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**Structured Peer Mentoring for Student Support in Higher Education Institutions  
in Pakistan; Catalysing Change in the Culture of Learning**

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Structured Peer Mentoring for Student Support in Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan; Catalysing Change in the Culture of Learning**

### **Abstract**

This action research project explores the impact of introducing student peer mentoring on the culture of learning in universities in Pakistan. Student peer mentoring is widely used in developed countries to enhance professional student support and help bridge the gap between learners and the university. This research investigates whether peer mentoring could be adapted to the culturally different context of Pakistan where no universities had previously introduced mentoring schemes for their students.

Students at universities in Pakistan face many barriers to their optimal learning. Teaching is predominantly teacher-led, and students have high contact hours, but there is minimal student support compared to that provided in universities in developed countries. State universities struggle to meet basic curriculum requirements within their budgets and funds are not available for the provision of extensive student support.

For this project, I designed a framework of structured student peer mentoring and introduced it, for the first time in Pakistan, into two universities in Lahore. This was intended as low cost and light-touch support to supplement existing student support services. The project involved training senior student volunteers to mentor new/junior students for one academic year. The process was monitored and evaluated to measure impact on students' learning and other aspects of their experience. The responses of participating students, lecturers and senior staff in the two universities demonstrated a range of benefits for students including increased academic and personal confidence, improved employability and a strengthened sense of belonging to a learning community. The findings indicate that such schemes could be introduced more widely in Pakistan to develop students' ownership of their learning, to effect a transformation of cultures of learning in universities and improve student engagement. The project demonstrated that student peer mentoring could be effectively adapted for Pakistan's universities. The thesis develops a new theoretical model for understanding mentoring in higher education, arguing that the mentor-mentee relationship provides culturally specific scaffolding through which the mentee becomes an effective learner within the university's culture of learning.

## **Dedication**

*In loving memory of  
Noveen Ruth,  
my big sister and mentor –  
you are sorely missed....*

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*Nosheen Rachel*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BERA	British Educational Research Association
BCES	Bulgarian Comparative Education Society
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
Dcsf	Department for children, schools and families
DAIs	Degree Awarding Institutions
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EUCEN	European Universities Continuing Education Network
FEDORA	Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique
GCSE	General Certificate of School Examination
GCE	General Certificate of Examination
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HE	Higher Education
HEC	Higher Education Commission (Pakistan)
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IBB	Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology
ICCE	International Conference on Critical Education
ICEEPSY	International conference on Education and Educational Psychology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IER	Institute of Education and Research
MBF	Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, UK
MINE	Mentoring in Nursing in Europe
MU	Middlesex University
NEP	National Educational Policy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAP	Social Action Programme
SIGMUS	Students in Governance and Management in Universities in Serbia
SLA	Student Learning Assistant
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey
U1	University 1
U2	University 2
UALL	Universities Association for Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USF	University of South Florida

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*You see things; and say: 'why'? But I dream of things that never were;  
and I say 'why not'?*

- George Bernard Shaw (1921)

*My overall experience of peer mentoring at [U2] was overwhelming. It gave me a reason to be beyond what I am, from a student to a teacher, and from a teacher back to a student. It was a two-way learning process for me, I helped two students from underdeveloped areas of Pakistan. The most important highlight of my mentoring meetings with my mentees was that, I learnt about them, their cultures, as well as how something insignificant, as it may seem to us, may be quite complex for some to comprehend, it showed me to view the world and its people with different perspectives.....*

- NI, Mentor (Chapter VI)

#### **Preamble**

This thesis presents an action research project which introduces, structured student peer mentoring to selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for the first time in Pakistan and explores its impact on the existing culture of learning in those institutions. The research makes an original contribution to knowledge on student mentoring in Higher Education (HE) by developing a framework of structured student peer mentoring specifically to be introduced into universities in Pakistan and other educational contexts in which peer mentoring had not previously been part of student support provision. The thesis provides an original theoretical model to underpin the practice of peer-mentoring in situations where the cultural backgrounds of participants differs from those for whom the established practice of peer-mentoring was developed.

Peer mentoring has been widely adopted in universities in the UK, USA, Australia and some other countries as a way of providing additional student support, and more recently, to enhance the efficacy of student-centred learning in universities. In Pakistan, universities have not introduced this form of support for students. In this thesis, I interrogate the possibility that structured student peer mentoring can be adapted to the

particular circumstances of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan with beneficial outcomes both for the students, and also for the universities in which it is introduced. I seek to demonstrate, through action research conducted in two universities in Pakistan, both that structured peer mentoring can be adapted to and introduced successfully into HEIs in Pakistan, and also that its adoption by the universities can transform the learning culture within the universities.

The aim of the research was to introduce structured peer mentoring to supplement student support within selected universities in Pakistan and to assess its impact on the student experience and on the learning culture within the universities.

The following objectives contributed to the formulation and development of my research.

Objective 1: To develop a framework and operational system of structured student peer mentoring for student support in the selected universities in Pakistan.

Objective 2: To elaborate a model of peer mentoring with which to provide theoretical underpinning for the introduction of student peer mentoring in Pakistan's universities and other similar contexts.

Objective 3: To examine the possibility that student peer mentoring could facilitate the development of student-centred learning culture in universities in Pakistan.

The research question was:

*What are the implications of the implementation of student peer mentoring in universities in Pakistan for the development of a student-centred culture of learning within the university community?*

In the initial phase of my research, I reviewed the literature on existing models of peer mentoring. In doing so, I was not able to find any documented evidence of the use of student peer mentoring in universities in Pakistan. The literature on student mentoring in studies in the UK, the USA and Australia show that student peer mentoring has been found to be highly effective in helping students, particularly those benefitting from

widened participation in HE, with their learning and overall student experience, and with significant benefits in retention and attainment (Clutterbuck, 2004; Andrews and Clark, 2011). Peer mentoring, in this context, is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member (Miller, 2002).

The rationale for this project was to design and implement a peer mentoring scheme distinctively for students in universities in Pakistan where there is minimal student support and no concept of structured mentoring for student peers. Mentoring has been used in a small number of universities in Pakistan for professional development or to support professional training. In Bahria University (Usmani *et al*, 2011) a form of structured mentoring was used in the medical and dental training of undergraduate students but the mentors were members of faculty and not senior students. Such faculty-based mentoring is common in medical schools in developed countries and is regarded as essential in improving appropriate professional skills. Similarly, a scheme run by the British Council (British Council, 2012) trained four Pakistani teachers in techniques of mentoring and peer support with the aim of cascading mentoring amongst teacher trainers to improve the professional quality of trainee (and retraining) teachers. Apart from these instances of a small number of faculty led schemes, there is no documented evidence of student peer mentoring in any university in Pakistan. My project was, therefore, an entirely new intervention into the existing learning culture of HE in Pakistan.

The HEIs in Pakistan strive to meet the basic curriculum requirement within the limited budget allocation by the state (Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, 2011). There are no funds or resources, including academic and non-academic staff, available for the implementation of co-curricular schemes for student support. By identifying the issues and difficulties faced by students in universities in Pakistan, through fieldwork in specific Pakistani universities and an assessment of the current practices of the limited student support services available, it was possible to design and implement a pilot project, within the selected universities, which offered the possibility of achieving support for students at minimal cost. However, it could not be assumed that what appears to work in universities in Europe, Australia and the USA would work in Pakistan. Therefore it was necessary to investigate the proposition that such a scheme could be implemented successfully in a

developing country, with different learning relationships in the universities, dissimilar financial constraints and specific socio-cultural synergies impacting the management systems (Farooq, 1996; Zubair, 2001).

An essential element of this project was to evaluate the impact of the implementation of peer mentoring on the existing teaching and learning in Pakistan's HE and to assess the effectiveness of such support systems in the universities. However, additionally, the project looked for a changed sense of student engagement within the university community, and considers the impact that this might have on broader development issues in education and in the society as a whole (Kolb, 1984; Lave and Wenger, 1991; James and Bloomer, 2001). Consequently, when students take the adaptive skills and sense of democratic involvement in learning developed through participation in peer mentoring into employment and society, the greater impact of such schemes on social and economic development may become apparent (Topping, 1996; Miller, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Forehand, 2008; Fenge-Davies, 2010; USF, 2011). This is also echoed by the Higher Education Academy's project in the UK on Education for Sustainable Development which states that 'students are champions and potential change agents for sustainable development in Higher Education' (Higher Education Academy, 2012: no page).

This research project introduced planned and structured change into Pakistan's HE student support, under controlled circumstances on a limited scale (Bradbury and Reason, 2001). The choice of action research as the primary research framework was to provide a situation where change was the intended outcome (Herr and Anderson, 2005), but on the basis of the adaptation of a well-established set of practices that have proved effective in other contexts. This is discussed in detail in Chapters III and IV.

As the sole coordinator of the project, my personal experience of learning and teaching in Pakistan was significant in planning, informing and developing this research (Hughes, 2006). Gummesson has argued that where researchers have awareness of pre-understanding of the context of research and the problem area, it facilitates the development of a richer understanding of the area of research (Gummesson, 1991). I found this to be the case in my project. From my experience of studying in Pakistan's education system, working as a former secondary school teacher and training pre-service and in-service teachers at a teacher training institute in Lahore, I have been aware of the problems students encounter in the education system in Pakistan. As this



research explores the possibility of alleviating some of the student related problems in selected HEIs, my knowledge and experience gave particular insights which might not have been available to researchers without previous experience of education in the country.

My initial approach to the research can be seen as similar to Havelock's much discussed model which suggests that there are five steps to planned problem-solving change; the need for change, defining the problem, searching for promising solutions, implementation of the solution and determining whether the problem is resolved satisfactorily (Havelock and Zlotolow, 1995). This model has become a standard for researchers investigating planned change (Scott, 2003). Recognition of the need for change emerged from my own prior experience of HE in Pakistan and the UK, and in particular my observation of the ways in which students entering university in the UK from diverse and sometimes disadvantaged backgrounds were able to access a number of support systems to help them engage with their learning. I was aware from my experience as a student and as a teacher in Pakistan HE that such support was rare, and consequently student performance and well-being could suffer.

The search for a solution to these problems partially stemmed from my personal experience as a mentor and a voluntary student support worker in the UK. While studying for a Master's degree in Education at the UK university where I am doing my doctoral research, I participated in a government sponsored mentoring scheme in science education, the Student Associates Scheme (SAS, 2006), whereby university students volunteer to mentor and assist GCSE and A Level students in schools to inform them about the benefits of HE. I also volunteered as a mentor in the pilot peer mentoring programme organised by the university I studied in the UK. This experience firstly led me to develop a pilot mentoring project for secondary schools in Pakistan for my MA dissertation, but also to postulate that such support would be valuable at university level in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007). It is through this lens that I am able to speak of experience as structured through particular rationalities and performativity. I then looked for ways in which this solution could be implemented, and implemented in controlled circumstances so that the introduced change in the situation could be monitored and evaluated. This process is indicative of the essential character of the action research paradigm selected for my research project which was to introduce

change on the basis of previous evidence of positive benefits, but with continuing monitoring to allow for adaption to the specific circumstances of the changes intended (Cohen *et al*, 2011).

The remaining part of this chapter provides a summary of each chapter and maps the content and structure of the thesis.

### **Structure of the thesis**

Chapter II, 'Context of Research' sets the contextual background of Pakistan, the country in which my project was conducted. It introduces the reader to the complexities of the educational background in Pakistan. This chapter also provides a brief insight into the major problems Pakistan is currently facing as a nation and the issues specific to its education sector. Finally, the impact of these problems on the learning and experience of students in all levels of study is discussed with particular focus on student-related issues in HE Institutions. This chapter describes the Pakistan government's effort to address issues such as low literacy rates, especially amongst women and girls, and provides data about the current situation in the education sector. The prevailing culture of learning, embedded in strong religious and cultural values among students at all levels; primary, secondary and tertiary, has also been analysed. I discuss a model of learning based on James and Bloomer's (2001) work on learning as a cultural practice, and suggest the use of such a model to recognise the cultural specificity of learning and learners in different contexts. In the final section, I review and discuss the kinds of general challenges that students face in universities today and the particular challenges faced by students in Pakistan, and which need to be considered in developing mentoring in universities in Pakistan.

In Chapter III, 'Literature Review', I discuss, in Section 1, theories of change and relate this to my project which was to introduce planned change into universities in Pakistan. I also relate it to the underlying principles and theoretical aspects of my role as the agent of change. In Section II on 'Mentoring in theory and practice', I consider the extensive use of mentoring in different disciplines ranging from business to health services to teaching and learning. The importance of mentor-like roles in educational settings is then discussed in detail, focussing on the use of mentoring in HE

institutions with reference to my own experience of mentoring programmes at my university in UK as well as other UK universities. I then situate my research in the context of theories of learning that apply to the practice of mentoring. In this section, I propose a new model for situating learning in a particular cultural context and suggest that this can help to develop and adapt mentoring practice to the specific needs of students and institutions. Analysis of a range of mentoring practice involving student peers providing support to junior students in HE follows in the next section and I discuss issues in conducting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating mentoring programmes in educational institutions. Best practices in mentoring are reviewed with special reference to models of successful mentoring schemes in universities in the developed countries.

Chapter IV discusses the ‘Research Methodology’ appropriate to meet the aim and objectives of the research. The chapter is divided in four sections: methodological perspective – action research; role of the researcher; ethical issues and implications; methods of data collection and analysis. The first section rationalises the selection of action research as the primary methodology for my doctoral thesis. The section on my reflection on the role of the researcher familiarises the reader with the complexity of my role as a researcher, an insider and an outsider, a participant and non-participant observer and as the agent of change. The ethical issues and implications section presents my awareness of the responsibility of my role and the level of sensitivity required to ensure that no harm was done to the participants in this project which was maintained throughout the research and demonstrate that the ethical principles were adhered to. The permission and informed consent of participants, anonymity and relevant imperative parameters required for social action research were fulfilled to the international standards of the ethical code of conduct. The theoretical underpinning of the data collection methods and the preference of selection of the tools for data collection are explained. Different data collection methods were used for triangulation purposes to ensure the conformability of the data collected. This chapter concludes with a diagrammatic summary (p.106) of the roadmap of the research fieldwork process. The roadmap follows the timeline given in Appendix 20.

Chapter V on ‘Research Design and Implementation’ encapsulates the roadmap of my research project. In this chapter, I discuss the details of the preliminary and subsequent

five distinct phases illustrated in the previous chapter. Each phase (1-5) commences with my visits to Pakistan for research fieldwork. This unpacks the diagram (p. 106, Figure 10) of roadmap of the research and demonstrates the design of the project as it developed chronologically. Explicit information on the design of each document resource used in the research fieldwork is articulated in this chapter. Each phase is represented as a successive cycle which reflects the practical application of the theoretical concept of action research.

Chapter VI presents the 'Research Findings'. This chapter gives an account of the responses and findings from the participants by the use of the data gathering tools in the form of observations, interviews, questionnaires and through focus groups. Data on academic grades of one group of mentors and mentees is provided and contributes to triangulation of data on these students' academic performance after their involvement in mentoring.

Chapter VII provides 'Data Analysis and Reflection' on the research findings and critically identifies and analyses the data from Chapter VI. The data was analysed through theme analysis. It also explicates various themes that emerged from the findings. The research praxis is discussed in the temporal, dialogic, subjective and reflexive framework. It retains the chronological structure of the research timeline (Appendix 20) and identifies the main themes during the preliminary and subsequent five phases of the research design. The themes emerging from each phase are tabulated with a summary of the data followed by descriptive analysis of the themes. In the last section of the chapter, recommendations on the implementation of mentoring are suggested in the light of the findings and analysis of the project.

Chapter VIII, 'Discussion and Conclusions' provides critical reflection on the essential findings of the research and summarises the overall conclusions. Each of the objectives of the research project are discussed individually drawing together the various stages of the action research design to demonstrate how the main aim has been met. Finally, this chapter provides the reader with two major conclusions drawn from my study; answers the research question and identifies and explicates the contribution of new knowledge from this research within the existing literature on mentoring.

## CHAPTER II

### CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

In the first section of the chapter, a brief outline of the education system in Pakistan is given to familiarise the reader with the contextual background of my research and the main issues facing the education sector in Pakistan. It also provides a picture of the aspirations and problems of students studying in HE institutions. An insight into the learning cultures in the education system in Pakistan and its impact on shaping of HE is also discussed.

#### SECTION I: Context - Pakistan

Pakistan has a crucially important strategic place in the world today, both geographically and politically, with China, India, Afghanistan and Iran as its neighbouring countries. With a population estimated at around 180 million (Population Census Organization, 2012), it is the sixth most populous country in the world. The official religion is Islam, with 96% of the population Muslim. There are small but significant Christian and Hindu communities.



Figure 1: Map of Pakistan (CIA, 2012)

Pakistan became independent in 1947 when the former British colony of India was partitioned in the settlement that led to independence from colonial rule for the sub-continent. This followed and led to severe internal conflict, mainly on religious lines.

The majority of the Muslim population moved into two separate areas of the northern part of the sub-continent, forming East and West Pakistan, and the Hindu and Sikh populations from those areas moved inside the new boundary of India. East Pakistan, after political and then military conflict with West Pakistan, seceded from Pakistan in 1971 to form Bangladesh (Rahman, 2009). Since gaining independence from British colonial rule and partition from India on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947, Pakistan is grappling with the multi-dimensional issues of a country with only 65 years as an independent nation.

Although Pakistan has considerable natural resources and economic potential, the current per capita GDP of \$2,800 (£1750) makes it one of the poorest countries in the world (CIA, 2012). Ongoing political instability, coupled with the huge cost of security, both because of continuing conflict with its neighbours, and the war against terrorism, has prevented the country from realising its economic potential (BBC, 2012).

Pakistan is committed to the processes of development, and its economic growth is seen by the country's government, as well as outside agencies including both the US and UK governments, as directly linked to and influenced by the education sector, and especially HE. Both individuals and nations benefit from education. For individuals, the potential benefits lie in the general quality of life and in the economic returns of sustained, satisfying employment; for nations, the potential benefits lie in economic growth and the development of shared values that underpin social cohesion (OECD, 2012).

## **SECTION II: Education in Pakistan**

### **i) National Education Policy**

Successive Pakistani governments have also understood that the role of educational institutions is pivotal in contributing towards the economic, political, social and cultural structure of a country (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010). The population has increased to around 180 million by 2010 compared to 132 million in the 1998 census (Ministry of Population, 2010), showing a rapid expansion of the birth rate and in the population at school and college age. The implications for the age profile of the country are great with around 35% of the population in 2011 under the age of 14 (Population Census Organization, 2012). With such a youthful population, any change in the education system will have significant impact on the development of the country.

In this thesis, I suggest that if students are given supportive educational opportunities and introduced to participation in community learning services within their educational institutions, they can make a positive contribution towards the development of a supportive culture of learning and could help Pakistan achieve political, socio-economic, cultural and religious stability. This view has also been voiced recently by the chairperson of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2012: no page):

...there is a direct correlation between knowledge capital and economic development. If Pakistan wishes to become an emerging power, it needs to enhance its knowledge and intellectual capital drastically.

The students of today will be the decision makers and opinion leaders of the country when they progress into the positions in the society and economy for which they are being prepared (Higher Education Academy, 2012; Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2012).

## ii) The education system

The Ministry of Education and Training (formerly Ministry of Education) of the Government of Pakistan is the body responsible for all education in the country, and this includes responsibility for both the public and private sectors of education.

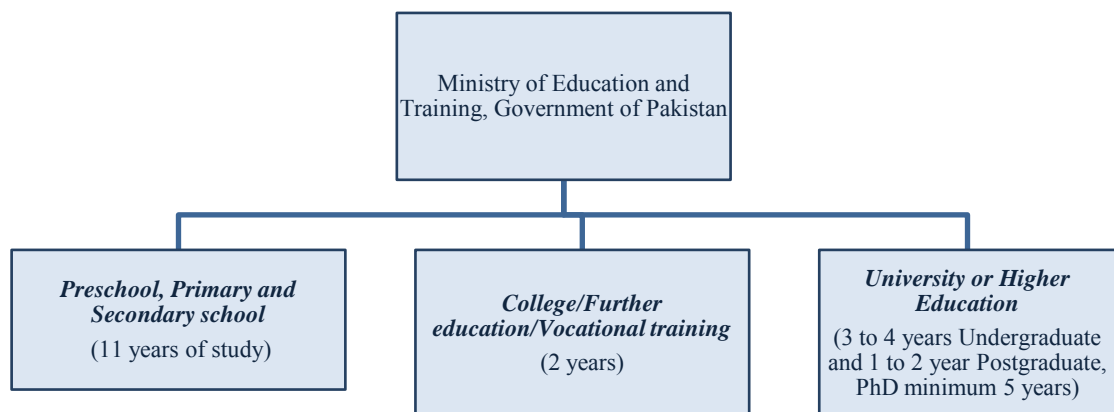


Figure 2: Education system in Pakistan

Iqbal (2011) points out that despite a number of attempts by various governments to make at least primary education compulsory, Pakistan remains one of the few countries in the world where there is still no compulsory education. In the Provincial State of

Punjab, in 1994, the Punjab Compulsory Education Act was passed but has never been enforced. No similar legislation exists in the other Provinces of Pakistan. This point emphasises the fact that, although the central government has overall control over educational matters, each province has considerable autonomy over local practice and the implementation of policy.

The education system in Pakistan is highly complex (*ibid*) but may be categorised under the conventional headings below:

1. Preschool, primary and secondary school (up to 11 years of study)
2. College/further education/vocational training (normally 2 years of study)
3. University or HE (3 to 4 years undergraduate and 1 to 2 year Master's, PhD minimum 5 years of study).

Within these categories, the descriptions below cover the main forms of educational provision, although other, informal, education provisions are present, particularly in rural areas.

#### 1. Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education:

There are three parallel education systems in Pakistan at the preschool, primary and high school level; the Government (state/public) Schools, the Private Schools and the Madrassah (Islamic Schools), all governed by the Ministry of Education and Training.

The majority of schools at this level are Government (state) schools which use Urdu as the instructional language and follow the curriculum and textbooks designed by the Ministry of Education and Training, Government of Pakistan. English is taught as a compulsory subject at the primary level in state schools. There are also two types of private schools. One of these types follows the same curriculum in year 9 and 10 as the government schools, though the instructional language is English and these schools have permission from the government to use curriculum and textbooks other than the ones used by the government schools for classes below year 9. The other type of private school offers high-cost, high-quality education and offers the University of Cambridge/University of London Examination Board GCE O Levels and A Levels following the curriculum set by the UK universities. These schools have the permission from the Ministry of Education and Training to practice policies made by the board of



governors of the specific schools and aim to offer international standards of education. All private schools have to be registered with the Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, there are Madrassah schools which follow the curriculum set by religious scholars (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012). Usually children from less privileged families go to the Madrassah schools and Urdu Medium schools whereas children of the social elite attend English Medium or London/ Cambridge exam school system.

Ten years of studying in school leads to matriculation (equivalent to GCSE/O Level qualification). Students are then required to take Intermediate studies (F.A/F.Sc equivalent to A Levels) before they can be accepted into a university or a university college for undergraduate studies. In the private sector, a few further and higher education colleges and Secondary schools offer London/ Cambridge exam system GCE A Levels as a parallel system of education, in addition to the Intermediate courses offered and approved by the Ministry of Education and Training, Government of Pakistan. Schemes of studies for all these courses are based on three key factors: national educational policy, market demand and global issues. According to UNESCO report on education statistics the net enrolment rates in primary education is 81% male and 67% female and the transition rate from primary to secondary in 2011 was 73% (UNESCO, 2012).

## 2. Further/technical and vocational education:

Vocational education is offered for students above 13 years of age in Technical Colleges and in a small number of vocational schools. Courses are mainly limited to craft based subjects such as carpentry, needlework and weaving. Technical Colleges also provide post-secondary education (post-15) which is aimed at providing skilled and semi-skilled technically proficient workers for a range of employment. There are over 3000 technical and vocational institutes which are closely controlled by government and which offer nationally recognised qualifications for technical education. There are no national examinations for vocational institutes. The most recent data on available is for 2008 whereby gender split at these colleges was roughly 62% male, 38% female students (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

### 3. Higher Education:

All teaching and assessment in all universities in Pakistan, is conducted in English, Pakistan's only Official Language (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012).

Teaching at university level cannot be delivered in any other language. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the governing body for universities and HEIs in Pakistan. Since 2001, the Higher Education sector in Pakistan has undergone a dramatic renaissance. The President of Pakistan in a message on his commitment to education to the Higher Education Commission stated:

A holistic approach was adopted in this regard, which aims at enhancing literacy levels, improving the quality of primary and secondary education and giving a major boost to higher education. We are targeting 60% literacy level by the year 2005, raising it to over 90% by 2015, and producing 1500 PhDs per year mainly in science subject. The present position of student entering higher education is to be enhanced from 2.6% to 5% by 2009. (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010: no page)

The realisation by the Government of Pakistan of the importance of HE in contributing to sustainable socio-economic development, as well as poverty reduction, stimulated a chain of events that led to the establishment of the Higher Education Commission.

Founded by Presidential Ordinance on September 11, 2002, following the recommendations of the 'Task Force on Higher Education', the Higher Education Commission inherited a HE system having a wide range of problems. The HEC replaced the University Grants Commission in 2002. It is an autonomous body with its own board of governors, chaired by the Prime Minister. The HEC has the main aim of facilitating quality assurance across the sector, in both public and private institutions. The HEC is a national body, although each of the provinces has some autonomy in HE policy, for example, in the recognition of institutions as valid HE providers and degree awarding bodies. The Director of HEC recognises that:

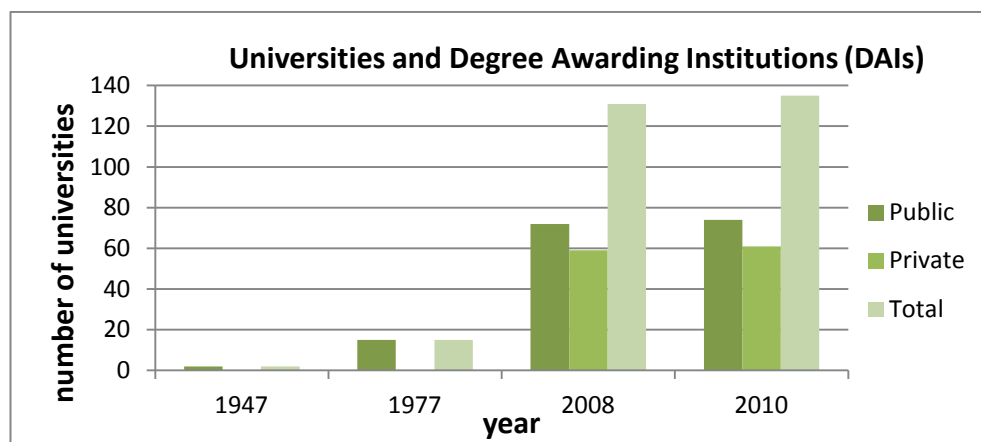
while concrete progress has been made in improving the state of higher education, an impact will only be possible if the reform process that has been initiated is sustained, supported and strengthened. (Director, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010: no page)

Currently Pakistan has a total of 135 universities or degree awarding institutions, of which 74 are public/state run and 61 are private universities. In 1947 when Pakistan

gained independence from the Indian subcontinent, there were only two universities. By 1955, four more universities had been established and by 1965, the total number of universities was 10. After the secession of Bangladesh (East Pakistan) in 1971, there was significant expansion of the number of universities in Pakistan, and in that decade the Allama Iqbal Open University was established on the model of the UK's Open University. The major expansion of HE however, took place after the National Education Policy (NEP) was revised in 1998 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012). The intermediate colleges were upgraded to degree level, and a target of 5% HE participation by 2010 was set. Twenty-one new universities were promised, and the door was opened to an expansion of self-financing for institutions. By 2008, the number of universities was 131 (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010) and this increased to 135 by 2010 under the mid-term development framework, with considerable educational investment from overseas aid, particularly from the USA and UK.

Year	Universities and Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs)		
	Public	Private	Total
1947	2	0	2
1977	15	0	15
2008	72	59	131
2010	74	61	135

Table 1: The increase in the number of universities in Pakistan since 1947 (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2011)



Graph 1: The increase in the number of universities in Pakistan since 1947

The National Education Policy aim of bringing curricula and quality levels to internationally recognised standards was well established. However, much of the expansion of HE has been in the private sector, with a number of for-profit universities and Degree Awarding Institutions being established. This has presented the quality assurance systems of the HEC with particular problems, especially as each province has the authority to recognise institutions independently of the national government/HEC. The overall number of students in tertiary/higher education in 2007 was 741,092, with 54% of these male students (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2012). However, enrolment in degree colleges was roughly half of that figure (352,053), with a clear majority (61%) of female students (*ibid*). The National Education Policy statement in 2008 put participation in tertiary education at 4.7% (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012), on track to reach the 5% participation target.

The vision of the Ministry of Education and Training (*ibid*: no page) is that ‘education is a categorical imperative for individual, social and national development that should enable all individuals to reach their maximum human potential’. The Ministry of Education and Training (2012) suggests that the system should produce responsible, enlightened citizens to integrate Pakistan in the global framework of human-centred economic development. It functions in the development and co-ordination of national policies, plans and programmes in education and development of curricula. It keeps under consideration the international aspect of development and planning of education. During the past 30 years attitudes to society and education have changed. Pakistan has made huge efforts in the education sector to increase the literacy rate with limited success (UNICEF, 2007). Although the Ministry of Education and Training has promoted special studies designed to identify problems of national integrity and introduced measures best calculated to ‘protect the mainsprings of ideological inspiration and develop national cohesion’ (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012: no page) there has been only slow progress towards acceptable literacy and primary education participation and to improve the gender balance in education. This existence of a wide gap between policy and practice, according to Schön’s Centre Periphery Model of leadership, as viewed by Stenhouse (1975 in Kelly, 1999) leads to continuing barriers to the implementation of policies.

### **iii) Issues for a developing country**

#### **a. The literacy issue**

Literacy rates in Pakistan have consistently been among the lowest in the world. The figure of 34% literacy given in the 1992 National Education Policy (Iqbal, 2011) was among the reasons for the Government launching the Social Action Programme (SAP-1) in 1993-4 followed by successive programmes in 1996 (SAP-2) with an extension to 2000. The SAPs placed special emphasis on primary education, with increased literacy at its heart. However, by 2005, the overall literacy rate was still only 57%, with significant geographic and gender differences in the rates (PSLM, 2009). Literacy rates in Baluchistan province are consistently lower than other provinces and the rates of literacy for women fall between 10% and 20%, lower than those for men. Again, the largest gender gap is seen in the mainly rural areas of Baluchistan (*ibid*). Pakistan faces great challenges to keep pace with educational levels in the rest of the world and in particular to achieve the Millennium Development Goals announced in the Millennium Declaration in 2000 (United Nations Organisation, 2000), which set targets for global literacy of 88% by 2015, with equalisation of rates of male and female literacy.

#### **b. The language issue**

Urdu is the national language of the country but the official language is English. The majority of education in Pakistan is conducted in Urdu and/or English, despite the fact that neither of these languages is a majority first language in Pakistan. Higher Education is conducted in English. The issue of language has been a political issue for many years, with regular attempts to establish Urdu as a second official language for the country, and there have been recent attempts to increase the number of national languages to include those spoken across all the provinces (Dawn, 2011), with the proponents arguing that the proportion of the population who speak Urdu as a mother tongue is very low, despite its prevalence in urban areas and in elite circles. In the 2001 Pakistan Census (Population Census Organization, 2011), only 7.57% of the population were recorded as Urdu native speakers, while native Punjabi speakers were about 44% of the population. Language remains a highly contentious issue and is one which has impact across the whole education sector, as well as in employment and political circles. In a detailed article for the Academy of the Punjab in North America, Rahman (2009) argues

that the predominance of the use of English and Urdu as the languages of the elites and thus of power creates problems of social cohesion.

.. the language policies of Pakistan, declared and undeclared, have increased both ethnic and class conflict in the country. (*ibid*:10)

However, he concludes by emphasising that multilingualism would be important in raising the cultural status of users of other languages than English and Urdu. The first priority would be to ensure that the level of teaching of those two languages is improved to the whole population and not divided between very good teaching to the urban elites, and very poor teaching of these languages to the rural poor. This would begin to address the issues for those sections of the population who are severely disadvantaged in terms of access to higher levels of education and thus to their personal economic and social development.

Such arguments follow similar debates about the constraints on educational opportunity in the UK, dating back to Bernstein's (1973) argument on the 'restricted codes' of working class speech and more recent work on the problems faced by some speakers of English as an additional language in realising fully their education potential (Troyna and Siraj-Blatchford, 1993). These arguments have led to significant resource and pedagogic interventions in UK education including the introduction of peer support schemes to help students realise their abilities and in particular to improve the success rate of initiatives to broaden access to HE (Aimhigher, 2006). Government funded actions such as Aimhigher initiative pioneered a number of strategies to support students from diverse and frequently educationally disadvantaged backgrounds in order to extend access to Higher Education beyond the traditional predominance of middle class and largely white students (Fenge-Davies, 2010). The scheme was also intended to provide support to students whose first language was not English, including recent migrants and asylum seekers.

This emphasis on broader access echoes aspects of the National Education Policy (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012) which reiterates the importance of all citizens achieving their full potential. While the need for high quality universal primary and secondary education is highlighted, the underlying commitment to broadened access to higher learning remains in focus despite the myriad problems facing social and economic development in Pakistan.

### **c. Development and economic issues**

As a developing country, considerable emphasis has been laid on investment in education by the current and recent governments in Pakistan in order to improve the literacy rate and to address the multi-faceted issues related to education system. However, the problems of implementing policies for educational improvement are further exacerbated by national and natural disasters similar to the earthquake on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2005 (magnitude: 7.6 on Richter scale), a consequence of which was that more than 4000 government primary schools had to be rebuilt, with help from international funds, in the earthquake-stricken area in Balakot, Rawalakot and other northern areas of Pakistan. According to the UNICEF press release:

in the earthquake zone, UNICEF has helped to re-establish over 4,000 government primary schools that were destroyed or badly damaged, ensuring that as many as 375,000 children can continue their schooling. (UNICEF UK Press Office, 2006: no page)

Continuing multi-dimensional issues of health related and other life threatening situations also tends to push education reforms to the back of the government agenda. For example, the epidemic spread of dengue fever and other water-borne diseases as a consequence of the 2010-11 floods affected most of Pakistan, but especially regions in the Province of Punjab:

According to the Punjab Health Department, the total number of dengue patients in the province has reached 11,584 whereas 10,244 relate to Lahore. (The Nation, Sep 2011: no page)

Another news report stated:

Lahore, a city of 10 million inhabitants, 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in Pakistan is in the throes of a dengue outbreak, and is struggling to cope. There have been heavy rains in the region for the second year running, leading to water accumulation in open spaces and increased atmospheric moisture, conditions much favoured by breeding mosquitoes...(BBC, Sep 2011: no page)

These natural disasters, together with the ongoing security situation, violence and political unrest in Sindh Province and in the border areas with Afghanistan have made considerable inroads into the Government's ability to pay for and direct educational reform. The problems at the national level in all sectors including the education sector

are intensely complicated. The continuing low expenditure on education seems to be an insurmountable problem for Pakistan's government with the government spending only 2.1 % of its gross domestic product on education (EFA, 2010). In contrast, India spends 3.3% of GDP and Malaysia 4.7% (UNESCO, 2010).

Figures for the federal budgets from Pakistan's Finance Ministry for 2010-11 and 2011-12 (Table 2) show that around 2.9% of the total federal budget is allocated to the Education Services Ministry, with just 2.7% spent on actual education provision in primary, secondary and tertiary education with the remaining 0.2% spent on administration in central and local government. These budget figures include support for education from aid and development loans from external sources as well as internal finance. The lower 2.1% figure quoted in the previous paragraph is based solely on the proportion of Pakistan's GDP spent on education.

<b>Public Services</b>	<b>Budget 2010-11 (Mn Rs)</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2010-11 (Mn Rs)</b>	<b>Budget 2011-12 (Mn Rs)</b>
General Public Service	1,387,664	1,655,566	1,659,978
Defence Affairs and Services	442,173	444,640	495,215
Public Order and Safety Affairs	51,263	58,735	59,609
Economic Affairs	66,897	79,960	50,307
Environment Protection	448	448	577
Housing and Community Amenities	1,842	1,657	1,602
Health Affairs & Services	7,283	7,455	2,646
Recreational, Culture and Religion	4,359	4,197	4,247
Education Affairs and Services	34,500	40,324	39,513
Social Protection	1,463	2,940	1,164
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,997,892</b>	<b>2,295,921</b>	<b>2,314,859</b>

Table 2: Budget Allocation comparison year 2010-11 and 2011-12  
(Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, 2011: no page)

Education Affairs and Services (see Table 3) were provided with 39,513 million Rupees in the budget estimates for 2011-12 compared to Rs 34,500 million under budget estimates for year 2010-11 and Rs 40,324 million in revised estimates for 2010-11. The bulk of expenditure at Rs 29,111 million was allocated for Tertiary Education, including vocational and further education.



<b>Education affairs and services</b>	<b>Budget 2010-11 (Mn Rs)</b>	<b>Budget 2010-11 revised (Mn Rs)</b>	<b>Budget 2011-12 (Mn Rs)</b>
<b>Total allocation</b>	<b>34,500</b>	<b>40,324</b>	<b>39,513</b>
Pre-primary and primary	3,174	3,245	4,148
Secondary Education Affairs and Services	4,232	4,425	4,893
Tertiary Education and Services	25,210	31,166	29,111

Table 3: Budget allocation for Education (Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, 2011: no page)

In Pakistan, as in most developing countries, poverty, malnutrition and health challenges, while central to economic and social development, are only a few of the many issues faced by the country. The provision of the most basic needs of the people is of major concern to the government and most of the funds in the budget, apart from those for defence and security, are allocated to such purposes. The significance of ‘meeting basic human needs’ is affirmed by Maslow’s theory on hierarchy of needs (Huitt, 2004) which is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the four lower levels are grouped together as deficiency needs linked with physiological needs, while the top level is termed growth needs associated with psychological needs. The basic concept is that the higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus once all the needs that are lower down in the pyramid are mainly or entirely satisfied. While deficiency needs must always be given priority in a developing country, the growth needs that are in part met by education struggle for resources and recognition.

Problem solving for specific individuals in ‘Maslow’s pyramid’ is at the top of the pyramid which can only be reached by humans once the basic life needs are met. In Pakistan, the levels of poverty are such that the development of education and other social, cultural and psychological aspects of life become difficult to achieve for the majority of the population. International development aid has been seen as a way to bridge this gap, but support is generally targeted at provision at the highest levels of need. The provision of development aid in itself brings problems in that donors, including international agencies, have agendas that may not coincide with those of the recipient country (Riddell, 2009), despite the claim of the OECD Paris Declaration:

It is now the norm for aid recipients to forge their own national development strategies with their parliaments and electorates

(ownership); for donors to support these strategies (alignment) and work to streamline their efforts in-country (harmonisation); for development policies to be directed to achieving clear goals and for progress towards these goals to be monitored (results); and for donors and recipients alike to be jointly responsible for achieving these goals (mutual accountability). (OECD, 2005: no page)

In Pakistan, the security situation and international political tensions over the past 20 years has meant that this kind of support was, in any case, reduced considerably for a number of years from the main sources of aid, including the USA, UK and the rest of Europe. During the 1990s, for example, the USAID budget was minimal, only increasing again in 2002, although much of this was in military aid (Guardian, 2011). Humanitarian aid has increased considerably since the earthquake in 2005, and again following the floods in 2010, but this was barely able to meet the challenge of the catastrophic consequences of these disasters. Thus, the flow of aid is unable to meet the main developmental needs of the country, and the education sector has not benefitted from an increased input of resources.

### **SECTION III: Cultural context**

#### **i) Learning cultures in Pakistan**

This section discusses the cultural context of Pakistan's HEIs and the issues and problems encountered by students in those institutions. The identification of these problems at the earliest stage of research was necessary as it helped towards diagnosis of the barriers to learning and the development of possible solutions.

Education patterns in Pakistan had historically been established on the basis of the colonial British education system working alongside the traditional Madrassah schooling. More recently the influence of the US education system was introduced as US Christian missionaries from the USA became active at the time of separation of Pakistan in the division of the Subcontinent in 1947. There has been little development of pedagogy at any level until recently, and, in primary and secondary schooling at least, the practices in teaching and learning which were in place 60 years ago are still being used, with rote learning and the authority of the teacher still the basis for schooling (Farooq, 1996; Iqbal, 2011). Formal examinations play a vital role in determining approaches to teaching and learning, and teachers face great pressures from

various stakeholders to gear their teaching to prepare students for passing examinations with good grades. Students are also expected by teachers and parents to sharpen their latent potential by rote memorizing factual knowledge and reproducing it in the examination. There is little emphasis on testing children's understanding of what they learn, application in everyday life of the basic concepts they study and on higher order skills. Rahman (2009) suggests that it would help improve the system if consideration was paid to defining clearly the objectives of formal examinations and how they are conducted. He also argues that the introduction of formative assessment to internal school/college/HE practice and also as part of the public examination system would lead to improved teaching and learning and enhanced quality of education.

It has already been pointed out that Pakistan has severe and on-going problems in delivering education to its citizens (p.17-22), with low participation in primary education, poor literacy rates, marked differences in the quality of education between urban and rural areas, and especially in rural areas, a significant gender imbalance in access to and participation in education. Other main issues inherent in the government education systems in Pakistan are: high drop-out rates particularly at primary level, high repetition rates, low completion rates, inequalities by location and social groups, lack of support from the parents, child labour, teachers' absenteeism, and unsatisfactory performance of schools which impacts on secondary and tertiary education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012).

These issues have exceedingly strong impact on students' cognitive learning and development. Issues in the public schools are of a difficult nature and the leaders of the government schools alone cannot do much to alleviate these problems due to lack of resources, motivation and initiative. However, in the private sector education system, the issues are somewhat different as the parents tend to be highly supportive towards their children's educational needs. Because of the high fee charges, more funds are available for privately run educational institutions enabling them to improve their own existing system from within. The leaders of the private sector education institutions are also more conducive to accept and try out new strategies and communicate them to the school community and to help students with their problems. The policies in private schools/colleges are indicative of a collegial approach of leadership (Bush and Middlewood, 2005) as compared to state school/college/university policies. The leaders

in private education institutions make an effort to achieve collegiality in practice. The collegial theories of leadership (Bush, 2005) claim that effective communication is the glue that holds an organization together. In collegial models the head or principal is typified as the facilitator of an essentially participative process. Their credibility with their colleagues depends on providing leadership to staff and external stakeholders which include students, parents and the educational institutional community.

The contrast between the educational provision in the private sector and that in the state sector, and in resources enjoyed by the two sectors only helps to exacerbate some of the problems, and in particular that of creating and maintaining a small and educationally privileged elite, who are not drawn from the wider society in Pakistan. As well as being socially divisive, it is also, in national terms a wasteful process when a significant part of the population is effectively excluded from educational opportunities, particularly at higher levels (Haeri, 2002).

The education system in any country is pivotal in determining its economy and development and its youth are the heritage of that country (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012). Pakistan is culturally rich in its traditions and enjoys a close-knit family system where most parents of the middle class families and social elite living in urban areas consider it a responsibility and an obligation to provide the best education to their children and strive to educate their children in private or better state schools and in well-established universities. However, these privileged students living in the urban areas form less than 20% of the population in the country. The remaining 80% of children live in the rural areas (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics, 2012) where they have little or no access to quality education, even in the private sector. Moreover, the ambitions of the parents and the desire of students to meet those ambitions create a situation where challenges to the orthodox forms of educational culture are virtually unknown.

## **ii) Education for girls**

The education of girls is a particular problem in a country where one child in eight is informally employed from an early age in physical labour which for girls may include carpet weaving, craft manufacture and domestic service (Farooq, 1996; Iqbal, 2011). This is especially the norm in the communities residing in rural areas, where there is

neither an expectation that girls will need education, nor motivation for education because the lack of social mobility is such that it is exceptional for any young person to move beyond the work and social constraints of the local area (Zubair, 2001; Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007). Under such conditions, schooling will necessarily suffer. In addition, the eldest girl is frequently required to stay at home to care for the elderly family members or younger siblings.

Under a recent Pakistani law, at least half of all money expended on education must go to schooling for girls (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010), but many families are unable to afford the notebooks, uniforms and food to keep children in school. More generally, gender attitudes lead to preference being given to keeping boys in school, while girls leave school at the earliest opportunity (Haeri, 2002; Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007). However, while this is true of the rural areas, it is not true of middle class urban areas, or of participation by girls in private education. We have seen above (p. 17) that the gender differences in literacy rates between urban and rural areas indicate that girls in urban areas are far more likely to attend school and achieve literacy than those in rural areas. Furthermore, as students progress through to higher levels of schooling, after the filtering processes of class and geography have already taken their toll on girls' schooling, the gender imbalances in participation all but disappear. Iqbal (2011:34) quotes Pakistan Education Statistics for 2007- 8 which show that 'participation in Higher Secondary schooling (age 15+ to 17+) is equal for boys and girls. The same statistics show enrolment in degree colleges at 61% female and that for universities (all levels including postgraduate, 2007-8) at 46% female' (*ibid*).

In their most recent regular analysis of world educational attainment produced by Barro, the Harvard economist, and Lee, Head of the Asian Development Bank's Office of Regional Economic Integration (Barro and Lee, 2010) indicate that, in Pakistan, the graduation rates for different age groups between 20 and 40 are around 85%, easily comparable with those of developed countries. The proportion of women in this age range completing their studies is even higher at about 90%. It also indicates that, apart from the older age group of 35-39, a significantly higher proportion of the population with HE qualifications are women, and the dropout rates for women are also significantly lower.

The following Tables represent the Educational Attainment for the total population for 2010 and for female population for the same year.

Country : Pakistan : Educational Attainment for Total Population, 2010									
Year	Age Group	Highest level attained						Average Years of schooling	Population (1000s)
		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary			
		Total	Completed	Total	Completed	Total	Completed		
		(% of population aged 15 and over)							
2010	20-24	-	-	-	-	7.3	6.3	7.618	18147
2010	25-29	-	-	-	-	6.3	4.8	5.938	15051
2010	30-34	-	-	-	-	7.3	5.7	5.596	12003
2010	35-39	-	-	-	-	7.3	5.8	5.106	9722

Table 4: Education Attainment Dataset – Total Population (Barro and Lee, 2011: no page)

Country Pakistan : Educational Attainment for Female Population, 2010									
Year	Age Group	Highest level attained						Average Years of schooling	Population (1000s)
		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary			
		Total	Completed	Total	Completed	Total	Completed		
		(% of population aged 15 and over)							
2010	20-24	-	-	-	-	8.9	8.0	5.840	8783
2010	25-29	-	-	-	-	6.9	5.5	4.907	7275
2010	30-34	-	-	-	-	5.6	4.6	4.083	5796
2010	35-39	-	-	-	-	4.4	3.6	3.386	4687

Table 5: Education Attainment Dataset – Female Population (Barro and Lee, 2011: no page)

This illustrates some of the difficulties in extrapolating from the severe conditions of educational hardship seen across Pakistan as a whole to the picture for HE where the national participation rate of 4.7% in 2008 (NEP, 2009) indicates a considerable degree of selection. When considering the specific issues that might be faced by students entering HE, compared to those identified for HE entrants in the UK or USA, it is necessary to consider both the experiences of those from the middle class urban elites as well as the contrasting experiences of the small minority who have achieved HE entry from considerably more economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

### **iii) Learning and cultures of learning**

In relation to the learning culture of the students, a complex pattern emerges. Whereas the learning site (the relatively fixed formal conditions of a particular university in which the student is studying) remains more or less constant, attention needs to be placed on the different positions of students within the broader learning culture. The assumption that might be made about the extent to which the learning culture is shared by all students needs to be examined.

As discussed above, the majority of students who enter HE in Pakistan are likely to have come from private sector schools, and thus, from teaching in the English language, some having taken English or American exams. However, in all but a very small number of schools, the style of teaching and the emphasis on preparation for examinations currently remains the same as in other schools in Pakistan.

The National Education Policy 2009 (NEP, 2009) explicitly and for the first time recognised pedagogy as a problem in delivering the results intended in previous plans and policies and referred to the 2008 NEP, which stated:

The previous policy framework...did not produce the desired educational results and performance remained deficient in several key aspects including access, quality and equity of educational opportunities. (NEP, 2009:7)

The 2009 National Education Policy also stated that the education system should produce responsible and enlightened citizens to integrate Pakistan in the global system of economic and social development (*ibid*). In order to achieve these outcomes, the Policy identifies radical changes to the pedagogy, with the introduction of student-centred learning in secondary and higher secondary schools. Teachers are trained in interactive methods of teaching, with counselling support also provided, both for personal issues and for subject guidance (Iqbal, 2011). These initiatives co-exist with curriculum reforms and changes to teacher education, including enhanced in-service training to update existing teaching styles (The World Bank, 2012). Although the impact of these changes, even if successfully implemented, will not be seen for a number of years, it does show an increased recognition of the problems for learners in

Pakistan and the recognition of a different approach to teaching and learning and student support.

Thus, for nearly all entrants to university in Pakistan, the learning culture that they are used to is one where the student is trained to be a passive recipient of knowledge, to memorise knowledge and regurgitate it in examination with minimum institutional support or guidance (Iqbal, 2011). For such students, the authority of the institution, and of its teachers and of the knowledge they impart cannot be questioned (Rahman, 2009). Moreover, such acceptance of authority reflects a wider attitude to civil society and to citizenship and this underlies one of the tasks indicated in the 2009 National Education Policy (NEP, 2009); to prepare students for enlightened and responsible citizenship.

Higher Education is increasingly regarded as a global activity (Altbach *et al*, 2009) with universities across the world competing internationally for research funding and teaching curricula that are converging on the reproduction of skills and knowledge that all national governments expect in order to build an economically sound future. This suggests that the university is increasingly an institution that has certain common and easily recognised features independent of the local cultures surrounding it. In many countries, university education has developed from former colonial practices.

Universities in the Indian subcontinent, Anglophone Africa, Australia and New Zealand have owed much of their shape and constitution to the university system in the UK.

Those in francophone Africa have developed or inherited structures very like those in France. Kattumuri (2011) argues that the cultures of learning in many universities across the world have had their roots in a colonial system. The addition of new 'private' universities has, in many cases, introduced aspects of US HE into the system because the organisations behind such enterprises, including philanthropic or religious agencies as well as those run for profit, are frequently based in the USA. The globalisation of HE highlights some of the differences between these systems, but the urgency of expanding HE within limited budgets has focussed considerable attention on the primary aims of the university, and on the development of the most effective learning processes to achieve those aims.

The relationship between learning and culture has become a particular focus of attention, and is central to the consideration of the design of a mentoring scheme in HE (HEFCE, 2010). The recognition of the importance of cultural aspects in the learning



process is especially important in working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, or where there is a distinct shift in the learning styles required when the students move from school to university (UKCISA, 2008).

There are two particular, linked ways in which culture is a factor in the learning process. Firstly, the parent cultures of individual students may impact directly on the student's relationship to teachers, to peers, and to the learning materials provided. If, for example, the student comes from a religious or familial structure where forms of communication and relationships are hierarchical and deferential, adjustment to informal learning situations and, in particular, shared learning with peers, is problematic. Thus the student enters the learning situation with established expectations of the relationship between teacher and learner, of the authority of the teacher and the institution, of their relationship to knowledge and its acquisition. In Pakistan, the parent culture of deference and passivity in the learning process is found both in the school system and in the familial and other cultural structures within which the students live (Iqbal, 2011).

Secondly, the learning context of the university itself is surrounded by an institution-specific 'culture of learning' that has its origins in the history of the university and how it has developed over time in response to institutional, local and global changes. The University of the Punjab (Punjab University, 2011), for example, was established in 1882 as one of four universities established by the British colonial service in the Indian subcontinent. It was modelled on the expanding sector of city universities in the UK, which were themselves modelled academically on even older universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. The structures of faculties, disciplines, teaching and examination methods were directly transferred into the colonial situation in the Punjab, and, initially, many academic appointments and most professorial appointments were of British academics. Even the academic year, which historically in the UK included a long vacation to allow the students to return home to help with the harvest, was not adjusted to the local conditions, which meant that examinations would take place at the hottest time of the year in Pakistan. Under British colonial rule, the language of tuition was mainly English, and the majority of students who joined the university had progressed through an English based school system, mainly run by Christian missionaries, church schools or, in some cases, as private enterprises, using English curricula and exams. The basic structure of the university, with faculties and

departments, formal teaching methods and unseen examinations remained much the same after Pakistan's independence. Any changes in the curriculum, responses to local needs, or pedagogic innovation had to take place within these basic structures of the university.

James and Bloomer (2001), discussing an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2012) project on learning cultures in UK Further Education Colleges, make a useful distinction between 'learning sites' and 'learning cultures' and invoke the concept of 'authentic learning site'. The learning site is the specific situation within which learning takes place, primarily, the institution itself with its internal behaviours, values, meanings and purposes, but also the formal setting, discipline boundaries etc. The learning culture, on the other hand, is the broader cultural context to which the learner belongs and in which the learner lives their daily life. The distinction is subtle; it is not that the student enters a different cultural setting once they walk through the gates of the university. All educational institutions impose a specific cultural space within which the primary focus of learning exists, whereas the learner is actually situated within a much broader cultural space in which the on-going practice of learning must take place. Thus the student is constantly negotiating the boundaries between the learning site and their learning culture. James and Bloomer express the view that:

the notion *learning culture* is broader and more 'elastic' and complex than that of learning site alone. We intend to use the term, learning culture, to include the time and space within which learning occurs and, also, those persons or material conditions whose presence impinges upon learning whether they are the subject of formal prescription or not. It thus includes conventional class meetings of recognised student groups and their tutors, but it may also include work experience, private study, recreation, family life, personal relationships and other cultural experiences. .... learning cultures consist of shared and contested meanings whose perpetual evolution lies at the very heart of learning processes. (*ibid*:9)

James and Bloomer's idea of an 'authentic learning site' to describe what they, using Bourdieu's (1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) work on culture, suggest is where the cultural practice of learning actually takes place and which defines the experience of learning for students:

Authentic learning sites include, potentially, much of what is recognised in formally prescribed learning opportunities, but they also

include much that is not prescribed such as home, peer group and personal relations, accidents, career and other aspirations, and even sleep. They are endowed with meaning – the meanings, sometimes idiosyncratic and sometimes shared, that individuals bring to their learning and that they construct and re-construct in the course of their learning. They are ‘elastic’ and vary not only from individual to individual, but even in an individual case, from moment to moment. Moreover, they are situated within wider social, cultural, economic, political and moral networks and have to be understood in terms of such situativity. (*ibid*:6)

In the context of my research project, the concept of an authentic learning site has much to offer. Mentoring of students in HE is an intervention intended precisely to target the individual students’ needs in the learning situation. Student peer mentoring has the advantage that the mentor and the mentee share at least some of the conditions that construct the authentic learning site in which the mentee is situated at the moment of the mentoring encounter. Not only has the peer mentor experienced the formal learning situation, the learning site, as a learner themselves, but, with careful selection and allocation of mentor to mentee, may also be part of, or at least be in a position to understand, the broader conditions of the learning culture. The mentor may not share the authentic learning site which James and Bloomer (*ibid*) suggest is always unique to the learner who, in this case, is the mentee. However, the extent to which the mentor is part of the cultural construction of the mentee’s authentic learning site, through sharing the learning culture and learning site, assures a high degree of shared meaning and understanding from which the benefits of mentoring may arise (Kolb, 1984; Murray, 2001).

This is indicative of the fact that most students in Pakistan arrive at university from a hierarchical school system in which knowledge is unquestioned and patterns of teaching and assessment are formal and teacher-centred, where students live within a shared broader culture in which there is a deferential attitude to social, familial and religious authorities (Haeri, 2002; Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007; Rahman, 2009). The learning culture, that is the combination of this broader cultural context, and the learning site, that is the relatively conservative institutional structure of the university itself, provides the setting for the students to engage with the intense pressure of higher learning (Zubair, 2001). Even though, as Iqbal (2011:181-2) argues, the students entering university come mainly from the elite class and private or good urban state schools, the

learning culture of this group, in terms of the shape and form of the learning process, and of the constraints on independent thought, is little different from those students who successfully find their way to university from less advantaged backgrounds. It is through the idea of the authentic learning site that the subtle differences between different students and their individual issues and needs can be identified and addressed.

#### **SECTION IV: Challenges to learning for students in higher education**

In the sections above, it is shown that students entering university in Pakistan have experienced some particular challenges and barriers based on the geo-political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances of the country. It has also been discussed that university life in Pakistan tends to rely on a more traditional ‘teacher-based’ style of education, although this is changing in some universities and some departments (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010). The question then must arise about the extent to which the model of peer-mentoring that is substantially based on the experiences of students in the USA and UK may be applicable in such a different context and in particular, the extent to which students in Pakistan may face a very different set of challenges to those facing students in the USA and UK. For example, the following broad lists of challenges have been distilled from experience in one American University (Iowa State University, 2009: no page) as a guideline for counselling or mentoring students, and as discussed further in Chapter III, are similar to those used as an assumed basis for student guidance in many mentoring schemes in the US and UK:

##### **a) Personal challenges**

- Moving to a new environment
- leaving family
- living with a roommate
- meeting new people
- making personal decisions everyday
- facing new peer pressures (sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.).

##### **b) Intellectual/Academic challenges**

- Speaking up in class
- communicating with professors
- developing semester course schedules
- seeking academic assistance when problems arise
- balancing academic and social life.

