Student teacher expectations of the role mentor lecturers play in developing teacher identity

by

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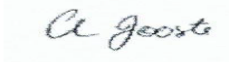
DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

I declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my late mom, Mary Jooste, the kindest person I have ever known, my mentor for life, and to my dad, Johan Jooste, in appreciation for his unwavering belief in me.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FIRE	Fourth-year Initiative in Research in Education
IPET	Initial Professional Education and Training
MRTEQ	Minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications
NRF	National Research Fund
PCK	pedagogical content knowledge
PRA	participatory reflection and action
SoTL	Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
TUKS	University of Pretoria
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
WIL	work-integrated learning

ABSTRACT

Mentoring has been acknowledged as an important foundation of teacher education worldwide and is pivotal to the development of student teachers' teacher identity, especially during teaching practice. Despite this, mentorship seems to fall short of its intended objectives and student teachers frequently seem to perceive mentors are critical evaluators rather than as mentors. The current descriptive case study forms part of a broader research project, the Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, focused on the development of a mentorship intervention for student teachers. To determine the role student teachers expect mentor lecturers to play in the development of their teacher identities, semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires were completed anonymously by 170 student teachers after they had completed their teaching practice. These questionnaires were then analysed using an interpretive approach by means of inductive thematic analysis. Previous work, including Hudson's Five-factor Model for Effective Teaching, acknowledged the need for mentor lecturers to integrate system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, feedback and personal attributes in order to perform important mentorship roles. These included mentor lecturers being experts (in subject didactics and pedagogy), models/guides, reflective practitioners, coaches, companions, motivators and change agents. These factors and roles were identified as significant in the current study, although the need for a caring and encouraging relationship between the student teacher and mentor lecturer was also highlighted. The implication is that mentor lecturers should view student teachers more holistically and offer both personal and professional support during their teaching practice, thus indicating the need for a possible sixth factor, namely the context of a safe and nurturing relationship which may aid teacher identity development.

Key words: Educational psychology; teacher education; mentorship; teaching practice; qualitative research

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Despite the fact that mentoring has been widely acknowledged as an important foundation of teacher education around the world (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson 2009; Knippelmeyer & Torraco 2009; Korthagen, Loughran & Russell 2006; Phillips 2013) and is recognised as 'pivotal to the development of student teachers' (Du Plessis 2013:29), especially during teaching practice, it seems that mentorship may be falling short of achieving its intended outcomes. It has been suggested that many student teachers perceive mentors as critical evaluators of classroom practices rather than as advisers with whom they can build good relationships (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson 2009; Ingersoll & Strong 2011).

The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (South Africa. Department of Education, 2003) proclaims that it is crucial for student teachers to acquire the relevant mentoring, support and training that specifically meets their needs. A dearth of research about what student teachers actually expect from mentors during teaching practice appears to prevail. It is important to determine how student teachers may be assisted during teaching practice because educators can play an important role in preparing students for the fast-changing world, which seems to be especially important in a country like South Africa, a country that has an emerging economy (Petersen 2017; Schleicher 2016).

One may reasonably claim that in South Africa there appears to be a need for improvement in education in general and in teacher education specifically in order to resolve general challenges. These challenges include inequity in society, defective school management, insufficient infrastructure and the inequitable distribution of resources, which all have consequences for teachers and the work they do (Modisaotsile 2012). It is widely acknowledged that the quality of teachers, their teaching strategies and techniques are determining factors in the academic success learners are able to achieve (Moir, Barlin, Gless & Miles 2009). Christofferson and

Sullivan (2015) argue in favour of a more effective combination of didactic coursework and experiential learning for student teachers and emphasise the importance of the guidance that is given by more qualified mentors. Smit and Du Toit (2016) assert that a reassessment of student teachers' education should be undertaken in South Africa's changing education sector in order to change it with a view to making a contribution to transforming society.

A significant number of changes have been introduced in education and for the professional development of student teachers since South Africa's major political transformation in 1994 (Pillay 2015). The government of South Africa's Revised policy on minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (MRTEQ) (Republic of South Africa. Department of Higher Education and Training 2015:15) specifies that practical learning must be implemented in all initial teacher education qualifications. This policy furthermore states that arranging work-integrated learning opportunities for student teachers is the responsibility of the tertiary institution where the teaching qualification is obtained. The period of teaching practice should be at least 20 weeks over the period of four years, which it takes to complete the qualification. The practical training must take place in a school setting and during this time the student teacher should receive supervision, assessment and mentorship. This supervised teaching practice allows the student teacher to obtain real-life experience of the standard operations in a school and builds a triadic relationship between teacher-educators, i.e. the lecturers who provide instruction, those who supervise during teaching practice or school mentors, and student teachers (Darling-Hammond 2017).

Since the aforementioned teaching practice presents student teachers with the first opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in a real situation, it is not uncommon for them to experience feelings of doubt and insecurity (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate 2016). Student teachers have been identified as especially susceptible to a large number of stressors that are prevalent during the onset phase of their teaching careers (Vesely, Saklofske & Nordstokke 2014). Peterson (2017:2,5) describes this as a time of 'professional vulnerability' during which the student teachers undergo immense adaptation and adjustment, and asserts that this process of 'enculturation' would be less challenging if student teachers had someone to guide them and elucidate any

unspoken rules. For this reason mentoring is an important aspect of teacher training at this time.

Research findings indicate that mentoring during this uncertain teaching practice period helps student teachers to reflect on how their teaching influences students' learning, allows them to feel more confident (Wang, Tomlinson & Noe 2010) and to establish new strategies for effective teaching (Villani & Villani 2009). They are also enabled to initiate norms, values and standards which will guide these student teachers during their formative years of teaching and contribute to their establishing their teacher identity (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt 2000; Korthagen 2016).

Teacher identity may be described as the perception of student teachers of themselves, which begins to form at this stage of their development and is likely to change during the course of their careers (Fraser 2018; Van Putten 2012). Student teachers participating in work-integrated learning, or teaching practice, are confronted with the responsibilities which come with real teaching in a classroom for the first time. This is therefore a time of uncertainty for many student teachers, yet it is a crucial part of their teacher identity development. Fraser (2018) argues that teachers define themselves with reference to their perception of teaching and learning strategies, their understanding of the subject content and knowledge of the needs of their learners. These self-perceptions are influenced by their experiences during teaching practice.

The current study forms part of a broader interdisciplinary research project known as the Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). The project focused on the development, implementation and evaluation of a mentorship intervention for student teachers in which mentor lecturers received training in how they could adequately support student teachers and guide them in developing a teacher identity. There were two main motivations for this investigation. Firstly, existing literature acknowledges mentorship as a basis for student teacher support (Knippelmeyer & Torraco 2009; Phillips 2013). However, there seems to be very limited South African research on how mentor lecturers (or university supervisors) could help student teachers to develop teacher identities. An increase in the number of students enrolling to study education has been noted, which means that the demands in terms of

mentorship have amplified, resulting in a number of new challenges for mentor lecturers.

Secondly, the investigation was based on the preliminary findings of a National Research Fund (NRF) research project, the Fourth-year Initiative in Research in Education or FIRE (Fraser 2018). This project focused specifically on the teacher identity development of student teachers. Preliminary findings derived from the FIRE project signified that although students considered mentor lecturers to be important role players in shaping their teacher identities, the contributions of these lecturers frequently seemed to fall short of meeting students' needs, especially owing to the lecturers' perceived primary focus on classroom practice and criticism rather than the holistic development of the students (Fraser, Ferreira, Kazeni, Eberlein, Beukes, Beckmann & Mwambakana 2016).

The following diagram depicts the various phases of the Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project in Figure 1.1.

