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Mentoring Teacher-Research: From Situated Practice to 'Global' Guidance

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Introduction

How to mentor teacher-research (that is, research carried out by teachers into issues arising in their work) is a relatively unexplored area in education generally (though see Fletcher, 2012; Ponte, 2002). Moreover, within ELT, while teacher-research has been shown to be a powerful means of professional development which can have a profound impact on teachers and learners (see, for example, Borg [2010] and Edwards [2021]), there is a lack of research and resources on how to *support* teacher-research as a mentor. A pioneering attempt was made to shed light on the development of teacher-research mentors in Turkey by Dikilitaş and Wyatt (2018), while Smith et al. (2014) discussed aspects of mentoring in a large-scale teacher-research programme for secondary school teachers in Chile (the Champion Teachers programme). Bustos Moraga (2017) explored difficulties mentors were subsequently facing in the same scheme and, in the context of another British Council programme, the Action Research Mentoring Scheme (ARMS) in Nepal, Smith (2020a) has researched Nepali mentors' perspectives on the challenges and benefits of teacher-research mentoring.

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Outside these and a few other studies, the facilitation of teacher-research has remained a relatively unexplored area. Providing appropriate structure and guidance for mentors has, however, emerged as a pressing practical need in recent years, in relation to actual and potential further expansion of teacher-research within English teacher development programmes, specifically in several Global South contexts. In the past, official in-service teacher-research schemes tended to be relatively small-scale, involving mentoring by external experts (e.g. programmes supported by Cambridge Assessment in Australia and the UK). These schemes have also involved only a small number of teachers in each cohort, mainly in language school or small-class ESOL teaching situations in English-speaking countries. Since 2013, however, various sustained teacher-research initiatives have engaged primary and secondary school teachers in developing countries, including:

- the Champion Teachers programme in Latin America (2013–present; see Chapter 15);
- the TESOL International Association Electronic Village Online (EVO) on Classroom-based Research for Professional Development (2016–present; as described in Chapter 16);
- ARMS in South Asia (2017–2020) (focused on in the present chapter);
- the teacher-research strand of the Leh Wi Lan Secondary Education Improvement Programme (SSEIP) in Sierra Leone (2019–2021) (see MBSSE, 2021);
- some Teacher Association based initiatives, including the recent Africa ELTA–IATEFL Research SIG project described in Chapter 13 (see also Banegas et al., 2022).

One thing all these initiatives have shared is the adoption of a particular *kind* of teacher-research—exploratory action research (EAR), as conceived initially in the context of the Champion Teachers project in Chile (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018). This approach was developed specifically to be feasible and useful for schoolteachers working in difficult circumstances (Smith, 2011; West, 1960). Indeed, in explicit opposition to the idea that action research should be merely another Global North imposition on already burdened teachers, EAR has been presented and, in practice, experienced by many teachers as a way for them to explore and *address* the problems they face,

as 'experts of their context capable of developing inquiry-led understandings of contextually appropriate pedagogic practices' (Kuchah & Salama, Chapter 13).[1]

An additional common feature, particularly in the Champion Teachers, ARMS and SSEIP schemes, is that, rather than mentoring being done by outside experts, there has been a deliberate attempt to enhance local mentoring expertise in the service of upscaling and sustainability, that is, to achieve a 'participant-centred approach to professional development through localised mentoring' (Kuchah & Salama, Chapter 13). Local mentors in the above schemes have learnt to facilitate teacher-research largely 'on the job' rather than via any extensive training, although overall guidance ('mentor mentoring') has increasingly been provided by scheme coordinators. Thus, attention has become more focused than in the past on how to train and enhance the development of teacher-research mentors.[2] Expansion of mentoring via these schemes has enabled the benefits of teacher-research to be spread more widely, and, in turn, lessons from facilitating and mentoring teacher-research within these programmes can also now be disseminated.

Context: The ARMS-India and ARMS-Nepal Programmes

This chapter recounts how mentors' experiences, along with insights from my own experience as academic coordinator of Champion Teachers (2013–2015), ARMS-India (jointly with Amol Padwad, 2017–2018) and ARMS-Nepal (2017–2020), have informed the development of a framework of guidance to teacher-research mentors which is of wider potential use. Areas of challenge which have arisen and which seem specific to teacher-research mentoring underpin this framework and will be the main focus of this chapter, along with corresponding practical ideas for meeting these challenges.