**c) Physical challenges**

- Coping with weight gain/loss
- forming positive health habits and breaking problem habits
- becoming self-reliant in managing health/stress
- finding lifetime hobbies and activities.

**d) Interpersonal challenges**

- Connecting with a new friendship group
- starting and managing romantic relationships
- learning how to show emotions in appropriate ways
- managing conflict situations
- recognizing/deciding to act on sexual orientation.

**e) Career/Lifestyle challenges**

- Choosing or changing a major
- deciding on participation in internships and other work experiences
- deciding to leave school/change schools
- making decisions related to future issues (marriage, income needs, etc.).

Of these lists, whilst the specific meanings and circumstances may be different in each new context, including Pakistan, most of these challenges are of a general character as has become evident from other studies (Chapter III) and my own findings in this research (Chapter VI). Thus, university life, no matter how varied the cultural contexts of student and institution, involves a number of changes to the lives of students which have common characteristics. This is, in part, due to the fact that the model of HE in Pakistan is substantially based on the UK (or US) models. A majority of students in Pakistan HE are high-achievers from predominantly educated and independent backgrounds, with strong commitments to success. At the same time they encounter similar challenges of entry to a relatively independent young adulthood that students face in the UK and US even though some of the challenges will be specific to the local culture. Furthermore, in many UK and US university mentoring schemes, a significant number of the target students are from varied cultural backgrounds, either as recent migrants or international students. For this reason, the general character of the challenges listed above is a reasonable starting point in considering introducing mentoring to a new context, with the proviso that the details of the specific learning culture, and recognition of the authentic learning site of the individual students must be given due recognition in the implementation of the scheme.

In considering the potential for peer-mentoring to address the issues facing students in Pakistan, the following points appear to be important:

- Improving students' academic performance and motivation while the resources are reduced.
- Preparing students for changing patterns of learning to more learner-centred approaches, in contrast to the hierarchical form of teaching which predominate across the education sector, including much of HE.
- Increasing student ownership of the learning process, and the outcomes of learning.
- Improving the student experience, and supporting students facing a wide range of personal, cultural and academic issues.
- Developing a stronger sense of citizenship and community learning.

In contrast to this, the emphasis on learner-centred learning in the UK, while central to the changes in HE over the past two decades, has been mainstreamed through the curriculum and is not such a priority for peer mentoring schemes except for those intended for overseas students entering UK HE whose home learning culture may not have been learner-centred (UKCISA, 2008).

Many of the challenges listed above may have their equivalents for students in Pakistan. However, the differences between the learning culture of the students and that of a mid-Western American university might be significantly different. It was necessary to carry out some preliminary research on the issues that the students and faculty regarded as major barriers to learning and integration into the HE process. The issues identified by students and their academics in this research are given in Chapter VI.

This approach to the identification of challenges and the positing of mentoring as a solution for students in Pakistan requires some examination in terms of the role of education systems developed in the UK and other Western countries in contributing to maintenance of the dominance of Western culture in former colonial countries (Pannikar, 2002). As indicated above (p. 29), universities in Pakistan developed either on the model of British universities through the colonial administration of education during the imperial era, or with the more recent expansion of private colleges and universities based on US university structures. In all universities in Pakistan, English is

the language of instruction, and this, together with a highly selective system, ensures that most students attending university in Pakistan are influenced by the dominant cultural forms of Western countries. A significant proportion of school students, particularly poorer students, attend madrassahs where Urdu and Arabic are the languages of instruction. Despite the existence of this form of Islamic educational institution in Pakistan since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and a significant expansion of madrassahs since partition and the end of colonial rule in 1947, particularly under the Presidency of General Zia ul-Haq from 1978 to 1988, no madrassah has been accorded university status in Pakistan despite offering education at the equivalent level as universities. The total number of registered madrassahs in Pakistan in 2012 was 21402 (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2012). This excludes very many school students from attending university. On the other hand, within a country which is a proclaimed Islamic state, the strong presence of a distinct Islamic educational tradition has led effectively to a separate theocratic hierarchy within Pakistan's social, political and cultural life. While this might be seen as counter-hegemonic, it remains the case that political and economic power is currently associated with those who have progressed through the university system rather than the madrassah system. Qadir (2011) argues that this stems not so much from direct imperialism but from the adoption by the government of Pakistan of a dominant idea of secular modernity developed in colonial India in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, partly as a form of resistance to the Islamic traditions of HE in the sub-continent. He believes that this view, while having its origins in a utilitarian view of universities which coincided with the foundation of the University of London, is not a simple colonial hegemony, but an ongoing need to develop a nation state in which Islam was central. This suggests that the hegemonies in Pakistan's HE system are complex, and as much influenced by the government's policy of modernisation within a global context as by the colonial past.

The question remains whether mentoring, or, more specifically, the forms of mentoring that have been developed in UK universities, might contribute to the hegemonic dominance of English medium universities in Pakistan's culture. However, mentoring is intended to deal with real-life student issues. A pragmatic approach would suggest that attention should be paid to the specific cultural formation within which the students are working, including recognition of the ways in which the learning culture of the university reflects the influences of colonialism, religion and nation-building. In this

context, mentoring may be, while not wholly culturally neutral, at least benign in its impact on the wider culture of Pakistan.

The next chapter provides a review of the literature on change and change management and provides the basis for the stance I took as the agent of change in my action research. It then gives a critical appraisal of the theoretical and practical aspects of mentoring in educational contexts and provides the rationale for structured peer mentoring as my selected problem-solution approach for the alleviation of student-related issues in selected universities in Pakistan.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews literature on the management of change in Higher Education and provides a critical perspective on theoretical and practical approaches to peer mentoring. It aims to provide the basis for understanding how peer mentoring may be developed for the context of Pakistan's universities, and give theoretical underpinning for the implementation of a mentoring scheme in Pakistan. I discuss both learning theories and cultural theory to consider how these can help to elucidate the impact of peer mentoring on students' learning experience.

In the first section, theoretical and practical dimensions of leading and managing change in organisations and educational institutions are critically analysed and its relevance to action research is provided.

#### **SECTION I: Action for change**

##### **i) Managing change in education**

The process of formal education appears to be continually in a state of flux (Higher Education Academy, 2012), and the management of change is a constant in organisations and educational institutions whether in the developing or the developed countries. In some cases, changes are in the organisation or in the educational setting. Sometimes, the change is the result of continuing developments in pedagogy itself, not the least of which is the result of the introduction of new educational technologies. Change may result from government initiatives. Schostak (1999) believes that intervention to effect change may have an illusory value, as change takes place anyway and is the only thing that is permanent and inevitable. We may mistake our actions as either the cause of, or resistance to changes which are inevitable and therefore outside of our actions (*ibid*). Inevitable though it is, paradoxically, the pace of change depends on the will and action of ordinary individuals (Fullan, 2001 and 2004; Scott, 2003) whether the stimulus for change comes from within the institution or from external agencies such as governments. Action and the sense of empowerment depend upon the time-frame within which change takes place. Cultural changes in values, opinions and forms of action of young people may change much faster than the more traditional

views and attitudes of their elders. Furthermore, global changes may not always be the catalyst for local change. Sometimes it is not the global that acts faster than the local, but change, including widespread change, may be the result of local or small-scale changes (Fullan, 2004; Kotter, 2008). My project was intended to create change on a small-scale because of the limitation of the time frame and resources available for the research. However, it was also seen as a pilot for further action and with the view that change resulting from an intervention such as the introduction of peer mentoring would be seen as beneficial and that this could be an initial step towards wider uptake across the education sector in Pakistan.

Schostak (1999) asserts that introduction of a small-scale action may bring about considerable change. Posch (1994) suggests that, depending upon one's point of view, individuals, communities, societies or the whole world can be seen as either heading in the right direction, or needing improvement or not heading in the right direction at all, and needing cure or repair to get it back on track.

Sketches of current educational culture (Fullan, 2001 and 2004) demonstrate the emergence of perceptions of increasing complexity in education systems. In particular, these perceptions point to the changes in the use of information technology, new developments in pedagogy, and growing globalisation together with increased awareness of learners as individuals (James and Bloomer, 2001). These suggest the need for measures to develop a framework to assist educationalists and educational institutions in coping with these dynamic developments, divergent demands and complex practical situations.

In the next part of this section, I briefly examine some theories of change in social, political and scientific thought. I then look at theories of change in educational and organisational contexts and identify the strategies developed for planned change in educational institutions in relation to the planning of changes to be introduced through my action research project in selected universities in Pakistan.

## **ii) Perspectives on change**

The cultural anthropologist, Wallace (1970) observed that social and cultural change begins with instability in a cultural equilibrium which results in increased individual

stress. As a growing number of people find that they are unable to meet cultural expectations, this is initially seen as an individual problem. However, as the number of these individual differences expands, it may weaken the society to the point where the society needs to recognise that the problem is not just personal. It is necessary at this point to revitalise the society as it becomes impossible for a state of equilibrium to be maintained. According to Wallace (*ibid*), this process depends on the operation of a number of principles which include: Formulation of a new idealised vision or code; communication of the vision and building an organisation among the holders of the vision, which then may be adapted to broaden the appeal of the vision. Cultural transformation occurs once the organisation gains enough support to sustain its vision and the communication leads to implementation of change (Trowler, 2008). If successful, the stresses that stimulated the change should begin to reduce and a process of normalisation established whereby the vision becomes institutionalised.

Marx also identified change as resulting from stress in a system (McLellan, 2000), although in his political theory, the stress was the result of inevitable conflict between economic classes in societies. His political and economic ideas were derived from Hegel's (Bristow, 2007) view of history as a dialectical process. The dialectical process, which may be traced to the work of the Greek philosopher, Socrates, describes the way in which the opposition of two ideas (thesis and antithesis) may lead to a new idea (synthesis) that is derived from the oppositional pair. This new idea may then become the thesis to which a further antithesis emerges and the dialectical process continues. Hegel (Forster, 1998), and Marx subsequently, applied this to the process of historical change in human society, arising from class conflict. Where Hegel believed that the *bourgeois* stage of social development was the end point of history, the pinnacle of human society, Marx argued that this end-point would not be achieved until the final synthesis of the opposition between the working class and the *bourgeois* or ruling class was achieved. The key general point that emerges from this model of change is that the opposition of ideas, and of social groups, will generate a transformation, not just of one part of the whole, but of the totality of the structure and that this transformation is inevitable wherever class conflict exists.

In scientific thought, a common question that arises is whether change is self-generating, or is change the result of response to an action or in other words, is

equilibrium the natural state of the world? According to Newton's Laws of motion (McCall, 2011), an action produces an equal but opposite reaction, assuming that balance is the natural order. In the laws of thermodynamics, conversely, although the first law of thermodynamics states that the totality of energy in the universe remains constant, the second law states the quality of that energy is in a constant state of disintegration. Another example, Le Chatelier's principle (Le Chatelier in Oesper, 1937:451) can be used as an analogy for a model of change. Whenever there is a disturbance that alters the equilibrium of molecules in a system, the whole system shifts in the direction that nullifies the effect of change and the system thus regains the state of equilibrium. The appearance of stability is maintained within the molecular system, yet change has taken place at the molecular level.

Kuhn (2000) used the idea of a paradigm shift to explain how scientists adjust their conceptual model of reality as a result of shifts in data and adjustments in theories that derive from on-going scientific research. Paradigms have their own sets of rules and describe their own sets of facts (Cohen *et al*, 2011). In this way paradigms are self-validating and may be resistant to change. In the world of science, the accumulation of evidence that may be challenging to the paradigm may build up, and at a certain point the dominant paradigm is overthrown, and a new paradigm becomes established. This model of change is not unlike the model of social change proposed by Marx, hence the reference to 'revolution' in the title of Kuhn's book (Kuhn, 2000). This point of view contrasts with a more conventional view that scientific knowledge is evolutionary and is primarily the result of the gradual accumulation of data (Popper, 2002). The evolutionary view does not fully take account of how the data itself is to some extent pre-defined by the conceptual framework of the dominant paradigm. For Kuhn, the paradigm shift was a necessity to achieve greater scientific understanding. Change to scientific (and perhaps more general) knowledge occurs only when this shift has been established.

It can be seen from the above that these theorists of change, from rather different standpoints, have a number of common points to make. Change is inevitable, even when the status quo appears to have been maintained. Change has to encompass conceptual or paradigm shifts, and is not just a rearrangement of existing ideas or structures. Change emerges from tensions, or even contradictory positions in a framework of knowledge

where the new vision is a resolution or synthesis of opposing or inconsistent ideas. The conceptual shifts that occur as a result of achieved change establish the process for further change. Change is a dynamic process and is not implemented effectively without broad support and understanding of both the need for change, the implications of the change and, most importantly, the planning and management of change. Finally, some systemic or structural change is an inevitable result of any change, no matter how small.

Applied to the possibility of change in HE in Pakistan resulting from my project, I would suggest that the intervention of peer mentoring, if it is effective, is so because it disturbs an apparent equilibrium of current pedagogic practice. In so doing, it offers the opportunity for resolving tensions inherent in the current system, and makes possible a paradigm shift in the culture of learning in the institution. Although a small scale change in pedagogic practice in an institution, such as that proposed through the intervention of student peer mentoring, may appear to be insignificant, it could impact on the wider institution through the changed perceptions and actions of participants. This is not to claim that all change is beneficial, or that there may not be resistance to further change. However, as the theories above suggest, some systemic change is inevitable. As Le Chatelier's principle indicates, as discussed above, even where an appearance of stability is maintained at the macro level, change has occurred at the micro level.

In the next section, I consider approaches to organisational change, especially in universities, with particular emphasis on the management of change and the gaining of support and consent from participants and those who may be affected directly or indirectly by the dynamics of the change process.

### **iii) Developing strategies for change in education**

Any form of change within an established organisation is usually perceived by members of the organisation, at least initially, to be uncomfortable as it may result in unfamiliar situations (Fullan, 2001; Higher Education Academy, 2012). The fear of the unknown arises to challenge the comfort zone of familiarity and this can lead to resistance to change even if the situation which the change sets out to address is seen as problematic.

The initial step in change management is the prior understanding and addressing of any potential resistance to the changes to be introduced (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008). Higher Education across the world is facing many challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The number of students participating is increasing as countries rise to the challenges of economic growth through new technologies and the expansion of the knowledge economy. But traditional approaches to HE are costly and the cost of expansion to the public purse is a matter of concern. New pedagogies are emerging, especially those using the latest technologies (Herrington *et al*, 2009). University managements are faced with contesting priorities between research and teaching and increasingly complex institutional frameworks. Simultaneously, HE is becoming increasingly global, with pressures for increased mobility of staff and students, and the convergence of qualifications to facilitate global recognition is a requirement of the market and of the activity of both state and multinational agencies such as the European Union. Change in HE is not an option but a necessity, and the ability to manage change successfully is an imperative for all involved (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005; HEC, 2010; Iqbal, 2011).

The diagram below is taken from an Infokit that was developed by a team from the University of Bedfordshire for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2010) for a Good Management project on effecting change in HE. It illustrates the pathway through the introduction of changes, and the stages that have to be traversed along the way.

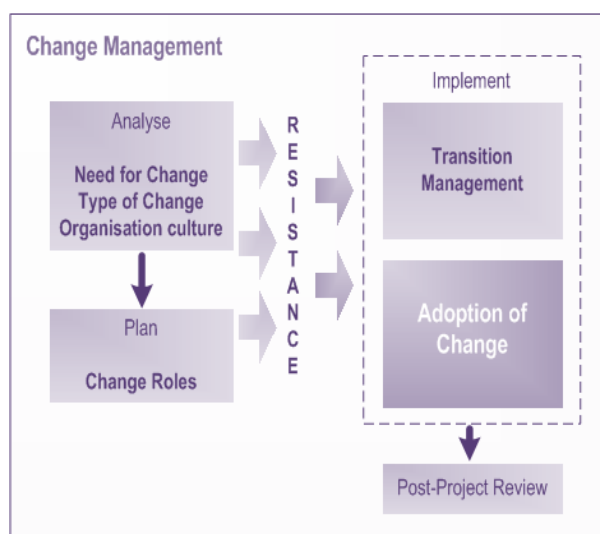


Figure 3: Effecting Change in Higher Education (JISC, 2010)

At the centre of this model is ‘resistance’, an acknowledgement that no change management can be effective without addressing this aspect of the situation. This is not to say, however, that resistance is inevitable. It may be, especially in a well-prepared project, that resistance is minimal.

The Bedfordshire model (*ibid*) emphasises the interrelationship between the culture, the processes and the people in the situation facing changes as shown in the diagram below:

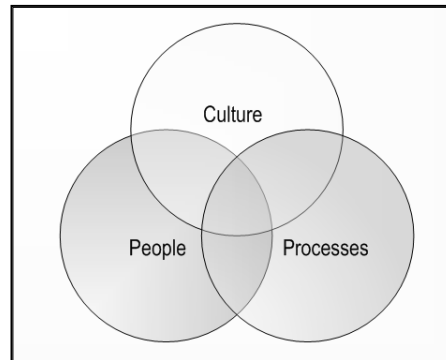


Figure 4: Relationship between culture, people and processes (*ibid*)

Whereas many models of change, they argue, assume that if the processes are right, the changes will inevitably follow. The diagram shows, however, that not only do changes involve people, both within and external to the situation, but also both the processes and the people have to interact within a wider cultural framework that may present unforeseen obstacles to the introduction of changes.

Kotter (2008; Kotter and Schlesinger 2008) has dealt with this problem of resistance to change by addressing the difference between leadership and management. According to Kotter, management is planning and budgeting while leadership is establishing direction, motivating and inspiring people to produce the desired change. Management is mostly aligned with organisation and staffing, controlling and problem solving to produce results that can be predicted. Stamm analyses Kotter’s (Kotter in Stamm 2010:12) ‘eight stages of change management’ within a leadership role:

- Establishing the urgency of need
- forming a powerful guiding coalition to lead the effort
- creating a vision to direct the initiative for change
- communication of the vision for change
- empowering participants to act on the vision

- creating short-term benefits and wins
- consolidating performance improvements
- institutionalising the new developments.

This approach to transformational leadership (Bush, 2005) introduced by Kotter has been widely used as a theoretical basis for introducing and managing planned change. In order to introduce peer mentoring into the universities in Pakistan, it was useful to recognise the eight stages listed above, and to structure the planning of the project to reflect these stages. The project was urgent for myself, as I had limited windows of opportunity to carry out fieldwork and it was fortunate that the senior staff at the universities accepted this and were prepared to treat the project with urgency. In doing so, they created the ‘guiding coalition’ of university senior staff, teaching staff and myself and supported and communicated the vision of change, particularly in the context of the recognition of the importance of student-centred learning by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2010). The short term gains and benefits were built in to the project through certificate ceremonies, and through recognition by teachers of the serious engagement of the students in the project. Consolidation and institutionalisation of the changes presented more difficulties as this was an area where my position as leader of the project, but not of the wider changes needed in the universities, was limited. This is discussed further in Chapter V.

The last part of this section introduces my role as the project coordinator and researcher in introducing planned change in selected HE institutions in Pakistan.

#### **iv) The role of the agent of change**

Agents of change are people that actively intervene at a local level in order to bring about or stimulate planned or intended changes (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995; Goleman *et al*, 2002). In doing so, they are responsible for achieving agreement for and commitment to the changes, both from the participants and the wider authorities, for monitoring and evaluating the change process, noting progress and points of resistance, learning from evaluation and disseminating results (Fullan, 2001; Scott 2003).

The HEFCE study discussed above (HEFCE, 2010) follows Kotter’s model (2008) in arguing that change agents should have awareness of the vision and sense of purpose, be able to communicate the vision effectively (Bush and Middlewood, 2004), should be



realistic about time constraints and be flexible on the path to required change. They should also demonstrate political and historical awareness and understanding as well as the skills and competences to promote change (Higher Education Academy, 2012). The HEFCE study also identifies the need for good communication skills to build the required framework and to be able to communicate the benefits as well as being able to handle negative consequences of the changes. Building a strong support network is seen as vital and making use of all stakeholders and resources available especially those that can support the process with appropriate leverage (Fullan, 2004; Goleman, 2006).

Accounts of leadership styles (Eisenbach *et al*, 1999) in organisations are often linked to the requirements of the management of change and make reference to the person recognised in the role of the agent of change. Weber (1947) first identified charisma as a source of authority, but specified that a crisis was needed to bring the charismatic qualities of a leader to the fore. In the context of change management, the ‘crisis’ could be the precipitation of change through the introduction of new circumstances or arrangements. Bush (2005) and Kotter (2008) prefer the concept of transformational leadership, particularly in the context of educational change where the drivers of change are less likely to appear as a crisis. Bass (1985) makes reference to the idealised influence of the leader in stimulating change, recognising the importance of the individual qualities of the agent of change in transformational leadership and in achieving objectives.

In accounts of both charismatic and transformational leadership models, it is clear that there is an expectation that personal attributes of the agent of change can impact on the effectiveness of the change process. Fullan (2001) argues that emotional intelligence is important in helping the agent of change to lead the process. Goleman (1998; 2006) defines emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer 1990; Mayer *et al*, 2000) as the ability that bridges cognition and emotion in human thought. Emotional intelligence, at the most general level, refers to the ability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others with four major aspects; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, echoing key attributes in Kotter’s (2008) characterisation of the leader of change. It may be seen, therefore, that successful change management benefits from transformational leadership, and on a strategic approach which includes the developing relationships, building and communicating the

shared goals of the intended change and learning from previous good practice to establish the process within well-defined and agreed parameters (Bush and Middlewood, 2005).

It is important to point out that the agent of change may not be the overall manager of the change or even the originator of the concept of the intended change. However, in the current project, these did coincide, even though theoretical and practical models of similar changes already existed. My position was that of someone both familiar with Pakistan's HE system from the inside, coupled with my ability to appear as a fresh pair of eyes from outside the system, with some authority as an 'expert'. But this was not in itself sufficient. As shown above, transformational leadership requires a complex combination of understanding, empathy, assertiveness, authority and social and cultural acceptability, some of which can be acquired through training, and some of which may be fortuitous (Bass, 1985; Bush, 2005; Goleman, 2006; Kotter, 2008). Throughout this project, my position was necessarily that of both the agent of change and the leader of change. As agent of change, I initiated events which were intended to bring about changes in the circumstances of the participants in the project. As the leader of change, it was necessary for me to adopt a pro-active position in each stage of the project from meeting senior managers at the universities which were taking part to gain acceptance of the project to engaging with the participants in training, monitoring and evaluating the project. The effectiveness of the project in initiating change was dependent on my ability to demonstrate the qualities indicated above. Moreover, the fact that I undertook the role of pro-active agent and leader of change was a strong reason for adopting an action research methodology explicated in Chapter IV.

In the next section, I discuss theories of mentoring and learning and assess accounts of mentoring practice, mainly from the UK. In situating my research within this body of literature, I also develop an original perspective on the contribution of cultural theory and learning theories to a theoretical underpinning for peer mentoring in different contexts. This provides a basis for considering the best practices and recommendations for peer mentoring from existing literature and developing a model for the introduction of peer mentoring in universities in Pakistan.

## **SECTION II: Mentoring in theory and practice**

Mentoring, as a specific practice to support and assist learning in educational institutions, is somewhat under-theorised (Forehand, 2008; Phillips, 2009). Much of the literature on structured peer mentoring is based on the practice of mentoring in the UK and other similar developed countries. In this discussion, I review these theories and practices and consider the extent to which mentoring practice based on these experiences in western countries can be applied in Pakistan. As student peer mentoring in universities was not practised in Pakistan prior to this project, there is no body of literature discussing peer mentoring in Pakistan's universities.

### **i) The origins of mentoring**

The concept of one person helping another person to develop their education or other aspirations alongside formal training has a very long history. The word Mentor (though there are various other etymologies) seems to derive from the name, Mentor, given by Homer to a close friend of Ulysses who was entrusted with the care of Ulysses's son, Telemachus, during the ten years of the Trojan War around 1200 BC. In Homer's version, it is the goddess Athena who assumes the form of a man to take the role and helps with Telemachus's education as well as the development of other necessary skills while his father was at war (Fagles, 1996).

There are a number of instances of this mentor-like role over the centuries, and it is easy to see how the word mentor came to be used to describe a range of behaviours not dissimilar to the role assumed by Athena in the form of Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey* (*ibid*; Colley, 2001). However, as these behaviours became refined into specific sets of practices in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of the mentor role (p. 1) became more specific and specialised for different purposes, but was also highly contested in terms of the claims for its efficacy in different situations. Part of this debate derives from the extensive use of mentoring across a range of professions and in educational and therapeutic contexts. In particular, mentoring has come to be used extensively in management (Roche 1979; Klasen & Clutterbuck 2007; Kotter, 2008), in psychology and therapy (Levinson *et al*, 1978; Laske, 2008; Forehand, 2008) and in education and training (Astin, 1977 and 1984; Miller, 2002; Higher Education Academy, 2012). Each

of these fields has developed a set of practices appropriate to the needs of those involved. The focus for this research is on the last of these and on HE in particular.

## **ii) Mentoring as a helping strategy in education**

Mentoring has been used to describe a variety of relationships within a number of settings. A common form of mentoring that has developed in recent decades in developed countries in universities, colleges and schools is as a helping strategy involving pairing students with more able or experienced peers, older students or adult volunteers who provide friendship, guidance, and support as students navigate new and ever more challenging circumstances (Miller, 2002; Forehand, 2008). Through internally-based mentoring programmes, universities across developed countries are offering students new avenues for exploring educational and career paths, stronger support and incentives for continuing in university, and increased confidence in their ability to succeed (Phillips, 2009). For students in need of career direction, mentoring programmes can pair them with professionals who can familiarise them with the world of work, serve as role models, and help them improve confidence (Clutterbuck, 2004). For students encountering social or academic difficulties, or for students at risk of dropping out, mentoring programmes provide supportive friends who are personally involved in students' success and who can both encourage them and hold them accountable for going to class and getting their work done, but mentoring programmes are not just limited to these scenarios (Murray, 2001; USF, 2011).

While the practice of mentoring has developed across a wide range of contexts, a narrow definition of the role has proved elusive. A mentor may be one or more of the following: a role model, sponsor, 'buddy', guide, teacher, advisor, coach or confidant (Floyd, 1993; Murray, 2001). Within HE, there have been studies of student/faculty, junior/senior student, faculty/administrator, and junior/senior faculty mentor relationships (Merriam, 1983; Hill *et al*, 1989; Chang *et al*, 2003; Phillips, 2009).

Versatile and relatively low in cost to implement when compared to other university improvement efforts, mentoring programmes have been designed for students of all ages and from all segments of the student population (Smink, 1990; Floyd, 1993; Topping & Ehly, 1998; Miller, 2002; Hill & Reddy, 2007). Although mentoring has often been considered to be primarily for underachievers, for students with low grades

and limited opportunities, it has also been used for gifted and mainstream students, providing them with opportunities to develop job and communication skills, practice decision-making, and learn more about community learning (Goodlad, 1995; Hamilton *et al*, 2006). These are similar to the uses made of mentoring in senior and middle management roles in helping to prepare colleagues for higher positions (Clutterbuck, 2004). However, while mentoring in business and management settings invariably use experienced and successful colleagues to mentor less experienced colleagues, Goodlad (1995), in an analysis of the use of mentoring in education, shows that mentors who have struggled academically will show more patience and understanding with their mentees, as they can empathise from their own experience.

Mentoring has become a regular feature in many universities in the UK, North America and Australia, and, to a lesser extent, across mainland Europe. These schemes have largely been developed as a means of addressing underachievement and student retention (Brown, 1995; Chang *et al*, 2003, Brockbank and McGill, 2006). However, the role of a mentor is not universally understood and there are many variations in the way the idea of mentoring is interpreted (Jacobi, 1991; Topping 1996). It is not always clear, for example, whether the mentors are expected to take a teacher-like role and instruct, to persuade the mentee towards improvement in their motivation and learning or just to be a role model and friend (Murray, 2001). In a survey of faculty at one American university, Sands *et al* (1991) found that the mentorship system in place at that university was seen as a complex, multidimensional activity that included four types of mentors: (a) the friend, (b) the career guide, (c) the information source, and (d) the intellectual guide. In some schemes, the type of activity and the role of the mentor are clear and may be limited to very specific objectives and activities, while in others, the brief is more open, and the role will be genuinely multidimensional and responsive to the varying needs of the mentee. Although in some of the schemes considered by these authors mentors may be members of academic staff, more frequently they are senior students in the university (Miller, 2002; USF, 2011).

Baker (2003) suggests that the benefits of peer mentoring in universities include: promoting and developing a caring community; contributing to university effectiveness and university improvement; promoting the citizenship agenda; giving a message to the community that relationships are important; reassuring parents and families that

students will be safe; and giving the message that inclusion is a priority. Furthermore, peer mentoring encourages students to share their experiences with family members and friends, thus contributing towards the strengthening of the family unit and creating an atmosphere of peace and support in the local and wider community.

Baker (*ibid*) also believes that peer mentoring supports academic achievement. If, as Vygotsky (1978, in Wink and Putney 2002) argues, learning happens first at the social level, in the interaction between people, it makes sense to find and implement ways for students' social relationships to enhance their learning. Baker (2003) also claims that the relationships between students are a vastly underestimated and under-used resource which could play a key role in the improvement of educational institutions. Peer mentoring programmes successfully begin tapping that resource by including students as partners in university development and quality enhancement.

The following summary lists the potential benefits of peer mentoring, for mentors, mentees and universities, as indicated by research into mentoring schemes in educational institutions in developed countries:

Benefits for mentors include:

- The satisfaction of having contributed to the university community (Mosqueda and Palaich, 1990; Smink, 1990; UKCISA, 2008);
- opportunities to enhance personal strengths and develop new skills (Cowie and Wallace, 2000; Hall, 2002; Leyden, 2002);
- the development of a close working relationship between academics and students (Astin, 1991; Tyrell, 2002);
- the development of leadership and communication skills in students through their involvement in the programme. A growing awareness of the importance of the concept of leading as serving, resulting in students becoming more involved in their communities throughout their lives (Miller 2002; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007);
- enhanced knowledge and skills to make positive choices in their lives (Cruddas, 2005; UKCISA, 2008).

Benefits for mentees include:

- Positive attitude to study and improved academic performance - indicated by higher grades and standardized test scores (Cowie and Wallace, 2000; Leyden, 2002; Phillips, 2009; MINE, 2010);
- increased attendance rates (Sipe, 1996; UKCISA, 2008);

- enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence. Improved relationships with academics and peers (Project PLUS, 1990; Sipe, 1996);
- improved, less disruptive, behaviour, both at home and at college/university (Pringle, 1993; Sipe, 1996; Chang *et al*, 2003; Cruddas, 2005; MUSU, 2011);
- enhanced social, communication, relationship, and decision making skills (Roberts, 2000);
- awareness of career options and ability to make vocational and educational choices and decreased likelihood of dropping out of school/college/university (Sipe, 1996; Miller 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Public Sector Mentoring Project, 2012).

Benefits for the educational institutions include:

- Lower dropout rates (Project PLUS, 1990; Chang *et al*, 2003; Cruddas 2005);
- improved image of the university in the community and the university will be perceived by all as a more positive, caring community, genuinely encouraging all students to reach their potential (Pringle, 1993; Miller, 2002; Leyden, 2002; Hamilton *et al*, 2006; MINE, 2011);
- cost-effective when using student volunteers for the mentoring (Leyden, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Phillips, 2009);
- academic staff are able to focus on the teaching as mentoring programmes support them in their pastoral roles (Crockett and Smink, 1991; Cowie and Wallace, 2000).

This summary of conclusions from existing research on mentoring in universities and other educational institutions leads to broadly positive and supportive results about the benefits for participants and for institutions. However, there are two main criticisms of this literature from the point of view of my research.

The first of these is specific to this project. As pointed out in Chapter 1 (p. 1 and 3), there were no student peer mentoring schemes in Pakistan prior to the project on which the research is based. All of the literature surveyed above is based on mentoring in the UK, USA or Australia. The question must therefore be asked about the relevance of the models of mentoring available from previous experience to the rather different context of Pakistan. This is discussed, in Chapter II (p. 35), in relation to the issue of the possible neo-colonial influence of mentoring schemes. However, a further concern is whether or not there is sufficient theoretical basis for mentoring to be adapted for Higher Education in Pakistan and this is connected to a second criticism arising from the literature reviewed above. This is that the schemes surveyed do not share common definitions of mentoring and therefore the accumulated findings indicated in the

summary above may be based on incompatible conceptual models. However, while it is the case that there is no fully shared concept of mentoring, it is possible, from the examples given above, to identify sufficient conceptual convergence to define traditional mentoring in this way: a paired relationship in which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) offers psycho-social and pedagogic support to a less experienced or junior individual (the mentee).

Applied to the particular context of Higher Education, conceptualising and defining peer mentoring raises further issues. A number of terminologies are used interchangeably in the literature. These include: peer mentoring; peer guiding; peer advising; peer support; peer tutoring; peer learning; and peer assisted learning.

This means that the task of providing a theoretical basis for mentoring is not simple. Miller (2002), for example, believes that mentoring is generally confused with befriending, counselling, tutoring and coaching due to the fact that mentors employ 'helping' behaviours. He argues that, while mentoring may include befriending, it generally involves less extensive emotional support. He also argues that mentors generally engage in self-disclosure to win the trust of their mentee, whereas counsellors tend to avoid self-disclosure. Conway (1997) distinguishes coaching as a more directive process often carried by line managers or professionals, whereas mentoring is non-directive and a more broadly focussed relationship with the mentor taking a longer perspective for both the individual and the organization. Peer mentoring has also been viewed as a means of improving and raising teaching and learning standards, to address multiple issues and meet diverse university and student needs (Clutterbuck, 2004; Brockbank and McGill, 2006). These terminologies reflect the wide range of practices brought together under the heading of mutual support, or of students helping students.

Through consideration of the various perspectives in the literature, a shared concept of reciprocal peer learning and support in a Higher Education context may be posited as a relationship in which students support each other either academically or socially (or both) in an educationally focused way for a fixed period of time. However, this does not resolve the issue of whether models of student mentoring developed in the context of universities in the UK in particular could be adapted for Pakistan's universities.



In the next section, I consider the theoretical underpinning of mentoring and argue that the addition of a cultural perspective to the psycho-social learning theories of Vygotsky and others yields a flexible model of mentoring which could be adapted to varied cultural contexts and settings and thus allow for a specific mentoring schemes to be developed for the selected universities in Pakistan.

### **iii) Learning theories and mentoring**

As the above discussion has shown, mentoring is used to describe a range of practices in different settings, with no clear common definition. Within the context of education, and of HE in particular, it is not surprising that many educationists and practitioners have been concerned with the role and impact of mentoring in the learning process, echoing the importance of Mentor's tutoring role for Telemachus (Fagles, 1996).

The learning theories of Bruner (1978), Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978) and Kolb (1984) support the view that peer mentoring can be helpful to the junior/new student. These theorists believe that the student's learning can be scaffolded (Wood *et al*, 1976) by a more experienced person through what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development (Hogan and Tudge, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978, in Wink and Putney, 2002). Kolb suggests that experiential learning may be the basis for mentoring whereby the mentor-mentee relationship helps develop skills in both participants by the experiencing of learning in conjunction with a peer (1984). Peer mentoring may be more fully understood through the social interaction (socio-cultural or social constructivist) view of cognitive development. Mentoring allows supported or scaffolded exploration through social or cognitive interaction with the more experienced peer. This takes place in relation to a task of a level of difficulty that is within a mentees zone of proximal development. This perspective remains a theoretical cornerstone of peer-assisted learning and similar mentor-like roles (Vygotsky, 1978).

Bandura (in Hergenhahn & Olson 1997) believed that most human behaviour is learned by observing others, modelling or imitating their behaviour and suggested that this was the basis for new behaviours in learning and can act as a guide for action. However, Bandura's Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977) also suggests that even though learning through observation takes place all the time in human interaction, it may not necessarily lead to a change in behaviour. The approach that recognises that learning

occurs through a social context provides an important dimension to the theoretical rationale for different mentoring schemes (Topping 1996; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; Laske, 2008).

Social anthropologist Lave and educationalist Wenger (Lave & Wenger, 1991:45) used Situated Learning theory to relate learning to a process of engagement in a 'community of practice'. Through participation in a community of practice, people discover new meanings and construct knowledge through negotiation with others (Kolb, 1984; Hamilton *et al*, 2006). Lave and Wenger argue that the community of practice is everywhere, at home, in educational institutions and in organizations and these may be formal or fluid and informal. People learn through working and studying alongside others, observing, making mistakes and gaining from 'a positive learning culture of mutual support' (Eraut, 2007:415). Learning happens irrespective of the context. As people participate, the community changes as new knowledge and meanings are generated. Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29) as defined by the situated learning theorists is 'a process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice'. The concept of 'community' therefore provides a means of analysing and understanding different ways in which learning takes place, where the focus is on learning by participation in the social world.

While this concept of 'community' is important from the point of view of understanding the learning culture in which the student is situated, it is not sufficient to understand the complex relationship between the home or parent culture of the newly arrived student and the 'community' that the student encounters. It is this encounter that defines the learning process for the student, and which the mentor has to work with, to guide the new student effectively into both successful learning and a positive student experience. This is an important issue in considering the adaptability of mentoring practices developed in the UK and similar countries to different cultural and educational contexts such as those in Pakistan. It is also important in providing a theoretical basis for the selection of mentors and mentees, and for guiding the training and support given to the participants.

The approach taken by James and Bloomer (2001) discussed in Chapter II (p. 30) helps to bridge this gap by situating the relationship of mentor and mentee in the complex encounter between the wider cultural context, the culture of learning of the institution,

and the specific cultural backgrounds that mentor and mentee bring to the encounter. For James and Bloomer, the idea of an authentic learning site places the learner within a cultural framework to which there are two main contributing components, and within which a learner identity is constructed and the learning process is conducted. The first of these two components is the learning site comprising the institution specific culture, its formal and informal teaching and learning arrangements, its written regulations and unwritten codes of conduct within which the learning has to take place. The second component is the broader surrounding culture of the parent society, its opportunities for formal and experiential learning, its stated values and class, economic and other social structures with their own associated cultural practices. As argued in Chapter II (p. 31), the success of the learner's encounters with the curriculum and with the institution depends upon the development of an effective learner identity within this framework.

However, what we have seen from the theorists of learning above is that learning for each individual is highly specific, and incorporates psycho-social characteristics that may not just be reduced to a negotiation of cultural practices. This may be characterised as the specific learning style (Kolb, 1984; Lave and Wenger, 1991) of the individual student. I propose that, if this component is then added to the model of James and Bloomer (*ibid*), the authentic learning site appears at the intersection of the broader learning culture, the learning site of the institution and the individual student's learning style. I represent my theoretical stance in the diagram below.



Figure 5: Rachel's model of authentic learning site

In Figure 5, the authentic learning site is placed in the centre of the intersections of the three components, indicating a successful negotiation of the individual learning style with the learning site and within the broader learning culture. For most students entering Higher Education, this negotiation is a process which has to be completed during the first weeks or months of study for the student to be able to become an effective learner in that context. For many students, however, this negotiation is complex. Their authentic learning site may, initially, be positioned outside the learning site – that is, their learning style may be effective within the broader culture of home, popular culture and social life, but at odds with, for example, a strong internal university culture that has social and cultural expectations of students that are different from those of broader society outside the university. Moreover, it would be a mistake to assume that the learning culture outside the university is homogeneous. Differences of class, religion, gender, for example, and the structures and attitudes to these that prevail in the dominant culture of the society determine the specific position of a learner in the broader learning culture. In Pakistan's universities, for example, English is the medium of instruction and assessment, and thus good English is a central part of the learning site of all universities in Pakistan. For those students who study at Urdu medium schools, and whose first language is, perhaps, neither Urdu nor English, negotiating a learner identity or authentic learning site which is comfortably within the learning site can be a challenge. But without English language proficiency, and the concomitant cultural competences of reading, writing and verbal expression, the student will not be an effective learner.

In recognising these cultural factors and the need to provide assistance with this complex cultural negotiation, I argue that a peer mentoring scheme informed by cultural awareness in this manner is a valuable addition to the support available to students. In such a scheme, therefore, mentors should be selected and matched as far as is possible, to a mentee similarly positioned in the broader learning culture and who has an awareness of the mentee's learning style but who has, as a senior student already effectively negotiated their own authentic learning site within the learning site of the university. In giving due attention to the cultural contexts of the mentoring situation, this approach also allows for the flexible and pragmatic adaptation of peer mentoring arrangements to cultural contexts where mentoring is previously unknown or untried, such as in Pakistan's universities.

By developing the mentoring scheme to recognise the need for cultural proximity between mentor and mentee within the model represented above, it is also possible to see the synergy between this model and the theories discussed above on the scaffolding of learning (Bruner, 1978) through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and in the development of a different community of learning (Kolb, 1984) within the university. I suggest that, in the mentoring relationship, the scaffolding is provided by the mentor, allowing the mentee not only to achieve certain specific tasks (for example, developing basic ICT skills) but also to assist in the development of the authentic learning site of the student. Once this is established, the mentee gains increased ownership of their learning, and is able to continue to move through their zone of proximal development with decreasing reliance on the mentor and increased interaction with the wider community of learners within the learning site of the university. Thus structured peer mentoring is an important factor in supporting the student to develop their role as active learners within the learning site.

While definitions and theories of mentoring vary, as do individual student mentoring programmes and the types of relationships they promote, the concept that mentoring helps develop the student's authentic learning site, recognises the need to support the negotiation of the mentee into a position of learning which enables them to gain maximum benefit and empowerment in the learning process.

#### **iv) Issues in mentoring**

Many educationalists believe that the requirement for structured mentoring in educational institutions is incontrovertible (Cowie and Sharp, 1996; Miller 2002; Chang *et al*, 2003; Cruddas 2005; Forehand, 2008; Phillips, 2009). However, its effectiveness and therefore its value to the students and the institutions depends on numerous contributing factors, the foremost being the university environment. Furthermore, tailoring a mentoring programme that is suitable for the requirement of the specific educational institution has its limitations (Freedman, 1993). Part of the purpose of the research conducted for my project in Pakistan was to explore the efficacy of structured mentoring in a highly specific situation in which the assumptions above could not be guaranteed due to the lack of previous experience of mentoring in Pakistan's universities. This was key aspect to the research; to test the new theoretical ideas

derived from existing literature on mentoring and learning with the findings from a new context where this strategy had not been used before.

The diversity of mentoring programmes in HE led Noe (1988) to question whether these programmes have anything common beyond the desire to help students stay in the university system and succeed academically. Despite the growing body of empirical research in the past two decades, the vagueness in the definition of mentoring has led to a lack of clarity on the outcomes, characteristics and antecedents of the formal mentoring relationships (Jacobi, 1991). While a number of different models of mentoring are successfully implemented by a number of USA and UK universities, some of these attempts have had mixed outcomes, with negative aspects including a lack of engagement from mentees, timekeeping and time management issues for both mentors and mentees for their meetings (Smailes and Gannon-Leary, 2008). One example given was that mentees relied too heavily on the mentors when seeking advice on their assignments and then delayed submitting their assignments if the mentor was not available, thus missing deadlines. This suggests an over-reliance on the mentor and points to a failure in the training and management of the relationship, particularly with respect to boundaries and expectations. It also suggests that close attention needs to be paid to the precise objectives and aims of the mentoring process and to the cultural context, especially the learning culture, into which the scheme is being placed. In mentoring, one size does not fit all (Miller, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Forehand, 2008; Laske 2008; USF, 2011).

There are two distinct schools of thought in the literature on the importance of matching student mentees with mentors of the same gender or ethnicity. Theoretical literature on mentor-mentee relationships for students emphasises the effectiveness of cross-race or cross-gender relationships (Pounds, 1987; Moses, 1989; Rowe, 1989). However, in practice, many mentoring programmes strive to pair students with a mentor from their own gender or ethnic background as is argued by Meznek *et al* (1989) and Johnson (1989). They believe that the mentor is a student who has been through a similar experience with respect to their ethnicity or gender and therefore is more likely to empathise with this mentee. They further contend that the efficacy of the mentoring relationship may be affected by cross-gender relationships arguing that female and male students may have different academic needs. It is also possible that, in some contexts

where gender separation throughout schooling is prevalent as in Pakistan, cross-gender mentoring may be problematic for non-academic reasons (Lockwood, 2006).

Student mentoring programmes vary widely in scope, structure, and length of involvement making it difficult for researchers to measure comparative mentoring effectiveness (Brown, 1995; Cruddas, 1995). There is considerable disagreement, for example, about the optimum duration of the mentoring relationship. Whereas Levinson *et al* (1978) describe the typical mentoring relationship as lasting from two to ten years; Phillips-Jones (1982) suggests that a mentoring relationship can be as brief as a single encounter. Most of the recent HE literature and the examples above describe mentoring programmes serving students during their first year in college, or sometimes for a single semester, implying that such relationships, at least in the formal programmes in HEIs, normally last for a maximum of one year (Johnson, 1989; Murray, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Laske, 2008).

Much of the information currently available on mentoring successes comes in the form of testimonials from former mentors and mentees, and from studies of school/college/university-based programmes that serve a large enough number of students to provide valid test groups (Smink, 1990). For many educational institutions, peer mentoring is viewed as a part of learning support strategy to help raise standards of achievement (Floyd, 1993; Topping 1996; Clutterbuck and Klasen, 2007; Phillips, 2009). However, the variables associated with academic achievement are numerous and wide-ranging, and carefully designed studies are needed to provide the evidence to support this aspect of mentoring in education (discussed in Chapter VI and VII).

### **SECTION III: The efficacy of mentoring**

#### **i) Structured mentoring programmes**

Unlike ‘natural mentoring’ relationships which may develop independently between students and teachers, older friends, relatives, or coaches, ‘planned mentoring’ relationships are those in which the ‘mentee’ is matched with a mentor through a structured programme with specific objectives and goals in mind (Floyd, 1993:1). According to Floyd (*ibid*) planned mentoring programmes can be of three general types:

1) Educational or academic mentoring focuses on improving students' overall academic achievement. While these programmes generally have specific education-related goals, such as raising students' grades, improving attendance, or curbing dropout rates, mentors do not concentrate only on tutoring or doing homework with their mentees. Instead, some academic mentoring programmes ask that mentors simply spend time encouraging, talking to, and becoming friends with their mentees, hoping to boost academic performance indirectly by improving students' attitudes about university, raising personal goals, giving them incentives to attend regularly (Murray, 2001; Hall, 2002).

2) Career mentoring helps students develop the skills needed to enter or continue on a career path. Career mentoring programmes often pair students with adults who work in the students' general field of interest, providing students with a role model who can familiarise them with the world of work (Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; Public Sector Mentoring Scheme, 2011). However, it can also be achieved by pairing junior students with those who are at the end of their academic careers and are actively seeking work.

3) Personal development mentoring supports students during times of personal or social stress and provides guidance for decision-making. While these programmes may foster improved academic performance, they focus primarily on improving students' self-esteem, behaviour, and decision-making ability and introducing students to social, cultural, and recreational activities they may not previously have experienced (University of Bath, 2011; USF, 2011).

In relation to these three types of mentoring programmes, it is possible to conclude that for near-age peers in the Pakistani HEIs, the educational and personal development mentoring programmes would be more suitable as the career paths were not the most important aspect of first year study, although, given the high unemployment rates in the country, many students are fully aware of their need to see education as a path to a long term future in employment.

In Pakistan, as the universities do not offer structured mentoring to students at present, the concept is completely new to students and to many staff (see Appendix 1, 2 & 6). Besides, as mentioned previously, the presence of a close-knit extended family system is presumed to take care of any sort of support, advice or guidance required. However,



with changing circumstances in Pakistan, students' needs are also changing and this emphasizes the need for the provision of such a support system from within the educational organization (Iqbal, 2011). Students entering university in Pakistan come from a rapidly changing social situation, surrounded by serious security issues, challenges to the current political and social order, religious and moral confusion and increased competition for and expectation from the education system. At the same time, universities are beginning to change from the relatively conservative pedagogic traditions indicated in Chapter II. The curriculum is being modernised, the slow expansion of participation is bringing small numbers of 'non-traditional' entrants into the system, and universities are slowly introducing new styles of teaching and learning, particularly in recognition of the fast moving changes in the use of information technology in education (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010). This suggests that family based support is no longer all that is needed to allow students to explore the range of issues that might impact on their studies. In my findings from the preliminary stage of this research (Chapter VI), it was evident that the students did not generally discuss their problems with parents or academics but preferred to talk about them with their friends (Appendix 2).

Miller (2002) describes peer mentoring as when people of similar age or position take on the role of mentor and mentee and suggests that the 'majority of programmes of this sort have been peer tutoring where the emphasis is often upon learning support in the areas of basic skills or subject learning' (*ibid*:120). Peer tutoring involves educational support through meetings between advanced learners and less advanced learners (Saunders and Gibson, 1998; Murray 2001). Herrmann (in Breen *et al*, 2001) argues that as societies become more and more complex and impersonal, the need for person-to-person mentoring is becoming more and more important. He also points out that mentoring has a real and positive impact as it brings about a culture of continuous learning. Importantly, he further argues that it brings about a culture which is open to differences, which is more creative and able to deal positively with change. These arguments are strong indicators that the students in Pakistan need a similar framework for seeking support and possible solutions to the problematic issues that they face, and to the changes that are rapidly occurring in the learning culture in universities and to the society at large (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2010; Ministry of Education and Training, 2012).

My personal experience of volunteering as a mentor with my university's 'Mentoring Programme for Students' has helped further me to understand the role of peer mentors (Rachel, 2007). The training sessions attended as part of that programme helped me to become more resourceful and confident in undertaking the peer mentoring project in HE institutions in Pakistan, and my observations as a participant at that time gave me first-hand experience of the value to both mentor and mentee. The following part of this section discusses current practices of peer mentoring in universities.

## **ii) Peer mentoring in higher education**

Mentoring, including peer mentoring, has been established within UK universities for many years (Miller, 2002; Hall, 2002; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; Phillips, 2009; University of Bath, 2011; Middlesex University SLA, 2011), with widespread sharing of good practice and considerable networking of those involved in introducing and managing mentoring schemes. Phillips (2009) carried out a substantial study of such schemes for her doctoral research at the University of Stirling. Although her data was based largely on research from year 2002-3, the general principles for student mentoring in the UK that she discusses are still in place. Phillips reported that in 2003, there were already 35 fully developed schemes operating in UK universities, with a further 19 pilot schemes in place. Of these, she found that 61% were to assist with student retention. The expansion of mentoring schemes in the UK coincided with a major expansion of participation in HE, combined with a series of policies intended to widen participation to include greater numbers of students from groups previously under-represented in HE. These included schemes such as the national Aimhigher project (Aimhigher, 2006) which allocated substantial funds to support widened participation. At the same time, universities were under considerable pressure to reduce dropout rates (Johnson, 2006; HEFCE, 2010; Higher Education Academy, 2012). These circumstances led to the widespread adoption of cost-effective methods of student support, especially those which addressed the problems of first year students, shown in both the USA and UK to be the group where dropout rates were the greatest.

Phillips' (2009) research conducted at two UK universities compared peer mentored with non-peer mentored first year students through the first 10 weeks of their time at university. She found significant positive results for the mentored students at the end of week 10 in the following: Feeling supported; improved adaptation; reduced wish to

leave university. In the latter, three times as many students from the non-mentored group indicated feelings of wanting to leave compared to the mentored group. Improvements were also seen in the indicators of stress levels and feelings of well-being, but these were not statistically significant in this survey.

These and other similar schemes in the UK have all tended to address the same range of problems, in particular, the problems faced by non-traditional students entering the expanded UK university system and, for the universities, the task of retaining them and helping them to succeed in their studies. However, these schemes attend to the wide diversity of students who are first generation and non-traditional entrants to HE. These include students with disability, students from a wide range of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, from working class backgrounds and from backgrounds in care, as well as mature students and those with vocational rather than academic qualifications. While in some sense, all of these groups occupy the same learning culture, the particular place which defines the authentic learning site of any student is too specific to generalise for the whole cohort. Thus, as Phillips (2009) points out, and is also suggested by other schemes at UK universities discussed, matching mentors and mentees is an important part of the process to ensure the greatest success to mentor-mentee relationships. This is challenging for managers of such schemes, but also indicates that the qualities needed for managing change, namely collegial and transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, as discussed above (p. 45- 47), are qualities that are particularly valuable for mentors. Hall (2002:5) identifies, amongst the factors likely to result in unsuccessful mentoring, ‘social distance and mismatch between the values of mentor and mentee’, ‘inexpert or untrained mentors’ and ‘conflict of roles’.

In the UK, North America and Australia, peer mentoring is explicitly used as a way to improve student retention, and some research has been conducted into the effectiveness of this strategy. Phillips’ extensive survey of UK Peer Mentoring Schemes (Phillips, 2009) found that the results on this were somewhat inconclusive. However, a study of a mentoring scheme in the Psychology Department at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia, (Chang *et al*, 2003) showed a marked improvement in dropout rates, from 25% to 7%, attributable, in part, to a specifically designed peer mentoring scheme. This scheme had a relatively large number of students involved; approximately 1000

first year students as mentees, with around 100 third year students as mentors. The mentoring sessions' duration was only 20 minutes every fortnight, for just one semester. This scheme was not voluntary, either for mentors or mentees, as it formed part of courses taken by the students. Mentoring sessions started from a highly structured set of topics developed from a list of 'academic skills' that needed to be covered, although mentors were also trained to respond to any issues raised by the mentees. Thus while the primary (though unstated to the mentees) objectives of the scheme were to reduce dropout, student stress, and to help the students in transition to HE, there were also indirect goals relating to both social and academic skills. Chang *et al (ibid)* found that the mentees responded by feeling connected to the university, both by being part of a group of peers, but also, through the scheme, they felt they were linked to the permanent staff coordinators and therefore connected to the academic side of the university life.

One of the key points that emerges here is that peer mentoring schemes not only need to be adapted to the particular institutions and their surrounding cultures, but also to the very specific objectives of the scheme. While it may be the case that most peer mentoring schemes have been seen to have some positive benefits for students (Jacobi, 1991; Miller, 2002; Chang *et al*, 2003; Clutterbuck, 2004; Phillips, 2009; Andrews and Clark, 2011), the investment and efforts required are better served if the scheme is developed, through an awareness of action research intervention methodology, with well-prepared adaptation to the specificity of the immediate situation. As discussed above (p. 55-56) and in the previous chapter, the view that each student needs to be treated as occupying an authentic learning site specific to their needs (James and Bloomer, 2001) accentuates the need for flexibility in providing mentor support.

My own university in London has developed forms of peer mentoring and similar student learning support strategies. The student union has offered a 'buddy' scheme from 2010 with the support of the University (MUSU, 2011). This scheme offered all first year students the opportunity to have general support from a second year, third year or PG student. The primary objective of this scheme was to assist students to settle in, reduce dropout rates and improve the students' satisfaction with their experience in the first few months at the university. The 'buddies' received full training from the coordinating team, but the training was not as comprehensive as many mentoring

schemes, with more in common with ‘befriending’ schemes. However, on-going support sessions were provided for the ‘buddies’ to enable them to deal with aspects of the student year as the new students approach each stage of the annual cycle. For example, when choices of second year courses are to be made, the ‘buddies’ are briefed on the process before meeting their supported students. This enabled information to be updated from the previous experiences of the ‘buddies’, in terms of new opportunities (placements or students exchanges) that were not available in previous years. The overall approach was less formal than a full mentoring programme and minimal documentation of meetings and of the support given was required.

Another similar programme was a pilot Student Learning Assistants’ (SLA) scheme introduced by the university’s Learning Development Unit in 2009 where 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were employed to assist and support first year students with their learning in seminars and lectures. The project proved to be effective (Middlesex University SLA, 2011) and was continued in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The SLAs were given full training for their role. This scheme gave the Student Learning Assistants a dual role, both as mentors to the students, but also as support in the class for the lecturing staff.

In 2010 an Erasmus Intensive Programme (IP) was developed for mentoring incoming exchange students on the Nursing programme at my university and was linked to a funded project on peer-assisted learning. Nursing teaching staff and students from Italy, Finland and Malta joined my university’s nursing professionals for an intensive two-week programme, held at the university campus in London. This programme, Mentoring in Nursing in Europe (MINE, 2011), was developed to enhance communication across the partner countries and to work by providing practice-based mentors who helped to develop the students’ practice learning experiences, focussing on the challenges of undertaking a clinical nursing practice placement in another country.

The coordinator for the project stated that:

Differing professional curricula, regulations and codes of conduct can present challenges to mentors and lecturers when trying to support exchange students. MINE aims to address some of these challenges, and to focus on ways in which mentor training and guidance skills can be improved, with both students and mentors can exchange experiences and learn from each other. (*ibid*: no page)

The University of Bath is another example of a UK university that encourages peer mentoring across all departments of the university. General principles were developed centrally by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office (University of Bath, 2011), together with common documents available to any department that introduced the scheme. Mentors were trained to develop transferable skills and their activity contributed to the Bath Award, a certificate for community service and volunteering. The goals of this peer mentoring scheme were to provide support for new students who were:

- Experiencing the transition from school to university;
- acclimatizing to new social situations;
- dealing with the practical aspects of university life such as finance and accommodation;
- developing key academic skills. (*ibid*: no page)

Pilot schemes ran in two departments at the university during 2008-9 (University of Bath, 2009). Each scheme was adapted to the specific needs of the department as perceived by the department coordinator, based on the goals above and some previous experience and feedback. Mentors were expected to spend two hours a week with the mentee, for at least the first term, but with possible extension if needed. In the evaluation of one scheme, it was reported that just over one third of the first year mentees remained in contact with their mentors for this duration, although it was also reported that a significant reduction in dropout rates at the university had occurred. Following the pilot schemes, in which training was limited, the training for mentors was increased and given clearer direction and more standard information and documentation was introduced.