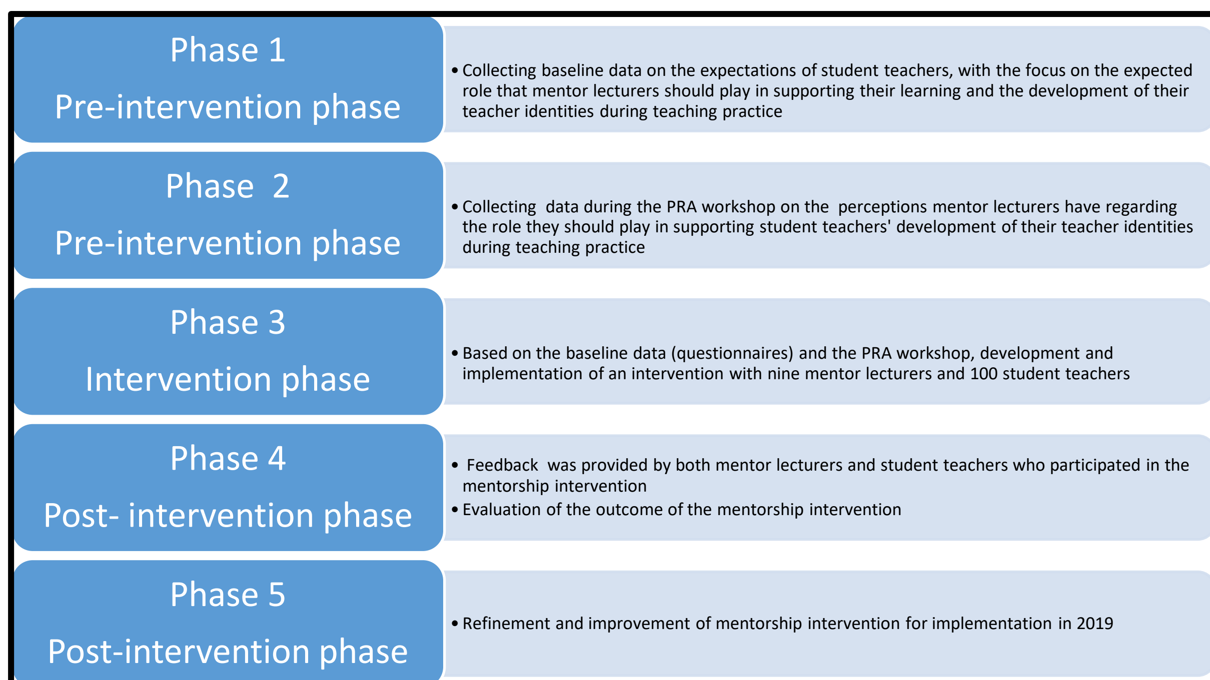


Figure 1.1 Phases in Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project

The current descriptive case study is a study of limited scope, as indicated above in Phase 1. I therefore researched ways in which mentor lecturers could support student teachers to gain optimally from their teaching practice experience and establish a teaching identity, which would allow them to become effective teachers. For the purpose of this study, I support the view of Korthagen (2016), who emphasises the importance of a nurturing relationship between a mentor (mentor lecturers in this case) and a mentee (student teacher), a relationship in which the mentor provides guidance and emotional support to the mentee. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (RSA. DHET 2015), an effective mentor is required to play the following roles: motivator, teacher, role model, supporter, counsellor, adviser, demonstrator, guide, change agent, companion and coach. A review of current literature on mentorship showed that limited studies have been conducted regarding ways in which students' experiences during teaching practice influence their perception of and attitude to the teaching profession (Kiggundu & Nayimuli 2009). This descriptive case study aimed to highlight the ways in which mentor lecturers might have an impact on student teachers' developing teacher identities.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to explore and describe student teachers' expectations of the roles and responsibilities of mentor lecturers in the development of their teacher identities. This applied to student teachers who had only gone out to schools in their fourth, and final, year of degree study and had the opportunity to experience real teaching practice for the first time. The aim of this study was thus to conduct a baseline investigation into the expectations of student teachers, including how their mentor lecturers could guide their forming their individual, newly emerging teacher identities (Edmonds & Kennedy 2016). It also aimed to provide some of the evidence that appears to be lacking in the existing body of knowledge regarding the mentorship needs of student teachers at the University of Pretoria (UP) and possibly other tertiary institutions in South Africa.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In consideration of the rationale and purpose of the current study, as described in sections 1.1 and 1.2, the following primary research question guided this inquiry:

What are student teachers' expectations of the role mentor lecturers should play in the development of their teacher identities during their first teaching practice?

In addition to the primary research question, I explored the following secondary research questions:

1. Why do student teachers need mentoring during teaching practice?

2. How can effective mentoring by mentor lecturers assist a student teacher to develop their teacher identity?

3. How can the findings of this descriptive case study inform the future mentoring roles of mentor lecturers at the University of Pretoria?

1.4 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

In the following section I explain the key concepts relevant to the study.

1.4.1 Student teacher

A number of studies define someone who is studying education at a higher education institution, and who wants to become a teacher, as a 'pre-service teacher' (Hudson 2004; Kaelin 2013; Korthagen 2004). The student teachers are furthermore also sometimes referred to as students-in-training, mentees or pre-service teachers. In the context of this study, I referred to them as 'student teachers' (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn 2000; Hobson, Malderez, Ashby & Tomlinson 2009). 'Student teachers' in this study were final-year students, those in their fourth year, who were doing the PRO400 or Teaching Practice Module. These students were therefore in their final year of the Bachelor of Education teaching degree at the UP during 2016. This therefore

presented the first opportunity for these students in four years of studying to engage in teaching practice.

1.4.2 Mentor lecturer

Khumalo (2014:7) refers to a mentor of student teachers as someone who aims to 'supervise, coach and guide student teachers so that they develop professionally'. In this study, the definition of 'mentor lecturer' referred to a lecturer at the Faculty of Education at the UP who had been appointed as a mentor to student teachers and who supervised students in the assessment of their lessons and gave feedback after the student teacher had presented a lesson. It was envisaged that the mentor lecturer would therefore assess student teachers, have an influence on them, act as a role model for the student teachers and offer them advice, guidance and feedback in the academic or psychosocial context (Bird 2012). It is important not to confuse the term 'mentor lecturer' with 'mentor teacher', the person who guides the student teacher in the school environment during their teaching practice, since these terms represent two completely different roles (Du Plessis 2013).

1.4.3 Teacher identity

Defining the construct 'teacher identity' has been acknowledged as ubiquitous and it appears that no common conceptualisation for the term exists (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott 2006; Castanheira, Green, Dixon & Yeagerb 2007; Korthagen 2016). The definition postulated by Van Putten (2012:20) after giving careful consideration to a number of definitions of professional teacher identity between 2001 and 2011, can be summarised as a complex concept 'made up of personal as well as social aspects which come together in a construct that encompasses knowledge and beliefs, emotions and relationships, contexts and experiences' is accepted as relevant to the current study. Professional teacher identity was therefore defined in the framework of this study as the way student teachers viewed themselves and their various responsibilities as teachers, including subject matter expertise, didactical expertise and pedagogical knowledge, which develop across different contexts as a process rather than as a fixed or unitary characteristic (Beijaard 2018; Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt 2000; Van Putten 2012).

1.5 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Taking into consideration the initial literature review, I conducted the current study against the background of the following assumptions:

1. Student teachers expect mentor lecturers to have a nurturing relationship with them in which they will care for the well-being of the student teacher, as well as motivate, support, and counsel them so that they may develop their teacher identity (Korthagen 2018). This nurturing relationship requires psychosocial support, which entails building a nurturing relationship with the student teacher and considering their overall well-being and emotional as well as social support needs (Ferguson 2017) in order to build their professional identities. This requires mentors to be supportive, positive and attentive (Hudson 2016).

2. Student teachers require guidance from their mentor lecturers with regard to: system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback on lesson plans during teaching practice.

1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

This section contains a brief overview of the epistemological and methodological paradigms that guided the study. More detailed discussions of these paradigms are presented in Chapter 3.

