

## **Sam Twistleton Podcast Episode 6**

**James Coleman:** Welcome along to the very latest episode of NASBTT's TEMZ podcast. My name is James Coleman and as always, we'll be speaking with a guest who helps us to examine the vital role teacher educators and mentors play in the world of initial teacher training. This week, we're joined by one of the key figureheads within our sector, Sam Twiselton. We cover a range of topics from the development of the core content framework, the impact COVID restrictions have had on training providers and analyse what's changed in teacher training over the past few years. That and much, much more packed in as we welcome you to the latest instalment of the TEMZ podcast.

Okay, I'm delighted to say I'm with Sam Twiselton, Director of Sheffield Institute of Education now, Good morning, Sam. How are you?

**Sam Twistleton:** Hello, nice to be here thank you.

**JC:** Great. Thank you so much for taking the time to come and chat with us. How was the, well not the start of term anymore, we're kind of we're into the second half term. How is the start of this year gone for you guys?

**ST:** Well, I mean, I'm compared to people in school and particularly school leaders, I'm incredibly lucky really and I would say it's kind of a bit boring and a bit samey for me, but nothing like the kind of moment by moment, you know, life risking decisions that people are having to make. So, for me it's fine. Just to be got through I think.

**JC:** Zoom fatigue doesn't seem quite so bad compared to the stuff people are having to do in schools at the moment is it.

**ST:** Exactly, exactly.

**JC:** Well thanks again for being on the on the call. We just wanted to kind of sit down have a chat with you today, you've obviously had a really important part to play in the core content framework, which is you know, supporting and structuring so many of our trainees and teacher educators years and so have a quick chat about that, but also just talk to you about the role of mentors and teacher educators more generally. What sort of influence they have on our trainee teachers and really the teaching profession more widely. That sound all alright?

**ST:** That was brilliant, one of my favourite topics because it's such an important role.

**JC:** Yeah, absolutely. Brilliant. It will be lovely to try and shine a light on that and some of the wonderful work that not only within you know, Sheffield Hallam, but also some of the other stuff that you've come across that mentors are doing. The guys that we've got, you know, a range of people will listen to the podcast from programme leads to trainees, mentors, people who maybe aren't involved in ITT at all, but are interested in getting involved. A lot of the people who are very involved in ITT will be very familiar with your contribution to it but for those listening who maybe aren't aware of the some of the things that you've achieved or how you contribute to initial teacher training, can you give us a quick overview of some of the work you do kind of beyond Sheffield Hallam within Sheffield Hallam?

**ST:** Yeah, yeah, well, I mean, Sheffield Hallam itself is a huge University in Sheffield and a large part of what it does is train lots of teachers. So we train all different routes, undergraduate postgraduate, we're SCITT partners for lots of really good SCITT's and we're also part of the Teach First so teaching in teacher training at Sheffield Hallam but the beyond that, I've had quite a lot to do nationally with teacher training. I suppose the first big thing was when I was involved in the Carter review of teacher training, which was announced back in 2014, published in 2015. And I think actually sort of echoes forward a lot to the work that I'm involved in terms of what we found through that review, which was a lot of really good practice, but also some inconsistencies. But one of the biggest messages was the importance of mentors. They are often the make or break thing in terms of trainees and actually and NQT's as well, you know, we all have moments when we think have I done the right thing? Am I doing the right job? Is it you know, am I up to it? And often a really good mentor is the person that can really get you out of that hole and a poor mentor can actually push you into it. So that that came through very strongly in the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training, which then kind of links up with what I subsequently went on to do when I was on the advisory group, well still am on the advisory group of the DfE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which led to the Early Career Framework, which led to the Core Content Framework, so they all actually sort of join up. And actually, I think tell quite a good policy story in terms of how the Government is, has become much more aware of the importance of really looking after new teachers, right from, you know, being a trainee through to, you know, two years into having qualified and the mentor role continues to be absolutely central, every step of that journey. So I feel like we're in quite a good place in terms of some of the policy developments I've been involved in. I can't claim credit for them, but I'm very pleased to have been around as they've been unfolding.

