Introduction

This book is a resource book for trainers, and is not a coursebook as such. It is essentially a collection of activities for use on mentor courses. It begins with a description of the context in which these activities were developed, and goes on to consider who we think might find them useful. This will involve defining and exploring the roles and duties of mentors. The introduction will end with an overview of the organisation of the rest of the book.

Why we wrote this book

In 1990, the Centre for English Teacher Training (CETT) was opened at Eötvös Lórand University in Budapest, Hungary, with the task of developing a new and innovative initial English language teacher training programme. This new intensive three-year teacher training programme focuses not only on the subject (English, in our case), but also on the skills and knowledge needed by novice professional teachers (for a fuller description of the scheme, see Medgyes and Malderez 1996). The teaching practice component was enormously increased from the usual Hungarian six-week block placement to an integrated scheme where student-teachers would have responsibility for teaching a class for the whole school year. The responsibility for the teaching practice component of this new programme was given to us.

As had been the tradition in Hungary for over a century, CETT student-teachers on their practicum would also be under the supervision of a designated teacher in each of the various schools where the teaching practice would take place. The extended teaching practice together with the extended goals of the teacher training programme itself meant that these school-based supervisors, or mentors as we came to call them, would have considerable and different responsibilities, collaborating closely with university based tutors in helping student-teachers achieve the aims and objectives of the programme. In the words of the CETT Curriculum Document (Griffiths and Ryan 1994), they would be helping students to demonstrate the following:

(i) ability in planning, implementing and evaluating appropriate learning experiences for their pupils
(iv) ability in using and where necessary adapting ELT textbooks commonly in use in schools
(v) ability in evaluating and reflecting on their own teaching
(vi) ability in modifying their teaching strategies in the light of self-evaluation and peer evaluation

> (xii) ability in dealing with the most common role relationships, conflicts, negotiations, counselling, needs etc. encountered in the world of school (1994:5–6)

The overall programme aims relevant to the work of mentors were:

> (iii) to make it possible for trainees to practise the teaching of English in a sheltered way so that they would emerge as confident and competent classroom teachers
> (ix) to facilitate and develop in trainees the self awareness and interpersonal skills that would enable them to function better in the world of school
> (x) to develop in trainees the kind of professional perspective which enables them to locate their teaching in the wider context of the school and community
> (xi) to develop in the trainees powers of self-evaluation and a capacity for autonomous learning which together would enable them to complete their training as efficiently as possible, as well as go on to develop themselves professionally after graduation (1994:4–5)

In order to help the mentors with this new role, we decided to run mentor training and development courses. In keeping with the Hungarian Ministry of Education's requirements for in-service teacher training courses, they were designed for 120 hours, of which 90 are contact hours and the remaining 30 used for between-session tasks and assignments. The courses were run for selected teachers working in primary and secondary schools, who met once a week for four months and then for an intensive week at the end.

Faced with the responsibility for the school-based mentor training, we were unable to find any practical publications on mentor training, and were therefore forced to create our own activities. Initially our work was informed by the theoretical literature on mentoring available at the time, and, inevitably, by our own personal histories, which include, perhaps most notably, experiences in motherhood, psychiatric nursing, counselling training and drama teaching as well as EFL teaching and teacher education. The versions of the activities in this book have, however, evolved into their present form through the invaluable responses and suggestions of participants on courses and our own evaluation of their effectiveness in use. This, then, is the book we would have liked to have found when we first started our work as mentor trainers.

Who this book is for

Although these activities were developed to prepare mentors to work with student-teachers for a specific pre-service purpose and in a specific context, we have used many of them in other in-service and broader trainer-training contexts. In this book we have included only activities that relate to mentoring skills rather than English language teaching skills or broader trainer-training skills, although many activities are useful in a variety of contexts. In many pre-service contexts, mentor courses would also include what we have called 'ELT methodology update', in order to ensure that the mentors and their mentees share a common methodological background. Trainer-training courses

would be extended still further to include such things as workshop design, the design of tasks for teacher education and so on.