1.6.1 Epistemological paradigm: Interpretivism

As the intent was to interpret the expectations of students pertaining to the mentoring and guidance provided by their mentor lecturers, I relied on interpretivism as my epistemological paradigm. Interpretive researchers maintain that there are 'multiple socially constructed realities' (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:7) and that communities seek to understand the world in which they live and work by elaborating on the personal significance of their experiences (Creswell & Creswell 2017). Owing to people being incomparable and complex, they experience and understand reality in different ways and have individual reasons for their choices and actions. Hence

interpretivists are interested in perceptions, views and experiences, and in addition aspire to achieve empathetic understanding of their subjects (Thompson 2017). As an interpretive researcher, I used systematic procedures. However, as I believe that there are multiple socially constructed realities, the views described are subjective rather than objective, unlike those of positivist researchers, who maintain that only a single reality exists. My professional judgements and perceptions are reflected in the interpretation of the data. There is emphasis on the values and context of the student teachers rather than on numbers or objective measures. Through the exploration of students' individual perceptions, I endeavoured to capture the meaning of the experiences of the student teachers (Maree 2015).

1.6.2 Methodological paradigm: Qualitative approach

I followed a qualitative approach in order to gain an understanding of the phenomena of mentorship and teacher identity from the perspectives of the participants. In the case of the study under review the participants were 170 final-year student teachers of 2016 at the UP and the methodological approach that was employed corresponded with the interpretivist paradigm (Maree 2015).Qualitative research is flexible and inductive (Sandelowski 2004), which allowed me to create a comprehensive description of the phenomena (Creswell & Creswell 2017) and to write comprehensive, context-bound summary statements (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The qualitative approach was first and foremost exploratory and used to acquire a deeper comprehension of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of the student teachers' expectations of mentoring (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout 2014).

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory that guided this study was Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson, 2004) which identifies the following important key features: personal attributes (including being supportive of the student teacher and helping to instill confidence and positive attitudes, especially through being attentive, listening conscientiously to the mentee and creating a context where talking is comfortable); system requirements (such as articulating the aims and policies required by the

education system and explicating the details of the curricula); pedagogical knowledge (including classroom management, time-tabling, planning and implementation of lesson); modelling (for example, showing enthusiasm; using language appropriate to the syllabus; demonstrating hands-on lessons; modelling classroom management strategies and exhibiting effective teaching methods for a particular subject) and feedback (articulating expectations of the student teachers and providing detailed advice once lesson plans have been reviewed and the mentee has been observed teaching a lesson).

This theoretical framework guided the current study so that a comparison could be made between the current study's findings and Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson, 2004).

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, I present a brief overview of the research design that was used for this descriptive case study.

1.8.1 Research design: Descriptive case study

The research design employed for the current study is identified as a descriptive case study. The aim of the study was to provide an in-depth analysis of the expectations of student teachers regarding the way that their mentor lecturers contributed to the development of their professional teacher identities. I chose a descriptive case study as research design because a case study may be perceived as identifying a selection of factors for exploring as a solitary case (McMillan & Schumacher 2014; Yin 2018). It is moreover a widely acknowledged research design used extensively in the social sciences (Yazan 2015). Descriptive case study has been acknowledged as being a suitable method for investigating professional teacher identity (Van Putten 2012).

Furthermore, Yin (2018) asserts that a single case study is the optimal choice when a researcher investigates one single aspect. The student teachers themselves were the 'case' being investigated as their combined expectations with regard to how their mentor lecturers might contribute to the development of their teacher identities was

the focal point. The attention was thus on gaining an in-depth understanding of this topic in its natural, real-life context (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh 2011). The case comprised 170 student teachers who were in their fourth, and therefore final, year of their studies in 2016 and were all taking the PRO400 module. They had completed their teaching practice (of 20 weeks), which had also been their first exposure to the real world of teaching in four years of study. They had been supervised by lecturers who monitored, mentored and assessed them. The baseline data revealed that appropriate mentoring was lacking in the case of the majority of these student teachers. Qualitative case study research was an ideal method to employ in order to gain a more holistic understanding of the mentorship needs of student teachers, because it allowed me to position the student teachers' expectations of their mentor lecturers in relation to the development of their professional teacher identities and their teaching practice requirements.

1.9 METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

A brief overview of the methodological strategies utilised for this study is provided in this section.

1.9.1 Selection of partcipants and research site

For this study purposive sampling was used, because it yielded 'information-rich' descriptions of the case being studied (Morrow 2005:250). This sampling method was directly linked to the objective of the research (Palys 2008). The participants were therefore purposefully selected. The population for my study was 170 final-year student teachers (2016 group) who were completing their BA degrees in education at the UP. The reason for the research being conducted using only the final-year teaching students was because they were the only students who had already done any teaching practice at the time (PRO400 module); and also because the main aim was to describe the expectations of this particular group during this specific phase.

There was a week of reflection during September 2016, which all student teachers were required to attend, therefore the questionnaires containing open-ended questions were administered in the Normaal Hall on the Groenkloof Campus at the UP

then. There would have been an additional cohort of 170 student teachers, but the second day of reflection was cancelled owing to unexpected protest action on the campus. The two groups had been randomly selected, therefore this would not have caused any bias to be present in the research. I wanted to establish what the need was among the UP's students first of all as this particular case could be a precursor to potentially exploring the needs and expectations of student teachers at other institutions.

The sampling method may also be described as convenience sampling because the student teachers were on campus after their teaching practice for reflection week, when they were all required to assemble in the Normaal Hall on the Groenkloof Campus of the UP. This scheduled official event therefore made it convenient for the participants as they had to be on campus at the time anyway. It was arranged with the Teaching Practice Office of the university that the student teachers would be allowed to use some of that time to complete the questionnaires.

1.9.2 Data collection, documentation, data analysis and interpretation

The data-collection technique and the documentation, including the researcher's reflective journal, are expounded on in this section, which includes the data analysis and interpretation.

1.9.2.1 Semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires

The data-collection technique employed was open-ended questionnaires, which were completed, and then analysed using inductive thematic analysis (Yin 2018).There were seven questions (all open-ended, with room for elaboration) related to: the ideal role of the mentor lecturer; what kind of practical contributions the mentor lecturers made to enhance the student teachers' professional identities; any major concerns regarding the mentoring process; what positive aspects were experienced during the mentorship process; what expectations were pertaining to the mentor lecturers and any suggestions for successful mentor-mentee relationships in future.

The justification for using a questionnaire is that the open-ended questions allowed

participants the opportunity to express and expand on their true opinions of the subject, with a view to achieving the desired outcome of the study – answering the main research question. This process was moreover enhanced by the questionnaires being anonymous, preventing the participants from possibly being reticent about mentioning any negative aspects. Issuing questionnaires at a previously arranged event was also economical in terms of time and money. University students and lecturers have busy schedules, and face-to-face interviews would therefore not have been a realistic course of action considering that there were 170 participants. The questionnaire was piloted among the university's staff to ensure that it was comprehensible and that it did not contain irrelevant or ambiguous questions (Maree 2015). Special care was taken when developing the questionnaire to ensure that the questions were clear, unbiased and relevant. Short and leading or loaded questions, as well as double-barrelled or negative questions were avoided (McMillan & Schumacher 2014).

Questionnaires gave the participants the opportunity to re-examine any questions in cases where they were uncertain and they were moreover able to take their time and consider before responding to the questions. There were nevertheless some limitations to using questionnaires, namely being unable to probe and obtain clarity in respect of responses; there being no way of telling whether the participants had been honest or not (sometimes people give the answers that they feel are desirable, rather than being candid); and being unable to read and interpret the body language of the participants.

1.9.2.2 Researcher's reflective journal

I kept a researcher's reflective journal throughout the research process. I recorded information and personal thoughts in this journal as they occurred during the course of the research. I made notes regarding my personal reflections and emotions as well as information and ideas garnered from literature and the data (Nieuwenhuis 2007). I attempted to unveil any assumptions, bias or personal values which may have influenced the study by keeping notes on my thoughts and by having frequent conversations with my supervisor, which were also put on record (Creswell & Creswell

2017). These actions enabled me to compare the themes that emerged from the literature review and the data with my contemplative notes in order to understand how my subjective views may have influenced the results (Nieuwenhuis 2007). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:334) recommend keeping a 'reflexive journal' with a view to enhancing reflexivity. In addition the aim of keeping the journal was to maintain credibility during the descriptive case study.

