**Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity**

**James Burch**

**Dr Alison Jackson**

**University of Cumbria**

**2012**

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This research project was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Research and Scholarship Development Fund of the University of Cumbria.

**Executive summary**

**Introduction**

It could be argued that the model of partnership between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in use at present in England is still predominantly a cooperative one, that is to say working *with,* rather than a collaborative one, that is to say working *together*; the latter with the ultimate aim of reaching shared understandings. This small scale research project sets out to be the first step in further research which will investigate models of partnership and suggest an approach to partnership based on collaborative provision, achieved through ‘Third Space activity’. The participants in the research are: tutors in the HEI concerned in this research who are responsible for the training of student teachers at the HEI and work with colleagues in schools; and mentors from the partner schools who are responsible within the schools for training those same student teachers. The HEI is a university in England. There is also a short contribution from a student teacher, a participant in one of the observed meetings. All the participants are involved in the secondary PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate In Education) and the programme which forms the basis of the research study is the secondary PGCE at the university. The benefits of the initial study will be to teacher educators at this university and to their colleagues in school. As the importance of successful partnership is relevant to all teacher educators and school colleagues, dissemination will benefit the wider teacher education community.

**Research Aims**

* To explore and evaluate the strategies employed to develop collaborative provision of teacher training between schools and HEIs in teacher education.
* To investigate the notion of the use of ‘Third Space’ to bring about effective collaborative provision.

**Methodology and methods**

This study is concerned with the early stages of the revised programme of collaborative practice between HEIs and schools and can be described as a small-scale case study which, as Bell (1999:10) suggests concentrates on a specific situation in depth within a limited time scale. Walker (in Hammersley, 1993:165) defines a case study as ‘the examination of an instance in action’. The ‘instance in action’ here is the first steps towards the goal of HEI tutors and school mentors ‘working together’ rather than ‘working with’. Walker also explains (op.cit:166) that ‘the case study reveals what institutions mean to individuals and helps us get beyond form and structure to the realities of human life’. This resonates here as the ‘institution’ can be translated as the joint endeavour of HEIs and schools to encourage and create effective teachers through collaborative training.

Criticisms aimed at case studies consider them to be a weak vehicle for generalisation, however, as Bassey (1981:86) suggests: ‘If case studies are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research.’ This case study is relatable and hence claims some validity.

Illuminative Evaluation (Gray, 2009:163) is often associated with case study. It is used to show how existing knowledge is used to inform and guide practical action. In as much as existing knowledge about HEIs working with schools underpins the proposed changes described here, this resonates with this study. Illuminative Evaluation is a flexible and open-ended approach which seeks the views of participants, recognising that there are multiple perspectives on any matter under scrutiny. The continuing consultation which has and is taking place in order to devise this programme reflects this approach as does the research study which seeks to observe and engage with the participants in the programme. As no pre-specified outcomes or results are intended from the research, this again suggests an Illuminative Evaluation which uses qualitative methods of observation and interviews.

The research took place between January and December 2012 and consisted of observation of meetings between HEI tutors and school mentors and subsequent interviews of selected members of these two groups. It was decided to concentrate on two strands of the whole project: ‘noticing as a disciplined enquiry’ and ‘coaching and mentoring’. This would enable the basic concepts of developing partnership through third space activity to be considered through two particular strands and, because links exist between the two chosen strands, this would give an added dimension to the findings. Ethical approval for the research was gained from the University of Cumbria Ethics Committee.

**Main findings**

The nature of this research project suggests that the following list of findings offers hints rather than conclusions and statements for reflection rather than absolutes.

* Developing partnership through Third Space activity requires vision.
* That vision requires an enhanced and ‘deeper’ interpretation of ‘working together’ rather than ‘working with’.
* Working together through Third Space activity requires participants: to embrace change; to challenge their own assumptions; time.
* Working together through Third Space activity is complex despite the appearance of simplicity.
* Working together through Third Space activity needs to be founded upon a common moral purpose.
* Effective partnership between schools and universities has been evolving over time, suggesting that working together through Third Space is potentially the next part of that evolution.
* Working together through Third Space activity is an ambitious ideal.
* Some drawbacks/difficulties are: getting everybody on board; time; finance; quality control; logistics; conflict.
* Benefits outweigh difficulties. All concerned benefit: school staff, university staff, student teachers, pupils.
* Slow, measured process is key.
* Developing partnership through Third Space activity is worth the effort; it can be transformative to all concerned.

**Concluding thoughts and recommendations**

* The aims of the research project have been accomplished: the investigation of collaborative provision of teacher training between schools and HEIs in teacher education; and the notion of Third Space to bring about effective collaborative provision.
* Developing partnership through Third Space activity is ambitious, but it is possible. It creates a passion within those participating which brings rewards: rejuvenation, personal reward, excitement, fulfilment, challenge, enrichment.
* The philosophy behind the concept of developing partnership suggests that generalisability is possible to other HEIs and schools, accepting that different circumstances would allow the project to evolve in different ways, relevant to those circumstances
* As teacher education in England undergoes yet more change with the introduction of School Direct it is recommended that the philosophy within ‘working together’ through Third Space activity continues to be embraced and researched as a fundamental way of achieving excellent teacher education and training of student teachers, and hence excellent teachers of children and young people.

**Full Research Report**

**I. Introduction**

1.1. The Coalition Government White Paper (2010) in England set out the intention that more teacher training will be ‘on the job’, thus turning the spotlight more than ever upon successful partnership between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In future Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspections, a key criterion for judging the quality of an ITE programme will be the depth of the partnership arrangements with particular emphasis being given to the role of school partners in the overall provision. The Education Select Committee’s conclusions in 2012 concerning attracting, training and retaining the best teachers emphasise the role of both schools and HEIs and suggest strongly that innovation and commitment to strengthened modes of partnership are required:

Indeed, we have seen substantial evidence in favour of universities’ continuing role in ITT (Initial Teacher Training), and recommend that school-centred and employment-based providers continue to work closely with universities, just as universities should make real efforts to involve schools in the design and content of their own courses. The evidence has left us in little doubt that partnership between schools and universities is likely to provide the highest-quality initial teacher education, the content of which will involve significant school experience but include theoretical and research elements as well, as in the best systems internationally and in much provision here.

(Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, 2012:78)

1.2. It could be argued that the model of partnership between schools and HEIs in use at present in England is still predominantly a cooperative one, that is to say working *with,* rather than a collaborative one, that is to say working *together* (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006; Edwards and Mutton, 2007; Bronkhurst et al, 2011); the latter with the ultimate aim of reaching shared understandings. This small scale research project sets out to be the first step in further research which will investigate models of partnership and suggest an approach to partnership based on collaborative provision, achieved through ‘Third Space activity’. The participants in the research are: tutors in the HEI concerned in this research who are responsible for the training of student teachers at the HEI and work with colleagues in schools; and mentors from the partner schools who are responsible within the schools for training those same student teachers. The HEI is a university in England. There is also a short contribution from a student teacher, a participant in one of the observed meetings. All the participants are involved in the secondary PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) and the programme which forms the basis of the research study is the secondary PGCE at the university. The benefits of the initial study will be to teacher educators at this university and to their colleagues in school. As the importance of successful partnership is relevant to all teacher educators and school colleagues, dissemination will benefit the wider teacher education community.

**2. Research aims**

The aims of this research project are:

* To explore and evaluate the strategies employed to develop collaborative provision of teacher training between schools and HEIs in teacher education.
* To investigate the notion of the use of ‘Third Space’ to bring about effective collaborative provision.

**3. Background**

3.1. The following investigation of pertinent literature to form the background to this study begins by acknowledging that, in order to change what happens now, it is necessary to create suitable conditions to allow change to happen. It then explores how we move forward from present practice to future vision through change, before focussing on collaborative provision in this research project. Finally the term ‘enactment’ and its importance to this project are considered.

***3.2. Creating the conditions for change***

Teacher educators in schools and HEIs are used to a certain way of working collaboratively which has, over time, become ingrained. This has formed the beliefs that they now hold in connection with collaborative working which will need to adapt in order for a change to happen. Beliefs can both limit or liberate the learner (Feiman-Nemser, 2001); they are omnipresent and omnipotent, often without our registering their presence in the form of what Brookfield (1995:2) calls ‘paradigmatic assumptions’. Thus beliefs become knowledge in the form of Brookfield’s ‘paradigmatic assumptions’. Pajares (1992:311) explains that these beliefs then become difficult to change because they are so deeply ingrained and are not overturned by theory and counter arguments but by some sort of ‘conversion or gestalt [sic] shift’. It is therefore important to realise that we cannot aspire to create change itself, but rather the conditions for change in ways which gradually allow this ‘conversion’ to happen:

* By creating a vision of what is possible as the first step in the process of eventual enactment of a particular practice (Hammerness et al., 2005);
* By creating ‘multiple entry points’ (Gardner, 2006) so that we can open up many windows on the same example of practice, thereby avoiding a single-perspective approach that runs the risk of understanding a concept in the most limited and inflexible of fashions;
* By engendering, as part of the above, powerful experiences that assault both the senses and the mind – a sort of heady cocktail of the cognitive and the visceral to get that Gestalt moment going;
* By ‘unpicking’ and reflecting on the experience(s) so that the meaning is not missed (Ellis, 2010);
* By listening to and challenging underlying assumptions that arise from the above by working with existing beliefs, rather than setting out to change them in an explicit, upfront manner (Wideen et al., 1998:144) which is akin to Brookfield’s concept of going ‘assumption hunting’ (Brookfield, 1995);
* By keeping to a minimum the time lag between all of the above and opportunities for multiple acts of enactment.

In this way it is possible to create learning that is ‘informed by a richer, more complex understanding of experience’ (Ellis, 2010:111) through the creation of meaningful (that is to say understandable) and meaning-full (that is to say striking an affective and cognitive chord with the learner) experiences. There are some first-order challenges here for the schools and the HEI in this study as they develop ‘together’ a shared vision of learning (student teacher and pupil); creating the necessary conditions for experiencing the vision and enacting it; and foster the high-level coaching expertise to help transform the vision into reality.

***3.3. Moving forward***

3.3.1. A crude definition of the status quo in partnership arrangements between schools and HEIs in England would suppose that the student teacher learns theoretical approaches to teaching in the University and then puts them into practice in the school context. If this is accepted, then the model of training is still predominantly a cooperative one, rather than a collaborative one – a case of working with, but not together; or even in some cases programmes are ‘neither complementary nor collaborative’ (Edwards and Mutton, 2007:505). Furlong et al. suggest such simplicity ignores a complex issue, reducing collaborative partnership to bureaucracy and schedules, rather than resting on a vision of working together:

We would contend that when partnership is reduced to ‘finding more places’

or setting up common procedures and paper work, without paying attention to the epistemological and pedagogical issues underpinning any one particular teacher education programme, it undermines the nature of the professional education that is offered. Once again, it flattens complexity and reduces teacher education to technical rationalist tasks.

Furlong et al. (2007: 43)

3.3.2. Ellis et al.’s (2011) report into teacher education in England tends to agree with Furlong’s view of the ‘flattening’ of complexity. They found that there was an abundance of evidence to show that the University/School partnerships in the training of teachers worked well; however, the HE (Higher Education) tutor spent a disproportionate amount of time maintaining relationships with and between schools and individual trainees. Ellis (2010) refers to teacher education in England as an ‘impoverishing experience’. Here he is not criticising practice per se, but rather the overall capacity within ITE for getting the most out of experiences to enable the development of professional knowledge. In his view, part of the problem stems from the policy decisions that seem to be underpinned by a view of professional learning that knowledge can just be transferred from the teacher to the trainee:

Experience in schools simply becomes an opportunity to receive or become acculturated to the existing practices of the setting with an emphasis on the reproduction of ritualised behaviours and the development of bureaucratic virtues such as compliance and the collection of evidence.

(Ellis, 2010:106)

3.3.3. In a bid to reclaim complexity, Ellis argues passionately for teacher learning to be informed by ‘a richer, more complex understanding of experience’. He refers to the priority given to the acquisition of centrally-prescribed Standards skills (for example in England the Teaching Standards from the Department for Education (DfE, 2012a) which simply become ‘a means of restricting our interpretations and analysis of experience, from within’ (Ellis, 2010:110). His solution is to propose that ‘we begin to view the experience from which beginning teachers learn in schools as the object of enquiry by student teachers, teachers and University-based teacher educators’ (op. cit:116); what can be seen perhaps as a plea for a type of partnership which draws on the strengths of all participants and allows ‘working together’ rather than ‘working with’.

***3.4. Collaborative provision in this research project***

3.4.1. What approaches does the proposed collaborative provision of teacher training in this research project put forward for achieving a paradigm shift, ‘a conversion’ in both the partnership and the pedagogy? The answer can be summed up in the following terms: ‘boundary crossing’ (Akkerman, 2011; Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Engeström and Sannino, 2010; Tsui and Law, 2007); the creation of a ‘third space’, sometimes also referred to in the literature as a ‘hybrid space’ (Martin et al., 2011; Zeichner, 2010; Cuenca et al., 2011); and followed by, if these are successful to ‘expansive learning’ (Engestrőm and Sannino, 2010). In essence this means coming out of our normal working environment (school or university) and into the neutral ‘third space’ to design, develop and deliver a completely new programme with jointly shared understanding and vision.

