose any year group in terms of mentoring. I think for year ones though particularly that transition and being able to talk to somebody else that's already done that transition because I think, I think that's the hardest transition that any student will ever make coming from sixth form or college into university, I think that's a huge transition, and not just academically, emotionally, mentally and I think that's where they really struggle. Particularly those that are moving away from home and coming like to live in the halls or rented accommodation and I think it would be good if they could be matched up with somebody else that had gone through that same experience so you've got, so you have got something sort of like wise really. Erm, but I think particularly emotionally a student does need that support from their mentors and then I think as they go on through the year then it maybe becomes more academic but I think particularly for the emotional side of it and just making that transition to try and to be a little bit more of an independent learner. Erm, because a lot of students they do come now without the skills, they don't know how to reference erm, we're expecting much more higher level abilities than we seem to get a lot of students coming in with now. Erm, and they often come and they have been told to write in a certain style for their A levels for example, and they come to us and we are like no you can't write like that it's not how you want to do it, and it's alright again us telling them that but actually being able to talk to their mentor and say oh yeah we really struggled, you know I really struggled with that as well and it might take you a year to change that style of writing but eventually you get in and I think it's about knowing that because three years seems like forever. So I think it's about that them

Benefits

Feedback and Improvements

Transition

Feedback and Improvements

Transition

Transition and Social and Academic Integration

knowing that eventually you know if they use that support that's in place for them that they will be able to get there and they will be able to succeed. Erm, and I think as well for any students that maybe get their first assignments back and they have got a low grade or they have been referred again it's alright them talking to us but being able to talk to somebody else that might have been through that experience again I think that's really beneficial erm, but I suppose the one thing that does concern me is that I've not really thought about before is if they don't get a particularly effective mentor or they get somebody that's not very good at communicating because all of our students are very different erm or not engaging. Now normally if they are not engaging they wouldn't offer to be a mentor or but some of them probably still do erm and if there not really developing academically and only sort of scraping through you've got to think about then sort of I suppose how they're going to support their mentee more academically. Doesn't mean they can't support them I suppose emotionally and especially if they are still struggling and they have got one that's struggling but academically that does worry me a little bit.

Me: in your opinion do you think there is a connection between peer mentoring and the retention of students?

Retention and Feedback and Improvements

CL2: I don't know; I think it's too early to tell. I think because we have only been running with it for such a short amount of time really, because its, in my opinion we have only run it sort of properly I think this year, this year its run, it seems to have run more effectively.

Me: Yeah

CL2: Than in previous years because when it ran in the first year I think they really really struggled to recruit students, whereas they have recruited more of ours we still haven't got enough for the number of students that we have got that need a mentor. Erm, so I think it's too early to tell. I think it definitely could be again I would see it as being a positive, I suppose in past experience, I'm just trying to think of when I worked in college when we ran it. I, yeah It probably was successful we never ran anyway we didn't run a proper project we didn't, so I couldn't say to you yeah definitely there's data to say that yeah its successful but I do think there could be a connection between retention but I think if a student is considering withdrawing its not just about what support the mentor gives I still think a lot of that would come from like their personal tutor, the progress tutors and the support there that they are getting and I think it would be probably all working together but actually I mean there's an idea there do we, you know do we as academics need to work more closely with personal tutors, you know with er sorry with mentors because if you asked me which mentors I've got that have been allocated mentees I couldn't tell you. I've never seen a list.

Retention and Support beyond Peer Mentoring

Me: Okay

CL2: So if you are looking at recommendations

Me: Yeah

CL2: I suppose it's actually about us knowing as academics.

Me: You being aware

CL2: Or as personal tutors, right so these are my personal tutees who is their peer mentor? Erm, and then if we do know there's somebody struggling we could actually contact them as well and say look could you get involved maybe do this or you know obviously we'd have to have agreement from the mentee but erm, I think we maybe need more closer connections to make it work.

Feedback and Improvements

Me: That sounds interesting

CL2: Good

Me: Erm, next I'm interested in finding out about the relationship between peer mentoring and academic and social integration.

CL2: Right

Me: So, what do you know about academic and social integration?

CL2: Do you want to just tell me a little bit more about what?