1.9.3 Data analysis and interpretation

When analysing the responses to the questionnaires for my study I employed inductive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2014:7) describe thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' and Saldaña (2009) endorses the qualitative technique of thematic analysis as being suitable for a descriptive case study. The aim of the inductive thematic content analysis was to achieve an in-depth, yet concise description of the phenomena being studied. This was done by carefully and thoroughly examining and comparing raw data, which were the responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, until I could make valid inferences and condense the information into a number of categories or themes. Elo and Kyngäs (2008:108) refer to this as the 'abstraction process'.

The aforementioned method is flexible, especially as researchers appear to concur that although research should be rigorous and systematic, it does not have to follow uniform procedures or give the steps followed the same names or descriptions (Bengtsson 2016; Elo & Kyngäs 2008; Krippendorff 2004; Prasad 2008; Saldaña 2009; White & Marsh 2006; Zhang & Wildemuth 2005). I conducted inductive thematic analysis of the baseline data by following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2014), which are depicted in Figure 1.2.

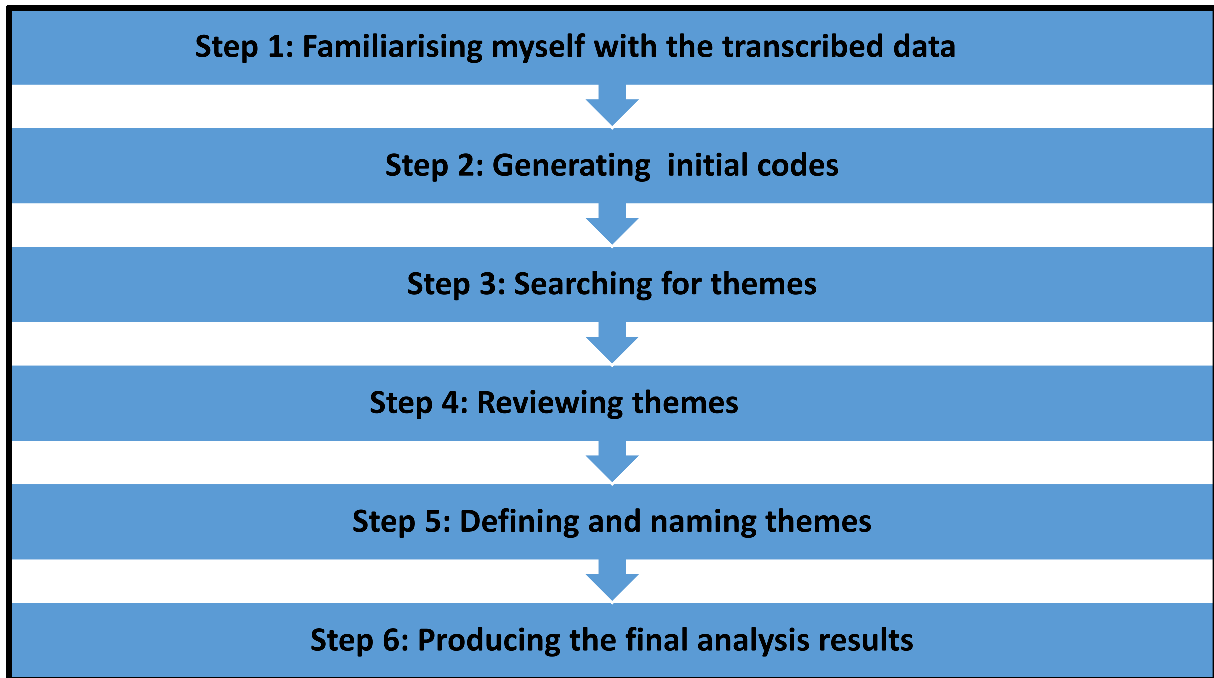


Figure 1.2 Steps for conducting inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2014)

Employing inductive thematic analysis meant that I could use data which was pertinent to my particular research problem (Prasad 2008). For this study the final-year teaching students' responses to the questionnaires were suitable, because I was exploring their own expectations. Using inductive thematic analysis allowed me to make a well-considered interpretation of the student teachers' expectations (White & Marsh 2006). It was helpful that the data, in the form of responses to questionnaires, were permanent, because it meant that I could validate findings through re-examination (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Inductive thematic analysis can be complex and the 'themes are usually quite abstract and therefore difficult to identify' (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013:402). If themes are too broad, they are difficult to manage, yet if they are too narrow, they may cause the results to be too fragmented, and either case can culminate in a loss of meaning of the original text (Graneheim & Lundman 2004:110). I explained my abstraction process (Elo & Kyngäs 2008:112), the identification of essential ideas, in detail by including a comprehensive audit trail (Bengtsson 2016; Zhang & Wildemuth 2005:5), and substantiated it by means of authentic citations that corroborated and explained the process. I followed this route to ensure that my themes 'capture[s] something important about the data in relation to

the research question, and represent[s] some level of response pattern or meaning making within the data set' (Braun & Clarke 2014:88), thus enabling others to critique the credibility of my conclusions (Elo & Kyngäs 2008; Krippendorff 2004; Sandelowski 2004). I moreover made notes in my reflection journal, which verifies the process.

1.10 QUALITY CRITERIA

Finally, the quality criteria and trustworthiness of the study was an essential part of the overall design, which was considered during the implementation of the different procedures in the research process. I utilised various strategies to ensure the criteria, namely credibility, or the accuracy or truthfulness reflected in the descriptive case study; dependability, or that the research findings were consistent and repeatable; confirmability, or that the findings were shaped by and described the participants' experiences rather than my own opinion or bias; transferability, or the extent to which the results might have relevance for other settings or groups; and authenticity, or the genuineness and credibility of the case study, which are all required in qualitative research (Athanasou & Maree 2012; Bengtsson 2016; Morrow 2005; Sanjari *et al*. 2014; Zhang & Wildemuth 2005). I cautiously avoided bias in my description of the data and endeavoured to convey the content of the text in a scientific and trustworthy manner.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations which advised the current study included permission to use existing data, voluntary participation and informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, trust, reflexivity, integrity, beneficence and non-maleficence (Creswell & Creswell 2017; Guillemin & Gillam 2004, Miles & Huberman 1994; Sanjari *et al*. 2014). In section 3.6 I provided a detailed description of the ethical considerations that guided the investigation. The ethical clearance number is UP16/11/03 and the ethical clearance certificate is attached as Appendix D(i).

1.12 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

As this was a qualitative baseline study, I was involved in every step of the research

process, apart from the design of the questionnaires, and the data collection on the actual day. I may therefore be described as a co-researcher in the larger project of which the current study forms a part. I relied on information provided by the participants of the study and my role was to report as impartially and accurately as possible the participants' thoughts and feelings (Denzin & Lincoln 2003). It was crucial that I should practice reflexive self-awareness (Malacrida 2007) so I kept a research journal, *inter alia,* to elucidate my own reactions to and reflections on the data (Greenbank 2003). I furthermore worked closely with my supervisor.

1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study reported on the expectations of student teachers in respect of the way that their mentor lecturers contributed to student teachers' development of their teaching identity. The aim was to conduct a baseline study, based on the results of the FIRE project, to explore the mentoring needs of student teachers as they perceived them. This information then inspired a mentoring intervention by the Faculty of Education at the UP to train mentor lecturers. The aim of such an intervention was to help mentor lecturers to become best equipped to deliver on what student teachers needed most. The objective, therefore, was for more effective mentorship to assist the student teachers to become the best teachers that they could be, and that they should be able to use what they had learned as a foundation for developing their teacher identity. This would also hopefully help student teachers to become more confident (Hudson 2009) and to remain in the teaching profession (Ingersoll & Strong 2004). The results of the study aimed to enhance mentoring rather than merely monitoring or supervising, and to create a mentoring scenario as opposed to tormenting, such as harsh criticism rather than being constructive and supportive in feedback, the student teachers.

