

Chasing and Slaying the Dragon

Mapping how trainee teachers' learner and teacher identities change during the PGCE year

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Why are we here today?

Teacher identity is a **complex and dynamic** concept that develops over time and has both a personal and professional dimension.

'Knowing who you are as a teaching professional gives agency, supporting individuals to thrive and continue to develop in an ever evolving, challenging, and rewarding profession.'

(Connelly, 1999).

Key to developing an understanding of teacher identity is

‘ the centrality of the teacher educator role in guiding and leading developing teachers through times of change. ‘

(Steadman, 2023 p.15)

Events that led us to conduct this research ……..

- The seismic changes introduced across Initial Teacher Education between 2019 -2024

(Market review 2019 Reaccreditation 2022/24)

- The withdrawal and progression rates of trainees and difficulties centred around retention of Early Career Teachers.

- Increasing deficit between what trainees ‘believe’ teaching children will be like and the ‘reality’ in school.

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Full Confession:

The study has not yet concluded

… it took over 6 months to get ethical clearance.

Today we are presenting our initial findings and the emerging themes from the data collected so far.

We'll be back next year with conclusions!

But at LTU …….We are mindful that ….



We train dogs ….

But we educate people ….



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School of Education Vision and Values

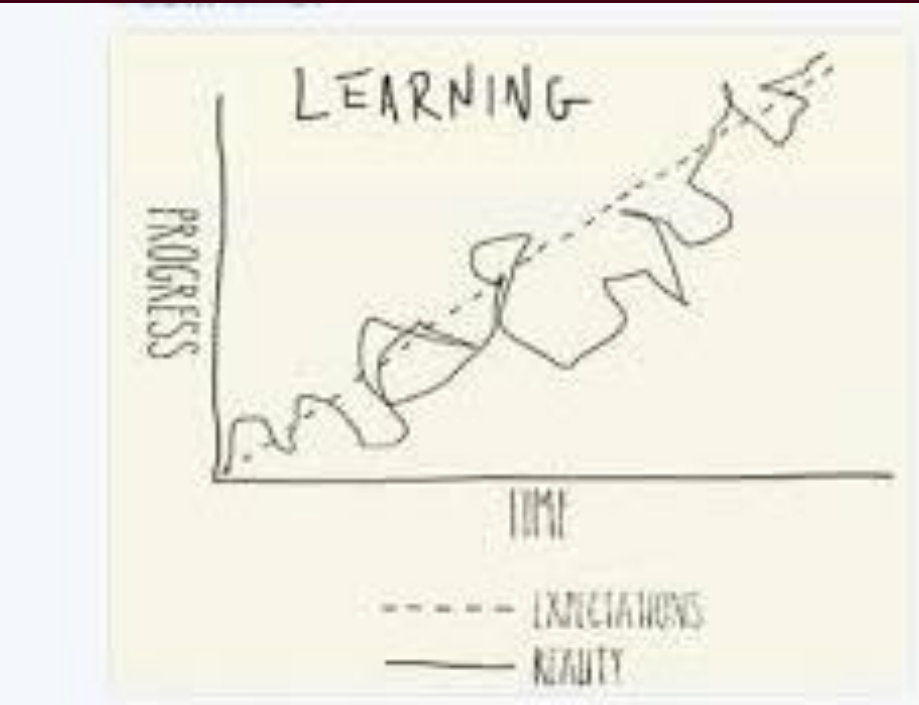
To develop skillful and resilient teachers who are experts in subject and age phase pedagogy, through:

Aspiration. Collaboration. Leadership.

- Aspiration for every child in our region and beyond to reach their potential through consistently high-quality teaching.
- Collaboration across the Partnership to meet local and regional needs.
- Developing teachers through a rigorous and ambitious ITT curriculum to become confident future leaders.

Why we want to slay this particular dragon?

Despite all this we are determined to maintain high quality ITE (not ITT).





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To better understand ways in which progression and completion within the programme could be better supported by exploring the dynamic interplay between trainee teachers' identities as 'learners' and as 'teachers' as they work towards QTS.

Why do we want to slay this dragon?