My main source of practical insights in this area was ARMS in India and Nepal.[3] Rather than reaching teachers directly, this programme has been explicitly focused on supporting *mentors*, who are responsible for facilitating

[1] See Smith et al. (2014) and Smith (2015) for more on the origins and early development of the exploratory action research approach in the context of Champion Teachers Chile.

[2] Indeed, Barkhuizen (2021: 11) identifies 'mentor of teacher research' as one of 14 different 'types' or identities that language teacher educators may nowadays aspire to.

[3] See https://www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/english/research-publications/arms (accessed 14 September 2021).

the teacher-research of small groups of teachers whom they themselves select. During 2017–2020, 48 mentors were supported to mentor 235 teacher-research projects to completion across India, and during the same period 26 mentors were supported to mentor 180 projects in Nepal (see Negi [2019] for reports of some of these projects). ARMS mentors' experiences (see Smith, 2020a) revealed some major challenges in facilitating teacher-research in difficult-to-access, low-resource contexts, whilst at the same time demonstrating how these can be, at least partially, overcome.

The insights shared below have formed the backbone of three relatively 'global' recent initiatives, which will be discussed in the 'Implications' section: an open-access handbook for mentoring teacher-research (Smith, 2020b; henceforth, 'the handbook'), a new EVO 'course' on 'Mentoring Teacher-research' in January–February 2020 (henceforth, 'the EVO') and monthly online meetings of an international mentor support group from May to November 2021 ('the support group').

Insights: An Emerging Framework for Teacher-Research Mentor Development

Areas which have presented particular difficulty for novice teacher-research mentors or been particularly new in their professional experience are addressed below. In relation to each area, I first show how it emerged as salient in the experience of ARMS mentors and then provide rationales for and descriptions of some of the advice and tasks which I incorporated into my practice, and, later, into the handbook, EVO and support group.

Generic Mentoring Skills

To begin with, there are many aspects of mentoring teacher-research which are common to mentoring in general, including: building rapport, trust and mutual respect; eliciting; listening attentively; questioning; paraphrasing; suggesting alternative options; and structuring action (see, for example, Gakonga, 2019). These generic mentoring skills will not be a main focus of this chapter, which highlights relatively unique and previously little-considered aspects of teacher-research mentoring. However, the nature of 'mentoring' itself does need to be clarified at the outset of a course of mentor development (see Smith, 2000a, Chapter 2), since views as to what this might entail tend to differ so widely. In India and many other contexts, a mentor is often conceived of as someone who 'tells' or 'advises' a novice teacher how to

teach, and who judges their teaching. Accordingly, an alternative formulation such as the following may need to be shared and discussed with new mentors:

> Mentoring can be defined simply as sharing knowledge, skills and experience in order to encourage and empower another person. In contexts of teacher development, this process involves enhancing teachers' autonomy to develop for themselves, increasing their ability and willingness to take control of their own learning rather than judging or directly advising them or telling them all the answers. (Smith, 2020b: 14)

There will, though, be times during most mentors' facilitation of teacher-research when, rather than mentoring (as in the above definition), 'directly advising' or 'telling' (informing, or instructing) may be quite common, indeed, necessary.[4] Directly advising for example, might occur when a mentor, from their own prior experience, can see that a teacher's intended research questions or methods will lead down a fruitless path and an alternative route is needed; informing or instructing may occur when a mentor provides an overall structure and timeline or raises participants' awareness of different types and stages of teacher-research. While 'mentoring' teacher-research is a useful overall designation, and generic skills in mentoring are undoubtedly crucial, teacher-research mentors also need to do more than 'just' mentoring, as the following sections illustrate.