1.14 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This section provides an overview of the chapters in this study:

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

This chapter outlined the background of the study, explained the relevant key

concepts, specified the problem statement, the purpose of the research and the research questions. A summary of the epistemological and methodological paradigms was included, along with the trustworthiness and significance of the study as well as the role of the researcher.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The chapter reflects a comprehensive literature review on relevant features within the context of the current study, including mentorship in teacher training and developing a teacher identity in order to investigate the expectations of the student teachers who participated in the current study. I concluded the chapter with an analysis of the theoretical framework for the study in an attempt to assist with achieving consistency between the purpose of the current study and the significant theory attached to the topic of enquiry.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research process concerning the selected research design and the methodology pursued during the current study to investigate the research questions. The methods of sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation that were selected were described and justified. I also included a comprehensive discussion on quality criteria and the ethical principles which guided the study. This chapter was concluded with my role as researcher, and a reflection on my experience.

Chapter 4: Results and findings

In this chapter I delineated the results and findings obtained during the current study. The results were advanced in accordance with the themes, categories and sub-categories which emanated from the inductive thematic analysis process. Lastly, I proposed an interpretation of the results and a review of the literature that had been summarized in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusive chapter provides a summary of the main findings and outcomes in line with the research question and purpose of the current study, as posited in Chapter 1. The potential contributions of the current study were discussed, as were the limitations. The chapter concluded with recommendations for further research, training and practice.

1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 presented the introduction, background and rationale for the current study, along with an explanation of what motivated me to choose my particular research focus. The significance of the anticipated contribution of the study was presented as well as of the primary and secondary research questions. Key concepts were elucidated and I provided a brief outline of the selected paradigm, research design and methodological selections. I also acknowledged the ethical issues and quality criteria connected with ensuring the trustworthiness of the current investigation. Finally, I provided a brief outline of all the chapters in this research paper.

In Chapter 2, I explored existing literature regarding the mentorship of student teachers and the development of a teacher identity. A comprehensive review of the topics relevant to the current study took place and I also explained the selected theoretical framework, namely Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004). I incorporated this theory, along with the relevant research, to form a conceptual framework, and conceptualised how mentoring may assist with development of different aspects of teacher identity.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHING PRACTICE AND MENTORING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of some of the literature pertaining to the mentoring of student teachers, which is relevant to this descriptive case study. As indicated in Chapter 1, the main aim of the current study was to determine the mentoring needs of student teachers specifically relating to their mentor lecturers. Therefore, a description of what teaching practice entails in the South African context was provided, followed by a discussion of teacher identity. Consideration of teacher practice is essential, since this is the stage when the mentor/mentee relationship becomes evident and therefore necessary to establish. Furthermore, I included a discussion on the theoretical framework, Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004, 2016), as well as an explanation of the rationale for using this theoretical framework. A conceptual framework integrating Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model and the outcome of the literature review concluded this chapter.

2.2 TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2007) requires that all Initial Professional Education and Training (IPET) programmes should have three common components, namely educational theory, professional studies and teaching practice. Student teachers must be placed for their teaching practice in schools that have been acknowledged as suitable sites of teaching and learning. Through teaching practice student teachers complement their theoretical training and acquire experience of the regular operations in schools. Teacher education programmes intend to prepare student teachers for their professional careers as schoolteachers (Pearson 2016). The teaching practice component is generally the first opportunity student teachers have to apply their knowledge in an authentic teaching and learning environment. Maphalala (2013:123) describes it as the 'culminating experience in teacher preparation' because it presents an opportunity for student teachers to be socialised into the teaching profession. Kiggundu and

Nayimuli (2009) depict it as the 'make-or-break' phase for student teachers.

Du Plessis (2013) describes teaching practice as the period in which student teachers are exposed to school life under the leadership of a supervisor or mentor lecturer and a mentor teacher. The teaching practice period referred to in the current study is the period during which the student teachers were required to use the theoretical knowledge they had acquired and apply it in the classroom in real life. The key role players involved were the prospective teachers (the student teachers), the higher education institutions, and the schools in which teaching practice took place as specified by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which may be diagrammatically indicated as follows:

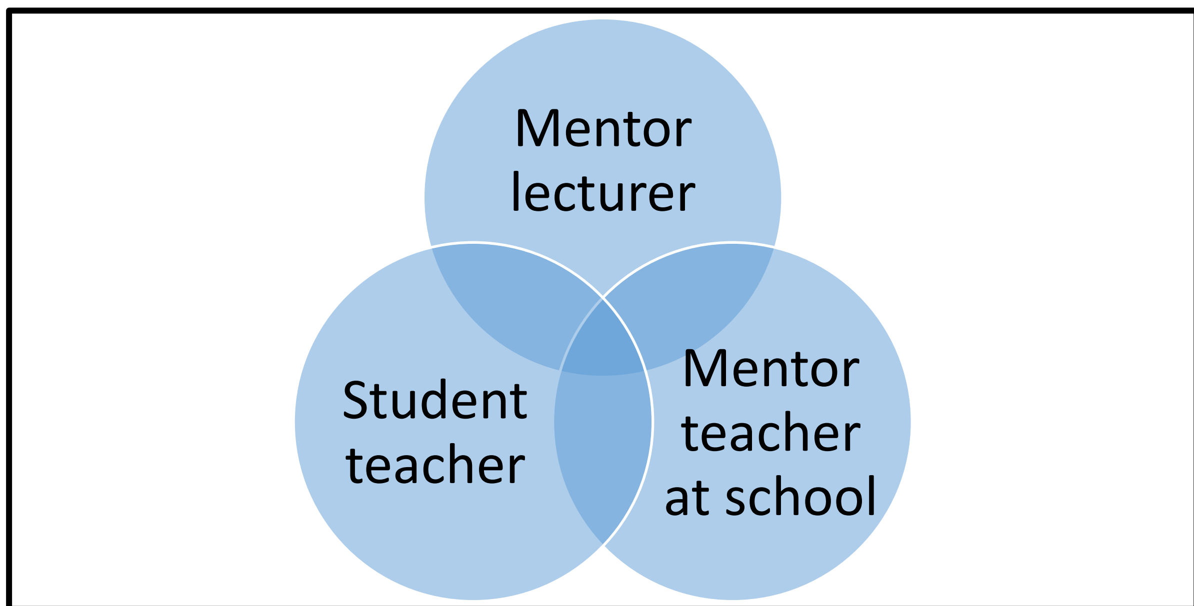


Figure 2.1: Triad of role players during teaching practice

Learning during teaching practice requires that the student teachers instruct learners in authentic classrooms. This is also referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL) and comprises aspects relating to learning from practice (by means of observing qualified teachers and reflecting on their lessons) and learning in practice (when the student teachers plan, teach and reflect on their own lessons that they present at the schools in which they are placed in accordance with the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications or MRTEQ (RSA. DHET 2015). This school-based WIL includes supervised and assessed teaching practice, which forms a vital part of the

B.Ed. initial teacher training programme.

2.3 THE NEED FOR MENTORING DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

Mentoring is widely acknowledged as an indispensable part of the teaching practice for student teachers because of its potential to contribute advantageously to the student teachers' development (Helms-Lorenz, Slof & Van de Grift 2013; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson 2009; Ingersoll & Strong 2011.) A number of studies exist in which only the teacher appears to be considered as the student teacher's 'mentor' during the teaching practice period (Dos Reis 2012; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka 2009; Tillema, Van der Westhuizen & Smith 2015). Maphalala (2013), for example, aimed to establish the nature of the mentorship student teachers studying at the University of South Africa (UNISA) received by using Padua's model (2003), which specifically relates to mentor teachers. However, the current study aimed to explore the expectations of student teachers specifically in relation to the mentor lecturer, who is usually assigned by the university.