3.4.2. Akkerman and Bakker (2011:1) define boundaries as ‘socio-cultural differences leading to discontinuity in action or interaction’. They further explain that by crossing a boundary, participants are compelled to reconsider their assumptions and look beyond the known and familiar. The ‘third space’ is what Zeichner (2010:92) describes as a ‘transformative setting’ which is less hierarchical in nature. In essence, this is about working together in a way in which each constituency’s views are respected and in which there is a common moral purpose and joint responsibility for the improvement of both the trainees’ and the pupils’ learning. It is a ‘third space partnership’ forged in and by pedagogy; the pedagogy of teacher education and pupil learning. It is an endeavour that will have its own particular challenges because as Martin (2011:299) says: ‘the complexities of teaching and learning to teach present formidable challenges to those who work to support and guide teacher learning.’

3.4.3. It can be argued that to have a programme in which the learning experiences are coherent and principled, then a massive amount of ‘boundary crossing’ (trainees, school staff and university staff) needs to take place, not only to build understanding but also to foster what Engeström and Sannino (2010:1995) call ‘expansive learning’ as opposed to ‘restricted learning’ where each of us stays in our own designated area, making the odd foray outside. Expansive learning entails all moving across boundaries both in the micro and macro sense, for example between lessons and subjects in particular schools and between different educational settings. For this to happen there is a need to develop a programme that is worth being part of in its own right because all the participants benefit in terms of rigorous professional development. Most of all, school pupils benefit because of the improved insights into teaching and learning that are generated together as a partnership within a series of ‘third spaces’.

3.4.4. Enactment

A major problem of teaching and teacher education is the problem of moving from intellectual understanding to enactment in practice. (Kennedy, 1998)

Knowing about something and knowing how to do something are two concepts that are often presented as dichotomies; what Ball and Forzani (2010:42) describe as the ‘endemic gap between knowing about teaching and doing teaching’. In short, there are lots of pitfalls on the path to pedagogical enactment. Weick (1988) describes the term enactment as representing the notion that when people act they bring structures and events into existence and set them in action. Weick uses this term in the context of ‘sensemaking’ by managers or employees. Qualitative methods, such as dialogue and discourse analysis are used. Dialogue strives for a balance between individual autonomy and organisational constraint through incorporating diverse voices (Weick, 1995). In the project described by this research, there has been much debate between stakeholders over the term ‘enactment’; whether it is an accurate term for what will be hopefully the outcome of successful partnership and indeed what the term means. Through this debate, a conclusion was reached that decided that for this project, the term enactment is interpreted as: ‘more than merely doing something in the classroom; it is doing it with understanding across a range of contexts.’

**4.** **Programme Rationale and Philosophy**

4.1. In this section the programme and philosophy of the PGCE secondary programme concerned in this research study is set out. In particular the question of how to get to a position of enactment using this different form of collaboration (working together, not with) between HEI tutors and school mentors is explored. Throughout the section, ‘we’ and ‘our’ refer to the HEI tutors and school mentors who worked together on the programme.

The plan of the programme is to achieve enactment with understanding and traction for current and future teaching in the following ways (this is not an exclusive list, but is rather intended as a starting point for development and experimentation):

* Working together and not just with
* Achieving ‘simplexity’
* Learning in, through and from practice
* Creating rich, meaningful and meaning-full experiences
* Developing high-leverage learning strategies
* Fostering pedagogies of enactment where teaching is taught and not just caught

4.2. Working together and not just with

By working together is meant a deeper form of partnership that involves schools, trainees and University staff developing, planning and implementing initiatives together. There are arguably elements of current provision which are predominantly ‘cooperative’ rather than truly ‘collaborative’; that is to say, each party carries out a particular role without fully understanding what the other is doing and what the fuller picture is, together with the underpinning principles. The project in this research project has the potential to foster uniquely collaborative provision in which everything undertaken is designed together, developed together, delivered together and evaluated together, thereby also being understood together with a common lexicon of learning and joint moral purpose. The ways of working that it is hoped will foster an even deeper sense of ‘together’ are:

* Common moral purpose: The common moral purpose behind the Programme is to improve pupil learning; in other words to have a positive impact on the school system not only through producing high-grade trainees, but also through the personal development of all concerned in the training process: student teachers, school and University staff. This means that all who participate in the Programme, either directly or indirectly (pupils, student teachers and school and University staff), benefit in terms of their own personal learning and /or professional development;
* Mind the gap: There are currently many ‘gaps’ in the training process which need defining, acknowledging and hopefully closing; these gaps refer to such things as understanding and collaborative working;
* Boundary crossing and third-space activity;
* Lesson study approach;
* Joint design, development, delivery and evaluation.

4.3. Achieving simplexity

Fullan (2011) uses Kluger’s (2008) concept of ‘simplexivity’; ‘simple to understand, complex to make jell’ (xiii). Drawing on this concept, by looking at one’s own practice and the practice of others, it is possible to suppose a series of simple high-leverage strategies

* Go more quickly by going more slowly: it is worthwhile to get deep levels of understandings and high-quality enactment around a certain core, high-leverage practices. With such understanding and practices in place it is easier to graft on new approaches, meaning that the training, over time, is both more effective and faster. Avoid the rush to practice.
* Coverage is the enemy of understanding: this means resisting the temptation to push a lot of information into the student teachers before they undertake something in school.
* Reflection not collection: the key to complexity lies in simplicity and as such, the documentation will be streamlined to afford more time for reflection and less time for form-filling.

4.4. Learning in, through and from practice

The following principles underpin this approach:

* Practice is the servant of theory and theory the servant of practice: Theory and practice are wrapped up into a single entity with practice forming the context for theory and theory providing the key to understanding practice, all within the context of practical theorising.
* Practical theorising: Practical theorising concentrates directly on practical issues and, as such, is less diffuse and much more focussed than ‘critical reflection’ which can encompass critical evaluation of some of the ‘big ideas’ in education lectures within the university context, as well as reflection on teaching practice, with the latter often being reduced to no more than surface-level, ‘common-sense’ observations. With practical theorising, the same theory and research of the wider ‘reflective practice’ are still present, but are brought to bear in a sharp focus in and upon a practice-orientated, real context.
* Principled practice: This represents a set of guidelines, of theoretical perspectives on teaching, learning, schooling and training that can inform our educational decision-making. These guidelines are derived from and well-grounded in the theoretical and empirical literature. The development of principled practice lies at the heart of our ‘working together and not with’ approach.
* Learning teaching, rather than learning to teach: Learning to teach implies the action occurs in the future, often long after something has been encountered, usually in the form of ideas in a particular university session or as a part of a string of school observations that do not immediately lead anywhere, whereas learning teaching conveys the idea of learning occurring constantly in different contexts as part of our pedagogies of enactment. A key focus is therefore on closing the gap between knowing about teaching and doing teaching.
* High-level mentoring and coaching: presently there is a perceived lack of coherence in the programme and a key strategy for helping to improve this situation is the implementation of high-level mentoring and coaching strategies underpinned by joint understandings.

4.5. Creating rich, meaningful and meaning-full experiences

Here are some key design strategies:

* Seeing is believing: Creating a vision of what is possible as the first step in the process of eventual enactment of a particular practice (Hammerness et al., 2005)
* Feel, see and hear a concept: create powerful experiences that assault both the senses and the mind.
* Create ‘multiple entry points’ to a concept: so as to open up as many windows as possible on the same example of practice, thereby avoiding a single-perspective approach that runs the risk of understanding a concept in the most limited and inflexible of fashions or perhaps not even noticing the concept at all.
* Go assumption hunting: Through careful questioning, listening and coaching, take the time to explore the underlying assumptions that arise from the above experiences. Having uncovered certain assumptions, again take the time to work with the existing beliefs, rather than setting out to change them in an explicit, cognitive, up-front manner (Wideen et al., 1998:144).
* Experience is not enough: In all of the above it is vital to ‘unpick’ and reflect on the experience(s) so that the meaning is not missed (Ellis, 2010).
* Noticing as a disciplined enquiry: Mason’s concept of ‘noticing as disciplined enquiry’ will underpin all aspects of our work (Mason, 2002:7-9)
* Procrastination is the thief of enactment: this is about keeping to a minimum the time lag between all of the above and opportunities for student teachers to do similar things themselves through utilising the full range of ‘pedagogies of enactment’.

4.6. Developing high-leverage learning strategies

These are strategies that are designed to maximise learning for both pupils and trainees. With respect to pupils we are looking at so-called ’ambitious’ teaching techniques (Lampert, Boerst and Graziani, 2009) that promote deep understanding of subject knowledge. With respect to trainees, because the time is so limited, we want to promote strategies that give them the best possible traction for teaching not only when they are with us, but also for their future careers, hence the term ‘traction for current and future teaching’. Thus once the ‘anatomy of practice to be learned’ (Grossman et al., 2009:2060) has been worked out, it is time to devise the different activities required to enable trainee teachers to learn and practise, in multiple settings, these high-leverage strategies.

4.7. Fostering pedagogies of enactment where teaching is taught and not just caught

By ‘caught’ we have in mind an acquisition model of learning whereby student teachers pick things up as they go along. We would maintain that it is easier to pick up certain practices and incorporate them into one’s personal pedagogical repertoire when there is already a strong skill set in place to which connections can be made. Although it is difficult to predict the order in which learning can occur – if at all – a great deal more can be done to provide much richer learning opportunities that leave far less to chance. As such we will be experimenting with ‘teaching teaching’. With student teachers we plan to employ performance-enhancing pedagogies to get those basic foundations in place to which connections can be made at a later date in a more self-directed, autonomous way. To this end we will be employing so-called ‘pedagogies of enactment’. These are the processes that are brought to bear to foster enactment and comprise a range of strategies stemming from the high-leverage techniques. The strategies involved in this process are;

* De- and reconstruction of teaching episodes: this is a planning process requiring breaking down classroom activities into their constituent parts – deconstruction. An essential part of this deconstruction is a theoretical understanding as to why certain strategies are employed. Re-construction strategies are designed with the purpose of giving student teachers multiple opportunities to see, understand and practise the teaching techniques that form the strategies underpinning the chosen are of high-leverage learning. So as to give a structure to this process we have categorised the multiple entry points into representations, proximal and prototype enactment activities, all of which broadly correspond to seeing, rehearsing and then undertaking a dress rehearsal. The challenge in all of this is to keep the learning experiences as realistic and holistic as possible
* Representational activities: powerful experience that assault both the senses and the mind. Such activities are about giving trainees multiple opportunities to see and experience the world through the eyes of their learners. The activities are carefully scaffolded with clear-cut observation tasks. Skilful coaching strategies are also employed to ensure that meaning is not missed and beliefs are brought to the surface
* Proximal activities; promote the rehearsal of key teaching strategies in conditions which are as near to real ones as possible e.g. working with groups of children in a school or university under the guidance of an ‘expert other’ who is able to coach and challenge.
* Prototype enactment opportunities: take place in real classrooms, with pupils in other school contexts. The difference between these enactment activities and ‘real’ ones is that they are not part of whole-class teaching responsibilities and could be conducted on either a horizontal or vertical basis.
* Real enactment with reflection: this is the stage where the evidence can be gathered for the teaching standards. By real enactment we mean the sustained implementation for key strategies in real classroom setting over a period of time.

**5. Research Methodology and Methods**

**5.1. Case Study and Illuminative Evaluation**

Blaxter et al.(1996:66) explain that case studies are ideally suited to the needs and resources of a small-scale researcher because a case study allows a focus on just one element, for example a small number of individuals in the researcher’s place of work. This study is concerned with the early stages of the revised programme of collaborative practice between HEIs and schools and can be described as a small-scale case study which, as Bell (1999:10) suggests concentrates on a specific situation in depth within a limited time scale. Walker (1978 in Hammersley, 1993:165) defines a case study as ‘the examination of an instance in action’. The ‘instance in action’ here is the first steps towards the goal of HEI tutors and school mentors ‘working together’ rather than ‘working with’. Walker also explains (op.cit:166) that ‘the case study reveals what institutions mean to individuals and helps us get beyond form and structure to the realities of human life’. This resonates here as the ‘institution’ can be translated as the joint endeavour of HEIs and schools to encourage and create effective teachers through collaborative training.

5.2. Criticisms aimed at case studies consider them to be a weak vehicle for generalisation, however the readers of case studies use their own autonomy and responsibility in a naturalistic way to generalise from theoretical propositions (Burns, 2000:476). This study does not claim to be more than a starting point in this debate. As Walker (1978 in Hammersley, 1993:188) says, case studies are never finished and it is intended that the research begun here will continue over time as the programme becomes embedded. As Bassey (1981:86) suggests:

If case studies are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research.

This case study is relatable and hence claims some validity.

