

EXPLORING THE VALUE OF ENGAGEMENT MENTORING AS A PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY WITH AT-RISK YOUTH

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For Enza and Rowan.

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Volume 1: Abstract

Volume 1 comprises five papers, an Introductory Chapter, Papers One and Two which are the main papers in the Volume, a Concluding Chapter and an Appendix Chapter. The Introductory Chapter provides an overview of the overall research enterprise, inclusive of factors influencing the choice of work undertaken and how the research project brief was negotiated with key research partners. Reference is also made to the organisation and general style of in which both of main papers are written. Presenting work within a genre appropriate for the intended target audience is part of the university criteria for Volume 1.

Paper One presents an 8000 word Critical Literature Review of the focus area of the research, namely, 'engagement mentoring for marginalised youth'. The purpose of the Review was to inform the research design of the study that followed. The primary research activity undertaken came to be conceptualised as 'Development and Research' (D & R) rather than 'research per se'. Paper Two presents the D & R project which involved two local children's service providers devising and developing a community-based engagement mentoring project through Realistic Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) for young children identified as 'at-risk' of offending behaviour. Work was carried out in the Kingstanding area of Birmingham, which might be described as a socially disadvantaged / economically deprived suburb of the city.

The Concluding Chapter suggests how engagement mentoring as an intervention might be further developed. Finally, the Appendix Chapter provides a fuller methodological critique of the empirical study, inclusive of the context in which the research was undertaken.

Introduction to Volume 1

The working context: Birmingham Educational Psychology Service

As part of the University of Birmingham's Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate programme, Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs) are required to secure an appropriate supervised placement working within a Local Authority Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for years two and three of the course. A number of research-based activities have to be completed within the supervised placement in order to meet the training course requirements. Volume 1 of this thesis includes a substantive research project that I completed as part of my supervised practice placement.

I completed my professional training placement in the West Midlands at the Birmingham Educational Psychology Service. The West Midlands Local Authority is England's largest urban authority, with a population of approximately a million people (Ofsted, 2007). Birmingham EPS employs approximately 52 full-time educational psychologists (EPs), 12 TEPs, and four graduate psychologists.

As a Trainee I was given 'free reign' by the Service to select an area of interest that might meet research requirements for Volume 1, providing that the work carried out would serve to meet the needs of children in Birmingham. In some Services restrictions can apply in that regard, and in others research questions are even dictated. The opportunity to choose and develop my own area of interest was one of many advantages to working within a large EPS.

Factors influencing the chosen area of research

The focus of Volume 1 falls within the broad research paradigm of youth support, or more definitively 'marginalised youth' (France, 2008). A number of related factors contributed to this research area being chosen.

Researcher identity Firstly, I had previously worked with vulnerable youth within community settings for both private and public service sector providers and remained passionate about trying to provide high quality services in that regard. I have a good awareness of the constraints typically associated with working within this 'professional landscape', and particularly those relating to evidence-based practice, or lack of it. Secondly, my 'wider experience' was very much celebrated on the Birmingham training programme and since studying at the University I developed a keen and growing interest in community psychology and particularly emancipatory research (e.g. Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). Thirdly, and in relation to service delivery, my employers viewed my interest in community-focused research as something to be capitalised on in terms of providing a high quality service to children and

their families, in line with various policy initiatives directing children's service providers to provide 'joined up solutions' (e.g. DfES, 2004). Collaborative research with other service providers was actively encouraged by the Birmingham EPS. Finally, despite the role of the educational psychologist widening to incorporate an eco-systemic focus, my research interests were 'unconventional' when considered alongside the research that previous and current employees within the service had, and were, undertaking. In terms of my own professional development, selecting this particular type of research venture also presented me with an opportunity to carve out an early and distinct professional identity in one of the country's largest educational psychology services.

Policy Government has identified Youth Services as not doing enough to stop young people drifting into crime (DfES, 2006, 2009) and Birmingham's own 'Children and Young Peoples Plan' (2006) states that by 2008 all local Youth Support Services should be effectively working in partnership with other children's service providers targeting at-risk youth. The Joint Area Review of the LA's Children's Services Ofsted (2007) describes parts of Birmingham and its communities as 'having high levels of deprivation, with the associated problems of crime, poor health and unemployment' (p. 10).

The Birmingham Children's Plan Strategy 'Brighter Futures' identifies the marginalisation of young people as a key target area for research, and particularly in relation to the influences of crime and education (Birmingham City Council, 2007). Whilst Birmingham is comparable to other UK cities in

terms of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), the Local Judiciary prosecutes a significantly greater number of young people within its court system (Birmingham City Council, 2007). With court prosecution amongst one of the acknowledged indicators of future mental health and behaviour problems in young people (e.g. Davis, 1989), Brighter Futures prioritises improving 'process' for vulnerable youth, conceptualised as:

- Keeping young people at home;
- Improving relationships;
- Promoting engagement at school; and
- Reducing the number of minor criminal convictions.

The Kingstanding area of Birmingham where the engagement project was developed is one of the most deprived areas of the city and local data identify the area as having more than twice the city average of young people receiving ASBO and /or court prosecutions.

Negotiating the project brief with stakeholders

With a good rationale established in accordance with local need, I set about trying to engage a research sponsor to commission a research project focusing on working with marginalised youth. Following dissemination of my research interests via email across Birmingham's Children's Services, I received an email from Birmingham's Youth Inclusion Services Preventions Development Manager showing interest in working collaboratively with the

Birmingham EPS. Resulting from this, a meeting was arranged between myself, Birmingham's Youth Services Community Prevention Lead Officer, and the Senior Management Team (SMT) of The Kingstanding Youth Inclusion Project (KYIP). The KYIP is one of five Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs) across the city of Birmingham that targets young people considered to be 'at-risk' of offending behaviour through a range of intervention approaches, i.e. a multi-layered approach to social inclusion. Work carried out by the YIPs can be broadly conceptualised as 'community-focused preventative outreach'.

At this initial meeting I was invited by the Community Prevention Lead Officer to support the KYIP in developing an engagement mentoring project that would target 'reducing offending behaviour' in young people considered 'at-risk' of further criminal conviction. The KYIP had previously tried to develop a mentoring project in 2006 for these purposes but this had failed. According to the KYIP SMT this was largely due to the KYIP staff, including the SMT, having a limited understanding of what mentoring was: two of the KYIP staff had attended a half-day training course in 2005 run by the Youth Offending Service but reported that this had largely covered risk factors associated with offending behaviour only (e.g. West and Farrington, 1973), and with a 'minimal input' addressing theoretical underpinnings informing mentoring approaches, and nothing by way of actual methods for mentoring interventions. It was agreed at this initial meeting that I would review the relevant mentoring literature to establish the feasibility of the proposed research brief, and this comprised the focus and purpose of the critical literature review of paper one contained in Volume 1.

The evidence-base from the review demonstrated that targeting crime reduction via engagement mentoring (EM) was misguided, but that an EM programme might be a viable option if the programme to be devised was non-directive in orientation, and programme structure was fully context-embedded, i.e. immediately relevant to local need inclusive of mentors as well as mentees. A second consultation meeting was attended by all current stakeholders where programme aims were re-conceptualised as 'empowering marginalised youth through positive mentoring relationships'. In accordance with developments within the literature, needs-led assessment and solution-focused methods would be the chief methods used to achieve programme aims. This second consultation meeting is reported more fully within the research paper, given the relevance of contextual factors to the research and development (R & D) project which I negotiated with the project stakeholders.

A chief criticism of previous studies employing non-directive methods relates to their unbridled use of relativist methodological frameworks and lack of programme specificity (see Pollitt, 2009). Establishing high programme reliability would form a secondary aim of this D & R project. This meant that evaluation would have to be detailed and thorough, as well as contextually-grounded and Pawson and Tilley's (1997) Realistic Evaluation framework was deemed fit for purpose in that regard. The importance of a collaborative approach to programme development was broached in consultation, and the commitment required of stakeholders, particularly mentors, emphasised. In part, an aim of evaluation would be to identify a coherent and context-appropriate framework for the actual programme structure and programme

delivery. It would also aim to embed identified mentoring procedures and methods within the actual mentoring team. As Pawson and Tilley (1997) note, it is people that make programmes work, not the programmes per se. In essence, marrying a non-directive approach with rigorous evaluation criteria was a central and most challenging aspect in developing the KYIP EM Programme and in that regard, Paper Two of Volume 1 is chiefly concerned with reporting how methodology was devised, how programme specification and evaluations ensued, and how failures of programme specification and delivery were re-formulated for further evaluation within the Kingstanding mentoring context. The collaborative, iterative and organic nature of Pawson and Tilley's (1997) RE methodology was seen as critical to programme's success, and, with previous non-directive EM programmes lacking methodological credibility, this D & R project is seen as making an important contribution to the field in that regard.

Presenting the work to Journal specification

Whilst the primary aim of Papers One and Two is to present work at Doctoral Level, Volume 1 criteria also required that papers should be written up with regard to a 'target journal specification'. Publications serve as a medium through which a particular issue can be advanced, and in a recent article Sinatra (2006) emphasises the importance of educational psychologists (EPs) contributing to their professional field. Nihalani and Mayrath (2008) provide guidelines for EPs aiming to publish, some of which state simply that authors should decide what they want to say, how they aim to say it, and to whom

they want to say it, i.e. genre and audience. Genre and audience were considered in producing both main papers in Volume 1, and determining my choice of target journals.

Paper One 'Educational and Child Psychology' was the target journal identified for Paper One. Breadth, liveliness and applied psychological orientation of the publication's content were chief considerations here. As noted, in terms of actual focus, this research enterprise was far from a 'standard research activity' within the field of educational psychology practice, and in my immediate professional circles fellow EPs had shown an interest in the actual research topic, for example, in relation to how engagement mentoring was conceptualised, what were its aims, and whether it could be effective in schools and /or as part of wider community-based provision. Extended schools / cluster work is particular topical within the Birmingham EPS at present. Klinger et al. (2005) and Sinatra (2007) refer to 'wide circulation' and 'high visibility' in considering target journals, and with this journal well read within my profession, and using the interest shown at the Birmingham Service as a barometer, I selected 'Educational and Child Psychology' as my target journal for Paper One.

Paper Two As discussed, Pawson and Tilley's (1997) RE was central to the conceptualisation, and proved fundamental to the successes of the D & R project. Given the importance attached to the evaluation methodology and its centrality in relation to the actual write up of Paper Two, '*Evaluation*' was deemed an appropriate target journal. Publications typically focus on the

complexities associated with evaluation, for example, a 2004 issue focuses entirely on the organisational and institutional settings within which evaluation is embedded (Stern, 2004). The journal has also published several articles utilising RE, though these are mainly within fields of Health and Social Work / Policy.

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MENTORING AT-RISK YOUTH: A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Target Journal:

Educational and Child Psychology

**Postgraduate Professional Training Programme in Educational
Psychology: University of Birmingham**

Abstract

Engagement mentoring has experienced a meteoric rise in popularity since the 1990s and it has been championed internationally as the next silver bullet that might address disaffection. Programmes in the United States, such as the Big Brother/Big Sister initiatives, currently boast over 1 million volunteers and the expansion of comparable community-based programmes can be traced across Canada, Australia and many parts of Europe including the UK.

Despite this fervour, across the literature doubts remain as to the efficacy of mentoring as a viable social engineering mechanism, and many critics complain that the evidence lacks consensus and conviction. Various programme evaluations have shown outcomes are much less favourable than expected, and recently, the custodians of public funding have begun to withdraw monies previously ringfenced for mentoring projects within the UK.

This review provides a detailed critique of key papers indicative of developments within the 'engagement mentoring paradigm'. Predominantly, the focus will be on the UK research. Critiques will be set largely within a socio-political context. The paper argues for a rethink in terms of how we approach 'at risk' youth through mentoring programmes, and suggests that a redirection towards a more nurturing, naturalistic programme ethos is a way forward for policy makers and public servants alike.

Key aims of this review and parameters of the literature search

This review sets out to provide a detailed examination of some of the key literature, seeking specifically to ascertain:

- the difference between informal and formal approaches to mentoring;
- whether outcomes-driven mentoring programmes work for 'at risk' youth;
- how mentees view mentoring as a process; and
- what specific aspects of programme designs mentors find positive for both mentors and mentees.

The research strategy used for this review involved accessing two databases, PsychInfo and the British Educational Index (BEI). Searches were restricted to contemporary literature published between the years 2000 and 2008.

Initial key-word search terms used on PsychInfo and the BEI were: mentoring, engagement / disengagement, disaffected, at-risk, youth, mentee and mentoring-programme. Combinations of these search terms produced 196 titles and abstracts, which were reviewed for appropriateness at the initial stages of the review. Additional search terms were used on PsychInfo and the BEI at later stages of the review; these were: needs assessment, solution focused, redirection, empowerment and directive / non-directive.

Combinations of these search terms produced a further 76 titles and abstracts and again these were scanned for relevance in relation to the overall aims of the review.

The 'pre-2000' literature referenced in this report was identified through papers by Colley (2003), Hall (2003), Phillip and Hendry (2000), Piper and Piper (2000), St James-Roberts et al. (2005) and St James-Roberts and Singh (2000) . The 'pre 2000' literature was sourced through PsychInfo and the BEI, and through manual library searches.

Introduction

Reducing the gap between the majority and an 'excluded' minority is one of government's chief aims. Whilst previous governments have often conceptualised social exclusion primarily in terms of poverty (Townsend, 1979), major policy documents such as the Green Paper 'The Learning Age' (DfEE, 1998) and the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report 'Bridging the Gap' (SEU, 1999), widen this focus to incorporate underachievement, disruptive behaviour and crime as key indicators of marginalisation. Within this context 'disaffected youth' is a term frequently used to refer to young people who are socially excluded (Newburn and Shiner, 2005).

Since New Labour came to power in 1997, engagement mentoring has been utilised as a key mechanism for promoting the government's Social Inclusion Agenda (DfEE, 1998), with policy makers enthusing not only of its inclusive properties, but also its cost effectiveness (House of Commons Education and Employment Committee, 1998; DfES, 2005). The National Mentoring Network (NMN) provides a forum for the exchange of good practice and currently

receives a government bursary as a means of achieving this. The NMN presently has over 1500 affiliates (Newburn and Shiner, 2005).

What is Mentoring? Aims and Moral Purpose

Defining the term mentoring is highly problematic in that mentoring exists in a variety of forms. Roberts (2000), in attempting to pin down the concept, noted that we enter into a definitional quagmire. For example, youth mentoring has been associated with coaching, counselling, teaching, tutoring, volunteering, role modelling and advising (Hall, 2003). At the European Mentoring conference in 1996 Clutterbuck noted:

‘the biggest problem for researchers into mentoring is defining what it is’

(Hall, 2003 p. 3)

For explanatory purposes, mentoring approaches may be dichotomised into two forms, informal and formal. According to Homer, Mentor was the name of a friend that Odysseus chose to act as guardian to his son while he went off to fight in the Trojan Wars (Colley, 2003). This classic, informal type of mentoring is based on friendship and guidance and on what might be seen as a more naturalistic relationship. Friend is the operative word here. Compatible with this original version, Collins (1993, p. 123) refers to engagement mentoring as:

‘a close interpersonal helping relationship between two individuals’.

Conversely, formal approaches adopt a more structured and directive style.

For example, the UK-based 'Dalston Youth Project' operationalised mentoring as:

'a structured, one-to-one relationship that focuses on the needs of the young person concerned'

(Tarling et al. 2001 p. 19).

This formality - informality delineation is central to understanding the intentions and purposes behind mentoring programmes. Of course programmes are not wholly directive or non-directive and there is no definitive formal – informal dichotomy. In reality mentoring programmes rest along a continuum where designs incorporate both friendship and directive aspects. However, where programmes do rest, and to what extent they are directive, does have direct implications with regard to power relationships between mentor and mentee (Millwater and Yarrow, 1997). With many reengagement schemes claiming 'empowerment' as their orienting philosophical goal, irrespective of design, this raises conceptual, moral and ethical concerns that offer a fundamental epistemological challenge.

At least in relation to engagement mentoring, pragmatically it is perhaps helpful to view programmes in terms of their origin and purpose.

Understanding the compatibility of programme aims and designs is of crucial importance when evaluating the efficacy of mentoring as a viable social intervention.

In order to appreciate the true nature of the current wave of programme intentions, it is important to look at the political context in which the seeds of engagement mentoring were initially sown. In order to do this we need briefly to go back to the 1980s and firstly to the United States of America (USA).

Mentoring Youth for Social Inclusion: USA Programmes Providing the Spark

A major longitudinal study carried out by Werner and Smith in Hawaii in 1982 was instrumental in shaping existing engagement programmes. Accessing a large sample of young people from poor multi ethnic communities for over 18 years, the researchers found numerous risk factors, such as poor housing, a dysfunctional family environment, learning disabilities and teenage pregnancy, to be associated with vulnerability to offending behaviour and long term unemployment. Comparisons can be drawn here with the seminal work of West and Farrington (1973) carried out earlier in the UK. However, resilience to adverse outcomes was also found and one of the key protective factors identified was an ability to seek out and gain support from an informal mentor within the community (Werner and Smith, 1982).

Werner and Smith's (1982) shift in focus from risk to protective factors can be seen as instrumental in supplanting the notion that mentoring might be used as a means of targeting vulnerable youth.

Early Development and Application: The Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) Mentoring Programme

One of the earliest mentoring programmes to emerge from Werner and Smith's (1982) research was the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) and the programme currently remains one of the best known in the USA.

Adult volunteers mentor young people aged between 5-18 years from single parent families only. The general approach is claimed to be non-directive with programme ethos focusing on the whole person rather than specific outcomes (Newburn and Shiner, 2005).

The most widely publicised study of its impact was carried out by Tierney et al. (1995). Incorporating randomised controlled trials (RCTs), they accessed a sample of 959 10-16 year olds over a period of 18 months.

In comparison to controls, BBBSA participants were reported to be less likely to use drugs or alcohol (45%), were a third less likely to hit someone, showed improved peer and family relationships and had improved attendance (52% fewer days missed), school performance, and attitudes towards school. No reduction in criminal activity was reported.

The BBBSA programme is frequently cited within the literature by those claiming efficacy for mentoring, with such writers often referring to Tierney et al's (1995) use of RCTs as a means of shoring up their claims. For example, Sherman et al (1999) evaluated a number of community-based programmes across the USA, giving ratings between 1 and 5 in accordance with

'methodological rigour'. BBBSA was given the highest score of any of the programmes (5) as the authors judged it to be tightly controlled. Many social researchers see RCTs as the 'gold standard' as they suggest notions of causality and generalisability (Robson, 2002).

Intensity of programme infra-structure identified as duration and frequency of contact, i.e. over 1 year and between at least 2 and 4 meetings per month, along with appropriate matching and screening processes, and provision of ongoing training and support for mentors, is posited as the significant most influential factor in the programmes success.

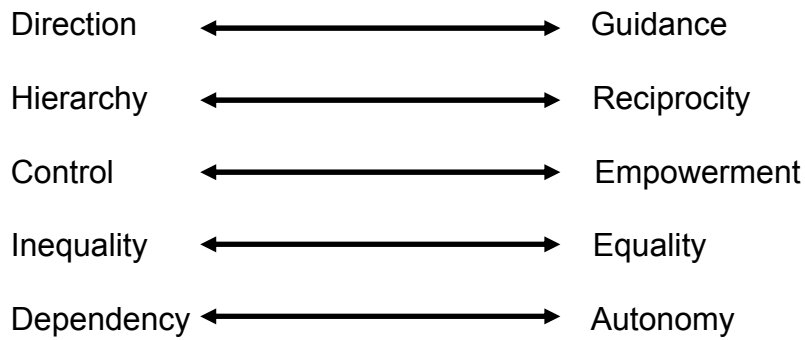
Fabricated relationships: the pitfalls of attempting to over-engineer the natural

One of the chief criticisms levelled at policy makers and proponents of engagement mentoring relates to their attempts unproblematically to infuse naturalistic processes into planned settings with overambitious, tightly specified outcomes, such as crime reduction and improved attainment (Colley, 2003). Garmezy, (1982 p. 14) warns against utilising prevention models that are founded more on values than on facts. For example, a critical factor with Werner and Smith's study (1982) was that the findings were correlational only and as such it is not possible to conclude whether the mentoring relationships with the young people were a cause or effect of their resilience.