Some studies identified that certain student teachers experienced very limited benefits during their teaching practice owing to poorly implemented mentorship (Maphosa, Shumba & Shumba 2007; Mukeredzi 2017). Du Plessis (2013:1) asserts that 'non-mentoring' has a negative impact on teaching practice, which may affect the student teacher's perception of their professional identity, leaving them disenchanted and unmotivated. Harfitt (2018) asserts that this important part of a teaching student teacher's training may either lead to commitment to the teaching profession and retention or to regret and departure.

Recent studies (Ambrosetti, Dekkers & Knight 2017) have underscored the importance of lecturers and teachers working together and co-ordinating their efforts so that the quality of mentorship in schools could be improved. It was anticipated that exploring the student teacher's expectations of their mentor lecturers would provide much needed guidance in terms of defining the function and responsibilities of these important role players. The current case study focused specifically on the lecturer as mentor and how they might enable the student teachers to develop their teacher

identities during teaching practice.

2.4 TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION AND ITS ROLE IN TEACHING PRACTICE

The teaching practice period has been identified as an important time for the development of teacher identity (Hsieh 2014). Although a teacher's professional identity emerged as a distinct research area during the past two decades (Beijaard 2018), no common conceptualisation for the term exists (Dinham, Beltman, Glass, Chalk & Nguyen 2016). There appears to be some consensus, however, that the development of a teacher identity is a complex, dynamic and ongoing process (Cross & Ndofirepi 2013; Fraser 2018; Korthagen 2016, 2018.

Van Putten (2012) carefully considered definitions that had emerged between 2001 and 2011 and proposed a summarised description of teacher identity as a combination of personal and social characteristics, inclusive of knowledge and beliefs, emotions, relationships, contexts and experiences. Vähäsantanen (2015) defines teacher identity as a complex combination of the following four factors: perceptions of professional concerns and functions; views of how students learn; the beliefs about the goals of teaching and learning; and anticipation of the future.

Vähäsantanen (2015) unequivocally acknowledges the effect of both social and individual resources on teacher identity. Dinham *et al.* (2016) and Bukor (2014) similarly assert that a person's life story, personal encounters and professional experiences shape teacher identity. These researchers (Bukor, 2014; Dinham *et al.,* 2016) cite previous encounters with teachers and teaching, the learning that occurs during pre-service training, experiences during teaching practice and expectations of society as influencing factors. They assert that it is paramount for teacher educators and teacher education programmes to facilitate the development of a distinctive, meaningful, resilient teacher identity that is founded on strong beliefs and values.

Fraser (2018) highlights three important components of teacher identity, illustrated initially by Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000), namely: subject matter expertise;

didactical expertise (theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning strategies) and pedagogical expertise (consideration of the interactions that occur during learning and knowledge about the cognitive needs of learners). Beijaard (2018) recently emphasised that teacher knowledge and development comprised more than studying subject matter, pedagogical content knowledge, theories of teaching and learning and teaching skills, because all of these aspects needed to be converted into practical action. Beijaard (2018) reiterates that many personal aspects, such as a person's own biography, aspirations, learning history and convictions about education are prevalent in the development of teacher identity. Korthagen (2016:13) confirms this by highlighting the 'multi-dimensional', 'multi-level' and 'often unconscious' nature of teacher identity development that occurs in the relationship between 'theory, practice and person'. Korthagen (2016) consequently acknowledges the importance of connecting the professional with the personal aspects of learning, which includes emotions, motivations and personal cognition. He describes this finding as an 'inconvenient truth' (Korthagen 2016:1) for policy-makers because he asserts that the dichotomy between theory and practice prevails.

Joseph and Heading (2010:75) assert that putting theory into practice may assist with the shift from 'student identity' to 'teacher identity'. In order to navigate these discrepancies and improve professional development in such a way that effective learning can take place, Korthagen (2016) emphasises the need for a safe environment in which student teachers may voice their genuine concerns and feelings, an environment in which these emotional and motivational characteristics will receive sincere consideration and attention. Bukor (2014) similarly argues that personal issues and professional issues cannot be examined separately because both are principal influences on teacher identity and teaching practice. One's self-concept, including factors such as emotions, values, motivation, contentment, dedication, attitude, ability to deal effectively with stress and sense of pride or achievement, influences and is influenced by teacher identity.

Zhu and Zhu (2018) noted some important transformations in student teachers' teacher identity that might occur in a safe and nurturing learning environment. These included changing from having idealistic notions of teachers' roles to gaining more

realistic insights; from experiencing feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy related to a lack of professional knowledge and the perceived inability to teach to variable degrees of professional growth and confidence; from 'transition shock' arising from the shift between university setting and school placement to a well-adjusted, professional teacher identity; and, finally, a change in the influential relationship of student teachers with mentors, from one in which the mentor is in charge to one in which the mentees become empowered through additional opportunities in teaching practice (Zhu & Zhu 2018:3). This study highlighted the need for mentors at schools and universities to be dedicated to facilitating the development of teachers' professional identity during teaching practice. The revised policy on MRTEQ emphasises the importance of tertiary institutions' 'developing mutually beneficial partnerships with schools' (RSA. DHET 2015:15).

Cross and Ndofirepi (2015:95) argue that there is a need for a paradigm shift in teacher education in South Africa because, as their findings suggest, knowledge and skills are insufficient for teachers to achieve success. Knowledge and skills must be integrated with 'strategies which enable teachers to navigate through the complex processes through which shared meaning about the teaching profession is negotiated in order to develop and consolidate teacher identity' Cross and Ndofirepi (2015:95). The findings of these researchers, based on interviews with 200 teachers from the Limpopo province, suggest that providing student teachers with the aforementioned strategies requires a more profound understanding of the influence of personal factors, such as environment, life history and life experiences, the school context that student teachers themselves experienced, the communities, social networks and events that have affected their lives, along with the influence of teacher social and education networks and the complexities of the schools where they are placed for teaching practice.

Although the majority of studies related to the mentoring of student teachers claim that a relationship of understanding between a mentor and mentee is beneficial to the student teacher and teacher identity development (Hudson 2016; Knippelmeyer & Torraco 2009; Korthagen 2016; Phillips 2013), Cavanagh and Prescott (2007) argue that the development of a teacher identity can actually be constrained by the mentoring style of the mentor lecturer. Hobson *et al.* (2009) maintain that mentoring may even

have the potential to do harm. Hobson *et al.* (2009) moreover also mention the following weak points: firstly, when mentors neglect to offer sufficient support to ensure the student teacher's emotional welfare; secondly, when mentors do not give student teachers enough independence and responsibility; and, thirdly, when the mentor focuses too much attention on practical concerns and not enough on the subject of pedagogy and promoting reflective practice. Promoting reflective practice is a common theme in teacher education and recent studies support the development of critical thinking skills, such as cognitive flexibility, open-mindedness, attentiveness, problem-solving and time management, as an important part of reflection necessary for teacher identity development (Sheybani & Miri 2019; Chen 2018).

Literature seems to present that teacher identity develops across different contexts as a process rather than as fixed or unitary characteristic (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt 2000; Fraser 2018; Van Putten 2012). Teacher identity continues to develop and change over the course of a teacher's career (Beijaard 2016; Korthagen 2016; Noonan 2018) and the results of a study by Noonan (2018) highlight the significance of ongoing professional development as an imperative part of teacher identity. Noonan (2018) iterates that there should be greater flexibility and more personalisation in the development of professional development programmes for student teachers and teachers to ensure sustained growth and improvement. Furthermore, Noonan (2018) describes teacher identity development as a process which is intended to improve alignment between values and behaviour, and vice versa. This concurs with Russell and Korthagen's (2013) proposition that a successful teacher is one who is able to find and maintain an alignment between core virtues, ideals, consciousness of identity, beliefs and values, skills and knowledge, behaviour and the characteristics of the environment. Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset and Beishuizen (2016) identified five psychological processes that occur during the development and maintenance of teacher identity, namely: a sense of gratitude; a sense of kinship or relatedness; a sense of competence; a sense of dedication; and the ability to envisage a future career path. These points highlight the complexity of teacher identity formation, and are why Korthagen (2016:268) calls for a 'more holistic approach toward teacher development'.