**JC:** So thinking about that the Carter Review, which like we said was kind of six or seven years ago now, how far do you think ITT has come since then? What are the big shifts? What are the big changes that you think have made a real difference since the Carter Review?

**ST:** Yeah, I think there's a number of things. When the Carter Review was first happening, it was in the early days of the rapid expansion of school lead obviously school lead had been around for a while but that administration was really encouraging it, that we were visiting a lot of very new SCITT's that were just kind of finding their feet, and you know, it was an exciting time. But you know, there were some naivety and definitely a lot of learning to be had at that point. Whereas now, you know, I mentioned that we partner several SCITT's and I'm out and about in the role in a sort of national role, and I get to meet many more. And I think they've reached a level of maturity and a level of understanding, you know, about the complexity of what's involved in initial teacher training, but also some of the opportunities that you get from being school lead. I'm not saying it's impossible to do it in a University, because we saw some examples where it happened but that school based element, you know, which is after all, two thirds of the time, for a postgraduate teacher training route, that skill base element is so important, so powerful and the mentoring role, as I've said, so, central, in that, often school lead providers are able to be a bit more deeply connected, and a bit more in control of the variables in that space. So I've seen some absolutely fantastic practice, you know, in recent days, where as I say that maturity has led to some really good examples of that, that very deep partnership working, which I think, provides a really good start, a really good basis for trainee teachers, and then particularly, if they then are employed, you know, in the same collection of schools, and that support, then kind of almost seamlessly continues into their early career phase. I think that's, you know, that's one of the things that has really struck me about kind of our unfolding practice. And I think that's what the early career framework. Really what it's trying to do is replicate

what's been there as a sort of local thing for lots of people, but not there as an entitlement for everybody. From next year, it becomes an entitlement for everybody. And it's building on that very good practice, which, as I say, I think school led an initial teacher training has, to some extent lead the way with. So you know, it's really good to see.

**JC:** You kind of stole the words out my mouth in terms of the Early Career Framework, and that mirroring that process of training somewhere, maybe within an academy or within local authority and then that continuing when you're employed then within that same environment, and it's clear that the core content and then the ECF, kind of feed into that model, in trying to have continuity for trainees, how important is that? Obviously, you know, lots of trainees may go abroad or move into a different part of the country or into a different matter into a different local authority. But how valuable can it be to have that continuity, and actually, as the early career framework, sets out that entitlement to that time to develop, you know, we all know that it takes longer than a year, much longer than a year to go and be the brilliant teacher that you want to go and be.

**ST:** Yeah, I mean, exactly. I mean, you've hit the nail on the head. It's that kind of consistency, it's that feed through from the initial phase into that early career phase so you don't feel like you're starting again. You're building on what you knew already. And, therefore, you're really hopefully certainly by the end of your second year, you know, when the Early Career Framework comes to an end, beginning to fly, because you've had that experience of that sort of spiral curriculum where it all kind of links up. And as you say, you know, you may train in one part of the country and get a job in another part of country or even, you know, in a different country. And I think the early career framework is actually likely to be being picked up by international schools as well. That's why we've very deliberately made both the Early Career Framework and the Core Content Framework be as similar as possible. So the knowledge statements are actually identical because what you need to know to be a good teacher doesn't change just because you're a trainee or new or you're a newly qualified teacher. The bit that's different is that how you experience that knowledge, which for a trainee is absolutely, you know, a lot of it through the support of a good mentor or other expert colleagues who are supporting your learning. So we've kept it as two frameworks which join up very, very closely, but they are very deliberately frameworks they're not a full curriculum. So they don't describe absolutely everything particularly in the ITT phase that you would expect a new teacher to need to experience because, you know, we do know that different localities are different. Different schools have different needs, different trainees have different leads. And so it's really important, I think that providers still have the, the need or the ability to turn that sort of fairly bare framework into a rich curriculum with careful sequencing of, of knowledge and activities, etc, which is therefore then able to sort of reflect the local needs and also the expertise that's available. So I feel like what what we've tried to do is get a balance of enough consistency and enough sort of meat on the bones, in terms of what's there for everybody at national level through the two frameworks, but then also enough ability for people to be able to sort of really flesh out that one framework into a sort of full blown curriculum, both in [the ITT space \(12:07\)](#) and in the Early Career Framework. And that you can therefore kind of really adapt to local needs. That's certainly the intention.