Me: so in terms of academic integration

CL2: yeah

Me: it would be things like you've already spoke about the academic attainment and grades

CL2: Yeah, yeah, yeah

Me: and the style of writing

CL2: yeah

Me: and all that kind of thing, I suppose then as well them being aware of the academic skills tutors

CL2: Yeah, yeah

Me: Erm, social integration would be your things like freshers week

CL2: right

Me; and all that kind of thing

CL2; Okay, so ask me the question again

Me: Erm, so what do you know about them both?

CL2: Well obviously I know a lot about academic attainment

Me: Yeah

CL2: erm and in terms of the support that's there, in terms of the social integration yeah we've got like fresher's week there's like, we've obviously got support services erm, and things that can like support students, student union that out lots of different activities and things on erm, and I do think they are linked you know in terms of

Social and Academic Integration

being coming, a student becoming engaged within university erm, but I think they see them as two completely different things, I think students probable see them as two completely different things so they have got their academic side of it and then they've got the social side of it and I don't think they see the two mixing to be honest.

Me: Do you think both types of integration have a link with peer mentoring? In terms of do you think peer mentoring helps with

CL2: the integration?

Me: Yeah

CL2: Yeah, because obviously I've already said about academic. Definitely would support the academic in terms of social integration I've never really thought of it in that way I suppose I always just think of it in an academic way. But yeah again it can, it could do, it could because I suppose that social integration we don't particularly sell as such because we don't normally know what's going, unless we've got student union coming in to tell people about it we don't get emails through and this is going on that's going on erm, and it will be other students that know more about it particularly if they have been involved with student union and things and freshers and whatever's going on. And I think er, you know like some of the clubs that they have got going on, one of my second year students were talking about a skiing club or something to me, I didn't even know we had a skiing club. So yeah, so I do think yeah they could do, they could get them more involved in terms of that social side of it erm and become, because I think the two mix because it's about that whole learning community erm, and for particularly younger students because we do have some more mature students and they might not be that interested in freshers week and going out and doing all that but you wouldn't want them to get forgotten either. Particularly for the younger students they do need to see it as a whole community I do think. So yeah I think that peer mentoring could support that side of it because I don't think we particularly do.

Social and Academic Integration

Me; Yeah erm, in terms of academic integration then how much impact do you think peer mentoring has as in, do you think as peer mentors they are quite helpful at signposting say the academic skills tutors or trying to help them along in that sense?

CL2: Definitely yeah, yeah as long as they have got a good peer mentor then yeah definitely.

Me: Yeah

CL2: Erm, I think they would, I think in this particular school, I think where, I think even as academics we do that a lot. We do signpost to other support services the only thing other I suppose might not, they might not signpost I suppose if they have not done it themselves.

Support Beyond Peer Mentoring

Me: Yeah

CL2: you know if they have not been, so say if they have never been to the academic skills tutor because they've never really needed to because actually they

are doing really well and they don't see it as being a need will they then think, oh actually I could signpost them to that service or you know that department.

Me: Yeah

CL2: Erm, so I think that will depend on the mentors own experiences

Me: Yeah

CL2: in the academic side of it.

Me: Would you say, from your experience, would you say you're in a position to be able to determine whether peer mentoring has helped academic performance? Like if you compare before the peer mentoring programme started

CL2: Yeah

Me: and where we are now?

CL2: Yeah we've actually seen over the last couple of years our grades rising

Me: Yeah

CL2: somewhat, now I couldn't only say it's down to academic, erm, the mentors and mentoring, we've put a lot of work in as a school, you know like you said using marking rue bricks things like that which you would expect again I suppose peer mentors to say to their mentee don't forget to use your marking rue bricks see what tutors are looking for so we've done a lot ourselves but like I was saying the student that came, did come and talk to me about her peer mentoring saying how great she was and everything her grades have definitely gone up. Erm, but I think that's, I think you might get more feedback on that from the students than

Feedback and Improvements

Me: Yeah

CL2: than me because, like I said yeah our grades have definitely increased over the last couple of years but I know that the school have done a lot of work on thinking about right how can we you know get students to achieve higher grades how, what support can we put in place but it's also been at the same time that the peer mentors come into place so yeah I probably would say yeah.

Me: Okay

CL2: Yeah

Me: Erm, in your opinion do you think social and academic integration is important to helping students transition?