Introducing Teacher-Research

Teacher-research is a process with recognisable, even if sometimes overlapping stages, as illustrated in the spiral or steps diagrams which are usually used to represent action research or exploratory action research (see, for example, Smith, 2020b: 10–11). Thus, whereas mentoring may generically be conceived of as a relatively open-ended and participant-centred process, with goals and contents of reflection to be determined largely by the person being mentored, teacher-research mentoring inevitably also involves induction into a particular kind of process with relatively pre-determined stages. Therefore, depending partly on how much time is available for the overall project, teacher-research mentoring tends to require more guidance, indeed instruction, along the way than might be expected generally of a mentor. This guidance might need to start with an introduction to different kinds

[4] Cf. Ponte's (2002: 420) insight that mentors might need to be 'forceful' sometimes: 'Forceful, by continually talking to teachers about the actual performance of concrete activities and about discussing them with colleagues in a systematic and purposeful way'.

of teacher-research and to the stages that are expected in the particular model adopted, and an attempt to show teachers why engaging in research might be of value to them (see Smith, 2020b, Chapter 1). An orientation session to generate initial interest and enthusiasm can usefully involve sharing examples of teachers who have previously completed and can vouch for the process, ideally teachers from a comparable context. For example, a major positive development occurred in the second year of the Champion Teachers programme when Andrea Robles López, a previous participant, was invited to join the orientation workshop team and share her experiences. A further breakthrough occurred when the first book of Champion Teachers stories was published (Rebolledo et al., 2016) and could be shared with new participants. Since then, further books have been published in Latin America (Rebolledo & Bullock, 2019; Rebolledo et al., 2018), and similar books of stories have been brought out in South Asia (Gnawali et al., 2021; Negi, 2019; Sarkar et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017) and West Africa (MBSSE, 2021), motivating schoolteachers in particular to engage in teacher-research.

This kind of instruction will help teachers move beyond the image they may have of research being for academics, not for them. However, it should be phrased in language that they can understand, 'consciously [normal language], not the academic language, so that the teachers can actually feel connected to [research]', as one ARMS-India mentor put it. As in any mentoring relationship, building initial trust, rapport and confidence is important, and if a group is being mentored it might be important also to try to develop a good group spirit, so that participants can help one another and the mentor. Finally, it is also important at the outset, as in all mentoring relationships, to establish appropriate expectations about the mentor's role—what they will and will not 'provide' and to what extent and when they will be available—alongside expectations of the teacher's own responsibilities. An initial orientation session can help in this (see Smith, 2020b, Chapter 4).

Planning a Research Timeline and Communications

Teacher-research mentors in India and Nepal have consistently identified time management (their own and that of the teachers they were working with) and establishing/maintaining communication as their two biggest challenges. Attempting to pre-empt likely difficulties in these areas can help ensure greater success for teacher-research mentoring. Although not usually considered as part of a mentor's repertoire of skills, predicting, planning and

other organisational abilities are therefore important for mentors of teacher-research, including knowing how to plan an overall timeline for research and scheduling meetings accordingly.

Providing a clear structure by means of an overall month-by-month plan depends first on deciding which form of teacher-research is to be conducted. If there is to be an exploratory phase, for example, as in exploratory action research, this can be predicted to last a certain number of weeks, while, for action research, a particular number of cycles might be predicted until the expected end-point of mentoring. Teachers may require different kinds of support at different stages (for example, some mentoring can occur via workshop-style meetings (assuming more than one teacher is being mentored), whereas at other points (for example, deciding on research questions) one-to-one mentoring might seem more desirable.

Advance planning of a realistic overall schedule and deadlines can help to mitigate concerns about lack of time for research, although such concerns are never likely to disappear completely, and flexibility is required to cater for unexpected events like strikes and adverse weather conditions. A mentor needs to develop a kind of ethnographic awareness of family, work and community issues which can have an impact on the time available for teacher-research and related meetings, in order to work around these.[5] Among the issues that came up in India and Nepal, for example, were requirements for teachers to work as election officials, engage in household or agricultural work at weekends (thus hindering attendance at workshops) and participate in festivals, while sickness, change of school, and denial of leave were other factors which sometimes hindered progress.

Planning in advance when and how to communicate can also be important:

> Establishing rapport and agreeing on the channels of communication should be the first thing which should be worked out between mentors and mentees. It's about saying: we shall be doing most of the work by emails and by phone calls, and dividing the work: OK, let's say fine tuning of research questions will take place in orientation workshop in face-to-face mode, identifying research questions, data collection tools will take place via emails, things like that. (ARMS-India mentor)

There are always likely to be communication issues and gaps in understanding, particularly when mentors and mentees are working in different

[5] Cf. Fletcher's (2012) perception: 'If my (limited) experience can be taken as a model for others' work with teachers as research mentors, it comes with a recommendation to be very sensitive to underlying cultural contexts, both national and particular to any school'.