**JC:** And for providers and leaders of programmes, they'll be very familiar with the CCF what we'd hoped they'd be very familiar with the CCF by now, and implementing that into exactly as you say, creating their own curriculums or adapting the current curriculum that they have to ensure that they're acknowledging the Core Content Framework. For the trainees, teacher educators, mentors who are working within those programmes, it will exist around them without them necessarily being

aware of it being there. The people who are involved in implementing that will be very aware of it, but the people actually experiencing, it may not be because as you say, it's the curriculum that will be driving them and that they'll be very aware of. So, can you give us a quick overview of what the CCF is? You've done a brilliant job of kind of detailing it but in real simple terms, what is the Core Content Framework? I know you weren't as involved in ECF but just an overview of that for our teacher educators, mentors, trainees that are listening who have maybe for the first 10 minutes with you what is the Core Content? Or what is the Early Career Framework. Give a really simple overview of what those two documents are. What a challenge!

**ST:** I'll do my best.

**JC:** That's why we got you on Sam!

**ST:** So, the way that both frameworks are organised, as I've said, is similar. So they're actually both organised into eight different areas. And each of those areas is kind of blocked out into two columns. The areas themselves, I can't list them all I'm afraid

**JC:** No I wouldn't expect you to.

**ST:** But they kind of common-sense things. There's something on special needs or something on the curriculum, there's something on how children learn, and so on. So there's nothing there that you wouldn't expect to see in terms of, you know, broad areas that that that you need to know about if you're going to be a competent teacher. Then with each of those areas, as I say that these "know that" and "know how" columns. "Know that" column is identical between both frameworks, the "know how" this is probably the bit that's most useful for mentors, if they haven't looked at it, it probably is worth having a look, although their providers will have already adapted the kind of mentor training and the other advice that they're giving mentors to reflect it. So it's not absolutely essential. But what we try to do in that right hand column, is be a lot more specific than other sort of versions of attempts to kind of give national guidance for ITT. So we've given some, you know, I think fairly carefully thought through examples of the kinds of conversations, the kinds of observations, the kinds of activities that trainees should, be receiving. And, and where there's a role for a mentor or somebody else in school. So sometimes it might be they're asking their mentor to facilitate a conversation with somebody else, head of department, for example, or the SENCO, or somebody like that. We've just tried to be a bit more pinned down in terms of the kinds of conversations, the kinds of questions the kinds of deconstruction, sort of analysis kind of activities that should happen. So I don't think it should be adding to the mentor role in terms of asking them to do more. I think it's maybe just defining it a little bit more. And it's really building on what we know, really good mentors do anyway so hopefully, for many people, it won't feel like a big difference. It might just be hopefully reassuring, that we're kind of validating what they were doing already anyway.

**JC:** Yeah. I think that word reassuring about you know exactly what you're saying, seeing that and going, oh, you know what, actually, I'm taking a lot of those boxes already.

**ST:** Exactly. That's what we're tending to find as we're going around sort of talking to people about it. That's mostly what people, but occasionally there might be some terminology that seems slightly different or something like that but once you unpack that, most people just actually recognise it as, what they're doing already and just giving them that sort of validation actually, they were already doing this with well.