5.3. Gray (2009:152) suggests that case study is often used to evaluate a new process and this is apt in this study. Evaluation often explores what needs to be changed; the change here is from HEI tutors and school mentors ‘working with’ to ‘working together’ in the training of teachers. It looks at the procedures put in place to effect this change, as is the case here and will, in some part, ask whether that change has occurred (Warr et al., 1970). Illuminative Evaluation (Gray, 2009:163) is often associated with case study. It is used to show how existing knowledge is used to inform and guide practical action. In as much as existing knowledge about HEIs working with schools underpins the proposed changes described here, this resonates with this study. Illuminative Evaluation is a flexible and open-ended approach which seeks the views of participants, recognising that there are multiple perspectives on any matter under scrutiny. The continuing consultation which has and is taking place in order to devise this programme reflects this approach as does the research study which seeks to observe and engage with the participants in the programme. As no pre-specified outcomes or results are intended from the research, this again suggests an Illuminative Evaluation which will use qualitative methods of observation and interviews. Gray (op.cit.) suggests that problems associated with Illuminative Evaluation are that it does not lead to results that can lead to action and that also it may be heavily influenced by the subjective views of the evaluator. House (1980) warns that therefore it faces the difficulty of proving its authenticity and confidence in its outcomes. However it is suggested that the outcomes of the study do suggest a method of working which can be used by others in the same or different contexts. The evaluator is not part of the programme and therefore can claim some objectivity and has taken great care to ensure that the findings are presented as the views of the participants, not the researcher.

**5.4. Methods**

The research took place between January and December 2012 and consisted of observation of meetings between HEI tutors and school mentors and subsequent interviews of selected members of these two groups. Originally it was intended to investigate all the strands of the project – SEN (Special Educational Needs), literacy, behaviour management, EAL (English as an Additional Language), coaching and mentoring , 'noticing as disciplined enquiry’, assessment – however, it soon became evident that there was a lot of preliminary work being undertaken by the various strands, and some were more advanced than others. For this reason, and also because it was felt that an in-depth look at two strands would be more beneficial than a less detailed scan of all the strands, it was decided to concentrate on ‘noticing as a disciplined enquiry’ and ‘coaching and mentoring’ only. This would enable the basic concepts of developing partnership through third space activity to be considered through two particular strands and, because links exist between the two chosen strands, this would give an added dimension to the findings.

*5.4.1. Participants and stakeholders*

Throughout this report participants and stakeholders in the research are referred to in the following ways:

* Student teachers / trainees; both these terms are used to describe those participants or stakeholders who are following a university course to gain Qualified Teacher status. The terms are copied as they are used in either texts or in the meetings or interviews.
* University lecturer / tutors; both these terms are used to describe university staff engaged in teacher training.
* Professional mentor; this term refers to the member of staff in a secondary school who has the overall responsibility for working with the student teachers from the university.
* Subject mentor; this term refers to the member of staff in a secondary school who has responsibility in their own subject area for working with the student teachers from the university.
* Pupils; to distinguish young people in schools who are sometimes referred to as ‘students’ from student teachers, the term pupils has been used throughout.

*5.4.2. Data collection - Documentation*

One document was used in the data collection to add to the findings. This was a document outlining the proposals for the new PGCE programme.

*5.4.3. Observation*

In the meetings which took place between January and March 2012, the researcher simply observed the activities but did not take part in them. As a non-participant in either the school or the HEI setting as far as the discussions on partnership between them were concerned, the researcher was not an ‘insider’ and was not wanting to gain a deep understanding of their lives (Gray, 2009:400) but merely reporting what happened. Field notes were taken and written up immediately after each meeting in order for there to be no delay between the observation and the writing up which might mean that it was not recalled accurately (op.cit:403). Generally key words and phrases were taken and a note made of the affiliation of the speaker. Although the identity of the speaker was noted at the time, this was simply to aid recall of the event, not to use that speaker’s identity in the findings; the differentiation between HEI tutor and school mentor was of more general use in the research and the specific identity of the speakers was not of importance. Appendix i gives details of the coding used to identify whether the speakers were school or university based. No other details of the meeting participants are given to protect their anonymity. No recordings of the meetings were made and no judgement was made as to what was appropriate to note and what was not; when analysing the field notes, the relevance or otherwise to this research of the notes taken was scrutinised. The researcher’s non-participation before or during the meetings had the advantage of allowing a more neutral stance. However, on the other hand, it is acknowledged also that it was necessary for the researcher to draw on personal knowledge of teacher education and partnership in order to make sense of the proceedings.

5.4.4. *Interviews*

Interviews were arranged in the autumn of 2012. Five participants were chosen: two university lecturers and three teachers. All were chosen because of their direct involvement with the Third Space project. It was intended that the interviews would give insights into the process and progress of the project through their perspectives. The university lecturers had specific roles within the project and the school colleagues were directly concerned with the mentoring of student teachers. However, it was realised early on in the project that description of their roles when the number of participants was so low would compromise the ethical anonymity of the data. For this reason care has been taken to ensure that no information directly relating to their role is given. Appendix i gives details of the coding used.

The interviews were semi-structured. According to Mason (2002:133), to ensure a ‘state of insight’, it is preferable to be less pre-constructed and pre-formatted, rather than more, so discussion was encouraged to flow within the following broad areas: partnership before the introduction of the Third Space project; definition of terminology; perceptions concerning benefits, difficulties, complexity, differences; process; progress. However, in order to ease comparison of data, questions within these themes were adhered to with every participant. The prospective interviewees were sent an e-mail inviting them to take part in the research (Appendix ii). With the e-mail the following attachments were sent: an information sheet about the research (Appendix iii); a consent form (Appendix iv) which the participant could either return electronically or complete on the day of the interview. They were also advised at this time that if they accepted the invitation, the full schedule of interview questions would be sent prior to the interview along with information concerning the date, time and venue (Appendix v). There was no compunction to prepare for the interview, participants were simply advised in the confirmation e-mail: ‘It is not essential that you look through these [questions] prior to the interview, but you may wish to consider them in advance.’ The reason for this was that it was more important to allow reflection about the project than surprise the participants with unanticipated questions. In this way it was hoped to arrive at considered replies. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analysed using comparison of replies and following the interview schedule closely as it had been constructed to reflect the broad areas mentioned above.

*5.4.5. Ethical considerations*

Ethical approval for the research was gained from the University Ethics Committee. This was based on the following information requested by the committee: project description; aims of the research; research process; potential outcomes; all participants could and did give informed consent; safeguards, such as the fact that participants did not have to take part or could choose to withdraw at any stage assured anonymity for participants.

*5.4.6. Validity and bias*

As noted above, the researcher is a member of staff from the university and could therefore be seen to be biased towards the university point of view. However, the researcher is not involved in the secondary PGCE programme and so was able to report facts from a neutral stance. Some of the participants were known to the researcher before the research began but in different contexts, so the project was new to the researcher who was not researching something which had been discussed previously. The researcher did not take part in the debates in the meetings and did not deviate or suggest answers in the interviews, again with the aim of maintaining a neutral stance. The care taken to distance the researcher suggests some validity can be claimed for the findings.

All the participants were closely involved in the programme under investigation in the research study. This does not mean that they needed to agree with the way the programme was unfolding. However in the description of the findings and the discussion, it is suggested on occasion that there may be some bias in their replies. This is in order to clarify that no deliberate action was taken to try and find people as participants who were professed negative critics of the programme and to acknowledge that the participants were more likely to be positive because of their professed interest.

**6. The Research findings**

**6.1.1. The new PGCE Programme – document**

This document outlines the proposals for the new PGCE programme and makes it clear that the programme had not (at the time of writing – May 2012) gone through the final stages of the university’s validation processes. The aim of the programme is to ensure that ‘all who participate in the programme either directly or indirectly (pupils, student teachers, school and university staff) benefit in terms of their own personal learning and/or professional development. The document states that it has been devised ‘over 18 months by working parties comprising student teachers, schools and university staff, all of whom have been working together in different configurations’.

6.1.2. The school placements used to be designated ‘Placement A’ to indicate a first placement in school in the autumn and ‘Placement B’ to indicate a longer placement in the spring and summer. They are, in the new programme, to be named ‘Exploring learning and initial enactment phase’ and ‘sustained enactment and innovation phase’[[1]](#footnote-1). Explanation of the terms is given as ‘pre-enactment’ means ‘getting ready to do something in the classroom’; ‘enactment’ means ‘is carrying it out’; and ‘sustained enactment’ denotes that ‘this activity has become part of one’s normal classroom repertoire, thereby being able to link it to a particular standard if applicable’. Further explanation of the terms goes on to suggest that Initial Enactment involves utilising the best possible settings for student teachers to notice, understand and start to rehearse and implement key teaching strategies. The team hope ‘to create multiple entry points to help student teachers to see certain aspects of education and then, with careful scaffolding, start to make the first steps towards enactment with the final judgement being the ability to enact a key practice in a sustained way in a real educational setting – hence sustained enactment’.

6.1.3. The notion of working together (collaborative) and not just with (cooperative) is emphasised in the document with an explanation that this means that student teachers, school staff and university staff work together on the design, implementation and evaluation of the training model. This is to be achieved through an expansive model of learning which is developed together; planned together; delivered together; and evaluated together; is also understood together.

**6.2. Meetings**

***6.2.1. Meeting 1***

The first meeting visited by the researcher was one called as a follow-up to a previous meeting. Present at the meeting were 12 colleagues from school and 13 colleagues from the university, indicating a virtually even share between both halves of the partnership. This meeting was designated as an invitation to a unique 'third space' event to be held early in 2012 and the description here is taken directly from the invitation which was sent out:

The purpose of this would be for school mentors to work together with the entire PGCE subject team to draw up the progression through the generic strands of the PGCE course (SEN, literacy, behaviour management, EAL, coaching, 'noticing as disciplined enquiry’, assessment etc.). By doing this it was hoped to do several things:

1. Pool expertise and start to develop a shared understanding of progression.
2. Develop a template of activities and ways of working, all of which lead to

enactment.

1. Have a dry-run on our new ways of thinking that can then be incorporated into

subject-specific thinking and ways of working.

1. Develop a shared understanding of how the input and enactment activities can be structured so that there is room for subject-specific needs being developed without becoming like the Weimar Republic!

It was hoped that the above would give all a unique opportunity to gain coherence between School and University inputs. On the basis of this, the subjects [that is to say the different subject disciplines within the secondary programme] would then have a clear-cut idea of what they need to undertake and reinforce. The meeting was held at the University.

6.2.1.1. The meeting comprised various addresses and opportunities for discussion. There was no input from a university tutor at this meeting, but rather from school mentors and a student teacher. There was a suggestion in one address that there was a ‘gap between what is being said in one institution and another’; between HEI and school. There was a need to narrow that gap in order to make sure that every opportunity is taken to cater for the needs ofthe individualpeople concerned and for the ‘product’ at the end. The nature of the PGCE was seen as something ‘massive to do, something transformational’. The meeting therefore heralded an ‘’epiphany’.

6.2.1.2. Participants at the meeting were presented with questions for discussion:

* How far is the current model for ITT of learning and teaching speed dating?
* Is this effective and/or likely to be transformational?
* Are we working together, not with?

Discussions commented on these questions in the following ways (no assignation of the speaker is given here as the comments were anonymous in the large group):

*How far is the current model for ITT of learning and teaching speed dating?*

* Student teachers, it was thought, get some in-depth knowledge on practice, but in specific places; there tends to be concentration on one issue. ‘Moving on’ encourages superficial transfer of information.

*Is this effective and/or likely to be transformational?*

* ‘Theory and practice synthesised is best but minimising theory might be damaging to student teachers’.
* There was a suggestion that this might be seen as a ‘one size fits all’, a kind of sausage machine which is potentially destructive for student teachers and mentors; in practice, some things do not work.

*Are we working together, not with?*

* It was felt that the ‘divide’, that is to say the divide between HEIs and schools is quite apparent but that there is not necessarily a lack of continuity. There are ‘lots of elements which we separate’ but ‘how do you blend them?’ One meeting delegate thought that it was necessary to first acknowledge that there is a gap and then ask where it comes from; it was even possible to ask whether the gap exists at all.

6.2.1.3. Generally there were fears that if you deconstruct everything and remake it, it may well be the same (i.e. if we just pull to pieces what we already have and rebuild it we will arrive at the same answer even if the pieces are in a different order). The dilemma is taking the risk; it was felt that in some schools ‘you’ll be in trouble if you are radical’ and therefore it is essential to have the school leadership on board. It was worth remembering that ‘the Head has to carry the can’. We need to embrace it – and it should drive up standards, so how do you get Heads to agree with the dream? It was felt that it needs a holistic vision because it is like ‘starting again’ and within schools the professional mentors need passion and strategic influencing.

6.2.1.4. Further presentation and discussion centred around ‘the gap’, but there was some debate as to what ‘the gap’ was: the gap between what the tutor says and what the mentor says and how these are different; the gap between the university and the school? An HEI tutor suggested: ‘The biggest gap is that they [the schools] are thinking about teaching and we [the HEIs] are thinking about learning.’ There were no conclusions but questions raised: maybe there is a multiplicity of gaps and if we are to talk about ‘the gap’ it is essential to define ‘gap’.

6.2.1.5. The final word of the morning was given to a PGCE student teacher. S/he talked of shared understanding and commented that people can see the same thing and interpret it differently. The university sessions, in her/his opinion, give a wealth of information and ‘one way of doing it’ but schools may say it is unrealistic, so student teachers feel they have a dilemma. S/he felt that different ways of looking at things are beneficial so it would be a good idea to point this out. S/he also felt that it would be beneficial to have vision from one direction. S/he went on to talk about trainee understanding; in the university session, the ‘penny’ might ‘drop’ but in school it all disappears. There is a lack of context in university sessions and it needs to be made more real; it is not obvious what the relevance of sessions is. Particular examples s/he gave were: that of watching an experienced teacher; ‘we don’t know what we are looking at – we need to be given a focus’; ‘we know when a lesson isn’t perfect but don’t know what we are looking at in the evaluations – we need more critical feedback’. Finally s/he looked at high quality coaching and support. Her/his theme was that student teachers ‘don’t know what they don’t know’ or in fact what they do know; unconscious competence and unconscious incompetence. S/he thought that student teachers realise that there is no one solution but, if you are told what to look for, s/he suggested, you will see those things and there was a great need for mentors and tutors to help.