Whilst the BBBSA programme demonstrates the efficacy of naturalistic mentoring, claims made from this study should also be viewed cautiously. Measures obtained were self reports only and findings may be susceptible to social desirability effects (Robson, 2002). For example, while some studies report reduced alcohol and drug intake as a result of mentoring programmes and support Teirney et al's (1995) findings (e.g. Rhodes and Reddy, 2005), many other studies using similar measures do not (Tarling et al., 2001; Schmidt et al., 2007; St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001). Moreover, reported areas of success relate primarily to 'soft' outcomes, such as improved relationships and self esteem and although harder outcome measures are reported, such as attendance and attainment, no formal indicators were available from the study.

Within the current climate of 'accountability' (Ofsted, 2007), one of the major problems for government-initiated programmes relates to funding. Publicly funded projects almost always focus on harder targets such a crime prevention or achievement (Colley, 2003). Subsequently, many government-backed programmes tend to be more directive in design and orientation. Such programmes are often criticised as being structurally and professionally oppressive and coercive rather than empowering, despite their claims (Gay and Stephenson, 1998; Gulam and Zulfiquar, 1998; Phillip, 2000). Gay and Stephenson's (1998) spectrum of mentoring styles illustrated in Figure 1 provides a useful frame of reference in this respect.

Figure 1: Spectrum of Mentoring Styles (Gay and Stephenson, 1998)



The next section of this paper starts with a brief evaluation of one such, highly prescriptive government-funded programme (St James-Roberts et al., 2005). The remainder of the section provides a critique of other key ‘outcomes orientated’ programmes. These serve to demonstrate some of the difficulties and limitations that researchers have experienced whilst attempting to impose directive methods, via a variety of forms, on already marginalised youth, and are indicative of the shifting focus within the mentoring research paradigm from ‘outcomes driven’ towards more ‘process driven’ evaluative studies. A review of the process focused research comprises the final section of this review.

Outcomes Orientated research

National Evaluation of Youth Justice Board Mentoring Schemes 2001 to 2004

(St James-Roberts et al., 2005)

Between 2001 and 2004 the Youth Justice Board supported and evaluated 80 community-based mentoring projects across England and Wales (St James-Roberts et al., 2005). Broad programme aims were to reduce offending. Improvements in literacy, numeracy and social skills comprise other targeted outcomes. Programmes varied in duration between 3 and 12 months, with meetings occurring, on average, weekly. The mentoring approach used is described as 'competency focused'. In short, programme ethos was wholly directive with mentors aiming to 'teach' new skills.

Over 2000 young people between the ages of 10 to 17 years were sampled, many of these male and from black minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds. Approximately 70% had a history of offending, with 48% having special educational needs (SEN): SEN being defined here in terms of children who were statemented.

A quasi-experimental, mixed design was used and evaluations report some successes, though these are minimal. Over a third of young people involved with the programmes were reported as re-entering education and this is seen as one of the key successes of the initiative. Approximately 50% of the BME

children are reported as successful in this respect, though St James-Roberts et al., (2005) do not make clear in their paper the percentage of children with SEN who re-entered education.

Programmes that ran more than 10 months were most successful in this respect. However, formal data such as police and school records showed no improvement in relation to chief programme aims, i.e. crime reduction and literacy and numeracy performance.

Self report measures do indicate improvements in academic achievements, behaviour in school, family relationships and community involvement, such as attendance at sports and social clubs. Nevertheless, some of these self reported outcomes do contradict the formal indicators; in relation to achievement for example. Again this highlights the need to view such measures with caution. Piper and Piper (1999) draw attention to this, specifically in relation to mentoring programmes that evaluated solely via participant self-report measures.

With poor outcomes in relation to the chief aims, the authors conclude mentoring to have had no efficacy as a stand alone intervention in reducing offending behaviour. However, recommendations are made for future programme design.

The failure to take account of what young people wanted from programmes is highlighted by St James-Roberts et al., (2005) as a major stumbling block with

regard to mentee ownership and programme success. High attrition rates support this conclusion, with less than half of the 5000 original referrals managing programme completion. In this sense, there appears to be an epistemological shift, and a nod by the authors, towards what is arguably a more methodologically valid approach. Self-directed goal setting is a key recommendation made for future programmes. Findings from other studies support this recommendation (Tarling et al., 2001; Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000).

A need for thorough needs assessment is highlighted by the authors, given that typically, needs for learning, psychological and family support are endemic within this group of children and young people at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour (West and Farrington, 1973; Tierney et al. 1995). The emphasis here is on providing a joined up, professionally-run approach as a means of meeting holistic needs.

Matching is another proposal made by St James-Roberts et al., (2005) which unifies, and potentially facilitates, the above two recommendations. Female mentors were particularly successful for female mentee outcomes as were mentors from BME backgrounds in relation to mentees of similar ethnic origin, particularly in relation to repairing fractured family relations, although this contradicts other research (Abel, and Rogers-Huilman, 2000). Whilst it is sometimes argued that males fare better with male mentors (e.g. Dean and Goodlad, 1998; Colley, 2003), no evidence was found for this by St James-

Roberts et al., (2005) and in general, female mentors achieved more successful outcomes than male mentors with both male and female mentees. Another key recommendation is that future programmes target younger age groups and those at risk of offending, rather than those already offending. This supports the general evidence that teenagers are influenced more by peers and less by parents and adults, compared with pre-adolescent children (e.g. Rutter and Rutter, 1993). Compared to older mentees, younger mentees were significantly more successful on several indices. Box 1:1 below outlines the results of regression analysis in relation to mentee age. Significance levels are highlighted in bold.

Box 1:1 Age-Related Mentee Outcomes (St James-Roberts et al., 2005)

- Programmes delivered (16 to 18-year-olds more likely to have programme terminated early than 10 to 12-year-olds). **(0.007)**
- Re-entering education or training (both 10 to 12 and 13 to 15-year-old mentees more likely than 16 to 18-year-olds). **(0.004)**
- Literacy improvements (both 10 to 12 and 13 to 15-year-old mentees more likely to have improvements than 16 to 18-year-olds). **(0.024)**
- Numeracy improvements (both 10 to 12 and 13 to 15-year-old mentees more likely to have improvements than 16 to 18 year old mentees). **(0.034)**
- Community activities (both 10 to 12 and 13 to 15 year old mentees more likely to become involved in new community activities than mentees aged 16 to 18). **(0.043)**
- Mentees aged 16 to 18 more likely to be arrested while on the mentoring programme than those aged 10 to 12. **(0.031)**

The Dalston Youth Project Part II (Tarling, et al., 2001)

The DYP II worked with 11 -14 year olds considered at risk of exclusion. Those referred to the programme were generally underachieving at school and displayed behavioural problems. Most of the young people came from materially poor home backgrounds.

Based on the shortcomings of the previous DYP I the programme, Tarling et al. (2001) hypothesised that working earlier with 'at risk' youth, in a more systemic way, would reduce crime. After school clubs were a key aspect of the programme design with the aim that increasing motivation to achieve and engaging young people in structured leisure pursuits would reduce risk of criminal activity. Mentoring took place both in and out of school premises.

Tarling et al., (2001) tracked an ethnically diverse sample of 80 young people over a period of three years, eight of whom had been cautioned or convicted of no more than one offence and 47 of whom had experienced one fixed-term exclusion. Though no controls were employed, both quantitative and qualitative measures were thorough, and data sources were made explicit within their report. Formal records such as police and school records showed no improvements in relation to attendance, achievement and criminal activity.

However, survey and interview data obtained from mentors, mentees, school staff and some parents, showed improvements with regard to relationships with significant others and improvements in positive self concept. Non-participant observations carried out by programme staff at residential weekends also support these findings. Robson (2002) notes how methodological triangulation, i.e. use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and the use of more than one method of data collection, helps to counter numerous threats to validity, such as researcher and/or respondent bias.

One key criticism of this study is that the authors do not acknowledge that prescriptive aspects of the programme design, such as the after school clubs and their focus on improving grades, might have been misguided. This is in spite of the fact that attendance was recorded at less than 50% and that generally, programme attrition rates were high. Rather the recommendations drawn by Tarling et al., (2001) focus on earlier intervention, with a younger, 'less deviant' sample. Whilst admittedly, this fits with other research findings, it does not address future design issues in relation to this particular age group (11-14 years).

A second criticism relates to internal validity (Robson, 2002). Both mentors and mentees placed high value on the need to develop mentor empathy, mentee ownership and opportunities for challenge within the mentoring relationship. Whilst Tarling et al., (2001) suggest that this lends support to the matching processes undertaken at the outset, the data informing this

conclusion lacks detail in terms of clearly identifying treatment and outcome effects (Robson, 2002).

The authors do make recommendations for future practice, which are grounded in the data however. For example, whilst mentors expressed that they valued their initial training, interviews demonstrated that they felt abandoned as the programme unfolded. The authors recommend that future programmes provide ongoing support for mentors: a suggestion consistent with other research findings (Tierney et al. 1995, Schmidt, et al., 2007).

Project CHANCE (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001)

Project CHANCE was a government-funded, community-based initiative that targeted primary school aged children identified by school staff as 'at risk' of marginalisation. St James-Roberts and Singh (2001) tracked 80 children over a three year period and provide an evaluation of the project. Controls were not incorporated into the study's design.

Programme ethos was one of early redirection with broad programme aims targeting antisocial behaviour, school exclusion and offending. Mentoring was carried out over a 12 month period for each participant and innovatively, included the use of solution-focused methods. Other mechanisms such as peer and parent support groups complemented the mentoring component.

Formal data, i.e. police and school records, indicated that no improvements were made over the three years either for attainment or crime reduction and attrition rates were again high. Self-reported gains in confidence, self-control, social awareness and family relationships were noted and attributed by the authors to the non-directive aspects of programme design that were employed, i.e. Rogerian principles such as empathy and positive regard.

This is an interesting programme in that it explicitly attempts to straddle the divide between non-directive and directive methods. Ownership is a fundamental defining feature of solution focused approaches (SFAs) given that in theoretical orientation SFAs are constructivist and build on existing strengths (de Shazer, 1985). Thus, in terms of delivery, SFAs require facilitation, rather than direction or high levels of direction. SFAs have been shown to be efficacious in a number of studies (e.g. Rhodes, 1993), but only when their use gives necessary attention to fidelity of implementation, and specifically, a client-led approach.

However, although St James-Roberts and Singh (2001) claim in their paper that their evaluations are formative, and do infer by this a degree of shift from hard line realism onto a more relativist footing, their recommendations nonetheless remain rooted within a deficit model and with that, in relation to the suggested methods, i.e. SFAs, remain misguided. For example, better training in SFA, focusing on more specifically targeted outcomes for 'disaffected youth', is a key recommendation made by the authors.

Such conceptually ill-founded recommendations highlight the need for practitioners to have a thorough understanding of the necessary compatibility between theoretical and research orientation and methods used in order to maximise the probability of achievement of programme aims. Other recommendations include improved mentor training and targeting low risk youth only, and these appear to be fully grounded in the data.

This study provides support for non-directive/naturalistic approaches to mentoring and confirms other findings that directive methods, or misused non-directive methods, have little efficacy for reengaging, even young, vulnerable youth.

Pre-Transition Intervention (Schmidt et al., 2007)

In a practice-oriented study, Schmidt et al., (2007) claim partial success for a non-directive approach used with young children considered 'at risk of disengagement'. Primary prevention was a key consideration of programme design and Schmidt et al., (2007) provide a strong rationale in their paper for pre-transition intervention (Gilchrist et al., 1988; Srebnik et al., 1993).

Employing a quasi-experimental design, 31 nine year olds completed a range of self reported baseline measures, which were repeated at 18 months follow-up, immediately prior to their middle school transition. These included the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1986), the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (Reynolds and Richmond, 1978), the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1992) and the People in My Life

Questionnaire (Cook et al., 1995). Parents' views were also sought and in addition, the children's class teachers completed the 'Student Behaviour Survey' (Lachar et al., 2000) at the pre and post intervention intervals. All of the self-report materials used in this study adopted either a Likert-style or 'yes/no' response format.

Schmidt et al., (2007) report significant improvements for mentees in relation to self concept and internalised anxiety compared to controls. No improvements were found in relation to behaviour in school or with parent relationships, though mentee self reports contradict this.

Though success levels were modest from this programme, this is an important study in informing future design. The fact that there were fundamental disagreements between child, teacher and parent reports highlights the problems that can arise when attempting to utilise absolutist, closed response formats (Cohen and Manion, 2007). Schmidt et al., (2007) conclude that future 'outcomes-orientated' research should focus on goals that are negotiated between programme designers and programme recipients, i.e. mentors and mentees. Key strengths of the study include a sustained period of intervention, which other research findings support (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002, Tierney et al. 1995), and the fact that more than one informant was sourced.

Summary of Outcomes-Oriented Research

In tracing back the origins of engagement mentoring, no definitive indicator of clear cause and effect relationships between mentoring and re-engagement has been demonstrated (Werner and Smith, 1982). In this sense, the validity of positivist approaches to engagement mentoring remains questionable. Misguided epistemological assumptions result in misguided methods and directive approaches adhering to tightly specified outcomes have been criticised vehemently throughout the literature, particularly on the grounds of 'oppression' (Gay and Stephenson, 1998; Gulam and Zulfiquar, 1998), rather than the empowerment which they claim. Attempting to socially engineer natural, non-directive mentoring processes has proved difficult for policy makers and interventionists.

The five key studies reviewed show minimal efficacy for outcome-driven approaches to engagement mentoring. In the main, positive findings evident from engagement mentoring programmes for vulnerable youth relate to soft outcomes only, i.e. improved relationships with significant others / improved self-concept.

With the exception of the BBBSA programme (Tierney et al., 1995), the outcomes-oriented studies reviewed above acknowledge the limitations of prescriptive approaches to engagement mentoring, and to varying degrees, recommend a methodological shift towards more inductive processes and procedures within the mentoring paradigm. This recognition that there is no 'silver bullet' intervention for marginalised youth signals a move away from a 'deficit-model' towards an acknowledgement of systems influences on

children and young people's social development, and a move away from a 'value-imposition' model towards 'needs-led' assessment and intervention. These outcomes-oriented studies are chronologically indicative of this shifting focus that has occurred within the 'apriori' mentoring literature.

Relatively, studies that are most prescriptive in design and directive in method recommend more radical shifts in terms of future programmes. The detailed evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's highly prescriptive, nationwide mentoring scheme led St James-Roberts et al., (2005) simply to conclude, that children's views were paramount if problem ownership was to be facilitated, and that interventions needed to be community-wide and multi-layered, i.e. using an ecological systems perspective.

Similarly, Tarling et al., (2001) recognise the limitations in the Dalston Youth Project's narrow, achievement focused 'after school clubs design'. Failing, however, to recognise the programme's over-directive approach, they concede that earlier intervention with younger children should be sought in terms of facilitating problem ownership. Whilst this recommendation might be considered dubious at an ethical level, arguably it makes sense from a research perspective in terms of gaining a foothold on a valid and efficacious mentoring approach.

The solution-focused approach (de Shazer, 1985) used in Project CHANCE (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2000) signified a change in focus towards supporting greater problem ownership, although not in terms of underlying

philosophy and the adopted deficit-model. Outcomes were still poor for this sample and this highlighted the importance of coherence in terms of programme aims, design, and implementation of method.

All of these studies (St James-Roberts et al., 2005; Tarling et al., 2001; St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001) employing, for the most part, a directive approach to mentoring, conclude that these methods have little viability with vulnerable youth, with lack of ownership and high attrition rates largely informing these conclusions.

Two studies, Tierney et al. (1995) BBBSA programme and the pre-transition programme evaluation by Schmidt et al. (2007) have claimed what might be described as more definitive, positive outcomes using positivist approaches; though these claims are less modest with regard to the latter study.

Schmidt et al. (2007) maintain 'improved behaviour in school' as an outcome of mentoring, although through one self-report source only (mentees).

Triangulation is an important factor in determining reliability of evidence, particularly with self-report measures (Robson, 2002). Teacher and parent self-reports were not comparable with those of mentees in this study.

Tierney et al. (1995) study does claim that hard targets, such as improved attendance and/or reduced drug and alcohol intake, have been achieved through the BBBSA programme, and similarly these are demonstrated through self reports. Mentee self reports were corroborated through other

sources, giving added weight to these findings. However, no formal measures indicated that hard targets, such as crime prevention and attainment, were achieved in this study. A key factor to the success of the BBBSA programme is that mentoring was non-directive and formed one intervention strand of a systems-wide community approach to assisting marginalised youth.

Needs-led mentoring is a central recommendation to emerge from the 'apriori literature', which consistently identifies optimal programme conditions that might facilitate this. Box 3: provides a summary of these recommendations. However, this literature does not specifically identify how these structures / processes might work in practice, most notably in reference to non-directive and non-oppressive mentoring practice.

Box 2: Synopsis of programme recommendations (derived from: Tierney, et al., 1995, St James-Roberts et al., 2005, Tarling et al., 2001, St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001, Schmidt et al., 2007).

- use of naturalistic / non-directive mentoring only
- mentee-led agenda/goal setting
- focus on younger age groups and on on less prolific offenders
- training for mentors and programme managers
- provision of ongoing support for mentors and programme managers
- appropriate matching informed by detailed needs assessment
- use of professional mentors where possible
- mentoring as part of other systems-wide intervention packages
- sustained period of intervention (12 months minimum)

The final section of this paper provides a review of the exploratory, more process-focused research into mentoring. The key papers reviewed in this section comprise qualitative and interpretative work. These studies allow for some of the more efficacious aspects of programmes designs already identified, to be examined more closely in terms of how these mechanisms may specifically work in practice.

Process Focused' Research

Young people and Mentoring: mentees' views (Philip and Hendry, 1996)

Much of the research on youth has been criticised for affording little attention to the wider environment within which young people develop (e.g. see Griffin, 1993, Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Philip and Hendry (1996) carried out an exploratory piece of research that looked at how young people perceived their own mentoring relationships within a variety of social contexts. This is an important paper not only for its systemic focus but also in that, within the UK at least, it spawned much of the constructivist-based research looking at young people's mentoring experiences (Philip and Hendry, 1996).

With regard to alienation, a much posited theoretical/ontological position is that marginalised youth lack mainstream cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973), and alternatively negotiate sub-cultural capital via 'risk' situations as a means of gaining 'out group status/identity' (e.g. Merton, 1938, Cohen, 1955 in

Williams, 2007). This theoretical notion of 'negotiated capital' informs much of the work by Philip and Hendry (i.e. 1996, 2000) and underpins the mentoring approach used in their 1996 study (Philip and Hendry, 1996). The programme hypothesised that by assisting mentees to navigate difficult social situations, mentoring relationships would serve to generate a form of cultural capital for mentees, which may then be used by mentees as a means of facilitating mainstream re-engagement. The key focus of this study was thus, the nature of mentoring relationships, and the processes undertaken within those relationships.

A purposive sample of 150 young people aged between 13 and 16 years was accessed. Pilot studies were carried out, and from these pilots both collective and individual experiences of mentoring were elicited through group and individual interview processes respectively. In the group interviews a card game was used where various risk scenarios were presented, followed by discussions relating to where help might be sought from a mentor. The game format was used not only as a means of attempting to 'distance' individuals from personally sensitive issues, but also as an attempt to minimise some of the other limitations of group methods, such as a tendency for a minority to dominate group discussion (Kitzinger, 1994).

Group interviews were observed, tape recorded and themed 'blind' by three researchers. Emergent themes were further validated by a wider research team, who also accessed the transcripts. Agreed themes formed the basis for more in-depth individual interviews and similar triangulation processes were

followed in relation to the individual interview data. The authors propose a range of mentoring forms and processes which contribute to how young people are supported within the community. Figure 2 below provides a list of the different mentoring forms identified by Philip and Hendry (1996). The Figure illustrates the typical context in which each mentoring form may be found, and the function that this mentoring relationship may serve.

Figure 2: A Typology of perceived mentoring forms (Philip and Hendry, 1996).