- Analyse the ebb and flow of trainees understanding (and emotional responses) to the intensity of training to teach during a PGCE year.
- Drill down into the contributing factors relating the identify throughout the year.
- Better understand ‘the role of emotions and tensions in shaping teacher identity.’ (Steadman 2023 p.16)
- Identify additional support that can be given to trainees in their ‘ times of need.’
- Help students understand what support is available to them from the university.
- Ultimately to catch them before they fall… and ensure an ongoing pipeline of teachers into the profession.

The structure of the programme

- Professional Educational Studies
- Subject Knowledge and Applied Pedagogy
- Research Literacy
- School Experience

The Quality Requirements (DfE 2024)

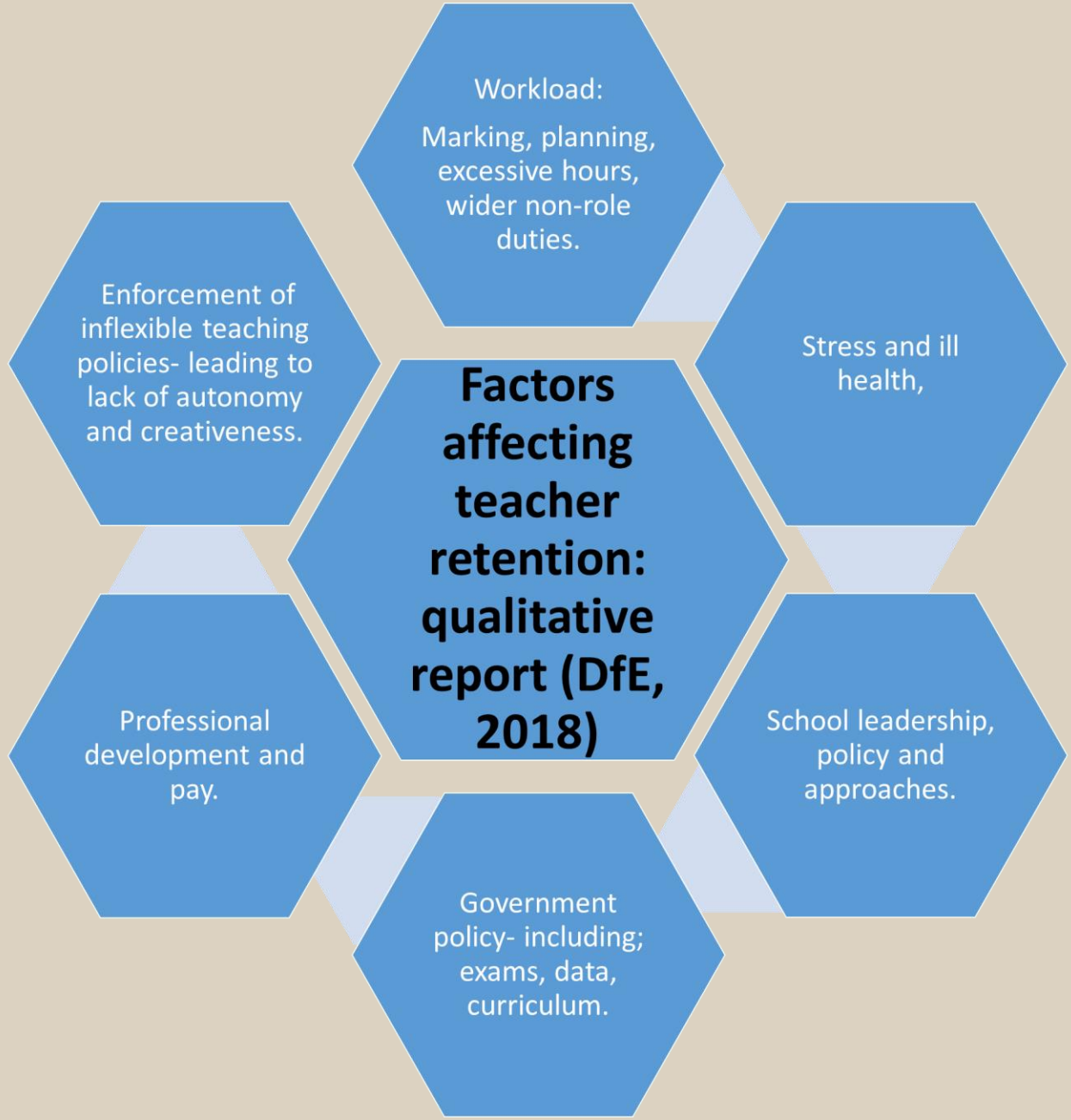
ITT minimum time allocations	Postgraduate	Undergraduate
Total weeks of course	36 (180 days)	N/A
Minimum weeks in school placements (general placements only, excludes intensive training & practice)	24 (120 days)	24 (120 days) (3-year course) 32 (160 days) (4-year course)
Minimum weeks of intensive training & practice (in addition to general school placements, does not need to be delivered in a single block)	4 (20 days)	6 (30 days)
Minimum hours in classrooms (including observing, teaching, co-teaching, etc.) each week during general school placements	15 on average (average of 3 per day)	15 on average (average of 3 per day)

