

The Geography Mentor Survey The Results

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The Survey

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Mentors in geography education: an under-used resource and under-represented community?

- Who are geography mentors and who do they mentor?
- What is geography mentors current practice and why?
- What development and progression opportunities would geography mentors like and why?

Why?

- The Carter Review (2015) has several sections devoted to school-based mentoring and makes recommendations which led to...
- 'National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors' (DFE, 2016)
- Early Careers Framework (DFE, 2019)
- Building Great Teachers (OFSTED, 2020)

The extent to which trainers and mentors in schools and settings were trained for their role varied. Higher-scoring partnerships were often determined to improve their school- or setting-based mentors' own teaching skills. This provided trainees with greater opportunities to be engaged in high-quality discussions about teaching and learning with their mentors. Weaker training of school-based mentors often lacked clarity of purpose or was simply unavailable. This meant that some mentors were unaware of how best to train and support trainees throughout their placements. (OFSTED, 2020, p6)

Why?

- Hobson et al (2009) describe the need to develop a “*shared discourse for mentoring*” within a mentoring community (p212).
- Apsfors et al (2015) argue that the process of becoming a mentor is important since being a good teacher is not necessarily the same as being a good mentor.
- Schatz-Oppenneimar (2017) uses mentor perceptions before embarking on training to highlight that mentors perceive the job of mentoring to be very similar to that of teaching stating that “*the assumption that a good teacher will make a good mentor were evident in participants' statements*” (p287).

A successful and effective geography mentor will..

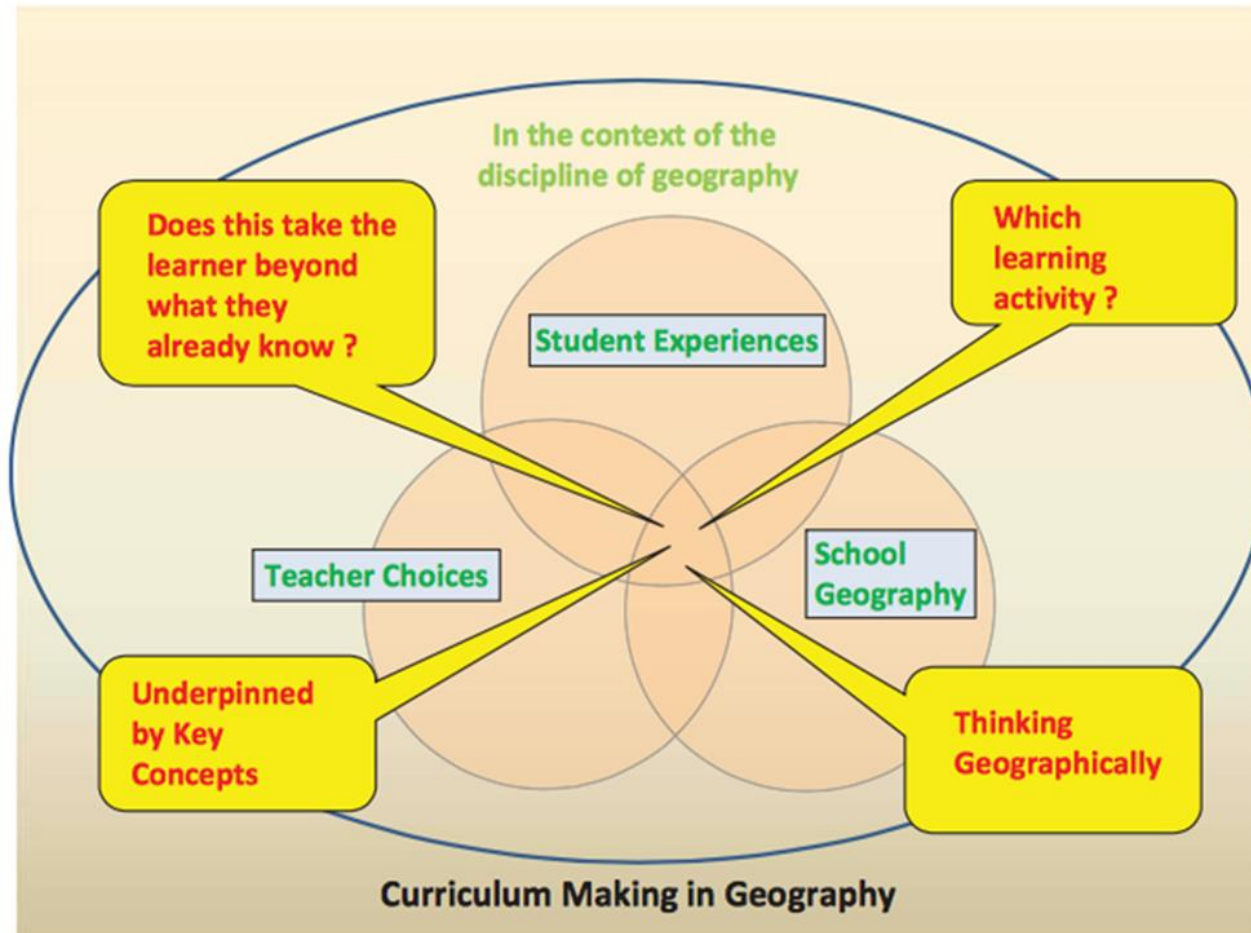
- Be a good geographer, who is up-to-date in their own geography knowledge and geography pedagogy.
- Have high expectations of good geography teaching. As they are training new geography teachers for the profession, not just to teach in one school, it is essential that the mentor has a broad understanding of geography teaching in a variety of contexts. They should have a clear understanding of what constitutes high quality, challenging geography teaching that brings about effective learning.
- Be an experienced geography practitioner who consistently teaches good and outstanding lessons, and is a good role model, both as a geography teacher and a member of school staff. They must be able to explain and analyse their own classroom practice, as well as that of their trainees. Some universities expect mentors to have at least three years teaching experience.
- Be a dedicated professional who is committed to their own ongoing learning and prepared to give time to supporting and training others.



