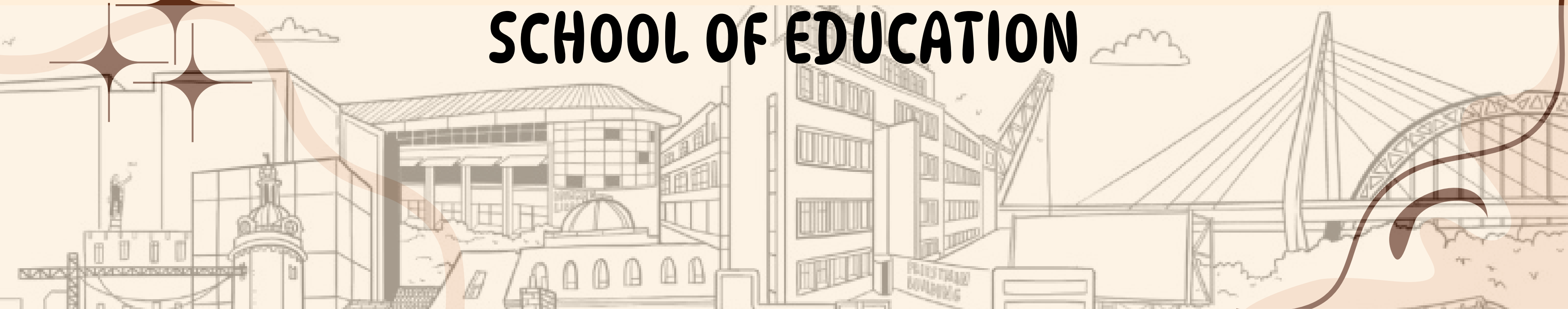


PERSONAL ACADEMIC TUTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING A PAT



PE Teacher



**Post 16 Tutor working with
vulnerable learners**



University Lecturer & PAT



THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

Building Relationships

- A genuine interest in students' background
- Authentic relationship
- Relatable
- Honest (& sometimes difficult) conversations

Student-teacher relationships are crucial in students' action-oriented behavior. Students reported that they were better able to cope with and act upon feedback when they can rely on their teachers to be available for help and support. (Leenknecht, 2023)



THE CURRENT RESEARCH & CONTEXT

Building relationships as a PAT - challenges & potential solutions

Opportunity to develop into an action research project.

Focuses specifically on personal academic tutors for BA (Hons) Primary Education students enrolled at the University of Sunderland

A Case study approach

Aim: Determine the views of Higher Education academic staff, on their role as a PAT

Objectives:

To establish the challenges faced by PATs

To identify PATs perception of the tutor-tutee relationship



UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND

CONTEXT

Teaching intensive University

Low socio-economic area

Professions facing

Degree programme with QTS

120-160 per year group on the Primary Education Undergraduate programmes.

PAT - randomly allocated 10-12 students, retained throughout the degree.

2 hours per student per year on workload



PASTORAL SUPPORT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

SPEARS & GREEN, (2022) - SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS

WALKER, (2022) - WELLBEING SHOULD BE REFLECTED WITHIN EVERY STRATEGY

YALE, (2017) - PERSONAL TUTOR PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN STUDENT UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE



EXISTING LITERATURE

CAHILL, BOWYER & MURRAY (2014)

PROTECTED TIME FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

RABY (2020)

MOST WOULD SEEK ADVICE FROM THEIR PERSONAL TUTOR BUT SOME STILL FOUND THE TUTOR UNFAMILIAR

YALE (2017)

POSITIVE & GENUINE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TUTOR IS A BUFFER FOR CHALLENGES

COLLINS (2024)

FOUND A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL SUPPORT

LAWS & FIELDER (2012)

WORKLOAD ALLOCATIONS MUST INCLUDE 'EMOTION WORK',



METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Data Collection:

- Qualitative Study
- Ethnographic Approach
- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic Analysis

**SAMPLE:
CONVENIENCE SAMPLE -
CURRENT STAFF WORKING AS A
PAT ON THE PRIMARY
EDUCATION PROGRAMMES WITH
A MINIMUM OF 1 YEAR IN THIS
ROLE**



Example Quotes	Sub Themes	Overall Themes / General Dimension
to provide pastoral support for trainees, so to be a point of contact should something arise... (P1) it can also be around pastoral care... getting in touch because they're having a rough time (P2) either academic work or sharing an issue that maybe they have...(P4) supporting students wellbeing... or it could be more sort of pastoral (P6)	Pastoral Support	The role of the PAT
provide academic support and guidance as well (P1) either academic work or sharing an issue that maybe they have...(P4) It could be academic support (P6) Its offering academic support... remember I'm here for academic support (P2)	Academic Support	
Could be signposting to finance or wellbeing or one of our other teams (P4) Signpost them to kind of next steps (P6) Also signpost students to other services across the university (P1)	Signposting to wider services / other support	