Teacher Education delivered to your door on plate



Teacher Identity and teacher retention

Research demonstrates the correlation between retention- 33% leave in their first five years- and the reasons for leaving cited as "lack of autonomy and creativeness"(DfE., 2018).



Why we want to slay this particular dragon ?

Research Aims and Method



Research Aims and Method

Aim:

- To investigate how our trainees identify as teachers and learners across the academic year.

- Method – a mixed methods approach:
  - Complete a survey on Microsoft forms 3 times across the year.
  - Take part in a small follow up interview at specific ‘crunch points’ in the training year.

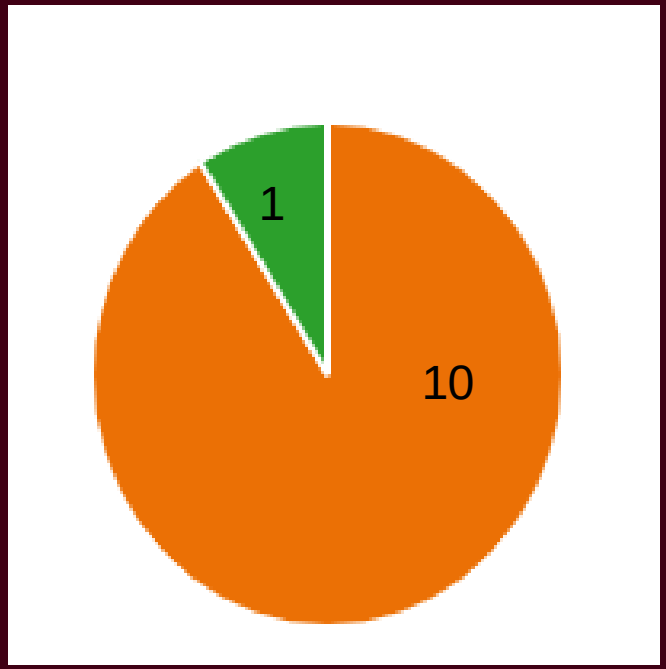
Survey 1- Responses

- Cohort Size: 90
- Initial EOI on launch: 29
- Survey 1: 2 weeks into programme (40 hours of directed taught time in SKAP* and *PES)
- Completed survey: 11
  - 4 males
  - 7 females
  - 3 parents/carers
  - 4 career changers

Initial Findings –

1. Before beginning PGCE study, I *

- ◯ Had not considered the concept of 'Teacher Identity'
- ◯ Understood the type of teacher I wanted to be, but had not considered the concept of 'Teacher Identity'
- ◯ Was aware of the concept of 'Teacher Identity'



Initial Findings

The students perceived themselves to be more of a learner at LTU.