**JC:** Last one on the on the CCF in the ECF stuff. From what you've seen when you've been part of this, putting this up and seeing how providers have interpreted the Core Content Framework, anything that stands out to you as, when you've seen it work well, something that each provider has done. Is there a common theme or common thread when people have implemented this really well, that the provider has done? Is there something that makes them stand out in terms of using this most effectively? I'm just thinking about programming leads who are listening to this thinking, how can I really make sure that I use this? Is there anything that you've seen that you think actually, that just that just seems to work when providers have done that with the CCF?

**ST:** Yeah. So, I mean, I think, again, this is sort of reflecting what probably good programme leads would be doing anyway, but just helping them to see it through the lens of the Core Content Framework. Where it works really well, is where it's completely recognise what I've said already, that it's not a curriculum, you know, it doesn't tell you what to do, when, and how often. And so that that's, that's the job of work for the programme leads. And as you've said, it might well just be looking at what they do already. It might be that they're not actually having to do anything at all from scratch. But just thinking really carefully about how you sequence the activities, the activities in the training, the activities that happen in school, the mentoring conversations, etc. So that you've got that sense of a journey through the Core Content Framework, where it's actually often quite a spiral, you know, they'll be some things that you need to keep coming back to, you know, we know for example, behaviour, you need a lot on behaviour to begin with but then you know, as you get more experience, and you're able to sort of compare and contrast different experiences, you come to a more sophisticated understanding of children's behaviour. So you do need to return to it in a more sophisticated way, for example. So, so the really good programme leads have really thought about that spiralling, of you know, what do we need right at the beginning, and maybe in a fairly basic form? But then, you know, what point do we most usefully come back to it? How does it link to what we're asking our mentors to do? Etc. And then I think the other thing, as I said, recognising it as just a framework and the will be the things that you want to include. So for example, as somebody with a primary background, I would put a lot of emphasis on child development, which isn't, it's kind of implicit in the framework, but it's not explicit. And, you know, I would want to make sure there's a really good chunk in my programme about that, probably linked to some of the things that are in the framework. That would be sort of an example of, you know, where you recognise it's, it's not telling you absolutely everything that you need to do, you need to really think about what are the bits that are missing. And then, again, I think school lead is in a good position to do this. It's that sort of tying up between what happens in the central training, and what happens when trainees are out in school, and really thinking hard about that. So you don't just shove them off into school and sort of see what happens, you actually sort of craft the experiences that happen in school in a way that they're able to make those connections as strongly as they possibly can, to what they've been hearing in the training element.

**JC:** And I think that flexibility is key isn't it because when you think about local contexts and what drives one school in one area, what drives another school in another area, is really important. And, and as a provider, you want to value those things and make sure that you're preparing your trainee teachers to teach in those environments as effectively as possible whilst recognising that there's a whole suite of stuff that they're going to need to know alongside that too.

**ST:** Exactly.

**JC:** So moving away slightly from that and broadening out a little bit and thinking about mentors and teacher educators up and down the country that are they're doing, I mean every single year do an incredible job. But in these circumstances, even more so than usual. What do you see? And again, this is not an easy one to answer, Sam, so I apologise. What do you see the role of a mentor, a teacher educator being within an ITT context?