Effective Geography ITE Training and Mentoring

Andrea Tapsfield

Tapsfield, 2019, p3



Lambert and Morgan (2010)

If mentoring is too focused on technical aspects of the classroom, there is a danger of not considering the relationship between *what* is taught and *how* it is taught.

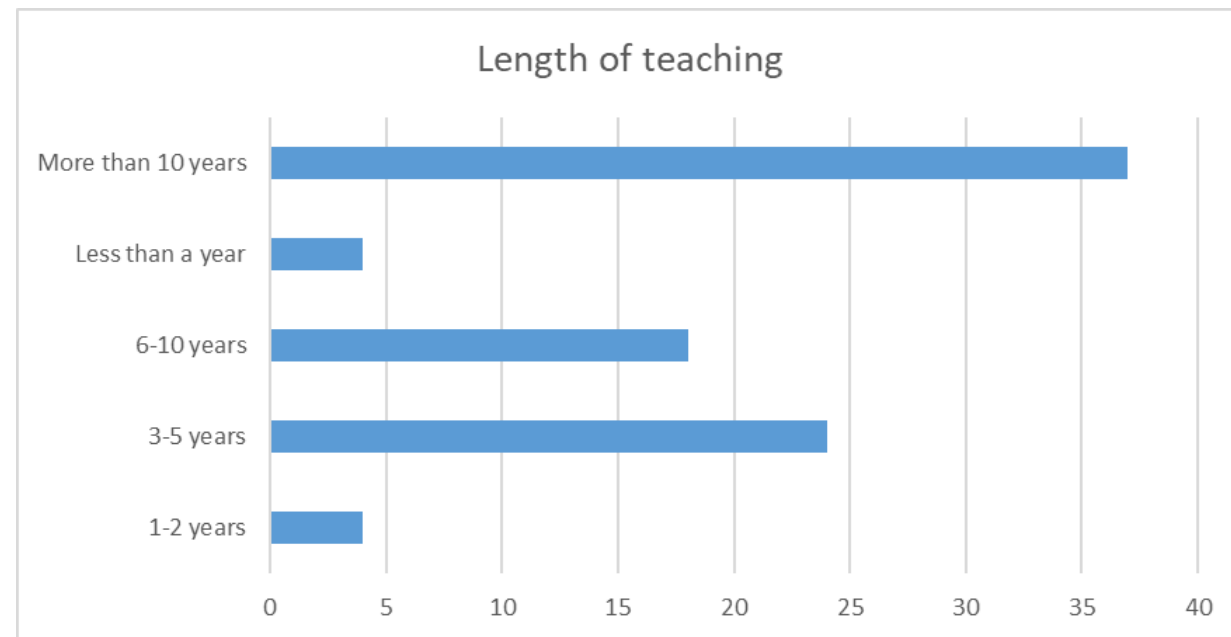
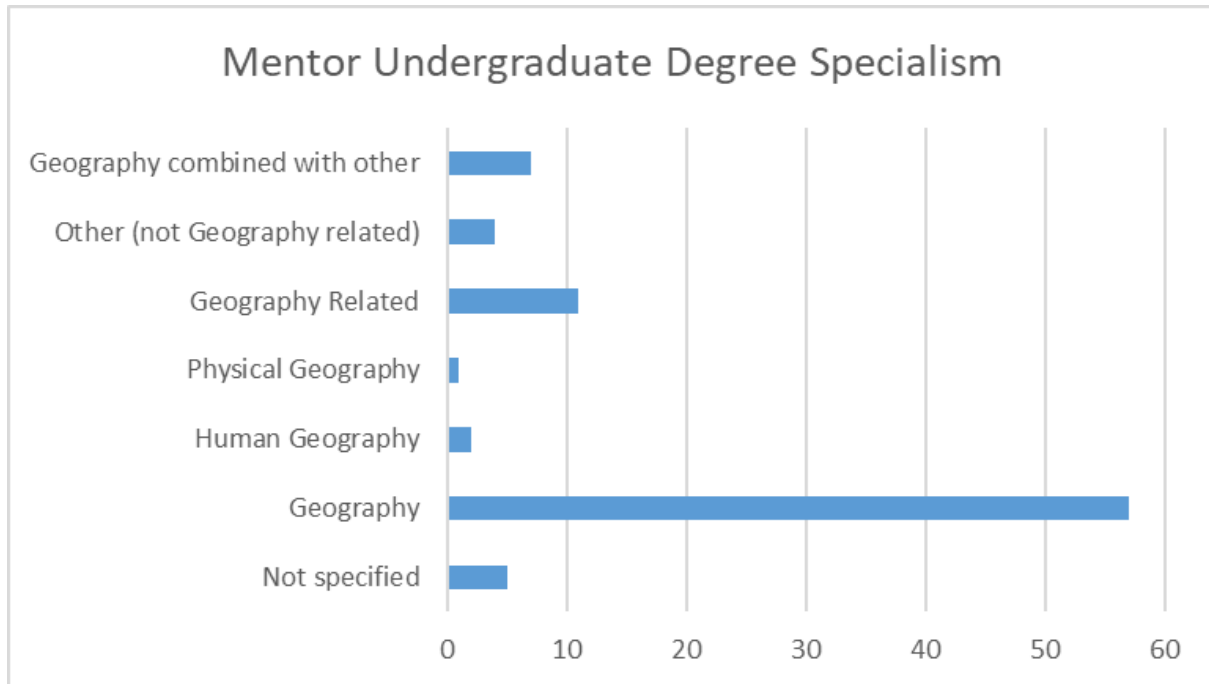
Teachers need to consider what they are teaching and how, balanced with the needs of the pupils and drawing from the discipline.