6.2.1.6. The afternoon session picked up on one of the themes pinpointed by the student teacher: noticing as a disciplined enquiry. This is one of the two strands represented in this research (see 5.4). The idea is to move away from Watch and Copy approach to Noticing and Observing. This was seen to be an invaluable tool for staff development but you need to know how to do it. Trainee teachers need a lens to help filter what goes on in the classroom which is a complex place.

6.2.1.7. In the final discussion group of the day, delegates turned to practicalities:

Questions raised:

* Should trainees physically remain in school?
* Should there be morning sessions and the afternoon be given over to reflection upon the session?
* Should the placements be re-arranged?
* The student teacher said that if you saw a lesson and immediately deconstructed it, it would be most effective; is this possible?

General comments made:

* Universities are a constant, schools aren’t. (School mentor)
* The idea, the principle is that we are all on the same team – integrate the training of the mentor with the training of the trainee.
* There is fluidity across boundaries, but more would be helpful.
* The key is to be a team, but there must be recognition of different roles.
* It’s a chance to be radical but present model is practical. (University tutor)
* Personalisation would make professional mentor job very difficult. (University tutor)
* Lots of professional mentors are not given status.(School mentor)
* A and B arrangement suits school.
* The big issue is philosophy – a mindset change for mentors – how are you going to take it down to the next level? There is a need for communication which tends to be by accident.

***6.2.2. Meeting 2***

This meeting was specifically called to further the work of the Noticing and Observing strand. The meeting took place in a school. This meeting followed up and elaborated upon the introduction given in Meeting 1. The suggestions presented in this meeting were formulated following input from colleagues at Meeting 1 and further discussion in this Meeting 2 was encouraged, thus ‘working together’ to create the shared understanding of the strand. Delegates at the meeting were: a PGCE student teacher (S); a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT); 4 university lecturers (M2L1, M2L2, M2L3, M2L4); a Professional mentor (M2PM).

6.2.2.1. The PM provided an introduction for the meeting to explain the significance of this strand, drawing on Lortie (1975).

‘Lortie (1975) refers to the time that a pupil spends in the classroom during the years of compulsory education as an “apprenticeship of observation”, suggesting that all who train to become teachers develop our initial ideas and conceptions of teaching based on our personal experiences as learners. The danger, he suggests, is one of imitation without understanding. Trainee teachers do not know what they do not know and therefore they are unable to structure observations and ask questions of practising teachers that would help them to understand the teaching and learning process. They just see the surface elements of teaching and not the underlying principles. Conversely, experienced teachers do not know what they know; their pedagogical expertise has become so proceduralised that they take it for granted’ (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006:78).

6.2.2.2. According to the PM, the ability to notice and observe is at the heart of the new PGCE; this ability permeates every aspect and area of teacher training; without these vital skills it is impossible for trainees to learn, progress and become teachers and effective teachers. S/he went on to quote Mason (2002:7-9) who makes a series of points about observing and noticing to illustrate the difficulties inherent in leaving noticing to chance:

* We tend to notice what we value;
* We cannot act upon something that we do not notice;
* We have a tendency to react according to established patterns, meaning that we are not responding sensitively to new situations, although we may delude ourselves that we are;
* We have so much to attend to at once in the classroom that we need to be selective in a situation where there are so many opportunities for learning.

6.2.2.3. The PM referred to the need for shared understanding, time and resources to make this successful. The key skills of noticing and observing are to be developed in this strand in a progressive way in the following three areas:

1. Progression in terms of developing greater self-awareness
2. Progression in terms of skills development
3. Progression in terms of knowledge and understanding

This strand seeks to move trainees from simple noticing to ... competently observing to ... developing effective practice.

6.2.2.4. Three basic assumptions were made to underpin the strand:

* There is high quality tutoring/mentoring/coaching
* There is sufficient time and resources available to deliver and support the activities
* Alongside this strand trainees have covered other crucial areas such as exploring learning and themselves as learners.

6.2.2.5. The assembled meeting participants were then invited to discuss a table setting out the proposed plan and notes were made of their suggestions and ideas. Having spent some time on this discussion, the PM posed the question: Where do we go from here? For the student teacher, the key problem was the mentors; how would they be able to translate all this when they do not have the time? The NQT echoed this concern, calling on what s/he called ‘pot-holes’ which are time, boredom and overload of information. There was some discussion of the use of video to help streamline things; despite agreement that the use of video was a good idea, Lecturer 2 pointed out the difficulties involved with getting all this video footage. Questions were also asked about where various things should be done: university or school? There was no answer at this stage as to whether this new plan would be ‘better’ than what had gone before or suggestion that it could be replicated in other situations. However the meeting, which seemed generally positive, also ended on positive note because, ‘mentors would make it work based on the underpinning principles’ (M2L4) and as it is all an ‘integral part of all that is done in the profession … professional vision drives it forward’ (M2L2).

***6.2.3. Meeting 3***

Meeting 3 was convened to discuss the Coaching and Mentoring Strand and took place at the University. The group this time were carefully chosen for their coaching experience and expertise and consisted of: 3 Professional mentors (M3PM1, M3PM2, M3PM3, an experienced proponent of coaching in schools (M3E) and three university lecturers (M3L1, M3L2, M3L3) although only M3L1 remained for the whole meeting.

6.2.3.1. M3L1 outlined the aims for the day:

* To discuss and plan how to implement the policy for developing the coaching model of practice for the new PGCE programme
* To consider ideas that ensure high-quality mentoring

S/he reiterated the overarching theme of schools and universities working together and reminded participants in the meeting that the strand of Coaching and Mentoring runs through the whole programme. This was endorsed by M3L3 who averred that what was intended was in fact very complex - collaboration, not cooperation- and needs to grow slowly by tapping into all concerned so all gain from it; pupils, mentors and schools, lecturers and university.

6.2.3.2. Much of the ensuing discussion focussed on coaching. M3L1 noted the contested nature of the word but suggested: ‘Teacher coaching in schools takes various forms, but is commonly conceived as a means of providing personalised professional support to teachers through discussion about their practice.’ S/he went on to suggest that good coaching encourages teachers to become more reflective, articulate, exploratory, metacognitive in relation to their work and its impact on learners. M3E found the use of the verb ‘encourages’ important, but suggested that it was something that teachers and mentors are doing but are not really aware they are doing it; it happens informally, in the corridor, it does not happen in a half hour one to one. So, the conclusion was that there is a need to develop the tools but not necessarily to stick rigidly to them.

6.2.3.3. L1 suggested questions for the meeting to consider:

* How do we ensure that there is a clear understanding of the differences between coaching and mentoring?
* What training has already been offered relating to coaching?
* Is coaching focused on teaching? Do we use coaching to focus on specific areas?
* How do we engage/train all student teachers, university tutors, mentors and other school staff?
* Do all participants follow a similar process/use the same coaching model for consistency?
* Does our training include different levels of coaching?

6.2.3.4. There was much debate on these questions. It was thought that the difference between mentoring and coaching was key (M3E). There was agreement that subject mentors tend to be required to be judging, whereas coaching is more of a conversation where judgement of the student teacher is not used (M3PM2). Mentoring is built on hierarchy; the mentor knows more than you, they use their experience, expertise, knowledge and understanding to try to help you develop as a teacher, they use their observations of you to make a difference, their judgement becomes part of the pass/fail (M3L3). The coaching model was good to get people moved on between levels, rather than mentoring where the judgement used was retrospective. The conclusions about coaching were that:

* Coaching is NOT about judgement
* Is about having personal goals
* Is not about giving advice
* Is about listening
* Is not about having all the answers
* Is about asking the right questions (to arrive at a possible solution)

Someone who had all tools to move from mentoring to coaching was most effective. There was a feeling that there was a need for individuality about the process of both mentoring and coaching, some student teachers need nothing but others need a lot of help. Not everyone should use the same model because you need to be comfortable and use the model which suits you (M3PM3) and therefore rely on ‘gut feeling’ (M3E).

6.2.3.5. In this debate ideas were constantly generated: ‘I’m already having ideas – in a perfect world the trainee needs a mentor and a coach but trainees being coaches of each other is brilliant and I will set it up – it should work very well’ (M3PM2). All agreed that ‘as a tool for improvement, coaching works’ (M3L3). The consensus was that coaching conversations should be purposeful, supportive, structured (despite some reservation, it was agreed that it can help the coach), honest, open minded (this is particularly difficult), influential, ongoing. An Action Plan was devised and a decision reached that mentoring and coaching are professional learning conversations and thus Professional Learning Conversation would be a preferable name for this strand. As in the Noticing and Observing strand the need for Headteachers to be ‘on board’ was thought to be crucial as was the commitment and interest of the mentors in schools. In fact the link between this strand and the Noticing and Observing strand was noted and it was actively recommended that ‘how they fit together’ be explored. To ease the roll-out of the idea, M3E felt it important that they make it clear that although the basic idea is not new, the novelty is that it is being highlighted and made more effective; looking at mentoring and coaching as a continuum where each individual may be at a different point. Student teachers’ perceptions, role play opportunities (M3PM1), a training package (L1), a measure of efficacy by asking the student teachers what they feel (M3PM2) were quickly suggested. However, realistically, problems and worries were considered, particularly the need for everyone to be speaking the same language in order to make this work. Following this meeting, M3L1 drew up the plan for final discussion in a subsequent meeting.

**6.3 Interviews**

6.3.1. Participants were invited to reflect on whether, in their experience, partnerships between the HEI and the school had been effective prior to the beginning of the new PGCE programme which had started in September 2012. There was a general feeling amongst all the participants that they had been ‘effective’ but also a realisation that their replies would be dependent upon their personal experiences, such as how long they had been working in partnership and their role within the partnership.

6.3.1.1. L1 pinpointed that even the use of the word ‘effective’ in this question was open to interpretation, suggesting that how one defines that word would influence how one answered. S/he explained further that if one were to look at the ‘effectiveness’ through Ofsted’s eyes, then that was ‘really the paperwork and the bureaucratic endeavour that was going on rather than getting a deeper understanding’. Despite a feeling that ‘in a way partnerships have always been effective’, one of the problems throughout the country, according to L1, is reaching this ‘deeper understanding’; ‘getting shared understanding, shared values and consistency/coherence’.T1 reported that her/his knowledge of partnership indicated ‘very supportive university staff’, but commented that’s/he felt that it was ‘not the case that we worked together really’. S/he drew a distinction between university staff and ‘us’, but was clear that if a trainee was struggling, then ‘the partnership was strong in the sense that you could ring the university colleagues and they would either come in and do supporting observations or provide the trainee with extra help’; from this kind of experience, s/he felt that the partnership ‘did work, work well’. Another interesting aspect from this participant was that s/he had the opportunity to see the complexity of the partnership at work and the amount of work which went into it. Time spent ‘thrashing out the details and things that were going to come up that were going to impact on how the partnership works’ was an eye opener. T2 commented on the fact that the partnership between HEI and school had become increasingly effective over the last couple of years and pointed out the ‘noticeable’ difference; ‘… going back five or six years ago, it seemed to be a case of the university did what they did, we did what we did, every so often there would be a conversation between the two, but there wasn’t any huge contact really’. This difference seemed to be based on the fact that the university had made significant efforts to work more with schools in the following ways: co-ordinating meetings with professional mentors from all the school in the area; coming in and working with mentors in school to see what’s happening; comparing university tutor and mentor judgement of lessons; setting up local area meetings where university tutors and professional mentors discuss the programme, any problems or issues, and share knowledge and success. All this leads to ‘a greater awareness of what’s happening’.

6.3.2. If the meaning of effective was in question, and the differing experiences of individuals suggesting differing responses, did the participants, as T1 suggested above concur with respect to their own definition of ‘working with’, a cooperative model of partnership, as opposed to ‘working together’, a collaborative model? The responses indicate there seemed to be shared understanding amongst them with several strong hints of a preference for working together.

6.3.2.1. Working with for L1 is to have ‘a distinct role and you stay in your particular space … to carry out that role’; this can mean that you are all training student teachers but do not ‘necessarily know what the other person is doing’. On the other hand, working together allows the ‘deeper understanding’ s/he had spoken of earlier; ‘it is a much deeper concept in that it is literally coming together, designing things together, evaluating them together and getting a joint understanding going’. Significantly it seemed the ‘vision’ was to be ‘worked out from scratch’. T3 spoke first about working together and had recourse to the notion of ‘deeper’ as L1 had suggested, by describing it as ‘more of an equal partnership … a much deeper relationship than simply working with somebody’. Various factors were necessary: more time; more depth; more detail; a greater range of thinking; greater range of people involved. Working with was synonymous with working alongside to her/him and could not result in the ‘solid, firm partnership’ which would be the outcome for working together. L2 also spoke first of working together and highlighted the need to have ‘a relationship … based on openness and trust and honesty between all partners’ in order to achieve true collaboration. S/he was less comfortable with the notion of working with and described it negatively using the same terminology.