Mentoring Forms	Classic (1)	Individual team (2)	Best friend (3)	Peer group (4)	Long-term risk (5)
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Both	Both
Context	Home based	Youth groups	Home based	Street action	Home and street
Function	Empathy, recognition and aspiring to role models	Acceptance of peer group and youth culture values	Rehearsal for social action	Managing reputations identity / lifestyle	Recognition and life crisis. Empathy

Various themes emerged within and across different contexts. For example, empathy, trust and a willingness to challenge were repeatedly identified by mentees as important mentoring qualities. Equality and reciprocity were identified as other important factors, particularly within the 'Classic' (non-directive) and 'Long-term' models (relationship of more than 1 year). This notion of equality lends support to Gay and Stephenson's (1998) and Gulam and Zulfiquar's (1998) position, that overly directive mentoring processes are ineffective in terms of empowerment and re-marginalisation (see Gay and Stephenson's 'Spectrum of Mentoring Styles' p.23).

Also within the 'Classic' model, willingness for mentors to provide special treatment, which might incorporate the sanctioning of minor rule bending, was seen as important in terms of trust/relationship building. Mentors 'self-disclosing' was also viewed as a valuable process and mentees saw 'similarities in experiences' as a crucial component of successful mentoring relationships. This in conjunction with the necessity for mentors' ability to empathise with the young person supports the research recommending appropriate and sensitive matching (Tierney, et al. 1995; St James-Roberts et al., 2005). Lastly, whilst mentoring relationships were seen as exclusively different from all other adult relationships, many young people saw adult mentors as serving a valuable role as potential mediators where crisis situations had arisen, particularly within long-term mentoring relationships.

This is an early, exploratory study within the mentoring paradigm and as such recommendations made in relation to future programme implementation are drawn tentatively by the authors. Nonetheless, this is a methodologically robust piece of research by Philip and Hendry (1996) both in terms of design and reflexivity.

Inter-subjective elements between the researcher and the researched, influence data collection and analysis (Usher, 1996). Professional identity and power relations can inadvertently influence qualitative research processes (Finlay, 2002). The pilot study and group discussions carried out in Philip and Hendry's study (1996) prior to the individual interviews minimised the risk of a 'professional agenda' unwittingly creeping into the research process. Thus, at

the outset, the in-depth interviews appeared contextually grounded in the participant's world. Thorough and detailed data triangulation within the research team also reduced the influence of the researchers own 'historical situated-ness' (Gadamer, 1975).

Lastly, much of the previous research on mentoring had been based on retrospective accounts only (see Rhodes, 1994) which can be prone to recall error (Robson, 2002). Accessing young people's views of mentoring relationships, as they occurred, allowed the authors to abstract data on how relationships develop and this renders the data more reliable in this respect. This paper paves the way for future research to look more closely at mentoring relationships and the contextual factors that influence mentoring processes.

Mentors' Reflections on the Mentoring Process (Philip and Hendry, 2000)

Building on their 1996 study, Philip and Hendry (2000) carried out research which looked at the processes of mentoring from the perspectives of adult mentors. This study aimed to identify what mechanisms within mentoring relationships generated cultural capital for mentors, as well as mentees.

Thirty adult mentors were sampled from the mentoring programme. Thirteen were community mentors identified by mentees and 17 were professionals whose remit included an element of mentoring. Two researchers carried out semi-structured interviews. Themed 'mentee data' from Philip and Hendry's (1996) study informed the interview format and structure. Audio-taped

transcripts were analysed by a team of researchers and in addition field notes of all interviews were supplied to the team as a means of minimising individual bias (Robson, 2002).

A number of factors was seen as generating 'cultural capital' for mentors within the mentoring relationships. This 'mentor capital' was in-turn seen by mentors as further serving to improve mentoring experiences for mentees. Mentoring was interpreted as a form of cultural capital for mentors in four respects:

1. by enabling them to make sense of their own past experiences, including mentoring relationships and / or surviving difficult circumstances;
2. as an opportunity to gain insights into the realities of other people's lives and to learn from these for themselves;
3. as having the potential to develop alternative kinds of relationships, which were reciprocal and cross-generational; and
4. in building up a set of psycho-social skills as 'exceptional adults' able to offer support, challenge and a form of friendship.

(Philip and Hendry, 2000)

A central theme to emerge from this study was that effective mentoring relationships were seen by mentors as resulting from a non-oppressive, 'negotiated' environment. These findings are compatible with the views expressed by mentees in Philip and Hendry's previous study (1996), and are consistent with other research recommending a non-directive approach to engagement mentoring (e.g. Tierney et al., 1995; Schmidt et al., 2007).

Mentors viewed acceptance, empathy and trust as key properties of effective relationships, and stated that those relationships which lasted over time were most likely to incorporate those properties. Long term relationships were more likely to be characterised by mutual liking and an absence of power struggles and where this climate was generated, this was seen by mentors as allowing them to know 'when' and 'how' to challenge mentees appropriately. Mentors saw the development of these 'challenge skills' as important in enabling them to deal with difficult situations that their own children might face. Programme duration was therefore seen as an important factor for mentors and mentees. Recommendations made by other studies, which for example suggest a minimum intervention period of 12 months (e.g. Tierney et al., 1995; Tarling et al., 2001; St James Roberts et al., 2005, St James Roberts and Singh, 2001), support this notion.

Self-reflection and self-disclosure were key processes that facilitated an environment of 'negotiation'. Self reflective processes undertaken by mentors allowed them to re-evaluate their own earlier negative experiences, and to

make sense of these past experiences within their present day contexts.

Mentors stated this process had therapeutic properties for mentors.

The relationship literature portrays self-disclosure as a central relationship process variable, critical to relationship development and fundamental to communication and exchange that is more than surface-level conversation (Dindia, 1993 p. 27). Self-disclosure refers to the extent to which an individual relates their experiences, emotions, beliefs, fears, failures, and successes within a relationship (Hinde, 1997).

Self-disclosure of mentor experience was seen to benefit mentees. Mentors saw the disclosure to mentees of their own earlier negative experiences, and the disclosure of the mentor's strategies that were considered / used to overcome those situations, as important in facilitating a relationship environment of acceptance and mutual respect. The 'disclosure process' was seen by mentors as one of the key mechanisms that facilitated mentees in developing and openly 'testing-out' meta-cognitive problem solving skills within the mentoring environment. 'Problem solving rehearsal' was identified by mentees as occurring in other mentoring contexts, with peers for example, in Philip and Hendry's previous study (1996). This suggests that mentors' self disclosure also provides socially engineered mentoring relationships with elements of ecological validity.

This is an important study in that few studies have looked at how mentoring impacts mentors as well as mentees. Research that has examined mentor

experiences, for example Colley's 2001 and 2003 studies, suggests that high emotional demands placed on mentors can lead to their experiencing greater levels of stress, resulting from their being neglectful of their own emotional needs. These inconsistent findings, in conjunction with other research showing mentors as requesting better training and assistance (Tarling et al., 2001; St James Roberts et al., 2005, St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) lends support to the notion that close supervision and support should be provided for mentors throughout programme implementation.

Philip and Hendry (2000) suggest these findings have important implications for future programme design. All of the 'mentor data' from this study was triangulated with the 'mentee data' from Philip and Hendry's previous work (1996) and in this sense their recommendations can be considered robust. Philip and Hendry (2000) make the following key recommendations with regard to facilitating, non-oppressive 'negotiated' mentoring environments:

1. appropriate matching in terms of mentor and mentee experiences and mentors' ability to self-reflect and self disclose to mentees;
2. a non-oppressive and respectful approach by mentors within mentoring relationships, where mentors actively encourage the development of meta-cognitive / problem solving skills in mentees;

3. a non-oppressive and respectful approach by mentors within mentoring relationships, incorporating appropriate and timely challenge by mentors; and
4. lengthy programme duration (i.e. 12 months), allowing time for mentors to develop empathy and gain better insight into the mentees' world.

Conclusion to 'Process-Orientated Research and Review Synthesis

Evidence from outcome-driven research suggests non-oppressive, non – directive approaches better facilitate engagement and true empowerment of marginalised youth. However, much of the research advocating non-directive approaches to mentoring, both quantitative (e.g. Tarling et al., 2001; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) and qualitative (e.g. Buist, 2000; McGill, 1999) lacks detail in terms of how this is achieved. Without this detail there is no way of knowing whether or not studies / practitioners are effectively operationalising optimal conditions within mentoring environments. Philip and Hendry make an important contribution to the mentoring literature in this respect. Through detailed analysis of relationship processes, their 1996 and 2000 studies specifically identify the mechanisms that might facilitate non-directive, non-oppressive processes.

Key Recommendations for Programme Design'

Overall, the following conclusions for the design of future engagement mentoring interventions can be drawn from the systematic review of recent relevant studies summarised above.

Approaches to engagement mentoring should be non-directive and non-oppressive. One of the fundamental recommendations to emerge across both the positivist and interpretive mentoring literature is that children and young people's views must be sought, and that interventions must be needs-led. In relation to mentoring marginalised youth, research demonstrates that 'one size' does not fit all.

Effective relationship processes identified by Philip and Hendry (1996, 2000) should be operationalised within mentoring programmes and ongoing evaluation that these processes are being implemented optimally should be sought by programme managers. Programme structures, such as training and support for mentors, and programme duration, should inform mentoring programmes in order that these are effective. However, it is crucial that programme structures are context-specific.

Importantly, whilst mentoring may be part of the solution to the prevalence of anti-social-behaviour in marginalised youth, there is no evidence to suggest that mentoring alone should be the intervention of choice with regard to crime prevention. Mentoring should be implemented, not in isolation, but as part of

and in conjunction with other community-wide interventions that are specifically tailored to the needs of the individual child / young person, and the risk and protective influences within the community.

The model illustrated in Figure 3 overleaf maps out a suggested programme design and provides a synthesis of the optimal programme structures and processes identified in this critical literature review (derived from: Tierney, et al., 1995, St James-Roberts et al., 2005, Tarling et al., 2001, St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001, Schmidt et al., 2007, Philip and Hendry, 1996 and 2000).

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**EARLY INTERVENTION WITH AT-RISK YOUTH: THE
COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY-
BASED ENGAGEMENT MENTORING PROJECT
THROUGH REALISTIC EVALUATION**

Target Journal: Evaluation

**Postgraduate Professional Training Programme in Educational
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Abstract

Engagement mentoring has been utilised widely as a means of promoting social inclusion for 'at-risk' youth. However, initiatives highly prescriptive in programme design have shown limited success and in a climate of professional accountability this presents difficulties with funding. Many non-directive programmes do demonstrate good outcomes, though in relation to 'soft-outcomes' only, such as improved relationships with influential and significant others. Here, local context, in relation to mentors', as well as mentees' needs is seen as critical to programme success. Yet many non-directive programmes remain methodologically flawed in that methods used are ill-defined

The current study was a joint research project carried out by an Educational Psychology Service and a team of professional, community-based mentors, who together developed an engagement mentoring programme which was non-directive in orientation but specific in programme design. Programme consistency and reliability formed a secondary aim of the project. 'Realistic Evaluation' (RE), a methodology concerned with identifying the mechanics and dynamics of social programmes, which pays particular attention to contextual influences, was used to develop the programme. RE allows for programme delivery to become a key focus of evaluation. 'Context sensitive' application of needs-led assessment and solution-focused tools, along with a supportive service culture, were found to be critical to this programme's success in terms of developing positive mentoring relationships.

Introduction

Public anxiety, paired with significant and rising costs associated with social exclusion and 'disaffection', ensures that government policy and initiative retains a critical focus on targeting marginalised young people (DfES, 2009; France, 2008; France and Utting, 2005). Early intervention and prevention are now fundamental to work carried out by local children's service providers (DfES, 2004) and as part of the Youth Matters agenda for change (DfES, 2005, 2006) Local Authorities need to establish integrated youth support services that adopt a consistent approach to assessment and intervention for 'at-risk' populations. Various youth support reforms, such as Youth Matters (DfES, 2006), Aiming Higher for Young People (DfES, 2007), and Targeted Youth Support Next Steps (DfES, 2009), aim to ensure that that targeted support reflects local context, and that services have a lasting impact on outcomes for young people.

Preventing exclusion, improving attendance and behaviour, raising levels of attainment, strengthening relationships, and reducing offending behaviour, are identified as key target areas of youth support services (DfES, 2009), while the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy (DfES, 2008) proposes substantial investment over the coming years in that regard. Understandably, the ever-present need for 'accountability' accompanies this cash investment.

This research venture

This project involved the development of an engagement mentoring (EM) programme aimed at facilitating positive mentoring relationships for 'at-risk' youth. This was a collaborative research venture between The Birmingham Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and The Kingstanding Youth Inclusion Project (KYIP), a local youth service providing multi-strand, targeted youth support. EPS involvement was requested by the senior management team (SMT) of the KYIP and Birmingham's Youth Support Services following previous unsuccessful attempts to develop an EM programme as part of targeted youth support.

Pawson and Tilley's (1997) Realistic Evaluation (RE) was used to develop the programme. Research demonstrates functionality and success of EM programmes to be particularly 'context sensitive', thus establishing what local factors would enable the programme to be effective would be of central importance to programme development. An ecologically valid and comprehensive approach to evaluation is a key strength of RE methodology.

An outline of the EM literature is initially provided. This is followed by a more detailed account of the commissioning of the research via consultation with the KYIP SMT members. This serves to make transparent the context in which the aims and purposes of the research were devised: of particular importance given the collaborative and emancipatory orientation of this

research venture. The processes involved in developing the KYIP EM Programme via RE are then presented.

Engagement mentoring: background

Defining the term For explanatory purposes it is useful to view engagement mentoring (EM) along a bi-polar axis of non-directive to directive. Non-directive mentoring is based on friendship and guidance and on what might be seen as a naturalistic relationship.

Compatible with this non-directive version, Collins (1993, p. 123) refers to engagement mentoring as:

‘a close interpersonal helping relationship between two individuals’.

In contrast, directive types of mentoring adopt a more structured style. For example, the UK-based ‘Dalston Youth Project’ operationalised engagement mentoring as:

‘a structured, one-to-one relationship that focuses on the needs of the young person concerned’

(Tarling et al. 2001 p. 19).

In reality, engagement mentoring programmes are neither wholly non-directive nor directive; they rest along a continuum where designs incorporate both friendship and directive aspects. Where a programme rests however,

and to what extent it is directive, has implications with regard to power relationships between mentor and mentee (Millwater and Yarrow, 1997), and this 'positioning' is central to understanding the intentions and purposes behind the programme.

Origins of EM EM as a concept emerged following a study by Werner and Smith (1982). They accessed a large sample of young people from poor multi-ethnic communities over an 18 year period and identified 'an ability to seek out and gain support from an informal mentor within the community' as a major protective factor against adverse outcomes, such as offending behaviour.

One of the best known EM programmes to emerge from Werner and Smith's (1982) research is the Big Brothers / Big Sisters of America scheme (BBBSA). BBBSA matches unrelated adult volunteers with young people from single parent households and operationalises an approach that is largely non-directive in theoretical orientation, though programmes typically set 'loose outcome-goals', such as improving life skills for example (Newburn and Shiner, 2005).

The most widely publicised study of its impact was carried out by Tierney et al. (1995). Outcomes of randomised controlled trials indicated that in comparison with matched controls, BBBSA participants were identified as being less likely to use drugs or alcohol, showed improved peer and family

relationships, and had improved attendance and attitudes towards school. No reduction in criminal activity was reported, however.

An abundance of recent engagement mentoring programmes across America (e.g. Blechman, 1992; Dondera, 1997; Dubious and Neville, 1997; O'Donnell et al., 1997) and Europe (e.g. EC, 1998; Miller, 2002) has been developed based on the reported successes of Werner and Smith's (1982) study and the evaluative studies of the BBBSA (Tierney et al., 1995). Certainly within the UK, the major initiatives that are funded by the government rely heavily on BBBSA in their rationale for programme development (e.g. St James-Roberts et al., 2005, Tarling et al., 2001, St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001). These initiatives have frequently operationalised academic achievement and crime reduction as key indicators of programme success.

Outcomes-driven EM: misguided at best Werner and Smith's (1982) data analysis is correlational only, and even if causality were established in terms of mentoring facilitating resilience to adversity, a critical consideration of the early studies (Werner and Smith, 1982; Tierney et al., 1995; Grossman and Tierney, 1998) is that they report positive outcomes in the context of self-sought mentoring relationships only, not imposed ones. Moreover, reported successes relate primarily to 'soft outcomes', such as improved relationships and self esteem, though irrespective of this many UK studies target 'hard outcomes' such as crime reduction (Newburn and Shiner, 2002).

Attempting to infuse naturalistic processes into planned settings with overambitious, tightly specified outcomes, such as crime reduction and improved attainment reflects a lack of theoretical understanding of what EM is, or what the formative and preliminary data suggest (Werner and Smith, 1982; Tierney et al., 1995; Grossman and Tierney, 1998). Garmezy (1982) warns against utilising prevention models that are founded more on values than on facts: a warning that has largely been ignored by government-funded EM projects developed in the UK.

Between 2001 and 2004 the Youth Justice Board (YJB) ran over 80 EM projects across England and Wales. Broad programme aims of the scheme were to reduce offending, with improvements in literacy, numeracy and social skills comprising other targeted outcomes. Mentoring was 'highly prescriptive' focusing on competency development.

National evaluations of the YJB scheme found poor outcomes in relation to the chief programme aims, with no improvements in relation to offending rates or literacy and numeracy performance. Some successes were indicated, such as improved relationships and greater community involvement, though these were minimal (St James-Roberts et al., 2005). Overall, the failure to take account of what young people wanted from programmes is identified as a major limitation with regard to mentee ownership and programme success. High attrition rates support this conclusion, with less than half of the 5000 original referrals managing programme completion.

The Dalston Youth Project II (DYP II) was a similar initiative aimed primarily at crime reduction, though arguably less prescriptive than the YJB scheme. This project differed, in that it aimed to work with younger children and in a more systemic way. After school clubs incorporating structured leisure pursuits were a key aspect of programme design. Findings from the DYP II are comparable to those of the YJB evaluations, with positive soft outcomes reported from numerous sources. Again however, in relation to chief programme aims, no formal indicators of programme success are demonstrated from directive-mentoring methods, and as with the YJB scheme (St James-Roberts et al., 2005), attrition was high with attendance recorded at less than 50% (Tarling et al., 2001).

One of the more innovative projects in the UK engagement literature to date was the Project CHANCE initiative (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001) which attempted to shift 'engagement' onto a less prescriptive footing through utilising a solution-focused approach to mentoring (de Shazer, 1985). Programme ethos was of 'early-redirection', with programme aims specified as reducing antisocial and criminal behaviour in the primary aged children.

Incompatibility of programme aims and methods was a key failing of project. Solution-focused approaches require facilitation rather than direction or high levels of direction (de Shazer, 1985). No significant improvements were found in relation to programme targets, and whilst some soft outcomes were demonstrated, similar outcomes were found in comparison children who were not mentored (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001).

Numerous other initiatives of similar ilk in programme ethos and structure to the YJB and DYP II programmes report comparable programme failures with 'at-risk' youth (James-Roberts and Singh, 2001, Parra et al., 2002; Schmidt et al., 2007). A chief criticism of agenda-led programmes is their construction of disaffection in terms of deviance and deficit (Levitas, 1996; Colley, 2003) and, whilst silver-bullet mentoring no doubt remains appealing to policy makers, particularly in relation to crime prevalence and the cost benefits of early prevention (Willimason, 2009), much of the existing literature concedes a need for a methodological shift away from a value-imposition model of mentoring. A central recommendation in this respect is that future programmes should primarily seek children's views, and that positive relationship development with mentors should form a key focus of programme design. With certain programme structures proving efficacious in terms of facilitating soft outcomes for mentees, particularly from studies involving the least prescriptive intervention / research designs, the outcomes-driven research converges to commend an optimal programme structure that might facilitate non-directive mentoring programmes (see Pollitt, 2009).

Non-directive EM Typically, non-directive programmes seek to support mentees in generating social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) relative to the mentees' own perceived barriers to social inclusion, with non-oppressive mentoring relationships the principal vehicle used to achieve this. General orientation in terms of aims and purposes of these programmes is thus emancipation rather than redirection or rehabilitation.

Whilst quantitative programme evaluations inform recommendations for optimal programme structure, this methodology inherently gives limited consideration of the wider societal influences that may impact mentoring relationships (Freedman, 1999; Colley, 2003). Qualitative studies have sought to re-embed programme evaluation in a more ecologically valid context.