3. While attending sessions at LTU I perceive my identity to be

More Details

Learner	2
Teacher	1
Both	8



Initial Findings

Most trainees felt that the LTU staff saw them as teachers and learners

4. When at LTU my perception is that university staff see my identity as

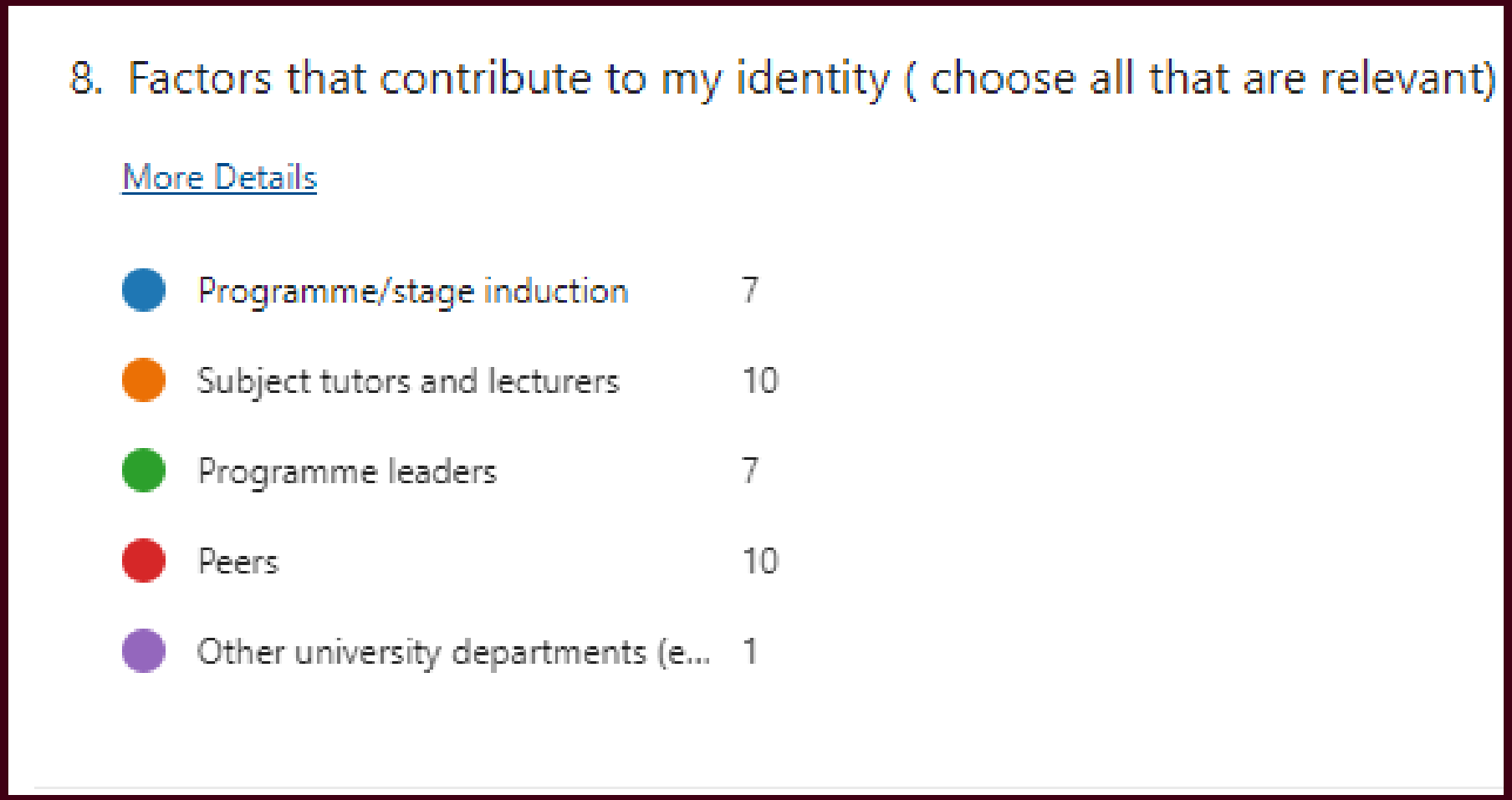
More Details Insights

Learner	0
Teacher	2
Both	9



Initial Findings

This became more apparent in the interviews



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Informal Interviews

9 Students opted for informal follow up interviews after four weeks of intensive university-based training and a total of 5 days in school.