**ST:** Yeah, I mean, that is a good question but also, a hard question. I don't think there's one straightforward answer to. If you read the introduction of the Core Content Framework, we labour at some length, this term, expert colleagues, because actually, a single person often can't really fulfil the breadth of sort of the mentoring and support that a trainee might really need. So actually, what we're encouraging and again, this is building on best practice that we've seen and working really well is you'll have a sort of named mentor who has the responsibility, hopefully the time and the recognition. But then that person will not necessarily be the person who solely supports that trainee. They will be the facilitator of access to other forms of support. And it's quite important that some of those are the forms of support and not in a position of making any judgments, any formal judgments that you know, one of the problems that we can have with the system is this thing that Professor Andy Hobson calls 'judge mentoring.' You know, you can sometimes have a conflict between the person who needs to be the shoulder to cry on and, you know, be a source of supreme emotional support is sometimes also the person who is having to make some kind of summative judgment about the trainee. So to be sure that they have other people that they can go to. But then as I said, there will also be specialist areas like SENCO as I said earlier. So it's quite complex role, because you are having to think of it's almost like you're orchestrating the support from all these different sources. It's why it's so important that we have really good people doing it, and that is recognised for what it is, complex role quite demanding, but are also very, very fulfilling, and actually very good for personal development, as well as you know, supporting the system. Because actually having to think so hard about expertise, having to think about how to support trainees, and to think about really good practice, helps you to develop your own practice as well. So it's actually a really good tool for school improvement, you know, in a way that goes beyond just supporting the trainee.

**JC:** I think that multiple hats that you have to wear is one of the most challenging roles, certainly when I've mentored or supported anyone, being a different type of person for different types of situations and having to maintain a relationship alongside that is very challenging. And I think you're right in that, even if even if that structure isn't maybe in place in school, yet, you as a mentor, or a teacher educator have the control or the power to be able to say to someone that actually maybe speak to so and so down the corridor around this, because I think they're going to be really supportive in this element, or whatever it might be, to one take the burden a few, but two also, it may well be that person is going to be able to give them better support than you can in that area, because it's something maybe they're better they feel more confident in.

**ST:** Yeah, absolutely. And sometimes it's quite good to have somebody who's got a little bit more distance as well you know, it can be quite an intense relationship. So, yeah, I think broadening out, a source of support is really quite important for a number of reasons.

**JC:** Can you kind of identify anyone in your career that you think whether it was formal or informal, someone who mentored you, through either a period of change or challenge or a period of great success, but someone who you could recall now that you think, whether you were both aware of it or not mentored you during your career?

**ST:** Yeah, I mean, there's a few actually. I suppose the person who really stands out, and this isn't in the school context, but I still think there was some sort of some relevance to school based mentor. And that's when I very first came into higher education way back in the 1990s, I think it was. I came in as a part time researcher, I had been a teacher, I just had children, and it needed to start working part time, working part time in school didn't feel particularly attractive at that time. And there was a part time job as a, as a researcher came up in my sort of what was my local Teacher Training College. And the person who was my line manager who ended up also, being my PhD supervisor, was just wonderful. And this woman who, you know, she understood about that, she'd had children herself, so she understood how hard it can be juggling. It's sort of complicated domestic arrangements with trying to do a job, she was incredibly flexible in how she allowed me to do that job. She helped me to sort of think about the bigger picture of what I was trying to achieve what I was I was doing was researching the very early days of teaching assistants and the impact that they had in the classroom. And I look back on her, she was she I think she helped perform, which helped me to form my professional/academic identity. In ways as you say, I wasn't particularly even aware of just too busy living your life at the time and I thought you sort of look back on it, and you realise, oh, yeah, I don't think I'd be the person I am today. I hadn't had that kind of gentle support, sometimes challenge. But you know, supreme understanding, I think, what really struck me was how well she understood the world I was living in at that time. And you know, how to sort of navigate my way through it. She was she's an amazing person.

**JC:** And it strikes me when I think about people who in a very similar context thing, yeah, you know, they really supported me, either professionally, personally, mentored me in one way or another through something challenging. Very often it comes back down to the personal skills, or their awareness of me as a person

**ST:** Really does.

**JC:** And how much that made a difference. Don't get me wrong, they did lots of things as well, that were very supportive in terms of developing me as a professional or developing my practice but ultimately, it often boiled down to someone who understood either my current circumstance or the type of person, I wasn't really tapped into that at that time.