6.3.2.2. T1 suggested that working with was ‘the university and school working largely separately but coming together to support the trainee on practice; to observe and assess basically’. Whereas her/his understanding of working together ‘comes down to the planning of the sessions and experiences that the trainees are going to have done jointly with school colleagues and university colleagues’. T2 thought that the initiative to work together did not only come from the university as the school itself made it clear that they wanted a much closer working relationship with the university and the university were ‘very, very open to that’. S/he felt that ‘my impression is that the university definitely has made a real positive move to get staff in school involved in their programmes; so where it was before “this is what the university is doing, schools here you just follow on from that”, [now] we all make sure it all fits together’. S/he felt that the university is looking for real input from schools, asking ‘how could we as a university make this better’ and this for her/him was the definition of working together.

6.3.3. Having ascertained the participants’ definition of ‘working with’ and ‘working together’, they were then asked to comment as to whether they thought the proposal of ‘working together’ would be beneficial and if so to whom, if not, why not.

6.3.3.1. L1 was clear that s/he thought it would be beneficial ‘on several levels’ and in fact used the notion of ‘cooperation’ within the benefits of ‘collaboration’. It should lead to closer cooperation; developing; growing; seeing things from different perspectives; and again ‘deeper’, this time in creating ‘deeper dialogues’. All this was in contrast with things being compartmentalised and hermetically sealed off which ‘working with’, without presumably the further dimension of ‘working together’, had led to in the past. L2 was sure of the benefits of working together and spoke of earlier experiences in a different context where s/he had seen this kind of collaboration build up over time to be beneficial to all. S/he could see the same happening here within the strand with which s/he was involved: ‘it has that synergy effect where … the sum of the whole is better than the sum of the part.’ To her/him ‘all’ involved colleagues from school and university colleagues.

6.3.3.2. When asked to consider who would benefit from working together, T1 suggested that working together has the potential to benefit all three parties; school colleagues, university colleagues and the trainees. S/he went on to elaborate this by suggesting that trainees benefit ‘because I think for them it makes it easier to see the impact of what they’re learning at university in the school environment … because it is more joined up’. School teachers benefit because ‘[it is good for them] to be considering the theory behind what they do or the different ways of doing what they do’. University colleagues benefit from being in schools ‘seeing how things are working in the classroom or seeing … ideas they may have, research they may be doing, as working practically’. L1 noted that a straw poll had indicated that teachers think that working together with university tutors ‘helps them to have a fresh look at what they are doing in the classroom’. In this straw poll the teachers asked had gone further, to suggest that working together acts against a perception of de-professionalisation as it ‘acts as an antidote to some of the things which are imposed in school; it reminds them of their roots and gives them a greater sense of professional belonging’.

6.3.3.3. T2 felt that working together was beneficial to the trainees because ‘it adds a realistic kind of context to what they’re doing. S/he was very careful to point out that s/he thought that the university has ‘a vital part to play in trainees starting to train teachers’; ‘they have a massive impact’. However s/he felt equally strongly that trainees need to have ‘school staff having an input into their programmes and benefiting from the experience of staff in schools as well: ‘I mean …you’ve got this vast amount of practical day-to-day experience that you know … the trainees can’t help but benefit from.’ For LI, involving student teachers in discussions with university tutors and school mentors helps to avoid ‘methodological dissonance’ where it is seen that the university does one thing and the school does another. T3 was adamant that ‘it’s not just beneficial, it’s absolutely crucial’ to involve university and school staff and then the trainees themselves in order to achieve ‘joined-up thinking’, rather than separate camps. Outcomes from working together would be: shared understanding; consistency of approach; consistency in all areas of standardisation and making judgements; giving trainees a similar experience no matter what subject … no matter what school.

6.3.3.4. At this early stage of the interviews and for this question, only L1 mentioned any benefit to pupils. S/he put pupils’ learning ‘at centre stage’ and spoke of the benefits to them, feeling that working together would allow subject specialists in universities to work together with subject specialists in schools to reach ‘deeper levels of learning from the classroom’ and getting ‘lots of returns for the pupils’. The question of benefit to pupils was noted and returned to later with all participants.

6.3.4. The participants were asked whether they thought the process for achieving working together would be simple or complex. It was suggested by the interviewer that they may find elements of both extremes in their answer.

6.3.4.1. L2 did not consider the process of working together as simple in any way. For her/him, it is complex, not helped by problems of time; ‘some of the partners had other priorities’. Other barriers could be ‘conflicting philosophies’: ‘it’s quite complex to get to a situation where everybody’s working together and they’re all aware of their own role within the team and they’re all working equally and having the opportunity to share openly and develop trust.’ T1 agreed that working together contained both simple and complex elements, but like L2 went straight for the complex which s/he saw in terms of logistics (the number of people involved), geography (getting dispersed people together), delivery ( delivery things together) and conceptually (for some colleagues it is not always easy to understand where the new PGCE is coming from; an aversion to change perhaps or maybe not understanding the potential benefits for the trainees), financial implications of moving people around. Two participants started by discussing the apparent simplicity of working together, but suggested that that simplicity masked the complex nature of what could be called ‘true’ collaboration. T2 agreed that working together was both simple and complex, but appeared ‘simple’ where perhaps two colleagues, one from university and one from school just sit down together and work out a straightforward document. Like L2 s/he felt that ‘demands on time’ is the thing which pushes it into the complex, when the university adds level of complexity by taking it beyond a simple discussion. S/he expressed it as, ‘I have a job and … all school staff have a job within their own school so it starts becoming a little more complex to manage then’.

6.3.4.2. Another layer of complexity is working with a wider group of people: ‘when you’ve got more people working on a project, who’s doing what? Who’s responsible?’ This potentially also adds tension according to T2. T3 echoed T2’s perceptions as s/he did think it was complex but started by noting ‘I think if you look at it superficially it’s quite simple’ because it looks like all you have to do is sit round and decide a few ideas on development or research. The complexity behind this apparent simplicity comes in because ‘we’re all coming from a very different viewpoint and standpoint’. S/he also alluded to time and logistics as adding to complexity; ‘if you want everybody involved [in a partnership of this size], that is not do-able’. Everybody for her/him are university programme leaders, university tutors, school professional mentors, school subject mentors and trainees; all need to be involved to create a ‘really good, high quality programme’ with consistency of approach where all feel a sense of ownership. An interesting dimension that s/he added was passion; those that are passionate about the project make it simpler, those that are not, do not: ‘Putting together a PGCE programme that is beneficial to everybody … and is a really powerful way of … developing … outstanding teachers and potential leaders of the future is really difficult.’ L1 immediately went for elements of both simple and complex: ‘we are looking at a project that every single subject area is working on which is, in their terms “how can we improve pupil learning”, it’s for them to define; there’s a lot of freedom there but it’s also constrained because that is the topic or focus of attention that twelve subject areas will be working on.’ To the original adjectives s/he added ‘exciting’ and ‘messy’; exciting because one can grab emerging possibilities and see where they lead, but messy, that is to say complex because there are many different parts interacting in different ways. Interestingly s/he continued to welcome the complexity because this led to the courage to see emerging possibilities. Was there anything simple then? Just ‘the kernel of the idea’.

6.3.5. The participants’ definitions of ‘working together’ had been seen to tally and seemed convinced and clear. So were they equally at home with the other terminology which underpins the project; ‘Boundary crossing’, ‘Third space’, ‘Expansive learning’, ‘Enactment’? Having assured them that this was by no means a test of their knowledge of these terms, but simply to find out about shared understandings, results showed some terms to be generally more accessible than others.

6.3.5.1. Boundary crossing:

L1 explained it as ‘going out of your own environment with its socio-cultural practices and strengths into literally a third area where you are working on one simple idea … people [are] coming to a joint understanding … listening to each others’ perspective … stepping outside your normal working area’. L2 was a little unsure: ‘I think it’s … about working in new contexts perhaps and having the opportunity to work in new and different areas … and consider different points of view.’ When asked to consider the boundaries s/he went on to talk about boundaries as perceptions of each others’ roles which may or not be correct: ‘so it’s trying to break down those [perceptions] and … have a common understanding on where each side is coming from.’ T1 had thought about this carefully and went beyond university and school to theory and practice boundary. S/he thought of boundary crossing in terms of the fact that the former PGCE was taking theory from the university to the school and practice from the school to the university. T3 also referred to the old PGCE where there was no crossing between school and university, but for her/him ‘the boundary crossing is where you are comfortable working in each others’ areas’. To gain effective partnership s/her felt you have to come out of your comfort zone and cross the boundary of separation because ‘our aim is to do the same thing’. T2 was not sure about boundary crossing but thought it might refer to getting out of your own subject area and looking at others or possibly cross-phased work with primaries.

6.3.5.2. Third space:

T2 was very comfortable with her/his concept of third space; ‘it’s the opportunity to meet and discuss things between teachers … and the university … out of your normal environment’. S/he described the third space as the overlap of a Venn diagram; school does things in school, the university does things in the university and the third space is the bringing together. T1 however had found this ‘the hardest to articulate’, but spent time explaining what it meant to her/him. The difficulty s/he had experienced in articulating this had come, not because s/he did not have a concept of third space but rather that s/he was struggling not to think literally of third space as a physical space where university and school colleagues come together to work together. S/he did feel that the third space was physical but also partly conceptual and here s/he began to unravel her/his thoughts which agreed with L1 who described this as ‘a neutral area where you can work together and be honest and open’: ‘It’s partly about not being in either the school or the university, both of which are dominated by their own way of working, cultures, traditions, practices … to be slightly free of that culture.’ T2 found third space confusing because of the physical and the conceptual both being of importance in her/his mind. Although s/he could see the third space in terms of ‘staff changing their mindset when they go to work in that third space with the trainees’, was it just in the mind or did the physical space matter too? T3 was clear, and abstracted third space from the physical space because that brings you back to ‘school does this and university does that’. Despite specific roles, the third space is ‘where you do your joined up thinking’. Like T1, L2 also found it hard to explain third space: ‘I wonder if it’s about having the opportunity to share and have someone there to kind of facilitate that sharing … in a neutral environment.’ S/he felt that the physical space was not important: ‘Although you might be based in a school or university, the walls, if you like, aren’t there.’

6.3.5.3 .Expansive learning:

T2 had no thoughts as to what this might be and T1 was also unsure, admitting that s/he felt the ‘least confident’ about this one because s/he had not come across it very much in meetings or documentation relating to the new PGCE, nevertheless s/he came up with a definition: ‘for me expansive means broadening horizons … thinking outwards.’ L2, T3 and L1 did have interpretations of this term. L2 felt that this meant: ‘having opportunities to share experiences and to enrich the experience for the people who are involved in the process and discussion in the third space environment … and to come up with innovative ideas from that experience.’ T3 interpreted expansive learning as ‘you are expanding your learning throughout this programme’ and this was something for everyone, trainees, mentors and tutors. L1 referred to what is happening in schools where s/he perceives ‘a very restrictive diet in terms of how people are often expected to teach’ – expansive learning would make for a ‘much more thick, expansive set of possibilities’.

6.3.5.4. Enactment:

All participants were acquainted with this term. L1 summed it up quickly as ‘just a term meaning actually doing it in the classroom; carrying it out’. T3’s definition was equally concise and sure as s/he described enactment as ‘sustained practice with understanding, continuing to learn’. L2 recognised that this was a big part of the new PGCE and felt that ‘it is about making sense and to be explicit about what you’ve learnt … for the trainees to learn from their own experience and try these ideas out’. T1 felt very confident about this and simply defined it as ‘for trainees to teach with understanding’, going on to explain, ‘for me it’s the move away from watch and copy to doing everything for a reason and if it doesn’t go according to plan, understanding how to change it’. T2’s definition was not as expansive as this: ‘it’s the trainees doing what they’re trained to do, it’s the very bottom line’, but went on to add similar ideas to seemingly allow the trainees to think for themselves: ‘it’s the practising, the reflection, the discussion and then thinking how it could be better, it’s the application of theory, it’s all of those things.’

6.3.6. The discussion now turned to the workings of the strand with which they are engaged. As explained earlier only two strands are represented in this research as only two were far enough advanced at the time the research took place to afford meaningful comment. Identification of the strand to which the participants belong would compromise the anonymity of the research as explained earlier so all direct allusion to whichever strand has been removed. Participants had been involved in meetings to discuss their strand, so they were asked if these meetings had allowed working together rather than with.

6.3.6.1. L1 felt that ‘within the parameters of the particular meetings … they are very good examples of working together … because there is much more coming together’ and this s/he suggested was both intellectually and spatially. However, s/he felt that once the ideas were taken out of the particular meetings, they could easily become working with: ‘because you’ve got to build that understanding … what we haven’t managed to do yet is to get the idea of everyone collaborating and buying into these ideas, or sharing them or understanding them.’ S/he described this as the original idea ‘dissipating’ them further out from the centre. A way forward would be to take the emerging ideas to other groups for further discussion. S/he stressed the importance of the leaders of the groups to effectively orchestrate the strands, skilfully crafting the constraints under which all are operating, enabling the simple idea to grow and then having the courage to step back and listen; a more constructivist model rather than transmission model.