Educative mentoring

“Educative mentoring is mentoring that goes beyond quick-fix, “feel-good” support to incorporate a “vision of good teaching”, teachers as learners and the classroom as a site of inquiry (Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005). It is based on constructivist principles that involve building compelling theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning (Richter et al., 2011), facilitating the development of alternative beliefs and viewpoints (Flores and Day, 2006) and collecting and assessing high-quality evidence that is professionally relevant to the beginning teacher (Yusko and Feiman-Nemser, 2008).”

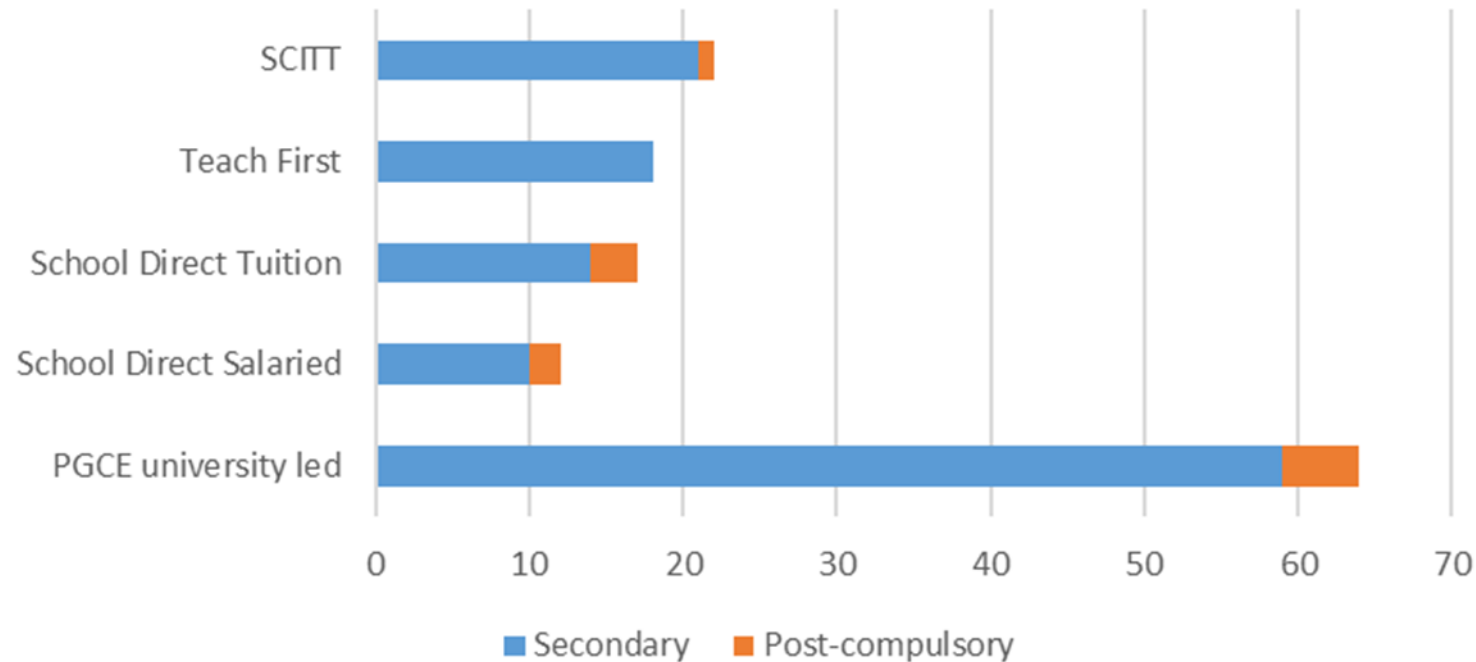
Langdon and Ward 2015, p243

Who are the geography mentors and who do they mentor?



Who are the geography mentors and who do they mentor?