Mentoring schemes have been long established in the USA and the experience in universities has contributed some insights into the way in which mentoring has developed in the UK and elsewhere. One distinctive feature of mentoring schemes at US universities is that provision is made for continuing development and training throughout the mentoring period, so that mentors feel supported throughout their work (USF, 2011). One further distinctive feature of many US schemes is the specialist nature of mentoring support. Although there is an expectation that all mentors are given general guidelines for dealing with everyday student problems, the division of labour is such that some degree of referral takes place. If issues which are identified by a mentor

are outside their specific remit, the mentee is referred on to the appropriate support section. However, there may be a risk that students might not get the very specific needs of their 'authentic learning site' addressed in the way that a more holistic approach to mentoring would achieve.

These examples indicate clearly that mentoring as a support service for students in universities is well-established, particularly in the UK, USA and Australia, and that mentoring schemes tend to have similar objectives and structures of organisation and management. In the more developed schemes, university resources contribute to the development and management of the scheme and in some cases, student mentors are paid or rewarded in other ways. In other schemes, mentoring is a voluntary activity, although most schemes provide some incentives for students to become mentors, with certification, academic credit or contribution to another award as the main forms of reward (Hall, 2002). In some cases, mentoring schemes are run at university level (Middlesex University SLA, 2011), while in other universities mentoring is locally run by academic departments (University of Bath, 2011). This could be a function of the organisational structure of the university, whether student support is a central function or run by departments or it may be based on the extent to which the specific learning culture of the mentees is seen as best served by those from a similar course or academic area.

### **iii) Best practice in successful mentoring schemes**

I have argued in this chapter that the effectiveness of any mentoring programme depends largely on the circumstances of individual student needs and interests, on institutional and administrative support, and especially in the amount of time and effort put into planning and supervising the programme. It also needs to recognise that contextualisation of mentoring practice must reflect the specific learning site of the institution and the process through which the authentic learning site of the mentee is constructed. Furthermore, the following 'best practices' have been identified in the literature and form the basis for the planning and development of the programme of student mentoring developed for universities in Pakistan for this project:

- Giving ample time to organize the programme. It is important to plan the programme to last at least one semester and preferably a full academic year so

that the mentors and mentees gain maximum benefit (Crockett and Smink, 1991; Freedman and Baker, 1995).

- The mentoring programme should be promoted as a positive opportunity for students to try new things and learn new skills (Cowie and Wallace, 1996; Clutterbuck, 2004).
- It is important to avoid making mentees feel they are being chosen for the programme because there is something wrong with them or because they are 'problem' students (Leyden, 2002; USF, 2011).
- Systems need to be established for students to provide their input and ideas into programme activities, goals, and structure so that they may feel valued and for making sure that goals for the programme, for the students, and for the mentoring relationship are clear and within reach (McPartland and Nettles, 1991; Cowie and Wallace, 2000).

In the design and planning stage, considerable emphasis needs to be placed on enabling a learning environment for students. Buchberger (2001:10) suggests that 'in powerful learning environments students become progressively agents of their own learning activities and processes'. These ideas are now being explored in developed countries in e-learning and virtual learning environments, with e-tutoring and e-mentoring as necessary parallel developments (CSV, 2012; CUSU, 2012). However, such developments are dependent on a higher level of ICT skills and resources than are currently available widely in Pakistan.

The following part of the section provides a summary of my findings in the literature of some of the basic questions, stages and strategies used in planning and implementing successful peer mentoring schemes in HEIs in the UK and other developed countries as discussed above.

#### 1. Getting started:

*Goals and objectives* - Assess the university's needs to identify the programme's target group and objectives (Smink, 1990; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007).

*Infrastructure* - Identify coordinator(s) and other staffing needs and support (Freedman, 1993; Cowie and Sharp, 1996; Murray, 2001).

*Logistics* - Decide length of mentor-mentee relationships and frequency and appropriate settings for meetings. It may take as long as six months for effective mentoring relationships to develop. For greatest effectiveness, mentors and mentees should meet



for an hour each week for at least one full academic year (Freedman and Baker, 1995; Goodlad, 1995; Miller, 2002; MBF, 2008).

*Liability* - Having students and peer mentors meet on university campus under the supervision of programme staff is the easiest way to limit liability and avoid blurring of the line between the personal and the mentoring relationship (Forehand, 2002; MBF, 2008).

*Funding* - To ensure availability of stable and adequate funds to cover costs for the duration of the mentoring programme even when the scheme is introduced as a solution to scarce resources for student support with volunteer mentors. (Sipe, 1996; MBF, 2008).

## 2. Selecting mentors:

Not every student is suitable to be a mentor. The selection process needs to be carefully and clearly planned and discussed in detail with all concerned in sponsoring the scheme (Breen *et al*, 2001; Baker, 2003; Brockbank and McGill, 2006; UKCISA, 2008). In order to make effective selection of mentors, the following steps are needed:

- Clearly identifying and specifying the qualities required in mentors and what expectations will be made of them.
- Deciding the time mentors need to commit to the programme and the skills they should possess. For example, if a mentor has problems keeping up with their own studies or with time management it is best that they should be given a light workload of mentees.
- Holding information meetings for prospective peer mentors to outline the programme goals and objectives and ensure that those that may volunteer are fully aware in advance of the purposes of the scheme and the need for commitment (Lengel, 1989).
- Careful screening of volunteers using agreed criteria of suitability.
- Asking prospective peer mentors to provide information on their motivation for becoming a mentor, and the types of students they are interested in working with.

## 3. Training mentors:

High quality orientation and training for peer mentors is essential to the success of any mentoring programme (MacConville and Rae, 2006). This involves the following strategies for developing effective mentoring relationships:

- Building trust with mentees (Miller, 2002; University of Bath, 2009);
- listening and communication skills, including training on different styles of communication (Cowie and Sharp, 1996; Phillips, 2009);
- basic information on development and transition from school to university; what is reasonable to expect from mentees, how students of specific age groups learn and communicate, and what challenges and issues students targeted by the mentoring programme may be facing (Crockett and Smink, 1990; Miller, 2002; Laske, 2008);
- cultural awareness and diversity training (UKCISA, 2008);
- the boundaries of the mentor-mentee relationship; difference between friendship and mentoring, counselling and befriending, doing academic work and advising (Goodlad, 1995; MBF, 2008).

#### 4. Selecting Mentees:

The following points need to be considered when selecting mentees in successful mentoring programmes:

- Develop a system for identifying and selecting mentees; eg, if the programme is intended to target low-performing students, academic staff may be asked to identify students with low grades or poor attendance (Crockett and Smink, 1991; Miller, 2002);
- hold information meetings for potential mentees to outline the programme goals, structure, and expectations (Lengel, 1989; Smink, 1991; MBF, 2008);
- be prepared to identify and remove students who are unwilling to participate or are unable to commit to meeting regularly with a mentor. However, with effective mentors, students who may be sceptical at the outset may find themselves drawn in and show benefit (Jacobi, 1991);
- obtain a written agreement signed by both mentor and mentee that states they understand the programme and consent to participate (Cowie and Wallace, 2000).

#### 5. Matching mentors and mentees:

Matching a mentor with a mentee is one of the most difficult tasks for a scheme coordinator (Floyd, 1993). As seen above (p. 56) and in Chapter II, the proximity of the cultural backgrounds of the mentor and mentee is important in gaining effective communication and understanding in the mentoring relationship. The following points need to be considered while matching new/first year students with mentors:

- Student needs: matches should be made with each mentee's individual needs in mind. Peer mentors should be able to empathise with their mentee and tailor activities/discussions according to the mentee's goals, as well as maintaining the schemes goals and objectives (McPartland and Nettles, 1991; Cruddas 2005).
- Common interests: while it is not necessary for students and peer mentors to have similar personalities, it may be important that they share some common interests (Leyden, 2002).
- Background: to help mentees negotiate an effective authentic learning site, it is helpful to match students with peer mentors who are from similar backgrounds or who have successfully overcome obstacles similar to those the mentees are facing (James and Bloomer, 2001; Hall, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; Cruddas, 2005).
- Convenience and timetabling: mentees and peer mentors must be available to meet at the same times and at the designated place (*ibid*).

All the strategies discussed above were considered while planning, developing and implementing the peer mentoring project in Pakistan. Each of the issues and stages indicated above were taken into consideration and adapted to address the particular needs of the students in Pakistan's universities. This is further discussed in Chapter V on the design and implementation of the research.

Andrews and Clark (2011) in their work on peer mentoring published for the Higher Education Academy in the UK suggested a series of recommendations for the establishment of peer mentoring schemes based on research into best practice in the UK. These recommendations were primarily intended for UK institutions, for executives and for those staff who would be involved in implementation. However, as some of these recommendations are generic, and capable of adaptation to different cultural circumstances, they may contribute to the development of peer mentoring in universities in other countries than those from which they were derived. In particular, the recommendation that mentoring forms part of an institutional transition strategy was important for this project. The support of the two vice-chancellors of the participating universities, and their willingness to see if mentoring could contribute to the development of less staff-intensive, more student focused learning gave impetus to the project. That this could contribute to meeting the recommendation of Pakistan's HEC meant that the vice-chancellors were committed to supporting change in the learning culture of the universities, and could see the project as part of that strategy.

Andrews and Clark (2011:88-89) also recommended that the matching of mentors and mentees should ensure that both social and academic needs could be covered by taking into account ‘subject and discipline areas as well as demographic and cultural factors’. This is consistent with the discussion above (p. 54-57) on the need to bring mentors and mentees into the zone of proximal development to be able to support the development of the mentee’s authentic learning site within the learning site of the university.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on the management of change in Higher Education to reflect on my position in this project as an agent of change in the universities in which the change is planned. I have then reviewed and analysed current literature on peer mentoring in the context of HE. I have discussed various definitions and descriptions of peer mentoring as a support strategy in universities. By introducing a perspective based on cultural theory, I have suggested a new theoretical approach to mentoring with which I underpin the development and implementation of my project. I have considered good practice from existing mentoring schemes in the UK and elsewhere, and have drawn together general and specific ideas of good practice with which to formulate a theoretically informed mentoring scheme appropriate to the target universities in Pakistan.

In the next chapter, I discuss the selection of appropriate methodology and research methods for addressing the research aim and objectives set out in Chapter 1. I argue for action research as the overarching methodology for research into the introduction of student peer mentoring to improve the learning support for students in Pakistan’s Higher Education. In Chapter V, I develop the research design incorporating a mentoring scheme based on the theoretical principles and examples of good practice in this literature review.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The primary methodology of the project is action research. The decision to develop this as an action research project was based on a number of considerations, but the main reason was to achieve more than to observe, record and analyse a given situation. Given the need to improve the experience of students in Pakistan's universities, it was important to consider a process that allowed for direct but controlled intervention into the research field, with the aim of producing beneficial change and to measure the character of the change by methods suited to a range of potential impacts and effects.

Action research is described as learning through doing, with a particular emphasis on the participation of the practitioners in the situation being researched. O'Brien (2001), points out that this is the primary focus, and that people are more willingly to apply the results of research, when they are engaged in it themselves. According to Gilmore *et al*, (1986:161):

Action research...aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of researcher and client, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process.

In this context, action research serves both the purposes of this study; to provide a basis for the beneficial change in Pakistan's Higher Education, but also (as a doctoral research project) to contribute to education research and facilitating 'co-learning' (*ibid*) for myself as a researcher and for the participants both individuals and institutions.

The research also makes an original contribution to existing knowledge on student peer mentoring in HE by developing and applying this practice in Pakistan's universities where it had not previously been introduced. Its findings were intended to develop a

model of structured student peer mentoring which could be applied in contexts in which it was previously unknown, especially in developing countries.

Action research is a holistic process as it involves an engagement with real people in real situations, with a researcher who is actively engaged in the problem-solving or change process. It requires a multi-faceted approach to the situation, and therefore cannot be satisfactorily placed in any of the dominant social research paradigms. Instead, action researchers will generally gather qualitative and quantitative data using a number of methods, and the challenge is to interpret and learn from the results of these varying methods in order to prepare for the continuation of the cyclic process that characterises action research as a stimulus for change (Somekh *et al*, 2011).

As stated in Chapter I, the aim of the research was to introduce structured peer mentoring to supplement student support within selected universities in Pakistan and to assess its impact on student experience and on the learning culture within the universities.

In formulating the research model, three linked objectives were identified:

- To develop a framework and operational system of structured student peer mentoring for student support in the selected universities in Pakistan.
- To elaborate a model of peer mentoring with which to provide theoretical underpinning for the introduction of student peer mentoring in Pakistan's universities and other similar contexts.
- To examine the possibility that student peer mentoring could facilitate the development of student-centred learning culture in universities and other education provision in Pakistan.

The research question was:

*What are the implications of the implementation of student peer mentoring in universities in Pakistan for the development of a student-centred culture of learning within the university community?*

The previous chapters on the research context and the critical review of existing literature on mentoring provide the background to my action research project, enabling

the development of a theoretically informed peer mentoring scheme to be introduced into the selected universities. Following the implementation of the mentoring scheme, appropriate research tools were then needed to gather data on the impact of the scheme on the mentors and the mentees and on the universities themselves.

The remainder of this chapter is presented in the following four sections: methodological perspective – action research; the role of the researcher; ethical issues and implications; methods of data collection and analysis.

### **SECTION I: Methodological perspective – action research**

This section contextualises the selection of action research as the primary methodology for this project within social and educational research. Availability of time and material and conceptual resources were considered while analysing and selecting the most appropriate methodological approach for the research.

Most social and much educational research has its methodological roots in the debates among sociologists (Booth, 1902; Weber, 1949; Durkheim, 1951; Park, 1952; Lazarfield, 1967; Bailey, 1994; Cohen *et al*, 2011) concerning what research techniques produced the most reliable data. As researchers do their work in the real world and with limited time and resources, methodological approaches are selected on the basis of both the appropriateness to the choice of topic and the resources, such as the amount of time, money and research fieldwork hours available (McNeill, 1985).

This section explains the selection of action research as the overarching methodological approach for researching the key research question articulated above. The selection of action research as the primary methodology was supported by the need to develop a research framework which would be effective alongside an active intervention in the research context. Within action research, a range of methods could be used to generate data to provide responses to the research question. While quantitative data made a small contribution to this data, the nature of the research and in particular the active role of the researcher within the project suggested the appropriateness of qualitative methods. This is discussed and developed further in the following chapters on the design of the research model used (Chapter V) and on research findings (Chapter VI).

In most social research, the researcher aims not to interfere with or affect that which is being studied. In action research, the researcher is actively involved in planning and introducing some change in policy or practice, and in using their research expertise in monitoring and evaluating its effects (Bradbury and Reason, 2001; Stringer, 2007; Gustavsen, 2008; Denscombe, 2010; Cohen *et al*, 2011; Somekh and Lewin, 2011). As discussed earlier, action research is a strategic intervention into given situations precisely with the aim of introducing change and is of particular importance to education researchers and others involved in practice-based research. Action research has been referred to by McNiff *et al* (2003) and Whitehead (2012) as a significant tool to change and improve the academic and educational community at a local level. Action research has helped bridge the gap between theory and practice to bring about positive change in social situations (Gustavsen, 2008; Cohen *et al*, 2011). The essence of action research is to monitor changes in relation to the planned implementation of a specific practice. In an educational context, an action introduced in this way may yield improvement or information about teaching and learning (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). The action is thus used as a research tool. Both elements of action and research are of equal prominence in the approach. It is for this reason that O'Brien (2001) and others situate action research in what O'Brien calls a paradigm of praxis. The idea of praxis, which originates in the writings of Aristotle, involves recognition that action to bring about change needs engagement with the practices of everyday life, as well as theoretical knowledge that is developed for its own sake. The integration of theory and practice in the development of action for change is central to the concept of praxis. Action research, with an agenda of intervention for change, and engagement with theoretically informed practice, clearly fits within this paradigm of praxis.

Action research can be summarised into two specific stages; the diagnostic stage, which identifies and analyses the problem in the given situation and the therapeutic stage in which the possible solution is then implemented and evaluated (Cohen *et al*, 2007; McNiff and Whitehead, 2011). In relation to this aspect of the approach of action research, Kemmis (1993) has highlighted the fact that the nature of action research is open to debate and is the result of a number of waves of advocacy over a period of several decades. Each wave is shaped by the particularities of its time and to some extent reflects specific cultural and historical conditions. Against this background, action research can be described as providing a framework for thinking systematically



about what happens in social situations, implementing action for change, monitoring and evaluating the effects of the action with a view to continuing the development. By using this framework, action researchers for a small scale project can not only improve what they do, but also improve their own understanding of what they do (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982). Linking the terms action and research highlights the essential feature of the method used: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the given situation.

The action research paradigm can be seen as an organic process, utilising, as appropriate, a number of different methodologies to frame, develop, gather evidence and evaluate the research field (McNiff *et al*, 2003; O’Leary, 2004). Thus, while the central principles of action research are maintained, that is intervention to produce change, monitoring and evaluation to assess change, and the continuation of the cycle after reflexive consideration of the results of the first phase, key parts of the process invoke different methods of research practice. As will be made clear in the chapter on research design (Chapter V), each phase of the research may make use of different methods which then require justification and integration into the data gathering process.

Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1948) was one of the key figures in the development of action research and ‘experiential learning’. Lewin is credited with the first use of the term:

The research needed for social practice can best be characterized as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice. (Lewin 1946, reproduced in Lewin 1948:202-3)

A refugee to the USA from Germany in the period before World War II, Lewin worked on early wartime concerns over family diets and sought to introduce new food sources and other changes in diet to help deal with food shortages. In doing so, he introduced the method that established action research as a paradigm for social research, and particularly for that which involves the planned introduction of changes to a social situation. Although he was a psychologist by training, one of the key features of this work was its interdisciplinarity. He identified issues in the social organisation of food distribution process in sociological terms, thus pointing to the key actors needed to participate in the necessary interventions for change. He argued for the principle that the

introduction of change, of the results of decisions, is best achieved with the participation of those implementing change in the decision process. Hence action research is closely associated with practitioner research, especially in educational research, and parallels the work of Schön (1983) in developing the concept of ‘reflective practice’, a model for professionals that effectively turns every worker, in, for example, education or the health professions, into small-scale action researchers.

One feature of both action research and reflective practice is that, while they are evidence based, they are not prescriptive over the methods used to gather evidence and both involve self-reflection on the part of the actor/researcher to situate themselves in the change or intervention process, even if they are not the primary agents of change. Therefore reflexivity, interdisciplinarity and methodological openness are established features of action research. In some of Lewin’s earlier work on action research (Lewin and Grabbe, 1945) there was a tension between the knowledge that individuals involved in bringing about change are themselves constructed through the very processes that they are trying to change, and the need to provide a rational basis for change through research which could then be implemented by those in the system requiring change.

Lewin’s approach to action research involved the identification and specification of a spiral of steps, ‘each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action’ (*ibid*:206). The basic spiral involves the following:

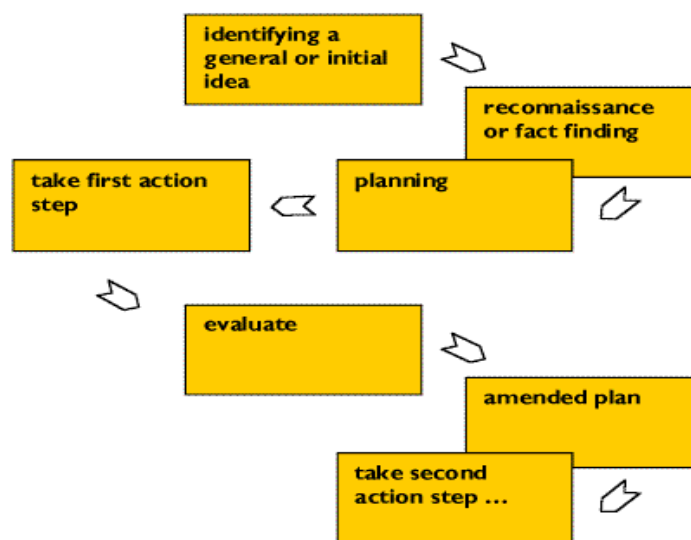


Figure 6: Lewin’s Action Research ‘spiral’ model (*ibid*:206)

As will be shown later in this chapter, this model, in different forms, has been the mainstay of action research (Elliot, 1991; Hudson *et al*, 2000; O’Leary, 2004). The most important feature is that it is not a self-enclosed circle, but an ongoing process of action and reflection, with the clearly intended consequence of bringing about change. It is this feature of action research that contributed in part to its neglect in the period of the 1950s and 1960s. With its emphasis on change, the model became associated with ‘political radicalism’ (Stringer 2007:9), and, particularly in the USA, some caution developed over social research that was overtly political in character, even if the intended purpose was the amelioration of social problems. However, there were other issues. There were (and still remain) questions concerning the rigour of the research, and particularly the lack of methodological ‘purity’, also of the training of researchers, especially in as much as it encouraged the view that those involved in the practice under investigation should lead the research, rather than step back and leave the research to professional researchers.

However, as Winter (1987:48) points out, researching ‘correct knowledge’ does not alone lead to change but attention must also be given to the ‘matrix of cultural and psychic forces’ through which the researcher and the object of study are constituted. In other words, where change is an intended outcome of research, positivist gathering of data gives no guarantee of that outcome. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:223) have specified that research is ‘a perspective that people take toward objects and activities’. Provided that the gathering of evidence and data is systematic, and critically aware, then the claims of the research are clear, and the validity of action research as an authentic research process is re-established against such claims. Thus action research has become a well-recognised methodology (or rather set of methodologies) particularly in professionally based and change oriented research and, as in the current study, in research intended to improve education and the learning process at all levels (Carr and Kemmis 1986). The action research ‘spiral’ is the methodological tool most closely associated with Lewin and his successors. McTaggart (1996:248) points out that using some form of research spiral is not the same as ‘doing action research’. He argues:

Action research is not a ‘method’ or a ‘procedure’ for research but a series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice a series of principles for conducting social enquiry. (*Ibid*)

For McTaggart, action research has to be more than an uncritical and non-reflective procedure or set of processes. It is McTaggart's (1996) argument that Lewin has been taken up by others who have misused or misconstrued what Lewin intended. McTaggart further points out that, while Lewin does refer to action research as a method, he is doing so to raise the status of action research in contrast to the more traditional forms of empirical-analytic research by stressing the significance of practitioner engagement and subsequent interpretative practice. McTaggart is strongly opposed to the idea that the research spiral should become some form of 'template' which resolves methodological problems (McTaggart, 1996:249).

Over a period of years of evolution of action research, the cycle or spiral of action research is modelled in a number of ways. In all of these, it is possible to recognise four **moments** as outlined in Figure 7. Accordingly in order to undertake action research, one aims to develop a **plan** of action, **act** to implement the plan, **observe** the effects of action in the context in which it occurs, and **reflect** on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent action and so on, through a succession of cycles. The problem solution tool, a design artefact, is developed on the basis of a series of revised plans following observation and reflection. While the usual expectation would be that the cycle is repeated over a minimum of two cycles, it is not necessary from the research point of view that the second cycle is completed as the revised plan is itself a research outcome from the first cycle, in addition to any changes and impacts that had been the intended outcomes of the intervention.

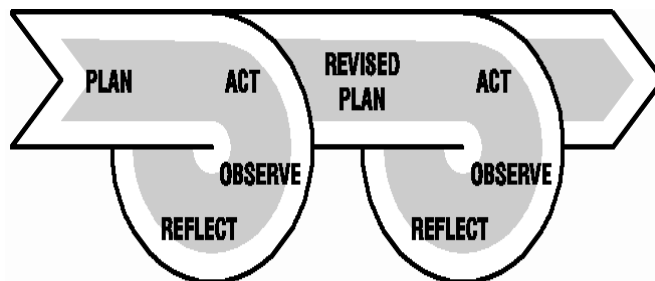


Figure 7: The moments of action research through a succession of cycles (Hudson *et al*, 2000 and Owen *et al*, 2001)

The context of my research involved a collaborative approach to student involvement, planning, action, observation and reflection within the programme and the potential for the repeating nature of planning cycles. The repetition of the cycles could lead to wider dissemination of the outcomes, as was suggested by Hudson *et al*, (2000) and Owen *et al*, (2001) and is discussed further in Chapter VIII.

The starting point for this research was the standard approach towards problem identification and its solution through means such as questionnaires to the stakeholders (Elliot, 1991) which in this case were distributed to both staff and students in the selected universities in Lahore. In relation to my initial research fieldwork, I found the approach of responsive evaluation as outlined by Stake (1973) to be particularly relevant. This approach aims to be responsive to the concerns and issues of the ‘stakeholders’ involved in the evaluation. Stake (*ibid*) contrasts responsive evaluation with standards-based evaluation. In standards-based evaluation, respondents work with a set of criteria, more or less formal, by which they can make judgements. This is appropriate where questionnaires relate to a set of questions for which there are agreed reference points. In the case of this research, however, these common reference points did not exist because the participants were asked questions about peer mentoring, of which they had little direct experience, but which could relate to their ongoing experience of teaching, learning and other aspects of university life. They were generating the evaluation through the responses which fed into the project through the reflective process of the action research cycle.

The following figure shows the basic application of the cycle of moments of action research to the current project.

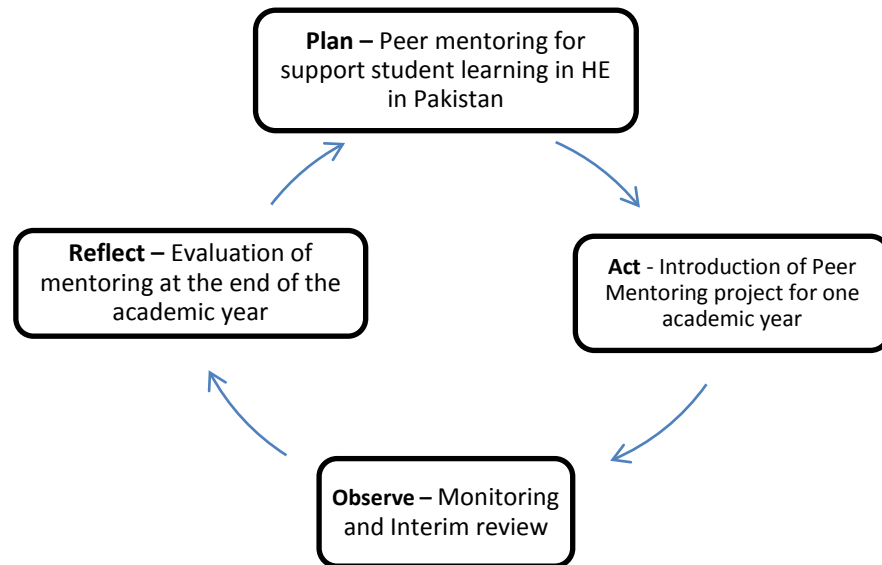


Figure 8: Action research cycle for peer mentoring project

The first moment, of planning, was the point at which the initial questionnaires to stakeholders, that is, to students and staff, were administered and responsively evaluated (*ibid*). This established the form that the project would take, but each phase of the cycle was at the same time subjected to ongoing review in order to adapt to issues as they arose as is suggested by O’Leary’s action research model (O’Leary, 2004). A succession of cycles of this model of action research is illustrated on page 106 where each of the five phases in the research fieldwork has a distinct cycle comprising plan, action, observation and reflection.

Figure 9 shows, within a similar cyclic pattern, how each stage of the project was also subject to ongoing responsive evaluation, with the consequent possibility of adapting the plan in the successive phases to maintain the overall structure of the process.

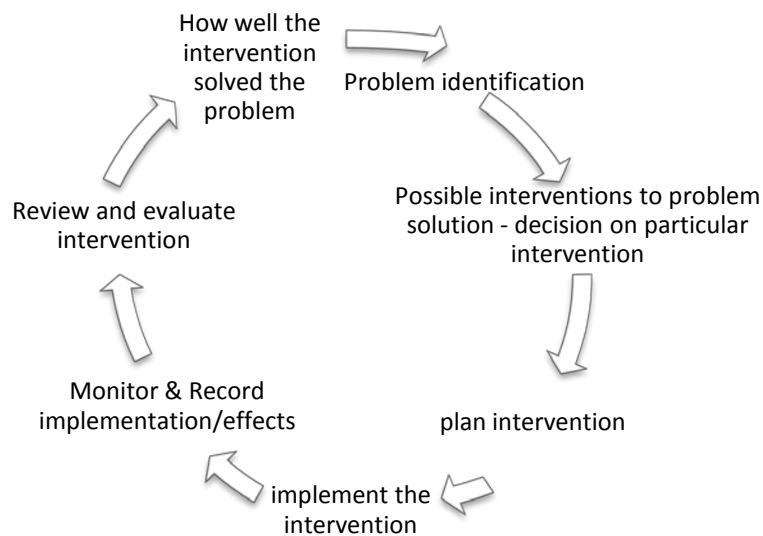


Figure 9: Action research – cyclical process of ongoing evaluation and response

## SECTION II: Role of the researcher

In this project, the researcher was external to the situation into which the project was being introduced. My role, as this external agent of change, was to implement the action research methodology in such a manner as to produce a mutually agreeable outcome for all participants, with the process being maintained by them afterwards. In order to accomplish this outcome, it was necessary for me to adopt many different roles at various stages of the process, including those of a leader; planner; catalyst; facilitator; teacher; designer; listener; observer; synthesizer; evaluator and a reporter (O’Brien, 2001). Such a variety of roles, as appropriate to the situation, is essential to the effective intervention that ‘action research’ requires.

The main role, however, is always to nurture local leaders to the point where they can take responsibility for and of the process (Fullan, 2004; Kotter, 2008). When this point is reached, they understand the methods and are able to carry on when the initiating researcher leaves (Bush, 2005).

In many action research situations, the researcher’s role is primarily to take the time to facilitate dialogue and foster reflective analysis among the participants, provide them with periodic reports, and write a final report when the researcher’s involvement has ended (Herr and Anderson, 2005). However, the use of the personal ‘I’ in this project reflects the researcher’s active involvement in the research process. Thus, the researcher

became part of the creation of contextualised knowledge that is anchored in the ‘stated convictions of the one who creates it’ (Kvale, 1996:14).

The paradigm for this project is set within an ongoing collaborative action research structure whereby the positionality of the researcher as specified by Anderson and Herr (1999), Bradbury and Reason (2001) and Heron (1996) is that of an outsider in collaboration with insiders which contributes to the development or transformation of the organization. The tradition for this aspect of action research measures change, organizational learning and community empowerment (Freire, 1970). Nemeroff (2008), in describing a rural development project in South Africa, points out that action research skills help communities to develop the idea that learning is a process that may lead to ongoing economic, material and cultural advances through the active involvement of the community in their own development.

An important aspect of a research process of this kind is to recognise and reflect on the position of the person conducting the research. My own earlier experience as a student in Pakistan gave me insights into the (changing) learning cultures in Pakistan and I had already conducted research into the impact of mentoring in secondary schools in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007). Using an action research framework in that project also helped me to develop a better understanding of the effective application of the concepts underlying peer mentoring and peer support (*ibid*). My perspective on the research question was therefore already partly conditioned by both these experiences, but also by my experiences in studying at Master’s level in a British university, and, during those studies, participating in mentoring programmes with very diverse groups of students in schools and university in the UK. Furthermore, I had considerable experience as a teacher in secondary school and an institute of education in Pakistan, which both gave me privileged access as an ‘insider’ to the universities in which the research was conducted, but also allowed me, through my previous positions and experience, an authoritative presence in the research context which might not have been available to an ‘outsider’. However, while this may in some ways have facilitated both access to the research context and a deeper insight into that context, it is also possible that my presence and the authoritative stance which I was able to assume through my training and experience may have impacted on the establishment of the mentoring process and the willingness of students (and staff) to participate and accept the process being



enacted (Kotter, 2008). As the purpose of this action research project was in part to see how peer mentoring impacts on the authority-based learning culture of the university, there is both an irony and a methodological issue to the implicit impact of myself, as an authority figure, introducing peer mentoring to the participating students.

My dual role as the insider and the outsider in this research had, in some ways facilitated the research process and echoes Mercer's (2007) continuum of insider/outsider dichotomy of the researcher. As an insider, I had awareness of the cultural sensitivities involved, could relate to the HE student issues and had the benefit of reporting these issues as someone who has been through the personal experience of having studied in the education system both at school and HE level in Pakistan. My experience also helped me address some of the practical and logistical problems of conducting research in the universities. As an outsider, I was able to assume the authority of the researcher, and demonstrate expertise from my experience with similar successful research in an educational context in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007) and with effective mentoring in a number of HE institutions in the UK. These factors are discussed in Chapters III and VIII.

As seen from the discussion above, the epistemological basis of my research is that of a subjectivist social epistemology, situated in a case study at a particular time in a specific context. It uses a range of observations and experiences from a wide range of participating subjects involved in the project. In the action research design of my study, a range of methods are used to generate evidence in relation to the research question and the key aim. These include questionnaires, observation, interviews and focus groups, within a research context that is described through narratives and ethnographic studies. Some statistical data contributes evidence, but within the interpretative and reflexive framework of the research. The views and responses of participants are analysed thematically.

### **SECTION III: Ethical issues and implications**

Awareness of ethical issues underpins the research. Conducting research in Pakistan's cultural setting, using a research process and ethical framework derived from the perspective drawn largely from work conducted in the UK and USA, presented a series

of challenges. These included issues arising from working in an environment with a strong influence from a particular religion and with associated cultural values and a lack of basic infrastructure and privacy when conversing with people who were vulnerable and unacquainted with the concept of this type of research (Haeri, 2002; Iqbal, 2011). Cultural awareness, empathy, a non-judgemental approach, and reflective research can assist in maintaining ethical practice among researchers (Sjoberg, 1967; Miller, 2008). Having conducted a previous research project in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007), I was aware of the need to approach participants in Pakistan within the ethical codes for researchers which are standard in the UK and I followed the guidelines of the Middlesex University Code of Practice for Researchers (Middlesex University CoP, 2011). Whereas it would have been possible to have conducted the research through informal contacts and without regard to the rights of the subjects of my research, it was clear that gaining official permissions from the universities concerned and gaining informed consent from the participants would be necessary in order to conform to good research practice and international ethical standards.

As I was residing in the UK, planning to conduct research in Pakistan required long-distance correspondence/seeking permissions from university authorities for the work I needed to conduct during my visits to Pakistan. This involved social and professional networks to assist me in obtaining the necessary permissions. Many months before I was to begin my data collection, I started inquiring about the channels of authority that I would need to navigate in order to access the universities. This is particularly important when dealing with the public sector in Pakistan where it is not always clear who is able to grant the permission required.

On my first visit in April 2009 before the data collection was due to begin, it became clear that I would need permission from the heads of the institutions, not just the heads of the departments, to gain support and assistance at departmental level. The most effective way of pursuing this was to prepare a detailed document outlining the process of the research, with stages of the research fieldwork and present it directly to the heads of the institutions. The chances of the proposal being rejected were very high if the purpose, process, and scope of the research were not communicated in a manner, which was clear and understandable. Conducting research in an environment that significantly relates to a specific cultural value and religious belief system raises many ethical

questions and creates situations that require an ethically competent approach, a situation frequently experienced by transcultural researchers. Although I have the same national cultural background as the participants, the data collection process in the research led to a series of complex situations for me, all requiring careful reflection, and challenging me to maintain the principles of the code of practice for researchers as specified by my UK university. The power imbalance between the researcher and the participants in regard to the availability of the means of basic living, education, and apparent control over immediate surrounding (the power/authority of the researcher) played a significant role. Understanding of the culture, a non-judgemental and respectful approach, empathy, acceptance of others' as unique individuals and reflexive practice are essential for the researcher to maintain in order for ethical research practice to be established and this was maintained throughout the research (Fetterman, 1989).

During the research, ethical considerations which encompass confidentiality, permissions and informed consent (Stringer, 2004 and 2007; Miller, 2008) have been assured. To protect the anonymity of the educational institutions, where most of the field work element was done, these universities have been identified by a number (U1, U2) instead of their actual names. The anonymity and confidentiality of the educational institutions and the participants, where the research fieldwork was conducted, is maintained. Official permission was sought from the department heads of the universities and the research project discussed. Permission was given by the head of the selected educational institutions for setting up the peer mentoring project and conducting the fieldwork which included data collection by distribution of questionnaires and through interviews, focus groups, conducting and evaluating the training workshops and the mentoring process at the end of the year. The participants in the research fieldwork which includes the members of the focus groups and the individual interviewees, as well as the participants of the project (mentoring coordinators, mentors and mentees) were informed about the purpose and nature of the project. Photographs of the participants of the workshop and the certificate award ceremonies (see Appendix 7 and 17) were placed in the thesis following consent of the participants. Consent was also sought before audio recording any individual or collective interviews. Prior to any video recording for observation purposes, such as that undertaken in the training workshops, participants were informed that the recording was taking place and their permission obtained. Any who expressed reluctance, were not

filmed. This echoes Cohen and Manion's (1994, in Bell 2010:39) affirmation that 'a code of ethical practice makes researchers aware of their obligation to their subjects and also to those problem areas where there is a general consensus about what is acceptable and what is not. In this sense it has a clarificatory value'.

Informed consent from the participants was also obtained before collecting data using questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The intervention was seen as a way of improving support and was structured, carefully monitored and assessed as it progressed. Care was taken to see that, as far as was possible, no harm (British Sociological Association, 2004) was done to students being mentored or being mentors. This also applied to those not involved in the process as they continued to receive the support that was previously provided by the university.

#### **SECTION IV: Methods of data collection and analysis**

The aim of the project, as stated in Chapter I, was to introduce a different student support strategy to the existing student support services within selected universities and consider any impacts that resulted from this intervention on the learning experience of students entering university. For my study, it was necessary to adopt a range of research methods at different stages of the research. Within the action research framework, as discussed above (p. 76), it was necessary, at the diagnostic stage, to identify and analyse underlying issues concerning the experience of students and the main barriers to learning faced by university students in Pakistan. For the therapeutic stage, peer mentoring was the proposed strategy for additional student support, and this required monitoring and evaluation both in the implementation and in the consideration of the outcomes of the intervention. Key to the aim was the investigation of changes in the learning culture and specifically in the development of student-centred learning.

Furthermore, to ensure credibility of the data gathered, it was not only necessary to use different methods for different questions, but also, where possible, to use different methods for each question to allow for the possibility of triangulation as suggested by Cohen *et al* (2011). For example, in addressing the issue of barriers to learning, I needed perspectives from students and staff to the problems facing students in Pakistan. The choices available were to use questionnaires, to have face to face individual interviews or to hold focus groups. In this particular case, questionnaires and individual

interviews were selected and not focus groups. This was partly for logistical reasons as this took place early in the research, and arranging focus groups was difficult. A more important reason was that the group context of a focus group might have inhibited the respondents from giving answers that might have been seen as problematic. By using the other two methods, I had the opportunity to gain direct responses from respondents, and a means of cross-checking responses.

Both primary and secondary data contributed to the conduct of the research project. The primary data was collected through the application of appropriate research tools during research fieldwork in Lahore. The majority of the research findings which are given in Chapter VI are primary data. Secondary sources provided theoretical and methodological background and contextual information in this project as discussed in Chapter II and III. Secondary sources contributed significantly to the formulation and design of the project (Chapter V) but not to the conclusions of the research.

#### **i) Data collection methods**

The initial literature review (Chapter III) helped to identify the barriers to learning faced by students in universities, mainly in the UK and USA, where mentoring schemes have been introduced widely. It considered the solutions offered by those schemes and discussed the appropriateness of adapting such methods for Pakistan. The use of secondary data at the initial stage established a framework for the introduction of peer mentoring in the selected universities in Pakistan, within which primary data collection was used to monitor the activities during the implementation of the project, using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. By using varied methods of data collection, triangulation was made possible, as discussed in the section on validity and dependability.

The main research tools used were:

##### Primary data

- a. Observation
- b. Questionnaires
- c. Individual Interviews
- d. Focus groups

### Secondary data

- a. Use of literature and statistical sources (for example, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 2008)
- b. University data on retention and achievement results for the mentors and mentees.

The discussion below critically assesses each of the research tools used for the project in the light of their theoretical significance, their use by researchers for data collection in educational research and their aptness as research tools in this project.

#### **a. Observation**

Observation encompasses looking and listening carefully and is a very significant data collection tool for researchers (Cohen *et al*, 2011). It may allow the researcher to study people in their natural habitat without their behaviour being influenced by the presence of the researcher (Simpson and Tuson, 2003). The use of observation in social science involves watching people in order to discover specific or particular information about their behaviour in their natural social situation and offers the investigator the opportunity to collect ‘live’ data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2004). It also involves the systematic study of groups of people or situations, artefacts or routines over a period of time, thus revealing changes. While observation is a phenomenon natural to people in everyday life, it has its advantages and disadvantages for the researcher. It seeks to develop a wide understanding of the overall situation and produces more comprehensive and in-depth information. A major disadvantage is that it is subjective and therefore very difficult to detect or prevent researcher-induced bias (Bailey, 1994; Newby 2010). Consequently, this mode of inquiry leads to difficulty in establishing the consistency and validity of the data due to the high variability of the forms of data collected (Bell, 2010; Denscombe, 2010).

The use of technology such as video recording possibly offers a more ‘unfiltered’ observational record than human observation and may help to overcome the subjectivity issue. Video recording has the advantage that it can be viewed several times which can lead to completeness of analysis and comprehensiveness and is not a ‘once’ only observation (Flick 2009:251). However, video recording has its own limitations as installing video cameras may create the problem of reactivity and may not be able to capture the natural behaviour of the participants as some people maybe camera

conscious (Cohen *et al*, 2011). If the participants are filmed without seeking their consent to record natural behaviour, this may lead to further complications and ethical issues of covert research (*ibid*). Video recording was used in this project for recording the peer mentoring training workshops after the consent of the participants was sought. As I was the facilitator and trainer of the workshop, I wanted to ensure that I did not miss out any observation during the workshops which could help develop and improve any unit in the workshop.

Observation offers a discreet way of collecting data different from questionnaires and interviews. Denscombe (1998; 2010) claims that observation is a more direct strategy than relying on what people say they do or what people say they think. It draws on first hand evidence witnessed directly. The role of the researcher as an observer is to maintain a record of behaviours and interactions within a group using a variety of qualitative enquiry tools. The identification of problems facing students in my research was based on my observation and experience (see p. 4, 5 and 151).

The advantages of using observational methods in this research were twofold. In the first place, it gives the potential of improved interpretation of data during other research methods. For example, during focus groups, it allowed me as researcher to register and take account of interpersonal interactions within the group that might have impact on individual responses. This also applied in individual interviews. Secondly, observation was an important factor in assessing the suitability of students as mentors during interviews and in training sessions as I was able to assess through verbal and non-verbal cues whether the students understood the idea and principles of mentoring, and therefore would be able to follow the structure of the mentoring programme successfully.

## **b. Questionnaires**

Questionnaires have the advantage that this mode is familiar to most people and they usually have some previous experience of completing questionnaires and generally do not make people apprehensive (Bell, 2010; Newby, 2010). There is uniform question presentation and the opinion of the researcher does not influence the respondent to answer questions in a certain manner. There are no verbal or visual clues to influence the respondent. Questionnaires are also less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face

surveys. A respondent has the flexibility to complete the questionnaire fully or partially, unlike other research methods, the respondent is not interrupted by the research instrument (Weems *et al*, 2003). Additionally, questionnaires can establish a theme or set an agenda for the participants in the research process. This may be implicit from the form and tone of the questions, or explicit in terms of an explanation given to respondents. In this case, I prefaced each of the preliminary questionnaires with an explanatory note which was necessary as the respondents had no familiarity with peer mentoring or its use in higher education (Appendix 1 and 2).

Conventionally, questionnaires are regarded as having two forms, the closed or structured questionnaire, which generally is used to generate quantitative data, and the open or unstructured form, which is generally for qualitative data collection or open ended studies (Newby, 2010). Cohen *et al* (2011) argue that few questionnaires are truly unstructured as the selection and sequencing of questions, and the use of language in framing the question lead the respondent in a certain direction towards a response which provides the researcher with usable data, even if the response is elicited in open text form rather than numerically. They suggest that such questionnaires are regarded as semi-structured. In practice, questions of both types may be used in a single questionnaire. Using both forms of question has the advantage that it may assist in triangulation by eliciting different kinds of data from the subject without the need to conduct additional data gathering. Both forms of questions were used in the questionnaires developed for data collection for this project.

Questionnaires, as a data collection technique, are usually selected to ensure that the researcher does not get personally involved with the respondent and maintains a social and personal distance between themselves and subject of research. Wilson and McLean (1994) suggest that valid survey information may be collected by the use of questionnaires administered without the presence of the researcher. Questionnaires with closed questions generating numerical data are relatively easier to analyse compared to other data collection instruments such as interview or observation analysis. However, this is dependent on the design of the questions as this determines the degree and volume of response it generates. Also, as seen in the discussion on action research methodology above (p. 78) this form of research, used alone in social or educational research, may be seen as oversimplifying the object of study and not recognising the



position and role of the researcher in relation to the research. The use of open-questions and the placing of the questionnaire within a framework of different methods of data gathering, counters this criticism.

Developing questionnaires can be time consuming but this can be counterbalanced by designing and structuring the questionnaire to allow limited flexibility of response. Structured questionnaires require time investment for the design and refinement of the questions phrased (Bailey, 1994). Cohen *et al* (2011) recommend planning the questionnaire in a way that data analysis and transcribing is time-efficient. Time spent on preparation of the questionnaire makes the data analysis task simpler, but it is not just a matter of the use of time. A well prepared questionnaire could give the researcher the right kind of data required to analyse the research theme. The validity of the research depends heavily on the ability of the researcher to design an effective questionnaire (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Although, due to time constraints and limitation of resource support, it was not possible to pilot the questionnaires with uninvolved students in universities in Pakistan, which would have helped identify any flaws or problems in the understanding of the questions phrased, my previous research in a school in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007) had used similar questions and guided the design of the questions for this project.

As the size of the sample in my research was relatively small (see p. 130, Table 6), the questionnaires used both structured and semi-structured questions (Chapter V and Appendix 1, 2, 6 and 14). I prepared a variety of questions in the questionnaires as shown in appendices. The questions ranged from closed and open questions to rating scales as well as rank order questions (for example, staff questionnaire Q1 and Q2 Appendix 2). The closed questions, rating scales and rank order questions were easy to transcribe and analyse. Furthermore, these questions were quick to complete and did not discriminate against any of the respondents disproportionately in relation to such important issues as gender or their fluency in English language. Nor did they lead to problems of interpretation where the respondent had problems of articulation. However, closed questions did not allow the respondents to elaborate by adding remarks or explanations and as Oppenheim (1992) points out this has the risk that the researcher's assumptions or bias in framing the questions may not address the issue as the respondent sees it and the respondent has no chance to indicate any difficulties with

this. To address this issue, I balanced the questionnaires by including open-ended questions in both the staff and student questionnaires. This enabled the participants to explain and qualify their responses and ‘avoid the limitation of pre-set categories of response’ (Cohen *et al*, 2011:382). The questionnaires distributed among the students at the end of the workshops and which were intended to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the training (Appendix 6) also had a mix of open, closed and rating/ranking questions. Dichotomous questions were also used as these have a significance of compelling the respondents to provide a clear, unequivocal reply. For example Q5 in staff questionnaire was a dichotomous question which was used for funnelling or sorting for subsequent questions (Appendix 2a and b).

The interim review (Appendix 14) required an in-depth analysis of the mentoring process and therefore the questions were open-ended. However, the interim review questionnaire as a whole was semi-structured in two ways. Firstly, the questions were sequenced in order to lead the respondents through their own evaluation process but in the categories that I had pre-determined. Secondly, the space given for responses was deliberately restricted to limit the length of response to be given. This had the advantage of encouraging the students to respond (as the length was restricted to just two pages) as advised by Newby (2010) and Briggs and Coleman, (2007). The final question was a dichotomous question, enabling the respondent to give a simple response on whether they wanted to continue mentoring sessions in semester II.

Use of questionnaires for students were based on a standard format (e.g. question 1 used the *Likert* scale model). Likert (1932) developed the principle of measuring attitudes by asking participants to respond to a series of statements on specific topic, in terms of the extent to which they agree with them, exploring the affective and cognitive components of attitudes. Responses to questions using Likert scales have the benefit that they do not expect a simple yes/no answer from the respondent, but rather allow for degrees of opinion, and even no opinion at all. The data obtained therefore, can be analysed and interpreted with relative ease.

The staff questionnaire consisted of 8 questions. The findings of the key research questions 1 and 4 in the questionnaire have been tabulated for the reason given above that the data is accessible for interpretation. Kaplan and Maxwell, (1994), argue that the

goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified in this way. However, when such data is subjected to interpretation within the context of a range of appropriate qualitative data, and is capable of helping to codify the responses in such a way that the data is readily available for interpretation, then it can contribute to the research process without loss of validity.

### **c. Interviews**

The decision to use interviews as a means of data collection was considered and selected as they are an effective way of seeking people's views (Bailey 1994; Newby, 2010; Cohen *et al*, 2011; BERA, 2012). Interviews are more flexible in comparison to questionnaires, even those which are semi-structured or fully open-ended, as the interviewer can engage with the interviewee in a dialogue to explore wider 'avenues of enquiry' (Newby, 2010:337). For my project, the use of individual interviews as data collection tools was a rich data source. The findings from the preliminary interviews partly informed the design of the peer mentoring programme. The use of a combination of structured and more open questions within the interviews enables the central themes of the research, the themes that allow for the interrogation of the research questions to be sustained (Oppenheim, 1992; O'Leary, 2004).

The individual interviews, while mostly structured, had semi-structured elements to allow flexibility and to enable any supplementary questions to be asked which were necessary to obtain a more clear perspective from the interviewee. As I was looking for common themes among participants, the same questions were asked to all the rectors/principals and other heads of institutions. All interviews were conducted using the face to face approach as person to person relationship establishes the quintessence of interview (Bailey, 2004). The interviews were audio-recorded so that the interview could be revisited to ensure accurate analysis and transcription of the data (Lee, 2004; Bloor and Wood, 2006). The collected data from semi-structured interviews was used as an indicator to answer the research question.

Semi-structured interviews have advantages and disadvantages. An advantage may be that they help to clarify any misunderstanding, allowing exploration of issues by using

probing questions and prompts and can thus generate rich data. The main disadvantage of semi-structured interviews is that they can be time consuming and also call for the need for an approach that allows the interviewee to express fully their own beliefs while the interviewer retains a neutral or distanced stance. This may require that the interviewer is trained to develop the skills which enable the interviewee to have ‘candour, authenticity, depth, richness and honesty about their experiences’ (Oppenheim, 1992:65). Post interview transcription and analysis of data can also be time consuming (Bell, 2010). Bell also suggests that in order to get a range of experience and views on similar issues, semi-structured interviews are a more appropriate option as compared to structured interviews which may generate close-ended responses in yes/no answers. A sufficient number of interviews needed to be conducted to represent a range of relevant points of view on the research topic. In unstructured qualitative research, the quality of the information collected is more important than quantity and so a small number of interviews, around six to ten, may be sufficient depending on the focus of the research (Denscombe, 2010). The exact number may not be pre-determined but the researcher may determine that if no new quality information is emerging and sufficient interviews have been carried out a ‘saturation’ point may be attained (BERA, 2012).

Interviews are sometimes seen as subjective experiences for both interviewer and interviewee, and therefore a risk of influence and ‘bias’ may arise (Newby, 2010:380). Bias might include interviewee’s desire to please the interviewer to create a good impression, as the interviewer may be seen to be in a position of authority if not of actual power, although the dominant position of the interviewer in arranging the interview, setting the agenda for the interview, deciding and asking the questions always places the interviewer in a position of strength. The interviewee may give the official viewpoint or say what they think is expected rather than their personal view, and the interviewers’ own views may come across and influence the interviewee’s responses e.g. expressing surprise or disapproval. Alternatively, the interviewee may react to the authority of the interviewer by giving subversive or contradictory responses. I addressed this issue in my research by endeavouring to maintain a neutral, collegial stance in asking questions and during the interviewees’ responses. This involved trying to ensure that neither my intention in asking the question, nor my reaction to the response was shown either in verbal or non-verbal signs. However, it is a methodological problem for

face-to-face interviews, and the underlying position of perceived power of the interviewer may always be present (*ibid*).

Whilst considering the credibility of this method of data collection, it must be remembered that there is no such thing as a 'relationship free' interview between interviewer and interviewee during qualitative research. The relationship between the two is a part of the process with the interviewee seen as the 'participant' in the research, actively shaping the course of the interview rather than passively responding to the interviewer's questions. Therefore it is impossible to be completely objective. It is important to recognize the subjective aspects of the interviewee-interviewer relationship, be sensitive to any presuppositions and to attempt to set these aside during data analysis. This was considered important since the viewpoints of individuals involved in the peer mentoring project are vital in assessing and interpreting their experiences (Topping 1996; Newby, 2010). Furthermore, in this project, data was gathered by a number of methods enabling some degree of triangulation as a cross check on the validity of results.

A number of factors influenced the use of interviews. Although interviews require the investment of time, the opportunity for flexibility in reaction to respondents and the quality of the data received are arguments in favour of the interviews. A broad interview outline reflected the nature of the research questions whilst listing the main topics to be covered in each interview. This ensured the interviews stayed on track and the central themes and issues were covered. The main sources of information for the topics to be included in the interview outline came from the literature review and preliminary discussions with the faculty, principal and students as well as through observation. The themes emerging from the content of interviews are discussed further in Chapter VII.

#### **d. Focus groups**

Collecting data from a focus group enables participants of the project to come together to share information derived from their own experiences and perspectives. Focus groups as specified by Cohen *et al* (2011) are a form of group/collective interviews and are being used more frequently in educational research. The reliance is on the interaction within the group on the topic provided by the researcher and the group dynamics can predominate. Morgan (1997) suggests that interview through focus group uses

interaction of the group to produce data and insights which would be far less accessible without the interactive group discussion. Stringer (2004) believes that focus groups not only extend understanding between the diverse individuals and groups, but enables them cooperatively to construct a framework of ideas for ongoing collaborative action. Interviews are about co-constructing knowledge and group interviews can sometimes alter that and the responses of the participants. The data gathered through the focus group discussions triggered new ideas in students and assisted in identifying the areas in need of further study.

Focus groups are supported by many researchers in the social sciences (Krueger, 1988; Millward, 2006) especially when interrogating the group's shared beliefs or shared understandings (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Millward 2006; Steward *et al.*, 2007; Krueger and Casey 2009). Krueger defined the focus group as:

... a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted with 7-10 people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is relaxed, comfortable, and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. (Krueger, 1988:18)

Focus groups are an important method of data collection precisely because group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Focus groups can only be used as guidance to the issues which need to be addressed through other evaluation methods. For example, to inform the questions to ask in one-to-one interviews, the focus group could complement a survey or questionnaire, where the issues cannot be explored in the same depth, but where a wider set of viewpoints could be sampled. Furthermore, focus groups are useful in developing themes, generating hypotheses, gathering data quickly and at a low cost. Focus groups also provide a platform for empowering participants to voice their views, values and opinions and this provides a greater coverage of issues (Krueger, 1998; Millward, 2006).

In my research, focus group discussions with the senior students who acted as mentors were aimed to discover the students' perception and their feedback on the effectiveness of peer mentoring. The point of view of mentors on student issues, emerging from focus

group discussions, and their feedback on the peer support they had provided to mentees, is given in Chapter VI. The choice of senior students as participants of the focus group was because the senior students had themselves 'been through the experience' and it was logical to value their opinions. This is in agreement with Cohen *et al*, (2007; 2011) who draw attention to the fact that in our endeavours to come to terms with the problems of day to day living we are highly dependent upon experience and authority. Collecting data through a focus group is useful in exploring attitudes and views on the topic of discussion. Although it was ensured that all the participants were given an equal chance to express their feelings and ideas; however, Cohen *et al*, (2011) argued that the opinions expressed in a focus group are ones that are perceived to be acceptable within the group (*ibid*). Denscombe (2010) points out that where group members regard their opinions as contrary to prevailing options within the group, they might be inclined to keep quiet, or moderate their views somewhat. The privacy of one-to-one interview does not pose this difficulty. Focus groups have been significantly used for the triangulation of data collected through more traditional forms e.g., observation, surveys, questionnaires or individual interviews (Morgan, 1997; Stewart *et al*, 2007).

Focus groups have some disadvantages. The number of topics discussed may be limited; group dynamics may lead to intra-group conflicts and disagreements. If the facilitator or moderator of the focus group is not well-prepared on the topic, they may not be able to keep the discussion on track and the group dynamics can fall apart (Smithson, 2000). It is also the responsibility of the person conducting the focus group to ensure that equal opportunity is being provided to all participants as one participant may dominate the group. There may also be a problem of dissenting voices being heard (*ibid*). For gaining most out of focus groups, skilful facilitation and management is required by the researcher. In my case, although while I had been trained in such research techniques, I was also aware that many of the techniques for working with groups that I had developed as a teacher were of value in working both with individuals and especially in focus groups. Focus group discussions can also be video or audio recorded to aid revisiting the discussion as an enormous amount of data can be collected in half an hour focus group and the facilitator may not have the time to note down each finding. Revisiting the focus group discussions through a video or audio recording also helps in analysing the findings more accurately (Flick, 2009).