2.4.1 The concept of mentoring to enhance teacher identity

Mentoring has been recognised as a way to enhance developing student teachers' teacher identities (Zhu & Zhu 2018). The idea of mentorship is an ancient one, starting in Ancient Greece, where the original *mentor* was described by Homer in *Odysseus* as 'wise and trusted counsellor' (Knippelmeyer & Torraco 2009:77). A review of mentoring literature highlights that despite an increase in research related to mentorship during the past two decades a precise definition remains elusive. Scholars continue to grapple with trying to understand the complexity of this possibly life-changing relationship and how it may enhance development of one's teacher identity (Pennanen, Bristol, Wilkinson & Heikkinen 2016). There is nevertheless a substantial amount of research on mentoring as a developmental tool for teachers-in-training (Crutcher & Naseem 2015; Darling-Hammond 2012; Grebenau 2018; Hudson & Hudson 2017) and mentoring has become widely acknowledged as a way to transform and improve education (Hudson & Hudson 2017).

Improving education systems requires more knowledgeable, well-prepared teachers. Phillips (2013:3) maintains that teacher-training institutions are accountable for training students to evolve into well-informed and confident teachers who can deliver quality education and manage a class of learners. She goes on to state that 'continuous change and renewal of teacher education programmes are necessary to keep pace with the changing world' (Phillips 2013:18). Part of this change is mentorship, since mentorship now appears to be viewed as a basis for student teacher support in the international arena. Evidence suggests that mentor lecturers can have an enormous impact on the success of student teachers (Korthagen 2018). Moir *et al.* (2009:1) maintain that 'when mentors are well selected, well trained, and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers become great'. Since student teachers doing their teaching practice are well on their way to becoming 'new teachers', mentorship may similarly support them to become 'great'.

A number of research studies indicate the significance of mentoring of student teachers during the teaching practice component of their degrees (Du Plessis 2013; Izadinia 2015). One important benefit of mentoring during this time is that it allows for

an opportunity to share practical, direct knowledge, which helps the student teacher to adapt more readily to the culture of a specific school and to the teaching profession as a whole (Pillay 2015). Mentoring may enable a student teacher to acquire a vast range of skills and act as a way of introducing the student teacher to classroom practices and general professional practices in teaching (Mena, Hennissen & Loughran 2017).

2.4.2 Personal traits of effective mentors

Mentorship is a common practice in a number of professions and, as already noted, is acknowledged as an important practice in the field of higher education (Hudson & Hudson 2017). Becoming a teacher is a multifaceted process and mentorship therefore requires attention to be devoted to the personal and professional experiences that shape the development of a teacher's identity (Cross & Ndofirepi 2013).

As previously discussed, a student teacher is required to participate in teaching practice, which is the culmination of their studies, an opportunity finally to put theoretical knowledge into action in the actual teaching and learning environment (Petersen 2017). Confidence and self-efficiency are important dispositions for ensuring student teachers' success during this important phase of identity development (Harlow, Cooper & Cowie 2019), yet it is common for them to experience insecurity, doubt and excessive stress at this juncture (Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom & Soini 2016). Mentors of student teachers are optimally positioned to support and guide them through this demanding phase of their development. Mentors, to navigate this role successfully, need certain positive personal attributes, which have been described in literature. Ingersoll and Strong (2011:26) highlight 'authenticity, gentleness, enthusiasm, patience, consistency and a positive attitude'. Hudson, Nguyen and Hudson (2009:2) identify the importance of 'motivating, sharing, influencing, counselling and being trustworthy', along with 'honesty, openness, sensitivity, enthusiasm, a sense of humour, organisation, self-awareness and reflectiveness'. Crawford and Hardy (2017) emphasise patience, approachability and empathy.

Some of the important attributes of a mentor, identified in a mentoring handbook developed for the University of Surrey and the University of Greenwich (European Commission 2010) include respect and trust, which should be reciprocal; openness; sincerity; genuineness; and good communication. Mutual feelings of respect and dependability may help to create a more supportive context in which both mentor and mentee may even freely express challenging emotions, where constructive feedback may facilitate new ideas, especially as a fear of failure or saying the wrong thing is unlikely when the relationship is nurturing.

Kaplan and Garner (2017) also emphasise the importance of both support and challenge for the mentee in their teacher identity research. Wang *et al.* (2010) make reference to psychosocial support and provide examples such as friendship and counselling. However, in order to avoid a state of complacency that may inhibit the personal and professional growth of student teachers, it is also important to challenge them. They will then be able to 'discuss options and opportunities, set positive expectations and ask curious questions about how and in what ways the mentee might discover how they are able to deal with challenging issues' (European Commission 2010:19).

Holmes, Warnes, O'Gara and Nishimura (2018:256) cite important mentor qualities such as knowledge, being credible, communication, with the emphasis on this being reciprocal, the importance of listening and 'active intervention' as well as altruism and dedication. They describe the importance of mentors' being selfless and giving in the mentoring relationship, with the explicit aim of helping the mentee to grow. Holmes *et al.* (2018:256) believe that mentors should be devoted to promoting the success of mentees by offering 'time, energy, transparency, honesty and resources'.

Izadinia (2015) conducted a study that compared mentors' and student teachers' perceptions of aspects of mentorship and its impact on identity formation and found that student teachers not only needed guidance with learning how to teach, but also persistent encouragement and emotional support. This study described how student teachers reported the need for a safe environment to their mentors to ensure their optimal development, also of their teacher identity. Van Ginkel, Oolbekkink, Meijer and

Verloop (2015) similarly described the ability to provide emotional support to student teachers as a critical component of mentorship. Successful mentors therefore need to be capable educators, have highly developed interpersonal skills to ensure open communication and give constructive feedback (Ingersoll & Strong 2011).

2.4.3 Different roles of student teachers' mentors

As regards mentors helping student teachers to develop their own teaching style and teacher identity, student teachers appear to consider flexibility as an important aspect of mentorship (Orland-Barak & Hasin 2010). The reason this flexibility is required by mentors is because they are in a collaborative relationship (De Hei, Sjoer; Admiraal & Strijbos 2016) in which the mentee is encouraged to develop their own teaching style and decision-making ability. Notwithstanding this need for a flexible approach, a review of existing literature produced prevalent themes, which indicated a number of roles that good mentors of student teachers who are developing their teacher identities during their teaching practice should play. Some of these responsibilities comprised mentors being: experts; models or guides; reflective practitioners; coaches; and carers of psychosocial well-being. A number of recurring themes related to the mentoring of student teachers.

Being, and encouraging the student teacher to be, introspective about teaching practice (Phillips & Chetty 2018); helping the student teacher to apply the theory to practice (Kaelin 2013); and good time management to ensure that the mentee is given adequate support (Hobson *et al.* 2009; Hudson 2016) are recurring topics. In addition, often mentioned ideas include keeping abreast of what is currently happening in schools and improving communication between the schools where student teachers are doing their practice and the institutions where they are studying (Phillips 2013), providing both professional and personal support/development for the protégé and building a trusting relationship in which the student teachers feel able to voice their opinions or concerns (Ferrier-Kerr 2017). It is also important to develop essential soft skills, such as those identified by Pachauri and Yadav (2014:22), namely: 'communicative skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, team work, life-long learning and information management, entrepreneurial and leadership skills and ethics, morals

and professionalism'. The various functions of a mentor of student teachers are discussed in the sections that follow.