locations (as was often the case with ARMS-India and ARMS-Nepal), but making a communications plan in advance can help to lessen these problems. This was one of the earliest lessons learned from the Champion Teachers experience (see Smith et al. 2014: 118–119), where mentors faced great difficulty making contact with the teachers they were responsible for and the initially envisaged platform proved inconvenient for teachers (see Burns [2011: 5] for an account of similar issues). Mentors need to find out from the teachers they are responsible for what mode of synchronous or asynchronous communication the latter most favour (e.g. email, mobile phone, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger—see also Bustos Moraga & Mann, Chapter 15), and establish a plan of regular communication in advance which takes into account connectivity issues as well as teachers' timetables and domestic circumstances.

Record-Keeping, Reflection, and Mentor-Research

In order to provide timely, proactive and otherwise appropriate assistance, it is important for mentors to keep good records about the teachers being mentored, particularly when mentoring a group of teachers:

> I have learnt that keeping track of progress is very important, you know? I keep making notes of changes in my relationship with mentees, and growth of each mentee, whatever they're learning, whatever their struggles, I can help them. (ARMS-India mentor)

Finding out as much as possible about what the teachers are going through involves the kind of 'ethnographic' role discussed above, in adjusting mentoring appropriately to the professional and life conditions of those being mentored. At the same time, if a mentor can keep track of their own perceptions, attitudes and actions as a mentor, this can help them improve their practice, forming a basis for reflection on experience and even 'mentor-research'. Thus, recording, reflection and research can be seen as integral parts of the mentoring process—for the mentor's own development and that of the profession as a whole, not just for the benefit of their mentees. Fortunately, given limited prior research into teacher-research mentoring, the volume of reflective and data-based accounts of teacher-research mentoring practices has increased recently (e.g. Békés, 2020, 2021; Chawla & Chakrakodi, 2022). As such publications multiply, the knowledge base of teacher-research mentoring will continue to develop.

Helping Teachers to Select a Topic and Develop Research Questions

So far, I have been considering what might be termed 'structural', 'external' or even 'logistical' aspects of the teacher-research mentoring process, emphasising these here partly because they have been little considered in previous work. Turning to the teacher-research process per se, generally recognised mentoring skills involving listening, questioning and so on come more into play, but with particular emphases which relate to the different stages of teacher-research highlighted in this quote from an ARMS-Nepal mentor's reflective account:

> What are the main challenges I faced in mentoring teachers to research their classrooms? Finding a topic; Data collection; Data analysis; Research methods; Poster presentation and sharing. (ARMS-Nepal mentor)

Firstly, as research needs to focus on a particular topic, how to guide teachers to find an issue from their classroom experience that they would most like to explore requires specific consideration. Teachers can be encouraged to recall particular successful, puzzling or problematic experiences, and then can be guided to narrow down to one topic, through reflection on what would be most manageable to research and questioning as to what would be most urgent, significant and engaging for the teacher concerned (see Smith, 2020b: 40; Smith & Rebolledo, 2018: 31). Here, clearly, generic mentoring skills like questioning, empathising and attentive listening need to be combined with an awareness on the mentor's part of practicalities relating to the envisaged research process, since some interesting topics are likely to be difficult or impossible to research.

When exploratory research is being undertaken, it is important for mentors to help teachers develop suitable and effective research questions, because these set the direction for subsequent work. However, the process can be difficult for teachers—as one ARMS-India mentor put it, 'Most of the mentees found narrowing down of research questions as the most challenging work'. Another said:

> Creating research questions is indeed quite tricky for teachers who get into teacher-research for the first time. And you need to talk to teachers regularly to make them get through this entire process.

By means of supportive yet challenging one-to-one conversations involving listening carefully, asking for clarification, probing, and recapping, a mentor

can help a teacher identify areas of uncertainty which can then be turned into exploratory research questions.[6] Teachers can have quite strong assumptions which can be deconstructed through this kind of dialogue:

> The key […] point for me is how to lead teachers towards this reflective process, and [there were] only two things that seemed [to work] in the last six months; probing questions and challenging teachers' assumptions. (ARMS-India mentor)

So, generic mentoring skills are certainly at play here but there needs to be a clear focus in the mentor's mind on an outcome, which will be a set of questions for further exploration, and this focus may therefore distinguish teacher-research mentoring from more open-ended mentoring in relation to teaching (see Smith [2020b: 43–45] for sample dialogues and associated practice activities).