Example Quotes	Sub Themes	Overall Themes / General Dimension
and its finding space within an already sort of crowded diary to make room for that... so it can be quite time consuming (P1) with competing deadlines, competing demands on their time, which also leads to competing demands on our time aswell (P3) and it comes back to time and the challenge that workload... (P4) more hours less students (p5) Ive mentioned before, the time, is the biggest factor (P3)	A lack of time	Challenges & Solutions
restrictions on our workload (P2) and it comes back to time and the challenge that workload... (P4) I cant see a way in terms of workload to make it, but because you have it, you have to take a general average (P1) Workloads, workloads there is only some much we can do about that (P2) Its an expectations that its two hours per trainee (P4)	Workload Restrictions	
But the other thing around kind of emotional stuff...but you know some really practical support (P2) When trainees come with quite big problems (P2)	Challenging Conversations	
We should be more aware about the trainees that you don't see as much of (P4) My relationship with them as their PAT has been fairly minimal and they haven't necessarily engaged (P3) I would also say for on campus programmes, attendance so trainee motivation to attend (P2)	Student Engagement	

Example Quotes	Sub Themes	Overall Themes / General Dimension
But you know the ones who you speak to obviously more, a lot better (P5) But I don't know all of them better, it very much depends on whether they engage (P6) Some years you have a PAT group who are fairly self sufficient only interact you may have with them is in those set meetings (P4)	Time / how often you engage with tutees	Building Relationships
I think the stronger relationship comes if your are PAT and UBM (P2) Build the relationship with them because you are meeting them more regularly and you're supporting them... (P3) Be more aware about the trainees that you don't see as much of (P4)	More support needed = stronger relationship	
You get to know the students in your PAT group better than you do the majority of other students (P1) Could you pick your PAT group out I would have to say No because I haven't seen them (P2) I've probably developed deeper relationships with some trainees that are not in my PAT group because of other responsibilities that I've had (P4)	Relationships with those outside of PAT group	

The Role of the PAT

KEY FINDING 1: PASTORAL & ACADEMIC SUPPORT WERE CITED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLES OF THE PAT

TO PROVIDE PASTORAL SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES, SO TO BE POINT OF CONTACT... PROVIDE ACADEMIC SUPPORT & GUIDANCE AS WELL (P1)

KEY FINDING 2: SIGNPOSTING WAS THE THIRD MOST CITED THEME

ALSO SIGN POST STUDENTS TO OTHER SERVICES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY (P1)
BUT ALSO KIND OF SIGN POSTING THEM ON RELEVANT SERVICES (P2)



Challenges & Solutions

KEY FINDING 1: TIME IS THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO BUILDING STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS WAS CITED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

I THINK ITS FINDING SPACE WITHIN AN ALREADY SORT OF CROWDED DIARY TO MAKE ROOM FOR THAT (P1)

ITS ABOUT HAVING THE TIME AND BEING ABLE TO ARRANGE MEETINGS. ITS JUST FITTING THAT IN AROUND EVERYTHING ELSE (P6)

I THINK I WOULD LIKE TO SPEND MORE TIME PHYSICALLY WITH MY PAT GROUP (P7)



Challenges & Solutions

KEY FINDING 2: THE WORKLOADING SYSTEM CURRENTLY DOES NOT PROVIDE WHAT PATS SEE TO BE SUFFICIENT HOURS.

THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE STUDENTS WHO DO TAKE UP ABOVE AND BEYOND THE HOURS THAT ARE ALLOCATED (P1)
WHEN WE'RE ALL WORKLOADED UP TO 100% AND BEYOND, IT DOES MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO FIT THINGS IN (P2)
THE UNIVERSITY ALLOCATES 2 HOURS PER PAT.... I DO FEEL THAT NEEDS TO BE INCREASED (P3)



Building Relationships

KEY FINDING 1: SOME PARTICIPANTS SUGGESTED THEY KNOW STUDENTS IN THEIR PAT GROUP BETTER THAN OTHER STUDENTS THEY TEACH

YOU GET TO KNOW THE STUDENTS IN YOUR PAT GROUP BETTER THAN YOU DO THE MAJORITY OF OTHER STUDENTS... ITS PROBABLY A SLIGHTLY STRONGER RELATIONSHIP (1)

PERSONALLY I FEEL LIKE I KNOW MY PAT GROUPS. SO IVE GOT THREE PAT GROUPS, CURRENTLY I KNOW EVERYONE OF THOSE STUDENTS.



Building Relationships

KEY FINDING 2: THROUGHOUT ALL INTERVIEWS TIME SPENT WITH STUDENTS SEEMS TO CORRELATE WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP

THERE WOULD BE OTHER STUDENTS IN OUR YEAR ONE COHORT THAT I PROBABLY KNOW BETTER THAN SOME OF MY PAT GROUP (4)
YOU DON'T GET TO KNOW THEM WELL AT ALL BECAUSE THEY JUST GET ON, BUT YOU KNOW THAT ONES WHO YOU SPEAK TO MORE, A LOT BETTER (5)



CONCLUSIONS

Role of the PAT combines pastoral and academic support.