CL2: Yeah, yeah definitely it's both sides and again it's like I was saying earlier it's about that whole community. Erm, you know they are not just coming, they don't just come to university to learn and to develop a skill and to you know to get a qualification I think particularly our students from early years they are going into a career that again is very it's a social career because they will be working in teams, as a whatever, whatever you go into really in Early Years you never ever are just going to be working on your own, you are going to be working with other people with

Social and Academic Integration and Support Beyond Peer Mentoring

the same qualifications, same type of jobs, you are working with children and their families all the time. So it's always about team work and that sort of social integration and from feedback from students I would say most of the learning styles that they like and the things that we do in class are very social learning, they like doing things in groups, they like to feel part of a group. Erm, so in terms of the wider university and that social integration and sort of doing things together I think that's really key. Actually I was only, I was talking to some students on Monday and they had been I think out for a meal together and not with their mentor or anything this was completely different but you could see them supporting each other, also not just for their learning but how

Me: Yeah

CL2: out of university as well and that support and I do think they do build up some friendships for life. Erm, sorry but I mean that's going off peer mentoring

Me: Your fine

CL2: I do, I think that they are both linked very very closely, and in terms of some students that don't particularly, are very quiet in class and are more individual, that social integration is more difficult for them. So again maybe to have a stronger peer mentor that understands the important side of their social learning and the social side of what's going on at university and getting more involved that would support them, because we do get the odd student that is very quiet and will stand back and won't get involved.

Feedback and Improvements and Social and Academic Integration

Me: Yeah

CL2: But again it's about getting the right mentor,

Me: Yeah

CL2: and the right person, and at the moment I think they are just allocated by, you can't look at a year one's ability because we don't know what their ability is we don't know what their personality like when they are first starting so being able to sometimes get the right people together that could be an issue.

Feedback and Improvements

Me: Erm, so in terms of social and academic integration again would you say that if a student is to integrate both academically and socially that, that helps with retaining them at university?

CL2: Yeah, yeah I think that would help massively with retention because again they feel part of a community

Me: Yeah

CL2: And I think that's really key that's really important it's not that they are just coming to university to learn it's the whole aspect of university and I think they get a sense of belonging, they feel that they belong at university and that they are not just a number or a student they belong here erm, I mean some of my students that have really sort of engaged in university stuff I suppose as such become part of committees and groups and done all that they, they've its generally those students

Retention and Social and Academic Integration

that have stayed on to do masters degrees erm, or have stayed in touch much more with us even when they have left but it is that type of student who has got involved in everything.

Me: Yeah

CL2: So yeah I would definitely say that it definitely supports retention if erm, they have got that whole round experience on both parts.

Me: Okay, have you got any further comments?

CL2; No


Me: Okay

CL2: I suppose to round it up I think it's a really beneficial programme erm, like I say the only thing if you want a bit of criticality about making sure you've got the right student with the right, so the right mentor with the right mentee as such but that's really difficult but also the right type of mentor that's fully engaged within their studies and within university erm, for the mentee to get a good experience.

Me: Okay, thank you.

CL2: You're welcome.