The following week they were heading into school full time for 6 weeks.

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Initial Findings

Round 1 PG TI interviews- the outcomes:

Most felt their TI **had not changed or shifted considerably** since application or week 1. "Feel like a student/learner."

More student at LTU, more teacher/TA at school.

Consistent theme of TI= growing, developing and evolving- improving with time at LTU and then practice in school.

Some clear differences with SE trainee to trainee– not putting into practice (yet) the CB content.

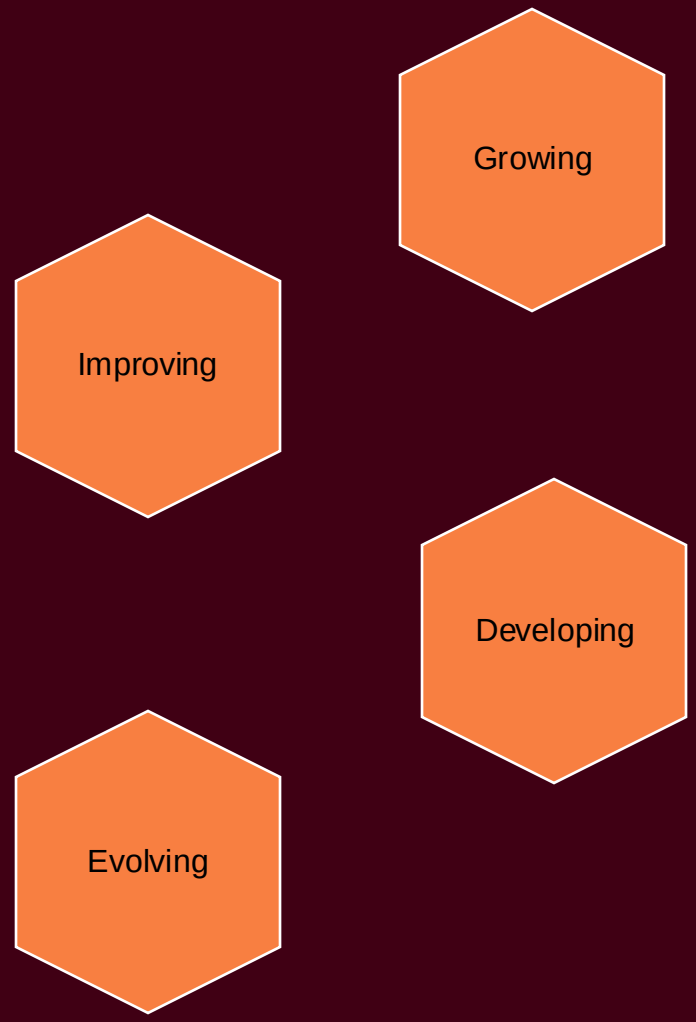
Representation was key for 2 trainees.

Saw the links between CB and SE.

Initial Findings

Key Themes

Teacher identity associated with:



All with support of sessions at LTU

Interviewees perceive that this will further develop with time in school.