**ST:** Absolutely. Yeah, that is so important. And you know, and it's not always straightforward and easy to get right. You know, sometimes it can just be a personality clash and it's not that there's any fault in either individual, but sometimes you just can't quite find that sort of empathetic bond early on, and you know, because it is quite fraught being in school as a trainee, you know. It doesn't take that much to sort of tip it over into something that can become a bit more negative. And that's why, again, why it's good to have a broader network of support around you so that it's not just necessarily completely dependent on that one relationship, because that can, like I said, that can be such a make or break thing. And so too, yeah, first of all, you do need to have those skills, absolutely but then you also need to be aware that, you know, the chemistry just doesn't always work for every single relationship.

**JC:** And then that's where the provider can play such a big role as well, recognising those relationships. If there is an issue, identifying that trying to fix it, if there isn't a fix also recognising that and adapting whatever support is in place, I think that's crucial from the providers perspective

to not just assume it's always going to work exactly how you want it to.

**ST:** Yeah, I would say that's probably one, you know, one of the really important roles or provide a complex, quite stressful, I know, for providers, you see the benefit, you know, if you can, if you do intervene, and you can make such a difference. It's worth all that stress and that effort.

**JC:** We're talking, we started off prior to doing the podcast talking about how we'd had a positive day yesterday in relation to the pandemic, and potentially this this vaccine, perhaps being down the road at some point, which was wonderful news to hear and something positive for the first time in a long time. But we are living in, you know, incredibly difficult times, not just professionally, but personally to. How have you seen mentors kind of contributing to ITT, and to the trainees that are currently involved, you know, at such a difficult time to be training to be a teacher? How have you seen mentors and teacher educators kind of step up to the plate and support that process?

**ST:** Well, just an phenomenal way to be honest, I think, you know, linking back to the previous discussion about those sort of interpersonal skills and that sort of empathy. Because it tends to be people who are strong in that area, who are mentors and who are teacher educators, I think they've been able to just step up to the challenges which have been really considerable. Yeah, in such a crucial way, both for trainees and NQT's I've seen this, because, you know, we're all dealing with such a lot of newness, and it's not even, you know, consistent, reliable newness, it changes from one day to another. And I know one of the things that mentors are sort of worried about is they're having to support trainees into a world in school that isn't normal. And you know, the way that we're having to teach children, the way we're having to behave in school isn't what it would normally be like, and probably isn't, we hope, what it will be like in a year's time. And so, they're almost having to live kind of parallel lives really. Helping them to sort of deal with the here and now, but also kind of inducting them into what will hopefully be the case when things do go back to normal. Though, I do think there will be some things that actually stay.

**JC:** Yeah, so I wanted to touch on that actually within your role as director of Sheffield Hallam, and obviously, you guys do so much within ITT and teacher training? What do you think, you know, has fundamentally changed? What do you think will be different? You know, what, have you seen that actually, through these opportunities that, you know, I know that working remotely, not just within ITT and teaching perhaps is now something that's far more viable and I think heads and schools are far more open to that idea of flexible working and I think that will move that agenda forward a lot quicker? What other areas or what do you see as being fundamentally impacted and changed by this COVID pandemic?

**ST:** Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, some very sort of practical operational things, how able you are to support and observe trainees without actually setting foot in the school, we know, we've kind of surprised ourselves that you can actually do that quite effectively. And actually, you're stripping back, you know, some of the noise and certainly some of the time that it would have taken if we were sort of, you know, scurrying around the country, you know, spending a day in a car for one hour in a school sort of thing. You know, we've surprised ourselves and how effective we can be. And I think that links in the next point, really, because what it makes you have to do if you're having to do things so drastically differently, is strip back to what are the fundamentals of what you're trying to achieve here. And that's really useful process in itself. And I think we've done that with our courses as well. So, we've had to really think hard, there are some things like, you know, primary P.E. would be an example. You know, some things you just have to be together in a room to do. But

actually, there's quite a lot that actually can be done quite effectively, sometimes more effectively, at a distance. Then you have to think carefully about you know, so what, how do we reflect how to interact? Again, as I say, it's back to first principles, which I think is always useful. Then I think there's some things that I've seen happen in school, which there are sort of elements of in, in how it's kind of bled into teacher training. Particularly in secondary school, we've seen a lot of teachers talking about how they're spending more time with fewer pupils now because of, you know, the bubbles and social distancing and things. Maybe maybe teaching across subjects a bit more. Certainly spending, you know, more social time with pupils, as well as sort of formal learning time.