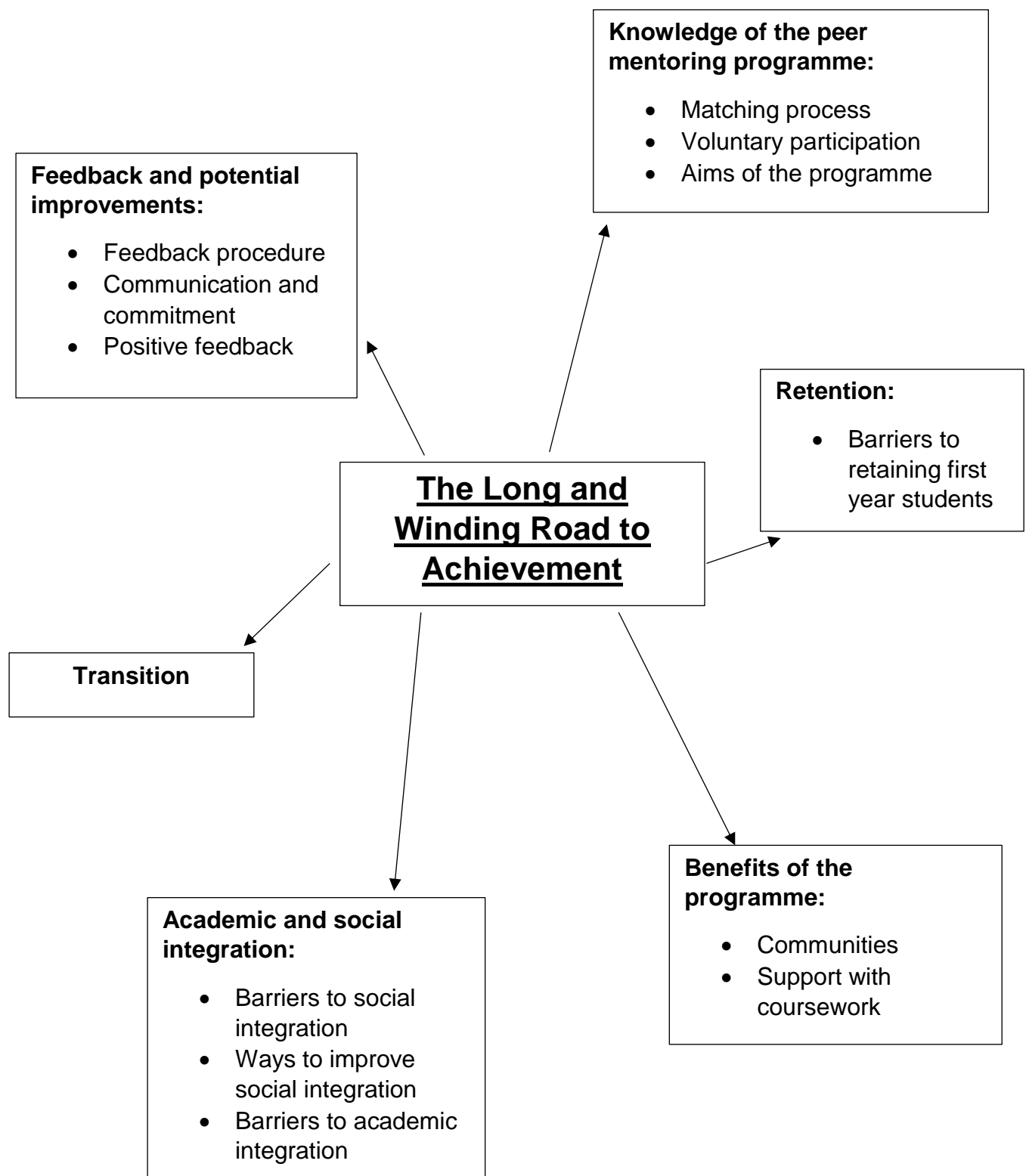
Retention and
Feedback and
Improvements



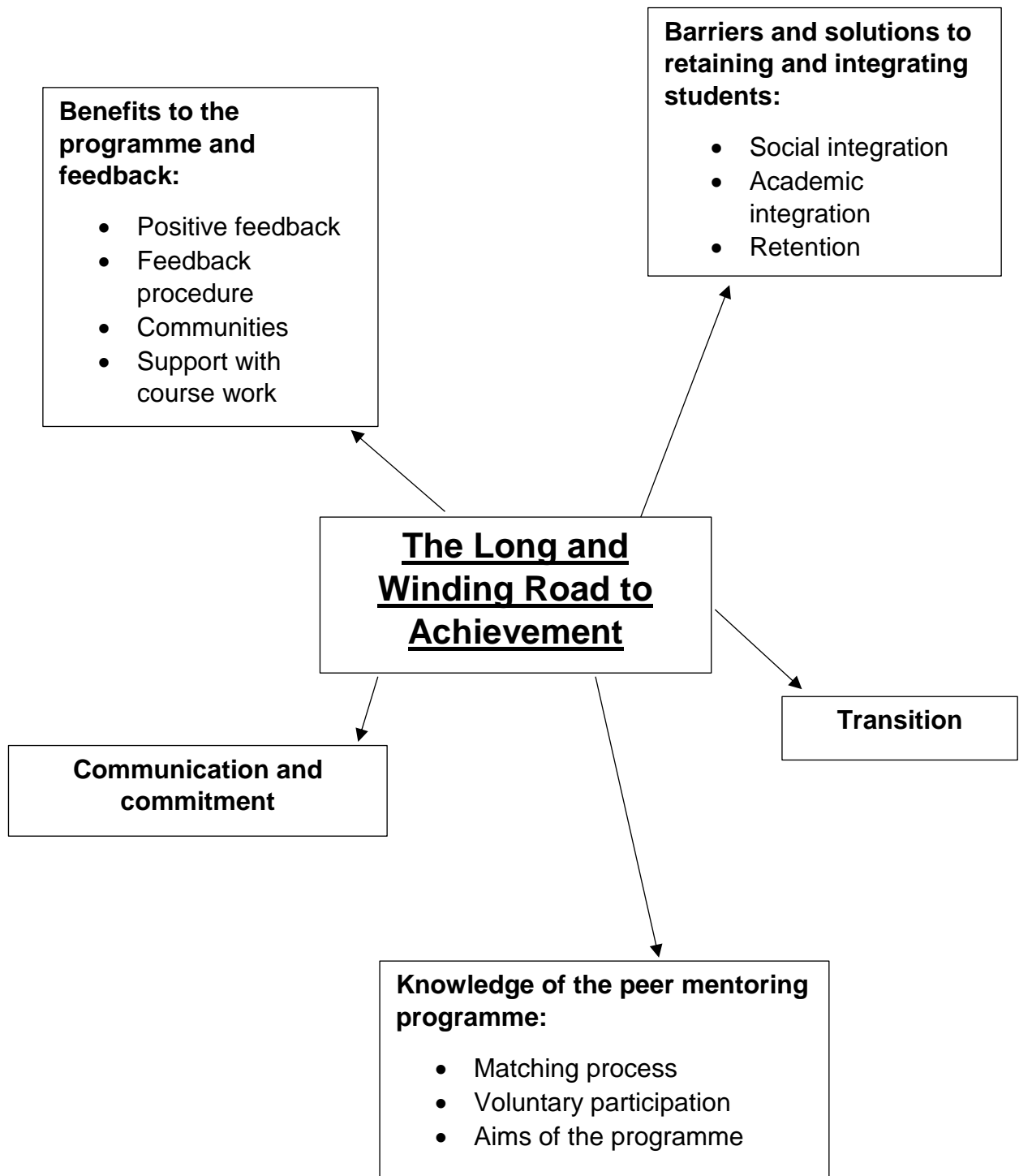
Appendix Six: Initial Ideas and Themes

- Knowledge of the peer mentoring programme
- Feedback and potential improvements
- Benefits of the programme
- Transition
- Academic and social integration
- Retention
- Support beyond peer mentoring