6.3.6.2. T1 ‘definitely’ felt that the meetings allowed working together: ‘You had school colleagues thinking very practically about how the strand was going to be delivered … and then you had university colleagues that were able to question on the basis of that outline structure in more depth.’ S/he was worried that it might sound as if s/he thought that school colleagues and university colleagues are ‘always at different ends of some kind of spectrum’ and insisted that this was not the case: ‘But I think they have very different skills that they were bringing to that design document we were working on.’ If it had been working with, the meeting simply would not have happened. T2 also used the word ‘definitely’ to answer this question. Interestingly s/he noted that there were more school colleagues than university colleagues at the meetings which s/he acknowledged looked as though the balance had swung towards school but s/he felt that this meant that ‘it was very clear things were not being imposed on us by the university … it was, we want your input, we want your experience’. S/he did not think it would have been better to have more university people there and felt that they had had some input in one of the meetings from a university colleague and now one was enough to then ‘disseminate to all the other university staff’. On reflection s/he felt that university staff would benefit from training and that maybe it would have been a good idea for more of them to come to these meetings to start broadening their awareness.

6.3.6.3. T3 had no doubts: ‘Absolutely’ because the input of the group members (which in this case were evenly balanced between school and university staff) ‘coming from maybe different standpoints was incredibly useful’. The crux was the common aim when working together allows you to really work together ‘changing and amending and developing what you have in a much more powerful way’. In this group the basic framework was put together involving discussion with university colleagues and trainees and then used to work together to be developed further. S/he acknowledged the power of the third space to take this beyond a one-dimensional perspective: ‘so that it’s not just the university doing it, it’s not just the school … everyone is involved and being informed about what’s happening which is really important.’

6.3.6.4. L2 also felt that working together had happened at these meetings because there were open and frank discussions, evidence of trust and respect. S/he noted that the group was deliberately small and made up of colleagues who had knowledge and experience in the area of the strand. S/he felt that this helped trust to develop and that this encouraged colleagues to suggest ideas and accept ‘constructive criticism about the idea and to dig deeper to see if it is a good idea to pursue’.

6.3.7. If working together was generally thought to have been achieved, had the participants noted any difficulties inherent in making the strand work and had they actually noted any progress thus far? All but T1 felt in a position to comment on these aspects. With respect to difficulties in making the strand work, they quoted ‘time’ again as a problem, but also, understanding and process.

6.3.7.1. L1 noted ‘simple’ things like ‘time’, ‘people having other responsibilities’, ‘finance because it is expensive’ (particularly supply cover for school staff and travel expenses). S/he referred to the process as ‘a big jigsaw puzzle’ for which there could be no timetable as such because any ‘timetable is often dictated by people’s availability’; ‘you have to be patient, very patient’. T2 felt that terminology used in the strand in which s/he was engaged was a difficulty, ‘getting them [the subject mentors, the professional mentors and the university] to understand what we mean by …’. This lead her/him to conclude that one of the difficulties ‘is getting the message to people’ if they are not comfortable with it. S/he pointed out the number of schools involved and wondered about quality control; who does it? ‘The actual putting that into practice [the whole programme], you know, training the trainees and everybody else is massively complicated.’ T3 explained the difficulties of getting people together in the first place ‘to get a broad enough group of people … so that you had a whole range of views’. As s/he pointed out, ‘it’s very easy to just work with like-minded people and what you need is the challenge’. S/he felt that those with a school focus needed ‘the views and input from everybody else to change that’. A second difficulty is making sure that everyone understands the strand; ‘I’m not sure, hand on heart that we’ve got a deep understanding right throughout the partnership. I think there are some that will have looked through and think ‘yeah I can do this’ and there will be some who’ve not engaged with it at all.’ That is not to be prescriptive in her/his opinion, but ‘we’ve got to provide opportunities for knowledge, for understanding and for skill development’. S/he also alluded to the different diet that trainees may receive in this first year from those schools that have been involved and those that have not, but hoped that this would gradually be resolved over coming years. As a final word here, L2 made an interesting point; the whole point of working together implies there is really no ‘leader’ and that can be a difficulty: ‘because we did want to work collaboratively’.

6.3.8. As to any progress that had been made by these two strands, the answer was yes but there were varying degrees and definitions of what kind of progress had been made.

6.3.8.1. L2 made it clear that it had started small and there was a way to go.

T2 agreed that progress was slow. S/he had discovered that the trainees had not seemed conversant with the strand terminology when they arrived for first placement. However s/he did concede that ‘it was originally planned to be drip-fed in very slowly’, acknowledging it is ‘such a hugely complicated thing’. L1 agreed on the complexity, suggesting that progress was ‘multi-layered’ depending upon the strand and other factors. Despite an excellent start in some areas, ‘what we’ve not managed to do yet is to embed that into the lifeblood of the PGCE system and our student teachers and mentors’. The leitmotivs of time and patience returned as necessary because ‘it’s almost like a lifestyle change and they do take time’. S/he alluded to the ‘massive undertaking’ and ‘logistical nightmare’ and ‘different personalities’ and ‘different people with different expertise’ coming together’. T3 was more positive about the amount of progress which had been made, saying that the trainees in the strand in which s/he was involved had been introduced to the notion from the start at university: ‘So there’s a big awareness now … and that’s massive progress because we haven’t had that … consistently at that kind of level before.’ As a result of this, the trainees seemed ‘far more aware, their skills are far more developed ... that is certainly a big difference in terms of what they’re starting with and what we’re able to build on’.

6.3.9. Attention now turned to perceived benefits of the new programme and, to balance these benefits, any drawbacks to working together that the participants had sensed. The questions concerning benefits were polarised to schools and universities and the participants invited to consider each in turn.

6.3.9.1. T1 was initially cautious about any benefits to the school. S/he did feel that in terms of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) there could be benefits ‘building on their role as subject mentor … work more in depth in that role’. S/he had also considered that it could be of benefit to teachers as individuals through working in the third space with university colleagues ‘who in my experience always challenge you to think in a different way’. Also s/he felt that many school staff ‘don’t really have a clue what your trainee is under in terms of pressure and requirements and demands from university’ and a greater awareness of the whole picture could mean ‘that you can kind of provide for the better’. T2 also felt that it was professional development for staff in schools and getting more staff involved with trainees. S/he pointed out that trainees do not just work with subject and professional mentors, they take classes of all staff and therefore the benefits were potentially for all staff. L1 noted that school staff liked ‘the ideas that they perceived as being brought in from outside … by the student teachers and the university staff’ and T3 that it helps staff develop relationships with university colleagues. S/he also thought that it would be beneficial for teachers if they could access more on pedagogy at a research level ‘because we don’t easily have access to that in schools’. T3 also thought that it is ‘very, very effective professional development for all those staff who are involved’ and this was not only mentors: ‘SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), data manager, form tutors, year teams, all of those people are involved as well … they’re also developing themselves and their own understanding.’

6.3.9.2. In general terms, T1 recognised that s/he was talking from a school that is very involved with teacher training and that it would not be the same for every school; ‘for the benefits to be accessible to everyone you have to get as many schools involved in that third space as you can’. Some may think that the whole project is not new at all as L1 recognised that embedded programmes are not new. However s/he considered that many of these embedded programmes had not been sustained. The focus in this new programme which is pupils’ learning, and an agreement from all concerned that the way of going about it will give ‘the best in the short term and long term prospects of those pupils’ would make it beneficial. T3 was quick to claim ‘big benefits’ and one of the main benefits is a better overall understanding: ‘we’ve previously had an idea “oh they’re at the university doing stuff”.’

6.3.9.3. Only L1 mentioned the benefits to pupils, reiterating pupil learning at the core of the new programme. However, when asked, the other participants were unanimous in thinking it would benefit the pupils and that this was perhaps self-evident. T1’s answer was unequivocal; because the teacher training would be better through third space engagement, that would make for better teachers ‘which in turn is going to benefit pupils’.T2, like T1 thought that that if trainees’ performance in the classroom was enhanced ‘that will have a knock-on effect on the pupils’ and L2 agreed but considered that this would be ‘ultimately’ because of hoped for improvement in classroom practice. T3 saw benefits for pupils as more immediate and thought they had benefitted tremendously: ‘They are hopefully going to get access to new ideas, new ways of thinking.’

6.3.9.4. Before leaving the benefits for the school, participants were asked to comment on headteachers’ perceptions of the new programme. Apparently the headteachers were generally supportive but devolved responsibility: ‘they are rather removed from this sort of stuff; they pass it over to their professional mentor’ (L1); ‘the headteacher is one of the driving forces in the school and has said “I want us working with the university very, very closely” (T2).’

6.3.9.5. Answers regarding benefits to HEIs were much terser. L1 and L2 thought that HEIs would benefit; L1 because of the ‘wonderful stuff’ that you see in school and then can spread to all our schools and L2 because ‘our programme relies on us having good relationships with schools’ so if the partnership is benefitted by third space working, the HEI provision will be benefit. From the school perspective all teacher participants acknowledged benefits to the HEIs. T1 felt that the ability to link with practice would be beneficial: ‘it must be beneficial if what you’re saying can be immediately demonstrated.’ S/he felt it would help lecturers to get the trainees to understand how what they are doing in the university session will help them in school: ‘obviously in the third space they can see that link a lot more clearly.’ T2 agreed that working with people in schools and getting to know key areas of expertise in a school would be very beneficial to HEI colleagues and this can come about in the third space.

6.3.9.6. The drawbacks which were mentioned revolved mostly around ‘time’ again; ‘It’s fitting it all in, you know’ (T2). Time involved everyone but L2 thought that schools particularly struggled because ‘time is what school often don’t have’.T1 saw time in terms of how willing people are to give up their time; some teachers saw it as ‘imposition’, some as ‘invigoration’. It would be important therefore s/he felt to invite people to join the third space rather than insisting: ‘you need people in your third space who are super excited about teaching and want to try things.’ S/he thought it may be the same in the HEI, but did not feel in a position to comment with authority on that. S/he did, however, apply the same principle to the trainees: ‘They do need to invest in what they’re doing. I went to see them and one [wanted to go home] and the last hour was for reflection and it was the most important hour of the whole day, so maybe there’s an element of trainees needing to appreciate what it means to be in that third space and what they should try and get out of it.’

6.3.9.7. T3 also picked time in as much as finding the time to get together but also selected the financial aspect as a drawback. Over and above this, s/he felt that ‘change’ could be a drawback ‘because as a school you are going to have to shift and move and as a university you are going to have to shift and move and any change is uncomfortable but has to be done for the good of the programme’. L1and L2 elaborated this kind of idea: there can be conflict if ‘the wider partnership believes in this, but the schools believe in that’ (L1); because working together ‘is about shared philosophies and there are quite a lot of changes on the horizon … that could be seen as threats to the partnership’ and there could be ‘conflicting interests too’ (L2). L2 also picked up a dilemma of partnership working; how much information do you share, how honest can you be without compromising your own position? As a global suggestion of ways round drawbacks, L1 offered a solution; have the funding in place and adequate time, then there are no disadvantages as ‘it’s an unparalleled opportunity to test your assumptions for all parties’.

6.3.10. Finally participants were asked to reflect; firstly on any significant differences with previous practice and secondly on the overall effectiveness of the process.

6.3.10.1. L1 did not see a distinct break between past and present, but rather that the process had been ‘evolution, not revolution’. However what s/he did see as different was the ‘underlying template for development’ which means that changes are underneath the surface and have the potential to develop. Also there are quite a lot of structural changes.T2 suggested that it was a gradual drip. They had started the year with a feeling of trepidation concerning all the things they thought looked ‘new’ but then realised that ‘it doesn’t actually look that different’. This was definitely a positive thing because it meant that ‘we can take this on board bit by bit … rather than having to just deal with massive change all at once. So there is a change, I wouldn’t say there was a significant difference … yet’ …but s/he did expect that the significant difference to the trainees and their performance in the classroom would happen given time. T3 however was in no doubt that there was a significant difference already and admitted that this may be because of the fact that the school had totally embraced the new PGCE. S/he felt that the mentors in school had ‘moved it [the core stuff] on to a significantly different level’ in terms of what they are doing and how they are doing it. There was far more awareness of ‘going slowly to go more quickly’ (discussed in 4.3), ‘because if we invest in the initial stages now …they’re far more prepared to go into that second sustained enactment phase’. S/he also thought that the trainees were far more prepared this year: ‘they are singing from the same hymn sheet … it’s more joined up than it has been ... I’m not starting from scratch … it’s having an awareness and an understanding of what’s been achieved before they walk through that school door.’ Not only this but the system for making judgements was improved according to her/him; ‘all the paperwork, all the admin. are significantly better’.

6.3.10.2. With regard to reflection on the overall effectiveness of the process to grow this new way of working, L1 thought that more time would have been useful ‘to grow it even more gradually’. This is because to take a large number of people along with you ‘can be quite tricky’. The ‘speed’ of this had meant that gaps of understanding had opened up which are not a criticism of the process itself but just of the speed. L2 referred to the negativity occasioned by schools feeling there were too many changes but that has been resolved as they realised that the process is a slow one.