Finally, it is useful to consider, with mentees, whether research questions are 'good enough', referring to criteria such as whether the questions are answerable by the teacher, use information (data) which is easy to obtain and lead them to understand the area of concern more deeply than before (Smith, 2020b: 46).

Guiding Teachers to Generate, Analyse and Interpret Data

It is important to introduce teachers to a variety of types of data, and to show how these can be well matched to different kinds of question, as well as showing how they can be appropriately analysed (see Wyatt, 2018: 42–43, as well as Smith, 2020b, Chapters 9–10 for advice to mentors in these areas). A common preconception about research is that it must involve questionnaires, but these are not always useful. There are different types of data which can provide answers to the questions teachers may have in their minds—for example, reflective notes if the question relates to a teacher's own perceptions, focus group interviews or 'chats' (as an alternative to questionnaire) if students' perceptions are to be investigated, and/or observation by a colleague if an area of uncertainty and associated research question relate to the students' or the teacher's behaviour or performance. To prevent

[6] Cf. Ponte (2002: 418): 'Teachers did not always manage to engage in critical reflection on their own; they had to be challenged to do so by the facilitators. The facilitators were the "critics", as it were, in their action research, and one of the ways they fulfilled that role was by constantly asking questions'. See also Wyatt (2018: 41).

future problems, a mentor can usefully assess in advance whether the data the teacher is intending to gather looks likely to answer their research questions and can guide them to more appropriate alternatives when necessary. Teachers may also need advice during the actual process of data generation, for example via comments on a set of interview questions or framework for observation that has been prepared, and guidance when data collection does not go according to plan:

> Using [the research] tool effectively [was] a very challenging thing – for that, our involvement was a major concern because we couldn't have face to face interaction […]. But thank[fully] the telephone came to our rescue and we had constant interaction on mobiles and telephone. (ARMS-India mentor)

Once they have generated data, mentees may be at a loss as to what to do with it. Again, a combination of instruction and 'genuine' mentoring comes into play:

> My teachers found analysing data as a very tough task. So, in order to make them understand what data analysis was all about, I took a session with them elucidating what qualitative data is, what quantitative data is. And then after the session was over, individually I called the teachers to my office with their data and then we analysed it step-by-step. (ARMS-India mentor)

Finally, mentors need to encourage teachers to discuss their interpretations, in other words to make sense of their findings in relation to their research questions, by asking questions like 'What do you learn from the findings overall?', 'Have any findings particularly surprised you?', and 'What's next?'.

Supporting Teachers to Plan and Evaluate Change

Having explored a problematic or puzzling situation, many—though not all—teachers wish to engage in a phase of action research proper, by planning change and evaluating the consequences. Teacher-research mentors can help to ensure that the action proposed relates to what has already been understood via exploration of the existing situation, and can help the teacher to specify practical actions for change, while guarding against the kind of situation described by one ARMS-Nepal mentor: 'In many cases, my mentees sought ready-made answers/solutions […] from the mentor'. Planning for evaluation of change and not just planning change itself is something that teachers can fail to take seriously but is at the heart of what it means to do action research. Sometimes teachers may be keen to prove the success of a

particular initiative, but mentors can help them see that they can learn from any findings, positive or negative, which can in turn begin a new phase of exploration or action.

Helping Teachers to Share and Reflect on Their Research

There can be many benefits for teachers themselves—as well as for the wider professional community (cf. Edwards & Burns, 2016: 14)—if they share with other teachers what they have done and what they have found. Doing so can consolidate what they have learned, provide useful feedback, and offer experience that empowers them to continue or even mentor others. However, teachers may lack confidence (see Kuchah & Salama, Chapter 13), so a mentor's role can be crucial in developing safe spaces for public sharing, and in preparing teachers for this opportunity. As was discovered early in the Champion Teachers programme (see Smith et al. 2014: 120), it can be very productive to provide teachers with alternatives to writing an academic-style report. Instead, teachers can present orally with a poster, and recording this can form the basis for wider sharing, including via social media (see Smith, 2020b, Chapter 12; Smith et al., 2016), As one ARMS-India mentor put it,

> Mentor has a good role to play in supporting the teacher to share his or her findings because teachers are not always aware of the […] platforms that are there. So, the mentor's first role is to acquaint them with the different platforms […] where they can go and share their research.