Initial Findings

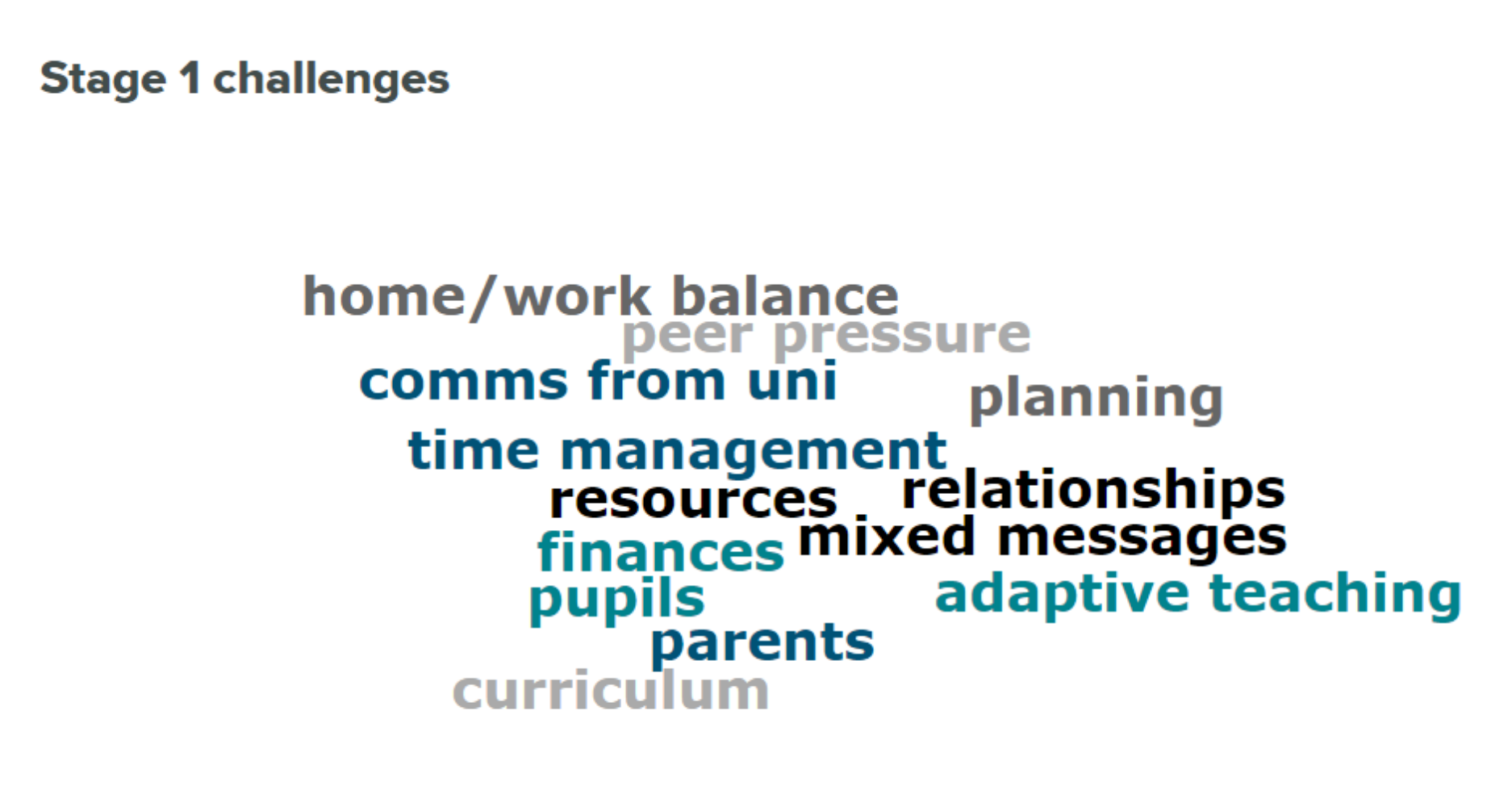
Trainees see the links between Centre and School Experience.

‘And I've noticed that something we were taught this week in science by Lewis was very much I was like, oh, we've done this, and I've noticed that with the children and it's it is all falling into place and that is helping.’

‘I've got a good foundation {from work and LTU} and now I've been introduced to the actual practice. All those things ring together now and like kind of form this idea of the job.’