6.3.10.3. T1 thought the meetings to set up the strand were ‘a perfect example of how the PGCE is now designed in a way that’s coming from both perspectives jointly together. The conference s/he had attended as part of the process had been effective; ‘you couldn’t fail at that conference, I don’t think, to understand what was trying to be achieved by the new PGCE’. T2 felt that it mostly had been effective. The meetings and the conferences had been very, very successful in her/his opinion. S/he did however feel that communication within the university could have been better as that has led to some frustration at a school level. S/he also felt that it was not always clear ‘who actually knows what’s going on’. T3 was clear it had been effective but that it was equally very challenging and very difficult ‘and there’s still lots to do’. The question of change came up as one of the problems of the process because of people’s reluctance to change. S/he realistically thought that you could work together but sometimes it was not possible and you have to go off to ‘do your bit’ ‘and then you kind of come together and do a little bit of togetherness and then you go off’. Even it has not been perfect however, s/he felt that ‘the outcome is an effective and a successful one … that allows us to build on that success and develop even further. It perhaps needs the pain to get to that moment’.

6.3.11. Concluding thoughts: The participants were invited to make any other comments they wished; L1, T2 and T3 took advantage of this to convey some of the passion they felt about the new way of working.

6.3.11.1. T2 had found it personally rewarding; ‘it’s rejuvenated me and my attitude to what I do in school, it really has, it’s great’. L1 wanted to spread the rewards of Third Space working together to a potentially very wide audience; ‘ if we can broadcast [this] much, much wider, and get a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, a sense of development, a sense of fulfilment, a sense of academic rigour and challenge and all those sorts of things … it would enrich everyone’s life, both professionally and personally and would give greater meaning to what we do; pupils, staff, university lecturers, anyone that’s involved in our partnership’. T3 was equally enthusiastic but suggested that ‘the problem, I guess now, is the direction that education is taking … really the fear is you put all this time and effort into creating something that actually may not have a shelf life, simply because of politically the direction that teacher training is going’.

**7. Discussion and concluding thoughts**

***7.1 An ambitious undertaking***

7.1.1. The findings of this research suggest strongly that the new PGCE programme based on the notion of bringing school and HEI partners in teacher education into a ‘Third Space’ and aiming to ‘work together’ rather than ‘work with’ is ambitious. The first meeting visited by this research project set out a list of hoped for outcomes and set the scene for an ambitious undertaking as witnessed later in the interviews. If we recall Fullan’s (2011) use of Kluger’s (2008) concept of ‘simplexivity’; ‘simple to understand, complex to make jell’, this resonates well with the process and practicalities in the experience of the interview participants. These interview participants had been very immersed in the Third Space project and are committed to it. Although they acknowledged a seemingly ‘simple’ way of working – after all, ‘working together’ sounds straightforward on the surface and does not appear to be greatly different to ‘working with’, if at all - actual involvement in the project had unearthed the complexities of making this work: finding enough time; developing trust to work equally together; the amount of people involved; geographical distances between people; understanding the basic concepts of Third Space and other terminology crucial to the project; financial implications of moving people around; embracing change; many people embracing a certain philosophy; leadership within collaboration, can it or should it exist and what happens without it?; working out who is involved and ensuring all parties really are involved; creating a sense of ownership; transmitting individual passion to legions; having patience.

***7.2 A ‘scary’ undertaking***

7.2.1. If Third Space activity to create ‘working together’ is ambitious, is it really necessary to create a revolution when perhaps none is needed? Meeting 1 suggested that some thought that the whole project may create a daunting amount of upheaval for very little gain; deconstruction for deconstruction’s sake. There is little doubt that in this first meeting there was a worry that this project was at the least ‘risky’ and a vision which must be shared by school senior management or it would fail. Participants in meeting 2 had indicated that there was no indication as to whether the vision would put in place a ‘better’ way of working than that which had been ‘effective’ before. Interestingly however, there was definitely a feeling throughout the research project that Third Space was and would be better. Albeit remembering that the participants represented in the research were all heavily committed to the project, there had been no coercion involved and they had chosen of their own free will to embrace this concept by actually ‘working together’ to work it out.

7.2.2. In Meeting 1 participants had used terminology with negative connotations with reference to previous ‘effective’ partnerships between HEIs and schools: ‘speed dating’; ‘a one size fits all’; ‘a kind of sausage machine’; suggesting a situation which could be improved upon. It was at this point in the interviews that the concept of ‘deeper’ arrived as a fitting comparative term to use rather than ‘better’. ‘Deeper’, it seems, aligns with ‘working together’, ‘effective’ aligns with bureaucracy it was suggested. However we also learned that this ‘change’ is not as sudden as it might at first seem. Both HEI and school colleagues pointed to a gradual process over several years of schools and HEIs drawing closer together to bring about more effective partnership; ‘a noticeable difference’ T2 told us which had started five or six years previously. This could point to a less ‘scary’ prospect perhaps as Third Space activity simply (despite its complex nature) builds on that gentle but insistent process of improving partnership relations for the good of all.

***7.3 Getting everybody on board***

7.3.1. Getting ‘everybody’ on board in an ambitious project such as this adds to the complexity and difficulty and in turn to the possible rejection of the project. Interview participants referred to ‘everybody’ and T3 defined who everybody is for us: university programme leaders, university tutors, school professional mentors, school subject mentors and trainees. In Meeting 1 there was an insistence that it would be necessary to narrow the ‘gap’ of understanding and the notion of ‘gaps’ that needed to be narrowed or closed recurred throughout the research: a gap between knowing about teaching and doing teaching; current gaps in the training process of which there are apparently many; gaps between what is being said in one institution and another; the gap between university and school; the gap between what the university says to a student teacher or student teachers and what the school says; the gap between talking about learning and talking about teaching; a reluctance perhaps to acknowledge that all these apparent gaps exist; a reluctance to close them even if you acknowledge their existence.

7.3.2. A major ‘gap’ is the gap between interpretations of terminology .The terms which we have seen earlier as being fundamental to Third Space partnership are: Third Space; boundary crossing; expansive learning; enactment; working together rather than working with. The expression ‘Third Space’ did not arise in the meetings, arguably because participants in the meetings were ‘in it’ at the time and did not feel any need to articulate this. None of the other terms were used in the meetings with the exception of ‘enactment’ which was used in Meeting 1, so the understanding of these terms was discussed through the interviews.

7.3.3. The interview participants were committed to the project and generally, but not completely, comfortable with the terminology. Third Space afforded some fascinating pictures of the desired ‘deeper’ thinking as participants acknowledged that they knew what it was despite the fact that they had to think about how to actually describe it.

How did their definitions sit with Zeichner’s (2010:92) description of Third Space as ‘transformative’? Did they agree with Soja (1996:57) who developed the theory of Third Space as somewhere in which ‘everything comes together… subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history’? ‘Everything comes together’; all participants saw Third Space as the coming together of school and HEI. ‘The abstract and the concrete …’; T1, T3 and L2 thought deeply about Third Space and concluded that it was perhaps physical to a certain extent, but went beyond that to a place where ‘the walls are not there’. L1 named it a neutral space and T2 placed it firmly in the overlapping space beyond the ‘polarities’ of school and university. (Figure i)



School Third

Space HEI

Figure i: T2’s Venn diagram

7.3.4. And did they believe that it was ‘transformative’? In as much as the data shows throughout that they are in favour and enthusiastic about Third Space, the answer appears to be that they did. However, it was suggested earlier that ‘a massive amount of “boundary crossing” for trainees, school staff and university staff needs to take place in order for the Third Space to be transformative’ (see 3.4.3.) . Crossing the perceived boundaries between two linked but potentially discontinuous cultures – that of the school and that of the HEI – compels members of those spaces to reflect, to reconsider their assumptions, presumably to be transformed into the new form of partnership, working together. The question of defining boundary crossing did seem to have precipitated ‘deep’ reflection amongst the interview participants; there was evidence of lack of certainty, questioning, wondering. The boundaries they came up with were: working with primary schools; going beyond your own subject area; working in new contexts; considering other points of view; gaining a better understanding of others’ roles; breaking down perceptions; theory and practice crossing between school and university. Certainly one could think to claim understanding of boundary crossing here as all these possibilities recognise boundaries and work to make them fluid so that traffic back and forth is facilitated. This does not mean that the boundaries disappear. On the contrary the existence of the boundaries is indisputable and it could be argued that this creates the opportunities for ‘deep’ thought, but the concept of ‘comfort’ to which T3 alluded becomes perhaps the ideal; boundary crossing via the Third Space takes you from your ‘comfort zone’ into a new, transformed position where you feel comfortable in each others’ areas, thus creating new ‘comfort zones’.

7.3.5. Expansive learning, we learn from the literature, leads from the boundary crossing; an enriched process by dint of the new territories into which one crosses, and emphasis of the creation of new knowledge. Thus T1’s tentative suggestion that this would mean ‘broadening horizons and thinking outwards’ seems a worthy definition. ‘Innovative ideas’ from L2 and T3’s supposition that ‘expansive’ was exactly that – ‘expanding’ - suggest that the point of language can very often be a means to open debate of possibilities rather than close debate to a singular answer; this contrast was illustrated by L2 whose antithesis ‘restricted’ confines the learner behind her/his boundary.

7.3.6. Enactment

When discussing boundary crossing and expansive learning, we concluded that ‘comfort’ was a key to this and with this last term ‘enactment’, comfort was found as all interview participants visibly relaxed, confidently linking understanding to practice as Kennedy (1999) was reported to have suggested earlier: making sense; carrying it out; learning from experience; having confidence to adapt to circumstances.

***7.4. Working together or working with?***

7.4.1. Meeting in the Third Space is intended to lead to ‘working together’ which, it seems from the whole research project, appears to be eminently preferable to just ‘working with’; the latter not to be discarded, but to be enriched by the former. Being cooperative and being collaborative can be supposed synonyms; a glimpse in the dictionary or thesaurus finds the two words supporting one another to reach their definition. For example, cooperation can be defined as ‘acting together willingly for a common purpose or benefit’, a seemingly beneficial kind of partnership which embraces collaboration. (Indeed, L1 (in 6.3.3.1.) refers to the notion of ‘cooperation’ within the benefits of ‘collaboration’.) However, this project rests upon a more complex distinction between the two concepts which is borne out by the findings of the research. Throughout the literature, the programme details, the meetings and the interviews, the importance of the distinction has been not only obvious, but welcomed and accepted and the new way of ‘working together and not just with’ has been embraced.

7.4.2. The initiative for ‘working together’ came from the university; there was evidence to suggest that university colleagues were reaching out to schools. The realisation that ‘the model of training is still predominantly a cooperative one, rather that a collaborative one’ as stated in 3.3.1. may have been perceived in schools as well as the university, but the impetus came from the latter. It could be argued that this is not surprising as up to the time of the research, the role of the university in teacher training and education has arguably been dominant. In the first meeting, the strand meetings and the interviews, it seemed that school colleagues were deliberately well represented at the invitation of university colleagues. School colleagues recognised the ‘divide’ and the tentative beginnings of ‘changing the mindsets’ of school mentors was welcomed, albeit with some hesitation as to how it could be achieved. By the meeting 1, the practicalities of how to achieve the ideal of ‘working together’ were being raised; the ‘buy-in’ was apparent, the ‘how’ in question. Interesting too is the fact that the important role of the university was never in question as the suggestion of the school mentor in Meeting 1 that the ‘university is a constant, the school is not’ was not challenged or debated, simply accepted. There was a student teacher present at Meeting 1 and this gives an interesting perspective at this point as s/he endorsed the merits of both university and school but looked for ‘shared understanding’ to help student teachers to make sense of the university experience in school and make sense of the school experience in university; ‘working together’.

7.4.3. From observation, Meetings 2 and 3 suggested evidence of ‘working together’. The level of debate, listening, sharing and working out solutions in both meetings encouraged understanding of one another’s roles, gave opportunities for designing training together, allowed ‘deep’ engagement. A leaning towards reaching out to school colleagues was again discernible: in Meeting 2 those present were approximately equally divided between school and university but the lead was from school; in Meeting 3 there were significantly more school colleagues who were encouraged by university colleagues to engage deeply with their strand, which they did with vigour. In all meetings, how school and university ‘fit together’ was actively explored. Interview responses also suggested evidence of ‘working together’ as perceived by the participants. The responses were ‘definite’, there was no doubt. Questions were raised about who was taking the lead in the meetings; here L1 raised a fascinating conundrum that suggests that equal partnership is best achieved when leadership is strong. In other words to gain that ‘definite’ response, partnership cannot be left to chance but needs direction, for which the application of the adjective ‘sensitive’ to the concept of ‘leadership’ may go some way to solving the conundrum. What ‘working together’ brought to school and university staff was: different, complementary skills; different, very useful standpoints; powerful transformation of training; shared information and understanding;

7.4.4. The enthusiasm for ‘working together’ was borne out in the interviews where all participants were not only in favour, but very clear about what it meant to work together. The initiative of the university coming to schools to work together with them was not lost on the school interview participants who were most appreciative of the trust shown to them by university colleagues wanting their experience. If ‘working together’ is considered visionary and ideal, then this initiative based on the perceived trust and honesty between all parties that L2 had hoped for would seem, according to the interview participants, to go far beyond the perceived simpler notion of ‘working with’. The end result would be an equal and firm partnership. However ideas concerning the perceived beneficiaries of this partnership raised some interesting points. There was no doubt that school colleagues would benefit from working together with university colleagues who bring elements of challenge and of questioning, perceived as beneficial to the sense of professional self and ‘vital’/’crucial’ for successful initial training of teachers. School mentors would benefit from the greater depth of engagement, but the whole school would benefit from an enhanced understanding about demands on trainees. As all staff came across trainees in different ways, they would personally benefit from their involvement with the trainees and it was seen as excellent CPD. Some mention was made of the links to pedagogy linked to research which working together with the HEI would bring. Arguably trainees would benefit from an enhanced view of the bigger picture, joining up the dots between practice and study. However, if ‘working together’ does not impact on children and young people, one could suppose that it is disjointed from its ‘moral purpose’ so it was interesting that the link may have been implicit to all but it certainly was not voluntarily made explicit by the interview participants (except L1 who did confirm it without prompt). It seemed it is self-evident that in a chain from better relations between schools and HEIs working together in the Third Space, this filters to the trainees and somehow to the pupils, but some of the words used – ‘a knock-on effect’, ‘ultimately’, ‘hopefully’ – although based on dedicated commitment seem perhaps to dwell more in future aspirations, despite T3’s supposition of immediate benefits. The other potentially significant people within the school who could ‘benefit’ or at least see benefits accruing to their school were headteachers. Meeting 3 suggested how important it was for them to be on board. However, in the interviews, their distant support and apparent general approbation of the project suggests perhaps a future direction for this research to explore.