In pre-service situations, the length of school experience varies enormously, and there may not be time for mentors to do more than start student-teachers off on the road to continuous professional development. Many of the contexts in which mentors work are not as privileged as the one in which these activities were developed: student-teachers may not have had long, in-depth, language teaching methodology courses, nor will their practicum be anything like as long as ours. We nonetheless believe that the activities in this book and the underlying approach (see below) are relevant in any situation. A worst case scenario, for example, might be where student-teachers arrive for a one-week practicum, having had almost no training in language teaching methodology. In our understanding of mentoring as support for professional development, we would argue, in such cases, that it is even more crucial that mentors have expert mentoring skills. They need to be able to establish rapport with the student-teachers rapidly in order to discover what their understanding of teaching is (which all student-teachers will have from their years of sitting in classrooms as pupils), and train them to question assumptions, and to observe and interpret teaching and learning events so that the developmental processes can, at least, begin.

We can also envisage the relevance of this book for other forms of mentor training (see *Mentors and their roles* below). So, those involved in training people to help the professional development of others, whether in the field of education (MA/MEd programmes, trainer-training courses, etc.) or business, may find something of use in this book.

What a mentor is

A number of contextual factors led to a concern with what we would call the teachers in schools who would have responsibility for our student-teachers during their school experience. The learning objectives for student-teachers in this component at CETT were not simply about performing prescribed 'correct' classroom behaviours, such as effective classroom management, or the presentation of a new structure. They were also about achieving deeper teaching competencies, for example, the ability to notice and interpret classroom events appropriately, as well as developing the ability and willingness to continue their own professional development after graduation. For this reason, we rejected the traditional word 'supervisor', which also suggested notions of hierarchy and directiveness inappropriate for most of the processes that would be necessary to achieve these learning objectives. Because of the strong educator role that would be required, as well as the length of time spent working with student-teachers – a complete school year – the word 'trainer' seemed more appropriate. This was further adapted to 'co-trainer', or COT, both to differentiate this role from the university-based trainers and to suggest the close collaborative role between university and school-based trainers. The metaphor in the acronym, COT, was perhaps unfortunate as

although it conveyed a notion of security and support, it denied the student-teacher's considerable previous experience – of life, of schools and of teaching and learning – implying, perhaps, that these were not essential starting points in their professional development. This, together with the increasing use of the word 'mentor' in the professional literature about teaching practice, and the realisation that our term was too localised, led us to adopt the name 'mentor'.

However, the literature now fast accumulating under the heading of 'mentoring' reveals a bewildering range of interpretations of the term. Most assume a one-to-one relationship between mentor and mentee, the 'student'-professional in the relationship, but even these often describe differing roles and functions for the mentor. The majority of these can be classified as in Figure 1:

ROLE	FUNCTIONS
1 Model	– to inspire – to demonstrate
2 'Acculturator'	– to show mentee the ropes – to help mentee get used to the particular professional culture
3 Sponsor	– to 'open doors' – to introduce mentee to the 'right people' – to use their power (ability to make things happen) in the service of the mentee
4 Support	– to be there – to provide safe opportunities for the mentee to let off steam / release emotions – to act as a sounding board – for cathartic reasons
5 Educator	– to act as a sounding board – for articulation of ideas – to consciously create appropriate opportunities for the mentee – to achieve professional learning objectives

Figure 1 Roles of mentors
(Fullerton and Malderez 1998)

While any, or any combination, of the roles above would seem to us to justify the term 'mentor', most mentors will be involved to a greater or lesser degree in all five roles. This is particularly true of those mentors who are part of formal professional development schemes. Because this book appears in a *teacher* training series and because of our own background, we shall be exploring the place of mentoring in the development of the professionalism of *teachers*. However, many of the broader arguments that follow, on learning, reflective practice and so on, will be relevant to any profession. We see most of the activities in this book as particularly relevant to those mentors with significant Support and/or Educator roles to perform.

The organisation of the chapters

It is important to stress that this book is not intended as a coursebook, but rather as a selection of activities for mentor course leaders to select as appropriate within their own context. It is divided into three main parts, *Mentor course principles and practice* (Chapters 1 and 2), *In-session activities* (Chapters 3 to 7) and *Projects and assignments* (Chapters 8 to 10), and finishes with a *Conclusion*.

The first part, *Mentor course principles and practice*, begins at Chapter 1, *Basic concepts*, which looks at the principles underlying the development of the activities and the training approach. Chapter 2, *Course procedures*, contains a number of procedures that we have used throughout courses, as opposed to individual session activities.