Much of the qualitative research adopts a structuralist lens, paying particular note to political factors that influence programme design, delivery and success. Colley (2003), for example, provides an evaluation of 'New Beginnings', a sizable, government-backed scheme that implements an holistic approach to marginalisation. Analysis is provided very much in the style of a Marxist critique (Wheen, 1999), with detailed stories of the befriending aspect of the mentoring revealing that other programme structures, such as education and training requirements, act as a barrier to the development of successful mentoring relationships. Programme failure is attributed to 'rules of the field', though the programme is not outcomes-driven as such (Colley, 2003).

Mentor status and identity have also been a focus within the literature. Approximately 80% of professional and voluntary mentors are thought to be female (Newburn and Shiner, 2005) and writers such as Haggerty (1986), De Marco (1993), Roberts (1998) and Colley (2003) offer feminist critiques arguing that the construction of the mentoring role is based on the archetypal female stereotype of nurture, care, and self-sacrifice, irrespective of emotional cost. These qualitative accounts infer misuse of, and a lack of

support for engagement mentors, a shortfall that resonates with the outcomes-driven literature where lack of training and support has been consistently identified as a factor contributing to programme failure (Parra et al., 2002; St James-Roberts et al., 2005; Reid, 2002; Tarling et al., 2001).

Other evaluative research focuses more on actual psychological processes within mentoring relationships. Qualitative accounts report self reflection, self-disclosure, empathy and a willingness to challenge, as important processes in the development of optimal mentoring relationships with vulnerable youth (Freedman, 1999; Maldonado et al., 2008; Philip and Hendry, 1996). An environment of negotiation, trust and reciprocity is also identified as critical in that respect, particularly in terms of longevity of engagement mentoring relationships (Philip and Hendry, 1996; 2000).

Difficulties with non-directive programme designs Whilst there is generally consensus that contextual factors are important in facilitating optimal mentoring relationships, qualitative evaluation brings its own difficulties. Relativism presents problems for funding, not only in terms of validity but also reliability. Where abstract psychological concepts associated with non-directive mentoring are identified as appropriate for context, the qualitative research often fails to provide indicators of what those methods are, and importantly, whether or not those methods have been delivered consistently and reliably by mentors.

Synopsis The literature converges to recommend that engagement mentoring programmes are wholly needs-led and that programmes orientate towards empowerment rather than value-imposition. Whilst the outcomes-driven literature identifies structural aspects of programme design that are optimal in terms of facilitating soft-outcomes for mentees, the qualitative literature is limited in clearly identifying effective mentoring processes. Success in relation to non-directive programmes has been shown to be highly context-dependant in relation to both recipients and those delivering mentoring programmes.

Consultation with research partners: developing project aims

At an initial meeting key stakeholders had positioned the possibility of developing an EM programme aimed at reducing offending behaviour, which prompted a review of the literature (Pollitt, 2009). A second consultation meeting focused on the feasibility of this initial project brief. Both key stakeholders, i.e. the KYIP SMT and Birmingham's Youth Support Services Community Prevention Lead Officer, attended the second meeting.

I presented a synopsis of the EM evidence-base in consultation, and it was agreed by all parties that developing an outcomes-driven programme would be wholly misguided. Key stakeholders expressed an interest in the research targeting soft-outcomes for marginalised youth, with the KYIP SMT showing particularly interest in the non-directive programmes that had focused largely on facilitating and developing positive mentoring relationships. Engaging

marginalised young people with school, the wider community, and local service providers, forms part of the wider remit of the KYIP, and as noted in consultation by the SMT, an opportunity to improve relationships with existing service users would potentially yield improved outcomes for the young people taking part in the EM programme (those identified for the programme would be already known to the KYIP through other means of targeted support).

A criticism often levelled at non-directive programmes is lack of direction and purpose (e.g. Colley, 2003; Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998). Project CHANCE (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001) attempted to straddle the divide between directive and non-directive approaches by operationalising a solution-focused approach (de Shazer, 1985) within the programme's design. Nonetheless, the project remained outcomes-driven and in that respect was poorly conceptualised in terms of infusing a non-directive method within a prescriptive programme design (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001).

Within the consultation process, we resolved that a solution-focused approach (de Shazer, 1985) was potentially compatible with non-directive programme orientation, and that it would potentially provide the programme with 'added purpose', as well as targeting 'problem ownership', for mentees. The reported 'protective function' that mentoring served in seminal work of Werner and Smith (1982) resulted from self-sought mentoring relationships only, not imposed ones. Similarly, the successful Big Brother programmes involve self-referred mentees (Maladono, et al., 2008; Tierney et al., 1995). The Kingstanding research would involve working with children who had been

referred (i.e. to the Kingstanding YIP), thus sampling posed a potential problem in terms of mentees not fully engaging with the mentoring sessions. Poor engagement has been identified as a key failing of mentoring programmes involving imposed mentoring relationships (St James-Roberts et al., 2005; Tarling et al., 2001).

Reference was made to several solution-focused techniques, such as 'problem-free talk', 'miracle questions', and 'scaling' which have been shown to be effective in a number of settings, including family service and mental health settings, public social services and child welfare, as well as schools and hospitals (Miller et al., 1996). Gingerich and Eisengart (2000) review the literature and identify 15 controlled studies providing empirical support for solution-focused approaches in a range of settings.

The idea of using a solution-focused methods was well received by key stakeholders and it was agreed in consultation that they would form an integral part of the KYIP EM programme's design. From a research perspective, this provided me with an excellent opportunity to take the EM research forward. A solution-focused approach had not previously been used within non-directive EM programmes.

With the evidence-base suggesting recognition of context to be critical to effective EM programmes (Pollitt, 2009), and given that in Kingstanding a new mentoring team would be delivering the programme, I proposed in consultation that the KYIP EM project might be conceptualised under the broad umbrella of Development and Research (D & R).

Development and Research D & R is a term formulated by the National Educational Research Forum (NERF) to describe research programmes designed to improve or develop something in a specific and immediate context (Stanton, 2006). The general aim of D & R is that 'research activities' are responsive to problems that practitioners are attempting to address. Evaluation entails a collaborative process with developers and researchers working iteratively, and whilst each focuses on their own area of expertise, the researcher's 'agenda' is influenced by the needs of the developers, and developers take account of research findings (Stanton, 2006). In that regard, the process is not dissimilar to collaborative action research (e.g. Robson, 2000), though D & R differs in that it also aims to develop programme theory that may be extended to other and similar working contexts.

An orientation towards improving 'general understanding' potentially increases opportunities for funding, and both the Community Prevention Lead Officer and the KYIP SMT were enthusiastic about this potential benefit of a D & R focused approach. All five YIPs across the city had experienced significant difficulties securing funding in 2008/9. It was envisaged that theory informed by my own study might be extended to other YIP contexts across the city, if the KYIP EM programme proved successful.

A further consideration broached in consultation, related to programme reliability and the difficulties that previous non-directive EM programmes had typically experienced in terms of lacking specificity in programme design. As noted, it had been surmised that a lack of understanding of theoretical

orientation and method informing mentoring processes had contributed to previous unsuccessful attempts at establishing a mentoring programme at the KYIP.

Aims

Two specific programme aims were agreed following the second consultation meeting. These were:

- to develop an EM programme specific for the Kingstanding context that focused on the development of positive mentoring relationships; and
- to develop an EM programme which was non-directive in orientation, but definitive in programme design to enable consistency, reliability and programme fidelity.

Summary As part of a multi-strand approach, the KYIP EM programme would target existing service users through a localised, collaboratively devised, non-directive EM programme. Successful non-directive programmes had embodied honesty, mutual respect, were needs-led, and wholly non-oppressive (e.g. Colley, 2003; Philip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; Tierney et al., 1995). With that, and in conceptualising the underlying theoretical principles informing the general orientation of the proposed KYIP EM Programme, a humanistic approach, and particularly the Rogerian (1971) notion of 'conditions for healthy growth', i.e. congruence / openness, empathy and

unconditional positive regard, would orientate programme development of the development of the mentoring relationship. The inclusion of solution-focused methods (de Shazer, 1987) as a core component of mentoring would also mean that aspects of 'positive psychology' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), i.e. that of building on existing strengths, would be fundamental to the KYIP's approach to EM, in terms of methods and processes.

Realistic Evaluation

Outline and rationale The negotiated project aims inherently required a sharp focus on the context within which the programme would sit, and on the reliability of that programme. Pawson and Tilley's (1997) Realistic Evaluation (RE) appeared consistent with the aims of the study in that regard.

RE is process evaluation approach that seeks to establish how and why programmes work (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The model operates on the fundamental principles of realism (Bhasker, 1986) and in acknowledging contextual / institutional as well as individual factors, RE offers a useful methodology where new programmes are to be developed and delivered within existing social structures, i.e. contexts. Context may include historical, cultural, political, organisational and other factors that may change over time, and phenomena such as individual thoughts and actions, team and / or organisational culture might all effect the development of the KYIP EM programme. By design, RE would provide a 'contextually-grounded'

comprehensive evaluation approach to programme development (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

RE focuses on the development of optimal programme theories, specific for the context in which they operate. Factors that make up programmes, i.e. aspects of programme theory, are conceptualised in terms of Contexts (C), Mechanisms (M) and Outcomes (O). Mapping causality is seen as fundamental to evaluation and the task of evaluation is to determine which Contexts are most effective in triggering the Mechanisms that produce the required Outcomes of the programme. Thus in RE, predictable social regularities are considered context dependant.

Pawson and Tilley (1997) use an example from chemistry to demonstrate the principle. That is, gunpowder explodes with regularity when heat is applied, if the conditions are right. If for example, the powder is damp, and / or the chemical composition is not right, and or, there is insufficient oxygen present etc, etc, then predicted outcomes may not result. Manipulation of the 'system' would then be required to make the programme work. Figure 1 conceptualises Pawson and Tilley's (1997) chemistry example within a standard CMO evaluation framework.

Figure 1: Example of a CMO framework:

Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Gunpowder	Application of flame	Explosion

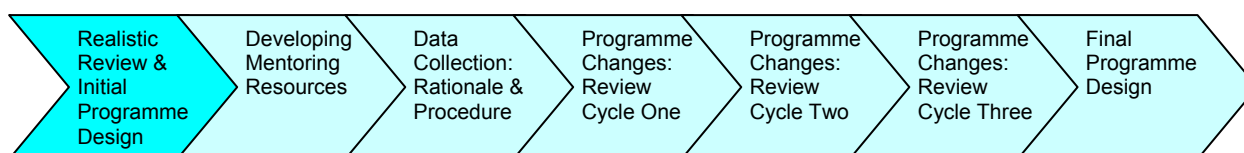
Irrespective of how abstract or changeable variables within a programme may be, RE allows for descriptors of programme theory, i.e. CMO families, to be specified and monitored at all stages of evaluation. This detailed specification of programme variables is a core feature of RE, and it was envisaged that this process in itself, in addition to illuminating how the programme might work, could be applied to improve the overall reliability of the KYIP EM programme.

A summary of the RE process used to develop the KYIP EM Programme can be seen in Box 1. An overview of this process in diagrammatic form is also provided in Figure 2. Further detail with regard to the specifics of each stage of the RE / data collection process is provided within the method section of this report. A process diagram is provided to indicate each stage of programme development to aid clarity in that regard.

Box 1: The RE process in developing the KYIP EM Programme

- Development of a macro programme theory and detailed specification of micro programme theories, conceptualised in terms of context (C), mechanisms (M) and outcomes (O), which provide a concrete framework enabling research stakeholders to identify, test and refine programme theory, i.e. hypothesis testing. Programme theories were established through a combination of consultation with the mentoring team and an extensive literature review of the current evidence-base for engagement mentoring programmes targeting 'at-risk' populations.
- Evaluation and re-specification of the Kingstanding programme theory, where aspects of the programme required modification in light of changes proposed by mentoring team, i.e. cumulative evaluation process: Three review cycles were completed in developing the programme.

Method



Programme design: a ‘Realistic Review’ The first task in developing the mentoring programme was to formulate an optimal programme structure, which I considered to be appropriate for the Kingstanding context. In accordance with RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), this requires the development of broad and general programme theory, and identification of CMO configurations hypothesised as targeting the aims of the programme. To achieve this I revisited my critical literature review of the EM paradigm (Pollitt, 2009) and this provided the data source at this stage of programme development. Pawson and Tilley (1997) refer to this process in their work as a ‘Realistic Review’.

Selecting programme components In RE, Contexts are settings within which programmes are situated or factors outside the control of programme designers. Mechanisms are the things that people do or manipulate to achieve the desired Outcomes (Timmins and Miller, 2007).

In selecting Context and Mechanism programme components, I posed the question:

'What Contexts will allow the Mechanisms to fire, which will produce the outcomes that we want for the KYIP EM programme?

The Context and Mechanism components selected from my literature review (Pollitt, 2009) can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Potential Context and Mechanism programme components drawn from Pollitt (2009).

Context components	Mechanism components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term mentoring programmes (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Tierney et al., 1995) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme / problem ownership for mentor / mentee (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring part of multi-strand approach (Tierney et al., 1995; Schmidt et al., 2007; Tarling et al., 2001) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs-led focus of mentoring (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching mentees with appropriate mentors (Tierney et al., 1995; St James Roberts et al., 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solution-focused approach & meta-cognitive skills (St James Roberts and Singh, 2001)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support for mentors (Tierney et al., 1995; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy, trust, respect and positive regard (Tierney et al., 1995; Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing programme evaluation (Tierney et al., 1995; Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention (St James Roberts et al., 2005; Tarling et al., 2001) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000) and self-disclosure (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; Schmidt et al., 2007)

Development the initial programme design (Programme 1)

Timmins and Miller (2007) note that mapping-out 'CMO conjectures' for evaluation, i.e. hypothesised CMO causal relationships, can be a difficult process. Other studies, particularly those within the field of health, report that it was helpful first to map-out the 'big picture' before breaking down programmes into CMO configurations (Byng et al., 2005; Evans and Killoran, 2000). In order to formulate our CMO conjectures, I developed an overarching programme theory from Pollitt (2009) and this strategy proved useful in helping me develop my initial programme evaluation framework. The developed broad programme theory orientating the KYIP EM programme can be seen in Box 2. The initial programme evaluation framework developed, i.e. CMO conjectures, is referred to as Programme 1 and can be seen in Figure 3.

Box 2: Broad programme theory for Kingstanding context

Mentoring relationships (C), as part of a systems-wide approach (C), can serve as an effective protective factor for marginalised and vulnerable young people (O), where mentoring relationships are wholly client-led (M), and programme staff receive ongoing support and training throughout programme duration (M), particularly in the use of self-directed, solution-focused problem solving models/tools (M).

Figure 3: Programme 1

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 1 (mentoring)	Long-term (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Tierney et al., 1995) non-directive EM as part of multi-strand-approach (Tierney et al., 1995; Schmidt et al., 2007; Tarling et al., 2001) targeting 'at-risk' youth early (St James Roberts et al., 2005; Tarling et al., 2001) with chief aim of empowerment	Positive mentoring relationships incorporating equality, empathy, trust & positive regard (Phillip and Hendry, 1996,2000) within an environment of 'negotiation' =	Good session engagement & attendance (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000) & opportunities to signpost other services
Theory 2 (needs-led assessment)	Mentors confident using needs-assessment tools (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) following training (Tierney et al., 1995; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001)	Cards developmentally and contextually appropriate + used in every session =	Non-directive climate (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000) & reliable programme structure (Reynolds et al., 2006)
Theory 3 (solution-focused approach)	Mentors confident using SFA (St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) following training (Tierney et al., 1995; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001)	Solution-focused approach (St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) including problem-free talk, miracle questions, scaling & challenge (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) =	Greater problem ownership allowing for challenge-environment (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) & development of meta-cognitive problem solving skills (St James Roberts and Singh, 2001)
Theory 4 (programme reliability)	Programme ownership from collaborative programme development (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) & mentors will be enthusiastic re: programme evolution	Mentoring mechanisms evaluated (incorporates self-reflection (Phillip and Hendry, 1996, 2000) following each session =	Suitable and reliable programme specification & delivery & high programme fidelity (Reynolds et al, 2006)
Theory 5 (Child Protection)	All adults working with children have clear responsibilities to address identified risk of harm promptly and effectively in line with national and local agency policies (Children's Acts, 1989, 2006)	Training and support provided throughout programme (Tierney et al., 1995; St James Roberts and Singh, 2001) & regular reflection (Reynolds, 2006)	Menors confident and able to address emergent signals of risk promptly and effectively

Collaborative programme development

Participants: Mentors Eight mentors took part in developing and delivering of the KYIP EM programme, five female and three male. Mentors' ages ranged from 24 to 43 years. All of the mentors had a minimum of one year's experience in dealing with marginalised youth, though six of the mentors had not received any formal input / training with regard to professional mentoring prior to the study taking place. Two of the mentors had completed a half-day training session with the local Youth Offending Service on mentoring.

Presenting the programme design to the mentoring team A consultation meeting was held between myself and the mentoring team. The aim of the meeting was to elicit the views of the mentors', and map any proposed changes onto the initial programme design (Programme 1). Development of shared 'programme ownership' would be central to this consultation. All mentors had been briefed prior to consultation by the KYIP SMT, and were aware that the project was planned as a collaborative venture.

Mentors were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the project at any time. Principles of confidentiality, equality and mutual respect, which are particularly relevant to collaborative research processes (Robson, 2000), were outlined in accordance with practitioner guidelines contained within the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics (BPS, 2006).

An overview of the EM paradigm comprising both outcomes-driven and non-directive research was presented (see Appendix 1). This was accompanied by the initial programme design (Figure 3: Programme 1) and the planned timescale associated with the project (Appendix 2). Commitment required of the team in addition to mentoring, i.e. attending skill development and programme evaluation sessions, was also broached.

Process consultation A process consultation model (Schein, 1987) was used in the consultation with the team. Process consultation models orient towards the consultee, and in that sense it is consultees who are seen as the central resource within a 'collaborative and exploratory problem solving process'. Facilitation and development of ownership is a chief function of Schein's model (1987), so that in theory, interventions / solutions emergent from consultation are likely to be more fully engaged with following the consultation process.

Only one change to the design was proposed by the team, which related to safeguarding children's welfare, i.e. Child Protection (CP). Mentors were uncertain with regard to how they might spot any emergent CP needs from mentoring, and what procedures they might follow in such circumstances. Further training in CP procedures, access to relevant literature, and completion of a CP pro-forma following each mentoring session were the proposed changes agreed within the first consultation.

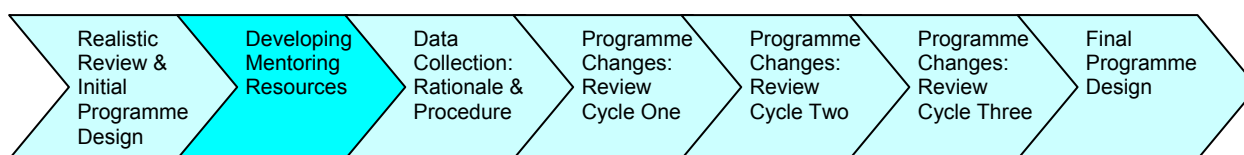
Agreed changes were mapped onto the programme design (See Figure 4: Programme 2). CP training was provided by Birmingham Local Authority prior to mentoring commencing. The CP literature, including a CP procedure flow chart, was provided by the EPS (see Appendix 3).

(NB: at this stage of programme development mentoring had not commenced. Data collected at 'programme review cycles' once mentoring had started, as outlined in the next section of this report, was done so through a more structured consultation / data collection process).