Apart from organising such opportunities, a mentor can discuss with teachers the ingredients for a written or oral research report and provide feedback prior to dissemination (see Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2016). Both in final reports and discussions, it seems to be particularly useful if teachers can look back and reflect on the overall experience, as this can help to consolidate benefits and provide a springboard for further teacher-research activity. Mentors can help in this by posing questions which specifically focus on achievements, lessons learned and plans for the future (see Smith, 2020b: 65 for specific suggestions).

Maintaining Teacher-Researchers' Motivation

If I have tended to emphasise relatively specific as well as technical and organisational aspects of teacher-research mentoring in this chapter, this is because such aspects have not tended to be written about previously but have

been particularly difficult for the mentors I have worked with. In general, I have found that prospective mentors tend to possess the overall attitudes and capabilities relating to having empathy and being participant-centred which are essential to teacher-research mentoring, but are more challenged by aspects relating specifically to teacher-research. Nevertheless, I return finally to an important affective role mentors can play—that of attempting to help teachers maintain motivation in the face of vicissitudes in the research process. One ARMS-India mentor, indeed, singled this out as the most salient challenge they had faced:

> Lack of motivation at times, or the troubles the teachers, mentees are facing. I think this is one issue which I found in common – almost all of them they have told me about this thing. Like, motivating teachers and making them do what they're supposed to do, and making them think about what they are doing.… They told me they are finding it quite challenging. (ARMS-India mentor)

Inevitably, some teachers will drop out—in the absence of encouragement or understanding from school leaders. In particular, it can be difficult for teachers to work on something that is not locally valued. Thus, as one ARMS-India mentor put it, 'Motivating and handholding at regular intervals was a major challenge for me'. This can be achieved via regular meetings and ongoing encouragement and praise, perhaps particularly at the moments of transition highlighted in the sections above. Teachers need to know that the mentor will be 'there for them' long-term during the sometimes difficult but ultimately rewarding teacher-research project journey.

Implications: Sharing Insights—And Elaborating Further

As we have seen, the following areas emerged as particularly salient for teacher-research mentor development in the case of the Indian and Nepali mentors I worked with (extending my earlier work with mentors in Chile):

- Generic mentoring skills
- Introducing teacher-research
- Planning a research timeline and communications
- Record-keeping, reflection, and mentor-research
- Helping teachers to select a topic and develop research questions
- Guiding teachers to generate, analyse and interpret data
- Supporting teachers to plan and evaluate change

- Helping teachers to share and reflect on their research
- Maintaining teacher-researchers' motivation

This list of areas of focus—or 'framework', as I have been terming it—was derived from and has fed back into mentor development experience over a number of years in particular contexts, notably Chile, India and Nepal. However, beyond these contexts also, it has been informing some more 'global' interventions which I will now briefly discuss.

Firstly, on the basis particularly of ARMS mentors' experience, I have written a freely downloadable guide to mentoring teacher-research (Smith, 2020b) for British Council India. Feedback to date (see, for example, Banegas & Serra, 2021; Banister, 2021) and the number of downloads achieved (18,000 in its first year of publication according to April 2021 British Council statistics) seem to indicate that the book responds to a need in various worldwide contexts for carefully structured support for both novice and practising teacher-research mentors. Indeed, it seems clear that mentors can themselves benefit from mentoring and, more than this, can thrive within a structured programme which acknowledges the main difficulties they are likely to face, on the basis of other mentors' prior experience. After all, just as a shift from teacher to teacher-researcher does not necessarily come naturally but benefits from structured support, so does becoming a teacher-research mentor, which itself involves taking on a new identity (Barkhuizen, 2021: 11) as well as acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Insecurity within this transition can be mitigated by mentor-mentoring, for which the framework and handbook can serve as a basis, but also by collegial sharing of experiences and by individual or collaborative mentor-research (research by mentors into their own practices). Thus, apart from forming the backbone of the handbook, another use of the framework has been to provide the basic syllabus for a five-week online 'course' of teacher-research mentor development, involving much collaborative activity, which I offered in January–February 2020 with Seden Tuyan as co-presenter/facilitator, as part of EVO2020 (see http://mentoring-tr.weebly.com/evo2020.html). The course was completed by around 20 existing and prospective mentors worldwide (mostly, in Latin America, Africa and South Asia), and participants and others interested have been enabled to keep in touch via a website (http://mentoring-tr.weebly.com/) and Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/mentoringTR/). Subsequently, the framework has found another use, informing the contents of monthly (May–November 2021) discussions of teacher-research mentoring in an online (Zoom-based) support group, participated in by around 50 EVO, Champion Teachers and ARMS mentors.