**JC:** Almost a little bit more of a primary setup.

**ST:** Exactly.

**JC:** No exactly reflecting that but far more towards that way.

**ST:** Yeah, certainly getting some of the benefits of knowing them better as individuals. And in particular, if you're teaching them across more than one subject, you know, you see how learners are different in different subjects. But you're also able to make connections across curriculum as well. And I think I think there have been elements of that certainly in our primary, initial teacher training, because ironically, in primary programmes, it tends to be more like secondary and the way it's organised, different people for different subjects. Whereas I think, you know, we've tended to keep people more with the one tutor group for more things. And that that sort of depth of relationship, that depth of understanding, definitely benefited as a result of that.

**JC:** Everyone who comes on the podcast, Sam tackles, our top five, which are five very, five questions that will come at you and you can you've got, like, as quickly as you can you answer those five questions.

**ST:** Oh god!

**JC:** I know!

**ST:** Got the pulse up now!

**JC:** I know, everyone does. But I'm hoping after this half an hour chat, you know, me well enough sound that I wouldn't throw you under the bus! There's nothing you wouldn't expect. And so then, first one, okay. First, most important quality as a teacher?

**ST:** Oh, well, it might just because we've been talking about it, but I think probably empathy. That ability to put yourself in somebody else's shoes.

**JC:** Absolutely. I did. You know, I've we've done I think we've just been our seventh podcast now. And I think that's come up four times is the most important quality.

**ST:** Really?

**JC:** Yeah but I completely agree. Your favourite book?

**ST:** Oh, that's really hard.

**JC:** I know.

**ST:** I can't!

**JC:** I mean, you can give me a, you know, it's early on a Tuesday so I don't mind if you give me a few. You give me a few options and say, well, it could be this one James or it could be this. If you say the Core Content Framework, we're going to be really disappointed!

**ST:** No, I'm not that sad! Because we're talking about teacher training, a favourite book to introduce trainees to is 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night.'

**JC:** Oh, great.

**ST:** It's a great book in itself but it's actually quite helpful for getting them just thinking about, well actually links to what I just said about empathy, really, you know, understanding different perspectives and different ways of seeing the world. So yeah, I'll go with that.

**JC:** Great book, my Mum made me read that when I was on holiday a few years ago. And it is a brilliant book. Most important quality as a mentor?

**ST:** I suppose I'm not allowed to use empathy. Again.

**JC:** Well, there's no rules in the top five Sam.

**ST:** I don't know if this counts as a quality but I'm going to draw on my research, which has shown the importance of been able to sort of hold the bigger picture understanding of what you're trying to get the trainee to be able to eventually be able to do. And then the micro moment understanding of what the next step, what the next practical step might be. A bit of a complicated answer to a simple question!

**JC:** No, it's important. I love that answer, that's great. And that's where the provider has a really big part to play in terms of that big picture.

**ST:** Absolutely

**JC:** That way, if you want a curriculum that's really clear and is fed through the entire programme, not just your Fridays, but actually every day in the weekend school that can make such a big difference.

**ST:** Exactly.

**JC:** Empowering your mentors with that knowledge is absolutely vital. Your favourite food?

**ST:** Oh, oh god! These are questions that make your mind go blank! My comfort food is probably Jacket potato with cheese.