Figure 4: Programme 2

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 1 (mentoring)	Long-term non-directive EM as part of multi-strand-approach targeting 'at-risk youth earlier with chief aim of empowerment	Positive mentoring relationships incorporating equality, empathy, trust & positive regard within an environment of 'negotiation'	Good session engagement & attendance & opportunities to signpost other services
Theory 2 (needs-led assessment)	Mentors confident using needs-led tools following training	Cards developmentally and contextually appropriate + used in every session	Non-directive climate & reliable programme structure
Theory 3 (solution-focused approach)	Mentors confident using Solution-focused approach following training	Solution-focused approach including problem-free talk, miracle questions, scaling & challenge	Greater problem ownership allowing for challenge-environment & development of meta-cognitive problem solving skills
Theory 4 (programme reliability)	Programme ownership from collaborative programme development & mentors will be enthusiastic re: programme evolution	Mentoring mechanisms evaluated (incorporates self-reflection) following each session Training and support provided throughout programme & regular reflection	Suitable and reliable programme specification & delivery & high programme fidelity
Theory 5 (Child Protection)	Mentors received training re: Child Protection Legislation – derived from practitioner knowledge	Mentors refer to CP Framework & complete reflection sheets (Reynolds et al, 2006) following every mentoring session	Greater professional confidence re: programme delivery and lessened stressors. Greater mentor engagement in programme development & delivery

Materials and skill development sessions



Three practical planning and skill development sessions were held with the mentoring team following agreement of the revised programme template (Programme 2). These involved:

1. Skill development in the use of a needs-led assessment method and related resource materials.
2. Skill development in the use of a solution-focused approach, including 'problem-free talk' and 'miracle questioning' and 'scaling' techniques.
3. Instruction and practice in completion of self-evaluation sheets relating to mentoring sessions.

Needs-led assessment materials / skill development A series of picture cards was developed with the mentoring team as a means of facilitating and promoting child-led discussion in the mentoring sessions. Images relating to various aspects of the school classroom, school playground and home environments were included (see Appendix 4 for example of card system). Relationships with family and friends formed a key focus for the images, as well as wider community settings, with some in relation to what might be seen

as anti-social-behaviour. Conviction of minor criminal offence(s) was the chief criterion for referral to the Kingstanding mentoring programme and provided the rationale for inclusion of such scenes.

The use of images draws heavily from the constructivist paradigm and the field of personal construct psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955), where images and drawings have been utilised widely by researchers as a means of eliciting and exploring /elaborating children's views (e.g. Fransella, 2005; Ravenette, 1999). Ambiguous images were purposefully selected for inclusion in order to align with the broad programme orientation of empowerment rather than value-imposition. A brief overview in relation to the principles of PCP (Kelly, 2003) and the importance of mentors not imposing their own construct systems on the images / mentees were incorporated into the skill development session.

Each mentor's pack contained approximately 25 cards. These were presented to mentees in each session, where they were asked to sort the cards into three categories entitled 'no problem for me', 'worried a bit' and 'causing me a problem'. Mentees were then asked to select a card from one of the categories (usually 'worried a bit' or 'causing me a problem' after the initial session) to discuss in the mentoring session (see Appendix 5 and training slides 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 relating to how the card system should be implemented).

Skill development using solution-focused techniques Mentors were provided with a theoretical overview and underlying principles informing solution focused approaches (de Shazer, 1985) (see appendix 6). The skill development session involved practical activities in the use of ‘problem-free talk’, ‘miracle questioning’ and ‘scaling’ techniques (Rhodes, 1993). Mentors were provided with ‘easy reference’ prompt sheets to aid their use of the solution-focused techniques (see Appendix 6). Skills were developed in the context of, and in conjunction with, use of the aforementioned card system.

Mentor’s self-reflection sheets A central aim of the research was to ensure that the programme design was rigorous in terms of ‘reliability’ (Robson, 2000), and that the programme template could be adhered to, and delivered by mentors with some consistency and regularity. ‘Mentoring Session Reflection Sheets’, specifying core elements of the programme’s ‘Contexts’ and ‘Mechanisms’ in a rating scale format, were developed for mentors to complete following each mentoring session in order to facilitate this (see Appendix 7), which also contains anonymised examples of completed sheets). This idea draws from the research on high reliability organisations (LaPorte and Consolini, 1991), including schools (Reynolds et al., 2006; Stringfield, 1995), which demonstrates that regular evaluation of what the research paradigm refers to as ‘standard operating procedures’ (SOPs) is critical to effective programme implementation and sustained organisational change. This session involved me steering mentors through completion of the ‘Mentoring Session Reflection Sheets’, with the aim of ensuring consistency in their use. (NB a further intended function of the Self Reflection Sheets was to

facilitate 'data / programme ownership, which is discussed further on page 46).

Mentoring

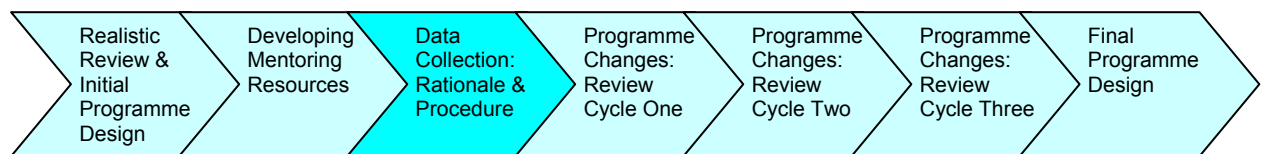
Participants: Mentees A total of 24 Year four and five children took part in the study (mentees), with mentees attending one of two primary schools in the Kingstanding area of Birmingham. All mentees had previously been identified as 'at-risk' of offending behaviour via a Youth Offending Service screening tool, and were receiving other forms of community support from the Kingstanding YIP at the start of the intervention. The KYIP staff clarified the nature of the EM project with mentees and their parents, and obtained the informed consent of both the children and their parents or carers (BPS, 2006). The majority of mentees had been convicted of one minor criminal offence. A small number had been convicted of more than one offence (typically 2). None of mentees had served a custodial sentence.

Structure of mentoring sessions Mentoring sessions began following the skill developments sessions. Mentees were paired with Mentors already known to them through other forms of professional contact via the KYIP. Mentors and mentees thus had existing professional relationships at the start of the mentoring programme.

Mentoring sessions took place weekly. Each mentoring session occurred within the child's school, and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Mentees

were informed that they could withdraw from mentoring at any time, that strict codes of confidentiality would be adhered to at all times by mentors (in accordance with YIP policy), and that no written records would be taken in the mentoring sessions.

'Programme Review Cycles'



A benefit of Pawson and Tilley's (1997) evaluation framework and particularly where numerous stakeholders are involved in the research process, is that it readily identifies who to ask what in evaluation.

In addition to developing programme content, this D & R project was very much concerned with getting the KYIP EM programme 'up and running'. Therefore actual programme delivery would form an integral part of the development and testing of programme theory. Given that these areas formed the central objects of evaluation, evaluation resources focused on accessing the views of the mentoring team only. Whilst incorporating the views of the mentees may have improved the validity of the programme's design in terms of whether or not it was appropriately targeting the mentee's needs, the time constraints associated with the project did not permit further exploration in that regard. This issue is discussed further in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chief Method of Inquiry

In considering the purposes of the Kingstanding Project and the validity of the evaluation data, a group consultation approach was adopted as the chief method of inquiry. Whilst immediately relevant to the collaborative nature of the D & R enterprise, two further broad considerations governed the selection of this approach.

Ecological validity The EM literature identifies contextual factors as critical to programme success (Pollitt, 2009). A qualitative approach would ensure that data were not disembodied from the mentoring context and the overall 'situatedness' of the KYIP EM programme theory. A questionnaire, for example, might provide 'bits of theory' only (Pawson, 2002).

Ethical considerations The KYIP Project was primarily concerned with 'emancipation'. Previous research draws attention to, not only the abuse of mentees as a result of imposed EM programme 'agendas' (Philip and Hendry, 1996, 2000), but also, of mentors (Colley, 2001, 2002; Haggerty, 1986; Roberts, 1998). In promoting the KYIP project aims, I was advocating that mentors adopt a non-oppressive approach to programme delivery, and in doing that I felt it important transparently to tangibly demonstrate a consistent value-system within my own research / professional practice. Welfare of service users, e.g. programme recipients and co-researchers, is one of the core considerations of ethical practice for psychologists, as outlined in the British Psychological Society's (BPS, 2006) Code of Ethics.

Consultation Process

Hypothesis formulation: outing researcher identity RE involves the testing of hypotheses and a suggested method by Pawson and Tilley (1997) is their 'here's my theory, what's yours' strategy. The general idea is to maintain validity, with reference to ecological context, by 'smuggling in' CMO theory within 'broad programme theory'. Comparison can be drawn here with vignettes (Robson, 2000). Nonetheless, these strategies remain an apriori process, in that they involve the researcher selecting hypotheses, albeit from within the parameters of the theory under investigation.

Process consultation operates from the premise that consultant - consultee relationships should be collegial and collaborative rather than hierarchical and coercive (Schein, 1987). In this regard, Conoley and Conoley's (1990) refer to appropriate and optimal consultation relationships occupying 'Coordinate power status', i.e. shared and equal power in decision making processes. As a means of minimising the impact of my own values, assumptions and identity in 'selecting hypotheses', a more inductive process was undertaken at each review cycle. Whilst I facilitated consultation, the agenda of consultation meetings was 'mentor-led'. To guide consultation, mentors referred to their self-reflection sheets that were completed following each mentoring session (Appendix 7). Aspects of programme theory that emerged were then discussed within the group consultation process.

I was mindful that I was the originator of the programme theory, design and implementation, and that this may potentially increase respondent bias (Robson, 2000) through, for example, the mentors not wanting to discuss programme shortcomings. This was addressed by my explicitly stating at the outset of each group consultation, that we knew there would be both successes and failures and that the main purpose and value of the session was to improve the programme.

Key points raised in each group consultation were recorded by one of the mentoring team, and relevant data reformulated (by myself and the scribe) into an adapted, 'is this your theory' format. Hypotheses were then presented (orally and via Powerpoint slide) to the mentoring team, followed by discussion focusing on programme changes to be made. Proposed and agreed changes were then mapped onto the next evaluation design.

Consultation model

Hanko's (1999) group consultation model was adapted to guide the consultation meetings and data collection at each programme review cycle. The model is designed to provide a supportive function for consultees, which accords with the KYIP EM programme design, and is particularly well-suited to facilitating problem solving processes. In that regard I judged the model fit for purpose. The model also adopts aspects of solution-focused questioning (de Shazer, 1987; Rhodes, 1993), which in addition to its primary function within the model, was also useful in that it provided me with an opportunity to

model techniques comprised within the actual mentoring programme, and to reinforce the content of previous skill-development sessions. Box 3 outlines the structure of sessions , for all of which, I acted as the process facilitator.

Box 3: Consultation model used to facilitate programme review cycles in development of the KYIP EM Programme: adapted from Hanks (1999).

1. Welcome: Purpose of the group and my role as facilitator clarified. Ground rules for the group outlined, i.e. confidentiality, maintenance of respect and empathy for other group members.
2. Self-reflection phase: Mentors spend few minutes revisiting their own 'Mentor Self-Reflection Sheets'.
3. Prioritisation of concerns: each group member invited to discuss any areas of concern re: mentoring programme (other group members asked to listen only initially). Selection of problem area(s) for further exploration (democratic process where facilitator provides 'gate-keeping function, i.e. ensures that process is democratic
4. Exploration of selected area(s): Group elaborates problem area(s). Exploration process improved by facilitator if required via paraphrasing / posing solution-focused questions.
5. Break: use of Problem Free-talk strategy if appropriate.
6. Hypotheses: Group presented with 'is this your theory' hypotheses & re-formulated if required.
7. Potential solutions phase: group asked to forward 'suggestions for programme change' (solution-focused approach using scaling technique if appropriate).
8. Reflection phase: Each group member invited to comment on today's session and reflect generally on programme development / delivery (previous changes made to programme broached in discussion if these had not already part of session).
9. Summing up: facilitator thanks the group, reiterates principle of confidentiality, and agrees next consultation meeting with the mentoring team.

Results

Results presented relate to consultation data obtained from the three 'Programme Review Cycles'. Each 'programme development area' (boxed) gives an overview of the data informing the programme changes that were made at each Programme Review Cycle. Discussion of the results, how data were mapped-out in terms of 'CMO families', and presentation of the final programme configuration to the mentoring team and the KYIP SMT, is provided in the Discussion section of the report.

Programme Review Cycle 1

(Programme development area 1)

Area to emerge in consultation (stage 4 Hanko's adapted model)	<i>Use of needs-assessment materials (cards)</i>
Consultation record: summary	<i>Mentors see use of the card system in every mentoring session as artificial and as taking up too much time. Sometimes the children don't want to use the cards and can get annoyed and bored</i>
Formulated 'is this your theory' hypothesis put to mentors	<i>'application of the card system in every session gives the programme an artificial feel, that doesn't help the relationship building process'</i>
Proposed programme changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Professional judgement re: use of card system</i>• <i>Inclusion of ice-breaker games</i>

(Programme development area 2)

Area to emerge in consultation (stage 4 Hanko's adapted model)	<i>Use of solution-focused materials (cards).</i>
Consultation record: summary	<i>Mentors had not been using the solution-focused approach as it was intended. Whilst all of the team had used the problem-free-talk strategy, only a minority of the team had used the 'miracle question' and 'scaling' techniques. Lack of established relationship rapport and trust were seen as key factors.</i>
Formulated 'is this your theory' hypothesis put to mentors	<i>'the solution-focused techniques didn't allow me to facilitate problem-solving opportunities or to challenge mentees' thinking without being threatening'</i>
Proposed programme changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Additional skills-development sessions.</i>• <i>Use solution-focused approach with minor concerns only at early stages of programme to build mentor confidence</i>

Programme Review Cycle 2

(Programme development area 3)

Area to emerge in consultation (stage 4 Hanko's adapted model)	<i>Use of needs-assessment materials (cards).</i>
Consultation record: summary	<i>Use of ice-breaker games is seen as positive by the mentors, though using professional judgement with regard to use of the cards has resulted in the cards not being used 'most of the time'. Mentors expressed concerns with regard to intention of programme design.</i>
Formulated 'is this your theory' hypothesis put to mentors	<i>'We have now gone from having too much structure in the mentoring sessions to not enough'.</i>
Proposed programme changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Scope for professional judgement re: use of card system but with card system out on display in every session to promote easy and more frequent access.</i>

(Programme development area 4)

Area to emerge in consultation (stage 4 Hanco's adapted model)	<i>Lack of support for mentors.</i>
Consultation record: summary	<i>Mentors expressed that they felt isolated in relation to programme delivery, and have little opportunity to discuss how mentoring was developing, or tackle problems via 'group support'.</i>
Formulated 'is this your theory' hypothesis put to mentors	<i>'The work schedule and case load affords us little time as a group to discuss mentoring other than during 'Programme Review Cycles'.</i>
Proposed programme changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Management facilitated support sessions during fortnightly team meetings</i>

Programme Review Cycle 3

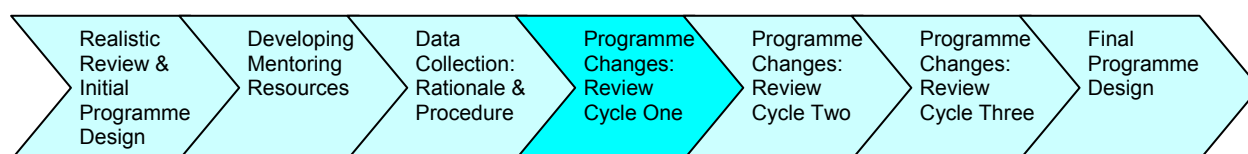
(Programme development area 5)

Area to emerge in consultation (stage 4 Hanco's adapted model)	<i>Use of group-mentoring sessions.</i>
Consultation record: summary	<i>Two of the mentors have used group-mentoring sessions effectively and this has been well received by the mentees. The group sessions had served a 'permission to talk' function for some of the more reserved mentees following modelling of the card system and scaling by the more confident mentees. Mentoring team enthusiastic re: group mentoring idea.</i>
Formulated 'is this your theory' hypothesis put to mentors.	<i>'We think the group sessions would really add to the programme in terms of helping some of the more reserved children'.</i>
Proposed programme changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Group mentoring sessions (no more than 6 mentees per group) can be included where mentors judge this to be appropriate.</i>

Discussion

This D & R project aimed to develop a non-directive mentoring programme, which in design and structure, was appropriate for local context. Whilst some outcomes of the programme's impact are briefly referred to in this discussion section, it was programme development and actual programme delivery that were the central objects of evaluation. The discussion section focuses primarily on these areas. The section is structured to reflect the chronology of change over the three programme review cycles which comprised the realistic evaluation process.

Programme Review Cycle 1



The purpose of RE is to surface CMO configurations that assist programme efficacy. In that regard, Pawson and Tilley (1997) recommend that programme mechanisms should be central to evaluation. Two key mechanisms of KYIP programme design, namely, needs-led assessment and solution-focused methods, emerged at Programme Review Cycle 1 as limiting programme success.

Programme change 1: needs-led assessment (cards) The principal aim of the needs-led assessment method (Q-sort activity using cards) was to

facilitate mentee-led sessions. Initial CMO Theory 2 assumed that mentors would use the cards in each of the early mentoring session immediately following a brief period of 'problem-free-talk'. Original programme design stipulated that the card sort should be used every session (not in their entirety but reference to) to allow for programme consistency in terms of delivery.

This programme structure was not seen as compatible with the Kingstanding context, or indeed with the core principles informed by the Literature Review (Pollitt, 2009). Mentors were of the view that this structure was 'artificial' and that using the cards in every session would have resulted in the mentoring sessions becoming 'agenda-led'. Research findings throughout the EM paradigm support this notion of 'sensitivity to prescriptive programme design with this target population (see Pollitt, 2009). The findings also served to demonstrate that the mentoring team were fully 'on-board' in terms of the Kingstanding programme's intended 'non-directive ethos' which was reassuring from the perspective of high reliability (Reynolds et al., 2006). Considering factors contributing to relationship continuity on the BBBSA programme, Parra et al. (2002), found the amount of contact with mentors, particularly in relation to non-directive activities such as sport and leisure rather than discussion, a significant factor in mentees 'staying with the programme'.

The use of 'ice-breaker' games, such as Connect 4 and Lego, along with flexibility in the use of the card system, i.e. that the mentors would use their 'professional judgement' when to use the card system, was mapped onto the

programme to increase /maintain the non-directive aspects of the programme design (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Mapped CMO changes: programme re: development area 1

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 2 (needs-led assessment)	Flexible approach to presenting context re: needs-assessment (cards)	Use of ice-breaker games & cards used when appropriate	Sessions do not seem artificial because of high programme structure

Programme change 2: Solution-focused methods Solution-focused approaches are constructionist in theoretical orientation and seek to build on existing strengths (de Shazer, 1985). Following training it was envisaged that a solution-focused approach would be used in the mentoring sessions with ‘problems’ that were presented, irrespective of their perceived severity, and this was mapped out with that intention on the original CMO configuration.

This design was not considered suitable for context by the mentoring team at Programme Review Cycle 1 and two factors governed the need for programme reconfiguration in this respect. Firstly, mentors stated that they lacked confidence in using solution-focused techniques with what they referred to as ‘the serious stuff’. Lack of sufficient training has been repeatedly identified across the literature a necessary consideration in programme design (St James-Roberts et al’s., 2005; St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001; Schmidt et al., 2007). Project CHANCE specifically identified

mentors' lack of understanding of solution-focused methods as a significant factor in programme failure (Tarling et al., 2001).

Secondly, lack of 'established trust' was seen by mentors as a barrier to the use of a solution-focused approach. Philip's (1996) work, which looked at a range of mentoring forms that young people sought across different social contexts, including home, school and the wider community, identified trust as a central and consistent component of effective mentoring relationships. Other research sees mentors' recognising trust as an important reciprocal process in terms of relationship development and particularly in relation to facilitating challenge (Philip and Hendry, 2000), a mechanism also operationalised in this programme design.

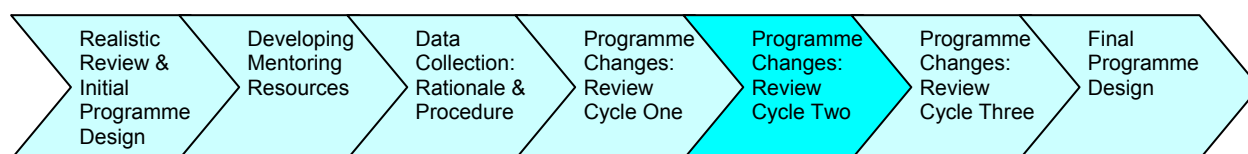
Notably, whilst the object of evaluation for this study was not 'outcomes' as such, it emerged at a later evaluation cycle (Programme Review Cycle 3) that the mentoring team saw solution-focused methods as central to the development of good mentoring relationships with mentees, and as facilitating trust within those relationships.