Most of these participants prepared groups of teachers to give teacher-research poster presentations at an IATEFL Research SIG Teachers Research! Online 2021 conference in December 2021 (http://resig.weebly.com/teachers-research-online-2021.html), while many of them also prepared data-based presentations of their own on aspects of their mentoring experience (http://mentoring-tr.weebly.com/2021-interactive-event.html).

The way in which the framework, in these different uses, has been welcomed and referred to by mentors and prospective mentors in a wide range of Global South contexts (from Peru to Nigeria to Bangladesh and beyond) indicates that it can serve as a good starting-point for mentor development quite generally, and, indeed, for research-based comparisons to be drawn between different approaches and experiences in varied contexts. Research mentors and mentor-mentors interested in the ideas presented in this chapter could, accordingly, do any or all of the following:

- use the framework as a basis for courses of mentor development which they design themselves (as in the EVO)
- use the handbook to self-mentor or provide a support for mentor development
- use the framework or handbook as a basis for reflection on issues in mentoring (as in the support group)
- focus on parts of the framework as a basis for further research into teacher-research mentoring
- add to, amend and otherwise critically adapt the framework in the light of local experience

Conclusion

So far, ideas on how to mentor teacher-research which have been derived from recent situated practice, particularly in India and Nepal, have been proving to be useful and relevant to mentors and prospective mentors in other contexts, as mediated by the handbook, the EVO and the support group. These initiatives have shown that insights derived originally from mentoring practice within the usually neglected difficult circumstances of teacher development in low- and medium-income countries can be relevant more generally, just as the EAR approach has itself been taken up beyond its original context of production, Chile (see Introduction). Being based inductively on the lived experiences and situated practice of local mentors in Chile, India and Nepal,

the framework I have proposed is not yet another Global North imposition on the Global South, even though its development was facilitated with (local) British Council support. Instead, just as with EAR for teachers, the framework relates strongly to—indeed, was designed to meet—the needs and priorities of mentors working in Global South contexts Arguably, it is more 'genuinely global', in fact, than if it had been developed primarily in and for the kind of well-resourced and privileged tertiary or language school settings in western countries which are at the origin of so much ELT discourse but which are far from the norm worldwide.

In the past, a more typical direction of travel of ideas in ELT was from English-dominant countries like the UK and the USA outwards to 'developing' countries. What we might be seeing here, on the other hand, is a new kind of process, pioneered within the EVO but since furthered during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. within the International Festival of Teacher-Research 2021: https://trfestival.wordpress.com/2021-events; see also Smith et al., 2022), whereby teacher-research and mentoring experiences from Global South settings get shared with teachers and mentors in comparable contexts more than previously, via the new affordances of international online networking.

Nevertheless, the wider relevance or otherwise of the ideas presented here—derived, as they are, mainly from practice in particular project contexts—needs to continue to be confronted with other realities and perceptions, with a view to guarding against the dogmatism which has characterised ELT claims to universality in the past. At the time of writing, this is being achieved via active discussions among mentors in the international support group mentioned above, with possible implications for eventual modification and critical adaptation of the framework I have presented.

Whether or not it can be called 'genuinely global' (in distinction with falsely global products presented as universally relevant but in fact best matching Global North conditions), the guidance for teacher-research mentoring which has been reported on here, precisely because it is based on situated experience in Chile, India and Nepal, has been well-received, appears adaptable to various situations, and, for now at least, seems to be serving a useful role in helping to facilitate the voluntary take-up of teacher-research in other Global South primary and secondary school contexts.

Engagement Priorities

- If you mentor teacher-research, how closely does your work align with the framework proposed in this chapter?
- Which parts of the framework are most important to you as a mentor (or prospective mentor) of teacher-research?
- Is there anything you would add to the framework in your own context?

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