## **ii) Data analysis**

This study was exploratory rather than confirmatory (Guest *et al*, 2012). The participants' were unfamiliar with peer mentoring, and the purpose of the research was to introduce student peer mentoring into the universities in Lahore and see what sort of changes, if any, might be generated. The majority of the data produced required some level of interpretation, partly because of the language issues discussed in the section on questionnaires above (p. 91). Theme analysis offered an effective way to order the data and permit exploration of responses to this intervention. Guest *et al (ibid)* suggest that the researcher in exploratory studies inspects the data for themes, trends and keywords to assist in outlining the analysis. Themes may be a priori, indicated in the preparation of the research tools and particularly in the selection of questions. The use of open-ended questions in the interviews and focus groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Newby, 2010) generates additional, emergent themes. Organisation of data thematically allows the researcher to address a particular research question pragmatically to help produce an account which is fully responsive to the positions of the participants and to that of the researcher. In this way, the question is explored rather than answered, and the outcomes of the research are suggestive, indicative and context specific. This is not to say that the results of such data analysis are not reliable or capable of some degree of generalisation. In the context of the cyclic pattern of action research, however, it is expected that a degree of contingency will always be found, such that, in the reflection phase, the results may be examined for new and emerging ideas and problematic, inconsistencies, new synergies and issues of application. The use of themes in the analysis is discussed further in Chapter VII.

## **iii) Validity and dependability**

The validity and dependability of the data collected was assisted by triangulation. According to Smith (1975, in Cohen *et al*, 2000:112) research methods act as 'filters' and are never neutral or theoretical in reflecting the 'world of experience'. In order to make the research as systematic as possible within a limited time, triangulation was used to allow for a greater consistency of data concerning each research question. Triangulation is the litmus test for demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research (Campbell and Fiske, 1959 in Cohen *et al*, 2000; Bell, 2010). For example, for evaluation of the mentoring workshops, mentors were interviewed



individually, in focus groups and responses were also gathered through questionnaires. This enabled interpretation of data on those questions to be based on a higher degree of dependability than would be possible from one method alone. As discussed in the previous chapter (p. 83) the absence of an established or shared set of criteria for the mentors and other participants to use as standards or reference points for evaluation meant that the responses were in the category referred to by Stake (1973) as responsive evaluation. However, while this was the case with the open questions, those that were more closed directed the respondent to reflect on particular parts of the experience, and, in doing so, created a more restricted field for potential responses. Thus, during triangulation and interpretation of results, reading of the responsive evaluations from open questions in the questionnaires and from interviews and focus groups was tempered by the more formal agenda set by the directed or closed questions in each method of questioning.

#### **iv) Language and data collection**

As discussed in Chapter II, English is the only official language in Pakistan, and the language of instruction in all universities. It was the language in which the training for the mentoring scheme was conducted and all the documentation was in English. For the monitoring and evaluation of the project, English was also the language used, and all the questionnaires were in English, and focus groups and interviews were also in English. However, while English is the language of instruction, and entry to university in Pakistan requires a good level of proficiency in English, it is not the language of everyday life for most families. Similarly, while Urdu is the national language, it is not an official language in Pakistan and is the first language for less than 10% of the population (see p. 18-19). Most students, therefore, will have some proficiency in two or more languages, but the level of fluency and understanding in English may vary. In particular, there is a marked difference in proficiency between those students educated at English medium schools and those from Urdu medium schools.

As stated above, English was the language chosen for the research on this project as it is the language of instruction in universities and therefore a common language to all participants. However, both in the training and in those research methods that required face-to-face discussion and questions, I was aware of the need to make sure that the participants had a good understanding of the questions, and were able to express their

responses accurately. As discussed further on p. 121 and p. 194, I would sometimes use Urdu to clarify a question or a response where I felt this would be helpful. Although I am not trained as an interpreter, I am tri-lingual in English, Urdu and Punjabi. This did enable me to detect uncertainties in understanding and to use any of these shared languages to help in clarification.

Considerable discussion has taken place over the resolution of epistemological issues arising in cross-language social research. This arises from work in socio-linguistics on the connection between language and the construction of social reality. Temple (2005) argues that, while translators may have valuable and sometimes necessary input in qualitative research, the complexity of decoding the language of interpreters positioned external to the research may create additional problems for the researcher. Bilingual researchers have some advantage in cross-language research, although, as Temple (2006) points out, different issues can arise and, in particular, that bilingualism cannot be assumed to be an unproblematic way to resolve problems of interpretation. As much care needs to be given to reflection on the position of the researcher to each shared language community as it is to other aspects of social difference, such as gender, that might impact on interpretation of data.

While acknowledging the importance of these considerations to my occasional use of Urdu in face to face discussions with participants, two factors need to be considered. The first is that, in Pakistan, while not denying that socio-linguistic issues about the relations between specific language use and social reality are of considerable general importance, in the specific group of participants in this research, flexibility in the use of different languages is part of everyday communication. While formal academic discussions take place in English, informal discussions on both academic and non-academic subjects frequently take place in a combination of English, Urdu and, sometimes, Punjabi, the language of everyday life in Punjab province. The use of 'Minglish' or 'Urdenglish' is prevalent in academic life in Pakistan, and my own position within this community of language users enabled a close connection to the underlying meanings of the languages used. Bi- or tri-lingualism in this context is somewhat different from the situation described by Temple (*ibid*) whose own experience is of two distinct languages and language communities (English and Polish) where very little mingling of either vocabulary or grammar occurs. In contrast,

Bashiruddin (2011) addresses the particular issues of research in the context of Pakistan. She points out that, for many in Pakistan including herself, growing up in households in which a number of languages were spoken:

fluid codes-switching came naturally in such an environment (Bashiruddin 2012:934).

This is an area that is so far under-researched, as Bashiruddin (*ibid*) points out. Language usage in the research process is clearly an important consideration in the reflexive position of the researcher. However, for the purpose of my research, I consider that, having been a student and teacher in Pakistan, and a member of a multilingual household in which English, Urdu and Punjabi, as well as various forms of ‘Minglish’ were spoken, I had sufficient understanding of the codes of everyday and academic speech to be able to recover the significant meaning of responses from participants in my research, given the limited parameters of the research process.

#### **v) Data sources**

##### **a. Lahore, Pakistan**

The research fieldwork was based in Lahore. To obtain the point of view of the academic faculty (rectors/ principals/ directors) and students, in identifying barriers to learning and their perspective on students supporting junior cohort students, data was collected through a literature search as well as interviews, questionnaires and focus groups from two different universities U1 and U2 in the city of Lahore located in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. The constant variable in two different universities was that both universities were prestigious universities offering quality undergraduate and postgraduate courses to students. Both the institutions had specific merit-based admission criteria for students which include a written test and an interview. The students selected for data collection (volunteered to participate) all belonged to the privileged elite or middle class families. In order to get the views of the participants the multi-method approach triangulation was used.

The data was collected in Pakistan through:

- Observation by the researcher (as an insider and an outsider)
- Interviews with the teaching staff/directors/rectors/principals of universities

- Interviews with graduates who had experience of studying in Pakistani universities and another university outside Pakistan
- Questionnaires administered to the students (Appendix 1)
- Teaching Staff questionnaires completed by academic staff of university 1 and 2 (Appendix 2)
- Feedback/evaluation form completed by the participants of the workshop for peer mentors in U1 and U2
- Mentor profile form for matching mentors and mentees
- Interim review form completed by the mentors and mentees from U1 and U2
- Group interviews with three focus groups of the students at U1 and U2 at the end of the mentoring process
- Logbooks completed by mentors to keep a record of their mentoring sessions with the mentees
- Logbooks completed by mentoring coordinators to keep a record of their monthly meetings with mentors
- Data supplied from universities on academic performance (assessments), and retention rates

#### b. London, United Kingdom

Interview with a senior academic and former head of widening participation from a UK university helped understand the importance of peer mentoring programmes in the UK, in addition to the literature review. The probability of solutions to students' problems was discussed with the senior academic and the emerging themes from the discussions and suggestions were useful in adapting the materials and aims of a peer mentoring project from the UK to the Pakistani context. Attending the Peer Mentoring Training Workshops at a UK university and at the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF, 2010) further helped in the design of the training workshop and materials for peer mentors. My own observations from participating in the various mentoring schemes at my university in UK also contributed to the development of the project (Chapter III).

This chapter explains and justifies the choice of research methodology and the data collection tools. The field work findings were gathered using the standard research tools of qualitative research: observation, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. The

chronological order of the research timescale from the beginning of the project to the final phase is provided in the time in Appendix 20. This timeline will help the reader keep a track of the roadmap of the action research process. The roadmap of the action research design comprised of these distinct phases is illustrated diagrammatically on page 106. The detail of each phase in the timeline (Appendix 20) is discussed in the next chapter which elaborates on the design of the research project and is maintained further in analysis of the data in accordance with the phases of the research.

## Road Map of Mentoring Process - Action Research

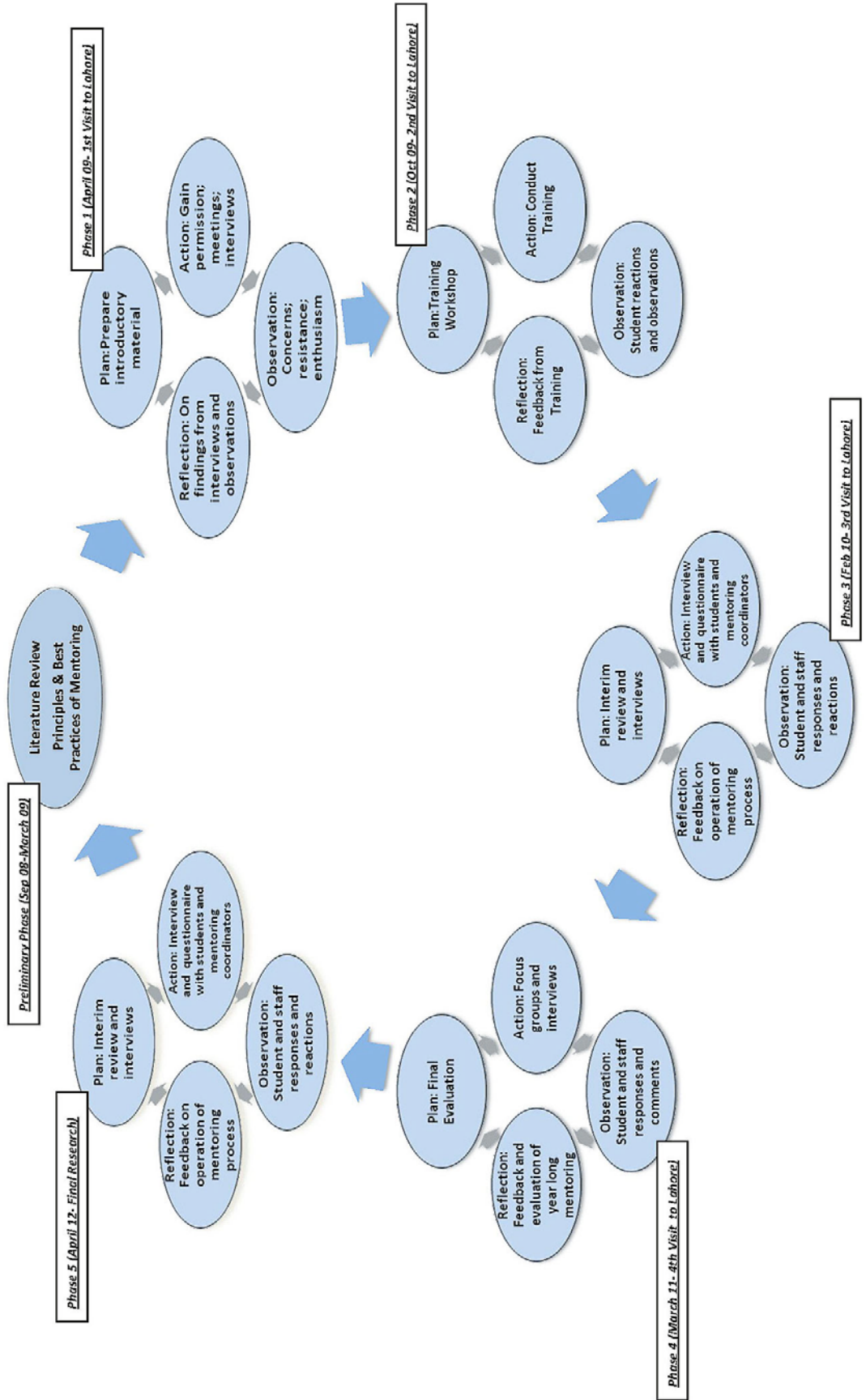


Figure 10: Roadmap of mentoring process

## **CHAPTER V**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter elaborates the design of the research project and the rationale for the selection of action research and particular research methods as discussed in the previous chapter. As the project uses an action research approach, the research design is an ongoing process, rather than a static design. The preliminary phase of the research process commenced in September 2008 and as the research fieldwork was conducted in Pakistan, the fieldwork had five distinct phases based on my visits to Lahore as listed in the timeline represented diagrammatically in the previous chapter:

Phase 1: April 2009

Phase 2: October 2009

Phase 3: February/March 2010

Phase 4: March/April 2011

Phase 5: April 2012

The details of my visits to Lahore, and the sequence of work along the timeline are discussed below chronologically and focus on the development and suitability of the research design for the fieldwork context. The sequence of work was intended to ensure that for each of the fieldwork phases indicated above, all necessary preparation was done. I explain my reasons for using the timeline which is included in the Appendices as Appendix 20. I outline the roadmap for the research on p. 106. I also discuss the selection of resource material and the research methods used.

The first key stage of the research process encompassed planning and designing the fieldwork. An initial and essential step consisted of contacting and convincing the selected universities to give their consent to allow me to introduce the mentoring process for their students. The next important stage was training the participants at all levels – the mentors, the mentees and the academic staff who were to oversee the operation of the scheme. Once the scheme was under way, it was necessary to monitor the mentoring process and to ensure that it was being implemented according to the protocols established in the documentation and training. The next stage involved

evaluation according to the sequence of research tasks. Finally, the overall analysis of the project, with the integration of the various evidences gathered, was made to ensure that all aspects of the project were considered and that sufficient and significant evidence was gathered to be able to draw conclusions with respect to the research question, aim and objectives.

## **SECTION I: Preliminary phase - September 2008 to March 2009**

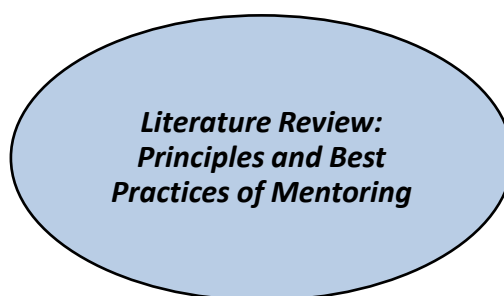


Figure 11a: Preliminary Phase

To refine the research topic and prepare for the selection of appropriate methodology, I conducted an initial literature review and gathered some preliminary data. I had regular meetings with my supervisory team to discuss the preparation of documents to introduce the project and its intentions to staff at the selected universities. The documents included letters of introduction from my university for the rectors/vice-chancellors at the universities in Lahore and also letters from myself to seek permission to conduct the research project and fieldwork.

Agreements with the participating universities were prepared and signed by the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) of my university in UK. Information for universities on introduction to peer mentoring and its significance in universities was prepared and finalised. Student and teaching staff questionnaires were developed to get an insight into the problems and barriers to learning as identified by HE students in Pakistan.

The documents prepared before the initial visit to Lahore were:

- Cooperation Agreement between my university and university 1 (U1)
- Cooperation Agreement between my university and university 2 (U2)
- Permission letters from researcher for U1 and U2



- Letters from research supervisor formally requesting fieldwork element permission at U1 and U2
- Notes on introduction peer mentoring and its significance in universities
- Student questionnaire
- Staff questionnaire
- Interview questions (for the rector/principal/director of HE Institutions)
- Focus group questions for interim review of the project
- Basic outline of the proposed peer mentoring pilot project

Of the documents listed above, questionnaires and interview questions were prepared for preliminary data collection purposes. The importance of these selected methods of collecting data has been discussed in Section IV of Chapter IV. Brief information on the design of each of the data collection tools for my project is given in the following paragraph.

### **Design of the data collection methods**

#### **a. Observation**

For my project, observation at all levels and phases during the research contributed to the particular design of research questions in addition to the necessity to gather data for the purpose of triangulation with other research methods. I was observing participants at one stage from a non-participant stance but was never a neutral observer (Newby, 2010) because of my personal identification with the research and my shared cultural understanding of the context with the participants (p. 4-5). My observations therefore, at different stages of the research, were as an insider belonging to the same culture as that of the research setting, having been through the experience of the education system in Pakistan both as a student and as a teacher. This is discussed in Chapters II and IV.

My observations were structured by my prior experience and in particular by my sense of what was required by my own research project, but this was best described as semi-structured, as it was possible for my experiences, in observing a range of activities that I had not experienced previously, to lead me to rethink some of the premises of my project. As these observations occurred at an early stage of the research, it was possible to adjust the content of my questionnaires/interviews in the light of my observations. My observations also led me to structure the whole project to enhance the possibility that the students, both mentors and mentees, could gain ownership of their learning, and

that as students they could be important contributors to the learning and support of their peers in the university (Floyd, 1993; Murray, 2001; Forehand, 2008).

## **b. Questionnaires**

The following questionnaires were used during the research fieldwork:

### For students:

#### a. Preliminary questionnaire

- for the identification of student related issues
- for students views on peer support
- as a method of recruiting volunteers to train as peer mentors

#### b. Evaluation questionnaires

- to assess the peer mentoring training workshop
- to conduct the interim review and evaluation of the mentoring process

### For Staff (academic and administrative):

#### Preliminary questionnaire

- to gain an understanding of the issues and their possible solutions
- to seek views on awareness and significance of peer support
- to assess the willingness or reluctance of staff to implement peer support
- to seek views on where students may gain support apart from peer support

The preliminary questionnaire for students in the selected universities in Pakistan was designed to find out the views of students on the barriers and issues they faced in transition to university life and while at the university. They were also asked how the existing support services provided by the university helped them. The other significant aspect of this questionnaire was to see how students perceived peer support at this initial stage, and how they thought peer support might contribute. It was also most important to use this opportunity to quantify the number of students who were willing to volunteer to participate in the project. Question IV specifically addressed this question and helped to recruit prospective peer mentors on the basis of volunteering. This was the defining moment for the project and would determine whether the students wanted this project to be implemented or not. In a way, Question IV acted as a ballot. Whether the students would vote in favour and give their consent to participate voluntarily and claim their ownership of the project was the finding that was sought in response to this question.

For the purpose of knowing the perspective of academic staff on peer assisted learning and peer support, a survey was conducted in universities U1 and U2 through questionnaires (see Appendix 2). Of the 80 questionnaires distributed equally between the two departments at U1 and at U2, 55 faculty members completed and returned the questionnaires with nearly 40 questionnaires completed by U1 faculty members, and the remainder by U2 staff. The return rate from U1 was particularly high as, for both the departments, the Department Heads had distributed and collected the questionnaires. In U2, the return rate was approximately 75% of those distributed. These rates of return were fairly high, given the difficulties some researchers face in obtaining satisfactory rates of return from this method (Weems *et al*, 2003; Bell, 2010). In U1, the role of the Department Heads was an obvious factor, but in U2, it is possible that the novelty of this form of consultation was another factor, coupled with recognition of the importance of the project as one which had been endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor.

Question I in the survey questionnaire was designed with two columns; the right column listed 7 academic-related issues and the left column listed 7 social/psychological issues or barriers that may impact on learning and student achievement in HE in Pakistan.

An example of the questionnaire completed by the academic staff is provided in Appendix 2 and two samples of student questionnaires in Appendix 1a and 1b. A sample of completed interim review form is given in Appendix 14.

### **c. Interviews**

The interview questions for the faculty (Appendix 2c) were designed to get the viewpoint of university faculty in the UK, and from faculty in Pakistan during my preliminary visit to Lahore, in order to make preparations for the research fieldwork.

The responses from the first interview with interviewee A (Chapter VI p. 143-145) were of particular significance in the formulation of the questions to students and staff concerning the factors influencing student's abilities to make the best of their studies, while recognising the need to adjust the emphases to the Pakistani HE context.

#### **d. Focus groups**

Whilst planning and designing the focus groups I established the following:

- The agenda for the focus group discussions -This was communicated clearly to the participants prior to their participation so that they came prepared on the specific topic for the focus group.
- The size of focus group - I conducted three focus groups and the number of participants did not exceed 10. Ideally, the number should not exceed 8 if the focus group is for 40 minute duration (Morgan, 1997). For a one hour session allocated to a focus group, participation number can be up to 12 people. (Krueger and Casey, 2009; Cohen *et al*, 2011)
- The number of focus groups - I used three focus groups, for largely practical reasons to do with the size of the sample and functioning of the group. All were conducted on the same topic in order to get diverse responses and to assist with triangulation. The same questions were asked to each group.
- Providing a comfortable forum for participants to feel at ease to share their view points on the topic of the focus group. This was done by booking a spacious common room with comfortable seating in which the participants could feel relaxed.
- As facilitator of the focus group, I needed to keep the participants on track and was aware that a balance had to be maintained between being too directive and allowing too much deviation from the point. This was done in part by the use of structured questions to remind participants of the task in hand.
- I also needed to prompt the participants to voice their opinion and also to prompt reflexive thinking.
- Discussions were audio taped after obtaining the permission of all participants in order to keep an accurate record.

Questions for the focus groups were prepared carefully in order to allow the groups to function well, with good participation, but also to elicit responses relevant to the research aim and objectives. The questions used are given in the research results in Chapter VI (p. 166) and shown in Appendix 14c. One important point to ensure full participation of all in the group was the need to respect the different facility with

English (the language used in the group) and gender and class power relations within the group. The first issue was dealt with by framing the questions in clear and simple English, but also by allowing responses in Urdu if, in that way, members of the group were able to participate and articulate their thoughts more effectively (see discussion on language on p. 101). For the second point, it was necessary to be clear and directive as the facilitator to ensure that all voices were equally respected.

**SECTION II: Phase I - April 2009**

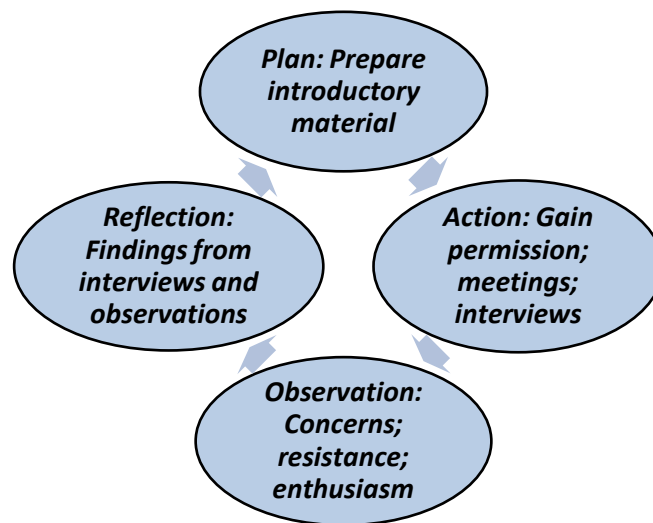


Figure 11b: Phase I – 1<sup>st</sup> research visit to Lahore

On my first fieldwork visit to Lahore, Pakistan, I established contacts with the universities in Lahore. Three universities were shortlisted but due to time constraints I only had meetings with the Rector /Vice-Chancellors of the two universities. Official permission was sought from the department heads of the universities and the research project discussed with them. It was not possible to get an appointment with the Principal of the third university at that time so this had to be postponed for the next visit due to time restriction. The third university was considered as a backup if either of the other universities were unable or unwilling to participate. University 1 (U1) was selected from the public sector and university 2 (U2) was a private university. Only two HEIs were selected for the project as I had limited resources and time constraints and a larger sample of universities would not have been feasible. The universities chosen were representative of the main groups of universities in Pakistan, large public universities and smaller private ones.

Private universities in Pakistan, as in other parts of the world, may be considered in two categories. As private universities, they are not dependent on state funding for either their capital or running costs which come from the income from student fees. Private for profit universities are wholly owned by companies who seek to make a profit from the provision of education. Private universities that are described as non-for-profit do not seek to make a profit, and are usually established by charitable, religious or philanthropic organisations (Bjarnason *et al*, 2009). The private university chosen was a not-for-profit foundation university and was representative of the more established institutions in the private sector.

The selection of universities from the two sectors was to provide a range of students, reflecting the wider social range of participation in HE in Pakistan. The much larger public university, which has subsidised fees, was accessible to a wider social range of students from across the country. The private university, which charged comparatively high fees, attracted students from higher social classes. However, it did also have an active scholarship programme for a small number of students from less advantaged backgrounds.

Agreements were signed by both the participating universities to run the project for full academic year 2009-10. During the research fieldwork planning, ethical considerations (see Chapter IV) which encompass confidentiality, permissions and informed consent (Stringer, 2004) were ensured. To protect the anonymity of the educational institutions, where most of the fieldwork element was done, these universities have been identified by a number (U1, U2) instead of their actual names. The anonymity and confidentiality of the educational institutions as well as participants in the research fieldwork is maintained throughout the project. The criteria for the selection of fieldwork sampling are discussed in detail in Chapter IV. To ensure the involvement of the academic staff, each university was required to identify and select a member of staff as their mentoring coordinator. Preliminary meetings of the project coordinator with the mentoring coordinator were scheduled to discuss the project in detail and the commitment of the mentoring coordinator. A brief talk with the students to inform them about the peer mentoring project was organised and at the end of the brief session the students were asked to complete a questionnaire. Student questionnaires were also used as a mode of recruiting peer mentors. Some questionnaires were also left with the mentoring

coordinator for students who were not able to attend the talk due to their class schedules. The students who volunteered at the talk were recruited as prospective peer mentors (also through questionnaires). Staff questionnaires were administered to seek the perspective of the teaching staff on the problems and issues that served as barriers to university students' learning in Pakistan. It proved important that the meetings with the Vice-chancellors and Department Heads were successful and that support for the project was won at the highest level in the university. This helped to overcome the resistance of senior administration and some teaching staff to the intervention of this project into the learning culture of the university.

I distributed the introductory notes to prospective peer mentors in order to initiate discussion on the concept of peer mentoring and my email address was also provided; students were encouraged to email me with any query or for further information. The students who volunteered to participate included their email details on the questionnaires. The university staff and students at each university were informed that I would return in October 2009 to conduct training workshops for the prospective peer mentors before one to one mentoring sessions could begin. It was also emphasized that the mentoring training workshop was mandatory for the prospective peer mentors to attend to understand their roles as mentors for their junior cohort of students. Of the students who attended the talk almost 90% volunteered to be peer mentors.

Students were informed at the first meeting that the role of mentor was unpaid as no funds were available. UKCISA (UKCISA, 2008) suggests that paying mentors defeats the purpose of a scheme (and makes it more expensive to run). Some institutions deliberately avoid monetary reward for mentors and instead focus on the transferable skills that students develop by being involved in such a scheme, for example cultural awareness, listening, problem-solving and language skills. Being a mentor can be closely linked to one's personal development and employability skills, can add value to and is impressive to add as a credential to the students' CVs (Miller, 2002; USF, 2011). Some institutions provide academic credit to those students choosing to become mentors, through a volunteering module or other similar credit-bearing course (Phillips, 2009). However, this was not a possibility in this project as neither university had the facility to create credit-bearing course units for such activities.

Whilst in London, I was in email communication with the mentoring coordinators and students of both the universities and some students emailed to know more about the project. The following six months were focused on developing the project to tailor it to the requirements of the universities in Pakistan to ensure that the students and the institution could benefit fully from it. Various existing models of peer mentoring in different HE institutions in universities in developed countries (UK, USA and Australia) were considered. The model selected as the starting point for training peer mentors was from the UK Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF, 2008) as it provided the level of flexibility needed to adapt to benefit students in Pakistani universities on the basis of culture and traditions within the university community and the region. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation is the largest organisation supporting mentors in the UK and has done extensive research into good practice in mentoring (*ibid*). It provides training for all levels of mentoring and is recognised as the leading training body in the UK with contracts with the UK Home Office, the UK Department of Education and the European Commission.

### **June - August 2009**

I reviewed the existing information on training strategies for peer mentoring used by universities in developed countries and prepared the necessary resource materials. An essential part of the preparation the project was the development of training and appropriate documentation to clearly outline the roadmap of the research for the participants. As none of the participants had previous experience of mentoring, considerable care was needed to develop these materials as the success of the project would depend on the participants' (mentors, mentees and all faculty involved) understanding of the mentoring process; the terminology, the constraints and boundaries of their role. The documents developed to be used to help facilitate the project are listed and each discussed in detail to provide the rationale for selection each document:

- Student and staff questionnaires (discussed above)
- Questions for interview (discussed above)
- Training Workshop for peer mentors required:
  - The peer mentoring training manual for mentors
  - Resources for the workshop i.e., power-point presentation, facilitator notes
- Evaluation forms for training workshop
- The handbook for peer mentors



- Mentor profile form
- Guidelines for mentees
- Logbook for peer mentors
- Mentoring contract for mentors and mentees
- The information pack for mentoring coordinators
- Logbook for mentoring coordinators
- Interim review form
- Certificate of participation for peer mentors and mentees

### **i) Objective of the training workshop for peer mentors**

I had previously conducted training workshops in secondary schools as a part of the research fieldwork for my MA dissertation (Rachel, 2007) and had also attended training workshops in the UK (MBF, 2008) for my role as a mentor at my university in UK. This prior experience helped me understand the impact of training on the success of the project. The feedback I received from the previous training workshops fed into plan and preparation of the resources for this project. My understanding of the context of student experience in Pakistan's universities, the language, religious traditions and the national culture of Pakistan and the current socio-political situation was also reflected into the planning and preparatory stage (Chapter II and Chapter IV).

My current project was designed to use structured /formal peer mentoring, unlike informal mentoring relationships where training may not be so vital, training was of key importance and essential to the project. In the context of HE in Pakistan where there was little pre-existing knowledge, it was necessary to ensure that training did not make assumptions about the prior knowledge or understanding of the participants. It was essential to provide the right type of preparation to the participants to help them perform their roles successfully as no previous schemes of peer mentoring for students in university had taken place. The quality of training was more important than the quantity and a clear conceptual model was framed to help understand roles and responsibilities. The objective of training, according to Gibson (2004), is not mastery of all the skills but equipping the mentors with the confidence to build the mentoring relationship, develop insight to recognize how to manage it and to identify where the relationship is least effective and most importantly how to take appropriate action.

The peer mentoring workshop was designed to train senior students to help new students settle in the university environment during the initial transition period from college to university, to help them understand the study programme and to be supportive to them. Programme content for the training addressed goal setting, decision making, problem solving and the development of confidence in peer mentors. It was designed to be experiential and to encourage as much participation as possible.

During the planning stage of the training workshop for students, my intention was to encourage the prospective mentors to:

- develop resourcefulness, leadership and communication skills through their interactions with the programme coordinator, other prospective peer mentors and a group of new students
- become more effective listeners
- contribute towards an atmosphere of mutual trust, honesty and a feeling of unity in the university
- integrate new students so that they should be able to settle quickly into a new community and feel confident
- break down the barriers between senior and junior students, thus creating a friendly atmosphere within the university
- help develop self-esteem and self-confidence of new students, enabling them to stand up to negative peer pressure
- develop constructive and meaningful relationships between students and teachers
- encourage mentees to appreciate the importance of goal setting, completing assignments on time, time management and teamwork
- encourage new students to discuss either personal or community issues that concern them and to cultivate self-discipline and the maintenance of high ethical standards.

The points listed above (see also Chapter III, p. 69-70) align with the main purpose of the workshop; to equip students with the necessary skills to become negotiators, mediators and people of positive influence in their communities (MBF, 2008).

Interactive discussions on the purpose of the scheme were of key importance to the workshop. These covered roles and responsibilities and provided the opportunity for participants to explore their own motives and objectives and to practice relevant skills for learning within the mentoring dyad.

Astin (1993) conducted research on the experience of university students and found that one of two factors that made the most difference to getting new undergraduate students engaged in the university experience was faculty-student interaction. He suggested that in training peer mentors to increase their effectiveness, it was important to stress to mentors that they could facilitate such interaction.

## **ii) Design of the training workshop**

Robson (1993:38) defines research design as being 'concerned with turning research questions into projects'. Hence the question of resolving student issues to improve student achievement led to the designing of a workshop to train senior students. The purpose of the workshop was to help senior students in developing key skills to be effective peer mentors (MBF, 2008). A certain degree of flexibility, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990:178, in Denscombe, 1998, 2003) is needed to 'pursue areas of investigation that might not have been foreseen or planned, yet they appear to shed light upon or add a new perspective to one's area of investigation'.

It was mandatory for the prospective peer mentors and their mentoring coordinators to attend the training. In a number of mentoring projects, insistence on participation in training is one way to filter out those who may not be that committed to taking part (Miller, 2002; MBF, 2008; USF, 2011). In my project, all of the volunteers attended the workshop, indicating their keenness and willingness to be involved in the project. The training workshop was designed to be conducted in two sessions. The aims and details of each unit are provided in Appendix 3a and b (MBF, 2008).

## **iii) Design of the training manual for peer mentors**

The training manual was developed taking into consideration the cultural norms in Pakistan and the learning culture of each HE institution where the research was conducted. The design of the training manual for the workshop for prospective peer mentors was adapted from UK's Mentoring and Befriending Foundation Organization (MBF, 2008) and the resource materials were also refined and adapted to tailor to the needs of students in Pakistan whose learning is embedded in the specific social, cultural and religious values (Appendix 3 and 4). The original framework of the training manual was maintained as this had worked effectively in training sessions in the UK and also in

my previous study of mentoring in two secondary schools in Pakistan (Rachel, 2007). In the Peer Mentoring Training Manual (Appendix 5) the reference in examples was changed to adapt to culturally sensitive issues; any reference to alcohol was removed from the adapted manual which was in the original one as alcohol consumption or any related matters are a religiously sensitive issue and alcohol consumption in Pakistan is prohibited by law. Any reference to examples using issues related to friendships between male and female students was not used. Any such cross-gender related issue was discussed under the confidentiality section in the training manual with emphasis on the importance of sign-posting and/or either referring these students' issues to a faculty member or with the mentoring coordinator of the university for prompt action.

Certain local but extremely important issues, for example, the need to avoid prayer times when arranging meetings, were not thought necessary to mention as the knowledge and understanding of the importance of these times is widely understood and accepted, especially among the minority of students from non-Muslim backgrounds. The examples used to describe a certain situation were changed to reflect their suitability as was the mention of TV sitcoms or celebrities that UK students are familiar with but most Pakistani students were not. The use of examples with reference from local situations to clarify and relate a concept to culturally familiar situations was considered while adapting to Pakistani student specific needs; for example, *AIK DIN GEO KAY SAATH (A Day with Geo)*, a local television talk show, popular among the young people in Lahore replaced the original example of a western talk show in the original training manual. These minor but important adaptations were needed to give the student training relevant to the local context. A number of factors were taken into account while compiling the training manual both as a resource material used during the workshop and for consultation during the mentoring period. These included theoretical aspects of management and behavioural theory, exploration of the competencies of an effective mentor and mentee and the relevant skills of relationship management. Interactive discussions on the purpose of the scheme and the roles and responsibilities of participants were of key importance to the workshop.

#### **iv) Design of the resource documents for the project**

The facilitator's notes (Appendix 3b) were examined and re-examined to ensure that the trainer/facilitator's knowledge reflected the expertise of the trainer and portrayed the

credibility of the workshop. The notes were designed to be used during the training to provide a breadth of examples of similar mentoring schemes, especially of universities in the developed countries.

The power-point presentation (Appendix 4) used during the training workshop helped to reinforce information as the language of instruction used for the training and the training manual was English; especially in the light of the fact that English was either the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> language of the participants. Urdu was the second language of the participants and first language for majority of the students was Punjabi, Pashtoo, Sindhi, Siraikai or equivalent regional language (see Chapter II, p. 17). To ensure that instructions were followed properly as the workshop was interactive and to maximize the learning and understanding of the unit requirement, the power-point presentation was used to help provide a learning tool, especially for the visual or spatial learners who prefer using images, pictures, colours, and maps to organize information and communicate with others. Clarke *et al* (2006) suggest that 40 % of HE students are visual learners and there is no reason for this finding not to be true for students in Pakistan.

Evaluation acts as a litmus test for every stage of an action learning project. Goleman *et al* (2003:306) advocate that 'the process of learning needs to be examined, and this examination needs to be a part of the outcome'. The objectives of the evaluation of the peer mentoring training workshop were threefold; to measure change in the thinking of the participants; to gauge the success of the training workshop for the senior students in developing their understanding of the role of peer mentors and to determine the key skills they had developed. The evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 6) was also a method for comparing the expectation of the students prior to the workshop with what they gained out of it at the end of the session. The questionnaire was designed to provide reflexive feedback on the different aspects and range of topics covered in the interactive workshop. For example questions 4 and 5 asked students to reflect on their individual views of the most important/useful and least important/useful unit in the training workshop. Furthermore, students' perspectives and suggestions in the final question, an open ended question seeking their views and encouraging their feedback, was intended to help the improvement of the training workshop and the mentoring process.

The **mentor's handbook** (Appendix 8) was developed by reviewing existing information on the reference guide to mentoring at Middlesex University and the documented information for peer mentors from various other universities which developed similar mentoring schemes in the UK and USA (Miller, 2002; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; Phillips, 2009; University of Bath, 2011; Middlesex University SLA, 2011; USF, 2011). The guidance notes in the handbook were designed to be succinct and comprehensible, precise and easy to follow with consideration given to those participants for whom English was their third or fourth language. The handbook, a 7 page A5 booklet, provided guidelines for peer mentors to help them understand the mentoring process and this to be used along with the training manual (Appendix 5). The mentor's handbook was distributed to the students at the end of the training workshop to reinforce the content covered in the training workshop. The first section in the handbook gave concise theoretical background of mentoring and the definitions of the role of mentor followed by personal specification of a good mentor. The next section listed mentor's commitment for the academic year. The list of ground rules for mentoring as discussed in the training was provided in the handbook. Furthermore, practical thoughts included a comment that if the mentee dropped out after the first few sessions then it did not reflect a failure of the mentor. The boundaries to observe in the mentor – mentee relationship were listed in the handbook and the study guidelines and recommendations discussed briefly. Finally, the last section of the mentor's handbook provided a table of the 'dos and don'ts' of mentoring (Appendix 8).

The **mentor profile form** (Appendix 12) was designed to be distributed among the prospective mentors to facilitate the matching of mentors and mentees. The profile form required mentors to complete information on their personal details, contact details, previous education, work history and degree course at university. The students were asked to indicate their availability for mentoring on weekdays during term time for first semester (Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm) and academic disciplines which they considered to be an area of strength. The next question was open-ended so that students could give details on their co-curricular interests and other leisure activities. The final questions asked the prospective mentors who had attended the mentor's training workshop about their particular strengths or experiences they thought they could bring to the mentoring programme. The mentor profile form generated data on the gender of the participants and this has provided the ratio of the male and female students who had

volunteered to be mentors (see Graph 2, p. 130). The project was intended to be inclusive so it was necessary to ensure that there was representation from male and female students.

The **Guidelines for the mentees** (Appendix 11) were designed for the mentees to gain awareness of their role (MBF, 2008). This provided introduction and information on the mentoring programme to the mentees but, importantly, it clearly indicated that the mentees were given the opportunity to participate but it was not mandatory for them to join the programme or that they were not forced to become mentees. The document stated that if they decided to join, then they had to agree to follow the guidelines for the mentoring process including the ground rules which were clearly listed in the guidelines. It pointed out that if they had any concerns or wanted to discuss any aspect of the mentoring sessions, or if they were concerned about the content of their one to one mentoring sessions with mentors, they should discuss it with their university's mentoring coordinator. The contact details of the mentoring coordinator and the project coordinator were supplied to the mentees along with the guidelines. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2007) believe that it is very important for the success of the project for all the participants to receive comprehensive training to develop the right knowledge, attitude and skills.

The advantages of training the mentors and mentees together has also been considered in UK universities as it is cost-efficient and has other advantages; for example, it enables mentors and mentees to have some social familiarity and this facilitates the matching process (*ibid*). This was not possible in the current project as the mentees were from the new intake of students and were not present when the mentors were trained. While designing the guidelines for mentees, the use of a separate training workshop for mentees was also considered, but due to time constraints and limited resources available, this option was not offered.

The **mentoring contract** (Appendix 13) required a signature from both mentors and mentees. This gave participants a mutually agreed framework of commitment to the conditions of the peer mentoring scheme. A copy of the signed contract was given to mentor and the mentee and the original was with the mentoring coordinator for record-keeping purposes. They were required to attend all sessions as agreed and inform each other in advance if they were unable to attend the sessions due to unforeseen

circumstances, to observe the rules of confidentiality and to participate in the evaluation of the project at the end of the semester and academic year.

**Logbooks** were prepared and were distributed to the mentors (Appendix 9a). Good practice in established mentoring schemes has shown the use of logbooks as highly effective in helping mentors document the meetings (Topping, 1996; Miller, 2002; Clutterbuck, 2004; USF, 2011). The mentoring coordinators were also provided with logbooks (Appendix 9b). The mentors were required to record the content of their meeting sessions. The use of a logbook was intended to help evaluate the mentoring process and mentor-mentee reports. The logbook was designed in table form with fixed space to limit the size of entries so that students would only be able to write brief notes. They were instructed during training to enter information on day/date/time of the mentoring session, discussion during the meeting, any issues the mentor or mentee encountered, targets set and the date/time of the next meeting. The last row in the table gave options for students to note down any other comments. This information was used for triangulation during evaluation of the project. Mentees were encouraged to make and use their own logbooks, but were not provided with a logbook so as to give them the feeling that they were not forced into noting down the details of their meetings but only if they wanted to (see Chapter III, p. 70).

The **notes for mentoring coordinator** (Appendix 10) were compiled with a view to facilitating the understanding of their role and this also outlined the mentoring coordinator's commitment in the overall management of the project. The mentoring coordinator's role required regular feedback from students each month and they had to record this in the logbook provided for them. This would help monitor the benefits or otherwise and the quality of the mentoring process during the year. It listed the key points required for the commitment and participation from the mentoring coordinator and the practical details of running the project. The role of peer mentors and the skills, qualities and attitudes towards mentoring were listed. The timeline for the mentoring process and my email contact details were provided in the mentoring coordinator's notes.

The **logbook for the mentoring coordinator** consisted of one logsheet (Appendix 9b) for each mentor and it was designed to track the mentoring record for six months – six rows each representing one month with each row listing the discussion points for



meeting between the mentor and mentoring coordinator and any targets set for the next meeting following month. It was designed to ensure that it was time efficient as I was aware that the mentoring coordinators' role of the selected staff was in addition to their job responsibilities and they were not paid to take on this role. Therefore, the need to simplify the record-keeping and paperwork was considered carefully.

The monthly meeting between mentor and mentoring coordinator was essential as it provided a platform for the mentors to discuss the progress of their one to one mentoring sessions with their mentees and any concerns or issues on confidentiality. The mentoring coordinators were involved, provided the necessary support to participating students and completed relevant documentation.

The peer mentoring project recruited the participants on the basis of volunteering with no payment. Therefore it was necessary to recognize their effort and input. Many successful mentoring programmes do not offer any monetary benefits to the participants as, according to many advocates (Clutterbuck, 2004; UKCISA, 2008; Phillips, 2009), this may defeat the purpose of mentoring which, in their view, should be as close as possible to organic or unstructured mentoring. In most mentoring programmes where no monetary benefit is provided, or even where some payment is made, as at USF (2011), mentors and mentees are usually awarded certificates or credits towards their university degree programme. In my project, the student mentors were awarded certificates to recognize volunteering and the extra hours the students had invested into the project as there was no funding available even to cover travel expenses for the participants. Therefore the students were clearly informed during the training that they should select those week days for mentoring sessions when both the mentor and mentee were already on campus for their regular classes, to avoid any extra travel costs.

The mentors were awarded the certificate of participation at the end of the 6 hour training workshop. I also intended to recognize the contribution of mentors and mentees for the mentoring sessions and for their participation in the project as a whole. For this purpose, **Certificates of participation** (Appendix 15 and 16) were prepared to be distributed among the students at the end of the academic year. The certificate of participation had the logo of the participating students' own university in Pakistan but also that of my university in UK. Each certificate was printed with the participant's name and was signed by all three parties; myself - the project coordinator; the Deputy

Vice-Chancellor, Academic, of my university and the Dean of students/Dean of Institute/Director of Institute from U1 and U2. There were three separate type of certificate of participation:

1. Certificate for the mentors for participating in training workshop (Appendix 15a).
2. Certificate of participation for mentees (Appendix 16).
3. Certificate of participation for mentors (Appendix 15b).

The distribution of these certificates in award ceremonies both gave public recognition to the mentoring project and also provided the students with an incentive to participate in the project for the whole academic year as they were not being paid for their role. Photographs of the certificate award ceremonies are presented in Appendix 17 and comments on the value of the certificates in providing evidence of participation in mentoring to future employees are discussed in Chapter VIII.

The **interim review** questionnaire (Appendix 14) was developed to evaluate the mentoring sessions at the end of semester 1. This was the first formal evaluation of the mentoring process and therefore significant as a) feedback from both mentors and mentees on their mentoring sessions and b) whether the students wanted to continue their one to one mentoring sessions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. The design of interim review form was adapted from MBF (2008). I used this format as it seemed appropriate for this project to have both mentors and mentees complete the form together, so that both had equal opportunity to give their feedback. The structure of the questions in the interim review form is discussed in Chapter IV (p. 94).

In parallel with the preparation of the documentation and resources listed above, I conducted a series of interviews (Chapter VI) and other fieldwork to assist in preparation for the next phase and to review and evaluate the preliminary work under completion at this stage. In August 2009, an interview with a senior education advisor and former head of admissions from a UK university helped me to understand the importance of peer mentoring programmes in the UK, in addition to the literature review. The approaches taken to helping UK students' with their problems was discussed with the advisor and the suggestions proved to be very helpful in adapting a model of peer mentoring to test in Pakistan's universities. Attending the Peer Mentoring Training Workshops at my home university and those held by the Mentoring and

Befriending Foundation (MBF, 2008) further helped in the design of the training workshop for peer mentors. A member of staff and alumni of a UK university who had graduated recently was also interviewed. The interviewee had also studied at a Pakistani university for his first degree and could compare the facilities offered at both universities. Useful themes emerged from the data collected in this interview and this further reinforced the idea of the value of peer mentoring as a helping strategy for both the mentor and the mentee.

**September 2009:** A local coordinator was appointed in Lahore to assist me with the research fieldwork; this included making contacts with the mentoring coordinators at each university and liaising with the project coordinator. The local coordinator was also responsible for printing/binding the booklets required for the mentors and mentoring coordinators for both the universities. The mentoring coordinators were happy to oversee the whole project for the benefits it provided but were reluctant to take on extra work without additional financial resources and benefits; hence the need to appoint a local coordinator. The local coordinator assisted the researcher from September 2009 – June 2010 (total of 80 hours – 2 hours/week) and helped in printing, compiling and binding of the materials required for the project. Other responsibilities included providing support during the training workshops with any logistical issues and also by liaising between the universities in Lahore and myself in London throughout the 10 month period of the pilot mentoring process.

**SECTION III: Phase 2 - October 2009**

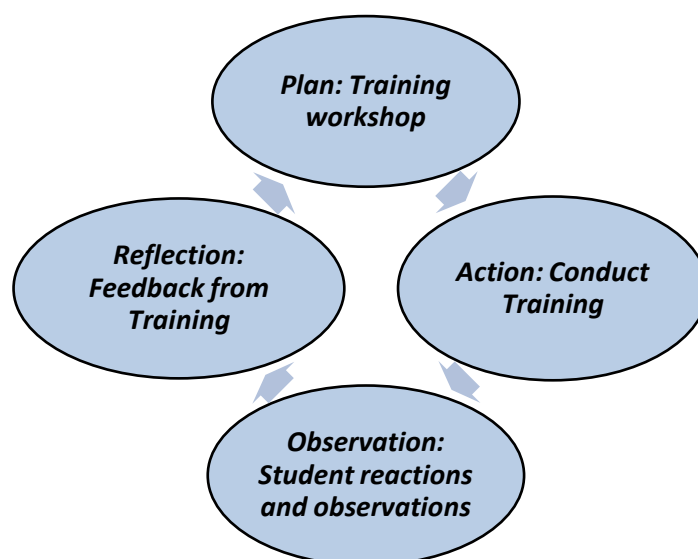


Figure 11c: Phase 2 - 2<sup>nd</sup> research visit to Lahore

My second visit to Lahore was intended to establish the peer mentoring project at the two universities in Lahore. I had the opportunity to interview the vice-chancellors of three different universities (two of these universities had already agreed to run the project). The interviews with the university heads were held to gain an insight into views on peer mentoring. This was also an opportunity for me to explain and clarify with the university heads before the interview that the purpose of this project was not to highlight flaws in the existing system of teaching and learning but to reinforce learning support by using final year students as a potential source of learning for the new students. During this three week visit, I confirmed the lists of students selected for the project, both as mentors and mentees. I also had meetings with the mentoring coordinators of both universities to discuss the logistics of the training workshops for the mentors identified.

### **i) Fieldwork sampling**

In U1 (university 1), a total of 60 mentors & 105 mentees were selected by the university academic staff of the two departments involved – the Institute of Education and Research (IER) and the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology (IBB). Two different departments within U1 were selected and agreed to participate. The involvement of the two departments in U1 arose from my previous studies in the Institute of Biochemistry. This enabled me to situate myself as researcher within a familiar context and learning culture. On the recommendation of the Head of the Institute who facilitated contact, I was able to gain access to the Institute of Education and Research (IER) and their consent to participate. This provided a different cohort of postgraduate students, with a different academic and socio-cultural character from that of IBB.

University 2 (U2) was selected on the basis of my previous experience of working with U2 during my research for my MA dissertation. This, again, allowed me the opportunity to conduct research in a familiar and broadly supportive context. At U2, a total of 20 mentors and 40 mentees were selected.

The total number of students involved in the peer mentoring project at both the universities was 80 mentors and 145 mentees. Male mentors were assigned male mentees and female mentors were matched with female mentees to minimise any

gender-related issues, keeping in line with the specific socio-cultural norms of the context of the project, as this could hinder the effectiveness of the mentoring process. This differs from the usual practices in western universities where a male mentor could be assigned to female mentee and vice versa. Due to slight imbalances in the gender ratio in the mentor and mentee groups, a small number of male-female mentoring dyads had to be allowed (with mutual consent) in order that all volunteers could be paired successfully. This is discussed further in Chapters VII and VIII.

### **U1 (University 1)**

**Group A** (Department of Education and Research - IER): The Dean of the Department of Education and Research identified two mentoring coordinators; each responsible for 10 mentors and 20 mentees from within their subject area. One cohort of students (both mentors and mentees) was from postgraduate MA Secondary Education degree programme. The other cohort was from MA Educational Research & Assessment. The students from department of Education were the only postgraduate students involved in this research.

**Group B** (Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology - IBB): The director appointed a senior academic to select the mentors and mentees and oversee the whole project for the undergraduate BSc Hons. (4 yr degree programme). The senior academic selected two mentoring coordinators. One cohort of students was from BSc Biochemistry, 15 students were selected from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year to be mentors and were assigned 2 mentees each, some students were only assigned one mentee as the total number of 1<sup>st</sup> year students in that section (A) was 26. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> year cohort of BSc Biochemistry 13 students volunteered and mentored 19 first year students from Section B. The other cohort was from BSc Biotechnology, with 12 mentors and 20 mentees. For BSc Biochemistry each 1<sup>st</sup> year student requested a mentor and all the 45 first year students were assigned a mentor.

### **U2 (University 2)**

The Dean of Students at this private university selected 20 mentors from different Undergraduate courses (70% were from Business Studies and IT) who volunteered to participate in the project. The mentees selected by the Dean of Students and the

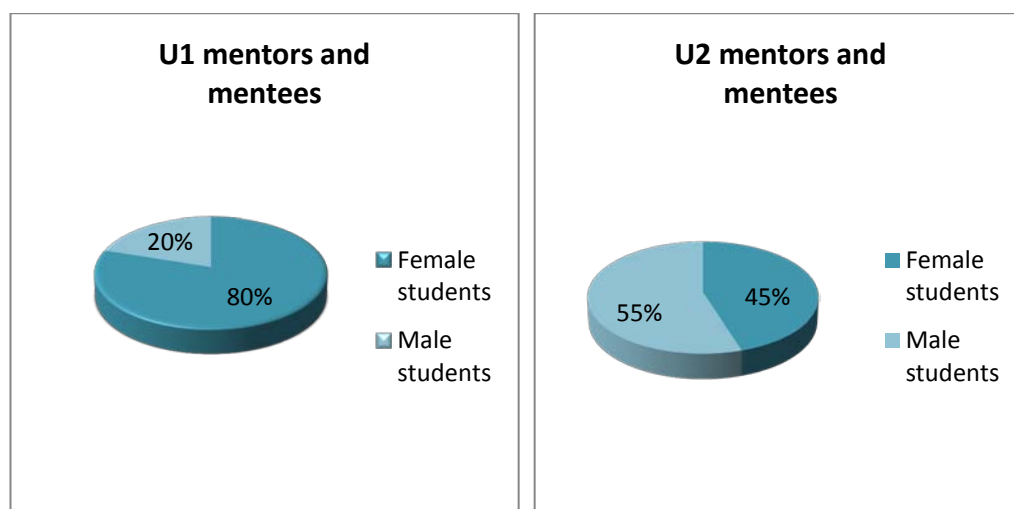
mentoring coordinator were first year students who were not local residents of Lahore as the Dean suggested that these students could benefit most from mentoring.

The researcher (Project Coordinator)	Local Coordinator	U1: University 1 (public)	Department	Degree Programme	Mentoring Coordinator	No. of Mentors	No. of Mentees (1 <sup>st</sup> year)
			Education & Research (Group A)	MA Sec. Education	1	10 (final year)	20
				MA Education Research & Assessment	1	10 (final year)	20
			Biochemistry & Biotechnology (Group B)	BSc Biochemistry	1	15 (2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	26 (section A)
						13 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	19 (section B)
	BSc Biotechnology	1	12 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	20			
U2: University 2 (private)	All departments	All subject disciplines (mainly from Business, Sciences & IT)	1	20	40		
<b>Total students:</b>						<b>80</b>	<b>145</b>

Table 6: Summary - the participants of the peer mentoring project

The total number of participants in the project was 240. This included 225 students, 5 mentoring co-ordinators, 3 heads of departments/deans, 5 interviewees, local coordinator and the project coordinator.

The ratio of male and female student participants is given in the graph below. The statistics on gender representation is discussed in Chapter VII, p. 182.



Graph 2: Participation of students in U1 and U2 – Gender representation

As outlined above, the following variables (discussed further in Chapter VII) were identified in the fieldwork sampling as factors that could impact on the results:

- i. Socio-economic background of the students;
- ii. gender;
- iii. subject area/ departments;
- iv. the level of study of participants;
- v. the researcher.

It proved impossible to obtain clear data on the socio-economic background of individual students, although in general, the premise that students at UI would be more likely to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds than those at U2 is correct for the overall intakes of the respective universities. It is countered to some extent by the fact that U2 chose to select mentees from outside the Lahore area, many of whom were scholarship students from the Northern provinces. Also, one of the departments at U1 was highly selective, and the students in that department tended to be from higher socio-economic backgrounds than the university average. For these reasons, the groups were not analysed according to this variable.

## **ii) Peer mentoring training workshops**

Training of mentors by the project coordinator (researcher) was completed in 4 days in total:

- 3 days at university 1 -
  - 2 half-day session of workshops for 2 consecutive days at the Department of Education & Research (IER) and
  - 1 full day workshop on a Saturday at the Department of Biochemistry & Biotechnology (IBB)
- 1 day at university 2 -
  - 1 full day workshop on a Saturday

The initial plan was to conduct each workshop for 2 half day sessions for 2 days at each university for students to contemplate and internalise the day's proceedings at the end of first day of workshop and return the following day with any questions they had for further discussions. However, this was not practically possible due to the worsening security situation in Lahore at that time due to a terrorism threat. All the educational institutions were closed by the government as a precautionary measure for nine days during my fieldwork visit. This made it impossible to conduct these workshops for two

half-day sessions with each group of students as planned. The only option was to conduct a full day workshop within the given time-frame. The students' level of commitment to this project was visible as they were in communication with me throughout this time and did not want to miss the workshop due to lack of communication during the university closure days. Once the training day was rescheduled, all students agreed that they could attend the workshop at the university on a Saturday. As the universities were closed, many students did not have access to computers at home and therefore could not access their email - which was usually the mode of communication between the researcher and the students. I informed the students about the day/time of workshops through text messages.

This was a challenging time, as, had the security situation not improved, the universities could have remained closed for months and this could have delayed the whole project for a year. The workshops were conducted as soon as the universities reopened. It was mandatory for the mentoring coordinators to attend the mentor training workshops and all the mentoring coordinators were present for the workshops of their respective group of students. The local coordinator assisted the researcher with all the training workshops and was responsible for distributing the training manuals, handbooks and logbooks. At the end of workshop, students were asked to complete the evaluation forms for their feedback on the workshop.

### **iii) Evaluation of the training workshops**

The feedback from the mentors and the mentoring coordinators was very positive and constructive at both the universities. The prospective mentors demonstrated enthusiasm and were looking forward to the meetings with their mentees. They claimed that the most useful aspect of the day was the information on boundaries in the mentor-mentee relationship. Detailed evaluation and analysis of workshop for mentors is discussed in the next chapters on research findings and discussions of the results.