7.4.5. T3 reminded us that ‘working together’, despite its desirability and the benefits for all concerned, is an ideal which is not possible ‘all the time’. Pragmatically ‘working with’ is not redundant; ‘work together’ to set things up, ‘work with’ to maintain the set-up, ‘work together’ again to continue the partnership to the high standards. This is not to undermine collaboration, but rather to offer practical advice to ensure that ‘working together’ does not come unstuck because of difficulties which are examined next.

***7.5. Difficulties/drawbacks (and solutions?)***

7.5.1. We have looked earlier at the need to get everyone ‘on board’, but it seems that not only do they need to be on board, they also need to speak the same language (Meeting 3). The interview participants mostly understood the terminology, but not completely, so how can the project be generalised beyond its initial geographical area? Interview participants pointed out that generalisation is particularly difficult if someone is not ‘that keen in the first place’. The complexity of the project, whilst invigorating and allowing the depth required can also be a problem if that very complexity is a bridge too far for many. It was suggested in 3.2 that a basic ‘difficulty’ inherent in something as potentially radical and transformative as ‘working together’ in the Third Space is the cultivation of a culture of change to allow a shared vision to evolve and be accepted. Interview participants realised this; a vision in order to become a reality has to be not only shared, but also agreed.

7.5.2. If people accept wholeheartedly the vision, the practicalities of making it a reality strike home forcibly and test the acceptance of the vision (Meeting 1). Within the question of practicality lie the multitude of participants involved in the project, both in the initial stages and in a hypothetical future; and therein lies the ubiquitous problem of time. Whether school colleagues would have the time to engage with this new way of working was questioned by participants in Meeting 2 and interview participants. If people find the time T1 wondered how willing they would be to give it up. This again tests the acceptance of the vision but also goes beyond to test the individual passion for the vision, somewhat diluted from its source. The solution to time is to be patient (L1). This is not something common in educational circles as government agendas have a tendency to run away in different directions before ‘good’ ideas can become embedded.

7.5.3. Logistics were felt to be problematic. The Third Space discussion created the feeling of a hyperspace beyond physical boundaries, but the physical space for meetings and for various parts of the programme have to be decided – university or school? – and the movement of large numbers of people into and out of the physical spaces brings up the question of finance; ‘it is expensive’ (L1). Thus sufficient conviction backed by funding is needed.

7.5.4. Another possible difficulty is Quality Control. Where does the leadership lie in real terms and where does the responsibility lie? With large numbers of schools involved and potentially large numbers of HEIs, responsibilities within collaboration are key and resume the debate concerning trust and reach one of the main problems of successful partnership; however unpalatable it may seem, partnership can become unstable if the delicate balance of sharing in an atmosphere of trust is broken or seen to be broken by either partner. At this juncture it would be highly likely that conflict between the partners would appear, rather than working together. This and all these difficulties can possibly be answered idealistically by the main driver; shared moral purpose and as L1 suggested a lot of patience. This is not to underestimate the difficulties or to be glib in suggesting a ‘simple’ solution, but rather to suggest that ‘working together’ seems, from this research, to promise a renewed definition of partnership seen within a renewed definition of the epithet ‘effective’ which is worth the effort.

***7.6. Reflection***

7.6.1. The need for patience echoed throughout the interview participants’ reflections on progress to date: ‘started small’, ‘a way to go’; ‘progress is slow’; ‘need to drip feed [the student teachers]’. This slow progress was set against ‘the massive undertaking’ which only one participant put against ‘massive progress’ made, but this is not to say that the other participants did not feel that progress was happening. It is interesting to notice that the seemingly daunting nature of the project turned out to be not quite as ‘new’ or ‘different’ as they feared. T2’s realisation that although the end result may take time, the unfolding was gradual, as arguably it should be. Most significantly a general feeling that no one is ‘starting from scratch’; ‘working together’ through Third Space activity is evolving.

***7.7. Concluding thoughts***

7.7.1. Developing partnership through Third Space activity is ambitious, it is scary, it is possible. T3 summed it up as ‘pain’ but the pain seems necessary to arrive at something worthwhile. The passion for Third Space working was evident throughout the research; it must be said that it was the researcher who insisted on the balance of ‘difficulties’ and ‘drawbacks’ as they were not automatically forthcoming and were accepted but not seen to be any reason for not going ahead. The ‘pain’ brought rewards: rejuvenation, personal reward, excitement, fulfilment, challenge, enrichment. Is it generalisable? The concepts of Third Space working and ‘working together’ transcend this small research project and transcend education. It is unlikely that exactly the same process would unravel in different circumstances, but one could argue that to be irrelevant. The philosophy remains the constant here and is approachable for all and therein lies the generalisability.

7.7.2. If we revisit the aims of the project: the collaborative provision of teacher training between schools and HEIs in teacher education has been accomplished by this research within the limitations of scale; the notion of Third Space to bring about effective collaborative provision has been investigated. As teacher education in England undergoes yet more change with the introduction of School Direct which ‘allows schools to grow their own new teachers by giving them opportunity to recruit and train their own staff’ (DfE, 2012b) and consequently changes the nature of partnership between schools and HEIs, it is recommended that the philosophy within ‘working together’ through Third Space activity continues to be embraced and researched as a fundamental way of achieving excellent teacher education and training of student teachers, and hence excellent teachers of children and young people.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix i**

**Codes used for participants in the research**

**Meeting 2**

M2L1 – University lecturer

M2L2 - University lecturer

M2L3 - University lecturer

M2L4 - University lecturer

M2PM – School professional mentor

S – Student teacher

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

**Meeting 3**

M3L1 - University lecturer

M3L2 - University lecturer

M3L3 - University lecturer

M3PM1 - School professional mentor

M3PM2 - School professional mentor

M3PM3 - School professional mentor

M3E – Experienced proponent of coaching in schools

**Appendix ii**

Copy of e-mail invitation sent to interview participants:

Dear xxxx,

I am writing to you concerning the Research Project that I am carrying out for xxxx, entitled 'Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity'. You may remember that I attended a meeting of the xxxx group at the University earlier this year as an observer. I am now in a position to complete the pilot part of the research by holding some interviews with key stakeholders and would like to ask you to contribute to the research by taking part in a one to one interview with me.

If you would be willing to do this, please would you suggest to me some possible times and dates between now and Christmas when I could hold the interview; I am very happy to come to your school and would simply ask that we can use a room where we would not be disturbed / hold the interview in the university which I will organise. I suggest that the interview will take between 40 and 60 minutes to complete.

I attach:

a copy of the participation information sheet which outlines the research;

a copy of the consent form which you can either sign electronically and send

back via e-mail or sign when you come to the interview.

Once the date and time are decided I will send you a copy of the questions to consider before the interview.

If you need any other information, please get back to me.

Thank you

**Appendix iii**

**Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity**

**Information sheet for participants**

James Burch, University of Cumbria

Dr Alison Jackson, University of Cumbria

The Coalition Government White Paper (2010) set out the intention that more teacher training will be ‘on the job’, thus turning the spotlight more than ever upon successful partnership between schools and HEIs. In future Ofsted inspections, a key criterion for judging the quality of an ITE programme will be the depth of the partnership arrangements with particular emphasis being given to the role of school partners in the overall provision. The model of partnership in use at present is still predominantly a cooperative one, that is to say working *with,*  rather than a collaborative one, that is to say working *together* (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006; Edwards and Mutton, 2007; Bronkhurst et al, 2011). This small scale research project sets out to be the first step in further research which will investigate models of partnership and suggest an approach to partnership based on collaborative provision, both in terms of planning and delivery and the proposed research. The benefits of the initial study will be to teacher educators at this university and to their colleagues in school. As the importance of successful partnership is relevant to all teacher educators and school colleagues, dissemination through organisations such as TEAN (Teacher Education Advancement Network) will benefit the wider teacher education community.

**Purpose:** The aim of this research is to explore and evaluate the strategies employed to develop collaborative provision between school and HEI in teacher education.

**Process:**

* Literature review of key trends in teacher education within the UK, especially in relation to comparisons between collaborative and cooperative provision between schools and HEIs
* Participant observation of 'third space' planning meetings in which colleagues from schools, University staff, trainees and other professionals will work together on developing a collaborative model of provision.
* Interviews with key stakeholders in two of the strands: noticing and coaching and mentoring

**Outcomes:**

* Internal dissemination and impact-related information for the SED and the next inspection
* Journal articles
* Presentation at education conferences
* Each participant in the research will receive a summary of the overall report in September/October 2013.

**Confidentiality**

Care will be taken at all steps of the research to ensure that participants’ identities are anonymised:

* All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. At the stage of transcribing, the actual identity of the respondent will be anonymised and not made available to the professional transcriber of the interviews. The recordings will be confidential, kept on a password protected computer and destroyed after five years in accordance with university policy. Participants can withdraw consent for the recording to be used at any time up to the point at which the interview material has been analysed and incorporated with other data. Any data that would be useful for future groups of student teachers and other staff will only be used with specific permissions from the owning student teacher/staff member.
* Notes from the observation of the programme will be anonymised and stored in electronic form on a password protected computer; any hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet.

**Appendix iv**

**Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity:**

**Research Project**

**Statement of Informed Consent**

***Stakeholders***

Type of data to be collected from school and university staff: observation of meetings; interviews

***Informed Consent***

This research project forms the initial evaluation of the project concerned with developing partnership through Third Space activity with which you are involved. It is intended that the data will be used in research reports and in publications for the wider higher education community.

We only want you to participate if you are happy to give your ‘informed consent’ for the information collected during the project to be used for this purpose. Therefore, in signing this document, you are agreeing with the following statements:

* I understand that my participation in the project is entirely voluntary
* I understand that strict confidentiality will be preserved throughout the research project, that my identity will be protected at all times, and that my contributions will be anonymous.
* I understand that I am taking part in this project of my own free will, and that I can withdraw from the project any time until the data is merged during data analysis, without giving a reason, and that there will be no negative consequences if I do so.
* I understand that, if I participate in any interviews, they will be recorded and transcribed and that once an interview has been transcribed, the researcher will check the transcription with me for accuracy, to ensure that I agree with it and to give me an opportunity to make changes if necessary.
* In accordance with the procedures for confidentiality, anonymity and the freedom to withdraw outlined above, I consent to my contributions being used in the writing of research reports and for any further publications and presentations in journal articles or educational conference.
* I understand that all data will be anonymised, securely locked away and destroyed at the end of 5 years and that the identity of all participants will not be revealed.
* I understand that I will be given access to the findings of the research report.

*Please sign*

I consent to participate in the Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity project at the University of Cumbria:

Name: ………………………………………………………………..

Institution: ……………………………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………

**Appendix v**

**Developing Partnership through Third Space Activity**

**The aims of this research project are:**

* To explore and evaluate the strategies employed to develop collaborative provision of teacher training between schools and HEIs in teacher education.
* To investigate the notion of the use of ‘Third Space’ to bring about effective collaborative provision.

**Interview questions**

1. Have you felt that partnerships between the HEI and school before this year have been effective?
2. Explain what you think is meant by working together and not working with. Do you feel that working in this new way will be beneficial? If yes, to whom? If not, why not?
3. Do you feel the process will be simple or complex?
4. What do you understand by the following terms used in the new programme;

Boundary crossing

Third space

Expansive learning

Enactment

1. Which strand are you involved with?
2. Do you feel that the meetings you had to discuss the strand allowed working together rather than with?
3. What are the difficulties inherent in making the strand work?
4. What progress, if any, have you noted so far?
5. Do you feel that there are benefits for schools in the concept of ‘third space’ partnership?
6. Do you feel that there are benefits for HEIs in the concept of ‘third space’ partnership?
7. Do you feel that there are drawbacks or disadvantages in the concept of ‘third space’ partnership for HEIs or schools?
8. Do you feel that what you are embarking on this year is significantly different to what you did in previous years?
9. Consider the process to achieve this new way of working – has it been effective?

1. These terms, it is suggested, will be abbreviated to IE and SE for ease of use. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)