Whilst use of solution-focused methods as a mechanism did not change, the context of their application was re-configured within the programme design as something that would initially be used with smaller concerns only, until mentor confidence and trust between mentor and mentee had developed. Additional 'practice-based' training sessions in the use of solution-focused methods (de Shazer, 1987) were also provided for the team (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Mapped CMO changes: programme development area 2

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 3 (solution-focused approach)	Flexible approach to presenting context re: solution-focused approach	Further solution-focused training & solution-focused approach techniques used with minor 'difficulties' until mentor's confidence is developed	Mentors more confident in using solution-focused methods

Programme Review Cycle 2



The reformulated application of the needs-led assessment materials following Programme Review Cycle 1 emerged as problematic at Programme Review Cycle 2.

Programme change 3: needs-led assessment (cards) Whilst the introduction of 'ice-breaker' games was seen as positive by the team, they reported that the card system was now hardly being used at all. The team agreed that they would put the cards out on display in each mentoring session, and that they would continue to use their 'professional judgement' in terms of the appropriateness for use (see Figure 7). This strategy was seen as productive at the Stage 3 Programme Review Cycle maintaining non-directive programme orientation whilst supporting programme reliability.

Figure 7: Mapped CMO changes: programme development area 3

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 2 (needs-led assessment)	Mentors' good awareness of importance of programme consistency and reliability	Ice-breaker games and needs-led assessment materials used in accordance with professional judgement, but to be physically available in every session	Programme reliability and consistency facilitated without mentees feeling pressured or session having 'artificial feel'

A second programme area emerged as problematic at Review Cycle 2. This related to lack of support for the mentoring team between programme evaluation and development sessions.

Programme change 4: support for mentors Evaluations of BBBSA (McGill, 1999; Tierney, et al., 1995) identify ongoing training and support for mentors as key components of successful programme infrastructure. Many of the failed outcomes-driven projects also make ongoing training a key recommendation for future programme design (St James-Roberts et al., 2005, Tarling et al., 2001, St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001), as does the process-orientated research (Philip, 1996, 2000; Maldonado et al., 2008). Support for mentors between mentoring sessions was factored in to the initial CMO configuration to reflect this.

Given that operationalised mechanisms are evidence-based, in that they have previously demonstrated efficacy in other contexts, a key focus of RE is often not what makes mechanisms fire, but rather what stops them? Critical realism

recognises the interplay of structure and individuals' agency and thus differential reception of ideas is seen as reflecting the cultural, social and economic circumstances in which programmes are embedded (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). It was my opinion that the organisational structure and culture of the YIP very much disabled the intended 'supportive' mechanism of the mentoring programme in this instance.

Accountability was a central aspect of much of the work undertaken within the YIP at the time that the project was being implemented, and as noted previously, there were funding pressures. Accountability was predicated on centralised control and Fullan's (2006) work on educational reform identifies similar 'change barriers' within systems, as does the work of Schein (1989), particularly in relation to vertical organisational structures and associated culture.

Whilst planned supportive mechanisms had been discussed and approved by the YIP management team at the initial planning stages of the project, these did not materialise operationally as part of mentors' working week.

Consultation revealed that mentors had not accessed or experienced a 'support mechanism' and were unaware that one existed. The team reported that they were expected by the Service managers 'to just get on with things'.

With specific reference to culture, Schein (1989) talks about the disparity between espoused and actual organisational behaviour and Thacker's (1994) work discusses 'the public face of organisations' in this regard.

Research in the field of health demonstrates that even well meaning organisations, expressing a clear orientation towards providing emotional support for their workforce, often fail to provide that support due to requirements to demonstrate effectiveness via various accountability measures (Prilleltensky et al., 2002; Rossiter et al., 2000). While human service organisations usually afford their workers more voice than do business orientated organisations (see Shinn and Perkins, 2000), it is interesting to note that the only mentoring programme that appears to have successfully introduced regular and sustained support for mentors is the BBBSA programme, a volunteer based mentoring programme.

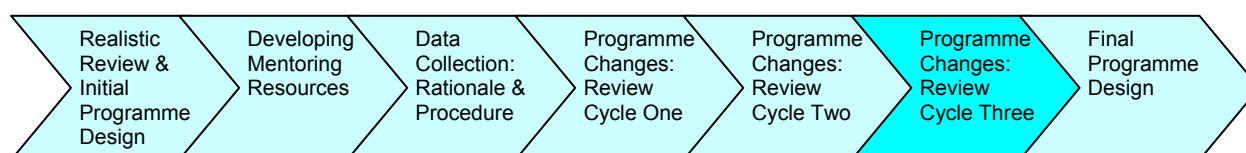
We were left in no doubt at the Stage 2 Review that a supportive mechanism was needed to assist effective mentoring. Hanko's (1999) process consultation model was used to assist each data collection cycle and whilst the model's structure allows group processes to be confidential and self-reflective, a secondary function is the facilitation of 'mutual support', during consultation, particularly at an affective level. As the 'supportive mechanism', or lack of it, was discussed with the team, an outpouring of emotional residue from mentoring sessions emerged. Studies suggest that high emotional demands placed on mentors can lead to their experiencing high levels of stress, resulting from their being neglectful of their own emotional needs (Colley, 2001; Philip and Hendry, 2000) and so this 'lack of professional support for the YIP mentors' resonates with the feminist critiques of the EM research paradigm (De Marco, 1993; Haggerty, 1986; Roberts, 1998).

The mentors proposed that support sessions might be infused into their routine team meeting on a fortnightly basis following this Stage 2 Review cycle. It was also proposed that YIP Service management facilitate this support. This change was mapped onto the next CMO configuration (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Mapped CMO changes: programme development area 4

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 4 (programme reliability)	Mentors recognise importance of regular support for mentoring team between Programme Review Cycles	Mentor support sessions infused within regular team meetings (allocated time for discussion)	Lowered stress levels and better engagement with mentoring process for mentors

Programme Review Cycle 3



By this stage of programme development, it appeared that the review cycle was almost redundant and no remaining ‘problem areas’ of the programme design emerged from consultation at Programme Review Cycle 3. However, programme changes in relation what might be seen as innovative programme improvements were proposed.

Programme change 5: Group mentoring sessions These changes related to the introduction of group-focused mentoring sessions. I viewed these ‘team

initiated' programme ideas as indicative of the team's ownership of the programme and their growing confidence as mentors.

The Kingstanding YIP provides a range of services for its target client group, many of which are delivered at group rather than individual level. 'Parenting groups' and 'girls groups', for example, are run monthly by the YIP staff.

Two of the mentoring team began to use a group format for their mentoring sessions, which were seen as providing an added dimension to mentoring relationships, particularly in relation to use of the cards and normalising the mentoring process, and in the development of trust between mentor and mentee. Mentors reported that discussing the cards as a group had given some mentees 'permission to talk' not only in the group session, but also in later one to one mentoring sessions.

A much posited theoretical/ontological position is that marginalised youth lack mainstream cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973), and alternatively negotiate sub-cultural capital via 'risk' situations as a means of gaining 'out group status/identity' (e.g. Merton, 1938, Cohen, 1955 in Williams, 2007).

Discussing the cards as a group was seen as facilitating empathy that in turn allowed mentees to explore their current identity status in a positive way.

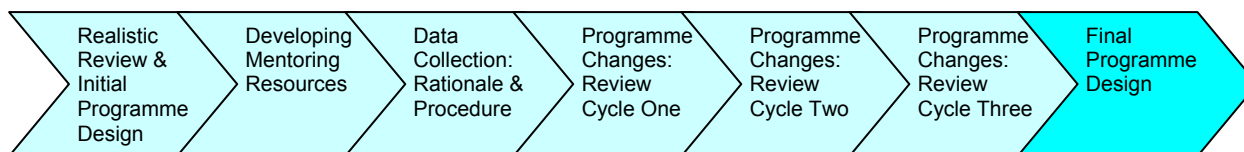
Accessing a relevant frame of reference, via immediate and tangible group identity, is very much in tune with the philosophical orientation of positive psychology (Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi, 2000) and that of building on mentees' existing strengths.

Philip (1996) successfully carried out group interviews using ‘risk scenario’ card games examining mentee experiences of mentoring in the community, while Project CHANCE operationalised peer support groups in their mentoring programme (St James-Roberts and Singh, 2001). The mentoring team were in agreement that group process potentially comprised an effective mechanism for the YIP programme. As with the needs assessment and solution-focused mechanisms, the desirability of a flexible approach was agreed, with the group process to be used a minimum of once every six weeks dependant on presenting context (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Mapped CMO changes: programme development area 5

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theories 2 & 3 (needs-led assessment & solution-focused approach)	Use of group mentoring session	Peer identification through group mentoring process	Use of needs led system and solution-focused methods normalised for mentees through modelling and giving greater potential for disclosure in individual mentoring sessions

Final Programme Review



Consultation meeting with all stakeholders Following Programme Review Cycle 3, I envisaged that programme development would be practically complete. Approximately three weeks after completion of Programme Review Cycle 3, a consultation meeting was attended by myself, the mentoring team, and the KYIP SMT in order to establish face-validity (Robson, 2000) of the proposed final programme design.

Programme change 6: support for mentors Only one difficulty emerged in this final consultation, which related to the mentoring support sessions, or lack of them. Mentors had not received management support, or accessed a timetabled support session since the last programme evaluation. In spite of lengthy discussion with the SMT, this support was not made available for the mentoring team. It was agreed in consultation that the team themselves would organise their own support sessions and this was mapped onto the final programme design.

Figure 10: Mapped CMO changes:

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 4 (programme reliability)	Programme ownership Regular support sessions for mentoring team (self- initiated) +	Mentors emotionally equipped to deliver effective mentoring sessions. Team valued =	Needs of mentors met. EM programme ethically viable (mentors perspective)

No other programme difficulties or proposed revisions emerged from consultation. I formulated and presented the following ‘is this your theory’ hypothesis to ensure that this was reliably the case. Again no changes emerged through consultation.

Hypotheses tested at consultation meeting checking the final programme design:

We’ve now got the programme design just right. I wouldn’t change one thing about the mentoring sessions in terms of how I deliver them, or how they are organised.

Finally, it should be noted that the mentoring team had not found Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) CMO evaluation framework useful in evaluation, and had requested a more practical and user-friendly ‘final programme design’ (at Review Cycle 2) to guide and sustain optimal mentoring programme structures and processes. A more user friendly programme format containing all programme components was devised (see overleaf), and in addition to its intended purpose, this was also used to assist a final check in terms of programme validity. No further changes were proposed by either the mentoring team, or the KYIP SMT. A final programme design presented in Pawson and Tilley’s traditional CMO format is included on page 116 (see Figure11)

Final map

Figure 11: Final programme design

	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Theory 1 (mentoring)	Non-oppressive & reliable mentoring programme	Regular contact with target population providing opportunities to empower marginalised groups	EM programme valued as part of overall KYIP service delivery. Greater potential to satisfy future funding requirements
Theory 2 (needs-led assessment)	Use of ice-breaker games / needs-led tools (cards available in all sessions) client led & facilitated by professional judgement Group sessions normalise use methods)	Consistency and programme reliability compatible with natural mentoring processes Enhanced disclosure	Good session engagement. Good attendance (mentees). Develops effective mentoring relationships
Theory 3 (solution-focused approach)	Mentors confident following formative approach to skill development in use of solution-focused techniques Group sessions normalise use methods)	Solution-focused techniques, i.e. problem-free-talk, miracle question and scaling, used regularly, appropriately and effectively Enhanced disclosure	Improved session engagement through discussing relevant areas of need. Builds trusting & effective mentoring relationships
Theory 4 (programme reliability)	Programme ownership Regular support sessions for mentoring team (self-initiated)	Mentors emotionally equipped to deliver effective mentoring sessions. Team valued =	Needs of mentors met. EM programme ethically viable (mentors perspective)
Theory 5 (Child Protection)	Familiarity with Child Protection Legislation / procedures	Mentors refer to CP Framework for guidance if required	Mentors can focus on facilitating optimal mentoring processes.

Further considerations

Benefits of RE The importance of context and the unique strengths of the chosen RE methodology emerged as central aspect to programme success as evaluation progressed. As noted, non-directive interventions have frequently been criticised as lacking purpose and direction (Ford, 1999; Gorter and Kalb, 1996; Gulam and Zulfiquar, 1998) and largely these criticisms are founded on two related issues, the first of which relates to programme delivery. Numerous studies report that mentors are often unsure what mentoring entails. A direct quote from a mentor on the New Beginnings programme provides an exemplar (Colley, 2003a).

Karen: Mentoring is difficult, because no one ever tells you exactly what it should be.

The second relates to stipulation of method within programme design, and the need for improved specificity, not least because funding has been problematic in a field where programme designs lack detail (France, 2008; Freedman, 1999; Piper and Piper, 1999).

RE addresses both of these potential difficulties. The methodology allowed us collaboratively to map-out programme designs that were flexible in responding to the needs of the non-directive mentoring contexts, but which remained specific in terms of method and orientation. The consistent reviewing of programme method, making reference to explicit programme descriptors ensured that method was refined and reinforced throughout the evaluation

period. At no stage during my involvement did the mentoring team report they were unsure with regard to the methods they should, or did employ.

In relation to funding, this was a Local Authority project where accountability was required. The wider activities that were carried out as part of the Kingstanding Youth Inclusion Project (YIP) had recently been under financial scrutiny. Against this context, the specifics of the programme design were welcomed by the Kingstanding YIP, with the transparency of the project very much championed by the YIP Management Team.

Trustworthiness (validity and reliability)

Whilst the central aim of this research was to develop a mentoring programme that facilitated optimal mentoring relationships, a further aim was to ensure that the final programme design was rigorous in its reliability / fidelity: in short, that the programme would be adhered to, and delivered by mentors with some consistency and regularity. The 'Mentoring Session Reflection Sheets' (see Appendix 7), focusing on specific elements of the programme's 'Contexts' and 'Mechanisms' in a rating scale format proved useful in structuring monitoring of mentors' adherence to the programme.

Whilst elements of the YIP mentoring programme remained flexible in terms of professional judgement and frequency of application of specific methods, (e.g. the ice-breaker games, the card system and the solution-focused methods), we were careful to remain descriptive and specific with regard all

aspects of the programme to ensure 'high programme reliability' in terms of delivery. During the 'Stage 2 Review Cycle' mentors were asked how they knew that they were doing everything in the sessions that they were supposed to. They responded by stating that the reflection sheets had kept them focused and 'on-track' in that respect. Data from the reflection sheets informed the structure of group consultation at each programme review cycle, further improving the validity of overall programme design.

Data collection within the group consultation process was advantageous. Whilst discussion was marshalled within the parameters of programme theory, which allowed for specific families of contexts and mechanisms to be targeted for evaluation, the 'bottom-up' consultation format adopted also gave permission to mentors to 'move around' within the wider programme theory freely during group discussion. This served to minimise researcher bias (Finlay, 2002) in some respects, particularly in relation to selecting 'what to test'. For example, as the consultant / researcher, I had, at no time presented a hypothesis relating to a 'group mentoring mechanism'; this was donated by two of the mentors.

There were also practical and organisational advantages to the group consultation approach. Group consultation was speedy, which allowed for several programme review cycles within the time constraints associated with this project.

Conclusion

Discourse of 'joined-up solutions for joined-up problem' is nowhere more prevalent than within youth policy literature, as is, ensuring that 'service provision meets local need' (DfES, 2008, 2009). A preventative approach is seen as critical in terms of facilitating better outcomes for marginalised youth and whilst research has contributed significantly to practice in terms of recognition and assessment of need through reliably identifying associated 'risk-factors' (e.g. Loeber, 1990; Farrington and West, 1990; Werner and Smith, 1982), harnessing and strengthening 'protective-factors' is less clear cut for practitioners. Targeted youth support presents a huge challenge for all who work within the field, including researchers and practitioners alike.

A working context of professional accountability, though necessary, adds further pressure and here a discrepancy between 'policy rhetoric' and actual practice often emerges (France, 2008). Certainly, this has been the case within the EM research paradigm. Many UK-based programmes have failed to accommodate the complexities of local context and local need, or alternatively have targeted specific outcomes as indicators of programme success.

Nonetheless, prescribed outcomes have typically assumed a need for directive methods, and mainstream value-imposed EM has not worked with an already marginalised population (Colley, 2003; Pollitt, 2009). Key recommendations within the outcomes-driven literature are that the EM paradigm adopts a u-turn in terms of approach, and refocuses on aiming to achieve that which it purports to, namely to engage 'the difficult to reach'. This

means an epistemological and methodological shift, and relocating research within, and on, a contextually-grounded footing. Non-directive programmes claim to have done that through developing positive relationships between mentors and mentees, though studies in the field have not been methodologically robust (Pollitt, 2009).

This collaborative D & R venture sought to address the previous shortfalls of both directive and non-directive EM research, through identifying a non-directive programme design that would facilitate positive mentoring relationships. This would be achieved through situating programme development within a comprehensive evaluation framework.

The KYIP Programme proved successful in achieving its aims in engaging service users with service provision, and in developing positive mentoring relationships for those individuals. Broad programme theory developed through the literature withstood iterative evaluation within the local context and this served to demonstrate that a non-directive approach to EM, underpinned by theoretical principles drawn from humanistic (Rogers, 1971) and positive psychology (Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi, 2000) paradigms, can form a viable option as part of a multi-strand approach to reaching a marginalised population. A solution-focused approach was instrumental in developing those purposeful and effective mentoring relationships, and with previous EM programmes' failing in this regard, theory is taken forward here. Box 4 illustrates the optimal programme theory suggested by this study, that practitioners might adhere to in developing non-directive EM programmes.

Box 4: Broad programme theory for non-directive EM programmes

Mentoring relationships, as part of a systems wide approach, can serve as an effective protective factor for marginalised and vulnerable young people, where mentoring relationships are wholly client-led and where staff receive ongoing support and training throughout programme duration, particularly in the use of self-directed, problem solving models/tools.

One of the chief limitations of non-directive EM programmes is their failure to identify a coherent method, and the use of a comprehensive, collaborative and organic evaluation framework showed that non-directive programme design could be specified, thereby improving overall performance and programme reliability. Programme delivery was central to evaluation and this, in conjunction with a thorough evaluation of the context within which the programme sat, were seen as critical to this programme's success. In developing the KYIP EM Programme, RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) also provided a framework that readily aligned to notions of professional accountability and the increasing need for a convincing specification of intervention and evidence re: outcomes as a condition for continuing funding.

Future EM programmes might give particular consideration to regular evaluation of mentors' needs, both in terms of skill development and use of actual methods, which in this instance related to solution-focused techniques, and support mechanisms that mentors should be accessing to promote effective programme delivery. In developing this programme some of the barriers to programme success appeared to be organisational and cultural in nature. Amongst key recommendations made are that the appropriateness and compatibility of organisational structure and culture is given full consideration by programme developers at the outset of stakeholder

negotiations. More specifically, these considerations should relate to an organisation's capacity to provide long-term mentoring for mentees and to provide an ongoing and supportive management-led mechanism for those who carry out the mentoring. Research findings from the wider engagement mentoring literature support these key recommendations from this localised research project.

Finally, EM as an approach has become less popular in recent years, and this has been partly due to programme aims and methods being ill-defined. Outcomes-driven programmes, whilst more readily and easily measurable, have been overly-directive. Conversely, non-directive programmes have lacked clear programme orientation and specificity of method. These are methodological problems only, which does not mean that EM as an approach is not a viable and useful intervention for Targeted Youth Support or other children's service provision. Future EM programmes can be effective if programme development and evaluation are rigorous, and comprise a collaborative process involving those delivering intervention. This ensures that methods are not only specific, giving the programme definitive purpose and orientation, but also that mentors are fully aware of the processes involved in mentoring. RE provides a useful methodology for achieving that (providing that the evaluation framework is compatible with the working context) in terms of , and providing that programme developers conceptualise 'difficulties' as they relate to the immediate context, i.e. mentees' views, rather than as a value-imposed 'condition', then EM can be successful as part of a multi-strand

approach to engaging 'at-risk' populations, as in the case of the KYIP EM Programme.