I had meetings with the mentoring coordinators to discuss the logistics of mentor-mentee meetings (venue, day and time of meeting). Most of the mentors were assigned two mentees by their mentoring coordinators although a few students had one mentee. The mentees were all the cohort of junior/1<sup>st</sup> year students. I had a brief talk with the mentees to explain to them the concept of mentoring, as most of the students had come



across this term for the first time and distributed notes on guidelines to their roles as mentees. They were also encouraged to discuss any issues on the content of mentor-mentee meetings with their mentoring coordinator. Meetings (one ½ an hour meeting of mentor with each mentee per week) between the mentors and mentees began in November, two weeks later than planned (due to university closures). At the end of each month, the mentors were required to meet their mentoring coordinators to update them on their mentoring sessions and discuss any concerns.

I returned to London in November and left the mentoring coordinators to ensure that the mentoring contract was signed by both mentor and mentee. The local coordinator's responsibility was to collect the contracts from the mentoring coordinators and return them to me and this was successfully completed.

**November 2009 to February 2010:** The mentor-mentee meetings commenced for 10 weeks within this period. At the end of each month, I emailed the mentors for an update. In addition to their response on the mentoring process, some of them also emailed me to discuss minor issues they or the mentees were facing in the university. They were advised to contact the Dean of Studies at their institution. I was also in regular communication with the local coordinator and the mentoring coordinators who were monitoring the mentoring meetings, ensuring that the students, both mentors and mentees, were meeting for half an hour each week regularly.

**SECTION IV: Phase 3 - February/March 2010**

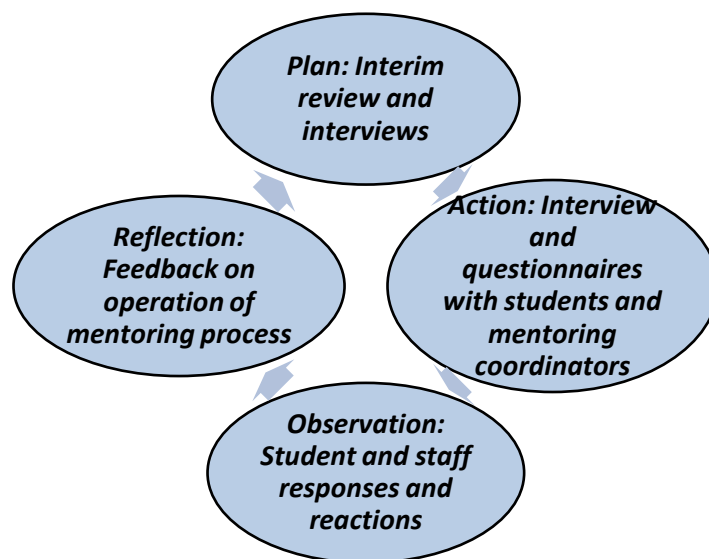


Figure 11d: Phase 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> research visit to Lahore

### **Interim Evaluation of the mentoring process**

For the third fieldwork visit at the midpoint of the mentoring process, I visited Lahore for three weeks to monitor the mentoring meetings and for an interim review of the mentoring process. I was joined by a fellow PhD student from my university in UK who was visiting Pakistan and was interested in observing the mentoring process in action. Her own PhD subject is in political studies on the development of the concept of the Commons in the context of direct action and local political activity. As our researches were not in the same field, no issues of shared research practices or results were raised. She observed some of the meetings with the mentoring coordinators, mentors and the mentees, but did not participate. Both the mentors and mentees were asked to complete an Interim Evaluation questionnaire together in their next mentor-mentee meeting and return these either to the mentoring coordinator or directly to me. The visiting PhD student assisted in handing out these questionnaires, but otherwise did not participate in data collection or analysis. As we were both aware of the need to remove any possible influence from another person's presence in meetings or during evaluation, she was not present at any session at which her presence, as an outsider and as a visitor from England, could have impacted on the ability of the participants to provide responses consistently to myself as the researcher. In this way, both ethical and methodological boundaries were established to circumvent any impact on the research findings. The interim review questionnaire was expected to be completed by all students participating in the project. The completion rate for these questionnaires was 100%. This was an unusually high response rate for research questionnaires, but was achieved by distributing the questionnaires to all mentors as part of the evaluation process, and stressing that it was a vital part of the project. In this way, the completion of the questionnaire was integrated into the regular mentoring sessions (Appendix 14a).

Focus groups of mentors at U1 and U2 as well as individual interviews with around 5 mentees from each group were also conducted to ensure validity and credibility of the data received. The data collected were valuable as this helped me to review and analyse the findings from pilot project and focus on the issues that emerged as a consequence of the implementation of peer mentoring. This is detailed and discussed in Chapter VI.

The students at U1 had an annual sports day at IBB and a certificate award ceremony was held prior to the event to recognize and appreciate the efforts and time of the

students who volunteered as mentors. The Certificate of Participation was awarded to the mentors by the Director of the Department. The local coordinator and the mentoring coordinator attended the ceremony. The mentors were asked to discuss the benefits of mentoring and its impact on their personal and academic life. Certificates of participation had already been distributed to the mentors at the Department of Education & Research at U1 and at U2 in October 2009 (see Appendix 17 for the photographs of the Certificate Ceremonies).

**SECTION V: Phase 4 - March/April 2011**

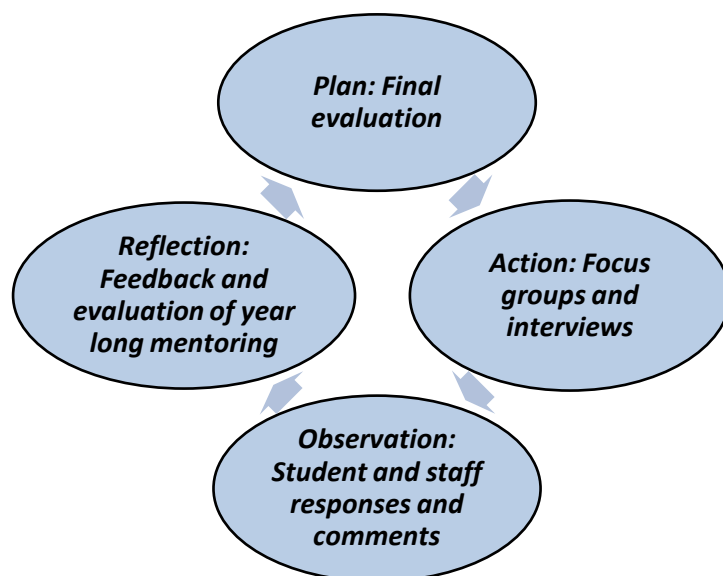


Figure 11e: Phase 4 – 4<sup>th</sup> research visit to Lahore

**Final evaluation and review**

My fourth visit to Pakistan was in April 2011 to conduct individual interviews with the mentors and the mentees. In U1 IER and U2 some students from the final year had graduated in July 2010 and informed me that either they were working or studying further. During semi-structured interviews they stated that their role as mentors had helped them in their careers, details discussed in Chapters VI and IX. 85 % of the mentors were either interviewed individually or through a focus group. 90% of the mentees gave their feedback on the project in a certificate award ceremony held at each department of both the universities where the project had commenced. The certificates of participation were awarded to all the participating students, mentors and mentees.

I also organised meetings with the heads of the universities to update them on the overall feedback on the project and the response of the students. The university heads had also independently requested and received feedback on the project from the participants. The comments that they received were given to me during our discussion. At both universities, the university heads reported that the feedback was fully supportive of the project and reported positive impact on the students and departments. In particular, one university head stated that, because of the success of the project, he wanted to introduce a scheme based on the materials used for all year one students in support of their existing Academic Advisor system.

The themes that emerged from these findings are provided in the same chronological format as the phases of the research. The award ceremonies were a celebratory event to recognise the efforts of the mentors. Informal feedback was given by the participants during and after the ceremonies (detailed in Chapter VI).

**SECTION VI: Phase 5 - April 2012**

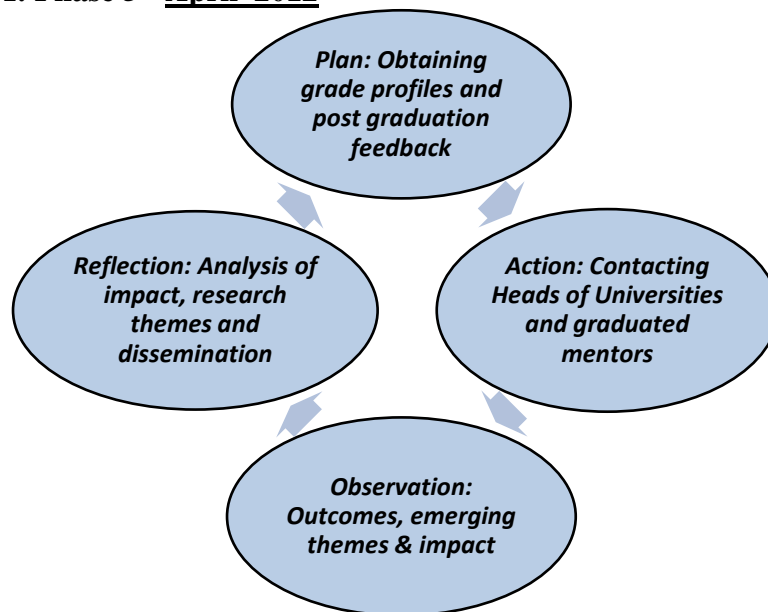


Figure 11f: Phase 5 - 5<sup>th</sup> research visit to Lahore

**Evaluation of the wider impact**

Further dissemination of the project was the main objective for this visit. It also provided an opportunity to gain access to the academic grades for the mentors who had graduated and at the same time, the grades for the mentees were requested from the universities. The students who had graduated and were employed in different careers

were also contacted during this visit for a post mentoring review of the graduates' perception of the impact of their mentoring role in the university on their career path. I had informal meetings with students who had graduated and were either doing further studies or in employment. The findings are discussed in Chapter VI.

## **SECTION VII: Problems and challenges encountered during the research fieldwork**

As stated earlier this action research project was full of challenges as the research fieldwork was in a developing country with multidimensional political and social issues. These issues were particularly challenging as the project was not part of larger research or team. I was working as an individual researcher with no logistical or administrative support for the arrangements and organisation in Lahore. Without support from a research grant, the fieldwork was also very expensive, although a small travel grant was provided by my university for two of the visits to Lahore. I took the opportunity to establish preliminary contacts with the universities on my personal visit for the Easter holiday as the universities in Pakistan do not close at Easter. Time constraints were huge as the duration of each research visit was less than four weeks and it was essential for the Lahore-based fieldwork to be completed during this time.

Initial contact with universities in Lahore was at a time when the security situation in Pakistan was at high alert and it was a challenge to book appointments to meet the heads of institutions. There was, at times, at least an hour long wait in a queue while elaborate security checks at the gate took place before visitors were allowed into the university premises. Similar situations arose during my subsequent visits.

Gaining the trust of the institution heads was a challenge as the university authorities were not keen initially and they were wary of the consequences of such a project. They voiced their concerns about this project leading to uncovering or intervening and finding/highlighting flaws in their universities' current practices of student support. As I was an outsider with no prospects of funding, the university heads had to be convinced that this project was designed to supplement the existing student support services and not criticise or find faults in the existing teaching and learning procedures. Furthermore, they did not expect to have funds available for students and wanted to ensure that no extra funding or any financial obligation was required of them for this project.

However, as shown in Chapter II, pressure from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan towards modernising the pedagogy of universities was helpful in that the value of peer support for learning could be argued on the basis of the success of such schemes in universities in the UK and USA.

The academic staff were not initially very helpful and even the mentoring coordinators, who were identified and selected by their respective university heads, did not seem motivated at first as this was a new concept for them. It also appeared as an extra work responsibility in addition to their existing and challenging workloads. They agreed to oversee the project but did not want to commit to any extra work involved. For this reason, the need to recruit a local coordinator had to be considered. The appointment of the local coordinator helped address major practical and logistical issues in completing the preliminary work required before the start of the project.

One of the greatest concerns for me as the researcher was that the students themselves would not show any interest in supporting the project. As the whole process required willing student volunteers to act as mentors, and willing junior students to become mentees, the project would not have been viable if the students had not responded well. From previous experience in the UK, I was aware that motivating students to participate in extra-curricular activities could be exceptionally difficult. Even after I had gained the support of the senior staff at the universities, it still remained a major challenge to meet and convince the students that their involvement would be of value to them and helpful and supportive to myself as a fellow (research) student.

The initial contact during the first meetings with the students was crucial in setting the foundations for future cooperation. Not only was it necessary to gain their agreement to participate, but it was also crucial to establish full confidence in myself as the project leader and to ensure that they would not only begin cooperation, but maintain that through the extended period of one year during which they needed to be involved. The initial meetings, therefore, became a central focus in terms of preparation and planning. It was necessary to present the project in clear terms, to demonstrate both clarity and enthusiasm on my part, to reassure the students that I would provide support for them and be able to guide and advise them to overcome their concerns. It is likely that my experience as a teacher was of some benefit in this situation, but also the ability that I had, as someone familiar with their cultural and educational contexts, to relate very

directly to their expectations from such a project. From this first contact with the students, it became clear that the majority were not only willing, but positively enthusiastic about taking part in the project. This is shown in the findings in Chapter VI.

In October 2009 when I had scheduled training workshops for the peer mentors, the universities were closed unexpectedly for nine days due to suicide bomb attacks and the ongoing terrorism threat in the city. With the worsening security situation, there was no definite time for the re-opening of the universities. At times, it seemed highly uncertain and extremely stressful whether this project would go ahead or if I would be able to do any training during my visit to Lahore which was only scheduled for two more weeks. Any training of mentors and meetings with coordinators had to be done in that time. I had to reschedule the training workshop but was in constant communication with the students and waited till universities re-opened to reschedule the training for peer mentors. When the universities re-opened I had to complete the workshop in one day, on a Saturday, instead of the scheduled 2 half-day workshops. All of the participants, including academic staff, attended and I was able to complete all parts of the training. This was a highly stressful period for me, as, in addition to the anxiety about the daily threats of terrorist actions in the city, I found myself needing to reassure and support the students who were strongly committed to the project and were concerned that it might not continue.

The mentoring coordinator of one of the universities only gave permission to begin the project provided that I could visit them again in February 2010 to evaluate and monitor the mentoring procedure. Initially I had informed the peer mentors and mentoring coordinators that the local coordinator would monitor and help me with the interim evaluation but as one of the mentoring coordinators insisted that they needed my confirmation to visit the university again before I could start the project, I consulted my research supervisors and was advised to return in February for an interim evaluation.

Communicating directly with peer mentors and the mentoring coordinators was always a challenge as email communication was the only mode when I was in London and most of the students only had access to internet and emails when they were in the university. On my fourth visit for the research fieldwork - final evaluation, in April 2011, students from one cohort (PG) had graduated and were already working so it was very difficult to arrange a meeting for final evaluation or specifically to arrange focus groups to

evaluate the project at the end of the year. The only way to achieve this evaluation was through individual interviews instead of conducting a focus group as was intended.

My fourth research fieldwork visit was to collect the data of student grades for the mentors, mentees and the control group of students from a previous cohort who had not taken part in mentoring. Despite requesting the universities to allow access to student results to compare the effectiveness of peer mentoring and the impact of mentoring on students' grades, it was difficult to get this very important information from the universities. There was no formal reason for this problem, and I had been assured by department heads that the data would be made available to me. However, possibly because of administrative delays, only partial data was provided. Some of the students, both mentors and mentees who were involved in this project gave their own GPA information but I could not gain access to this through the universities. I had to arrange for an additional visit to Lahore to access some of the required information with official letters from my home university requesting permission to access information on grades.

This final research visit was useful as I was able to get the results from only one of the participating departments at U1 (IBB), the results are provided at the end of Chapter VI. I was also able to contact a small number of mentors who had graduated and was therefore able to collect data on some aspects of the long term impact of mentoring. This was especially with reference to enhanced skills desirable for employers. Almost 70% of the mentored students who had graduated had already secured a job and this provided a valuable insight into the potential impact of mentoring on employability in Pakistan. Although there were no comparable official figures available from the previous cohort of students (who had not been mentored), anecdotal evidence given by the students suggested that this figure was higher than usual, and graduates in employment emphasised the value of the experience and the certificates in interviews for jobs and graduate study.



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an account of the findings from the different stages of primary data gathered from the fieldwork, in accordance with the phases of the implementation of the research design. In the next chapter, the data from these findings is analysed on the basis of identified content and themes. Given the complexity of the project, the collection of data had two main purposes. In the early phases, data gathered from secondary sources and from the evaluation of the documentation and training were primarily intended to ensure that the mentoring scheme was designed and implemented effectively. Once mentoring had commenced, the objectives of data collection were, firstly, to evaluate and adjust the mentoring process in order to remedy issues that emerged in the early stage of the project and, secondly, to investigate the objectives of the research.

Although, for the purpose of processing and analysing the data, different computer software packages like NVIVO were considered but due to the size of the sample, complexity of the fieldwork and the sources of data collection, all the data collected was manually transcribed, processed and analysed. Although the language of instruction in all universities in Pakistan is English, this was not the first language of the participants in the project. The data was gathered in English and standardisation of responses to key themes was problematic. Some degree of interpretation by the researcher was required, both linguistically and in non-verbal communication.

The stages of data collection followed the timeline (see Appendix 20), and the phases of the research design given in Chapter V, and are listed below:

#### Data collected in UK and Pakistan

- Interview in London with a senior academic in a UK university with experience of mentoring (Interviewee A).
- Interviews in London and in Pakistan with two former students (Interviewee B and C) with experience of education in the UK/Middle East and in Pakistan.

## Data collected in Pakistan

- Interviews with a senior teaching faculty/director of a School in U1 (Interviewee D) and Principal (Interviewee E) of a Private Women’s College.
- Questionnaires administered to the students in U1 and U2 (Appendix 1).
- Teaching Staff questionnaires completed by a sample of academic staff of U1 and U2 (Appendix 2).
- Student profile form for peer mentors to facilitate matching with mentees (Appendix 12).
- Feedback/evaluation form completed by the participants of the Training workshop for Peer Mentors in U1 and U2 (Appendix 6).
- Interim review form completed by the mentors and mentees from U1 and U2 (Appendix 14a and b).
- Three focus groups of the students at U1 and U2, as part of the interim review (Appendix 14c).
- Individual interviews with students at U1 and U2 at the end of the mentoring process.
- Informal interviews with the mentoring coordinators at the final evaluation stage for their feedback on the mentoring programme.
- The results and grades of students from one department of U1.
- Informal feedback from mentors two years after completion of mentoring.

## **SECTION I: Preparation and initiation of the project**

### **i) Preliminary interviews**

The list of academic/administrative faculty interviewed is tabulated below:

No.	Interviewee	University	Position/ Job Title of the Interviewee in HEI
1	A	Home university in the UK	Senior Academic and former Director of Recruitment
2	B	Home university and a Pakistani university	Former student from Pakistani University and a UK university working in International Office at home university
3	C	Pakistan’s university and a university in the Middle East	Former student from Pakistani HE and a Middle East University
4	D	Pakistan’s university U1	Director of the School of Biological Sciences(Doctoral Research) & Director of Studies for PhD students
5	E	Private College for Women in Lahore offering UG and PG degree programmes	Principal

Table 7a: List of faculty interviewed

### **a. In London and Lahore**

The interview questions are provided in Appendix 2c. The first interview was conducted at my university in the UK in early 2009 with a senior academic (Interviewee A) and HE expert, with over 40 years of HE experience, including responsibility for widening participation and the introduction of mentoring and other student support schemes in the university.

The responses to the first question, on factors that could interfere with a student's ability to progress, were:

1. Financial insecurity which can cause unnecessary worry for the student and may make the student to take employment and restrict the amount of time the student can spend studying.
2. Students may not understand the process of studying at university, and do not easily make the transition to HE. They may need help and support in moving to independent study mode rather than studying in a very teacher-focused way.
3. Relationship issues with friends, with family or with partners. These can create temporary or longer term problems for the student and they may then withdraw from study altogether.
4. Lack of motivation; students may not quite know how their studies would benefit them or be useful for their future. They have drifted into study, for example, under family pressure, but do not know quite why they are studying.

In response to the question on who do the students approach to get support in balancing their studies with the other factors in their lives, the following points emerged:

1. Family members may provide advice and support, particularly for younger students.
2. Friends or fellow students, especially when family relationships are absent or not supportive – these may be formal (as in mentoring schemes) or informal.
3. If class sizes are small, and relationships are relatively informal, tutors may be able to provide support, although this is unlikely for younger or junior students.

In response to the question on support for students at the interviewee's university, the following points were made:

The university has a student support service, which involves student advisors, student counsellors and a number of other people in the student offices who can provide support for student. The idea is that once an issue is identified for a student or the student self-identifies a

problem, they will either refer themselves or they can be referred to an appropriate service and the identification may take the form of an academic tutor, seeing that the student is struggling and decides then that some extra support needs to be given to that student. If in conversation with that student they decide that the problem is more of an academic one, they may provide support to the student - give advice themselves. If it is to do with the programme, the nature of the programme, they may refer the student to programme advisors. If they identify an emotional problem or health problem, they may then refer them to the counselling service. If they see a serious academic problem the student may be sent to the learning resource centre which provides very specific support or help on the use of English, essay writing and other study skills. However, students who most need support and guidance tend to be the ones who are most reluctant to seek help. Self-referral does not help such students. Some universities have a highly developed personal tutor system where a tutor will have general responsibility for a group of around 20 students. The tutor may then act as a mentor to those students throughout their career. (Interviewee A)

On peer support, interviewee A emphasised on the need for cultural change in the learning context:

.. student peers can help one another but there has to be a culture of student support. Two things inhibit that: 1. an over competitive nature that some students have. They are inclined not to help one another, because they see themselves in competition with the other students in this. 2. Students don't feel competent to help other students. They are so concerned with their own problems that they don't really see that they can help other students. Students usually offer help and guidance to other students but whether that is always appropriate, is a different matter. Therefore some training for peer support is important. (Interviewee A)

The interviewee supported the idea that senior students could mentor junior students, pointing out that students who have been through that experience can provide an enormous amount of support. Seniority could be measured in class progression so a senior student could be a year or two ahead of the student being mentored. Occasionally, support could be given by more mature students but within the same age or year group which could be effective. On the benefits for the participants in a mentoring scheme, the comment was:

For mentees, one would hope that is fairly obvious what they gain from it – they get trained help and support at a level which they can understand, and without the stigma of seeking help. For mentors, in

the process of supporting and helping other students, they learn a number of skills that would be benefit to them in their future careers. They will acquire training skills, listening skills; learning how to deal with problems, gain confidence and maturity by going through the training to learn about boundaries in relationships. (Interviewee A)

The final question was about the benefits that universities could gain from such initiatives:

... primary reason could be to help students get the best out of their studies. This should manifest itself in improved results for the first year students who have been mentored but also for the mentors as the self-knowledge they gain could impact on their ability to reflect on their studies and therefore improve their own studies. The university achieves better results, more satisfied students and better retention. (Interviewee A)

The same interview questions were asked to the two students Interviewee B and C in one to one interviews in early 2009 before the implementation of the project as this helped develop the project in the light of the students' views. Both the students had experience of studying in Pakistan and another university outside Pakistan. The first student who had studied at a UK university (Interviewee B) for his second degree had very similar responses to the questions as Interviewee A but for question 1, he identified financial constraint and accommodation as two of the biggest worries of International students or students who study away from their home town. Another problem identified was the communication in English language as English was not the first language; both spoken and written English proficiency was required; lack of communication skills in English could seriously impact on students' assessment and grades as all teaching and assessment is done in English.

Both interviewees B and C had the view that students discuss their problems with fellow students and more at ease with seeking advice from them especially in Pakistani HE. They suggested that due to the hierarchical system of teaching still prevailing in most HEIs, faculty are not easily accessible and students hesitate to discuss their personal worries which may have a direct and/or an indirect impact on their learning. The two interviewees responded to question on peer support as 'very important' and 'may produce better results if peers understand their role through formal training'. On the question of training senior students; both the interviewees were of the view that this

would help senior students with specific guidelines as to the extent of help and support they may be required to provide to new students.

Within Pakistan's HE context, both students suggested the importance to have senior students help juniors as the availability of support services in the universities was insignificant, and where available, less efficiency and lack of ability to offer guidance compared to the student support services offered in universities in developed countries. Interviewee B commented:

In countries such as the USA where student services are highly developed, students are sometimes helped with information on part-time jobs, or getting student loans/other financial support. It is my experience that student peers in Pakistan have played a vital though informal role in providing new students with the 'real inside story' of the university teaching and learning culture. This also occurs through informal contact with friends and relatives who have graduated, as they have been through the 'experience'. In UK universities, there is increasingly the idea of treating the student as a customer and customer satisfaction is always considered. In Pakistan, as the students in state universities do not pay high fees, there is no concept of 'customer service', although this is more so in private universities where the tuition fees are very high. In Pakistan although there may be a minimal support system but no one follows it, as compared to other developed countries where a specific system is followed. In Pakistani universities, all forms of help from senior students are informal.

Interviewee C also suggested the possible value, in response to question 3, of 'Pre-university courses for the introduction of the university to the new students, especially for those students who do not live local'.

One response to the question on benefits of peer support for the university was that increased student satisfaction could be achieved as it would be unique for new students to receive help from senior students. It could yield word of mouth marketing, without extra costs on marketing, as the universities are in a highly competitive education sector and the 'positive student experience raises the profile of the university' (*ibid*).

#### **b. In Lahore**

The Director of the School of Biological Sciences (Interviewee D) at U1 with 35 years of experience of HE in Pakistan, USA and the UK commented on the university environment as the key factor that provides stimulus for learning to the students.

Components of the environment are the general discipline, faculty, support system, facilities, curricular and co-curricular activities and traditions of the institution to help students acquire skills to contribute improve the community once they complete their studies and enter into different careers. Parents can provide support if they have been to the university in addition to teachers and peers. Students from Pakistan who study in UK and US universities are privileged and they make a positive contribution to the society and on their institutions when they return, as the support services, both academic and non-academic in the universities in developed countries help the students to realise and attain their potential. They bring back an element of modern and enhanced teaching/learning strategies with them and are not afraid to explore new methods of teaching. In these universities there is a tradition of helping each other with the learning, especially the help senior students can provide to juniors.

Interviewee D expressed concern about the usefulness of formal training of the senior students to help juniors in Pakistani HE, as senior students should not be burdened with an extra responsibility especially at a time when they were at the final year of their study which might have a negative impact on their own learning. He was of the view that peer support should not be too formal. The role of senior students to a limited extent can be useful to the institution. The ability of the mentors in this helping role defines and may contribute to the success of peer support and the attitude of the students been helped determines how useful this support can be in the university as well as the level and time at which this support is provided.

Interviewee E was the Principal of an elite private women's college in Lahore which offered intermediate, undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses and one of the oldest education institution for women developed by Christian missionaries in 1913 with a student enrolment of 3300 women students at present (KC, 2011). This educational institution was not selected by me for the project fieldwork although it was one of the institutions considered. Due to time constraints and limited resources it was not possible to work with 3 universities although the Principal was willing for peer mentoring to be introduced at the college. She also identified faculty she thought could be involved. The view of Interviewee E was very important as the education of women is of particular significance in Pakistan (Chapter II, p. 24). In response to question 1, Interviewee E emphasised on the quality of education the students receive prior to

joining the university which has a very strong impact on the students' experience of university education. How well the student is prepared at college impacts directly on their readiness for the learning requirements at the university. Family background was another important factor impacting on students' learning. Most of the time this determined the career paths the students may select or the path may already be selected by their parents. For example, if their parents or elder siblings are in medical profession the student would usually be predisposed to join the same career as there would usually be a lot of help, advice and guidance provided at home. Sometimes the students go to the same institutions as their parents, relatives and siblings so that they already have the knowledge of the academic culture of the institution, although this may not take into account the changes in the institution in intervening years. The curriculum and the quality of courses being taught at the university and the learning support materials used by faculty was another significant factor. Other support services like a digital library and access to information technology services were identified as the basis of the academic culture required for the students' learning. If these facilities were substandard this could impact students' learning. 'The students draw most support from their peers' was the interviewee's response to question 4 and 'this occurs most naturally in almost all education institutions'.

The Principal pointed out some of the logistic and practical aspects of senior students helping juniors in a more structured manner:

This has lots of problems as there maybe timetable clashes when juniors are free, the seniors maybe having their classes as the contact hours of the students for lectures and seminars is very high especially in comparison with UK universities. But this can take place in clubs and societies for students within the institution. For example, in the debating society senior students work very closely to help prepare junior students for various debating competitions and help them to improve their communication skills and to be more articulate. In the normal course of the day I think this will not be possible. (Interviewee E)

She also pointed out that 'parents provide their children with all the comforts but are too busy in their careers and /or social life to give time to their children. When they get their child admitted to an expensive private educational institution they assume that it will take care of the academic and psychological needs of the student, the damage is usually done at the primary and secondary education level and we see the repercussions at the tertiary level' (*ibid*).



Interviewee E also believed that even though the students are helpful to other students but they can be more helpful if a structured support system is created within the university. It was suggested that if some incentive/goal is given the students, work with a sense of greater responsibility:

The senior students are helpful only if they are willing and responsible. They tend to be more helpful if a tutor assigns them a task to help another peer, with the assignment or in just carrying out another task. (Interviewee E)

The Table 7b below summarises the interviewees' responses to Q 3a and b:

Student Support Service in HEIs	Interviewee A	Interviewee B		Interviewee C		Interviewee D	Interviewee E
	(UK)	(UK)	(Pakistan)	(Pakistan)	(Middle East)	(Pakistan)	(Pakistan)
Personal tutor	m				s		
Library support	e	e	m	m	s	s	m
Student welfare/financial advice	e	e					m
Academic Learning and development	e	e			s		s
Special needs/disability advice	e	e					
Student counselling service	s	s			s		m
Health and Well being advice	s	s			s		
Bullying and Harassment	s	s					

**Key:** m - minimal support service  
s - sufficient support service  
e - extensive support service

Table 7b: Interviewee response to Q3 a & b

The responses of the interviewees to question 3a about the student support services provided by universities in Pakistan indicated that in their experience, student support services of the kind found in the UK and USA were not provided, or provided at only a minimal level. In further investigation at U1 and U2, I was unable to find any university service in U1. In U2, a form of Academic Advisor service was provided, with 20 students allocated to certain junior academic staff, but the responsibilities of these advisors was very limited, and the responses of interviewees B and C indicated that even where such schemes existed, access to the advisors was difficult.

As shown in the table above, minimal student support services at HEIs in Pakistan were identified by the interviewees.

The responses of the five interviewees to Q 4 were very similar; that there is no specific system in universities where senior students can help new/junior students. One of the interviewees said she needed to know more about peer mentoring before she could comment on its effectiveness in Pakistani universities.

In response to Q 5, the answers from the interviewees indicated that the key skills required for being peer mentors were: ‘being responsible, a good listener’, ‘someone who is sensitive to other students’ feelings’, ‘optimism’, ‘should not gossip around’, ‘should be good at studies’.

Whilst aiming to interview as wider a range of participants as possible of the two educational institutions U1 and U2 as well as other institutions providing degree level qualifications in Pakistan, limitation of time, resources and the security situation meant that the only interview away from U1 and U2 was the interview with interviewee E.

## **ii) Preliminary questionnaires in Lahore**

Questionnaires were used with staff and students from the three participating departments to help develop an understanding of the issues facing students in the universities, and then to evaluate the training. The discussion of results given below does not separate the groups of respondents by department, but where results appear to be significantly different for a particular department from the responses from the other groups, this is commented on.

### **a. Student questionnaire**

As discussed in Chapter IV, the preliminary questionnaires for students were designed to find out the views of Pakistani HE students on the problems they thought the students encountered in university and the support services provided at the university. The other important use of this questionnaire was to see how students perceived peer support would help and most important to quantify the number of students who were willing to volunteer to participate in the project.

The student questionnaire (Appendix 1a and b) were distributed to 150 undergraduate year 2 and year 3 students in university 1 and 2. Questionnaires were also distributed among 30 postgraduate students in university 2. A total of 140 questionnaires were completed and returned. The completion rate was 77%. A copy of a completed questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1b.

The first question with 7 statements A to G required the 1-5 point scale answer, with 1 on the Likert or summative scale rated 'strongly disagree' and 5 being 'strongly agree'. Two thirds of the students encircled the choice neither agree nor disagree (3<sup>rd</sup> choice) for statement A and statement C. Some questionnaires leave out this option for respondents so as to force them to make a decision, there is never the midpoint and it would probably have been best to leave it out for better reflection. Around 90% of the completed questionnaires had choice 4 encircled for statement B which was related to 'benefit from more support in learning'. For statement D and E 25 % students encircled the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice (Disagree). For questions F and G which referred to helping juniors and receiving help from seniors as beneficial to the student the most popular answer was Agree 85% (4<sup>th</sup> choice).

Question II in the student questionnaire was designed to get an insight into students' perception on how helpful they thought senior students could be to them, the questionnaire had space where they could write up to three issues they could discuss with their seniors. Most of the students gave a variety of answers but the most common response (80%) was 'to help by suggesting about course selection.' The second and third most popular responses were 'listening to my problems' (55%) and 'guidance about study support services at the university' (49%). Another frequent response was 'being supportive and friendly' and 'to discuss the teacher's teaching style'.

Question III required the students to suggest how they could help their juniors in the university. Around 75% students answered ‘with my own experience as a university student’, ‘how to adjust in the university’, ‘help them build confidence’ and ‘to help them understand university’s values, discipline and code of conduct’. Other more frequent replies were ‘helping new students to understand the credit/course and assessment procedures’ and ‘provide support and help with know- how of studies’ and to ‘tell the new students about the clubs and societies they can join’.

Question IV was a close-ended question with either a yes or a no for answer and did not require any explanation. If the students ticked yes they were directed to respond to the next part of questionnaire where they could give their email address to the mentoring coordinator or the project coordinator. In response to Q IV 90% students ticked yes, they would like to volunteer as peer mentors. Around 10% students among the ones who ticked yes specified that they would like to know more about the project before they can volunteer.

The final question V in the survey was an open - ended question which allowed the opportunity for any other comment that the student would like to make. This was the only part of the questionnaire where the students could add comment and give their opinion or any suggestion in detail. The answers to this question were wide ranging from about 80 % students in the Institute of Education and Research at U1 leaving it blank to around 92% students from U2 providing a comment or suggestion. A few examples of comments received in response to the final question from U2 were:

Seems like a new interesting idea; I hope I am selected; could be useful to me; I would love to work with my juniors and tell them about my experience of studying at my university; I have been wanting to do something like this for a long time; these kinds of opportunities should be open to the students; it’s a good step as it will provide a platform because we faced a lot more difficulty in our freshmen year and would not want our freshers to suffer same problems; I think I will gain from helping my juniors as I will learn from them.

A common comment from a student of IER at U1 was:

It is much appreciated; I would like to work as a volunteer, so this project is very good and helpful; admirable project as I hope it proves

to be helpful for students so that they help other students; I think this is very important for new students.

A comment from a student at IBB from U1 in response to this question was:

I hope this project will help students in having an open-minded approach to learning and broadening their views about research projects; I think it will be a great project as we have no such thing at our university as I was not properly guided when I joined the university and it affected my studies; fresh idea and looking forward to knowing more about my role.

The responses to this final question were: ‘encouraging and enlightening’ and ‘I would like to participate and know more’.

The responses from the students indicate that the central principle of the project was well understood, to work with and support junior students. It is also obvious that the students recognised the need for such an activity, from their own experiences as junior students as well as in observing the experiences of others. That there was no such activity known to students is also telling, and the comments confirmed the positive response to the previous Question IV that students were very willing to undertake the role of mentor and to commit to the terms of the project.

#### **b. Staff questionnaire**

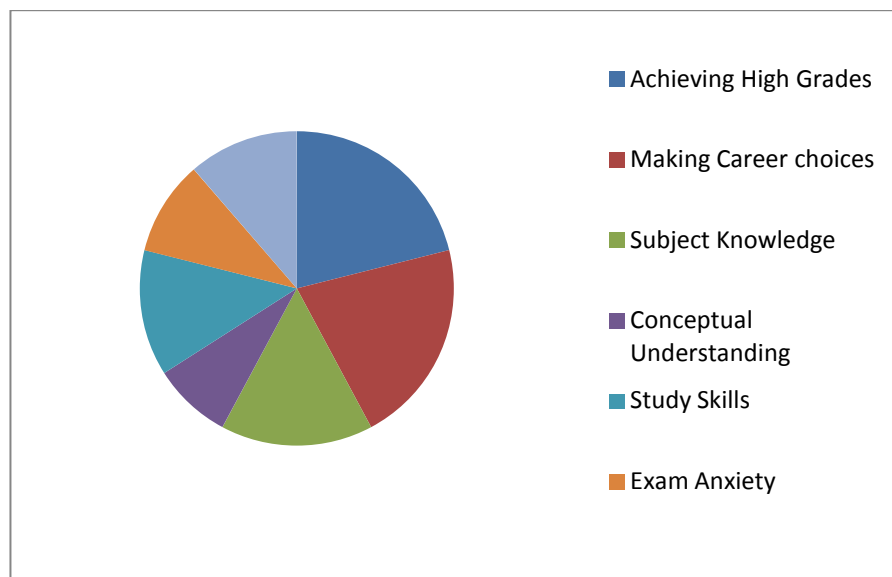
For the purpose of knowing the perspective of academic staff on peer assisted learning and peer support, a survey was conducted in universities 1 and 2 through questionnaires (see Appendix 2). Of the 80 questionnaires distributed, 55 faculty members completed and returned the questionnaires with nearly 40 questionnaires completed by U1 faculty, an overall completion rate of 69%.

Question I in the questionnaire was designed with two columns; the right column listed 7 academic-related issues and the left column listed 7 social/psychological issues or barriers that may impact on learning and student achievement in Pakistani Higher Education. The response of the university faculty to Q1 (see Appendix 2a and b) is tabulated and represented graphically on the following page. Of the academic staff that completed the survey, 39 of them ticked the option ‘making career choices’ and ‘achieving high grades’ had an impact on university students’ achievement in Q1.

The second highest response was Finance. Here, a marked difference was noted between the responses of staff in the private university U2 and those of the public university U1 as staff in U2 were more likely to see financial problems as an issue. As private universities charge high tuition fees compared to state universities it is not surprising that this is seen as a significant issue for students in that university.

<b>Academic - related Issues</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Achieving High Grades	39
Making Career Choices	39
Subject Knowledge	29
Conceptual Understanding	15
Study Skills	24
Exam Anxiety	18
Finance	31

Table 8: The academic faculty view of academic-related issues of greatest concern to students in Pakistan’s universities



Graph 3: The academic-related concerns of university students

The table below gives information on the social or psychological issues that the academic faculty identified of key concern to their university’s students and may have direct or indirect impact on their learning. Around 65% of the responses indicated that the political situation in Pakistan was seen as the non-academic issue that was of

greatest concern to students. Gender relationships were another important concern that was identified by the academics, especially in the transition to university as most students in Pakistan do not study in co-educational schools. Most of the schools and colleges in Pakistan are gender segregated (Iqbal, 2011) and some female students entering university may not feel comfortable in the class. One problem is that the female students lack confidence to speak up in class, and this reflects the male dominance in the more traditional parts of Pakistani society, where women are not supposed to be seen or heard in public. This is especially prevalent in some more rural parts of the country, including students who are from north-west of Pakistan where, as shown in Chapter II, the literacy rate for women, and the participation of girls in primary education are still exceptionally low.

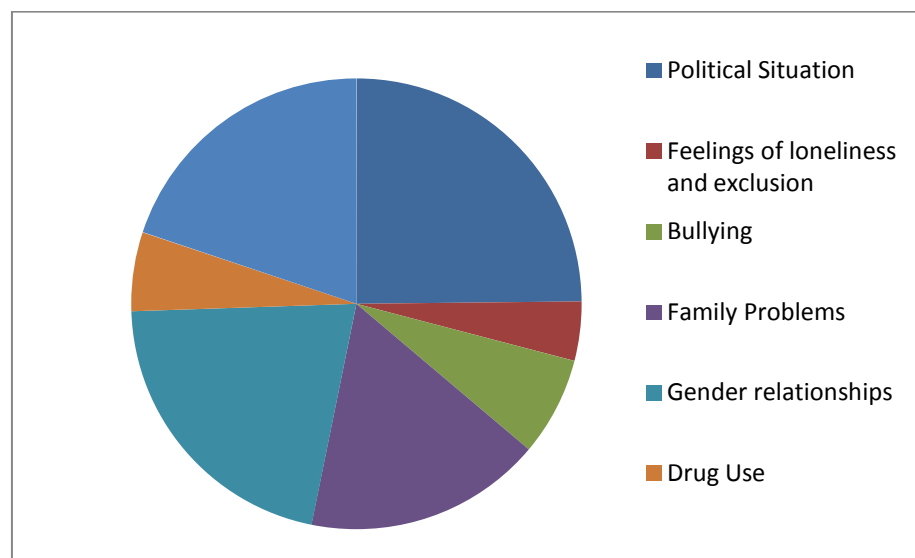
Friendships and family problems were the third and fourth most common answers. Pakistani communities generally have a very close-knit and extended family. Extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins all live under the same roof. Even if it is a middle class family, each parent and child group may be assigned only one or two rooms. There may not be atmosphere of studying in the home and male students sometimes have to take up part-time jobs to support their families. It is also interesting that the third most selected issue was that of friendship. Friendships might be expected to have a supportive role for students, but academics saw them as a concern. Assuming that their responses were to some extent informed by experience, this suggests that students in Pakistan do experience friendships as in some way intrusive in the learning situation.

Although bullying was not considered a significant problem in Pakistani HE by respondents, the findings below indicate that this problem is seen to exist. This can have a deep impact on the students' learning, and is especially a problem for students who are from other cities or provinces who may be bullied by local students with impact on their confidence and self-esteem. Peer pressure is quite significant at even the HE level in educational institutions in Pakistan. In most instances this is viewed as positive in helping students attain the best of their university experiences and makes them more competitive, at the same time this has shown to have a negative impact on students' performance.

The psychological/ non-academic issues are tabulated and presented in the graph below:

<b>Psychological/other Issues</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Political Situation	35
Feelings of loneliness and exclusion	6
Bullying	10
Family Problems	24
Gender relationships	30
Drug Use	8
Friendships	28

Table 9: The academic faculty view on psychological/other issues of greatest concern to students in Pakistan’s universities



Graph 4: The psychological/other non-academic concerns of university students

There was one significant response to the open text question, Q II and this identified ‘student- academic relationships in learning and teaching’ (Astin, 1984) as an important concern. It is one of the basic tenets of mentoring projects in higher education that academic staff may not always be the best intermediaries between the subject and the student, and that, sometimes, the presence and support of a peer learner can be the most effective way to advance learning. This comment from a lone academic voice in the sample shows the beginning of a realisation that there is something amiss in the learning



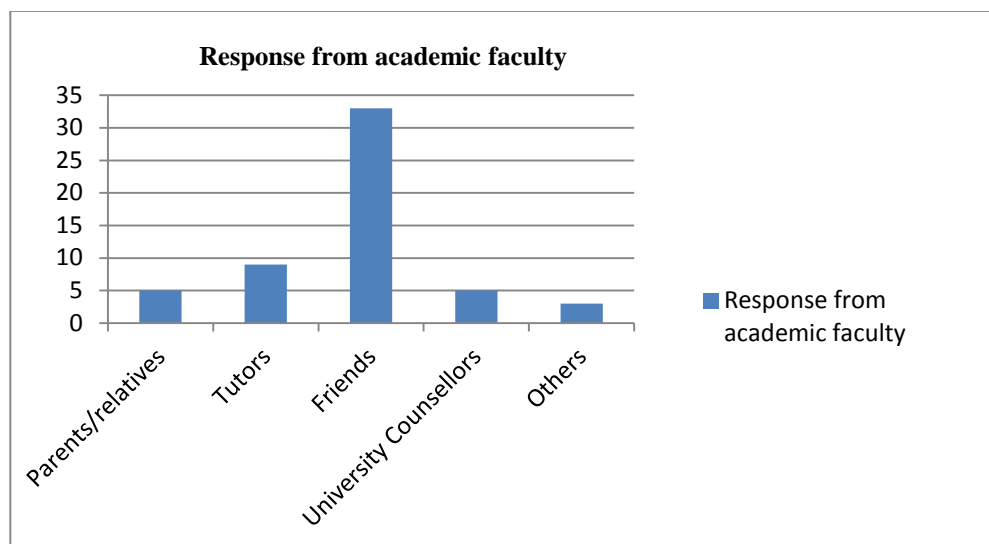
culture, and that this has to do with the nature of the relationship between teacher and learner.

The responses to question 3 reinforced the issues identified in question 1, by again indicating that the three main issues considered by academics that need to be addressed more urgently are political situation, achieving grades and relationships (see Chapter II, p. 23).

The academics' responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> question indicated that, according to them, and based on their experience of HE students in Pakistan, students do not discuss their personal problems with academic staff. As shown in Table 10, the survey gives a clear indication that academics recognise that students are more likely to discuss their personal problems with peers. According to the academic staff, very few students were thought to discuss their problems with a university counsellor.

People	Parents/relatives	Tutors	Friends	University Counsellors	Other
No. of responses	5	9	33	5	3

Table 10: Staff views on the people with whom students discuss their problems



Graph 5: Staff views on the people with whom students discuss their problems

80% of academics selected 'yes' in response to questions 5, 6 and 7 (Section III).

Question VIII provided a range of different responses to what the academics thought the

senior students could help junior students with. The responses given below are in the order of frequency of response:

<b>Concerns</b>	<b>Response (%)</b>
making career choice	40
study skills	32
gender relationships	12
conceptual understanding	9
exam anxiety	6

Table 11: Issues with which senior students could provide help to junior students

For the final question, of the 55 questionnaires 48 academics ticked yes with a majority adding that they required more information but suggested peer support could work. 3 responses were maybe and 4 left the question blank.

## **SECTION II: Training of the participants**

The training workshops for mentors were held in each of the university departments participating in the project, two workshops in U1 (one in each department) and one in U2 (details in Chapter V, p. 117-120).

### **Evaluation of workshops for peer mentors**

The students/trainee mentors in each group were given the evaluation form (Appendix 6) at the end of the training workshop to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop and to measure their understanding of their role. As all the participants completed and returned the form the response rate was 100 % of the 70 participants (including 5 mentoring coordinators) that attended the workshops. Although in most research of this kind, 100% response rate is very unusual, it was achieved in this case because the evaluation formed part of the training workshop and was therefore completed by all participants. A further 13 students did volunteer for mentoring and were accepted, but as the training they received was delivered by the mentoring coordinator, they were not asked to complete the training workshop evaluation form. Thus these results relate only to responses from attendees of the workshops.

Question 1 asked about prior understanding of mentoring. The majority of responses (approximately 75 %) either indicated no, or very little, knowledge of mentoring, or in some cases, showed misunderstanding of the question.

Of the more direct responses, two respondents simply replied ‘nothing’. Another responded with the comment that they thought mentoring was like an officer role – giving instructions or orders. One student remarked that they thought ‘only a teacher can be a mentor who guides us’. This is significant given the learning culture in Pakistan discussed in Chapter II above and shows the challenge in introducing peer support. Two students thought that mentoring was ‘the same as counselling’, again, indicating a more ‘professional’ view of the role.

Question 2 asked about how training changed their view of mentoring. All responses indicated that the students had clearly grasped the principles of peer mentoring, and some also picked out particular aspects of the training for comment. For example, one commented on the need for responsibility and accountability. Others showed clear understanding of the difference between friendship and mentoring – ‘peer mentoring is not a friend to friend relation – it has some constraints and boundaries’. One student commented on how the workshop motivated him to ‘help others’ as he wanted to be helped ‘in times of trouble’. Another commented that his perception of mentoring had changed to such an extent that he thought it ‘must be done all over Pakistan’. Another student, interestingly, commented that peer mentoring can help mentees and mentors ‘in the long-run of their lives’.

The third question asked directly whether the training has prepared them for their mentoring sessions with mentees. Perhaps not surprisingly, all of the respondents replied positively to this question. However, the following three questions were intended to elicit more detail concerning the structure of the training workshop.

The fourth question asked which unit (See Chapter V, p. 121 and Training Manual, Appendix 5) was the most informative. Responses here were much more varied.

The responses of the participants to Q 4 are presented in the tables below:

<b>Units of training workshop</b>	<b>Responses – most useful unit</b>
Unit 1	10
Unit 2	12 + 1
Unit 3	26+3
Unit 4	15+1
Unit 5	14
Unit 6	4

Table 12: Responses to most useful unit in training workshop

The above table shows additional numbers +1, +2 ... which have been indicated separately to show that these were the responses from the staff, who attended the training to help them in understanding their role as mentoring coordinators.

Similarly, question 5 asked about the least informative unit and the responses of the trainees have been tabulated:

<b>Units of training workshop</b>	<b>Responses – least useful unit</b>
Unit 1	3
Unit 2	7
Unit 3	2
Unit 4	3
Unit 5	5
Unit 6	3

Table 13: Responses to least useful unit in training workshop

The most frequent responses for question 5 were ‘none of the units were least informative’ and ‘all units were useful as this was the first time we have attended a training of this sort’. 31 participants of the 70 in total who attended the training gave the above response (44%). This included the 5 members of staff who were identified by the university heads as prospective mentoring coordinators.

The final question asked for suggestions for improving the training workshops. 50% of the responses were either left blank, or indicated that they had no suggestions, with a frequent comment being that as this work was outside their previous experience, it was difficult to make suggestions for improvement. ‘It was an impressive and informative workshop - well done’.

Of those that made suggestions, one commented on the lack of use of varied (electronic) media. A number of others commented on time constraints ‘for deeper understanding’, and five suggested that regular (monthly) training could be beneficial. As this was indeed a new experience for the participants, it is not surprising that they felt that more time to comprehend the material would have been useful, and this will be a consideration in any future design.

One unexpected response from around 20% of participants was that they thought that such a scheme should be introduced more widely in universities – ‘this project should be initiated in all areas of (U1) and in all universities in Pakistan’ was a typical response. Five students commented that such training would be useful for mentees as well as mentors, and one emphasized on the benefits of the presence of a mentoring coordinator in each department, a response to the fact that I, while leading the project, would not be in Pakistan while the mentoring was taking place but had ensured that a local coordinator was appointed to provide a focal point for discussion and to act as an intermediary between the mentors and myself. One useful comment was that it would be very valuable to see a demonstration of a mentoring session between mentor and mentee. This could be achieved with actors, or the use of a recording, or with a role play between participants.

Outside the formal feedback given in the questionnaire, many informal comments were given verbally, by email and by text message, by participants after the workshop. These included ‘fun-filled’, ‘interactive’, ‘we were constantly thinking on our feet’, ‘did not get distracted as it involved everybody’, ‘we were participating, not just sitting there listening all the time’, ‘the whole atmosphere was friendly and informative’, ‘I learned a lot’ and that ‘it was relevant and useful’.

The students were also given a Mentor’s Handbook with the guidelines that were discussed in the workshop to help them review the information in the training manual.

The mentors were asked to keep a record of meetings with their mentees in the logbook provided. The mentors submitted their logbooks at the end of the project and the findings from the data received through the logbooks are discussed later in this chapter. Photographs of the participants of workshop (see Appendix 7) were placed in this thesis after informed consent of all the participants.

### **SECTION III: Monitoring and evaluation of the mentoring process in Lahore**

The mentoring process was first evaluated in February 2010 at the beginning of Semester 2 with the interim evaluation. This was to obtain feedback from all the participants on the mentoring sessions that had taken place in Semester 1 for 10 weeks. The interim review was designed to provide an opportunity to both the mentor and mentee to assess the progress of their mentoring meetings and to reflect on their experience of the process. The mentor and mentee had to complete the review together, after discussions in their regular weekly one to one mentoring session, so that the response to each question indicated the view of both the mentor and mentee (Chapter V, p. 126).

Focus groups were conducted with the mentors at this stage to enable them to give independent feedback and also for the mentors to share their experiences with one another. During the same period, interviews were conducted with a small sample of approximately 15% of the mentees with the intention, again, of offering mentees an opportunity to voice opinions independently of their mentors.

#### **i) Interim Evaluation**

##### **a. Questionnaire**

The interim evaluation was conducted by using a survey questionnaire - the interim review form. The data collected through the form was cross-checked by individual interviews with the mentors and mentees and by three focus groups, one at each department. A sample of the completed interim evaluation forms is provided in Appendix 14a and b). The interim evaluation was completed by mentor and mentee during their regular weekly one to one mentoring meeting at the beginning of their 2<sup>nd</sup> semester in the university in February.

There were a total of 12 questions and most of the questions were open-ended to allow the students to give comprehensive feedback from both points of view. Each question was designed around the discussions on the topics covered in the training workshop for mentors as well as the introductory meeting with mentees at the beginning of the mentoring process to perceive whether the preparation for mentoring sessions in preliminary discussions and training were useful for the mentors and mentees during the mentoring meetings. It was also intended as a critical commentary on the process of training, with comments evaluated to improve on training in the future.

Q1 referred to listing the goals or targets set by the mentors and mentees for their mentoring sessions at the beginning of the mentoring process. The space provided for the answer to this question only allowed three goals. Almost all the students wrote 'help with the studies' as a major goal. 'Help with confidence building' and help with communication skills in English and the use of ICT 'using the computer and internet to browse for information to do course work' were also listed as significant goals. Each of these topics had been discussed in the training sessions, and echoed to some extent, the issues identified by staff and students in the preliminary questionnaires. It is notable that the fourth goal listed above – help with ICT – was not seen as a major issue by either staff or students prior to the mentoring. This may be a reflection on the familiarity with ICT that staff and senior students develop, but also a reflection on a surprising lack of familiarity on the part of junior students.

Q 2 asked the mentor and mentee whether the goals they had mentioned in question 1 had been achieved by them. Around 60 % responses were 'in part', 'to some extent', and 18 % responses were 'we are trying to achieve our goals as a whole' or 'approximately as a whole'. The remaining 22% responded 'yes, as a whole'.

Typical responses generated from Q3 on the expectations of the participants from this project were 'as a mentor I have gained confidence which I had hoped to achieve' and 'I have become responsible'. One student mentioned 'time management to ensure I am not late for my mentoring sessions with my mentor'. In response to Q4 on the experience of the mentor-mentee relationship nearly all the students wrote 'good, healthy, respectable', 'pleasant', 'friendly and helpful' and 'comfortable'. Only one mentor-mentee pair responded 'not so good' and did not wish to continue. In that case, the

mentee had proved very poor at timekeeping and missed many appointments. The mentee dropped out of the programme, and the mentor was allocated a new mentee for the second semester which helped to reassure the mentor that the breakdown of the first pairing was not regarded as a failure on their part.

Responses from Q5 were re-confirmed by asking a similar question from a slightly different perspective in Q7 and again in Q11.

The highlights of mentoring meetings and the personal benefits for the students in response to these questions were:

<b>Topic of mentoring meetings</b>	<b>No. of responses (%)</b>
discussions about courses	87
format of assignments	91
use of ICT and searching information in library	79
how to deal with teachers and the semester system	67
friendly talks on extra-curricular activities	56
gaining confidence	81
enhanced communication skills	70
punctuality	30
decision making	46
increased tolerance level	63
grades improved because of my mentor's guidance	59
my subject related problems resolved and someone reliable to talk to about my problems. 10 students responded 'no personal benefits'.	75

Table 14: Responses to common issues discussed during mentoring sessions

Q6 asked whether there were any unexpected results or learning points from the mentoring and 'No' was the most common response. One student, however, wrote 'it was difficult to communicate with a moody person, but I learned it through my role as a mentor that I could and prior to this role I did not know that this level of patience existed in me'.

In response to question (8) regarding challenges and barriers in the mentor-mentee relationship, the respondents' most frequent response related to time management and punctuality for the mentoring sessions and a few talked about the mentee being hesitant to come to the meetings. Around half the students wrote 'none, had a smooth



relationship'. The common response to Q10 on 'any way they could have done things differently', around 95% responses were no, of the 5% most wrote about their own lack of confidence that had made their mentee hesitant to meet them and be comfortable with them during the mentoring sessions. One wrote about 'practically guiding my mentee on accessing subject-related online information in the computer lab and convincing her to go on to the study tour arranged by the university'.

The suggestions students gave in response to Q10 'for enhancing the mentoring process' included: mentee should be trained to understand their role fully; more training for mentors during the year. Other suggestions were: more meetings between mentor and the mentoring coordinator, more meetings between mentor and mentee as a half hour weekly meeting is not sufficient; and that the mentees should be more punctual.

Q12 was intended to review the progress of the mentor/mentee relationship in order to determine whether continuation beyond semester 1 was going to be needed or valued. Mentoring is intended to develop the skills and confidence for the mentee and to encourage independence as a learner (see Chapter II and VII). Responses to this question reflect the extent to which further help was needed from the mentor beyond the initial contact. The responses were very interesting – asked whether they (mentor and mentee) thought that they would cease meeting, meet less frequently, or continue with the same frequency of weekly meetings, the majority indicated that fortnightly meetings would be preferred, a smaller number would prefer monthly or ad hoc meetings (when problems arose) and about 15% indicated that they would like to continue with weekly meetings. It was notable that this group consisted mainly of students who were from outside Lahore. This is discussed later in Chapter VII. Only two mentees indicated that they would like the meetings to discontinue giving the reason that they felt familiarity with the university and did not feel that they would benefit from further meetings and were finding it difficult to commit to meetings due to time constraints.