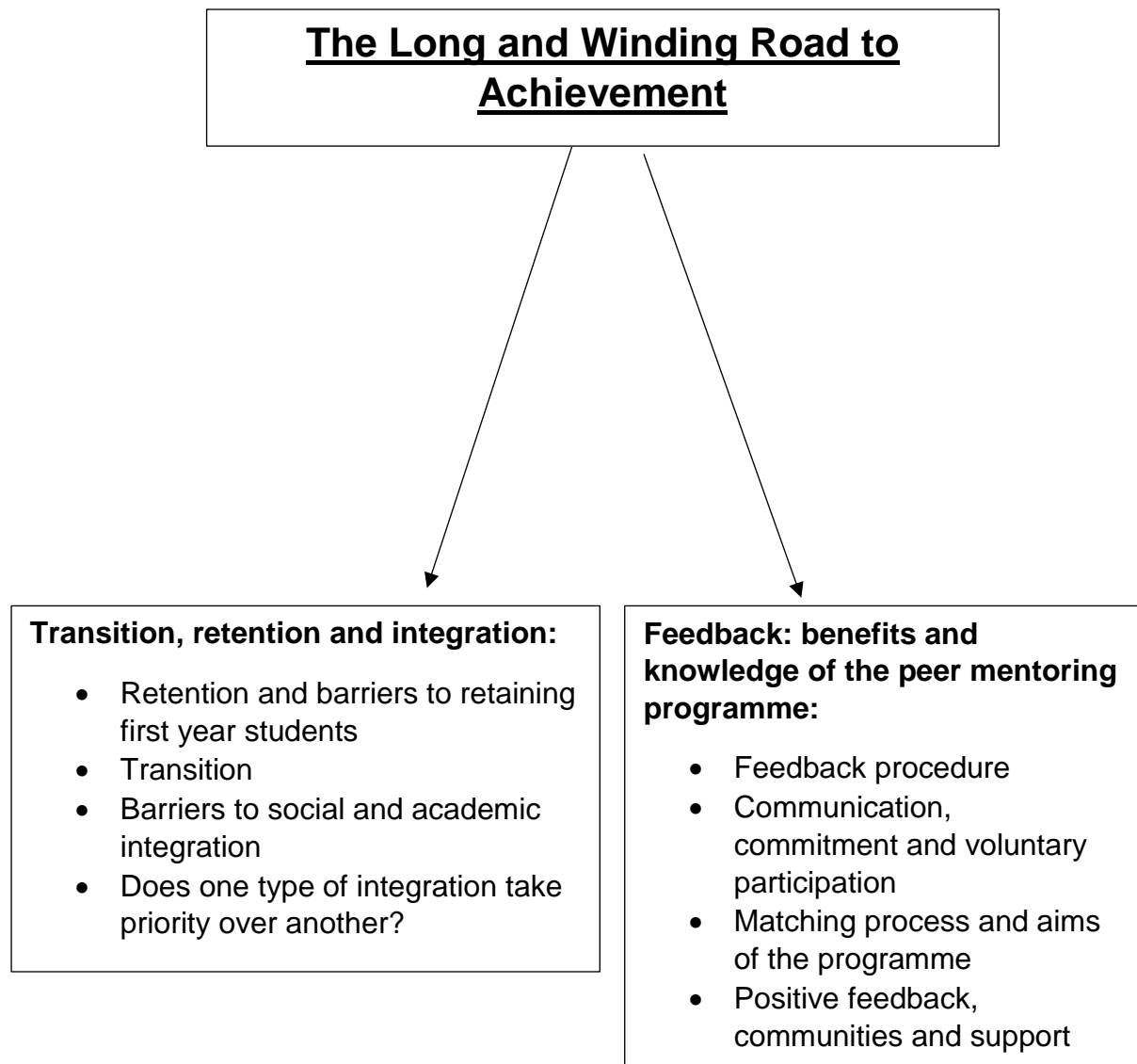
Appendix Seven: Emergent Candidate Themes



Appendix Eight: Refined Candidate Themes



Appendix Nine: Final Themes



Appendix Ten: Participant Background Information

Mentees	Degree Course	Type of Student
EY1	Early Years	Residential
EY2	Early Years	Commuter
EY3	Early Years	Mature Commuter
EY4	Early Years	Commuter
EY5	Early Years	Commuter
EY6	Early Years	Commuter
EY7	Early Years	Commuter
EY8	Early Years	Commuter
EY9	Early Years	Commuter
EY10	Early Years	Commuter
EY11	Early Years	Commuter
EY12	Early Years	Residential
EY13	Early Years	Residential
EY14	Early Years	Commuter
EY15	Early Years	Commuter
EY16	Early Years	Residential
EY17	Early Years	Commuter
EY18	Early Years	Commuter
EY19	Early Years	Commuter

EY20	Early Years	Mature Commuter
EY21	Early Years	Residential
EY22	Early Years	Mature
EY23	Early Years	Residential
EY24	Early Years	Commuter
EY25	Early Years	Commuter
EY26	Early Years	Commuter
EY27	Early Years	Mature Commuter
EY28	Early Years	Commuter
EY29	Early Years	N/A
EY30	Early Years	N/A
EY31	Early Years	Commuter
EY32	Early Years	Commuter
YC1	Youth and Community	Commuter
YC2	Youth and Community	Commuter
YC3	Youth and Community	Mature Commuter
YC4	Youth and Community	Mature
YC5	Youth and Community	Mature Residential
YC6	Youth and Community	Commuter
YC7	Youth and Community	Mature
YC8	Youth and Community	Mature
YC9	Youth and Community	Mature
YC10	Youth and Community	Commuter

RE1	Religion and Education	Commuter
RE2	Religion and Education	Residential
RE3	Religion and Education	Commuter
RE4	Religion and Education	Mature
RE5	Religion and Education	Residential
RE6	Religion and Education	Commuter

Course Leaders	Degree Course
CL1	Youth and Community
CL2	Early Years
CL3	Religion and Education
CL4	Childhood Studies