**JC:** Oh, great, great answer. And then last one, you're hosting a dinner party, you can choose kind of six people to host to come along to your party. I'd like to know who would be the first person on your list throughout history from the beginning of time to now - who would come to your dinner party who would be the first person on your list that would absolutely have to be there to be sat next to you not in any of other seats? They're the person you want to chat with for the night.

**ST:** Oh god this is the sort of question that you should have had to answer your fingertips for isn't it. I don't know if this is right or not. But I'm going to say Michelle Obama.

**JC:** Yeah. Right.

**ST:** So that's we'd have had longer to think about it I'd have come up with something better.

**JC:** But we've also that's also the second person is having Michelle Obama sit with them.

**ST:** Really?

**JC:** Yeah, yeah. Her book's also fascinating if you've read her book.

**ST:** Yes it is. I think that's why it's on my mind.

**JC:** Yeah. That's another great book. Brilliant Sam, well done.

**ST:** Thank you.

**JC:** Nothing too painful though it sounded like it was quite painful so I'm sorry.

**ST:** It was actually yeah.

**JC:** I didn't mean to put you through it. It's meant to be a light-hearted part of the podcast! I think it was probably the most challenging part.

**ST:** I'll forgive you eventually, don't worry.

**JC:** I should have gone harder on the CCF questions. Kind of before we wrap up Sam, I just really, it's a great opportunity to chat to you and I just wondered what from your perspective, there's been, you know, this is kind of looking less about mentoring and more about ITT generally and providers and, you know, new Ofsted framework, new Core Content Framework, there's been a lot of change over the last few years for ITT, in my opinion, all for the better. But what next, do you think? And I know we've got COVID as this huge kind of cloud that just stops us from thinking anything further than next week? And I completely understand that but, you know, a couple years down the line, where do you see it being? Will things have significantly changed? What will be the things that were doing really, really well, in a couple years time with an ITT do you think?

**ST:** I think I think there are some promising things that could have made some fundamental, fundamentally positive steps forward. We've got the specialist NPQ's coming out next year, of which there is one that's called 'Teacher Developer.' And that is for, you know, sort of Uber mentors,

people who are keen mentors who want to, you know, devote a significant amount of their time to it. I think it's going to be a great qualification, it will, it will give recognition to a lot of people who are already doing that kind of a role, and help to support and develop them think that alongside things like the Teaching School Hubs, which I know, it's a sort of challenging process to go through before we get to it, but you know, hopefully two to three years time that will have settled down. And what we will have is we will have sort of centres of people coming together in partnership on quite a big scale. I hope that Universities will be part of that picture as well as, as well as SCITT's and I think, what I hope it will do will be to forge the sort of really deep partnerships that we were talking about earlier on, where for ITT at least, you get that really proper genuine joining up of all the different elements of the of the experience that trainees need to have. Because you've got schools very centrally involved and very much in the driving seat. But working alongside, you know, Lead SCITT partners, Lead University partners, other players in the system, the people who are delivering the Early Career Framework, the NPQ's, etc. It feels like there's lots of different moving parts, which have all been designed to properly connect up with each other. To make, to create a lot more coherence, and a lot more sense of sort of support and development for teachers at every stage of the career actually not just at the beginning. And that's, you know, I feel like compared to that when we were out and about with the Carter Review back in 2014, where it felt like, although we saw a lot of pockets of excellence, the system as a whole was quite fractured. And I feel like you know, a couple years time that hopefully will have gone beyond that to something that's much more joined up. So yeah, I'm quite positive and quite excited about the world beyond COVID for Initial Teacher Training.

**JC:** A great positive message to end our chat with and massive thanks to Sam for being such a great guest. If you're a mentor or teacher educator listening to this, the TEMZ has been created for you and is completely free to access head to [www.nasbtt.org.uk/TEMZ](http://www.nasbtt.org.uk/TEMZ) to sign up and access all the resources available to you. That's it for this week, but we'll be back soon with another episode of the TEMZ podcast.