Biggest barrier to build student relationships is staff time.

PATs perceive time to coincide with strength of working relationship with the student.

- **Student engagement with the PAT is also important**
- **Some students could be overlooked**



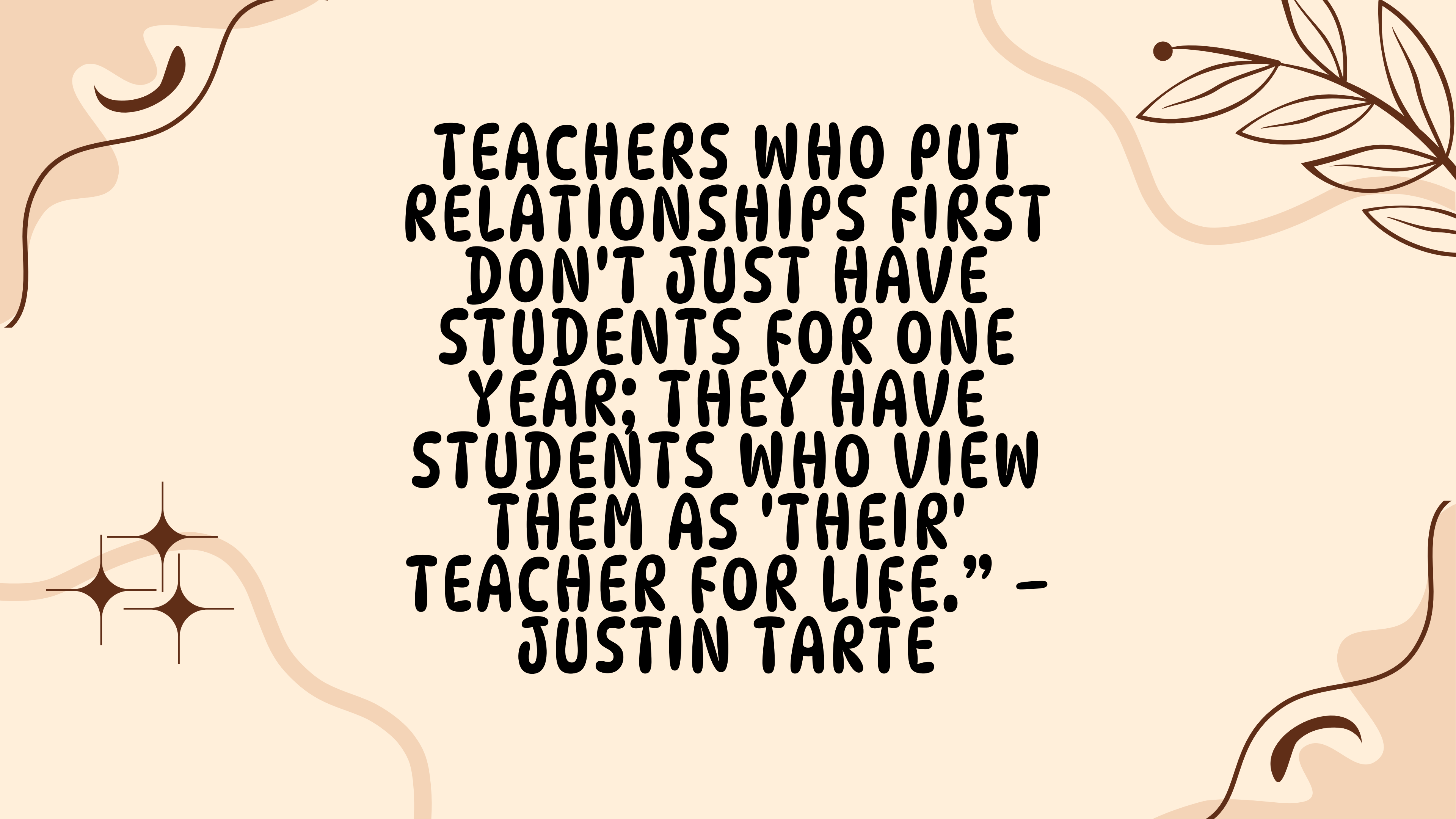
NEXT STEPS

Gather data from students to compare the opinions of tutors and tutees with regards to personal tutoring and building relationships.

Discuss the research/role of the PAT with colleagues and leadership to implement change.

Expand the research into secondary, further education & skills, and international provision.





TEACHERS WHO PUT
RELATIONSHIPS FIRST
DON'T JUST HAVE
STUDENTS FOR ONE
YEAR; THEY HAVE
STUDENTS WHO VIEW
THEM AS 'THEIR'
TEACHER FOR LIFE." -
JUSTIN TARTE