#### **b. Focus groups**

Three focus groups were conducted, each for 40 minutes duration at U1 and U2. As the mentoring programme was introduced at two departments in U1, interviews through focus group for mentors were done at the end of the first semester at each department. This provided part of the data collected during the interim evaluation of the project.

These sessions enabled the mentors, through recognition of their own experiential learning and analysis, to contribute to the discussion regarding the problems of their mentees (p. 32-36) and, to some extent, feel that they were taking ownership of their contribution to the project. The focus groups also allowed the mentors to share their experiences with each other, and thus feel less isolated in their work with the mentees.

The questions asked to the participants (mentors) of the focus groups were

1. How was your experience of mentoring?
2. What benefits are you gaining from your role as a mentor?
3. How did the content covered during training help you during the mentoring process?
4. What were the problems you faced?
5. How do you think you have helped your mentee with their problems?
6. Do you think HE institutions in Pakistan should have peer mentoring schemes?
7. Suggest how peer mentoring can be improved at your university?

The questionnaires and focus groups resulted in similar data. The synergies within the focus group however, were indicative of the sense of responsibility that the mentors voiced they had felt within their roles and the ways in which this role helped them gain confidence. The response from each of the focus groups to question 6 showed unanimous agreement that mentoring added value to the existing learning support in the university and this should be a regular feature of the support services in educational institutions.

### **c. Individual interviews with the mentees**

In order to provide a further check on the validity of the responses from the questionnaires, I conducted informal interviews with a sample of approximately 15% of the mentees to give them an independent opportunity to provide feedback on the mentoring process so far.

The feedback from these interviews with mentees was mainly positive with a few minor issues and generally supported the findings from the joint questionnaires. Some of the comments from the mentees on the benefits of this project for students from university 1 were: 'it was due to my mentor that I got good grades in my January assessments', 'I feel confident in talking to my tutors because of the encouragement from my mentor', 'I

know the university credit and semester system better now’, ‘it is a good feeling to know I can talk to a friendly person on campus once a week, to discuss my problems or just to reflect on my studies and how my previous week was like with my assignments and classes – this has helped me to become more organised’ and ‘I am thankful to you for providing us help in the form of mentors as I was very shy and hesitant to go to tutors with minor issues because this is the first time I have studied in a co-educational institution and I don’t live local’. A few mentees from U2 also stated that there was an academic advisor allocated to them but due to their busy schedule in the university neither the student nor the advisor were free to discuss any module related query. The main responsibility of the advisor seemed to be to sign off the module choices, but students reported difficulty even if getting this task fulfilled by their advisors.

One mentee from university 2 commented:

When I was informed about this facility at the university, I was not sure whether a fellow student could help me, but after my first meeting with my mentor I felt that this could be very helpful because I felt comfortable and my mentor was very supportive and encouraging. I discussed my problems regarding my tuition fee issue with my mentor and was encouraged to speak to the dean of students regarding my issue. I did exactly that - my issue was resolved and I found out that due to my financial situation I had qualified for a scholarship that could cover my tuition fee. I am ever so thankful for the advice and support of my mentor otherwise I think I would not have been able to continue to study at such a prestigious university. (Mentee, U2)

The issues and problems the students had encountered were mainly time keeping for the meetings and a few mentors complained that the mentees were not punctual for the weekly meetings and sometimes they had to remind them. A small percentage (2%) of the mentees did not want to continue as they thought it was a waste of their time to meet every week. One mentee wanted to discontinue because she said she was ‘too lazy to attend the meetings’. The final question in the interim review form ‘would you like to continue to meet up for further mentoring sessions?’ was one of the ways, foreseen by the researcher, of addressing this issue. All except three students wanted to continue their mentoring sessions till the end of the academic year (for another 3 months). 50% of students suggested that during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term they would prefer if instead of weekly meetings they met fortnightly for an hour as this was more practical due to a busier

work schedule during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term. Moreover, mentees felt more confident with the university procedures and were becoming more independent.

Although submission of logbooks was not part of the interim review process, the mentors were encouraged to bring them to the interviews in order that I could assess whether this part of the recording of the mentoring meetings was proceeding in an appropriate manner and would have the opportunity to give further guidance if necessary. In some cases, it was necessary to suggest that greater detail of the mentoring meetings should be recorded, both for the benefit of the mentor and mentee (as they would then have clear reference points of their meetings) but also to ensure that sufficient data was recorded for the purpose of evaluation.

## **ii) Final Evaluation**

### **a. Interviews**

Individual interviews with the mentors at the end of the mentoring process generated findings specific to individual mentors. The interview questions were:

1. What were the main issues on which your mentees sought help from you?
2. What was the most significant impact on your mentees during the mentoring process?
3. What is your overall experience of mentoring? In what ways do you think it has affected you and changed your perceptions of your own learning?
4. Do you have any suggestions that might improve a similar mentoring scheme at this university?

Some common responses were given by most of the mentors. For example most of the mentors from both universities U1 and U2 in interviews provided similar problem areas where mentees asked them for help. In response to the first question, the main issues that they reported that their mentees had sought help from them for were:

- Instructing them on how to use ICT and Library facilities;
- conversing in English to gain confidence while communicating (both speaking and listening) in class during lectures;
- information on credit/course details;
- assessment methods;
- advice on co-curricular activities available for students such as joining a debating society or a sports club.

Mentors reported that mentees were anxious to find ways in which they could develop skills that could improve their learning experience at the university, but lacked the knowledge of what was available to them, and also lacked confidence in joining such activities that could help them. Overall, the mentors reflected that, in response to question 2, increase in confidence was the most significant benefit gained by mentees, as this helped them with their learning and with other aspects of university life. One mentor from U2 commented ‘my mentee was extremely talented, but anxious about getting involved in university activities. I helped her to participate in some co-curricular activities at the university. It was fun and I felt I had made a positive difference in someone’s life. This is a great feeling!’

Further responses to this question are quoted at the end of this part of the Section.

The mentors’ feedback from both universities on their mentoring meetings in response to question 3 were: ‘it feels good to be valued’, ‘I am more confident and can explain concepts more clearly as this has helped me clear my own concepts on a few topics I have studied last year’, ‘thank you for helping me explore my leadership and communication skills. I wonder if I had a mentor during my first year I could have adjusted to university life much more quickly as I see that my mentee is settling in with a greater ease than I am. Nevertheless, I am happy that I can be helpful to freshmen in the university’.

In response to question 4, the mentors were unanimous in seeing the value of mentoring schemes to both mentors and mentees and supported the idea that such schemes should be introduced more widely in education. They emphasised the need for training and highlighted the absence of training for mentees, and the lack of ongoing training for themselves during the mentoring sessions as areas which could be developed in future schemes.

The following quotes from the responses of the mentors give a clear indication of the range of issues and how they were dealt with by the mentors:

1. My mentee was very shy and would lack the confidence to communicate with students and faculty in the class. I helped her with her English language skills, conversed with her and she gained more confidence. I also informed her that the university was having a

fashion show which was exclusively for girls and encouraged her to participate as she was very interested in and aware of the latest fashion and trend in clothes and accessories. I helped her sign for the event and also prepared her for the show. She participated and enjoyed it and said it was the best day of her life as she felt very confident and happy for herself and had wonderful feedback from her friends about her participation in the fashion show and she said it had changed her for the better. She was very thankful to me, I am glad I could help her improve her confidence and self-esteem. (Mentor, U2)

2. My mentee is not a local student and belongs to a lower middle class family, with financial hardships. He could only afford to come to study at this university because he had part of his fees waived which covered his fees for semester 1 but at the end of semester 1 he had to pay the tuition fees for semester 2 and he was worried that he would be asked to leave the university as he had no money to pay the fee and his financial situation at home did not provide any support towards the payment of his fees. He is a conscientious, hardworking student and the first one in his family to go to the university; I wanted to help him so I emailed the project coordinator and asked her advice on the dilemma my mentee was in. The project coordinator advised that I should immediately contact the Dean of students at the university, which I did. The Dean of students had a meeting with my mentee and sent him to the finance office, where he was told he could qualify for a scholarship and was informed on the application procedures. My mentee was very thankful to me and I felt great that a little help from me made it possible for him to continue his study at the university. I am so happy to be in this role, it makes me feel valued. (Mentor U2)

3. My mentee had her school and college education in an Urdu medium language of instruction and informed me during meetings that she was finding it very difficult to understand and follow the lectures as all teaching in the university was done in English. During our one to one mentoring sessions, I would encourage her to explain the topics in English for the various lecture strands and we would then go through each strand briefly. I would set her tasks for the following meeting and this made her understand concepts. But in order to help her understand these concepts I had to read through the information as well which made my own concepts very clear and helped me perform better and my coursework assessments at the end of the semester were really better. My mentee's assessment records also improved and she told me that it was because of the help I had provided to her. Our meetings helped us both so it was beneficial for both of us. (Mentor, IER, U1)

The overall evaluation was also received through the individual mentors' record of each mentoring session in their logbooks.

## **b. Logbooks**

All 80 logbooks from mentors were received and transcribed. The summary data permitted triangulation based on checking that the information in the logbooks was coherent with the findings discussed above. A second important purpose for the students was to give them the opportunity to show responsibility towards their own learning through the mentoring process by recording their weekly meetings and their developing ideas on the progress of the sessions.

Findings from the mentor's logbooks have been summarised below with special reference to the section 'topics discussed' in the mentoring tracking pages in the logbook (Appendix 9a).

The common issues identified were:

1. Searching for subject-related information on the internet; the patterns and formats of exam papers;
2. how to solve a problem with a teacher;
3. what to do when students in group work do not participate equally;
4. the scope of the degree programme studies by the students;
5. how can it help them in their careers;
6. administrative problems;
7. assignment problems;
8. dealing with different teachers;
9. how to convey content via presentation and improving presentation skills;
10. time management;
11. effective use of library support and ICT;
12. information on co-curricular activities and their relevance to the course studied;
13. communication skills including use of English and how to improve spoken and written English.

One logbook from U2 contained the following comment after one of the mentoring meetings:

We talked about the experiences of the students coming from Urdu medium to English medium, and we concluded that this diversity in medium of instruction is really a serious obstacle in the learning process. (Mentor, U2)

They also wrote about personal issues and concerns of the mentees, such as the health of family members, which were impacting on their studies. This appeared to be an important part of the meetings which was not reflected so well in other feedback, but

comes across through the logbook record. Logbook comments also reflected on how mentees found it easier to talk about such issues to their peer mentor than to others. This indicated the importance of establishing the parameters of the relationship within the training, so that the support can be given without crossing the boundaries of the mentoring framework.

The 'targets' set for the next meeting were recorded in the logbooks so that both the mentor and mentee had the agenda for the next meeting and could set goals, some examples are: discussion on a topic from the course work, assignment layout, how to book a computer in the lab and its effective use for subject related information, how to create an email address and manage emails, and visiting the library for searching the information relevant to specific topic for the subject.

In response to the interim review in Phase 3, mentors and mentees were given the option of decreasing frequency of their meetings and of becoming more informal. Information recorded in the logbooks indicated that meetings for approximately 40% of the pairings decreased to fortnightly and a similar proportion to monthly meetings. The remainder maintained, with a few gaps, the pattern of weekly meetings even if the meetings became more of an ongoing reassurance than to deal with specific issues.

The value, as data, of the reports in the logbooks in providing a weekly (and immediate) account of the mentoring meeting was that it provided a detailed means of triangulation with other forms of feedback via questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. As the logbooks were a single hand-written document, the authenticity of the data they contained was assured and was not affected by the constraints of other forms of feedback.

### **c. Informal feedback**

Informal feedback and personal statements were also received from the students in the final certificate award ceremony held during Phase 4 at the time of the final evaluation. The feedback was similar to the individual interviews and the information in the logbooks but it was noteworthy that the students gained the confidence to stand in front of the whole group of participants; mentors, mentees, mentoring coordinators and the heads of departments and gave their testimonial on their role as either the mentor or mentee and the impact on their learning.



One important finding from informal interviews and responses during the certificate ceremony was the feedback from mentees. The overwhelming response from mentees was that they valued the help provided by their mentors and were thankful for the support. They also expressed the view that they also wanted to become mentors themselves and help the next cohort of new entrants. The willingness of the mentees to take on the role of the mentors for their juniors was voiced by almost all the students (90%) who were present at the certificate ceremony, and by each of the students with whom I conducted informal interviews, although there was no direct question about this. This indicates that the experience of mentoring could bring about a change in attitudes in the mentees and develop a view of learning that is cooperative and community based, and not an individual activity.

#### **SECTION IV: Academic results**

Results from the assessment of students proved difficult to obtain, and although one of the original intentions of the project was to compare the academic performance of students taking part in the mentoring process with those who had not, this was not possible. One university was not able to produce any results in time for me to include in my study. One of the two departments in the other university did provide the results for students in both the mentor group and the mentee group and data for the previous year when no mentoring had occurred. This could provide some basis for comparison of the impact of mentoring on the academic results for participants although, as with any analysis of results with a small sample over a short period of time, there are a number of variables which are outside the control of the researcher. The Cumulative Grade Point Average and results at graduation from three cohorts were received for the academic year 2006-10, 2007-11 and 2008-12. In the first of these years, no students had been involved in the mentoring process. In the second, 2007-11, and the third, 2008-12, the students had been trained as mentors and had undertaken mentoring. The results are tabulated and the findings represented graphically:

<b>Roll No. (Student)</b>	<b>CGPA</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Results</b>
BB06-01	3.47	B+	Pass
BB06-04	3.17	B	Pass
BB06-09	3.42	B+	Pass
BB06-10	3.15	B	Pass
BB06-12	3.14	B	Pass
BB06-15	3.63	B+	Pass

BB06-16	2.98	B-	Pass
BB06-18	3.05	B	Pass
BB06-19	3.01	B	Pass
BB06-22	3.57	B+	Pass
BB06-23	2.81	B-	Pass
BB06-24	3.57	B+	Pass
BB06-29	2.54	C+	Pass
BB06-30	3.00	B	Pass
BB06-31	2.58	C+	Pass
BB06-32	2.86	B-	Pass
<b>Average CGPA</b>	<b>3.12</b>		

Table 15a: Results of U1 – IBB students 2006 -10 (no mentoring activity)

The table below provides the results for the IBB cohort 2007-2011:

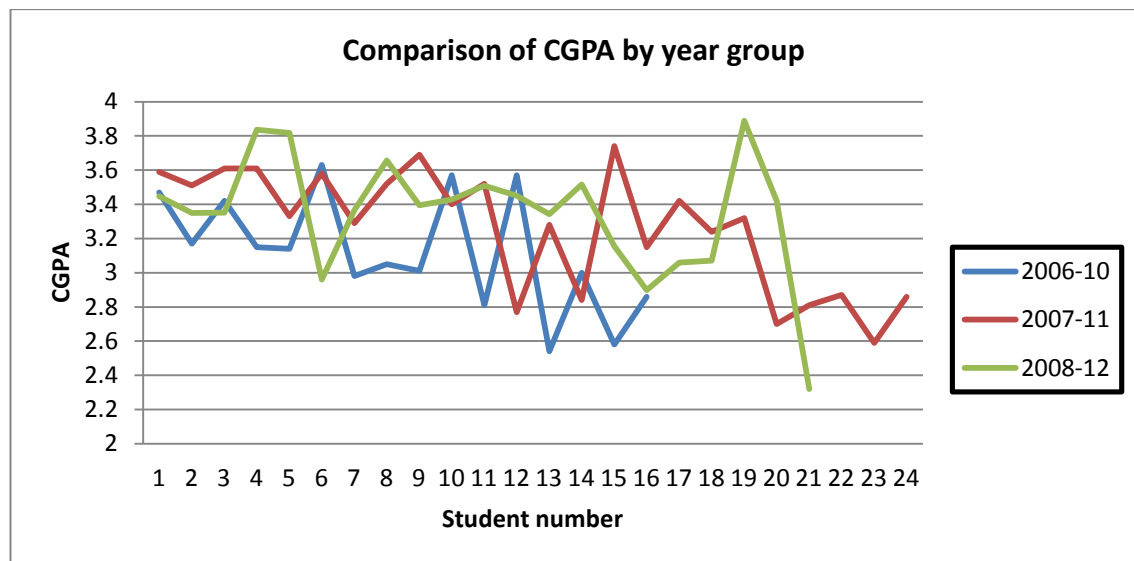
<b>Roll No. (Student)</b>	<b>CGPA</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Result</b>
BB07-01	3.59	B+	Pass
BB07-02	3.51	B+	Pass
BB07-09	3.61	B+	Pass
BB07-11	3.61	B+	Pass
BB07-12	3.33	B+	Pass
BB07-13	3.58	B+	Pass
BB07-17	3.29	B	Pass
BB07-18	3.52	B+	Pass
BB07-22	3.69	B+	Pass
BB07-24	3.40	B+	Pass
BB07-25	3.52	B+	Pass
BB07-26	2.77	B-	Pass
BB07-28	3.28	B	Pass
BB07-29	2.84	B-	Pass
BB07-30	3.74	A-	Pass
BB07-32	3.15	B	Pass
BB07-33	3.42	B+	Pass
BB07-34	3.24	B	Pass
BB07-36	3.32	B+	Pass
BB07-37	2.70	B-	Pass
BB07-39	2.81	B-	Pass
BB07-40	2.87	B-	Pass
BB07-41	2.59	C+	Pass
BB07-42	2.86	B-	Pass
<b>Average CGPA</b>	<b>3.26</b>		

Table 15b: Results of U1 – IBB students 2007-11 (students trained as mentors in year 3)

Roll No. (Student)	CGPA	Grade	Results
BB08-01	3.45	B+	Pass
BB08-03	3.35	B+	Pass
BB08-07	3.35	B+	Pass
BB08-10	3.84	A	Pass
BB08-11	3.82	A	Pass
BB08-15	2.96	B-	Pass
BB08-16	3.37	B+	Pass
BB08-17	3.66	B+	Pass
BB08-19	3.39	B+	Pass
BB08-20	3.43	B+	Pass
BB08-22	3.51	B+	Pass
BB08-23	3.45	B+	Pass
BB08-26	3.34	B+	Pass
BB08-27	3.52	B+	Pass
BB08-28	3.16	B	Pass
BB08-29	2.90	B-	Pass
<b>Average CGPA</b>	<b>3.40</b>		

Table 15c: Results of U1 – IBB students 2008-12 (students trained as mentors in year 3)

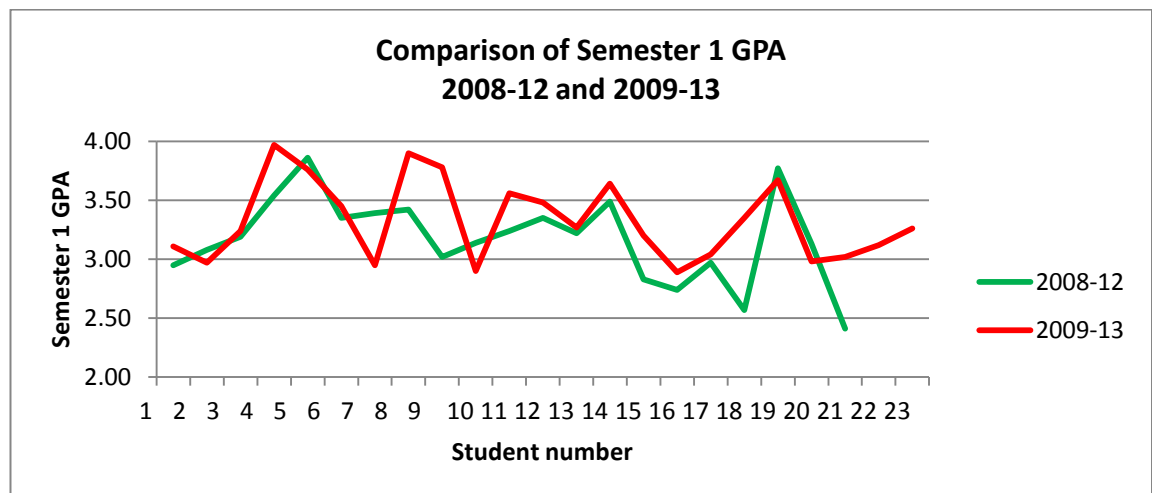
In Graph 6, the results from the three tables above are presented to show the comparison of individual CGPAs of the three consecutive year groups.



Graph 6: Comparison of CGPA by year group at U1

Although, as mentioned above, exam results from year to year are subject to many variables, and improvements cannot be ascribed to a single change unless all other variables are constant, it is notable that over the three years considered, there is marked improvement in the average CGPA from year to year, and the cohorts in the second and third years had all participated in the mentor training and in mentoring new students (Graph 6).

In the graph below (Graph 7) I have shown the first semester results for non-mentored students from the intake in 2008 against the results for the mentored students from the intake in 2009. In the absence of official results from the universities, I asked for these results from the students themselves and these were then confirmed by the academic staff from the departments concerned. The mentoring process commenced in academic year 2009-10 and new entrants (represented in red on the line graph below) were provided trained mentors for the first time in the department through my project. The results from students who were mentoring the new entrants for their 1<sup>st</sup> semester (green line on the graph) before the start of my project is shown below. This student cohort was not provided with mentors when they entered university in the year 2008-09.



Graph 7: Comparison of Semester 1 GPA of mentees and mentors

These results appear to confirm the anecdotal evidence from interviews and evaluation questionnaires that mentoring improved the performance of mentored students. For example, the mentors reported that their mentees' GPA for semester 1 was better than their own results for semester 1. However, again, the inference that mentoring improves academic performance must be treated with caution given the other variables that might

impact on performance. It would require an extended longitudinal study to make the case for the impact of mentoring on academic achievement.

## **SECTION V: Follow-up with mentor graduates**

In September 2012, a sample of the mentors who had graduated from the participating universities were asked, by email to comment on how they thought their role as a mentor had impacted on their current circumstances in employment or further study, and on any aspects of the role that contributed to their future prospects.

Feedback from three of these graduates is given below:

*1. I really enjoyed the peer mentoring program and I wish it continue in [U2]. You would be glad to know that I am at University of Wales, Newport studying MBA and I am also a Student Mentor here. All credit goes to what I learnt in those training sessions and then how I used my skills. I feel fortunate to be part of that program and it really helped me. Peer mentoring project at [U2] has a very significant impact on my personality and experience which I gained from this project is priceless. I had some fantastic moments during this journey. For me, mentoring means something different. It's not only helping others, it's the empathy that you share with your mentee. It's not only about just passing the information but also it's about telling them how that information would be helpful and beneficial to other person. I've got great experience from my mentorship program and there is one special thing happened during the course. I was able to help and support my mentee to get the full scholarship which he thought he never would able to get and the confidence he gained after this program. After his first year when he got scholarship and later next year as a sophomore student, it made me feel proud that he was completely changed and had more confidence to raise his voice and committed to his studies.*

*This program means a lot to me and it made me think that even my small words of support can make a difference. I feel like I am a completely changed person after having mentoring experience. It gave me confidence and understanding of nature of people and how to act in difficult situations and eventually it helped me in getting my current job as a student mentor during my studies here in UK. My communication got better and it kept on improving. I no longer feel shy to communicate with any person. I literally have a feeling this peer mentoring project mentored me and I got more than what I was hoping for. And I hope and look forward it would continue to help me in getting better as a professional. I really look forward to reap the fruits of this training when I'd go in the industry. (SA – Mentor)*

2. Currently, I'm pursuing my MS Economics from NUST Business School, National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST).

...it has been a fabulous and awesome experience of Peer Mentoring at [U2]. And you'll be surprised to know that we (Formanites) have started Peer Mentoring at NUST University as well to assist fresh Undergraduate students!

The most important highlight of our mentoring meeting was the financial issue of one of my Mentees who had lost his original documents at the time of admission at [U2]. Consequently, he couldn't apply for Financial Assistance, and he was about to leave university due to his financial problems. In one of our meetings, he told me this problem and as a Mentor I discussed this with Director of Financial Affairs. Fortunately, Director took it very seriously and asked my Mentee to apply for assistance even after due date. Within one week, my Mentee was granted 75% tuition fee waiver. This all became possible only due to this wonderful program.

I don't have words to explain the effectiveness and efficacy of this project. For me as a Mentor, this project has really been so fruitful. It developed my confidence which is required, as a leader, to encourage, lead, and guide the team work!

Although I didn't apply for any job after my BS (Honors) from [U2] but when I took admission in MS Economics at NUST Business School, Islamabad, the panel for interview asked me, "have you ever worked as a team leader? any real example of your leadership skills?" I told them that I had worked as a Peer Mentor; a project started by .. University, London at [U2], Lahore with the objective to assist and guide fresh students to make their 4-Year Program successful. They required me to show any Peer Mentoring certificate which I did. They applauded this program and thus, my interview remained so successful. And let me say that all credit goes to .. University and project coordinator, of course, for launching such a superb program at [U2]. (QL - Mentor)

3. Being in a university from high school in an educational system like one in Pakistan is truly an experience of its own, unique and naïve for almost all entering from the annual examination system to semester system. And being in [U2], has its own privileges unlike any in Pakistan. Graduate school is beyond text books and grades, it's about discovering one-self, networking and learning from fellow peers, professors and now mentors as introduced by the "Peer Mentoring Experience" creating a synergistic environment fostering young minds to broaden their horizons.

My overall experience of peer mentoring at [U2] was overwhelming. It gave me a reason to be beyond what I am, from a student to a teacher, and from a teacher back to a student. It was a two-way learning process for me. I helped two students from underdeveloped areas of Pakistan. The most important highlight of my mentoring meetings with my mentees was that, I learnt about them, their cultures, as well as how something as insignificant as it may

*seem to us, may be quite complex for some to comprehend, it showed me to view the world and its people with different perspectives. I helped my mentees by helping them grasp the concept and working of a semester system, from courses selections to career options, tutoring them in basic subjects such as Mathematics and English and helping them adapt to the local culture and norms of the City Lahore.*

*The project was of value to me in identifying my potential for what I could do, and I extended this concept with my Business Juniors as well. Today I see a few people performing well because of a little push I gave them, and this gave me a sense of self-satisfaction, something for which I can look back in my Undergraduate years and be proud of. My role as a peer mentor helped me in my studies as it helped me strengthen and clarify my concepts as well, since listening a lecture is one thing, but making some one understand something is something entirely different. You have to go deep into the subject to answer your mentees satisfactorily, it requires more effort than for self study but the rewards and much more. Things I couldn't grasp myself in Undergraduate for example some concepts in Finance (which I taught to my Business Juniors) became more clear when I studied to teach someone else. And these concepts I am sure to carry with me in my professional life as well. (NI – Mentor)*

In this chapter I have presented the data findings from my research fieldwork. The project was complex and a variety of research methods were used. As discussed in Chapter IV, interpretation of the raw data was very important in order not only that the *a priori* themes explored through direct questions were accurately identified, but also that emergent themes were not lost.

In the next chapter, I discuss my approach to thematic analysis of the data collected from the fieldwork and reflect on the significant themes from each phase of the study.

## CHAPTER VII

### DATA ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

This chapter reviews and analyses the data collected during the research and presented in the previous chapter. The character of the research question and that of the aim and objectives of the research indicated that an exploratory approach was needed (see Chapter IV, p.100). Firstly, the practice of peer mentoring was not previously found in universities in Pakistan. The responses of staff and students to this intervention needed to be investigated without pre-conceptions. Qualitative research methods, particularly when applied within an action research project, offer a range of different kinds of data (Herr and Anderson, 2005). In my research, the data ranged from responses to questions which permit tabulation according to Likert scales, through open-ended free text questions in questionnaires, to open-ended discussions in focus groups and individual interviews. The character of action research requires both the active engagement of participants in the progress of the research, as well as a flexible, reflective and interpretative role for the researcher (Whitehead, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter IV (p. 100), thematic analysis offered the most appropriate method for the analysis of the findings from the fieldwork in Lahore. Thematic analysis, in its association with phenomenological approaches (Guest *et al*, 2012), offers the possibility of highly suggestive conclusions from varied sets of data in which the subjective positions of both researcher and participants are respected. In this study, thematic analysis is used interpretively with themes shared and examined through questions and responses, and emerging from the experiences expressed by participants. For example, it was expected from the experiences of student mentoring in the universities in the UK that mentoring would have a positive impact on the confidence of participants. This theme was explored in questionnaires and focus groups with both mentors and mentees. Responses from mentors:

it made me feel proud that he was completely changed and had more confidence to raise his voice and committed to his studies. (p.177)

and

I feel like I am a completely changed person after having mentoring experience. It gave me confidence and understanding of nature of people. (*ibid*)



gave clear positive affirmation of the recurrence of this theme in the subjective experience of these participants. The following statement from a mentee was less explicit, but interpretation indicates that increased confidence resulted from the support of the mentor:

I discussed my problems regarding my tuition fee issue with my mentor and was encouraged to speak to the dean of students regarding my issue. I did exactly that - my issue was resolved. (p. 167)

Although some themes, as above, were built into the research on the basis of previous research and experience, initial conversations with staff and students (p. 153) were used to identify emergent themes that could form the basis of questions for the interim review. In those preliminary conversations, the use of ICT was not rated as a significant area of concern for potential mentees. Its importance as an emergent theme appeared strongly in the responses to questions in the interim evaluation (p. 164) as the fourth most common issue discussed in mentoring meetings.

The purpose of my research was to introduce the peer mentoring project in specific universities in Pakistan and explore its impact on the learning culture for students. In establishing the methods of data collection and analysing the themes, it was necessary to take into account certain variables that could impact on the general validity of the results. The section below gives a brief description of these variables and their potential impact on the results. This is followed by an analysis and reflection on the themes identified from each phase of the research. The last section provides recommendations from the research findings.

## **SECTION I: Variables**

### i) Socio-economic background of students:

The choice of universities, a private and a public university, were chosen to ensure a broad range of participation from different social and cultural backgrounds in the project (Chapter IV, p. 103). As a public university, it was expected that U1 would have students from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds, while the private university U2 would be expected to have a majority students from privileged backgrounds as the fees paid were high and admission highly selective (Chapter V, p. 114 and 128-130).

U1 did offer places to student mentors and mentees from diverse backgrounds and therefore students from more disadvantaged (widening participation) backgrounds could participate in the project. However, one of the departments at that university was highly selective in its admissions policies, and in practice, all selected student mentees at that department belonged to less disadvantaged backgrounds. U2 selected student mentees who were not local to the university and most of them were first generation HE entrants, and who therefore experienced the additional problems of living away from home. In this group were some scholarship students who did come from less advantaged backgrounds. While it was not intended to be achieved in this way, the effect of these selections in the two universities did indeed result in the selection of students from a wide range of backgrounds. The variable of socio-economic background was not one of the factors measured during the research but it was notable that mentors faced different kinds of issues with students from different backgrounds. As noted earlier (Chapter VI), some students faced greater problems with their use of ICT technology, and also with adapting to studies in English. These students were mainly from less advantaged backgrounds. However, these differences, important though they were to the mentees and mentors, were not significant in terms of the overall results. The reason for this was that the mentoring scheme was designed and intended to allow mentors to respond to the specific needs of the learning culture of the mentees and to address the authentic learning site of the students (James and Bloomer, 2001). The success or otherwise of the project was measured by the extent to which this was achieved, and in so far as the mentors succeeded in addressing the specific issues, the project was successful.

#### ii) Gender:

It was ensured that there would be representation and participation of male and female students (mentors and mentees – see Chapter V, p. 130, Graph 2) and academics (mentoring coordinators) in the project. The basic principles of the project were equal opportunity and inclusion of the participants. While U1 had nearly 80% female students, the overall ratio of male and female participants in the project was approximately 1:1 (p. 130). In Chapter II and Chapter VI, the issue of gender in education in Pakistan is discussed. In practice, there appeared to be no significant differences in the ways in which male and female participants worked within the project.

iii) Subject areas/departments:

At U1 the student cohort was from two different departments; Humanities (Education) and Science (Biochemistry and Biotechnology). At U2 the students were not selected on the basis of the departments but from all subject disciplines university wide. This included Psychology, Computing sciences, Business and Administration and Biomedical sciences.

The intention was to see if there were any significant differences in the willingness and approaches of students and staff from different disciplines to participation in the project, and also whether the different structures of learning in these subjects made an impact (p. 131). For example, students in the lab-based science subjects experience learning in a different way to those from a classroom-based subject. In practice, students from the lab-based subjects were much more willing to participate. However, given other variables such as the fact that this group tended to have stronger academic backgrounds and also received encouragement from the academic staff, it is not appropriate to draw any conclusions from this without further study.

iv) The level of study of the participants:

Except for one department IER at U1, all the other student participants were from undergraduate degree courses. There were no significant differences found from the findings on the mentoring process of the impact of postgraduate or undergraduate level of study of the students involved. There was greater willingness and enthusiasm among the postgraduate mentees at the end of the academic year to volunteer as mentors for their junior/new students.

v) The researcher:

One constant amongst these variables was the researcher who administered the project, the survey, evaluation and the feedback. This enabled a consistency of approach in the gathering of data which was of particular importance in the qualitative methods such as individual and group interviews where interpersonal contact is central to the exchange and thus to the data gathered. It could be argued that, as a female with a middle class background, my positionality in relation to the students created a barrier which might have inhibited the responses that were given. One further factor related to the particular sample of students in the study is that my educational background is in science (chemistry) and in education (as a teacher at secondary and HE levels, and with a

Master's degree in Education and in Chemistry). The groups of students in the sample were students of these subjects. In meetings with students, my experience as a teacher with a high level of familiarity with both the subjects studied, the university setting and the cultural backgrounds of the students enabled me to achieve a degree of interaction with the students that allowed effective communication (p. 4, 83-85, 87, 103, 128, 141). As discussed in Chapters I and IV, there may be other important factors such as personality, approachability or charisma that impact on the success of a project of this kind. However, while it is a requirement for similar projects in different situations to consider the variables associated with the researcher with sensitivity to the specific context, in the current project, I found no reason to think that my positionality had any bearing on the results shown.

It might be necessary to add one rider to this: where the response to the researcher is positive and enthusiastic, respectful (to me as a female and as a figure with some authority whose presence had been sanctioned by the university authorities) it is possible that more positive responses would be provided in interview and other personal contacts. However, the use of questionnaires and logbooks as part of the triangulation offered the possibility to recognise possible bias in the results.

## **SECTION II: Theme analysis and discussion**

In analysing the data, I identify the main themes that have emerged from the responses from academic and administrative staff, mentors, and mentees. The thematic analysis for each phase is tabulated.

Each phase is structured to provide an analysis of the findings in the same chronological format as the data was collected. After the preliminary phase, each subsequent phase began with a fieldwork visit to Pakistan. In this manner, the presentation of the data analysis retains the format of the research as indicated in Chapter VI, Research Findings, and explained in the chronological order in line with the timeline of research (Appendix 20) and in the diagram on page 106.

The analysis follows the sequence:

- i) Preliminary phase - literature review and interviews to establish the principles of the project.

- ii) Phase 1- first visit to Pakistan to establish the necessary arrangements for the project and conduct initial research on the local conditions and learning culture to enable refinement of the research design.
- iii) Phase 2 - second visit to Pakistan to conduct training and implement the mentoring process with evaluation of the training workshops.
- iv) Phase 3 - third visit to Pakistan to conduct interim review at the end of semester 1, and gather information through individual and collective interviews with mentors and mentees.
- v) Phase 4 - fourth visit to Pakistan to conduct final evaluation through collecting logbooks, individual and collective (focus groups) interviews with the participants and informal feedback.
- vi) Phase 5 - fifth visit to Pakistan to obtain data on student performance, including exam results. To conduct interviews with senior staff at the universities and with mentors and mentees who had graduated and were seeking or were in employment.

The analysis commences with consideration of the themes that were suggested by the aim and objectives and those which emerged from the preliminary findings during the initial visits to Lahore.

#### **i) Preliminary Phase**

In the preliminary phase, the main purpose was to establish, through primary and secondary sources, the effectiveness, and the problems, of introducing mentoring schemes in different learning cultures. Together, the results of this part of the research led to the development of the research design and the structure of the fieldwork as indicated in Chapter IV. In general, evidence and observations made from the interviews and of mentoring schemes in action were that mentoring schemes were effective in a number of ways in relation to the specific or general goals of the schemes. This is discussed more fully in Chapter III. The use made of these findings in designing the project is discussed in Chapter V.

The overall principles that were established from this preliminary investigation were:

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Finding/analysis</b>
1	The commitment of the organization	Effective mentoring schemes require support from the institution/university (p. 71, 114-115).

2	Availability of resources	Cost of resourcing mentoring projects varies widely, but the essential resources need not be financial - example, expertise/knowledge (p. 68).
3	Necessity for training	Detailed, well-prepared and documented training for participants is essential to effective mentoring (p. 46, 71, 119-126).
4	The need for structure	Introduction of mentoring in a context unfamiliar with established mentoring and peer support requires a high level of structure in the process to ensure effective implementation.
5	The need for selection	1. Mentors need to be selected to achieve good working relationships with their mentees 2. Selection and allocation of mentors needs to be sensitive to the specific culture(s) of the mentees and of the surrounding learning culture; examples include i) gender ii) religion 3. Mentees should not feel that they have been ‘targeted’ as in need of special help (p. 69-71).
6	Issues in mentoring	Vagueness in definition of mentoring. Quality and duration of mentoring, evaluation criteria, risk management, lack of engagement, lack of ownership, diversity of mentoring schemes, exclusive to target groups (p. 57).
7	The awareness of the learning site as context for the mentoring process.	Scheme coordinators and mentors need to show flexibility in recognising the specificity of the ‘authentic learning site’ (p. 31) for each student, and the need for mentors to help the mentee to work within the overall learning culture from within their specific position in that culture.
8	Changing pedagogical styles	Mentoring uses a learning style close to learner-centred learning, with emphasis on the student’s ownership of their learning. This contrasts with teacher-centred pedagogy practiced in many Pakistani universities.
9	Student engagement	Mentors and mentees should feel ownership of the process as a contribution to improvement of the student experience.
10	Researcher role	Researcher reflexivity based on previous personal experience in mentoring in UK and studying/working in Pakistan, defined researcher role for the project as involving practitioner based research as well as observational research (p. 4, 83-87).

Table 16: Theme analysis – preliminary phase

Following the preliminary phase, the above themes contributed to the first phase of the project, informing both the development of the project to introduce mentoring, and also the methods of data collection needed to manage and monitor the project as shown in the preliminary findings in Chapter VI.

At the beginning of each phase I have listed the four stages or moments of action research described in Chapter IV and illustrated diagrammatically on page 106, following the action research model as a succession of cycles. Each phase is a successive cycle in the roadmap of the project. Consequently, the problem-solution tool was developed on the basis of a series of revised plans following action, observation and reflection from the preceding phase.

**ii) Phase 1 – April 2009 (1<sup>st</sup> visit to Lahore)**

**Plan:** Prepared introductory resource material for the prospective participants.

**Action:** Sought permission from institutional heads for the project to be conducted; interviewed heads of departments; distributed questionnaires to academics and students.

**Observation:** Concerns; resistance; enthusiasm.

**Reflection:** Findings from interviews, questionnaires and discussions with staff and students.

The results gathered in the first phase were intended to check the viability of the project as envisaged, to ensure that the research design in the initial plan would be appropriate, and, as a result of the findings from the questionnaire and interviews at this stage, made final amendments to the plan for the next phase of the project, the preparation and training of mentors and mentees.

Themes identified during the Phase 1 beginning with my first research visit to Lahore are listed and a brief analysis of each theme is provided in the table below. The detailed analysis and discussion of these themes is then offered. All the staff and students referred to in this table are from the two participating universities in Lahore:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Finding/analysis</b>
Institutional commitment	Awareness of peer mentoring at the executive level. Concerns about logistics - for example, finance, time resources, commitment of participating staff and students. Persuaded to support project by explanation of scheme, by low requirement for local resource input and by coincidental pressure from Pakistan HEC to instigate learner-centred pedagogy in universities (p. 71).
Initial resistance to the introduction of structured peer support	Lack of awareness of and expertise in peer support; resistance to change in existing hierarchies in learning culture (p. 114, 137).

Mutual student support present in universities	Assumption that students already provide sufficient support to one another, especially on social issues (p. 137).
Recognition of both academic and social/psychological issues for students	1. Uncertainty concerning responsibility for supporting students facing these issues. Academic staff too pressured to offer much support. Some scepticism over student peer support.  2. Resistance to project lowered through training and understanding of purpose and methods as non-threatening to existing teaching and learning (p.167).
Student participation in mentoring project	Enthusiastic response to proposal. Willingness to be able to help and receive help from a peer. Students recognised the need for training and volunteered to be trained for role of mentors (p. 77).
Role of mentor	Concern over ability to provide help and support to junior peers.
Role of researcher	1. As an insider - it helped to use my links as an alumni and a local; this was seen as non-threatening; advantage of being viewed as someone with a greater degree of understanding of the situation and a high level of reliability (p. 87).  2. As an outsider - the authority and expertise from gaining experience and training of student support in UK HE (p. 83-85).  3. Agent of change; leading and managing change (p. 44, 128, 141).

Table 17: Theme analysis - Phase 1

As seen from the results in Chapter VI, the broad direction of the project as planned and prepared from previous experience and readings was confirmed in this phase.

Furthermore, some interesting contrasts appeared in the responses from students and teachers to the question of what problems students might encounter (Appendix 1 and 2). The responses of the academic staff to the academic issues were broadly similar to those which might be expected in a university in the UK, examples of which can be seen in Chapter III. However, the responses were very different for non-academic issues, where the political situation was given high priority. Such issues were not raised or discussed in any of the case studies considered while planning the project. This was not envisaged as a finding prior to the research fieldwork. There was no preconception on the part of the researcher that the security situation would be seen as impacting strongly on the learning culture. This may have been a consequence of my working in the preliminary



phase in London, separated geographically from the immediate impact of the situation in Pakistan, despite regular communication and news media reports.

The students were given a different question to identify areas where they felt help could be given by a senior student. The political situation did not feature in these responses. This may have been because they did not feel that a senior student could help them with such matters, although it was raised during the training, especially with reference to security situation as due to terrorism threat, security was on high alert at that time. I was not able to provide any advice to the students during the training in this area, as this was part of the complex learning culture in which Pakistan's students had to study. Given the need for mentoring to address the concerns of students, it was necessary to adjust the training to give guidance to mentors on how to deal with these concerns.

By the end of Phase 1, analysis of the findings showed that that the project would be supported by the two universities, would be received well by the students, and with further explanation to the staff, was accepted as a possible way of supporting students by academic and senior administrative staff. In both cases, there was some concern over the ability of students to cope with the range of issues and fulfil the role required. It was necessary to emphasise the significance of training for mentors and the mentoring coordinators and the structured form of mentoring that would be used. Phase 1 also provided essential feedback on the local context which was to be used to inform the training of mentors and the information given to mentees, thus providing local specificity to the mentoring process.

### iii) Phase 2 - October 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Lahore)

The cycle of action research in this phase encompassed the four stages listed below:

**Plan:** Logistics of training workshop.

**Action:** Conducted training.

**Observation:** Students' reaction/responses before during and after the workshop.

**Reflection:** Feedback/evaluation on training.

Theme	Finding/analysis
Role of mentoring coordinator	Work pressures prevented close involvement of mentoring coordinators who needed more support. In the absence of project coordinator, a <b>local coordinator</b> was appointed to liaise between

	mentoring coordinators and the project coordinator and provide local support. Training was mandatory for mentoring coordinators (p. 127).
Selection of mentors	Clear criteria needed by mentoring coordinators for selection - needed to be as inclusive as possible to address needs of diverse student groups.
Significance of training for participants	Training was essential to the success of the project, addressing specific concerns and empowering mentors (and mentoring coordinators). Detailed preparation of documentation was required (p. 127-134).
Role of mentor	Training sessions allowed clarification of mentor role but provision of ongoing support for mentors advisable; and provided by mentoring coordinator and project coordinator (by email).
Allocation of mentees	Allocation by gender, class and shared experience with mentor as far as possible.
Role of mentees	1. Needed to reassure mentees that opportunity was to all students, not a reflection of any weakness or need (p. 69).  2. Guidance needed on responsibilities and limits of mentoring relationship – written and via training (p. 132).
Role of researcher	Facilitator; observer in training workshops; knowledge producer; raising awareness of mentoring process; agent of change.

Table 18: Theme analysis – Phase 2

This Phase was the most significant part of the project. During this stage, not only were all of the participants trained in and/or made aware of the purpose of the mentoring project, but also the key documentation was delivered to the mentors, mentees and coordinators, following adjustments in response to the initial reaction of participants to the training, the mentees were selected and the one to one mentoring commenced. While initial resistance from academic staff decreased as their understanding of the purpose of the project grew, their ability to commit time to actively supporting the project did not increase. The appointment of the local coordinator effectively reduced the pressure on the academic staff in the departments implementing the project. He also provided support and reassurance to the project coordinator in giving a local presence (Chapter V, p. 127, 135).

The workshops were evaluated by the feedback/evaluation form. A number of points emerged from the responses to the questions, which reflected on the evaluation process, and added new perspectives to the training process. However, the main body of the

responses indicated a high degree of success in achieving the objectives of the training workshop. In the first question, for example, while the majority of the responses indicated, as could be expected, lack of advance knowledge of mentoring, a significant number appeared to have misunderstood the purpose of the question. These responses, which were more noticeable in U1, tended to give a view of mentoring that was clearly derived from the workshop itself. For example, in the first part of the training, students were asked who had been an unofficial ‘mentor’ to them and examples were given of who such a person might be. The problematic responses ignored the point about prior knowledge and repeated one or more of the examples given in the workshop (p. 159). Scoping of the feedback questionnaire was taken from my previous mentoring study with school ‘A’ level GCE students in a school and a college in Lahore (Rachel, 2007). In that study, no problems of understanding had occurred, but the students were fluent English speakers, and were mainly from a relatively privileged educational background. The group of students in U1 who had most difficulty with this question (and some others) were from much more diverse backgrounds (Chapter II, p. 22) and did not have the fluency of English language of the school students, or of the students from U2. One student from U1 answered the question in Urdu. This indicated that, in any repeat evaluation exercise, it would be necessary to frame the questions more carefully in relation to the language ability of the participants, but also that scoping should take place with a sample of the group from whom responses would be sought. It could also be more useful to pose that question at the beginning of the workshop, rather than leave it to the end with the evaluation questions. Also, as part of the training, the initial discussion in the workshops was about previous understanding of prospective mentors, and it is possible that this also prompted a less naive response to question 1 than would have been the case had the question been asked before the workshop.

**iv) Phase 3 – February/March 2010 (3<sup>rd</sup> visit to Lahore)**

This cycle of action research involved:

**Plan:** Interim review.

**Action:** Contacted students; conducted individual and group interviews and administered interim evaluation questionnaire; discussions with mentoring coordinators.

**Observation:** Students’ and mentoring coordinators’ reactions.

**Reflection:** Feedback on semester one mentoring sessions.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Finding/analysis</b>
Impact on student experience	Increased student engagement noticed both in classroom and through improved interpersonal skills (p. 91, 168-172).
Reflection on training	Mentors felt that they would benefit from ongoing training and that mentees should receive training as well.
Study support	1. Mentors and mentees reported help with studies as major goal for mentoring sessions.  2. Mentees found it easier and more helpful to raise study questions with mentors.
Confidence building	2. Mentors reported increased confidence in their own abilities and also increased confidence for mentees. Some mentors reported less reliance on them on the part of mentees, and some reduced contact for second semester.  2. Mentees reported increased confidence and ability to handle university workload. Showed less dependence on mentor and in some cases requested reduced or more informal contact with mentor for second semester.
Communication skills	Improvement in communication skills noted and reported by both mentors and mentees.
ICT support	ICT support more widely requested than expected; time management; advice with university structure and study planning.
Role of researcher	Monitor and evaluator of the scheme; Facilitator in ongoing support and training; Responding to individual situations specific to mentor/mentee relations.

Table 19: Theme analysis – Phase 3

The main purpose of the third phase was to review formally the progress of the mentoring process and to gather data on the impact of the first semester's experiences from both students' and academic staff's perspectives. Significant findings at this stage were the positive responses of both mentors and mentees to the first semester's experience of mentoring, and specific responses in relation to confidence both in academic work and in university life in general. These responses were endorsed by academic staff. All participants reported improvement in communication skills. An unexpected finding was the relative lack of experience of mentees with computers and with ICT skills generally at a low level. This had not been identified in advance as a likely problem, although, given the low level of ICT availability in schools, especially in more remote areas, perhaps should have been predicted. Although it was introduced

as a possible area of support in the mentor training, any future training should provide greater emphasis on this aspect of student skills.

Both mentors and mentees reported a growth in confidence on both parts and a maturity in the relationship to the extent that while they wished to continue, they did not feel the need for a fixed timetable and such a formal structure to the meetings as in the first semester. This supports Vygotsky’s view of the zone of proximal development (Chapter III, p. 53) and suggests that mentoring schemes should allow for the progressive development of the autonomy of the learner (the mentee) but provide the scaffolding (Wood *et al*, 1976; Bruner, 1978) for that autonomy to be achieved.

**v) Phase 4 – March/April 2011** (4<sup>th</sup> visit to Lahore)

This phase of the research fieldwork had the following stages:

**Plan:** Final evaluation.

**Action:** Individual interviews, group feedback at certificate distribution ceremony.

**Observation:** Staff and students reaction/responses before, during and at the end of the year-long project.

**Reflection:** Overall feedback.

Theme	Finding/analysis
Value to university	Senior staff indicated high satisfaction with results of project. One vice-chancellor considered wider application of mentoring across first year intake (p. 218).
Changes in attitude to mentoring	Acceptance of mentoring as a valuable support for students’ learning and engagement (p. 168-172).
Language proficiency	Proficiency in English – speaking and listening – was reported as a significant benefit for both mentors and mentees.
Self-esteem	1. Mentors felt valued and more integrated in university community. 2. Improved self-esteem reported by mentees – through increased confidence.
Co-curricular activity and student engagement	Increased confidence to participate in university activities – especially for female students.
Role of researcher	Evaluator/ non-participant observer; reflection and reflexivity.

Table 20: Theme analysis – Phase 4

Phase 4 marked the end of the mentoring process, the final evaluation and gathering of data from participants. The findings broadly supported those from the interim evaluation, but two significant additional factors emerged. The first, also indicated in the interim phase, was the need for support for increased proficiency in English – the language of tuition and assessment in the universities in Pakistan. As noted in Chapter II, it was seen that only a minority of students study at English medium schools, particularly for students from the rural areas, and those from Urdu medium schools, English proficiency is a major barrier. The use of English as the common language of the project and the issues related to language are discussed in Chapter IV, p. 101-103.

Themes identified from this phase indicate that the mentoring process provided, through the regular meetings conducted in English, both the opportunity to practice English (speaking and listening) in a non-threatening friendly environment and to address issues arising from the use of English in the classroom – for example, in technical language. The language of the project, both in training and in data collection, was English, as the language of instruction in Pakistan's universities is English. English was therefore a common language for all participants, and a language in which all participants would have sufficient competence to undertake university level study. However, as the range above the required competence level was varied, the role of a bilingual researcher was important in providing interpretation both in training and data collection. The researcher's role in interpretation, for example switching between English and Urdu to clarify a point in training, during interviews or while receiving feedback and evaluation was a significant factor in maintaining good communication between researcher and participants and between participants. The conscious interpretive role of the researcher was part of the pre-defined role as a practitioner in the plan of this action research project.

The second finding was that mentees showed increased confidence in taking part in co-curricular activities in the university, such as fashion shows, cricket matches, debating societies and other activities.

**vi) Phase 5 - April 2012 (Final research visit)**

In the final phase of this process the intended and unintended outcomes emerging and the long term impact of the project was measured. This phase involved:

**Plan:** Obtaining information on students’ grades and final feedback from academic staff and from former mentors.

**Action:** Contact participating universities, request grades for participants and control groups; contacting mentors who had graduated and in employment.

**Observation:** Impact on students and on university departments.

**Reflection:** Dissemination of project; further developments; mainstreaming; helping in careers.

Theme	Finding/analysis
Recognition of expert support needed for wider dissemination	Staff indicated that the innovation of this work in Pakistan’s context required expert guidance until schemes were fully integrated in the learning culture of the university.
Employability	Over 70% graduating mentors reported success with starting employment, with benefits in increased confidence, communication skills and an enhanced CV, backed by Certificates of Participation in the training and mentoring scheme.
Career enhancement	Graduates in employment discussed and some even initiated similar mentoring models in their work place.
Community learning and volunteering	1. Commitment to ongoing contribution to the wider community as mentor or in similar capacity (p. 177-179).  2. Mentees expressed strong desire to become mentors or to participate in some form of community support for junior students (p. 173).
Academic performance	1. Very limited access to comparative data on assessment results so no clear conclusion could be drawn. Responses to questionnaires and informal feedback from students and from academic staff indicated positive benefits in understanding and achievement. The small sample of data obtained on the academic attainment of mentors also supported the view of the positive impact of mentoring on attainment, but the sample size and other variables did not allow this to be a firm conclusion (p. 173-177).  2. The data on semester one results of the mentee group showed a clear improvement on those of the previous non-mentored cohort. The scale of the study and the range of other variables that could affect student performance did not allow this result to be viewed as a general conclusion, merely indicative (p.176).
Role of the researcher	Reflection, analysis; consideration of sustainability (p.217).

Table 21: Theme analysis – Phase 5

The final phase of research addressed two outstanding tasks. The first of these was to obtain grades from the universities for the cohorts of students in the departments taking part in the project. Despite a number of attempts to obtain these results, including visits to the departments in question, in the end only one set of results was forthcoming, those for one department in U1. While, as discussed in Chapter VI, these data are not sufficient to provide statistical evidence to support or refute the concept that mentoring helps improve student achievement, evidence from the verbal and written responses of students and of academic staff indicates strongly that mentoring has a beneficial impact on the learning of students in Pakistan, both mentors and mentees.

The second task was to hold follow-up discussions with the former mentors, mentees and some of the staff at the two universities to consider the wider and longer-term impact of the project, with particular emphasis on such matters as community learning and involvement.

One immediate impact that was reported by the university heads and the mentoring coordinators in the two universities was that this project enhanced student involvement within the university community and had benefits for the university (p. 195). As in universities in the UK and other parts of the world, in Pakistan student engagement within the university is a significant measure of the quality of the university. Students who had participated in the project were more willing to be involved as student representatives, in volunteering, in offering support to other students and in contributions to student councils and other organisations (Chapter VI, p. 177). From my personal experience as a mentor in the UK and from other studies of mentoring, this appears to be a recognisable feature of mentoring programmes (Phillips, 2009; University of Bath, 2009). Students who gain confidence and learn about university through mentoring are well prepared for other activities where student contributions are required. It may not be, however, that the mentoring process as such is the direct cause of a student's wider involvement although the development of confidence is important. It may be, in a volunteering context, that those who volunteer as mentors are pre-disposed to becoming more involved in all aspects of student life.

Former mentees showed strongly a willingness to take part in voluntary schemes such as mentoring in the future. This finding was also reflected in the mentors' responses, particularly in their views of how being a mentor might impact on their future role in



society. This is an important finding in relation to the possible impact of mentoring schemes on the development of community learning and citizenship programmes in Pakistan.

The student mentors who progressed to further studies at different universities reported continuing involvement in mentoring and similar roles based on their experience during the project. One student from U2, now studying at the University of Wales in the UK, has volunteered as a mentor in his new department and was selected on the basis of his prior experience. Another former mentor reported that he and three fellow student mentors who had joined Master's programmes at the National University of Science and Technology in Islamabad had initiated a student-led mentoring project with junior students at the university (p.177-179).

One further theme, not predicted at the start of the project, was found in the discussions with mentors who were seeking or in employment. This group clearly found that their participation as mentors had given them advantage in seeking employment and increased their confidence in new employment roles. As indicated in Table 21 (p. 195), 70% of the students who had graduated were in employment in the first year after their graduation and all of those interviewed reported that they had included the certificate for participation in the mentoring project in their CV. The mentors who had graduated and were in employment discussed their participation in the peer mentoring project with their employers at the interview stage and they reported that their employers were 'curious to know', 'interested in knowing more' about their role as peer mentors. All mentors had been given copies of the training manual and other paperwork during training, and were encouraged to share their experience and newly acquired knowledge of mentoring. One peer mentor from U1 who, after graduating, was employed in the teacher training department of the government had initiated implementing peer support for in-service training using some of the resources developed for this peer mentoring project. She said that her employer was impressed by her 'confidence, clarity of thought, initiative and knowledge in introducing peer support among new and senior teachers'.

Finally, in this phase, it should be noted that academic staff, reluctant at first, had become aware of the benefits of mentoring schemes. However, they still felt inhibited by their own lack of knowledge and experience of mentoring, as well as lack of time.

This indicates that sustainability of mentoring schemes requires an expert presence to initiate the handover to those internal to the university.

### **SECTION III: Recommendations from the project**

At the end of Chapter III, a number of features of best practice in mentoring schemes were identified from studies and observations in the UK and other developed countries. These were used to develop the form of peer mentoring in this project, with, as discussed, some modifications appropriate to Pakistan. Andrews and Clark (2011) made a series of recommendations (p.71-72) based on their work in the UK over the same period as my research and which coincide with many of my findings. As the discussion at the end of Chapter III indicates, these recommendations follow the well-established good practice of a number of existing mentoring schemes and echo those followed in the current project. However, some modifications and additions to the established practice were necessary for the introduction of mentoring in Pakistan's universities, and would be necessary in other countries where mentoring is not widely used and where peer learning and support is at an early stage of recognition and implementation.