Programme and phase that mentors work on

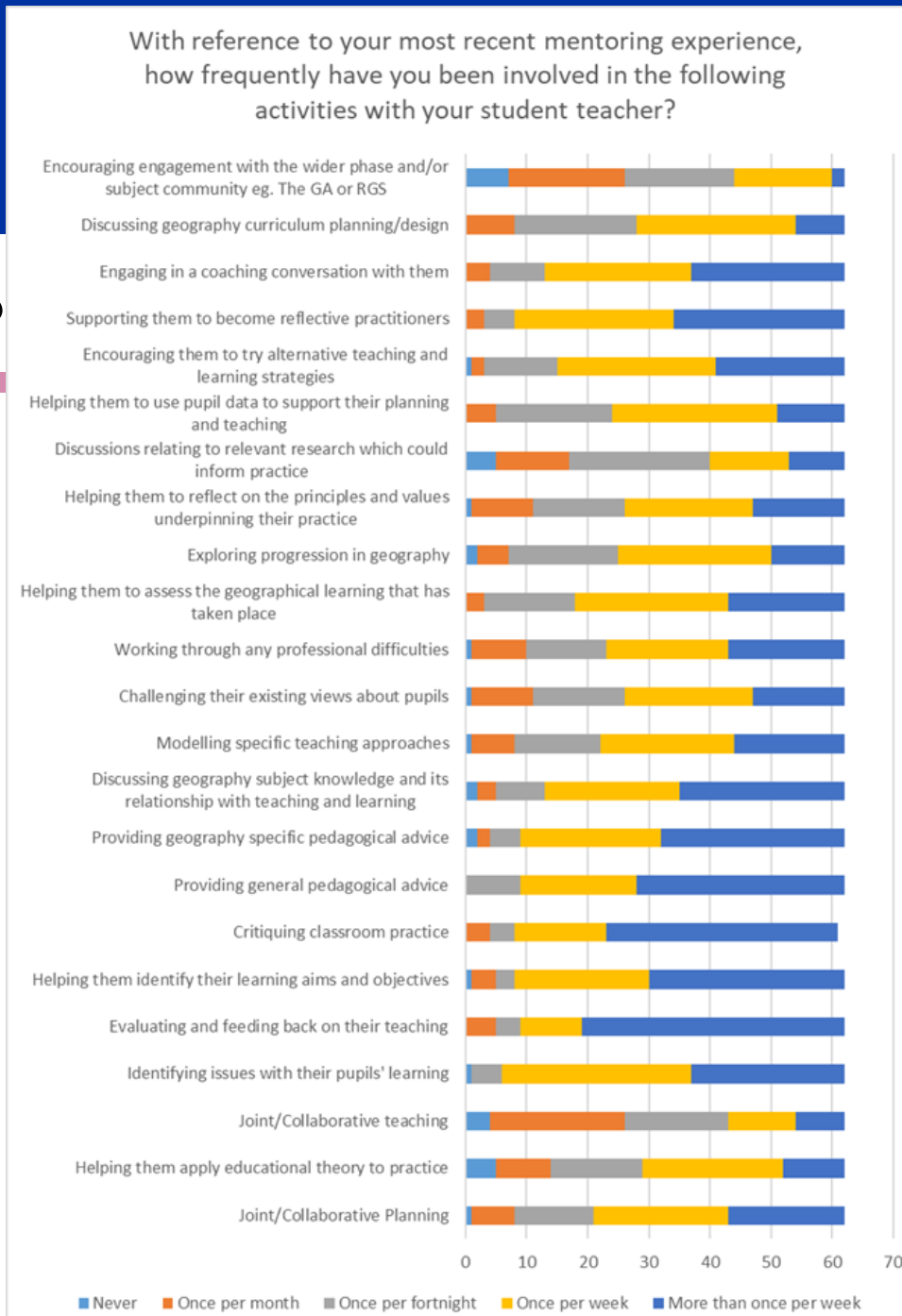


What is geography mentors practice and why?