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Concluding Chapter Volume 1

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Typically, non-directive EM programmes have lacked specificity in programme design and method. The Kingstanding D & R enterprise provides a unique contribution to the field in that specificity of programme design ensured that method was clear and transparent for all stakeholders and other interested parties, i.e. mentors as well as senior management teams, including those who might potentially fund a programme. Much of the success of the Kingstanding Project is attributed to the collaborative research processes and the methodology used and a central recommendation in that regard is that RE is utilised in developing further EM programmes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Nonetheless, there were limitations in developing the KYIP EM programme and whilst some of these have been discussed within the empirical paper, i.e. Paper Two, other have not due to the requirement for the paper to be written to journal specification. In this concluding chapter, some of these limitations along with future recommendations for programme development are made. Recommendations relate to both methodological and practical improvements.

Methodological considerations

In this project, evaluation was much about ensuring that programme structure, content and delivery were appropriate in terms of facilitating positive mentoring relationships. However, only mentor's views were sought. Future research might access the views of mentees in order to provide more

comprehensive evaluation. It is not being suggested that programme development should 'blindly' include multiple data sources for the sake of it. A benefit of Pawson and Tilley's (1997) evaluation framework is that it readily identifies who to ask what in evaluation. For example, mentees' views might be sought with regard whether programmes were targeting what they were intending to via actual mentoring processes. In-depth qualitative methods would provide detailed insight into the nature of mentoring relationships, which as Colley (2003) notes, we need to understand far better. This would allow participant's to tell their own stories and express more fully their experiences, sentiments and beliefs. Accessing 'targeted and relevant' richer accounts and triangulating these with a more structured data set would improve the overall validity of programme design and provide what Pawson and Tilley (1997) refer to as 'data completeness'.

Evaluation might also seek to understand how EM processes sit within the wider context of other multi-strand provision that 'at-risk' populations receive, i.e. the influences that mentoring relationships have on other forms of service provision. Currently there has been little research done in terms of the interplay between mentoring services and other service provision.

Practical considerations

One of the key learning points to be drawn from the Kingstanding Project relates to organisational culture. Though RE identifies wider systemic influences which may restrict or block the development of an optimal

programme design, there are conditions that may not be readily or easily changed by programme developers. For example, in spite of the need for a 'support mechanism' in the development of our EM programme, the organisational culture of the KYIP was unable to accommodate regular staff support (at least not during the evaluation period). Care should be applied by external research facilitators at the outset to ensure that organisations / settings have the capacity to accommodate all aspects of a proposed research design.

Ownership, at least during the early stages of programme development, also proved problematic in developing the KYIP EM programme. Some members of the mentoring team were quite resistant to proposals when we were developing the initial programme design to the point where I was forced to halt proceedings and inquire 'what the difficulties were'. It emerged during consultation that some team members were angry that the KYIP EM Project was yet another directive 'handed down' by the KYIP Senior Management Team. In reference to stakeholder-based models of evaluation, Cousins and Earl (1992) note the importance of introducing all interested parties to evaluation early, and particularly organisation members with programme responsibility. Engaging mentoring team from the start might be a consideration in developing EM programmes in other working contexts.

The Research and Development in Organisations model (RADIO) (Timmins et al., 2003, 2006), originally developed by Knight and Timmins (1995), provides a useful framework that could help to address both the above

recommendation for future programme development, i.e. assessment of an organisations capacity to develop a programme and developing ownership of a programme. The model adopts a strong focus on the negotiation and clarification phases of research, providing research facilitators with a clear and definitive framework (see appendix 9 in Paper Two). For example, Stage 3 of the model focuses specifically on clarifying organisational and cultural issues likely to support or impeded programme development.

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Appendix: Critical Reflection on the Empirical Study (Paper Two)

This Appendix provides supplementary information to Paper Two, aiming further to contextualise the empirical study. An editorial decision was made to include the information here given that Paper Two was written to journal specification, within an upper limit of 8000 words.

The Appendix comprises into six sections. Section 1 provides information relating to some of the constraining factors associated with the Volume 1 research, e.g. time pressures and working collaboratively with another service provider. Section 2 provides an overview of the broader, longer term aims of the KYIP D & R project, i.e. Phases 2 and 3. Section 3 outlines and critiques other methodologies that were considered for the study. Section 4, the substantive part of the Appendix, provides an extended rationale for, and critique of RE and the associated methods used in the empirical study. Section 5 considers limitations of the study and discusses, in particular, how the analysis, handling and reliability of the evaluation data might have been improved. Finally, Section 6 presents a brief concluding commentary relating to how the research was received generally within the Local Authority, including my own reflections on the research, and my own learning as a researcher, practitioner scientist and applied psychologist.

Section 1: Constraining factors

Structure of the thesis: Volume 1 comprises an account of a short-term project. Negotiation with commissioners and early scoping of the project took place over a single school term. Excluding meeting the training requirements of the mentoring team, evaluation of programme development and implementation was done over a further school term. The empirical study reported in Paper Two forms stage 1 only of an ongoing multi-phase study.

The two main papers in Volume 1, i.e. Paper One and Paper Two accrue 120 credits in total. Both papers are linked and written to journal specification. Volume 2 accrues 240 credits and comprises five independent professional practice reports, each reporting a different example of practitioner research. The thesis was completed over years two and three of the 3 year professional training programme. Two days per week in year 1, and one day per week in year 2 were allocated to completing the research projects contained within Volumes 1 and 2 of the thesis.

Both volumes of the thesis are diverse in their content domains, in theoretical and conceptual models applied, and in methodology used. This was to maximise personal, academic, research, and professional development outcomes of the professional training / postgraduate research programme at Birmingham. Within the small-scale empirical project reported in Part 2 of Volume 1 of the thesis, in addition to being deemed suitable for purpose, Realistic Evaluation (RE) (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) was chosen as a stimulus

for personal and professional learning, complementing approaches used for the five professional reports contained in Volume 2, i.e. collaborative action research and quasi-experimental research.

Working collaboratively: Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) directs children's service providers towards integrated working as a means of providing high quality services for families and young people. This indicates a move towards multi-agency / community-wide working for educational psychology services (EPSs), and expansion from the traditional remit of concerns of parents, teachers and schools as the primary impetus for work.

Birmingham's own strategy, Brighter Futures stipulates that integrated services should be fully developed by 2010, and in that regard a particularly strong focus has been afforded integrating the work of Youth Services in the city more closely with the work of other children's service providers, and with the EPS in particular. Work with the KYIP was therefore a significant innovation for the EPS, bringing, from the EPS perspective, expectations for a demonstrable psychological dimension and commitment towards evidence-based practice that would 'add value' to the existing modus operandi of the YIP.

Nonetheless, working collaboratively with the YIP presented very real challenges in getting more strongly evidence-based practices, and specifically, in the case of the KYIP project, an evidence-based programme 'up and running'. Complexities and difficulties associated with multi-agency

working are well documented in the literature, particularly since the publication of Every Child Matters (2003). For example, Leadbetter (2006) draws attention to the challenges of working alongside colleagues from different agencies that may use different tools, language and procedures that derive from very different perspectives on problem aetiology, causality and what interventions might entail. Birmingham EPS has a commitment to consultation as the primary strategy for service delivery, and this in itself presented challenges within the working context.

A further compounding factor was that the invitation to act originated from the YIP Service Managers, not the mentors themselves. With the initiative, in effect, 'handed down' to the mentoring team, programme ownership was a major consideration at outset of the project, and development of shared ownership was something that had to be managed and cultivated throughout programme development. Conoley and Conoley (1990) place emphasis on 'coordinated power status' between consultant and consultee if effective working relationships and outcomes are to be achieved in consultation (discussed further in Section 4). Tilley (2000) refers to the reception of ideas (i.e. programmes) as dependent on the cultural, social and economic circumstances in which existing working practices are embedded. Indeed, palpable resistance and defensive routines were evident within the mentoring team at the presentation of the initial programme design. Of note, the RE process itself perpetuated the shift in programme ownership from management team to mentors as programme development progressed.

The Mentees: Unlike many typical EM programmes, the children receiving the KYIP EM programme were not established / prolific young offenders. The preventative orientation of the research was apt in that respect. Certainly, there appeared to be no 'deficit model' labelling of mentees emanating from the KYIP staff. However, in this instance, early intervention equated to a young sample (in the mentees). Subsequently, the social and cognitive maturity of the mentees restricted the range of methods that were used within the mentoring sessions.

Section 2: 3 phases to the KYIP EM project

Phase 1: The study reported in Volume 1 comprised Phase 1 of an ongoing development and research initiative. The initial aim of the D & R project was to establish a programme that built upon the available research evidence, and that was congruent with the KYIP context, finding support for its ecological validity from Service managers and the mentoring team. *Programme development* and *programme delivery* formed the primary objects of evaluation in that regard.

In order to ensure programme sustainability in the longer term, it was envisaged that the project would involve two further phases of development and research. As noted, due to some of the constraining factors associated with the immediate research context, i.e. both university, and service delivery requirements of the EPS, only Phase 1 of the project is reported in Volume 1.

The research focus envisaged for Phases 2 and 3 of the project is outlined below.

Phase 2 - monitoring programme fidelity: This involved establishing programme fidelity across the mentoring team, consolidating the focus on consistency and reliability that was only partially addressed within Phase 1. Given the research focus, observation of mentoring sessions formed the primary method of investigation. As Mitchell (1993) points out, 'what people do often differs from what they say they do'.

Use of a highly structured, non-participant approach to observation aimed to facilitate clear and unobtrusive measures that would be replicable and reliable. Covert observation, used in parallel (via audio and / or audio-visual recording), aimed to minimise 'reactivity effects' (Le Compte and Goetz, 1982), whilst also providing resource material to support skill development during scheduled post-observation sessions with individual mentors.

Phase 3 – programme impact on mentees: This phase will focus on examining programme impact on the lives of mentees. Various indicators might be sought at Phase 3. Semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents, and the mentees themselves in relation to mentee attitudes towards learning and behaviour might complement harder 'outcome' data. Hard measures might include school records of behaviour and attendance, and criminal activity / anti-social behaviour via police records. Consideration of attendance and behaviour measures from other community-wide services

providers, where available, will be sought in order further to improve data reliability.

NB: As recommended in Paper One (Pollitt, 2009) and as reflected in the general orientation of the research enterprise (inclusive of the psychological dimensions), EM programmes should be developed as 'true empowerment models' (e.g. Gulam and Zulfiquar, 1998). Value imposition has had limited impact with marginalised youth. Phase 1 was intended as the first stage in striving towards that ideal, for both mentors (Philip and Hendry, 2000), and mentees.

Whilst examples of suggested impact measures for Phase 3 have been outlined above, these comprise suggestions / illustrative examples only. EM programmes have to be attuned to the context in which they sit. Thus, programme impact criteria and / or criteria for programme 'improvement', should ideally be defined by organisations / mentors / mentees themselves. The fundamental recommendations to emerge across both the positivist and interpretive mentoring literature are that children and young people's views, as well as those of mentors (Philip and Hendry, 1996, 2000), must be sought, and that interventions should be needs-led (Pollitt, 2009). The only essential 'expert criteria' that should be imposed on EM research / programmes should relate to ongoing evaluation of mentors' needs and support mechanisms, to ensure that, in-turn, mentees needs are being optimally met.

In reference to various Action Research (AR) models, Park (1999) discusses democratic research practice. Democratic practices are less hierarchical and involve wider organisational participation in consultation. Contingent upon levels of programme ownership and functionality within an organisation / setting, these models might be useful in assisting organisations / participants in defining their own programme impact / success criteria. The notion with more democratic participation, of course, is reminiscent of the values underpinning community psychology (Bender, 1976), which might be construed as 'political' and which fundamentally drove the KYIP D&R enterprise (the broader political orientations of the KYIP research are discussed in the methodology section of this paper).

Section 3: Methodological consideration for Phase 1

Factors influencing choice of methodology: The chosen methodology for Phase 1 needed to be fit for purpose at several levels. Phase 1 would entail developing an EM programme 'from scratch': No current programme existed at the KYIP, and as noted there was little by way of EM training or experience within the KYIP team.

Methodology would also need to meet the requirements of the KYIP Service managers and mentors, as identifying something that would work, and where there would be clear indices of success, i.e. that a non-directive evidence-based programme compatible with the KYIP context had been clearly established and was viewed as viable and fit for purpose by both service

managers and the youth workers who would fulfil the mentoring role. It would also need to be rigorous in meeting thesis requirements and my own personal learning goals as a trainee. From this last perspective, my own recourse to diverse methodological approaches was a criterion considered throughout my development of Volumes 1 and 2 of my thesis during the second and third years of my postgraduate professional training.

Options considered: A number of methodological approaches were considered before RE was selected.

A Case Study approach might have been used (Robson, 2002). Whilst illuminating the social, physical and organisational context would be central to the research, i.e. the KYIP and the mentoring team, the case per se' was not the central focus of the research. Rather development of an evidence-based, reliable EM programme was. A case study approach was therefore not considered the most useful way to conceptualise the work.

Action research / collaborative action research (AR) was given careful consideration. AR has an epistemological base rooted in critical theory, which focuses on co-operative inquiry, via cycles of action in problem identification and intervention and evaluation to plan subsequent evidence-informed action (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). As a process emphasising personal learning and self-reflective enquiry (Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Whitehead, 2000), AR appeared highly compatible with the formative nature of the KYIP research aims.

However, Kemmis (1988 in Hammersley, 2007) suggests AR is best conceptualised as a process used by workers to make sense of their own work. In this instance, the KYIP research agenda was in fact 'externally imposed', even on the KYIP management team. Whilst ideas from the KYIP staff (senior managers and mentors) were utilised within the D & R process, these were in effect marshalled within the parameters of the research agenda and the orientating EM evidence-base derived from the systematic literature review (Pollitt, 2009). In that respect my role as a researcher remained significant and I did not consider AR the best way of conceptualising the work overall and particularly Phase 1 of the project.

Of course this is not to say that AR model would not have done the job, it would. However, potential implementation of the developed programme city-wide (e.g. in other YIPs, as discussed when negotiating the project brief with the KYIP SMT) meant that D & R was possibly a better way to conceptualise the work. Also, Pawson and Tilley's (1997) RE methodology orientates specifically towards developing 'programmes'.

Activity Theory: Activity Theory (AT) was also briefly considered. AT (Engestrom, 2007) operates on the premise of socio-cultural theory. Here, human action is seen as purposeful and understood within the wider social, cultural and historical context. Though constructionist in epistemological orientation, an AT framework might embody 'realist criteria': programme components might be conceptualised as 'artefacts' or tools' for example.

Illuminating tensions or contradictions within an activity system, e.g. disjunctions within the activity system or interrelationships between political, organisational and individual factors, is a central function of the methodology of third generation activity theory (e.g. (Engestrom, 2007), and as with AR and RE, iterative cycles facilitate participant reflection in order that systems and activities might change. Third generation AT (Engestrom, 2007) includes developmental work research (DWR), adopting a particular focus on what Engestrom (2001) terms 'expansive learning', which typically comprises harmonising goals and practice within and / or across an activity system. DWR is thus seen as particularly useful for guiding interventions involving groups / teams. A number of studies have used DWR methodology to facilitate / evaluate multi-agency working (e.g. Edwards and Fox, 2005; Flynn, 2005; Leadbetter et al., 2007).

DWR was judged a viable methodology for the KYIP research. Firstly, I fully expected that working with the KYIP for first time in developing a fledgling community-based EM programme would be challenging. Potentially at least, the research process would be unwieldy and anchoring the study to a fluid, yet coherent and structured theoretical framework would have its advantages. Secondly, a methodology orientated towards developing learning and coherence within teams had obvious appeal. The notion of 'expansive learning' would sit well with a consultation model of service delivery, and mediation within 'zones of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978) would

potentially facilitate greater programme ownership for the KYIP mentoring team.

Nonetheless, I decided against an AT framework. Unlike AR and RE, AT imposes dimensions against which practices will be identified, explored and analysed: for example, mediating artefacts, rules and divisions of labour. The imposition of the AT framework would render a more 'top down' approach to programme analysis, which I was concerned may not have been congruent with emergent themes from practice.

Also, purely in terms of 'face validity' and the purpose of evaluation, I found the model unwieldy. Hansen (2004) uses the analogy of photography in suggesting how models should be selected as fit for purpose. The choice of the model corresponds to zooming in and taking a picture. Here Hansen (2004) suggests, model choice relates to choice of field of vision where, certain aspects fall into focus and other not. Though wider factors needed consideration within the development and implementation of the KYIP programme, it was the programme itself that was the central focus. I judged an Activity Theory framework too broad and expansive in its field of vision. Moreover, along with others (e.g. Thomas, 2009), I was not fully convinced that third generation AT does indeed comprise a valid theoretical paradigm, since it lacks predictive power, or that it comprises an original research methodology: Thomas (2009) questions whether the approach transcends facilitated action research – a question by which I too have been troubled.

Section 4: The realistic approach – methodological critique

This section aims to demonstrate how Pawson and Tilley's (1997) RE methodology was appropriate for the study. The section includes an outline of the principles of realism, and a detailed rationale for the use of a realist approach to the KYIP research. The rationale focuses on the appeal of the broader, more general aims of a realist approach, rather than the specifics of RE as such. A critique of the research processes undertaken during Phase 1 accompanies the discussion.

Realism: The EM literature had, in essence, identified two problems with extant research. Firstly, 'black box' models, i.e. outcomes-driven, positivist approaches, were left wanting. Whilst some success had been shown, generalisable 'truths' were few. Likewise, with research crying out for identification of why some aspects of EM worked some of the time (i.e. how variations in research could be accounted for), process evaluations had been typically woolly, providing little by way of clarification of what 'effective' EM was, or how success might be transferred to other research contexts (Pollitt, 2009). To compound matters, the KYIP staff also had little understanding of what EM was, and unsurprisingly, had previously failed to get an EM programme up and running in their Service.

Realism (Bhasker, 1986) provides a model of explanation that avoids both positivism and relativism. It challenges the extremes of law-finding natural

science methodology, i.e. generic application of universal truths, and the situation specificity and non-generalisability of subjectivism. In essence, it provides a 'third way'.

Box 5 contrasts dimensions of positivism, realism and relativism. The contrast has been presented as a means of illuminating the key aspects of the realist approach, as these related to the KYIP study. The reader should note that whilst the columns give the impression of discrete paradigms, realism incorporates aspects of both positivism and interpretivism within its underlying philosophy (Bhasker, 1986).

Box 5: Comparison of positivist, realist and relativist paradigms (adapted from Nagel, 1982 and Thistleton, 2008)

<i>Dimensions</i>	Positivism	Realism	Relativism
<i>Ontology and epistemology</i>	The world exists and is knowable. Epistemology is ignored	Reality exists independent of social actors and observers Because our understanding of the world may change this does not mean that the world itself changes	There is no objective reality – it can only be constructed through a conceptual system.
	Ontology is flat since what is observed is all that exists	Ontology is stratified and the world is characterised by emergence	Ontology is ignored
<i>Role of social science</i>	Discovering universal laws	Inventing theories to explain the real world and testing these theories by rational criteria	Discovering how different people interpret the world
<i>Research</i>	Experimental or quasi-experimental validation of theory	Explanation is concerned with how Mechanisms produce events and in what circumstances	The search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action
<i>Research methods</i>	Quantitative methods Mixed methods.	The researcher chooses the method which best fits the investigation	Qualitative methods

Realistic research: Epistemologically, realism (Bhasker, 1986) immediately stood out as appropriate for Volume 1. Realist research is highly critical of the accepted model of ‘systematic review’ as a basis for theory development or understanding of what works. In realist research, evidence is gathered from numerous studies over extended periods of time and ‘synthesised’, rather than accreted, to inform social intervention (Pawson, 2003). The intended function of synthesis of course remains the same as that of conventional

review, namely to be used in decisions about whether and how to implement intervention. However, at a core level and in terms of general orientation, the aim differs markedly. For realists, evaluation is a form of applied research, not performed for the benefit of science as such, but pursued to inform the thinking of policy makers, programme participants and public alike. In that sense, evaluation takes an enlightening and emancipatory form (Pawson, 2002a). In essence, it is inherently political (Weiss, 1987).

A direct quote from Pawson and Tilley (1997) encapsulates well the broad orientation of the realist approach.

'Being realistic means trying to perfect a particular method of evaluation which will work for a specific class of project in well defined, well circumscribed circumstances'....'we attempt to return evaluation to its roots in examining the effectiveness of particular social programmes targeted at specific social problems. We seek to find a way in engaging in piecemeal social reform.'