As retention is not a major issue in Pakistan, the recommendation at university level is that peer mentoring should be considered as part of a learning and teaching strategy in recognition of the fact that, in participating in mentoring, both mentors and mentees develop a different approach and attitude to learning. My own observations in the UK and elsewhere suggest that, notwithstanding the importance of retention in certain institutions, mentoring is most effective when allied to learner development as this helps the mentee to situate themselves in an authentic learning site which is embedded in the university culture. Improved retention could be a secondary effect of this intervention.

Recognition that introducing mentoring can bring about change in the learning culture of the institution is very important, and a systematic approach to the management of this change needs to be taken. This means that the person(s) responsible for the project need to be aware of the potential for change, and that at the institutional level, other adjustments may be needed to sustain the change.

Training should be extended to include academic staff who are directly (as coordinators) or indirectly involved in implementation. Where peer support has not been part of the

experience of academic staff, training can help to bridge the gap between the formal teaching responsibilities of academics and the changes that may take place for the learners. As the current project has shown, institutions in Pakistan are aware that there is very little expertise in mentoring within their institutions. It is very important for sustainability that training for academic staff is developed to introduce them to the principles and practice of mentoring so that schemes can be introduced and supported from within.

Finally, it needs to be recognised that financial and other resources may not be available, and the importance of developing and supporting a volunteer based scheme, with minimal resources is vital to the success and sustainability of the scheme. The energy and enthusiasm of students can be most effectively harnessed for this purpose. Of all the participants in the introduction of mentoring, those with most to gain and most to contribute are the students themselves.

The recommendations arising from the analysis of the research findings and the discussion above are summarised below (Table 22) in the form of a plan for the implementation of peer mentoring more generally in Pakistan, and in other developing countries where the practice of structured mentoring is not common:

#### **Plan**

- Explore the cultural context in detail:
  1. general culture: religion, politics, customs, traditions, media forms:  
In the context of Pakistan, attention needs to be paid to the dominant Islamic culture (and the different forms that this may take); specific local and regional customs and cultural practices; the volatility of the politics in Pakistan, both local and national; the ongoing security situation; and the media forms and contents that engage the attention of students, including mainstream film, music and television, but especially the extensive use amongst students in Pakistan of social media.
  2. culture of learning within the institution - dominant learning model:  
Pedagogy throughout Pakistan is only very slowly changing from a teacher-led, authority based approach. It cannot be assumed that either students or teachers will welcome or understand student-centred approaches.
  3. cultural groupings within the student body: language, ethnic groupings, lifestyle, student societies and organisations; educational backgrounds;  
Western style students' unions are almost unknown in Pakistan, and student societies tend to be formal (sports or debating) with limited options and not usually organised around language or religion. This means that it can be difficult to match mentors and mentees or to interpret the underlying student interests or cultural or educational background and requires a high level of sensitivity in interpretation of

student concerns.

- Prepare in detail appropriate materials and training in response to the cultural contexts indicated above, with special emphasis on the mentoring dyad as a communication/cultural dialogue and as an academic partnership.

### **Action**

- Prepare ground work with senior staff/ university executive:  
Universities in Pakistan have formal hierarchies of management, and it is important to gain support at the highest level to establish the process at department level.
- Ensure and emphasise in preliminary communications the shared ownership of and responsibility for the scheme by all participants
- Address any logistical issues: In Pakistan, it cannot be assumed that resources will exist within the institution to provide logistical support.
- Training of all participants at all levels: mentoring coordinators, mentors and mentees is essential and as much of the training as possible should be shared. This provides an example of levelling, where all participants including academic staff and students are regarded as peers. This is an unusual situation in Pakistan HE.
- Matching of mentors and mentees with particular attention to:
  1. Culturally specific requirements (eg gender, language, subject) according to scheme objectives but with particular attention to the points listed in the Plan section above.
  2. Introduction of mentors to mentees (may require a formal protocol if social norms require)
- Provision of:
  1. ongoing support to all participants (external and internal) during each stage of the process
  2. rewards at different stages to maintain commitment and engagement
  3. continuing opportunities for self-support and nurturing within the group to emphasise the 'learning community'.

### **Observation/monitoring**

- Ongoing and interim evaluation
- End of mentoring session evaluation
- Post-session feedback from former mentors

### **Reflection**

- Reflect on evaluations and feedback and respond as follows:
  1. Note and respond to changing landscape of student needs, in-session if needed
  2. Provide support to both mentor and mentee if there is breakdown of mentoring relationship
  3. For each stage in the process, identify areas of conflict or mis-communication and consider remedies

Respect cultural sensitivities that emerge and ensure behaviours change if necessary.

Table 22: Recommendations from the project

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In my action research study, I investigated the value of a specific intervention into the learning culture of two universities in Pakistan. This intervention, introducing structured student peer mentoring, was previously untried in any of the universities in Pakistan. The scheme was based on a culturally specific adaptation of models of peer mentoring widely used in the UK and other developed countries. Some forms of structured mentoring roles were previously introduced in education in Pakistan (p. 3), but only for professional training (teacher education, medical education), using academic staff as mentors. No form of structured student peer mentoring had been used for undergraduate or postgraduate students on non-professional courses.

In this chapter, I revisit and discuss objectives of the research listed in Chapter I, p. 2, and the extent to which they were met, in the light of the findings from the research fieldwork and in relation to the wider context and potential consequences of the project. The objectives contributed to my aim to explore the impact of the introduction of student peer mentoring to selected universities in Pakistan and this aim is revisited at the end of the chapter. Lastly, I review the research question and suggest conclusions drawn from the overall evaluation of my project.

Objective 1: To develop a framework and operational system of structured student peer mentoring for student support in the selected universities in Pakistan.

In order to introduce peer mentoring for students it was important to know the barriers for learning for Pakistan's HE students. In interviews and questionnaires with staff and students (Chapter VI) during Phase 1 (p. 115) and on the basis of previous studies (Chapter II), I identified the specific issues students face in Pakistan indicated in Chapter VI (p. 150-158). However, the sample of students was fairly small, and selected from just two of Pakistan's universities located in one city. The sample cannot be regarded as generalisable, representing the student population in Pakistan's universities as a whole, without further research and a wider sample (Bailey, 1994; Bell, 2010; Somekh and Lewin, 2011). Both of the universities selected were in Lahore and

were familiar to me as a student or through my previous research project with A Level students. If such a project were conducted in other universities in a different province, for example, in Baluchistan or North-West Territories, it would be necessary to adapt both the approach taken in establishing the project, and also the training and other resources to take into account a number of factors that did not apply in Lahore. In Northern or Western provinces, the gender roles are much more differentiated and the local culture is more rigid in maintaining that differentiation. It would probably not have been possible to have even the small amount of cross-gender mentoring that was possible in Lahore. However, as discussed in Chapter II, the common heritage of the university system in Pakistan in the colonial legacy of the UK has meant that most universities in the country have a shared and familiar structure and culture, as in most countries throughout the world. Local cultural variations will impact through the specific characteristics of the student cohorts, and the negotiations that produce the authentic learning site of the student will at least begin from a shared university learning culture (Chapter II, p. 31). The need to maintain flexibility in implementation, and the need to ensure that mentors are trained to respond to the specific needs of students is essential.

Some issues were highly specific to the context at the time of the research fieldwork, for example, the security situation described in Phase 2 (Chapter V, p. 139). Although security is an ongoing issue for all students in Pakistan, the issue and its impact on students will vary considerably over time and from city to city. This emphasises the need for such projects to reflect the immediacy of the situation facing the student and the impact it has on their experience. As discussed in Chapter III, p. 52, recognition of the specificity of the context is a well-established feature of research into mentoring (Jacobi, 2001; Miller, 2002; Chang *et al*, 2003; Clutterbuck, 2004; Phillips, 2009 and USF, 2011). Furthermore, the importance of the researcher's familiarisation with the context of fieldwork helps to address such unforeseeable situations efficiently (Herr and Anderson, 2005). In the case of my research, the ability of the researcher to respond as an insider to the detailed circumstances of the situation in Lahore, culturally and politically, during training and in ongoing support, was particularly important (p. 83). As discussed above, had the research been located in a less familiar context, a different approach would have been necessary. This could involve a period of familiarisation for the researcher in advance of the project, or more reliance on local coordinators to build

a sufficient understanding of the learning culture in the university and its immediate cultural context.

As shown in Chapter VI, the academic and non-academic issues and barriers raised by the participants are similar in many ways to those indicated in Chapters II and III. For both institutions and students in Pakistan, however, the concern over retention is much less marked than is the case for the UK and USA, where mentoring schemes are frequently established to minimise dropout rates (Miller, 2002; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; Phillips, 2009). While student mentoring schemes in universities in UK, USA and Australia may have different objectives from those in Pakistan, the issues that mentors could face are recognisably similar.

One issue where difference was noted between students in Pakistan and those in developed countries was that of the low level of ICT skills amongst new entrants to university in Pakistan. This is a real barrier to learning for students in Pakistan, especially in the initial stages of the course, although this was not identified in advance by either staff or students. In the UK, local students are, for the most part, very familiar with a range of ICT skills through following the national curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. Although ICT is also part of the national curriculum in Pakistan, the lack of suitable equipment in many schools means that students enter HE without even the most basic level of skills expected (Chapter II, VI and VII, Table 19).

As discussed in Chapter II, there is an assumption in Pakistan's universities that the majority of student support for anything other than direct teaching is provided outside the university (Zubair, 2001; Haeri, 2002; Rahman, 2009; Iqbal, 2011). In considering the current range of student support services in selected universities in Pakistan, the interviews with senior staff indicated that there were minimal or no student support services similar to those available in HEIs in developed countries. Only one example of an academic adviser service (in one university, U2) was found during interviews in the Preliminary Phase and Phase 1 (p. 150). This service was based on the US system of academic advice for the selection of modules, with approximately 20 students allocated to certain members of academic staff. Findings from the interviews indicated that access to this service was very difficult (p. 160, 167). This was not because support staff, academic staff or even the universities themselves were unwilling to provide support,

but because of a lack of funding, time and of a structure within the universities to provide this support. Although both universities claimed some form of student support service available for students, the numbers of staff available to help students were very small and the impact on staff and student perceptions of student support especially professional support in the form of counselling were minimal (Chapter VI, Table 10). Any form of professional counselling, apart from career counselling, is usually regarded in the local cultural context as a social stigma. The extent to which this service is effective is a debatable issue (The News International, 2012). It proved very difficult to find any information on counselling services within the selected universities in particular, and HE in Pakistan in general.

There is a contrast here with the availability of student support in the UK universities considered in Chapters III, V and VI. Where mentoring is introduced in those institutions, there is usually a long and well-established arrangement of paid staff undertaking a variety of support services, from student welfare and finance and learning support to extensive counselling services (p. 149; Table 7b). This is most clearly shown in the findings from my own university support services, and similar examples of student support services at other universities in the UK (Phillips 2009; Middlesex University SLA, 2011; MINE 2011).

The introduction of mentoring into the two universities in Pakistan had none of the advantages of a reference point of existing university services, and had to respond to a range of challenges similar to those faced in the UK universities mentioned above without the benefit of paid and professional help. Thus, while the principles of good mentoring practice derived from the experiences in developed countries formed the basis of the scheme in Pakistan, it had to be recognised that the mentors and the mentoring coordinators were much more isolated than their counterparts in the UK, and that the role of the Project Coordinator needed to encompass the full range of professional support available in universities in developed countries.

As structured student peer mentoring was virtually unknown in universities in Pakistan before this project, the models that could be used were heavily reliant on the experience of universities in developed countries. This is discussed in the review of literature in Chapter III, and in the findings on mentoring at my own university and at other universities in the UK in Chapter VI. The success of these models in a wide variety of



contexts and with diverse groups of students, including overseas students in UK universities, (Aimhigher, 2006; Phillips, 2009; UKCISA, 2008) suggested that adaptation of a model of student peer mentoring to Pakistan's situation would also be effective. The importance of a low-cost but effective solution is of considerable importance to the universities in that country. It is clear from the findings in Chapter VI and the themes analysed in Chapter VII (Table 17-21) that facilitated peer mentoring within a well-structured form adapted to the local cultural context can successfully provide specific support for individual students. As indicated above, however, without the professional support provided in the UK and elsewhere, the mentors must be prepared to take considerable responsibility for their mentees, and the planning, training and coordination has to take account of this.

In Chapters IV and V, I described the process through which the mentoring scheme was introduced to the two universities where the fieldwork was conducted. The support of the vice-chancellors at those universities, and possibly also the advocacy by the Higher Education Commission (2009) of a more learner-centred approach in Pakistan's HE, was timely in allowing a receptive atmosphere at the highest level for a project of this kind and helped to overcome resistance from staff members. It was also helpful that, as a researcher crossing the two sectors of UK and Pakistan HE (Gummesson, 1991; O'Brien, 2001; Rachel, 2007), I had familiarity with the needs of students and institutions (discussed in Chapter IV, Section II and Chapter VII, Table 18-21). This also had some impact on the willingness of staff to cooperate because I was able to demonstrate considerable awareness of their situation and speak directly to their anxieties and concerns (p. 5, 91, 117, 202). Without such factors, the project may have been much more difficult to carry forward.

This point illustrates the extent to which this kind of research project is facilitated by the researcher's position as an insider or, as in my case, an insider and an outsider, both in the practical ways suggested above, but also in terms of the data. Herr and Anderson (2005) identify a spectrum of positions that may be taken in research, each of which has certain advantages and constraints. In approaching this research, I was an outsider in a number of ways, carrying out interviews, using questionnaires, delivering a project that had its inception within a HE system significantly different from that being studied. Despite this, the fact that I shared a similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic and national

heritage with most of the participants placed me firmly as an insider according to the definition given by Ganga and Scott (2006). As an insider, I had the advantage of avoiding some of the assumptions that could have been made by an outsider (Haeri, 2002; Mercer, 2007). On the other hand, as an insider, I also made assumptions based on my own experience but which proved in practice not to be tenable. One such example was that I had assumed that cross-gender mentoring would prove problematic, if not unacceptable. In practice, when pragmatism required that cross-gender mentoring was used, no such problems arose (p. 58, 113, 120, 129-130, 155, 182 and 186). Thus, while for much of the data collection, my position was that of an outsider using a variety of relatively conventional methods, my insider positionality impacted in important ways on the interpretation of the data gathered. One particular example was in my ability, in interviews and focus groups, as well as in training, to identify, through incorrect use of words or grammar, and through body language, the points at which the subject's use of English might have been a barrier to the accurate recording of responses. At such points, I was able to switch to Urdu to clarify the meaning of the response (see also discussion on language in Chapter IV, p. 101). One of the issues that arises from these complex questions of the role of the researcher is that of the bias that could be brought in either because of distance from the subject (outsider) or too close identification with the subject (insider). While the outsider/insider position might partly resolve this, triangulation (Chapter IV, p. 100) between different methods of data gathering was used to ensure a level of dependability of the results.

Ideally, for an action research project, it would have been preferable to run the programme for a second cycle, with the results of the first cycle impacting on the design of the second (Kemmis, 1993; Hudson *et al*, 2000; Owen *et al*, 2001; Somekh and Lewin, 2011). However, both the time constraints of the project and the absence of funding meant that only one cycle could run, given the lack of expertise within the universities. This has meant that, though the results of the project were generally positive, extension of the project with a further longitudinal study could contribute to a better understanding of the efficacy of this intervention.

As discussed in Chapter III, the success of any mentoring project depends on effective training of the participants, and specifically in delivering the essential skills and knowledge to the mentors (MBF, 2008). In Chapter V and Appendix 3a and b, a

detailed description of the design and implementation of the training workshops is provided. The facilitator's notes used have been provided in Appendix 3b and the importance of training and the design of the materials is discussed fully as one of the significant themes in Chapter VII, Phase 2 and Table 18 (p. 189 and 190). One of the important points raised by mentors was that they would have liked to have observed mentoring in practice before they started their own sessions with their mentees. In some training sessions, this is done by watching and discussing filmed mentoring sessions, but more effectively it is carried out in ongoing schemes by observation or from previous experience of having been mentored (Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2007; MBF, 2010). One conclusion that can be drawn is that where mentoring is introduced into a situation for the first time, as in this case, it would be valuable to introduce filmed examples, possibly backed by role-play, into the training sessions, though it would be necessary to use examples that are as close as possible to the specific situation for which the mentors are being trained.

The exceptional security situation in Lahore at the time of the training led to major problems in following the schedule designated for the workshops (see Chapter V). Considerable effort was necessary to reschedule the workshops, and it is important to note that the enthusiasm of the students and their willingness to overcome the problems that faced the group that the training sessions, albeit somewhat curtailed, were able to proceed and enable the project to commence on time (p. 131, 139). Given the unpredictability of the circumstances in which the project was conducted, it was important to adopt a flexible and adaptable approach to implementation at different stages, both in the logistics and in the content of the training itself. It is one of the hallmarks of action research that it is adaptable and responsive to the actuality of the situations (Herr and Anderson, 2005; Cohen *et al*, 2011) and project coordinators are required to demonstrate a certain level of flexibility. Although, normally, the cycle of response and adaptation in action research would take place over the whole period of the activity, it is always possible to introduce a shorter response time in order to deal with a particular issue. Thus, when the planned training schedule was disrupted by the security situation, and the immediate action was prevented, observation and reflection led to a revised plan (p. 138-139).

The participation of academic staff (mentoring coordinators) in the workshops was a significant factor in gaining support from academics for the project and for increasing their awareness and understanding of the value of mentoring for students. As mentioned above, the role of the researcher as an insider/outsider in engaging the cooperation of the staff was pivotal. During the training workshops, the relationship between myself as researcher and the staff as peers took on a form of peer support, and facilitated the willingness of the staff to participate, and increased their respect both for myself as researcher and project coordinator and for the project itself. However, given that the staff involved did not receive an allocation of time for their role in the project, meant that, even with greater awareness and understanding of the aim of the project, they were not able to give more time to participate. This issue was resolved by the appointment of a local coordinator and this again supports the idea that such projects require the project coordinator to be adaptable and to resolve such difficulties with appropriate solutions (Gummesson, 1991; Goleman, 2006).

Another important aspect of the involvement of academic staff in the workshops was that their inclusion indicated to the student mentors that this was an activity that was supported by and integral to the university. The staff were highly active in the workshops, helping with such things as taking photographs, arranging venues and refreshments as well as participating very actively alongside the students in the training itself and completing the training evaluation form (with 100% response; see Chapter V, p. 134; Chapter VI, p. 158).

Interactive training workshops, with support materials, a layout facilitating active participation by all present and a non-hierarchical and open discussion format (Chapter V, Phase 2) were experienced for the first time by most of the students. Their response to this situation was very positive as has been discussed in the findings on the evaluation questionnaire in Chapter VI which reflected a high degree of engagement with the training activities (p. 110). At the same time, this encounter with a different form of learning, participatory and non-hierarchical, served as an important marker for the underlying theme of the impact that peer-support can make in the learning culture (Bandura, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991). A conclusion that may be drawn is that, in planning the training for activities such as peer-mentoring, close attention must be given to the format, structure and pedagogy of the training right from the inception of the

project not only to ensure the engagement of all participants but also to maintain a synergy with the aim of the project as a whole (Clutterbuck and Klasen, 2007; Chapter V, p. 123).

In the section above on the training sessions conducted prior to implementation of mentoring, reference to students referred only to prospective mentors, and not to mentees. In the final evaluations, both mentors and mentees indicated that some form of training for mentees would have been beneficial to establish basic principles for the mentor-mentee relationship on both sides (Chapter VI and VII). In the project, mentees were guided only by the 'Guidelines for Mentees' (p. 123). Following the feedback, it would appear that more formal training or guidance for mentees would have been beneficial to address such issues as time management for mentoring sessions, the ground rules and parameters of the mentoring relationship. In Chapter III (p. 67), where best practice in successful mentoring schemes is discussed (Leyden, 2002; MacConville and Rae, 2006; University of Bath, 2011), the schemes show very little attention paid to training for mentees. There is a tendency to avoid training mentees with concern that this might draw attention to those selected for mentoring (Leyden, 2002; USF, 2011). In this project, however, the need was identified by mentors, and the issue of drawing attention to mentees was not a problem as the mentees were not selected because of criteria which might identify them as problem students. Mentors also indicated that some form of ongoing training and formal support during the mentoring period. This would have helped further in addressing certain issues as the dynamic of the relationship changed over the course of weekly sessions, for example, to assist in responding to the way in which the mentees developed increasing independence over the period of mentoring, with consequent changes to the nature and timing of the mentoring meetings (Chapter VI, p. 165; Vygotsky 1978).

The limited data on the attainment of students given in Chapter VI provided some basis for comparison of the impact of mentoring on academic results. As pointed out in that chapter, the analysis of results with a small sample over a short period of time cannot take account of the range of variables outside the control of the researcher. The conclusions that could be drawn were therefore limited and cannot be generalised. An extended longitudinal study would be required to achieve this, but even in such a study,

as discussed at the beginning of Chapter VII, the variables surrounding educational attainment are complex and difficult to control.

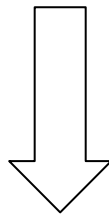
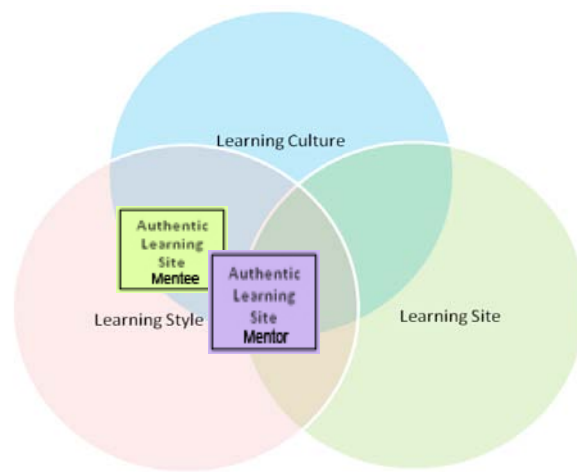
Objective 2: To elaborate a model of peer mentoring with which to provide theoretical underpinning for the introduction of student peer mentoring in Pakistan's universities and other similar contexts.

The results from the peer mentoring programme also demonstrated that mentoring by senior peers helps new entrants into the university in developing and situating their authentic learning site within the learning culture of the university. Students who enter university are joining an institution which is different in a number of ways from their previous experience. They could have experienced learning in a school or college which is quite different from that expected at university. They may come from a cultural background which is not shared by the majority of students or staff at the university. They may have little experience with technologies used every day in the university. They could have attended schools in which Urdu rather than the English of university tuition was the language of instruction. All of these factors can place the new student outside the position needed to gain full benefit from the learning offered within the university. The student's individual learning style (Kolb, 1984; Lave and Wenger, 1991) is a complex product of their previous formal and informal learning experiences, aptitudes and a number of psychological and cultural factors. A learning style that may be effective for rote learning may not support independent critical thought and enquiry. For effective learning, there has to be a synergy between the wider learning culture in which the student lives, the learning style of the student and the specific learning site of the institution in which the formal learning is to take place.

Using the concept of the authentic learning site (Chapters II and III, p. 29-31, 55-57), I have argued that the new student occupies an authentic learning site which is outside the learning site of the university and therefore, even though their authentic learning site is effective in helping them achieve a place at university, it may not be effective within the learning culture of the university (learning site).

The following diagram shows how, following this argument, students entering university who face difficulty in adapting their learning to the learning culture of the

university may, with help from scaffolding provided by senior peers acting as mentors, attain a position to achieve effective learning within that learning culture.



Student peer mentoring catalyses the positioning of the mentees' authentic learning site within the university's learning site through scaffolding provided by the mentors.



Key: Authentic learning site - Mentor  
Authentic learning site - Mentee



Figure 12: Rachel's model of mentoring and authentic learning sites

The Venn diagrams above represent the situation whereby structured peer mentoring (mentoring by a senior peer) catalyses the process of change by making use of the zone of proximal development of the mentee and mentor.

In the first of the two diagrams, the authentic learning site of the mentee is seen to be outside the learning site of the institution, but within the wider external learning culture which may include both formal and informal learning. The mentor is seen to share some aspects of the learning culture, and some aspects of the mentee's learning style (shown by the overlap of the mentor's and mentee's authentic learning sites), but is also positioned within the learning site of the university. In this way, the mentor and mentee are in a position whereby the mentor can assist the mentee to attain an authentic learning site within the learning culture of the university. This is illustrated in the second diagram. The mentoring relationship establishes the scaffolding (Bruner, 1978), through shared aspects of the learning culture and learning styles, which forms a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) to help the mentee to learn effectively within the university environment.

This theoretical model of peer mentoring provides an explanation of how the peer mentoring relationship between mentor and mentee works within different cultural settings. It emphasises the need for preparation and training for the mentors that is attuned to the precise social and cultural environment of the students. It highlights the need to establish boundaries and guidelines for the mentor so that the mentoring relationship is established within mentee's zone of proximal development in such a way that the mentor can create the scaffolding by which authentic learning site, their learner identity, can be situated within the learning culture of the university. By recognising both the individual learning style of mentor and mentee, and also the importance of their positions within the wider culture external to the university, it offers a dynamic view of learning within universities in which the students themselves create a learning culture.

Objective 3: To examine the possibility that student peer mentoring could facilitate the development of student-centred learning culture in universities and other education provision in Pakistan.

The primary activity in the mentoring process during the project was to develop and sustain effective mentoring relationships between two peers. During the period of mentoring, and subsequently during final evaluation, evidence emerged, not just of the way in which the participants viewed the learning process from their own individual points of view (Chapter VI, p. 168, 177), but also in which the participants as a group



began to see themselves as part of a distinct learning community (Lave and Wenger, 1991) as a result of being a selected group taking part in a different activity within the university (Chapter VI, p. 170, 179). When the mentors and mentees met together as a group, for example, in focus groups and in feedback sessions or during certificate presentation ceremonies, it became clear that a common form of identity had become established, of students with a different relationship to learning and to peer-relationships than had previously been the case (Chapter VI, p. 172). That this had become part of the self-awareness of the mentees as well as mentors is evidenced by the willingness of mentees to become mentors themselves (see Chapter VII, p. 194-197), and in that of mentors by their wish to take forward the values and understanding that they had gained into their employment and further study. This clearly indicates that the participating students recognised their role in the ownership of their own learning, as active and not as passive learners. In some cases this took the form of initiating and establishing mentoring schemes themselves (p. 177-179).

As discussed in Chapter II, any student entering university is engaged in a process of transition with the new culture of the university, with the new academic context and the different roles and tasks required. The social and intellectual challenges they face contribute to constructing a new learner identity through which the students position themselves within, and are positioned, by the new learning context. This forms the specific authentic learning site of the student (James and Bloomer, 2001). This learner positioning is a dynamic process affecting both individual learner, and others in the same learning context, and contributes to the learning culture of the university (Chapter III, p. 55-57). Through the strategic introduction of the mentoring scheme in the selected universities, the group of mentors and mentees brought about a convergence of positionality, changing the learning culture. Consequently, the students developed amongst themselves a genuine community of peer-supporting learners, and forms of learner identity that individual mentor/mentees were able to use in later contexts such as employment or further study.

This new form of learner identity, as part of a changed learning community was established by the change management process that had taken place in introducing peer-mentoring. In the universities in Pakistan, the establishment of a new and unfamiliar system required a particular form of leadership, appropriate to introducing and

managing change with minimal additional resources. In this thesis, reference has been made to the role of the researcher in initiating and carrying through interventions into the culture of the participating universities (p. 15, 46, 83, 91, 117, 183 and 202). The role included the need to develop a collaborative approach to addressing resistance to change (Bush 2005), the ability to demonstrate leadership while encouraging ownership of the change process in the participants (Fullan, 2001; Clutterbuck 2004) and the ability to be flexible and adaptive in implementing change and addressing resistance to change, especially in a highly normative culture.

At the end of this project, it can be concluded that changes at a number of levels have taken place as a result of the project, both in the individuals who participated and also in the views of learning in the universities. It was very important that my project was supported initially at the university level, and that staff members involved rapidly moved from a position of resistance to one of understanding and support. This meant that the developing learning community of mentors and mentees did not face conflict in their everyday identities as members of the university. Had the process been less well-supported, it could have been more difficult for students to develop the form of learner identity that enabled them to enact the change in the learning culture. It also allowed a strong synergy to develop between the authentic learning sites of the mentors and the mentees and the learning culture of the university (James and Bloomer, 2001). Where there is a higher degree of dissonance between the authentic positions of learners and the learner identities expected, implicitly or explicitly, within the university, the learners could find themselves isolated (p.187, 211-212).

In the UK, mentoring projects have been associated with support for ‘non-traditional entrants’ to HE as a consequence of widened access (Aimhigher, 2006; Phillips, 2009; University of Bath, 2011). This is partly in recognition that the distance between the culture of the university and the previous experience of that group of students created feelings of isolation and alienation. In Pakistan, the broadening of access to higher education is fairly recent (Chapter II). Pakistan’s universities are seeing an increasing number of students who could also be considered as non-traditional, for example, being the first member of a family to attend university. This has meant that an increasing number of students are not able to access the support structures that have been available traditionally to students in Pakistan’s universities. This project has shown that peer

mentoring can bring significant benefits to this group of non-traditional students. In U2, for example, the university selected mentees who were not local residents of Lahore, based on the previous experience of the university that such students face greater challenges than local students. Most of these students were residing in university student halls whereas local students were day-scholars and remained within the support network of family and friends. Support from mentors helped the non-local students to be assimilated into the local community of learners.

This project has demonstrated that the initiative to introduce student peer mentoring in Pakistan has the potential to facilitate the development of student-focussed learning, and to lead changes to the learning culture within the universities.

### **Overall conclusions**

As stated in Chapter 1 p. 2, the aim of my study was to introduce structured peer mentoring as a form of student support within selected universities in Pakistan and to assess its effectiveness on the student experience and on the learning culture within the universities. Peer mentoring schemes have been introduced into universities across the world in a number of different forms, and have been targeted at a diverse range of situations. For my doctoral project, I faced the challenge of designing and introducing a structured student peer mentoring scheme in selected universities in Pakistan, a country where no such schemes had previously been used. It was also a context in which there was little or no awareness of the concept of student peer mentoring among students or staff. In so doing, I have developed a specific mentoring scheme which is unique to the situation, but which is based on principles which give the potential for adaptation to a range of similar situations both in Pakistan and elsewhere.

The research question articulated in Chapter 1 was:

*What are the implications of the implementation of student peer mentoring in universities in Pakistan for the development of a student-centred culture of learning within the university community?*

I have explored this question through the action research project described in this thesis and, in addition to the responses to the project's objectives outlined above, I draw two major conclusions in answer to the research question.

The **first** conclusion is that structured student peer mentoring can be introduced into universities in a country where such a practice is previously unknown, and that such an intervention can bring a number of immediate benefits to both mentoring and mentored students.

Based on student peer mentoring schemes which have been widely used in universities in the developed countries to provide enhanced student support, I worked with the two universities to provide a structured peer mentoring programme for new students, mentored by senior students and successfully introduced a structured peer mentoring scheme into two universities in one city in Pakistan. In Pakistan, structured student peer mentoring in HE as a strategy for student support is a new concept and practice.

Resistance to change is ever-present in projects involving an external intervention, but in a specific culture where change is seen as a threat to an established way of thinking, micro-planning and a collegial approach at each stage of implementation is necessary. In the context in which I was working, it proved to be essential to establish the commitment of the university authorities at the highest level to the introduction of peer mentoring. In such a context, where there could be some resistance to an intervention of this kind, such support is a key factor in gaining success for such schemes. However, it was also necessary to gain consensus among those who are actively involved in the project, both students and staff, as a top-down managerial approach is not sufficient basis for a project which involves close cooperation between participants.

Peer mentoring in this project developed lifelong learning skills in student participants. Student mentors participating in the project reported that they developed skills that helped them increase their employment prospects. Peer mentoring enhanced the key skills of the mentors and mentees; communication, leadership and learning. Transition for mentees into university life was achieved successfully with improved student experience and student engagement for participating students.

With the establishment of peer to peer support through mentoring, the relationship of both mentor and mentee to the learning site of the university also changed. The situation of the new learner in both cases is one in which both the differences of position in the wider learning culture outside the university, and the differences in learning styles are acknowledged and supported by a peer, or in the case of an extended mentoring scheme,

a peer group. This suggests that peer mentoring can impact on the culture of learning of the university in establishing shared zones of proximal development, sites of learning, which are to some extent de-centred from the established culture of the university, and which not only establish a learning community amongst the peer group, but also will impact on the ways in which the university needs to respond to its learners.

The **second** major conclusion of my research is that change in the learning culture can be achieved through a well designed and managed peer mentoring scheme.

My study has demonstrated that structured student peer mentoring can provide an opportunity to develop a new learning community in the university. In the context of contemporary Pakistan, student peer mentoring was able to challenge the existing hierarchical patterns of learning and teaching and promoted a different culture of learning within the education system, with a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. Peer mentoring has the potential to offer students in HE in Pakistan the ownership of their own learning and the opportunity to become more autonomous learners.

Furthermore, peer enhanced support for students in the selected universities in Pakistan provided leverage for improved communication between and within year groups and promoted community volunteering and community engagement, for example, mentees volunteering to become mentors. Projects of this nature could benefit immensely from support with funding to provide the resources needed and to help it mainstream into the established university-wide support services in educational institutions in developing countries like Pakistan.

Structured student peer mentoring has been shown through this project to be effective in universities in Pakistan, provided the project is adapted to address the economic, social, cultural and religious contextual needs specific to the country (Table 22, p. 199-200). Introducing a new culture of learning in a developing country with very limited resources raises challenges that, in developed countries, are less of an obstacle to change. Even where, as in this project, careful planning led to a situation in which change was embraced by the participants and, to a lesser extent, the institutions, sustaining change without additional resources has proved difficult. Notwithstanding the fact that the project was seen as a success by the universities involved and that the purpose and methodology of the project was broadly accepted, it proved difficult for the

universities to bring peer-mentoring, in the form developed during the project, into widespread use.

In university 1, no scheme was put in place to continue the project. One contributory factor was the ongoing resourcing issue. However, another significant factor emerged. It was the view of senior colleagues in the university that, because of the innovatory character of student peer mentoring in Pakistan, the expertise that I had provided for the project did not exist to a sufficient extent in the university, and that it would be necessary for such input to be made available for a second phase in order that the activity could be brought successfully into mainstream university practice.

In university 2, the mentoring scheme was adapted successfully to support all first year students. Again, due to resource constraints, it was not fully implemented in the same form, but, in consultation with myself, the Rector of the university decided to arrange for mentors to support academic staff who acted as Academic Advisors for students. This allowed the process of mentoring to continue with an immediate impact on the learning culture of the university as student peers became involved in support for new students across the whole intake. This demonstrates the adaptability of the process of mentoring to the different needs of the institution. This project clearly shows that the development of peer mentoring in Pakistan's universities needs to be sustained. Appropriate expertise to support this development would be necessary as the comments from the staff at U1 indicate.

Finally, this thesis has developed an original contribution to the existing literature on student peer mentoring by developing a theoretical model of mentoring which specifically addresses the importance of recognising the comparative cultural positions of mentors and mentees in relation to the learning culture of the university. This recognition can help to ensure that the mentoring relationship not only facilitates the mentee to adapt to the social conditions of university life, but also to provide the most effective scaffolding with which to develop their learning within the university. My study demonstrates the ways in which student peer mentors help develop and situate the authentic learning site of the new entrants into HE during their transition from school/college to university. This, in turn, both develops the new entrant's potential for

effective learning within the university environment, and also transforms that environment into one in which peer support is an integral part of learning.

Aside from the general benefits of mentoring as a form of student support, what this project in Pakistan has demonstrated is that peer mentoring can have significant transformative power in the dynamics of the educational process. As education, or rather learning, is at the heart of human development and all that accrues from that (Colclough, 2012), the long term significance and impact of this small pilot project for Pakistan and other developing countries could be far greater than its original limited objective.

Education for citizenship has become an increasingly important part of the curriculum, and peer mentoring provides one obvious way in which educational institutions can generate service learning opportunities. According to Phillips (2009) and Andrews and Clark (2011), it is important that research is carried out to investigate the most appropriate peer support strategies for different kinds of student needs to be met. As stated in Chapter II, there is an increased demand for service learning and citizenship opportunities in education in Pakistan to promote peace, harmony and political stability (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012). Therefore, it can be suggested to the Ministry of Education and Training in Pakistan, to regard peer mentoring schemes as a mechanism of providing these opportunities. The experience of the pilot project and the examples of good practice that were developed provide a sound basis from which to establish a generic model which can be applied in a variety of peer mentoring settings in education in situations in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Pakistan is a country with very strong historic and current cultural ties to the UK, Europe and the USA but which has become increasingly isolated academically and culturally because of the current political situation in the region. Pakistan has the potential to play a major strategic role in the world today and it is especially important to keep open the doors of academic and cultural dialogue between Pakistan's universities and those in Europe and the rest of the world. The strength and significance of projects in Pakistan's universities that bridge the gap between Pakistan and the West cannot be underestimated.

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*This document was provided to the students at both universities in Lahore prior to the start of the project during my preliminary visit*

## **STRUCTURED PEER MENTORING PROJECT**

*SO YOU WANT TO BE A MENTOR.....?*

### **What is a peer mentor?**

A peer mentor is a senior student who volunteers to offer advice, respond to questions, and provide information about campus and community resources to junior peers (mentees). As a mentor you will be in a position to support and advise, and your mentee will look up to you as a role model. A mentor encourages, supports, advises, inspires, and challenges while building up their mentees self-confidence and self-esteem. This two way exchange of ideas and opinions takes place in one to one sessions with the mentee in the university.

### **What do I gain from being a peer mentor?**

There are many benefits for peer mentors including; Development of key skills for employability and personal development – it is an opportunity to be able to list practical experience in your CV, and to create a talking point for future job interviews or applying for further study at international universities. The skills and qualities you will develop from mentoring include better communication and listening skills. An ability to empathise, reflect on and share life experiences, while practising patience and a sense of humour.

### **What about the training and commitment?**

Training will take place for two full days. Attendance at both full days of the training is **prerequisite** and **non-negotiable**. If you are in any doubt that you will be able to attend both days, then we feel you should not apply this semester.

Once training has taken place we aim to have you placed the following week to meet your mentees. The time commitment for the programme is twenty weeks (i.e., twenty weekly meetings at the school).

### **Who will I be mentoring?**

Mentees (1<sup>st</sup> year students) will be identified by your department subject heads. These students need encouragement and practical advice on issues such as time management, organisational ability, academic support and general encouragement to succeed and look towards further/higher education.

You will be meeting with two students (mentees) each week for 30 minute sessions with each of them. Mentoring always takes place at the university campus.

### **I'm interested – what do I do next?**

Fill in the application form (please ensure you have read the person spec and role description first) the more information you can tell us about yourself, the easier it will be to match you to a mentee should you be successful at gaining a place on this programme.

The mentoring coordinator at your university will inform you as to whether you have been accepted to take part in the training. Once you have completed both days of the training we will give you more information about the peer mentoring project.

### **If I have anymore questions .....**

#### **Contact me:**

Nosheen Rachel

Project Co-ordinator, Middlesex University UK

Email: [nr291@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:nr291@mdx.ac.uk)

## **Structured Peer Mentoring Project**

### **Role Description for Mentors**

#### **Role title:**

Peer Mentor

#### **Location:**

Higher Education Institutions - Universities in Lahore, Pakistan

#### **Outline of the role**

A Peer Mentor:

- Attends one hour weekly meetings with two mentees (30 mins per mentee) in a one-to-one setting.
- Can commit to the programme for twenty weeks following the initial meeting with the mentees.
- Supports and empowers the young person who is going through an important transition in their life. Help them to set and work towards their educational goals.
- Respects the rules of the programme, in particular those covering confidentiality.
- Keeps weekly records of mentoring meetings, and completes the log book provided.

#### **Skills, qualities and attitudes required**

- You are interested in the education system and youth culture
- You have the ability to empathise with young people
- You have good interpersonal skills, especially listening skills
- You have good organisational and time-management skills
- You are open-minded, with a broad outlook on life
- You are committed to equal opportunities and will not discriminate against young people or limit their development through your own beliefs

**APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for students during preliminary phase**

**Student Questionnaire: Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities**

*Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities*

I) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below circle the **one** you think is the most appropriate answer (e.g. Circle 1 if you strongly disagree)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- A. I am content with my existing study support services  
1    2    3    4    5
- B. I feel that I would benefit from more support in my learning  
1    2    3    4    5
- C. My teachers provide me with all the support I need  
1    2    3    4    5
- D. My fellow students support me in my studies  
1    2    3    4    5
- E. I support my fellow students in their studies  
1    2    3    4    5
- F. I feel that with my experience I could help junior students with their studies  
1    2    3    4    5
- G. I feel I could benefit from help from more experienced/senior students  
1    2    3    4    5

II) I would benefit from being able to discuss the following issues with a senior student

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

III) I would feel able to help junior students with

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

IV) I would like to volunteer and train as a peer mentor (please circle 1 or 2):

- 1. YES                          Email: .....
- 2. NO

V) Any other comment: .....

APPENDIX 1a: Sample of completed student questionnaire

Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities - Student Questionnaire 1

Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities

I) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below circle the **one** you think is the most appropriate answer (e.g. Circle 1 if you strongly disagree)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- A. I am content with my existing study support services  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- B. I feel that I would benefit from more support in my learning  
 1                      2                      3                       4                      5
- C. My teachers provide me with all the support I need  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- D. My fellow students support me in my studies  
 1                      2                      3                       4                      5
- E. I support my fellow students in their studies  
 1                      2                      3                       4                      5
- F. I feel that with my experience I could help junior students with their studies  
 1                      2                      3                      4                       5
- G. I feel I could benefit from help from more experienced/senior students  
 1                      2                      3                      4                       5

II) I would benefit from being able to discuss the following issues with a senior student

1. ...How to get a good GPA?
2. ...How to make presentations, assignments and academic good?
3. ...How to get admission abroad?

III) I would feel able to help junior students with

1. To understand the semester system which is entirely new to them
2. To make assignments, notes and presentations
3. How to get involve in co-curricular activities as I am president of PU Debating society.

IV) I would like to volunteer and train as a peer mentor (please circle 1 or 2):

- 1. YES
- 2. NO

Email: [Redacted]

V) Any other comment:

I think it will be a great project for helping the junior students. I totally realized that thing "PEER MENTORING" when I got admission in Punjab university and was not properly guided by seniors.

**Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities - Student Questionnaire 1**

Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities

I) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below circle the **one** you think is the most appropriate answer (e.g. Circle 1 if you strongly disagree)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- A. I am content with my existing study support services  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- B. I feel that I would benefit from more support in my learning  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- C. My teachers provide me with all the support I need  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- D. My fellow students support me in my studies  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- E. I support my fellow students in their studies  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- F. I feel that with my experience I could help junior students with their studies  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5
- G. I feel I could benefit from help from more experienced/senior students  
1                      2                      3                      **4**                      5

II) I would benefit from being able to discuss the following issues with a senior student

1. How they have been managing to finish credit hours.
2. What they are planning to study further.
3. About exams/assignments and related stuff.

III) I would feel able to help junior students with

1. how to adjust with the new atmosphere.
2. guide them how to go about with the studies, especially info about my major.
3. what other activities they can engage in while on campus.

IV) I would like to volunteer and train as a peer mentor (please circle 1 or 2):  
**1.** YES                      Email: [REDACTED]  
 2. NO

V) Any other comment: Really looking forward on being a part of it!

## APPENDIX 2: Staff questionnaire during preliminary phase

### Staff Questionnaire: Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities

*Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities*

I). The issues below may impact on student achievement. Please tick those that you think are of greatest concern to students in your department/university

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Achieving high grades    | <input type="radio"/> Political situation                  |
| <input type="radio"/> Making career choices    | <input type="radio"/> Feelings of loneliness and exclusion |
| <input type="radio"/> Subject knowledge        | <input type="radio"/> Bullying                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Conceptual understanding | <input type="radio"/> Family problems                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Study skills             | <input type="radio"/> Gender relationships                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Exam Anxiety             | <input type="radio"/> Drug use                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Finance                  | <input type="radio"/> Friendships                          |

II). Please add any issues which were not listed above

.....

III). Of all the issues above which 3 would you say need to be addressed more urgently

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

IV). To whom do you think students in the university talk most often about their concerns

- Parents/relatives
- Tutors
- Friends
- University counsellors
- Other – please specify .....

V). Do you think peers are effective in helping each other with concerns?

If yes, why.....

If no, why not.....

VI). Do you think students should be trained to be more effective in helping other students?

.....

VII). Do you think students should have more involvement in creating a good learning environment in the university?

.....

VIII). With which concerns listed above do you think senior students could help new/junior students in the university?

.....

IX). I think a 'peer mentoring scheme' will be an important addition to university's student support services

- Yes
- No

**Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities - Staff Questionnaire**

Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities

I). The issues below may impact on student achievement. Please tick those that you think are of greatest concern to students in your department/university

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Achieving high grades    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political situation       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Making career choices    | <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of loneliness and exclusion |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subject knowledge        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual understanding | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family problems           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study skills                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender relationships      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exam Anxiety                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug use                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friendships               |

II). Please add any issues which were not listed above

..... Their material outlook → Their perception that they can buy education. ....

III). Of all the issues above which 3 would you say need to be addressed more urgently

1. The one I mentioned
2. conceptual understanding
3. gender issues

IV). To whom do you think students in the university talk most often about their concerns

- Parents/relatives
- Tutors
- Friends
- University counsellors
- Other – please specify .....

V). Do you think peers are effective in helping each other with concerns?

If yes, why..... → It all depends on who your peer is? .....

If no, why not.....

VI). Do you think students should be trained to be more effective in helping other students?

..... Yes .....

VII). Do you think students should have more involvement in creating a good learning environment in the university?

..... Yes .....

VIII). With which concerns listed above do you think senior students could help new/junior students in the university?

.....

IX). I think a 'peer mentoring scheme' will be an important addition to university's student support services

- Yes but not sure.
- No

**Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities - Staff Questionnaire**

Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer Mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience. I am a PhD research student and this survey will help towards determining the possibility of introducing Peer Mentoring Scheme for students in Pakistani universities

I). The issues below may impact on student achievement. Please tick those that you think are of greatest concern to students in your department/university

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Achieving high grades    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political situation       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Making career choices    | <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of loneliness and exclusion |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subject knowledge        | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual understanding | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family problems           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Study skills             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender relationships      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exam Anxiety             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drug use                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friendships               |

II). Please add any issues which were not listed above

.....  
.....

III). Of all the issues above which 3 would you say need to be addressed more urgently

1. *Finance*
2. *Making career choices*
3. *Study skills*

IV). To whom do you think students in the university talk most often about their concerns

- Parents/relatives
- Tutors
- Friends
- University counsellors
- Other – please specify .....

V). Do you think peers are effective in helping each other with concerns?

If yes, why *they, being in the same environment, know each others' problems*  
If no, why not.....

VI). Do you think students should be trained to be more effective in helping other students?

*Yes*

VII). Do you think students should have more involvement in creating a good learning environment in the university?

*Yes*

VIII). With which concerns listed above do you think senior students could help new/junior students in the university?

*Making career choices, Achieving high grades*

IX). I think a 'peer mentoring scheme' will be an important addition to university's student support services

- Yes
- No



## **APPENDIX 2c: Questions for staff interviews during preliminary phase**

### **Interview Questions**

1. There are a number of factors that can affect a student's ability to make the best of their studies. Which factors do you think have the greatest impact?
2. Who do the students approach to get support in balancing their studies with the other factors in their lives?
3. a. How does your university support students in helping them gain the most from their studies?  
b. How do you think other Pakistani universities deal with them?  
c. How do you think British & US universities deal with them?
4. Do you think student peers can help each other?
5. If so, is it better for more experienced/senior students to support new or junior students?
6. Should senior students be trained to support junior students in this way?
7. What benefits do you see for the participants
  - a. Peer mentors
  - b. Mentees
8. What benefits do you think a university would gain from encouraging peer support in students?

### APPENDIX 3a: Outline and aims of Peer Mentors training workshop session

<b><u>Workshop Session 1: Time 3 hours</u></b>	
<b><u>Session</u></b>	<b><u>Aims of the Session</u></b>
<b>Unit 1: <i>What is mentoring?</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. introduce university students to mentoring;</li> <li>2. explore the context of mentoring;</li> <li>3. contrast and compare mentoring with friendship;</li> <li>4. explore which skills are important as a mentor.</li> </ol>
<b>Unit 2: <i>Differences, values and attitudes</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. raise awareness of different values and attitudes;</li> <li>2. look at how people make assumptions often based on differences;</li> <li>3. discuss how remaining non-judgmental and open minded is an important mentoring quality.</li> </ol>
<b>Unit 3: <i>Communication skills</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify the importance of good communication skills as a mentor;</li> <li>2. practice questioning techniques to aid communication;</li> <li>3. highlight importance of good listening skills;</li> <li>4. highlight importance of body language to aid communication.</li> </ol>

<b><u>Workshop Session II (Time: 3 Hours)</u></b>	
<b><u>Session</u></b>	<b><u>Aims of the Session</u></b>
<b>Unit 4: <i>How do we help?</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify problems encountered by mentees in college/university;</li> <li>2. explore how mentors can help others;</li> <li>3. identify useful helping strategies;</li> <li>4. identify other sources of help within university.</li> </ol>
<b>Unit 5: <i>Ground rules</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify boundaries of the mentoring relationship;</li> <li>2. explore what is appropriate behaviour;</li> <li>3. understand issues of confidentiality;</li> <li>4. explore responsibilities of mentors.</li> </ol>
<b>Unit 6: <i>Starting the mentoring relationship: What next?</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. look at different ways of matching mentor/mentee;</li> <li>2. identify appropriate mentoring opportunities for mentors;</li> <li>3. explore setting the agenda for mentoring.</li> </ol>

Adapted from MBF (2008)

**APPENDIX 3b: Facilitator/Tutor Notes on ‘Training Workshop for the Peer Mentors’ adapted from resources provided by MBF (2008)**

**Workshop Session 1: Time 3 hours**

**Unit 1: What is mentoring?**

*The aims of this session are:*

- To introduce university students to mentoring
- To explore the context of mentoring
- To contrast and compare mentoring with friendship
- To explore which skills are important as a mentor

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Tutor Notes</b>
<p><b>1.1 Who is your mentor?</b> (time: 10 minutes)</p>	<p>Use Handout 1.1 in the training manual to explore if the student can identify someone who may already be an unofficial mentor for them. i.e. friend, relative, teacher, youth worker.</p> <p><i>NB. This exercise must not be confused with identifying a role model, as this can often be someone who they do not have a relationship with.</i></p>
<p><b>1.2 What is a mentor?</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Handout 1.2 highlights some of the contexts in which mentoring can happen. All of these roles can come within the context of mentoring at some point. This handout facilitates a discussion about the role of a mentor; there is no right or wrong answers, just areas for discussion.</p> <p><i>See Tutor Handout for further guidance on use of this handout.</i></p>
<p><b>1.3 Mentoring vs. Friendship</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>This handout allows for further exploration about the differences and similarities of mentoring and friendship. It allows for the discussion of boundaries within a mentoring relationship.</p>
<p><b>1.4 Helping skills inventory</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>This is a useful exercise to consolidate which skills are identified as being important in mentoring, and identify personal development targets for the students.</p> <p><i>NB. Always mention that this sheet is for their information only, and the purpose of the rest of the course is to help them address or improve on all of these skills. You may also want to cross out any you think are not appropriate for your scheme.</i></p>

## Unit 2: Differences, values and attitudes

*The aims of this session are:*

To raise awareness of different values and attitudes

To look at how people make assumptions often based on differences

To discuss how remaining non-judgmental and open minded is an important mentoring quality

Exercise	Tutor notes
<p><b>2.1 Exploring differences</b> (15 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask the whole group to walk in a clockwise circle. Give a variety of statements which could elicit a difference of opinion such as:</p> <p>Pacchas Minute is better than Aik Din geo kay saath (Pakistani talk show on television) Atif Aslam's songs are better than Ali Zafar's (Pakistani pop singers)</p> <p>If the mentors agree with these statements they carry on walking clockwise. If the mentors disagree with these statements they turn around and walk anti-clockwise.</p> <p>When you have finished the walking — convene the group and introduce Handout 2.1 and work through issues mentioned.</p> <p>The purpose of this exercise is to draw out:</p> <p>How hard it was to walk in the opposite direction? (i.e. to think differently). What did others think of you when you walked a particular way (i.e. did it bother you?)</p> <p><i>Link this exercise into how many different values and attitudes there are in society.</i></p>
<p><b>2.2 What are values?</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Whole group. Try to get some definitions from them or use power point presentation and discuss. (refer to the power point presentation) <i>NB Time or age of group may make it desirable to give some definitions of values rather than seek ideas from the students.</i></p>
<p><b>2.3 Value cards</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>As individuals, students identify their top five 'values' in order. There is no right or wrong answers. This gives the opportunity to look at other peoples' values and why they are similar/different from yours. <i>NB Placing cards around the room means that answers are anonymous.</i></p> <p>Use the choices to stimulate discussion. Point out that different groups of people (e.g. adults, younger pupils, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds), will almost certainly have different values but all are equally valid.</p>
<p><b>2.4 Assumptions</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Mentors to complete Handout 2.4 (trainers should insert an appropriate picture, or ask mentors to work with a partner). Ask for feedback from the partners as to how accurate the assumptions were. As many of the assumptions will be wrong, draw out in a discussion how making assumptions can be upsetting, damaging and/or lead to discrimination.</p> <p><i>(Another way of raising awareness of how we make assumptions about people is to have a variety of items which are usually associated with different people, e.g. a brief case, baseball hat, running shoes, 'hippy' beads etc )</i></p> <p>Ask the mentors to guess who they think each item might belong to and discuss</p>

	what that person might be like (either in pairs, or the whole group). At the end of the discussion let the mentors know that, in fact, they have all belonged to one person at different times in their life.
<b>Summary (5 minutes)</b>	Summarize by bringing together the key elements of the session, to show that people feel differently and value different things. Mentors need to ensure that they recognize the different values which their mentee might have and understand that they are equally valid. Mentors need to recognize this in a mentoring relationship, remain open-minded and avoid judging their mentee.

**Comfort Break: 15 minutes**

**Unit 3: Communication skills**

*The aims of this session are:*

To identify the importance of good communication skills as a mentor.

To practice questioning techniques to aid communication.

To highlight importance of good listening skills.

To highlight importance of body language to aid communication.

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Tutor notes</b>
<b>3.1 Yes/No game</b> (10 minutes)	Follow instructions for the game on handout 3.1a. <i>This exercise highlights how effective and restrictive closed questions can be, and aims to focus mentors on the value of effective communication.</i>
<b>3.2 Questioning styles</b> (10 minutes)	Ask mentors to look through Handout 3.2a and then, in order to familiarize mentors with the differing styles, complete Handout No. 3.2b.  Depending on the level of the group, you may wish to ask students to also have a go at Handout No. 3.2c. <i>The purpose of this exercise is to highlight how important questioning styles are, and how they can aid communication with mentees.</i>
<b>3.3 Listening skills/Body language</b> (10 minutes)	It can be useful if two trainers or well-briefed participants demonstrate this exercise, and know beforehand which verbal and non-verbal examples of bad communication they want to highlight.  The two briefed participants engage in a scene. Person 2 uses as many verbal and non-verbal displays of non-listening they can think of. Person 1 tries to carry on describing their morning, although they will find it increasingly difficult, because of the behaviour of Person 2.  Use the observation through the activity for the basis of the discussion. <i>The purpose of this exercise is to highlight bad verbal and non-verbal communication (body language).</i>
<b>3.4 Ten Commandments of listening</b> (5 min)	This is for reference only.

## **Workshop Session II (Time: 3 Hours)**

### **Unit 4: How do we help?**

*The aims of this session are:*

To identify problems encountered by mentees in college/university.

To explore how mentors can help others.

To identify useful helping strategies.

To identify other sources of help within college/university.