Most frequent activities: evaluating and feeding back on teaching, critiquing classroom practice

All mentors are supporting mentees to become reflective practitioners

Least frequent activities: Engagement with subject communities, joint/collaborative teaching.



Additional comments about your philosophy of mentoring...

We run a continual process, lesson planning, observation, reflection are done daily rather than weekly, this enables us to make sustained progress.

To be a good mentor you must always have time for your mentee. This may be to offer advice, be a sound board or simply to listen to their concerns.

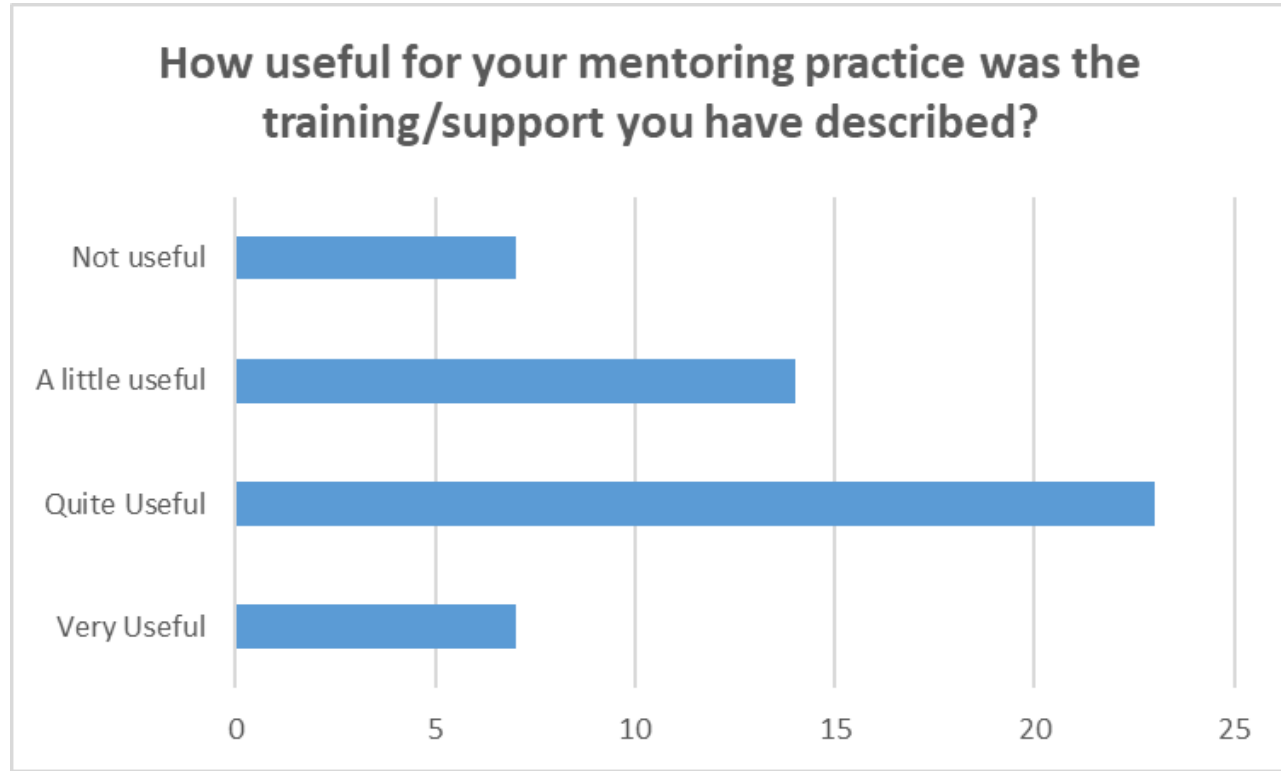
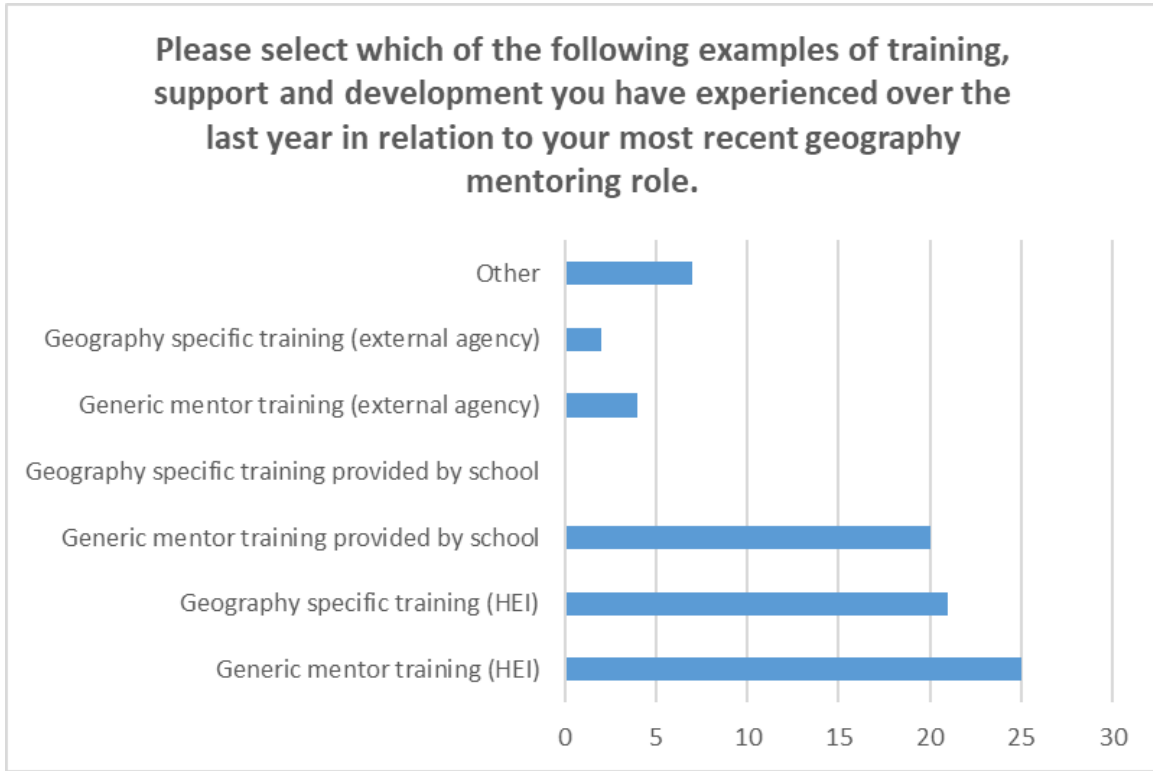
It is key to remind them that they are learning and it's okay to take risks and give support and advice. It is also key to remind them to make tweaks and develop and to have that work/life balance.