The activities in the next part, *In-session activities,* Chapters 3 to 7, are activities for use during sessions only. They have been sequenced with a certain sense of chronology. Chapter 3, *Lead-ins*, has a selection of activities for establishing relationships, and for beginning sessions and topics. Chapter 4, *Seeing clearly* comes next, as work on observation needs to start early in a course so that there is enough time to practise this difficult skill. Chapter 5, *Challenging appropriately*, starts with practice activities for the discrete interpersonal skills necessary for all aspects of mentoring work which also require extensive practice. It also contains activities for elaborating the knowledge base necessary for conscious selection of appropriate acts of intervention with a particular mentee – for developing the ability to challenge sensitively.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, *Role-plays*, differs from the previous chapters in that it contains ideas for role plays/simulations only. These elaborate activities are designed to simulate a mentoring event in order to practise the complex open skill of mentoring. This not only involves the use of a combination of the sub-skills that have been worked on individually through activities earlier in the book, but requires the appropriate selection of these skills as well.

Chapter 7, *Assessing teaching*, contains activities that are intended to help mentors turn evaluation into a positive experience for the professional development of their mentee. Imposed external judging of another's teaching seems to us to carry a high potential for unhelpful interference in that person's professional growth unless handled extremely sensitively. We have deliberately 'relegated' this topic to the last of the chapters that contain only in-session activities, partly because we want to get away from the constant judgemental role of traditional supervision, and also because formal evaluation is likely to occur only at the end of work with student-teachers.

The final part, *Projects and assignments,* includes Chapters 8 to 10. Each of these chapters contains tasks to be completed *between* sessions. The activities involve participants working either on their own or in pairs between the sessions and completing a writing, reading or observation task. Insights from the process are then shared when the group is together. Chapter 8, *Observation tasks*, contains two major types of observation activity to be carried out in

schools, with preparation and follow-up tasks to be done in session. Chapter 9, *Reading tasks*, contains a rationale and an example of a type of guided reading task to be carried out at home and followed up in the next session through which many of the knowledge-based objectives of the course can be met. Chapter 10, *Writing tasks*, contains the specifications, preparatory procedures and follow-up tasks for two kinds of written assignment which we have found particularly useful. One is a report on a piece of exploratory teaching or classroom research, and the other a reflective Development Report.

The *Conclusion* includes two activities for disbanding the group, and then looks at some ideas for evaluating mentoring, mentor courses and mentor course activities. It finishes by considering some ways of ensuring the continuous professional development of qualified mentors.

The final pages of this volume include photocopiable materials for activities described in the book, references and appendices.

The organisation of the activities

With the exception of Chapter 3, *Lead-ins,* which is in alphabetical order, the activities are arranged according to what we have found is a natural progression from those that focus on one particular element/skill of mentoring to those that combine such skills in a more complex way.

Most of the names of the activities have been created on past courses by participants during the work on reflection grids (see Chapter 2, *Course procedures*: *Reflection grids*). Using the names participants give is a way of helping group 'ownership' of the experience which increases group identity. There is a brief introduction at the beginning of each activity giving the rationale for its use on the mentor course.

Each activity is presented with the following layout:

Aims

These are given in a list, representing a summary of the rationale which is described in more detail in the activity introduction. They correspond to one or more of the macro course objectives (that is, what the participants will have done), but we have chosen to express them as aims (what the course leader hopes to achieve) since as course leaders we find it is easier to search for activities that correspond to what we are aiming to do in a particular session.

Suggested position in course

This heading will only appear when certain sub-skills are prerequisites for other more complex skill practice.

Suggested position in session

This heading will only appear when the activity is part of a natural sequence of activities.

Materials

All materials needed for each activity are listed here. Role-cards and specific task cards are also included for each activity, either under this heading, or in the case of larger task-sheets, in the *Photocopiable resources* section at the back of the book. *NB* In some places, for reasons of space, we have only included the text and an indication of the layout for a task sheet. We would normally copy this at the top of a blank A4 sheet, extending the columns, or other layout features as appropriate.

Leaders will need to provide their own context-specific materials such as videoed lessons and accompanying materials – lesson plans, coursebook extracts, etc. – or make decisions about which of the published material available is relevant for their own context.

Timing

The approximate timing we have given here is based on our experience with several groups, but obviously this will vary from group to group. Discussions very often need to last longer than might be expected, because it is the discussion itself – the struggle *towards* the completion of the task – rather than the outcome, which is so important to learning.

Assumptions

This is another heading that will appear only when appropriate. There is a basic assumption that all participants are teachers, and that they all have a near-native or native-speaker competence in English.