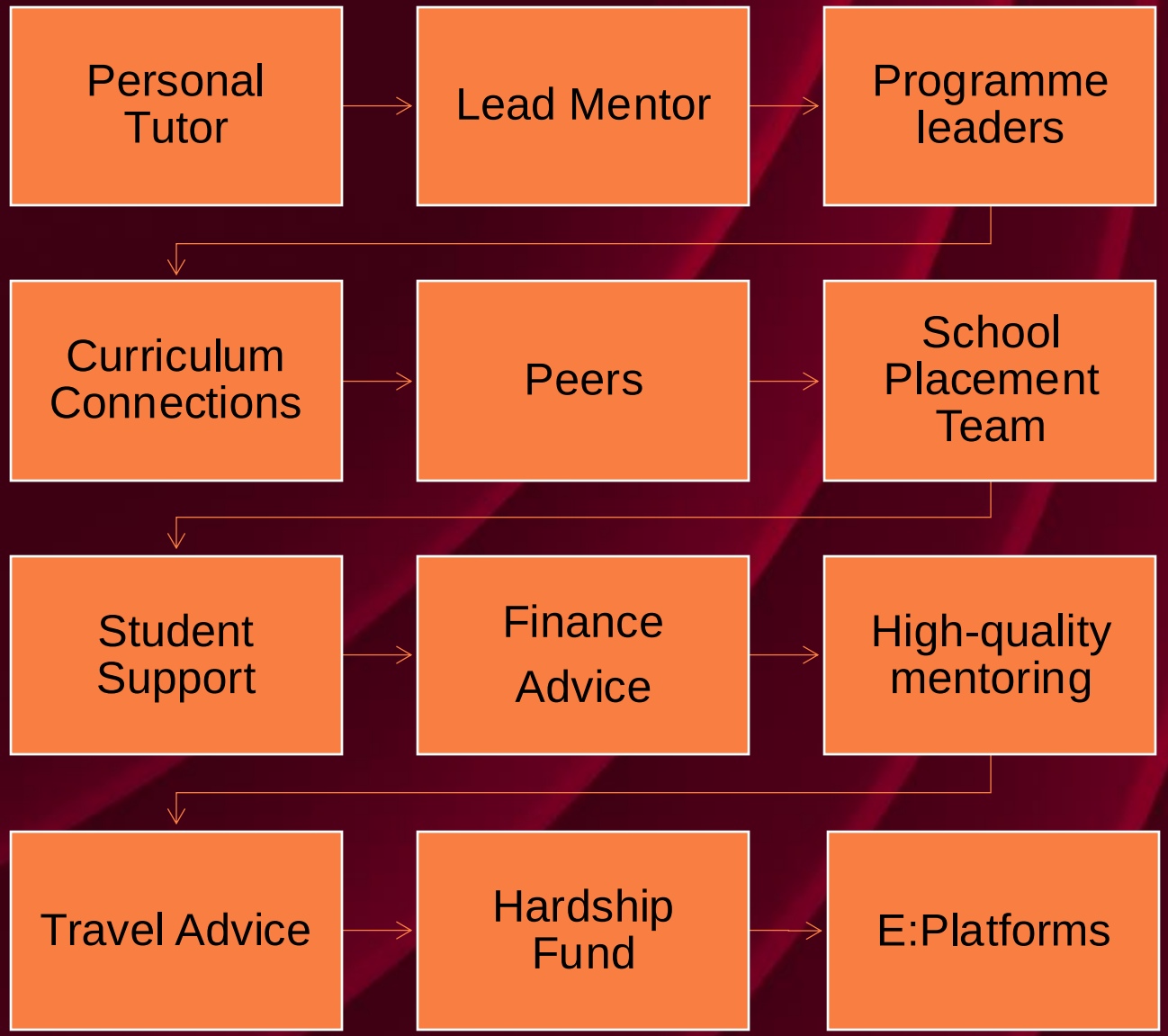
‘Content, adaptive, reflection, observing, So I still feel like that's really important to see that and see how they {the teacher} react and how the schemes kick in and everything like that. But I also think the theory behind it as well that's provided by you, to us is also quite useful in understanding.’

School Experience - Anticipated Challenges



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Support for trainees on placement



Next Steps

Repeat survey and interviews at the end of Stage 1 experience (December – January).

Trainees will have had 8 weeks of school experience

Consider:

- Differential across differing school experiences (opportunities/limitations of putting learning into practice).
- Role of teacher educator in shaping evolving Teacher Identity
- Role of mentor
- Explore the diversity across the cohort.

Final word from one trainee….

Q: What kind of teacher do you see yourself as, at this period? How do you perceive the kind of teacher you are now has changed since applying for or starting to train` to teach?

"As a 'role model- 'see it, be it. Trying to create opportunities for others. My opportunities are shaping me wanting to offer them opportunities."

So.....

How do we support our trainees to understand the value of the theory and how the research behind the ‘ practice’ helps shape them as teachers and their teacher identity?

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Thank you for your time ….

Thoughts …….?