I try to avoid fads and gimmicks and focus on good Geography. All the time we try to ask 'are the students becoming better geographers?'

Challenges and Rewards of mentoring?

<p>Getting them to move forward when they rely on other teacher's work too much.</p>	<p>The most rewarding aspect of mentoring Geography students is seeing them flourish into excellent practitioners with students making good progress.</p>
<p>Students thinking they know best, not listening to the support and advice!</p>	<p>A very reflective role, helped me reflect on my own practice. Excellent seeing young professionals grow in their confidence and practice.</p>
<p>Pointless paperwork and having to use specific forms that are not really fit for purpose, 'ticking the box' mentality, grading every aspect of the trainees practice at regular intervals.</p>	<p>Seeing the teachers of the future develop and nurturing their talents, but equally being challenged myself to do things differently or in a way that is 'out of my comfort zone'.</p>

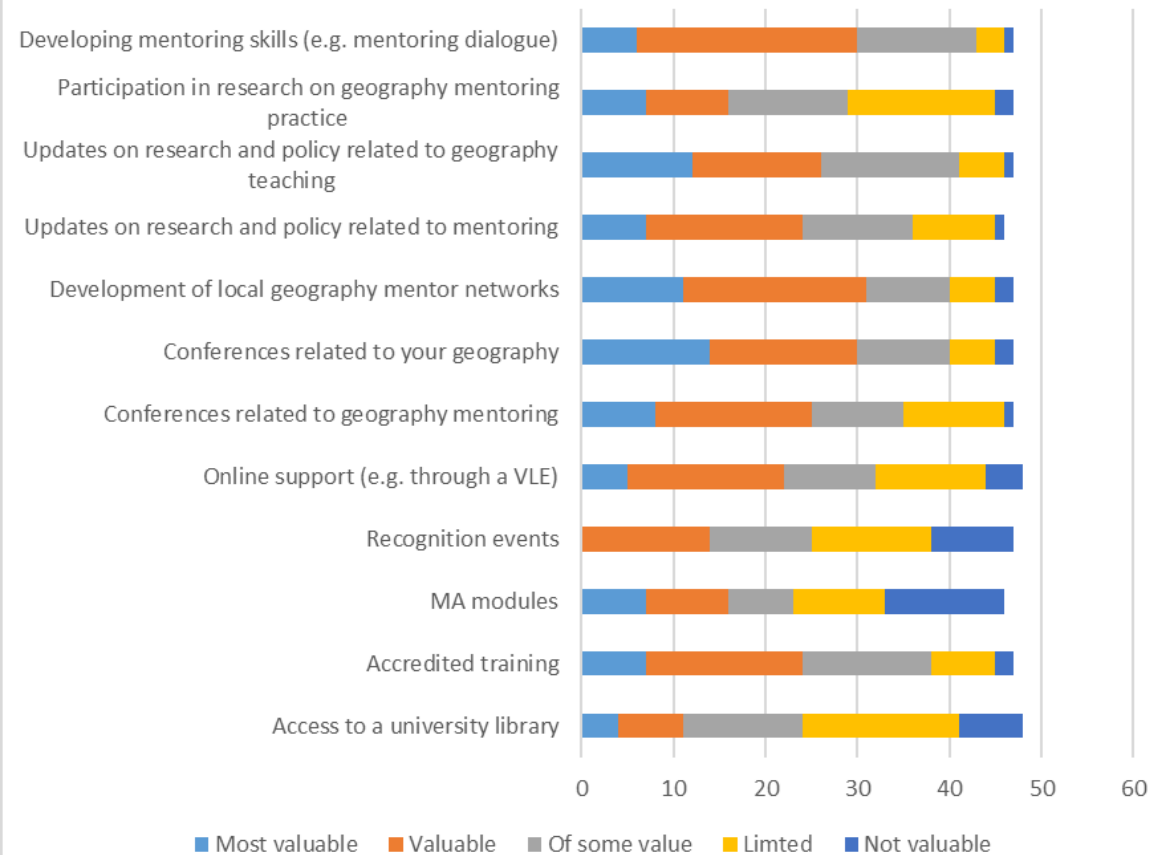
What development and progression opportunities would geography mentors like and why?



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Mentors would most value geography specific input to support their development as geography mentors and teachers

In support of your role as a geography mentor, please rate the following examples of support, training and development from most valuable to not valuable at all.



Conclusions

- Mentors are a varied group in terms of subject specialism background, teaching experience and mentoring experience
- The diversification of teacher training/education routes has an impact on the types of mentor-mentee interactions that occur most frequently
- Self-reported mentoring practice suggests a more generic approach
- Mentors want more subject specific training for both mentoring and their own teaching practice.
- Educative mentoring approach might be a way of developing both geography mentors and geography mentees.

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