Classroom organisation

This describes the various different organisations that will occur during the activity, so that the course leader can plan in advance how to get participants into the formations required (see Chapter 2, *Course procedures: Random pairing and grouping activities*). We hope most of the terms we use for the various formats are clear, but perhaps we need to define 'melee' and 'cross-group' here. Melee has been called 'market place', 'mingle', 'moving pairs' and so on, and describes the kind of activity where participants move at will around the room forming and re-forming pairs or groups to complete the given task. Cross-grouping occurs after an initial small group work activity

where each small group will have worked on a different task. Participants are then re-grouped, forming new small groups with a representative from each of the original small groups, so that outcomes from each of the tasks can be shared.

Procedure

The stages in the procedure of the activity are numbered. Each stage describes what happens during the activity. We have chosen to describe what happens rather than give instructions as we prefer to leave those decisions as to how to give instructions to the individual course leader. However, the language of these descriptions can easily be turned into instructions, if necessary.

Variations

This section will appear only when there are variations that we have either used ourselves or know of from others. Most activities can and, indeed, should be adapted, and *Variations* may give some additional ideas about how this could be done.

Comments

This section is more personal. It contains some of the issues that have come out of our own round-up discussions. These are by way of example only, and should not be taken as necessary or even desired outcomes. We are constantly surprised at how the same activity can produce very different insights for different groups. We have also included some anecdotes of successes and failures, especially where potential pitfalls are not obvious from the procedure.

Participant reaction

This section includes extracts from feedback on sessions provided by participants (see Chapter 2, *Course procedures*) and from Development Reports (see Chapter 10, *Writing tasks*) to give some indication, through authentic examples, of possible participant reaction to the activity.

Acknowledgements

This section will only appear when we know we owe a debt of gratitude to a specific source. If any reader knows the original source of an activity that we have not acknowledged, we would be happy to learn about it and acknowledge it in any future editions of this book.

Language note

We have used 'student-teacher' and 'mentee' somewhat interchangeably. However, we have tended to choose 'student-teacher' to refer to teachers in both pre-service and in-service situations who are, if you like, in their general 'learner-of-the-profession' role. We have chosen 'mentee' when referring to their specific role and relationship with the mentor. Others, in quotations used in the book, have used 'trainee' to refer to people in both the general 'student-teacher' and the more specific 'mentee' roles.

Having looked at who this book is for and what a mentor is, as well as describing the layout of the book, we can now turn to the basic concepts that serve as the rationale for our mentor training and mentor course activities.

Part I Mentor course principles and practice

1 Basic concepts

In this chapter, we will start by describing our understanding of learning, then go on to consider teaching before looking at how teaching is learnt, that is, at teacher education. We will then look at the concepts that underlie our approach to mentor training and development.

1.1 Learning

A traditional view of the teaching/learning process is one in which the learner is expected to receive external knowledge, transmitted by teachers or books, and this received knowledge is considered to be sufficient to last a lifetime. Such a view is generally known as a *transmission approach* to the teaching/learning process. Current views of this process see it more as interaction, or dialogue – a *dialogic approach* – with information flowing from teacher to learner and back, as well as between learners. In addition, this view of the learning/teaching process sees learning the skills of finding and using knowledge as more important than knowledge itself. It is, therefore, appropriate for the age we live in as it allows us to keep abreast of the increasingly rapid changes, where what is learnt today may well be redundant or invalid tomorrow.

With earlier *behaviourist theories* of learning came a view which has been very influential in language teaching methodology, in which language, for example, is considered a habit to be learnt, and therefore drilled practice makes perfect, although it carries the danger that practised mistakes will perfect imperfection! More recent *cognitive theories* see learning as being less about behaviour and more about what goes on in individual minds. *Constructivism,* for example, sees learning as a two-way process, with the learners linking input to their own personal experiences and perceptions of the world. Input from books, people, personal experience or practice is not seen as information to be added to a store of knowledge, but rather as new perspectives to be considered and possibly used to reconstruct the learner's existing internal knowledge. In this view of learning, the objective is neither a store of transmitted information, nor a set of habits, but rather something that is personally created: schemata or constructs of understandings, that can be added to or taken apart and reassembled in ways meaningful exclusively to the learner. Learning is seen as an assembly and reassembly of knowledge, which may or may not include new input, a process that can last a lifetime. *Social constructivism* (Williams and Burden 1997) acknowledges the important contribution of the context of learning and the other individuals within that context, whether in the particular