Pawson and Tilley (p. xiv 1997)

Realist research makes modest not grand claims. The complexity of open and fluid systems means that explanation is often partial and incomplete (Hansen, 2005). The position is that some knowledge is better than no knowledge, with the justification for 'small steps' typically provided via contrast with the nihilism frequently associated with traditional evaluation research (Nagel, 1987). In this respect, realist critique aims squarely at policy makers' preference for 'hard science' in comparison to less traditional forms of data.

Emphasis is placed on qualitative data in theory-based evaluation models (Chen and Rossi, 1980; Hansen, 2005; Stame, 2004; Weiss, 1987), and in RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) particular weight is afforded the validity of 'context-specific, user knowledge' in research. This follows from Pawson and Tilley's (1997) position that whilst programmes are 'complex systems thrust amongst complex systems', i.e. there are multiple variants in programmes succeeding, it is essentially people that make programmes work. For Pawson and Tilley (1997) people delivering programmes are the 'black box' and therefore are, or should be, central to evaluation. As Pawson (2006) notes,

'These stakeholders clearly have an insider understanding of the programmes in which they are implicated and so constitute key and critical informants in research'.

Table 2 presents a hierarchy of research evidence for evidence-based policy. Levels 1 – 5 illustrate the preferred 'mainstream form'. Levels 8 and 9 represent typical 'realist knowledge', which Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggest, is critical and central to programme's working.

Table 2: Hierarchy of research evidence for evidence-based policy

Level 1 'The gold standard'	Randomised controlled trials (with concealed allocation / double blind placebo controlled trials) randomised field trials
Level 2	Quasi-experimental studies (using matching)
Level 3	Before-and-after comparisons
Level 4	Cross-sectional random sample studies
Level 5	Process evaluation, formative studies and action research
Level 6	Qualitative case study and ethnographic research
Level 7	Descriptive guides and examples of good practice
Level 8	Professional and expert user opinion
Level 9	User opinion

Compatibility with the KYIP context: From my own perspective the KYIP research context resonated with a realist approach at numerous levels. Firstly, despite research showing tentative success for some aspects of EM programmes (Pollitt, 2009), monies ringfenced for projects in the UK were beginning to be withdrawn, suggesting a political u-turn and the beginnings of an 'it doesn't work mentality' (resulting no doubt from the narrow success criteria of the outcomes-driven research).

Weiss (1987) argues that policy decisions are typically driven by fear of forfeiting political popularity, rather than rationality. Explanations are seen as being chosen based on political point scoring rather than 'evidence' per se'. As Pawson and Tilley (1997) and others note (e.g. Heywood, 2000; Tilley, 2000), polity's appetite for evidence is meagre at best, and particularly in

comparison to the persuasions of lobbyists, agencies and the media. The government's recent sacking of Professor David Nutt (chairman of the Advisory Council for Misuse of Drugs), despite substantial evidence to support his claims, provides a good example of the limited authority of 'evidence' in government circles.

The commissioning of the KYIP research presented an exciting opportunity to present 'new knowledge' and potentially inject some sense into decision-making processes. Pawson (2006) talks about using language that is persuasive if evidence is to be heard. In terms of local policy at least, EM research was still in effect 'warm'. With its reductionist format of CMO causal relationships, RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) had potential to appeal to funders. Demonstrating reliability and accountability was one of the key aims of the research project.

A criticism levelled at some theory-based evaluation models is that they lack sufficient detail in terms of identifying process (e.g. Hansen, 2004 in reference to Chen and Rossi, 1980; Weiss, 1987). Pawson (2006) talks about identifying the 'pathways along which interventions have to travel', and indeed RE did just that. The detail that the evaluation provided was well received by the KYIP SMT, who reported that they were having conversations with managers in other YIPs across the city about what to do, and what not to do, when using mentoring as a resource for their target populations. Patton (2002) talks specifically about making evaluation democratic and getting citizens to think

‘evaluatively’, and whilst this was achieved only at a local level, I certainly considered this, in itself, a major accomplishment of the KYIP project.

This D & R project was not a quick win. Phase 1 was about making a small incision in a difficult research area in an attempt to capitalise on the ‘green shoots of success’ evident from some EM studies, and particularly those involving early intervention. RE methodology (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), with its combined best features of both empiricism and relativism, did its job.

Table 3 provides an overview of the fundamental principles of Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) RE research methodology.

Table 3: Research principles of RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997)

Epistemology (grounded in realism)	Theory of causal explanation based on generative principles.
Ontology	Structuralist – regularities in social activities brought about by mechanisms and resources available within given context.
Method	Concerned primarily with testing theories, i.e. CMO configurations – pragmatic approach.
Programming	Embodiment of knowledge re: what works in what circumstances?
Progress and influence on policy	Accumulative and incremental knowledge of programmes and other forms of data.

Method: In RE no one method of evaluation is seen as preferable in terms of developing and testing programme theory. Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggest the researcher chooses the method which best fits the investigation (see research methods in Box 5). Primarily, in this instance, qualitative data were derived through focus groups with the mentors themselves. A process model of consultation was used to achieve this (Hanko, 1999; Schein, 1987). The next few paragraphs discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of adopting this approach, and a detailed rationale as to why this method was chosen is provided.

Process consultation: Process consultation models are concerned with the process of problem solving and supporting consultees in finding contextually relevant solutions to the problems that they encounter (e. g. Schein, 1987). This approach appealed at a number of levels.

Firstly, process models look at how environmental factors influence performance. This was compatible with the principle of ‘generative causation’ and the influences that systems and human factors have on programme development / delivery (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Secondly, realism recognises that agency operates between stimulus and response and as previously noted, Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) methodology places great emphasis on the fact that ‘people make programmes work’ (Stame, 2004). Programme delivery was central to evaluation in Phase 1 and subjective accounts capturing context-specific ‘user opinion’ were critical to

evaluation in that regard. Pawson and Tilley (1997) refer to 'data completeness' in reference to realist synthesis, and 'user opinion' would compliment other quantitative and qualitative data derived from the literature review. Process consultation models place the consultee at the centre of consultation (Schein, 1987) and I judged that use of this approach would allow for rich data to be obtained to inform process evaluation.

Thirdly, the chief function of process consultation is to facilitate ownership, which in essence is achieved through minimisation of the 'expert role' to allow consultees to form their own diagnosis (Schein, 1987). From my own perspective, programme ownership was a central and critical factor to the development and research process. As discussed, project aims had been negotiated between myself and the KYIP SMT only. As far as the mentors were concerned, this remained a 'donated research agenda'. Potentially at least, a process model would alleviate these tension and improve the validity of the evaluation data, the quality of the overall programme, and programme sustainability.

Finally, process consultation was a method that I had used in previous roles helping adults and young people change various 'addictive' behaviour patterns, i.e. in relation to illicit drug use, alcohol, food and smoking. Much of this involved utilising consultation skills within group-work. These skills have been further developed over the past 3 years via the training course and supervised service delivery (facilitating problem ownership was a central feature of professional practice reports 3 and 5, contained in Volume 2).

Having a good understanding of the orientation of a process consultation model, and of the key benefits that this would bring, also influenced selection of the method, as did the policy orientation toward consultation within EP service delivery, of my own employment context.

Facilitating quality data: Process consultation played a key role in ensuring the quality and validity of the data that informed the KYIP programme design. Supported by theory and research, Gutkin and Curtis (1999) identify four factors necessary for the success of consultation services. These are; coordinate power status, confidentiality of communication, encouragement of active participation by consultees, and voluntary participation. Whilst the last of these would not be wholly possible in this research context, (although mentors could have refused to co-operate and / or withdrawn from the project) the first three could, and were, striven for within all aspects of the D & R project including data collection.

Wright (1996) notes that collaboration does not occur simply because two professionals are timetabled to work together. She argues that collaboration occurs when there is equality between professionals. Facilitation of 'coordinated power status' (Conoley and Conoley, 1990) was one of the intended functions of Hanko's (1999) group consultation model which was utilised within the current study. The model's embodiment of the ethical principles of 'confidentiality' and the 'right to withdraw' seemed to be effective in that regard, as did re-enforcing the purpose of consultation at the outset of each data collection cycle (Hanko, 1999). Timmins et al. (2006) found that

teachers (as consultees) who were informed about the consultation process before consultation meetings were more satisfied with its outcomes than those who did not receive prior briefing. Similarly, Wagner (2000) notes the importance of explaining the processes and purposes of consultation to consultees.

Explaining the purpose and rules of the group at the outset of each review cycle appeared to empower and engage the mentors during review cycles. This was seen as contributing to the validity of the data obtained.

In realist terms ontology is stratified (Bhasker, 1986). When programmes don't work, this failure is seen as resulting from the existing interplay between norms, values, practices and existing programme designs situated within the research context. Surfacing new and emergent contextual realities is thus central to the evaluation process in RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This is why evaluation is open, fluid and dynamic in realist evaluation research. Here exploratory, 'learning inquiry' is carried out in order to enlighten programme design, i.e. CMO configurations, so that 'programmes work', from the perspective of the key players at least. Pawson and Tilley (1997) refer to this aspect of the evaluation process as the 'teacher - learner function'. This implies notions of the 'outside researcher' elaborating user knowledge within the confines of the evidence base in relation to what is likely to work, in effect, marshalling discussion within structured interviews (Robson, 2002).

Process consultation (Schein, 1987, Hanks, 1999) allowed me to engage in 'learning conversations' with the mentoring team and scaffold thinking processes (i.e. my own as well as the team's) to identify programme enabling factors / theory. Exploration via dialog allowed us to cover a lot of ground quickly. The use of more structured individualised data collection methods and tools - a questionnaire, for example - might have proved considerably less effective in identifying necessary change within the time scales of the project. Moreover, one of my aims was to develop the team as more than a diffuse collection of individuals; to support a unified collective understanding and enable exchange, challenge and development and interrogation of mentors' views and experiences. Hence, I preferred to accept the distilled outcomes of a team discussion as my data corpus, rather than individual accounts. In saying that, this not to say that individual accounts would not have improved the study, no doubt they would and the decision to omit these accounts is acknowledged as a weakness in the study in Section 5 of the Appendix. On reflection, whilst focusing intensely on developing team cohesion was beneficial, at times this focus on development eclipsed that of the principles of research, and individual mentor's views might have been incorporated alongside the group data in order to improve the rigour of the research.

Notwithstanding this, as discussed, a critical consideration in this research context was that of facilitating programme ownership. Marshalling discussion had the potential to threaten this. The mentor self-reflection sheets were a key mechanism in that regard. When discussion did move away from programme

theory I was able to refer the mentors back to their own data (i.e. both the qualitative and quantitative data) contained within the sheets in order that programme knowledge could be developed within the confines of evidence-based theory components. Prompting questions such as ‘what else does your sheet identify?’ ‘How does this week’s rating of x compare to last week’s?’ And ‘why do you think that is?’ allowed me to lead discussion without risk of introducing bias. Hanko’s (1999) ‘gate-keeping function’ allowed me to facilitate democratic discussion within the team, and the only time my own constructs potentially contaminated the evaluation process was in summarising the mentoring teams own theory constructions. Feeding group data back to the team was of course part of the data validating process.

In summary, whilst this was a collaborative research venture, at the outset of Phase 1 at least, collaboration might be best described with a small c. In conjunction with RE methodology (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), process consultation as a method (Schein, 1987) played a significant role in facilitating collaboration and programme ownership for the KYIP EM team.

Process consultation (Schein, 1987; Hanko, 1999) served three core functions in evaluation during Phase 1. It facilitated:

- improved mentor engagement.
- greater programme ownership; and
- emergence of programme enabling (and disabling) factors that were recorded as the principle data set

Section 5: Improving programme data:

More rigorous processes in terms of data collection may have improved the KYIP programme design. As Stame (2004) notes, programmes are only as good as the data that inform them. This section discusses two broad issues in that regard, analysis of data and reliability of data.

Data analysis / handling: In terms of processing the data, one of my concerns as a researcher was whether or not I was conceptualising and feeding back to the team what they had actually said during consultation. Cassell and Johnson (2006) draw attention to the questionability of ‘third person researchers’ passively presenting inductively generated descriptions back to participants without contamination.

Audio recording the consultation meetings could have improved the detail and reliability of the data. Involving other parties and gaining inter-observer agreement may have reduced risks of idiosyncratic analysis on my part (Robson, 2002). Miles and Huberman (1994) provide a highly structured framework for qualitative analysis compatible with realist principles. The framework is expansive (in breadth) and is particularly well suited to Pawson and Tilley’s (1997) CMO framework.

“We aim to account for events, rather than simply to document their sequence. We look for an individual or a social process, a mechanism, a structure at the core of events that can be captured to provide a causal description of the forces at work”

(Miles and Huberman, 1994 p. 4)

Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework provides a structure for first and second order coding, and the codification system is compatible with NUD*IST and Atlas/ti software. Memos used throughout the coding process to record any emerging conceptual links and other observations about the data would assist the coding process. A number of studies, in health for example (Byng, 2005), have used this approach effectively with RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

Moreover, processing the data in a more rigorous way may have helped further identify more subtle mechanisms operating within the KYIP programme context. For example, in addition to the predicted 'you've been framed mechanism' Tilley's (1993) classic research on CCTV in car parks identified numerous additional functions of CCTV for deterring car crime, e.g. the 'nosy parker', 'publicity', 'memory jogging' and 'appeal to be cautious' mechanisms.

In the KYIP study, only very practical and obvious aspects of programme design were identified. At times I did wonder whether the overarching RE methodology was indeed too 'grand' for purpose, and / or alternatively, whether or not the level of data analysis had been sufficient. In my defence, however, I would argue that the methodology served its purpose, and as discussed in the main body of the research paper, RE (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) proved particularly effective in embedding an evidence-based approach

to EM within the KYIP, and facilitating programme reliability, one of the central aims of the research.

If future EM programmes are to be devised in different research contexts, more thorough data analysis procedures would benefit programme design and the reliability that can be claimed for programme outcomes.

Reliability of the data: The SMT were consulted at the final programme template stage as a means of verifying the programme design along with the mentoring team. Only one data source (and type), i.e. focus-group data from the mentors, was accessed during the study, and these data were recorded and reported only in brief summative form. Data from the KYIP SMT or individual mentors were not obtained. This is recognised as a limitation. Two factors largely governed this decision. This section discusses these factors and how additional data would have improved the KYIP evaluation design.

Firstly, in relation to not accessing data from the KYIP SMT, the potentially detrimental aspects associated with the way in which the project was 'handed down' by the KYIP managers to the mentoring team cannot be overstated. The team were 'battle weary' following numerous 'top down pressures' and as discussed previously, there was considerable resistance from within the mentoring team at the outset of the project. I made the decision not to include the KYIP SMT as an additional data source to focus on developing trust with the team (as an outsider), to engage the mentors in the research process, and in order to develop their own sense of programme ownership and agency.

One of the strengths of the RE framework is that it readily identifies who to ask what in evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), hence the methodology's frequent use in studies where multiple services, that serve different functions, work together toward collaborative research goals. Had the decision been made to include SMT data during the study, the RE framework might still have been utilised to identify what to ask about the programme in more general terms, e.g. in relation to how confident the team were, how much support was in place, how often this was being accessed, and how well schools were receiving the team. Some of these data might have been triangulated with the mentor data. Either way, data would have been useful to improve and facilitate richer discussion at the review cycles.

Secondly, time constraints associated with the project were a factor in my decision not to access the individual views of the mentors. On reflection, questionnaires could have been deployed and analysed relatively quickly. For example, CMO families agreed during focus groups might have been presented to the mentors to verify levels of agreement with group conceptualisations of programme design. One of the concerns that I had during the review cycles, and one that was confirmed via informal discussions with two of the mentors towards the end of the project, was whether or not some of the mentors were able to follow the CMO family conceptualisations accurately in the short time that they were projected on the overheads in situ, i.e. when we were discussing the programme as a group. Despite repeatedly asking team members 'if they were all sure and were in agreement with agreed CMO families' I was not sure that they were confident enough to

speak out. Kitzinger (1994) warns of the tendency for a minority to dominate in group discussion, and as discussed, I used Hanko's (1999) model to try and dissipate this risk. Triangulating data from individual questionnaires and the group interviews might have improved reliability of the focus-group data. Appropriate software packages, as discussed previously, would further have improved the rigour and sensitivity of the overall qualitative data analysis process.

Section 6: Final comments / reflections

This Appendix has discussed some of the limitations associated with the KYIP research context / design. Largely, this discussion has related to the time constraints associated with completing the empirical research component of the thesis, and working collaboratively with another service provider, and the limitations of the research design, particularly in relation to negotiation of the project brief, the development of programme ownership within the team, and the limited reliability of the data that can be claimed due to only one data source being accessed during the Phase 1 programme development and delivery.

In spite of these limitations, and in order to keep perspective of the work carried out, it should be bore in mind that the KYIP research enterprise was considered successful by both the mentors and the KYIP managers who commissioned the project; Moreover, Phases 2 and 3 are ongoing <December 2010>, so building on Phase 1 and to some extent at least,

compensating for its limitations. This final section discusses the programme in that context and provides further reflections of the research as an enterprise *per se*'.

The KYIP staff: The KYIP mentoring team and SMT reported unequivocally that they were extremely appreciative of my professional input in assisting with research, evaluation and development of the programme, and of the time spent providing and supporting professional development opportunities for the KYIP mentors, i.e. skill development sessions. Possibly the best barometer of 'success' is the fact that the KYIP EM programme still stands. Phases 2 and 3 of the research are in progress. I am also hopeful of developing programmes in other YIPs across the city.

NB: There have also been enquiries with regard to using the EM programme in other settings. For example, a colleague in the EPS is interested in testing and developing the KYIP programme theory in a Pupil Referral Unit. A Senior Management team from a secondary school in the city have also shown interest, where it was discussed that the programme might be adapted to suit older children, i.e. use of different cards in terms of content. Discussions are ongoing as to whether these programmes might be developed prior to Phases 2 and 3 of the research being carried out.

The research as viewed by the Birmingham EPS: The research was also presented to some 75 professional colleagues at the Birmingham EPS 'Continued Professional Development Whole Service Day', where it was

received with acclaim, particularly in relation to the successful work with another service provider, tackling what is typically 'un-chartered terrain', i.e. EPs carrying out what might be considered radical evaluative research with Youth Services. Collaborative work is difficult and can be messy. Community-based research is messier still (which possibly constitute some of the reasons why many avoid it and policy continuously seeks to re-enforce it). Working collaboratively with a service with a different history, culture, and agenda, proved taxing. Colleagues at work (particularly the TEPs and some of the EPS SMT) recognised that, along with the fact that the challenges that RE presented as a methodology (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), within this working context, were far from straightforward.

Professional development: In terms of my own views of the development and research process, its completion was enjoyable, however it was also tough. As with the other research contained in Volume 2 of the thesis, the area of research that was chosen was selected for professional development reasons, as well as in order to meet a need of service commissioners within the Local Authority.

In selecting mentoring as a research topic, and in working collaboratively within the community using, what was at times an unwieldy and complex methodology (in that context), I did wonder whether I had been overambitious. In my dual role as a Trainee, employed by a Local Authority and a full-time student enrolled on a doctoral course, I was obliged to meet sometimes disparate requirements of both the EPS and university, carrying out the role of

an EP within a 'patch' of schools, whilst also trying to negotiate, and fit in, a number of diverse learning experiences and identify projects suitable to meet thesis requirements. There were also challenges and uncertainties resulting from being the first cohort of TEPs enrolled on the doctoral training; this sometimes lead to the feasibility and requirements of our roles within the LA being worked out as the course progressed.

Nonetheless, I have drawn great satisfaction from the research, and particularly from the fact that the KYIP EM programme remains 'live'. Certainly I could have gone for a more 'traditional' research approach, and / or a topic domain more securely located within the 'mainstream' of EP practice, which may have proved more straightforward; however, I was, and remain, deeply committed to this broad research area, i.e. 'reaching the difficult to reach', and even with the practicalities of thesis demands considered, I chose to honour this commitment. The personal learning that has ensued from this process has been considerable, which is also satisfying as has been the opportunity further to reflect on the research process within this supplementary chapter to the main body of the thesis.

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