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Tutor notes</b>
<b>4.1 Barriers to learning</b> (10 minutes)	<p>Flipchart exercise encouraging student to identify difficulties students face in education, i.e. bullying, learning difficulties, family problems etc. This encourages students to start thinking about what issues they may help with as mentors.</p> <p>Mentors can copy down issues from the flipchart to help them visualize how these problems can become a brick wall for mentees. This also highlights how mentors can help break down this brick wall by helping mentees remove bricks from it.</p>
<b>4.2 Helping strategies</b> (10 minutes)	<p>This exercise helps to identify what sort of help mentors can give. It is also useful for addressing how to empower mentees to help themselves, by addressing the power imbalance in helping styles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cut Handout 4.2a into two parts and place at two ends of a piece of flipchart paper.</li><li>2. Cut Handout 4.2b up into pieces. Have a look at the cards and determine the level of the group's understanding; you may wish to start with only three or four styles.</li></ol> <p>Encourage mentors to place each card onto the line between each end card. They do this by deciding who is in control when each strategy is being used.</p> <p><i>NB. You may want to take this opportunity to explore what the implications are for mentors helping 'too much' i.e. not helping mentees to help themselves.</i></p>
<b>4.3 Helping skills case study</b> (10 minutes)	<p>This exercise can be done in pairs or small groups; it is for mentors to discuss how they think they could help, and to develop their helping skills.</p>
<b>4.4 Who else can help?</b> (10 minutes)	<p>This is a good opportunity for mentors to audit other provision in university/college, encourage their 'signposting' skills, and explore how they may assist by being an advocate.</p> <p><i>NB. Always encourage mentors to still consult the Mentoring Coordinator if they are unsure how to access other help in school.</i></p>

### **Unit 5: Ground rules**

*The aims of this session are:*

To identify boundaries of the mentoring relationship

To explore what is appropriate behaviour

To understand issues of confidentiality

To explore responsibilities of mentors

Exercise	Tutor notes
<p><b>5.1 Boundary cards</b> (Examples of possible situations / mentee requests given) <i>NB. Prior to the training the trainer should choose which scenarios they would like reflected on the cards, and write their own cards out if preferred.</i> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Each member of the group picks a card up from the pack. After reading it they decide whether to place it on either the 'YES WE CAN' or 'NO WE CAN'T' pile.</p> <p>When all the cards have been placed on either pile, the group has to agree or disagree with where they have been placed.</p> <p><i>NB. Don't just use inappropriate behaviours; you must also remember to include some appropriate behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>This exercise allows for discussion of boundaries, explores appropriate behavior and encourages negotiation within the group and teamwork.</i></p>
<p><b>5.2 Confidentiality</b> (example of basic mentor policy) <i>NB. Mentoring Co-coordinators should replace this with their own, or choose to follow an existing policy within their own organisation.</i> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>This policy would not be open to negotiation and forms one of the ground rules of the programme. The trainer must therefore talk through and explain the policy to mentors so that it can be understood.</p>
<p><b>5.3 Confidentiality case studies</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<p>This handout can be used either:</p> <p>By allowing the mentors to work in pairs or small groups to form their own conclusions based on the above policy; As a whole group discussion where contributions from the group assist them to complete the boxes.</p> <p><i>This exercise explores what is a confidentiality issue for their own work, and what is a greater issue needing support from others.</i></p>
<p><b>5.4 Ground rules</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>This handout can be used either:</p> <p>By allowing the mentors to work in pairs or small groups to form their own conclusions based on the above policy; As a whole group discussion where contributions from the group assist them to complete the boxes.</p> <p><i>This exercise explores what is a confidentiality issue for their own work, and what is a greater issue needing support from others.</i></p>
<p><b>5.5 Ground rules cards</b> (In reserve if mentors are finding it difficult to identify appropriate ground rules) (5 minutes)</p>	<p>These cards are read out by mentors.</p> <p>The group has to decide whether the content of the card is relevant for their programme, and whether they would like it as a ground rule.</p> <p><i>NB Some of the cards are 'red herrings', and are not an essential ground rule, but choosing whether or not to have certain cards encourages negotiation skills, and develops decision making skills.</i></p>

## **Comfort Break: 15 minutes**

### **Unit 6: Starting the mentoring relationship: What next?**

The aims of this session are:

To look at different ways of matching mentor/mentee.


To identify appropriate mentoring opportunities for mentors.

To explore setting the agenda for mentoring.

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Tutor note</b>
<b>6.1 Getting to know someone new</b> (10 minutes)	<p>This ice breaker pairs students who do not know each other very well, so that they can experience what the initial meeting between mentor and mentee might feel like.</p> <p><i>Mentors spend 5 minutes in pairs, getting to know each other. Afterwards pair's feedback to the whole group how it felt.</i></p>
<b>6.2 Mentoring statements</b> (10 minutes)	<p>This is an opportunity to ensure that mentors understand the ground rules. The three cards can be put around the room and the questions read out. Mentors then go to stand by the relevant card depending on whether they agree, disagree or are not sure. There is some clear right and wrong answers but others where some discussion is needed to clarify the answer. Ask pupils why they have chosen that answer and use their responses to generate this discussion. For example:</p> <p><i>'Mentors do your coursework for you.'</i></p> <p>Clearly they don't but they may help to organize time, place or resources to do it, or help with the understanding of a subject.</p> <p><i>'Mentors always understand how you feel.'</i></p> <p>Everyone is different so it is impossible to know how someone else feels but the important thing for a mentor to remember is to accept that their mentees feelings are important and real.</p>
<b>6.3 Mentee questionnaire</b> (2 minutes)	<p>As part of this session it will be used to introduce mentors to what mentees might expect from them, and how they could meet these expectations.</p> <p><i>NB The purpose is to get mentors to think about the practical aspect of mentoring and to be clear about the aim of their own mentoring relationship.</i></p>
<b>6.4 Mentoring opportunities</b> (5 minutes)	<p>Handout 6.4a provides an example of some of the opportunities available to mentors at one university.</p> <p>Universities would need to complete the blank sheet for similar opportunities at their own institution. <i>Handout 6.4b assists the Mentoring Co-coordinator in finding appropriate opportunities for students who have different levels of confidence and ability. It does not place too much responsibility on mentors too early.</i></p>
<b>Summary</b> (5 minutes) <b>Evaluation/Feedback Form</b> (5 minutes)	<p>Over to you!! Make the project sound like fun but credible and important, it needs valuing by university. Tell mentors when and how they can expect to get started.</p>



## APPENDIX 4: Peer Mentor Training workshop - Powerpoint presentation

<p><b>Peer Mentoring Training Workshop</b> October 2009</p>	<p><b>Unit 1</b> What is mentoring?</p>	<p><b>Unit 2</b> Differences, values &amp; attitudes</p>	<p><b>What is a value?</b> A value of something is the: • worth • usefulness • importance • significance that <b>YOU</b> put on it.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> 
<p><b>Unit 3</b> Communication Skills</p>	<p><b>Identify the type of questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think what would your professor say if you did not complete the results of the practical this week?</li> <li>2. How will this workshop help you in your role as a mentor?</li> <li>3. Are you sure everything is okay?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comfort Break</b> 30 minutes</p>	<p><b>Unit 4</b> How do we help?</p>	<p><b>Unit 5</b> Ground rules</p>
<p><b>Confidentiality Guidelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are not allowed to promise to keep secrets.</li> <li>All meetings will be kept confidential between the mentor and mentee, except in the following circumstances: You must tell either the mentoring coordinator or a tutor if you mentee discloses any form of abuse, or anything else that would make you worry about their safety</li> </ul>	<p><b>Confidentiality Guidelines</b></p> <p>If you have a concern about the content of a mentoring meeting, you are encouraged to discuss it with the Mentoring coordinator.</p>	<p><b>Confidentiality Guidelines</b></p> <p>You will have regular supervision from the mentoring coordinator to ensure that you are not worrying about how the mentoring is going...</p>	<p><b>Unit 6</b> Starting the mentoring relationship: The agenda for mentoring</p>	<p>Workshop conducted by Nosheen Rachel Naseem <b>Contact details: NR291@liverpool.ac.uk</b></p>

# **TRAINING MANUAL FOR PEER MENTORS**

**PEER MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**A Joint Project of**



**Middlesex University  
London, UK  
&**

*(Adapted from MBF & Middlesex University's Peer Mentoring Programme)*

# Who is your mentor?

Write down all of the people you can think of throughout your life who may have been an unofficial mentor for you. Think back to what it was that they did, or how they helped you.

Who?	Why?

*Can you start to see how mentoring can happen unofficially in a lot of different situations and contexts?*

# What is a Mentor?

Have a look at all of these descriptions below and put a tick next to the ones which you think are mentors.

A Counsellor	An Advocate
A Friend	A Friendly Ear
Some one who remains independent about your problems	An Advisor
A Role Model	A Sympathetic Listener
A Teacher	A Helper

## Mentoring or Friendship?

Have a look at these qualities and tick which you think exist in mentoring, and which exist in friendship.

Quality	Mentoring	Friendship
Confidentiality		
Respect		
Love		
Genuineness		
Opinions		
Advice		
Support		
Encouragement		
Motivation		
Understanding		
Time Constraints		
Accountability		
Clear Boundaries		
Always there when needed		
Empathy		
Sympathy		
Trust		
Warmth		

You probably found this difficult, and realised that some qualities exist in both, although it is the ones that only exist in mentoring which help us to define the differences and the boundaries.

# Helping Skills Inventory

You will now have a better idea about what skills are required to be an effective mentor.

Have a look at the list below and think about which skills you would like to improve on over the training.

Don't worry if you think you don't have any of these yet, these will all be covered by the training, and you will learn a lot about yourself and what you can offer as a mentor.

	Good	OK	Need To Improve
Listening to others			
Keeping boundaries			
Keeping confidences when I am able			
Building an atmosphere of trust and openness			
Asking open questions			
Asking closed questions			
Being reliable			
Not judging people			
Approachable and friendly			
Not getting over involved			
Able to find the right person to help			
Able to understand other persons point of view (even if you don't agree with it)			

What other qualities or experience have you got which you think would also be useful?

# Differences

- Your trainer will direct the whole group to walk around in a circle, all going clockwise
- Your trainer will give you some statements
- If you agree with what the trainer has said carry on walking in the same direction
- If you disagree with what the trainer has said turn around and walk in the other direction (anti-clockwise)

How did it feel to be going the opposite way to everyone else?

Did you feel more comfortable when you were going the same way?

Do you think there was anything wrong with thinking and acting differently to the others?

Can you see how we can make others feel when we think they are different?

**Your Values**

What do you value highly? A value of something is the:

- worth
- usefulness
- importance
- significance

that **you** put on it.

Look at the list below. Number the five that you value most from 1-5, with 1 being the most valued and 5 being the least.

Remember there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer; your answer should reflect how you see them.

Friends	
World peace	
Culture	
Religion	
Health	
Environmental preservation	
Family	
Human rights	
Education	
Money	



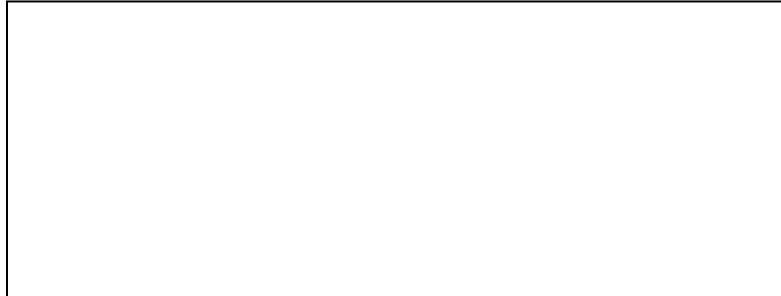
# Values Cards

These can be displayed around the room so that students can place their 'vote' in the appropriate box to give a visual resource, which can then be used in the discussion.

<b>MONEY</b>	<b>FRIENDS</b>
<b>WORLD PEACE</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>
<b>CULTURE</b>	<b>HUMAN RIGHTS</b>
<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>FAMILY</b>
<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION</b>

# Assumptions

Look at this picture, or choose another person in the group to work with and guess the following without talking to them



<b>Favourite food</b>	
<b>Favourite group</b>	
<b>Favourite clothes shop</b>	
<b>Favourite magazine or book</b>	
<b>Favourite hobby</b>	
<b>Favourite TV programme</b>	
<b>Favourite sport</b>	
<b>Favourite holiday destination</b>	
<b>What do they do at weekends</b>	
<b>Favourite soap</b>	
<b>Favourite subject at school</b>	

## YES/NO Game

### Some suggested questions for the YES/NO game:

Do you like chips?

Do you like watching TV?

Do you enjoy University?

Do you think this peer mentoring course is good?

Is your name.....?

Have you got a brother?

Have you got a sister?

Do you like the colour red?

Have you got a best friend?

Do you think it is cold today?

Are you looking forward to the weekend?

Have you got an ipod?

Have you got a pet?

## Questioning Styles

Here are some examples of questioning styles you may find useful when working with mentees.

*Tip. When you review how you are getting along with your mentee you may want to refer back to this and try other questioning styles, e.g.*

- *If you think you are still doing most of the talking, try consciously to ask open questions which encourage the mentee to talk, and leaves you to show your good listening skills.*
- *If you would like to encourage your mentee to try a different way of dealing with situations, use hypothetical situations and questions. If they have practised a situation with you, ask them to try it out and let you know next time you meet how it went.*

Type of Question	Example	Purpose
<b>Open</b>	'How's everything going?' 'What happened at University today?' 'How did you get on with Science today?' 'Is everything OK?' 'Is there anything especially you want to talk about today?'	To help get the conversation started.  To allow the mentee to respond according to their agenda (although they are probably not aware they have one).  Encourages mentees to talk.
<b>Probe</b>	'Are you sure everything is OK?' 'What happened about that girl you were telling me about?' 'What skills do you think you learnt while you were doing the task?' 'Where exactly do you live?'	Slightly more pressure on finding out the facts and problems.  Helps you steer the conversation to certain issues. (Be careful not to sound like you are interrogating them)
<b>Closed</b>	'Do you have a best friend?' 'Do you want to try databases'	Will often only illicit Yes or No answers.

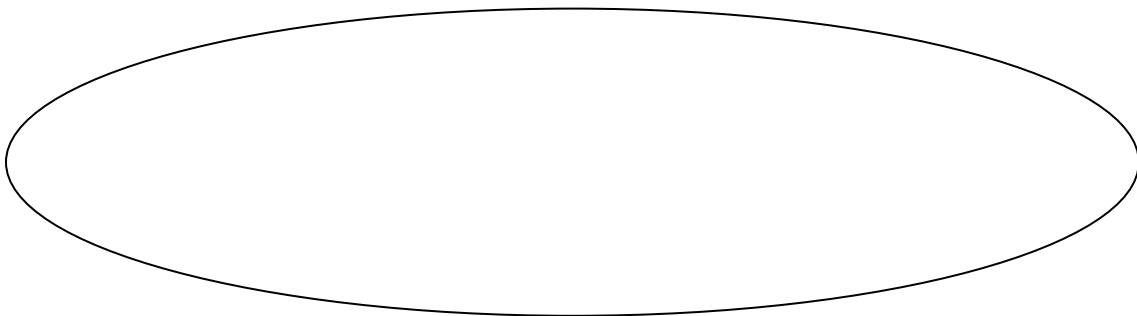
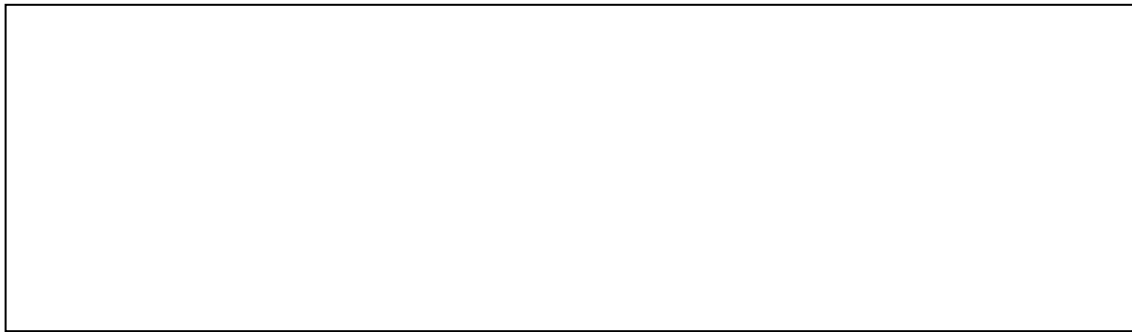
## APPENDIX 5: Training manual for peer mentors

	<p>next week?’</p> <p>‘Do you get on with your new tutor?’</p> <p>‘Did you go in the room?’</p> <p>‘Did you have your shoes on?’</p> <p>‘Did she hit you?’</p>	<p>Good for when you need to know facts quickly</p> <p>(Closed questions should not be used too often due to the habit forming nature of Yes/No responses.)</p>
<b>Hypothetical</b>	<p>‘What would have happened if...?’</p> <p>‘What would you do if...?’</p> <p>‘How do you think so and so would react if you....?’</p> <p>‘Given the choice what would you do if...?’</p>	<p>An excellent way to get mentees to think about other ways of dealing with things</p> <p>This type of can help mentees think about other ways of thinking/acting for the future. It gives them a chance to try out a situation in a safe environment and to plan for different outcomes.</p>
<b>Reflective and summary</b>	<p>‘This weeks sounds a lot better than last’</p> <p>‘So you don’t like it when people laugh at you?’</p> <p>‘It sounds as though you think everyone thinks you are stupid?’</p>	<p>By repeating what they have been talking about you are showing that you are listening and understanding what they are trying to tell you.</p> <p>It allows the mentor to clarify what the mentee is trying to say. Repeating back in the student’s own language is good for the student; they feel more accepted and understood.</p> <p>Gives the opportunity for the mentee to further talk about an issue.</p> <p>Can be good for giving feedback on progress.</p>

# Questioning Styles

## Exercise 1

Your trainer will read out three examples of questions/statements. Write these in the boxes below and decide which style you think they are i.e. hypothetical, open, probing etc.



# Questioning Styles

## Exercise 2

Look at the boxes below and think of a question for each style.

**OPEN**

**CLOSED**

**HYPOTHETICAL**

**PROBING**

**REFLECTIVE**



# 10 Commandments of Listening

- ❖ **Stop talking** — Nature gave you two ears but only one mouth, so take the hint!
- ❖ **Prepare yourself to listen** — Questions prepared in advance, when possible, free your mind for listening.
- ❖ **Put the talker at ease** — Smile and show positive body language.
- ❖ **Remove distractions** — Focus your mind on what is being said, don't doodle, tap, shuffle papers etc.
- ❖ **Empathize** — Try to see, and meet half way, the mentee's point of view even if it is not one you share.
- ❖ **Be patient** — A pause, even a long pause, doesn't always mean that the speaker has finished.
- ❖ **Avoid personal prejudice** — Don't allow irritation at things said, or the person's manner, to distract you.
- ❖ **Listen to the tone** — Volume and tone both show the person's reaction to what you have said.
- ❖ **Listen for the message – not just words** — You want to get the whole picture, not just bits and pieces.
- ❖ **Watch for non-verbal signals** — Gestures, facial expressions, and eye movement can all be important if you are talking with someone face to face.



# Barriers to Learning

From the flipchart exercise note down some of the issues facing young people in education. Fill in a brick with each problem.


Does this picture help you to see that sometimes problems for mentees can feel like a brick wall?

As a mentor you can help them break down the wall, by removing bricks/problems.

Remember that there will be some problems that you cannot help them with, but by helping them with others, the wall has gaps, which they can climb through themselves.

## Helping Strategies

**Mentee in Control**

**Mentor in Control**

# Helping Strategies

<p><b>Taking Action</b> The mentor and mentee decide on a course of action together and then do it.</p>	<p><b>Recommending</b> The mentor gives an explicit recommendation to the mentee on what they should do.</p>
<p><b>'Counselling'</b> The mentor and mentee develop a relationship, based on helping the mentee develop a change.</p>	<p><b>Advising</b> The mentor usually at the request of the mentee offers some advice, but always with the usual safeguards i.e. "you may do things differently to me because of blah blah", or "you actually need to think of your own solutions, lets talk them through".</p>
<p><b>Teaching</b> The mentor teaches the mentee a skill, or imparts knowledge in a directive way.</p>	<p><b>Informing</b> The mentor offers up to date information relevant to the mentees needs, which may help the mentee make a decision.</p>
<p><b>Support</b> The mentor is available to the mentee on an unconditional basis. Support is valued as there are no expectations to live up to.</p>	<p><b>Signposting</b> The mentor may think that someone else within school would be able to help with this situation, and refers the mentee to the right place/person. For the purpose of this exercise the mentor offers to go along too, as an advocate for the mentee.</p>
<p><b>Listening</b> Similar to support.</p>	<p><b>Advocacy</b> The mentor represents or speaks on behalf of the mentee.</p>

# ***Helping Skills***

## Case Study

Pick one of the bricks from your brick wall earlier, and have a think about how you might be able to help.

**What was the brick/problem?**

Can you help with this problem?

Do you need to discuss this with anyone else? If so who?

Would you sign post them to anyone else? If so who?

What else could you do? Think about the helping strategies on the last exercise.

## Sign-posting: Who else can help?

Mentors are never expected to have all of the answers, but have you heard the saying, "I know a person who can"?

Have a go at this exercise to see how well you know what support is available in your school, add in any extras you think of and ignore any if you do not have them in your school.

	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Where can I find them?</b>
Dean of School		
Head of Department		
Mentoring Co-ordinator		
Personal Advisor		
Academic tutor		
Study group members		
Council members		
Other mentors in universities		
Librarian		
Office Staff		
Administrative staff		

Always keep this handy - it is a useful list. You may also find it useful to keep with a list of co-curricular activities within your university, so that you know what happens and when.

# Confidentiality Guidelines

All mentors and mentees will be briefed on the confidentiality guidelines.

- You are not allowed to promise to keep secrets.
- All meetings will be kept confidential between the mentor and mentee, except in the following circumstances:
- You must come and tell either the Mentoring Co-ordinator or a teacher if a pupil discloses either any form of abuse, or anything else that would make you worry about their safety.
- If you think the mentee is about to disclose this information, you must tell them that you will need to take them to a member of staff, possibly as an advocate.
- If you have a concern about the content of a mentoring meeting, you are encouraged to discuss it with the Mentoring Co-ordinator; it will not go any further, unless one of the above.

You will have regular supervision from the Mentoring Co-ordinator to ensure that you are not worrying about how the mentoring is going.

# Confidentiality Case Studies

<p>Your mentee tells you someone at home is hurting them, what do you do?</p>	
<p>Your mentee asks you if you can keep a secret. What do you do?</p>	
<p>Your mentee tells you that they have stolen something from another student. What do you do?</p>	
<p>Your mentee tells you something of a personal nature, which is similar to something you have experienced. Do you share your experience with them?</p>	
<p>Your mum knows your mentee, and has asked what sort of things you talk about. Can you tell her?</p>	
<p>Your friends are always pushing you to tell them what the problem is with your mentee. How do you handle this?</p>	

# Ground Rules

In groups discuss what can be included under the following headings:

**Confidentiality** is not necessarily about keeping everything secret. It is about being sensitive to each other's thoughts and feelings. After all, if you cannot say something revealing in a mentoring session, where can you say it? However, there are situations which might occur, where you have to inform either the mentoring co-ordinator, principal or a teacher. What are these?

**Timekeeping for meetings:** good timekeeping works both ways. If problems arise do you know how to contact each other?

**Acceptable behaviour:** what do you consider to be appropriate behaviour within a mentoring relationship? What do you consider to be unacceptable?



# Ground Rules Cards

*Add your own that are specific to your mentoring programme:*

Smiling	Having a sense of humour
Being reliable	Keeping confidences
Showing your mentee respect	Being intelligent
Being helpful	Keeping in contact with Mentoring Co-ordinator
Having lots of ideas	Being co-operative
Being friendly	Being positive
Valuing your mentee's opinion	

# Getting to Know Someone New

Exercise: work in a pair with another pupil from the group who you do not know very well. In pairs spend five minutes getting to know each other. Ask your partner questions to find out more about them.

After 5 minutes feedback to the group:

**What questions did you ask?**

**How did you ask them?**

**Did you find out what you wanted to know?**

**How did it feel?**

The following are examples of topics and questions you could use with your mentee to get to know him/her better. Try and find things that relate to yourself and your mentee. This will make it easier to start a conversation and create a comfortable atmosphere.

Find three things that you and the mentee have in common.

Do they have any brothers or sisters?

What is their favourite television programme?

What does the mentee like to do in his / her spare time?

What is their favourite subject at school? Why?

What are their likes and dislikes?

Do they have any pets?

Do they have any hobbies or interests inside and outside of university?

What football team do they support?

What do they want to do when they graduate? Why?

# Mentoring:

## Some Statements

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Mentors do your homework for you			
Mentors tell you what to do			
Mentors help you choose friends			
Mentors lend you money			
Mentors help you get to know yourself better			
Mentor tell the teachers about problems you have			
Another word for a mentor is a friend			
Mentors sometimes break their promises to you			
Mentors talk about you to their friends			
Mentors meet you regularly			
Mentors tell your parents what you say about them			
Mentors always understand how you feel			
Mentors will help you sort out your love life			

## **Cards**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Not Sure**

# I would like my mentor to:

	YES	NO	NOT AT PRESENT
Be a support for me			
Help me to be a more confident person			
Help me to organise my time better			
Listen to me			
Help me to plan my homework and revision			
Help me to find out what I am good at			
Help me to feel able to try new things			
Help me to decide what I want to do in the future			
Help me to understand what school life will be like			
Help me with my homework/coursework			
Help me to improve my spelling			
Help me to improve my reading			
Help me to improve my IT skills			
Come with me to try the lunchtime clubs			
Come with me to try the after school clubs			

## Mentors only:

Do you think these are things you could help with?

Working in groups, think of how you would begin to work with any of these situations

## Who or where would you go for help?

What helping style would you use? (Remember Unit 4 – Counselling, Signposting etc.) What sort of questions would be useful? (Remember Unit 3 – Open / Closed / Probing / Hypothetical)

# What Happens Now?

Name:

There are various opportunities open to peer mentors. In order that we can make the most of your attributes and skills please complete this sheet, and leave it with the Mentoring Co-ordinator so that we can find the best opportunity for you.

Please tick the box, which you are most interested in. Numbers for the various activities are sometimes limited, but your skills are always valuable in many others areas.

Opportunity	Dates and Times	Please tick if interested
I would not like to become a mentor just yet, but please let me know about things as they happen.		
Sports activities	Sep - Dec	
As above		
Dramatics club activities		
As above		
As above		
As above		
Music club Activities		
As above		
IT Activities		
As Above		
As Above		
Assisting with Induction day	Sep	
I would like to be matched with a particular Tutor group in Sep	Sep - Dec	
I would like to be introduced to a new entrant who is having problems settling in	Sep - Dec	
I would like to help in a university club activity	Sep - Dec	

# What Happens Now?

Name:

There are various opportunities open to peer mentors. In order that we can make the most of your attributes and skills, please complete this sheet and leave it with the Mentoring Co-ordinator / Learning Mentor so that we can find the best opportunity for you.

Tick the box which you are most interested in. Numbers for the various opportunities are sometimes limited, but your skills are always valuable in many others areas.

Opportunity	Dates & Times	Please tick if interested
I would not like to become a mentor just yet, but please let me know about things as they happen.		

## Peer Mentor Training Workshop

### Feedback/Evaluation Form

1. What was your understanding of 'Mentoring' prior to this programme?

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2. How has this training workshop changed your perception of 'Peer Mentoring'?

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3. Do you think Peer Mentor training will help you with your mentoring sessions?

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Q4 &5 refer to the below information

Unit 1: What is mentoring?

Unit 2: Differences, values and attitudes

Unit 3: Communication skills

Unit 4: How do we help?

Unit 5: Ground Rules

Unit 6: The agenda for mentoring

4. Which unit of the training you think was the most informative and why?

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5. Which do you think was the least informative unit of the training and why?

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6. Any suggestion for improving the 'Peer Mentor Training Workshop'?

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**APPENDIX 7: Photos of the training workshops**



Training Workshops for Peer Mentors in Universities in Lahore, Pakistan

# MENTOR'S HANDBOOK

(Guidelines for Peer Mentors)

## PEER MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

A Joint Project of



Middlesex University  
London, United Kingdom

&

anonymised

University  
Lahore, Pakistan

*(Adapted from Middlesex University's Peer Mentoring Programme)*

This Mentor's Handbook provides you with guidelines for mentoring process and to facilitate you as a peer mentor. In addition, the Peer Mentoring (training) Manual should be referred to at all times.

### **Peer Mentoring – Helping Strategy**

For a new student, a university can be an exciting but also intimidating place. A university can also be a lonely place for a new student, especially if that student is the first in their family to go to university or a member of a minority community. Even simple things that experienced students take for granted can be challenging for a new student, such as finding classrooms and offices on campus, understanding university policies for registration for classes, and learning the special language of the university such as “syllabus,” “office hours,” and “credit hours.” A small number of new students learn the answers by directly asking professors in their classes or talking to university professional staff. But many, many students find out information by asking friends, especially more experienced students. In fact, most new students find their way to the offices of university staff and professors by first talking to more experienced students. In other words, the experienced students serve as guides for new students to help them access the storehouse of knowledge and resources at the university. Moreover, new students will continue to seek the advice of experienced students regarding decisions about classes, majors, academic difficulties, and personal problems.

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor or guide. On a general level, your role as a mentor is to build a relationship of mutual trust with another student (your mentee) and to act as an effective guide to them. An effective mentor is respectful, reliable, patient, trustworthy, and a very good listener and communicator. In a university, mentors can be found among faculty and professional staff. But mentors can also be found in the ranks of students themselves. Student mentors are known as Peer Mentors. Due to their close association with other students, Peer Mentors are very important. Often new students confronted with an academic or personal problem will seek out advice first from a Peer Mentor and only with encouragement will that student contact others in the university, such as counsellors, or academic staff.

Mentor roles and responsibilities are varied and complex. Serving as a guide, facilitator, role model, and/or ally to the mentee, a mentor must be prepared to take on a range of roles and responsibilities that may change as the mentor/mentee relationship develops over time, as the needs and goals of the mentee shift, and as specific contexts and situations require

different strategies. A mentor will generally enact a number of common roles and responsibilities.

#### **A mentor is . . .**

- **A knowledgeable and experienced guide who advises** (and learns) through a commitment to the mutual growth of both mentee and mentor.
- **A caring, thoughtful facilitator** who provides access to people, places, experiences, and resources outside the mentee's routine environment.
- **A role model** who exemplifies in word and deed what it means to be an ethical, responsible, and compassionate human being.
- **A trusted ally**, who works with (not for) the mentee and on behalf of the mentee's best interests and goals.

#### **Person Specification**

- You have an awareness of difficulties facing some students
- You have the potential to develop through training the skills required to be an effective mentor
- You are able to communicate effectively with others
- You have awareness of your own strengths and limitations
- You can commit to the basic time level asked for

#### **Mentor's commitment throughout the academic year:**

- Attend Training: 8 hours
- Meeting with Mentees: 1 hour/week for 20 weeks – you will be assigned 2 mentees and will have ½ hourly meeting each week with individual mentee
- Meeting with the Mentoring Coordinator: 1/2 an hour each month for feedback/advice on one to one meetings with the mentees
- Maintaining log book for a record of weekly meetings with the mentees
- Overall feedback of mentoring sessions at the end of the academic year to the Mentoring Project Coordinator.

## **Ground Rules for Mentoring**

- Respect each other
- Offer a listening ear
- Set clear goals and targets and achieve them
- Keep confidentiality
- Respect time restrictions
- If we can't help you will try to refer you to someone who can
- Empathy and sensitivity
- Give advice if asked
- Value honesty in others
- Not letting each other down
- Offer encouragement
- Trust
- Give constructive feedback
- Understand differences
- Be unbiased and equality
- Be Non-judgemental
- Be reliable
- Be realistic
- Be open and honest and value honesty
- Be patient.
- Be positive.

## **General points to keep in mind**

- You are not working alone but as part of a team. If you have difficulties, take it to your co-ordinator
- Take time to establish rapport – do not try to address all problems in the first meeting
- Recognise the limitations of the relationship. You can only advise, you are not responsible for your mentee
- Encourage them to come up with solutions and to take responsibility – empowerment
- If your own circumstances change and you have to withdraw, explain why to your mentee
- Do not be an expert – you can always gain information and advice from other sources
- Keep to the time commitment – the mentoring should not take over your life
- Discussions between you and your mentee are confidential and not to be divulged to other students

## **MOST IMPORTANTLY – BE YOURSELF**

### **Practical thoughts**

- make a list of the other student's concerns – think of ways you can help
- It may take some time for everything to come together – don't expect immediate success
- If the student drops out or goes home don't feel you have failed or see it as a reflection on you as a person. There may be many reasons why this happens. You did your best.
- Never sit alone with a problem. If you have concerns about your mentee take it to the programme co-ordinator. You are not expected to deal with everything on your own

### **Recommended boundaries for this programme**

As a guide the following is recommended, but common sense does need to prevail. Neither you nor your mentee should ever feel exposed, at a potential disadvantage or weakness. If you have any concerns you **must** share them with the co-ordinator.

1. Your relationship is *friendly*; you are not *friends* with your mentee.
2. You never take the relationship beyond the boundaries you have set
3. You should not take your mentee to your own home
4. You should not get emotionally involved
5. Do not give out your home telephone number or address to your mentee
6. Do not accept inappropriate gifts
7. **Never** give or loan money
8. You should not talk about personal/intimate areas of your life
9. Respect confidentiality

We are not asking you to suppress the caring and friendly parts of your personality. But it is necessary sometimes to set aside our individual responses and beliefs in the interests of retaining the boundaries.

### **Study guidelines - recommendations**

Assess concepts and themes from the course. Begin this process before your first meeting with your mentee. Use your course syllabus and other course materials as a guide (refer to course objectives, lecture topics, chapter break-downs).

Before your first meeting, evaluate your confidence in and comprehension of concepts and themes from the course. It is just as important to identify your individual strengths as it is to identify your weaknesses – it is likely that you understand something that someone else does not.

Establish clear goals for the meeting. What do you wish to accomplish? How do you plan to accomplish these goals? Consider your time frame, and mentees study needs. Design and assign responsibilities.

### **Together, you can**

- Review your syllabus and determine what material you need to concentrate on
- Explain concepts based on material from lectures, readings etc.
- Practice applying course concepts and seeing and building connections between concepts – develop study notes organized by theme or concept, or draw concept maps and diagrams, where appropriate
- Practice answering multiple choice, short answer and essay questions (develop your own, use resources from your text or refer to final exams from previous years – *usually available in the library*)

### **Ending the Mentoring Meeting**

Towards the end of the session you will agree with your mentee what their action plan for the forthcoming week is to be and what actions, if any you are going to take on their behalf. Finish the meeting with a short review of the key points covered and the decisions that have been made, and agree a time and place for your next meeting.

To gain commitment during the meetings make sure that you:

- **Listen actively**
- **Ask useful questions**
- **Take brief notes**
- **Summarise regularly**
- **Adopt a joint problem-solving approach**

## Dos and Don'ts of Mentoring

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree on a framework of the discussion</li><li>• Maintain a constructive and supportive atmosphere and tone</li><li>• Be certain you have all the necessary information</li><li>• Encourage the mentee to reflect on his/her responses, performance, attitude, etc</li><li>• Encourage trust and mutual responsibility</li><li>• Be prepared to discuss and negotiate</li><li>• Be comfortable with silences.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow paper work to dominate discussion</li><li>• Inhibit the mentee from talking</li><li>• Be a know all</li><li>• Use inappropriate language</li><li>• Pressure the mentee to adopt your own views</li><li>• Appear rushed or pressed for time</li><li>• Allow desired outcomes to dominate the process</li></ul>

*Thanks to Project Advisors:*

*Dr Gillian Hilton, Mike Dawney and Jacqui Waterhouse*

*Compiled by:*

*Nosheen Rachel Naseem*



# **MENTOR'S LOG BOOK**

**PEER MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**A Joint Project of**



**Middlesex University  
London, United Kingdom**

**&**

**anonymised**

**University  
Lahore, Pakistan**

*(Adapted from Middlesex University's Peer Mentoring Programme)*

## Mentoring Tracking

Name of Mentee: \_\_\_\_\_

Year group/course: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring	Date:	Day:	Time:	
			From	To
Discussion				
Any issues				
Targets set				
Date/time of next meeting				
Any other comment				

**APPENDIX 9b - Mentoring Coordinator's Logsheet**

## Mentoring Tracking

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Year group/course: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring date	Discussion	Targets set

## **APPENDIX 10: Notes for Mentoring Coordinators**

### **Peer Mentoring Project – Pakistan Higher Education Institutions**

Peer mentoring is a helping strategy whereby more experienced senior students (mentors) help and advise their junior peers (mentees) with academic, career or personal development under the guidance of a staff member. Peer mentoring has been shown to be effective in studies in the UK, USA and other countries in helping university students with their learning and student experience.

#### **Notes for Mentoring Coordinators**

The peer mentoring programme (a pilot project) at your University aims to enhance the student experience by providing a ‘light touch’ support mechanism provided by students that complements other departmental or academic support provision for new students. Information on the project is provided through training manuals available to coordinators implementing the programme. Student handbooks are also available.

#### **Mentoring Coordinator’s commitment:**

- Overall management of the project at your university
- Attending planning meetings with the Project Coordinator
- Attending the Training Workshops for peer mentors
- Ensuring that the mentor-mentee meetings take place regularly
- Regular monthly meetings with the peer mentors for feedback/advice on one to one meetings with the mentees
- Maintaining a logbook for the mentor-mentee meetings
- If you have any concerns about information disclosed to you by the mentor or mentee assigned to you - speak to your Project coordinator/Local Coordinator
- Monthly feedback to the Project Coordinator on the progress of the project
- Overall feedback at the end of the project

### **Requirements for Participation:**

- Mentoring coordinator must attend the ‘Peer mentor training’ workshops offered by the researcher.
- Mentoring coordinator must refer to the training manual provided to train the student cohort for detailed guidelines.
- Attendance at the training is mandatory for students who wish to become mentors. A Certificate of participation will be awarded to students who attend the peer mentors training workshop
- A basic suitability reference must be obtained for each student mentor volunteer.
- Each peer mentor should be assigned two mentees
- Feedback from students must be sought each month and recorded on the mentoring coordinator’s log book provided. This will help us monitor the benefits and quality of the programme during the year.
- Mentoring Certificates will be awarded to the participants (mentors and mentees) at the end of the academic year.

### **Role Description for Selecting Mentors:**

The following role description is outlined to help identify the suitability of participants for the role of peer mentors and should be followed in recruiting peer mentors for the project at your university

**Role title:** Peer Mentor

**Location:** Higher Education Institutions - Universities in Lahore, Pakistan

### **Outline of the role:**

A Peer Mentor:

- Attends the Peer Mentor Training workshops
- Attends one hour weekly meetings with two mentees (30 min per mentee) in a one-to-one setting.
- Can commit to the programme for twenty weeks following the initial meeting with the mentees.
- Supports and empowers the young person who is going through an important transition in their life. Help them to set and work towards their educational goals.
- Respects the rules of the programme, in particular those covering confidentiality.
- Keeps weekly records of mentoring meetings, and completes the log book provided.

## Skills, qualities and attitudes required:

The Peer mentors should

- be interested in the education system and youth culture
- have the ability to empathise with young people
- have good interpersonal skills, especially listening skills
- have good organisational and time-management skills
- be open-minded, with a broad outlook on life
- be committed to equal opportunities and will not discriminate against young people or limit their development through their own beliefs

## Annual Activity Timetable

April 2009	Intro meetings with the mentoring coordinators and students
May 2009	Recruit student mentors from current first year pool
October 2009	Train student mentors, Allocate peer mentoring groups, meeting mentees
February 2010	Solicit student feedback using evaluation questions
April 2010	Mentoring ends, overall feedback/evaluation

### Project Coordinator

Nosheen Rachel

Email: [NR291@live.mdx.ac.uk](mailto:NR291@live.mdx.ac.uk)

## **APPENDIX 11: Guidelines for mentees**

### **Pakistan Higher Education - Peer Mentoring Guidelines for Mentees**

If you wish to participate in the Peer Mentoring Project as a mentee, you agree to follow these guidelines during the mentoring process:

#### **Do...**

- arrange to meet with your mentor regularly throughout the semester as specified by your mentoring coordinator
- be punctual for the meeting with your mentor
- talk about your experience of studying at your university
- ask for help if you feel you don't understand something or you need help with something
- respect time restrictions
- keep a record of your meetings with mentors in a reflective log.

#### **Don't...**

- be over demanding or impose your own ideas, values or solutions
- become over dependent or expect too much of your mentor
- assume that your experience will be the same as your peers
- overstep the boundaries

#### **Boundaries**

- do not contact your mentor except by agreed communication method (e.g., text message or email)
- always meet your mentor on university premises
- never give out sensitive personal information (e.g. home address, phone number, ID info, etc.)
- all discussions are confidential between the mentor, mentee and mentoring coordinator, unless there is a risk to well being
- do not confide in your mentor on matters outside of your experience as a student as your mentor is not your friend

#### **Further support**

- always inform your mentoring coordinator if you have any problems with the mentoring arrangements or if you want to withdraw from the project
- if you have any concerns about information disclosed to you speak to your mentoring coordinator
- if you have any need for further help or guidance, or wish to discuss any aspect of your mentoring sessions please contact your University's mentoring coordinator

At the end of the academic year the mentees will be awarded a Certificate of Participation

#### **Mentoring coordinator of your university**

Name:

Office contact details:

**APPENDIX 12: Mentor profile form**

**PAKISTAN HIGHER EDUCATION  
PEER MENTORING PROJECT**

**MENTOR PROFILE FORM**

<b>Full name</b>	<b>Date of birth</b>	<b>Male</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Female</b> <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick)
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<b>University course</b>	<b>Year of course</b>
--------------------------	-----------------------

<b>Term-time address</b>	<b>Home address</b>
<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>Email</b>

<b>Qualifications obtained, including Intermediate/A levels and degree if completed</b> (include grade and level)
--

<b>Work experience, if any</b>
--------------------------------

<b>Previous experience of mentoring</b>
---



## APPENDIX 12: Mentor profile form

### Availability for mentoring

Students are likely to mentor in one 1-hour slot per week. Please list maximum availability, making note of restrictions such as lectures/seminars.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 am					
10 am					
11 am					
12 pm					
1 pm					
2 pm					
3 pm					
4 pm					

Please indicate subjects that you consider to be a strength (please tick)			
Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/>	Geography <input type="checkbox"/>	Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/>	Art <input type="checkbox"/>
English <input type="checkbox"/>	Combined Sciences <input type="checkbox"/>	Biology <input type="checkbox"/>	Design/Technology <input type="checkbox"/>
History <input type="checkbox"/>	Physics <input type="checkbox"/>	ICT <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other subjects:			

Other interests and leisure activities

Particular strengths/experiences that you feel you may bring to the mentoring relationship (see notes)



## Mentoring Contract

This mentoring project has been put into place in order to assist incoming first year students with the transition into University life. A peer mentor is a senior university student, someone who wants to help you – someone who will give you guidance and encouragement as you start your university programme”.

The relationship is beneficial to both the mentor, through gaining qualities such as leadership, problem solving and action planning and to the mentee, through having the guidance of someone who has shared the same experiences. The mentoring relationship relies heavily upon trust.

### To be signed by both the Mentor and Mentee

#### We agree to:

- Attend all sessions as agreed
- Let each other know if there needs to be any change to the arrangements
- Abide by the rules of confidentiality
- Meet the action plans we draw up
- Attend support sessions
- Complete review and evaluation forms as necessary
- Attend an end of project interview/focus group

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 14: Interim review questionnaire

### Interim Review

It is important at this stage, to evaluate the first term sessions, and to review the mentoring process so far.

In light of this, the interim partnership review has been designed to provide an opportunity to both of you, as the mentee and mentor, and also for the programme co-ordinator, to assess the progress of your mentoring meetings.

1. What were the goals you stated at the beginning of the mentoring relationship?
2. Have you achieved these goals, as a whole or in part?
3. What else did you hope to achieve by participating in a mentoring relationship?
4. How have you experienced the relationship between mentee and mentor?
5. What have been the highlights of your mentoring partnership for you, so far?
6. Have you had any unexpected results or learning points?
7. What personal benefits have you found, during your mentoring relationship?
8. Have you come across any challenges, issues, barriers or difficulties so far?

**APPENDIX 14: Interim review questionnaire**

9. In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?
10. Do you have any ideas on how you could improve or enhance your mentoring relationship?
11. Are there any 'hidden' benefits or rewards you've found from participating in the mentoring process?
12. Would you like to continue to meet up for further mentoring sessions?
<b>Mentee's Name:</b>
<b>Mentor's Name:</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>
<b>Length of Meeting:</b>

## APPENDIX 14a: Interim Review – questionnaire sample

### Peer Mentoring in Universities in Pakistan Interim Review

It is important at this stage to evaluate the first term sessions and to review the mentoring process so far.

The interim review has been designed to provide an opportunity for both of you, as the mentee and mentor, and also for the project co-ordinator, to assess the progress of your mentoring meetings.

1. What were the goals you stated at the beginning of the mentoring process? → To enhance own capabilities & end looking towards a bright future in order to have a good academic record.
2. Have you achieved these goals, as a whole or in part? As a whole
3. What else did you hope to achieve by participating in a mentoring relationship? —
4. How have you experienced the relationship between mentee and mentor? Yes, It is nice relation, relation of respect and kindness.
5. What have been the highlights of your mentoring meetings for you, so far? How to deal with teachers and semester systems.
6. Have you had any unexpected results or learning points? No.
7. What personal benefits have you found during your mentoring process? Yes, we discuss about studies and release much more tension related to studies.

PTO

**APPENDIX 14a: Interim Review – questionnaire sample**

<p>8. Have you come across any challenges, issues, barriers or difficulties so far?</p> <p><i>None - we had a smooth relationship.</i></p>
<p>9. Is there anything you would have done differently?</p> <p><i>If we had more time, or had frequent meetings we could have covered more.</i></p>
<p>10. Do you have any ideas on how you could improve or enhance the mentoring process?</p> <p><i>The no. of meeting should be increased.</i></p>
<p>11. Are there any other benefits or rewards you've found from participating in the mentoring process?</p> <p><i>Yes, it enhances self confidence, gives a new approach to dealing with juniors as well as seniors.</i></p>
<p>12. Would you like to continue to meet up for further mentoring sessions?</p> <p><i>Yes, I would like to continue to meet up for further mentoring session.</i></p>
<p>Mentee's Name: <i>Sara Agra Almas</i></p>
<p>Mentor's Name: <i>Sara</i></p>
<p>Date of Meeting: <i>01-03-2010</i></p>
<p>Length of Meeting: <i>1hr.</i></p>

## APPENDIX 14b: Interim Review – questionnaire sample

### Peer Mentoring in Universities in Pakistan Interim Review

It is important at this stage to evaluate the first term sessions and to review the mentoring process so far.

The interim review has been designed to provide an opportunity for both of you, as the mentee and mentor, and also for the project co-ordinator, to assess the progress of your mentoring meetings.

1. What were the goals you stated at the beginning of the mentoring process? I decide to take help to improve my learning skill
2. Have you achieved these goals, as a whole or in part? Absolutely, this process helped me to improve my learning (I'm the toper of the 1st session (☺))
3. What else did you hope to achieve by participating in a mentoring relationship? I was thought that it also improve my communicating skill & reduce to share my problem.
4. How have you experienced the relationship between mentee and mentor? Quite good & comfortable.
5. What have been the highlights of your mentoring meetings for you, so far? Mainly I was introduced to get information how to study, about learning materials & clear my concepts about different topics
6. Have you had any unexpected results or learning points? No, after every meeting I feel that I get something more.
7. What personal benefits have you found during your mentoring process? My communicating skills are improved. I'm confident. <del>_____</del>

PTO

APPENDIX 14b: Interim Review – questionnaire sample

<p>8. Have you come across any challenges, issues, barriers or difficulties so far?</p> <p>Some time, we can not spend much time to each other due to some other problems, but we manage it afterwards.</p>
<p>9. Is there anything you would have done differently?</p> <p>No. We discuss &amp; solve problems &amp; my mentor guide me just by conversation.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any ideas on how you could improve or enhance the mentoring process?</p> <p>This procedure should be start at the beginning of the 1st semester, because student need help at that stage.</p>
<p>11. Are there any other benefits or rewards you've found from participating in the mentoring process?</p> <p>Yes, I was very shy but now I am confident. and reward!! I am the toper of the 1st semester.</p>
<p>12. Would you like to continue to meet up for further mentoring sessions?</p> <p>Yes absolutely!</p>
<p>Mentee's Name: <u>Nazia Khizer</u></p>
<p>Mentor's Name: <u><del>Nazia</del> Nadia Yaseen</u></p>
<p>Date of Meeting: <u>10.11.09</u></p>
<p>Length of Meeting: <u>30 mins</u></p>



#### **APPENDIX 14c: Interim review - Focus group questions for mentors**

1. How was your experience of mentoring?
2. What benefits are you gaining from your role as a mentor?
3. How did the content covered during training help you during the mentoring process?
4. What were the problems you faced?
5. How do you think you have helped your mentee with their problems?
6. Do you think HE institutions in Pakistan should have peer mentoring schemes?
7. Suggest how peer mentoring can be improved at your university?



Middlesex  
University



## Certificate of Participation

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has participated in a programme of  
**Peer Mentor Training**  
at  
*University ..... Lahore*

**October 2009**

**Professor .....**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
Middlesex University, London

**Nosheen Rachel Naseem**  
Project Coordinator  
Middlesex University, London



Middlesex  
University



## Certificate of Participation

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has participated in Peer Mentoring programme  
as a peer mentor at  
*University ..... Lahore*

**October 2009 – May 2010**

**Professor .....**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
Middlesex University, London

**Nosheen Rachel Naseem**  
Project Coordinator  
Middlesex University, London



Middlesex  
University



## Certificate of Participation

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has participated in Peer Mentoring programme

as a mentee at

*University ..... Lahore*

**October 2009 – May 2010**

**Professor .....**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
Middlesex University, London

**Nosheen Rachel Naseem**  
Project Coordinator  
Middlesex University, London

**APPENDIX 17: Certificate Award Ceremony U1 and U2, Lahore Pakistan**





# FACULTY OF EDUCATION

[Redacted] Lahore-54590

[Redacted]  
Dean [Redacted]

*November 30, 2011*

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is certified that Ms. Nosheen conducted the research work on ‘peer mentoring’ at Institute of Education and Research (IER) as part of her PhD work. The project started in October 2009, with the training for peer mentors. One to one mentoring session commenced from November 2009 to May 2010. Mid-term evaluation for the project was conducted in February 2010 and final evaluation in March 2011 with interviews of students who participated in the project.

She is allowed to use name of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) [Redacted] as one of her research site. I hope that the outcomes of the research have been useful for maximizing students’ learning experience. I would like to know about the findings of the study.

[Redacted]

*Note: Appendix 19a & b provides information on my ability to communicate my research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences (in accordance with UK QAA guidelines on PhD candidacy).*

## **APPENDIX 19a: Research presentations, publications and awards**

### **I. Conference presentations:**

- 1) **‘Introducing Student Support Strategies to Pakistan’s Universities: Educational Development through Best Practice in European Higher Education’** (with Mike Dawney). Research seminar series - Middlesex University, Dubai, May 2011. <http://www.mdx.ac/files/Research-Seminars-2011-2012.pdf>
- 2) **‘Introducing Student Support Strategies to Pakistan’s Universities: Educational Development Through Best Practice in European Higher Education’**, EUCEN Annual Conference, ‘Education as a Right, LLL for All’, Granada, Spain, May 2011. <http://www.eucen.eu/pastconferences/Granada2011>
- 3) **‘Introducing Student Peer Mentoring in Universities in Pakistan - Hierarchy and a Different Culture of Learning?’** paper presented at FEDORA Annual Summer University, ‘Student Counselling in the 21st Century’, Ioannina, Greece, June 2011. [http://www.ekep.gr/library/FEDORA\\_SU\\_programme\\_v6.pdf](http://www.ekep.gr/library/FEDORA_SU_programme_v6.pdf)
- 4) International Conference on Critical Education, hosted by The History, Philosophy and Didactics of Science Programme in Athens, Greece, July 2011. Conference paper presentation **‘Challenging hierarchies of learning: Peer Mentoring in Pakistani Universities and socio-political change’**. <http://icce.hpdst.gr/2011>
- 5) Paper presentation at the Universities Association of Lifelong Learning annual conference ‘Higher education for social good? The Place of Lifelong learning’ at Clare College, Cambridge University. **‘Peer mentoring as a strategy for social cohesion in Pakistan’s Universities’** March 2012. <http://www.uall.ac.uk/annual-conference-2012>
- 6) 10<sup>th</sup> BCES (Bulgarian comparative Education Society) conference theme ‘International Perspectives on Education’ paper presented on **‘Structured Peer Mentoring: Enhancing Lifelong Learning in Pakistani Universities’** June 2012. <http://bces.conference.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/10th.bces.conferece.program.2012.05.21.pdf>
- 7) 3rd ICEEPSY (International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology) conference – paper presented on **‘Changing the culture of learning in Pakistan’s universities through structured peer support’** October 2012. [http://www.iceepsy.org/content.asp?Units\\_id=62](http://www.iceepsy.org/content.asp?Units_id=62)

- 8) SIGMUS/GOMES conference - 'Students in the Centre of Reform of Higher Education' . Paper presentation on '**Peer mentoring for enhancing student support in universities**' The University of Belgrade, Serbia January, 2013.  
<http://www.sigmus.edu.rs/eng/?v=1325>
- 9) **The role of peer support in developing ownership of learning for students**' Paper presented at UALL Annual Conference, 'Who and what are universities for? Local communities, global competitiveness and the part-time student', Durham University, March 2013.
- 10) Paper presentation on '**Promoting autonomous learning in Pakistan's universities through implementation of peer mentoring**' at BERA Annual Conference, University of Sussex, September 2013

## **II. Publication (peer reviewed):**

- 1) '**Structured Peer Mentoring: Enhancing Lifelong Learning in Pakistani Universities**' in Popov, N. *et al* (eds) *International Perspectives in Education Volume 10*, BCES, Sofia, 2012 (Available online at <http://bc.es.conference.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/bces.conference.book.vol.10.2012.pdf>)
- 2) '**Peer Mentoring: Enhancing Social Cohesion in Pakistani Universities**' published in *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, Volume 3, Number 2, May 2013* (available on-line at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=2042-3896> )

## **III. Awards:**

- 1) Poster presentation at the EAIE – European Association of International Education conference Nantes, France, theme - '**Making Knowledge work**' (with Sophie Ball). Of the 21 posters shortlisted by the EAIE selection committee, my poster was the winning poster for that year, September 2010.  
<http://www.eaie.org/dms/pdf/past-conferences/EAIE-Nantes-2010-Programme/EAIE%20Nantes%202010-Programme.pdf> p. 34;  
<http://www.eaie.org/home/archive/nantes.html> and  
<http://issuu.com/eaie/docs/winterforum2010> p.52
- 2) Universities Association of Lifelong Learning annual conference - March 2013, Durham University. Runner-up project and highly commended in the UALL annual awards and recognised as the most effective overseas project.



## **APPENDIX 19b: Transferability of my project**

Following my presentation on 'Peer mentoring for enhancing student support in universities' at the SIGMUS/GOMES conference 'Students in the Centre of Reform of Higher Education' in January 2013 at the University of Belgrade, Serbia, I was invited by the conference coordinator to train 40 student representatives from Students' Union of Serbia involving 7 universities in Serbia. These students were trained in April 2013 for the role of mentoring coordinators to enable them to introduce structured peer mentoring, for the academic year 13/14, for students within their universities and the departments they represented. In Serbia, as in Pakistan, there was no structured student peer mentoring in universities and a mentoring scheme similar to the one introduced in Pakistan's universities was considered suitable for implementation in universities across Serbia.

## **APPENDIX 20: Timeline of Research**

### **Preliminary Phase: September 2008 - March 2009 (London)**

- Preliminary literature review and data collection for rationalising the research topic
- Preparation of the material/notes/letters of introduction of the research and letters of permission for the universities in Lahore and introductory information/notes for universities on peer mentoring and the project.
- Preparation of agreements for the universities shortlisted for research fieldwork

### **Phase 1 - April 2009 (1<sup>st</sup> visit to Lahore)**

- Establishment of contacts with the universities in Pakistan
- Establishment of participating universities' agreements to run the project for a full year
- Selection of mentoring coordinators by each university
- Preliminary meetings of the project coordinator (researcher) with the mentoring coordinator
- Presentation/talk to the students to inform them about the peer mentoring project. Distribution and collection of student questionnaires at the end of the talk
- Pre-selection of prospective peer mentors from students who had volunteered at the talk and also through questionnaires
- Distribution and collection of staff questionnaires

### **June - September 2009 (London)**

- Literature review for effectiveness of mentoring programmes
- Development of models of peer mentoring
- Finalisation of the resource materials: Peer Mentoring Training Manual, Handbook for Mentors, Guidelines for Mentees, Guidelines for Mentoring Coordinators, Logbooks for Mentors and the Logbook for Mentoring Coordinators
- Printing resource material by end August/early September
- Interviews with students at UK university who had studied at Pakistani universities

### **Phase 2 - October 2009 (2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Lahore)**

- Selection of mentors and mentees by the academic staff at each university
- U 1 (total of 60 mentors & 105 mentees)
- U 2 (20 mentors and 40 mentees)
- Training of mentors by project coordinator 4 days in total (three days at U 1 and one day at U 2)
- Evaluation of the peer mentoring training workshops
- Meetings with the mentoring coordinators
- Logistics of mentor-mentee meetings (venue, day, time of meeting)
- Signing of the mentoring contract by mentor & mentee
- Interviews with department heads, faculty

### **November 2009 – February 2010 (Activity in Lahore)**

- Mentoring commenced
- One to one mentor-mentee ½ hr duration meeting/week for 20 weeks
- Mentors record of the weekly meetings with the mentees in the logbook
- Mentors meeting with the mentoring coordinator for ½ an hour each month
- Mentoring coordinator meeting with the mentees early January for their feedback on the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee weekly meetings

**Phase 3 - February/March 2010 (3<sup>rd</sup> visit to Lahore)**

- Follow up questionnaires (interim evaluation of project)
- Interviews with the mentors and mentees
- Focus groups
- Meeting with the mentors
- Meetings with mentoring coordinator
- Meetings with university Principals/Rectors/department heads
- Award ceremony for certificate distribution to the participants (peer mentors) of mentoring workshop

**April 2010 – January 2011 (London)**

- Transcribing interviews, interim evaluation questionnaires
- Preparation for research work presentation
- Preparation for the next phase of the research field work visit to Lahore
- Final evaluation of the project at the end of academic year

**Phase 4 - March/April 2011 (4<sup>th</sup> visit to Lahore)**

- Final evaluation of the project
- Certificate award ceremony
- Individual interviews
- Meetings with heads of universities for mutual feedback
- Meetings with mentoring coordinators for feedback

**Phase 5 - April 2012 (final research fieldwork visit to Lahore)**

- Assessment of the wider impact of the dissemination,
- Accessing grades of the mentors and mentees
- Interviews with graduates and in employment or further studies, on the impact of the project on their careers and future developments