2.4.3.1 Mentors as experts (in pedagogy, didactics and subject knowledge)

Brooks (2016) employed narrative research to explore how pedagogic and subject expertise played a noteworthy role in the development of a teacher identity. He used the metaphor of a professional compass to describe how teaching expertise may direct the decisions of student teachers and teachers, and empower them to develop stronger teacher identities. Moreover, Brooks (2016) asserts that this ensures more effective responses to the challenges the student teachers face in daily practice. Mentors of student teachers are therefore generally expected to have pedagogical expertise as student teachers (mentees) require expert guidance in the school context to develop their teaching practices and establish a professional teaching identity (Hudson, Hudson, Gray & Bloxham 2013; Moberg 2008). In their book *Mentoring for learning: Climbing the mountain,* Tillema, Van der Westhuizen and Smith (2013) discuss the concept of accountability and competence in mentoring. These researchers refer to pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), that may be described as the assimilation of subject expertise and knowledge of teaching methods, as an essential element of the mentoring professional. Tillema *et al*. (2013) assert that the main aim of a mentoring relationship is for the student teacher to achieve a higher level of proficiency and understanding of what and how they should teach. The supposition here is that realising competence surpasses the need for 'guidance, integrity and relatedness' (Tillema, Van der Westhuizen & Smith 2015:299), and whether this is achieved through a comforting or confrontational relationship between the mentor and mentee is immaterial.

Basing their research on interviews with and focus groups of student teachers, Murray, Czerniawski and Barber (2011) concurrently found that mentorship during teaching practice could be improved by allowing the students to be supervised and mentored – at least some of the time – by individuals who were experts in their subjects. Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba (2007) confirm this in their research when they assert that as expertise is gained through experience, or the more experience a mentor has in a

particular subject, the more effective their mentorship ability.

This is sharply contrasted by the findings of Kaelin (2013), who suggests that the students who were placed with mentors who had the most experience did not necessarily receive the most effective mentorship. Kaelin (2013:99) suggests that ‘merely competent’ professionals may make better mentors than expert ones. He claims this may be owing to the perception that these professionals are better able to articulate their reasons for thinking and behaving in a specific way, thereby allowing the mentee to gain valuable insight, as opposed to experts who seem to work instinctively and thus cannot always give students adequate, concrete justification for instructional practices and preferences. Although Kaelin’s (2013) study is limited by its small number of participants and their homogeneity, this assertion remains a point to consider, especially as it correlates with the assertion of Liou, Martinez and Rotheram-Fuller (2015) that expertise alone does not guarantee suitability for mentoring. The findings of Liou, Martinez and Rotheram-Fuller (2015) indicate that the willingness and ability to share skills and knowledge are more important to the mentoring relationship than having a talent or skill in a specific field.

Notwithstanding this debate about which is more important for effective mentoring, the relationship with or competence of the mentor, some theoretical basis for supporting student teachers seems to be essential. As part of a larger study aimed at developing a mentoring programme for effective teaching, Hudson and Hudson (2011:319) explored the mentor’s role in providing the mentee with pedagogical knowledge because they believed that much of mentorship was ‘haphazard’ and that mentorship of student teachers lacked a fundamental theoretical framework. Academics with a background in mentoring and school staff selected by principals participated in this study. Some of the foundational mentoring practices relating to pedagogical knowledge that had been identified were: demonstrating ways in which the student teachers could plan for teaching; communicating various approaches for classroom management; and discussing methods for connecting learning to assessment. Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald (2009) found that gaining experience during teaching practice and relationships with mentors might modify the way the student teachers viewed pedagogical content knowledge and help them to develop their

teacher identity and acquire the skills they need for effective teaching.

The aforementioned may take place through collaboration between the mentor and the student teacher (Grossman *et al.* 2009). Hobson (2016), in support of this notion of collaboration, attests that mentoring is more effective when it is not presumed that the mentor always knows best, but that instead mentors and mentees should be encouraged to learn together in a partnership. This was confirmed by Yuan (2016), who found that teacher identities could in fact be deconstructed by negative mentoring, when the student teacher's own preconceived identity is not allowed to emerge during teaching practice. Irby (2014) and Prilleltensky, Neff and Bessell (2016) similarly encourage mentors and mentees to explore practices and beliefs about learning and teaching together. Lejonberg, Elstad, Sandvik, Solhaug and Christophersen (2018) investigated the link between mentors' efforts, self-development, application of theory and the way in which student teachers perceived the level of developmental support by using data collected from 382 student teachers' self-reported surveys. Lejonberg *et al*. (2018) found that mentors and mentees mutually exploring practice and principles about learning and teaching was an indispensable part of developing the mentoring relationship.

2.4.3.2 Mentors as role models and guides

Van Lankveld *et al*. (2016) ascertained that experienced mentors played an important role in teacher identity development because they acted as role models and also modelled advantageous practices. Teacher education literature accentuates the value of modelling for teacher development (Bird & Hudson 2017). Hall, Draper, Smith and Bullough (2008) conducted a quantitative study in which mentors were required to rank aspects of mentoring (critical feedback, personal relationship, experience, standards, personal characteristics, modelling/demonstration, emotional support and opportunities to teach) in order of importance. Almost half, 44%, of the participants chose modelling/demonstration as the most important component and 32% chose it as the second-most significant aspect of mentoring. It must be acknowledged that this notion is from the mentor's perspective and not the student teacher's.

Crutcher and Naseem (2015) describe modelling as defined in the wider scope of literature as the portrayal of teaching strategies by teacher educators and mentors of what they want the student teachers to master. Oetjen and Oetjen (2009), however, emphasise that mentors should guide student teachers to make sound decisions and to understand that teaching is complex and dynamic by allowing them to experiment with different techniques and strategies rather than merely modelling perfect teaching. They further assert that guiding student teachers rather than merely instructing them in how to teach is one of the most challenging roles of the mentor (Oetjen & Oetjen 2009).

This concept of modelling versus experimentation has been explored in a number of studies on teacher education (Cetinkaya, Kertil, Erbas, Korkmaz, Alacaci & Cakiroglu 2016; Meritt, Gibson, Christensen & Knezek 2015). Duszynski (2008), who received the Clark P. Read Mentor Award in 2008, emphasised the importance of allowing mentees the freedom to be themselves and to discover their own strategies and intellectual property rather than desiring them to become clones of the mentor. Although his mentorship related to parasitology and not teaching, his advice rings true for mentors of student teachers and has been reiterated in a number of studies (Dos Reis 2012; Heeralal 2014). These studies acknowledge that the mentor should guide the student teacher towards independence and the discovery of their own personal teaching and learning strategies as they search for and develop their teacher identities.

It has been reported that some student teachers feel ‘their freedom to develop as teachers is restricted’ and under pressure to adopt a particular teaching persona (Hobson *et al*. 2009:210), which may be detrimental to establishing their teacher identities (Yuan 2016). Mackie (2017) describes how student teachers sometimes feel uneasy with the practice or temperament of the mentor, but don’t express these feelings because they are worried about being judged adversely. In these situations the student teachers sometimes abandon their own teaching identities with the aim of pleasing the more qualified mentor (Yuan 2016). This especially appears to be the case when the mentor lecturer is also responsible for assessing the mentee (Phillips 2013). It appears to be essential that effective mentor lecturers should be

approachable. Phillips (2013) supports the notion that mentors should know how to work with adult learners and should have enough confidence in their own abilities to be challenged or questioned. 'Establishing a trusting communication channel allows each to more easily expose their core beliefs about teaching in a non-threatening way', Walkington (2005:60) confirms. Ideally, what begins as a clear expert–novice connection should evolve through conversation, observation and experience into a collaborative partnership (Shanks 2017) so that, as Freire (in Phillips 2013:103) suggests, the mentee can develop their own opinions, or 'voice'.

Khumalo (2014:16) specifies that it is important for a mentor to be a commendable role model because they believe that student teachers are likely to copy some of their mentor's behaviour as they 'sculpt their own styles' and develop their own teacher identity. Crutcher and Naseem (2015) indicate that modelling by mentors in teacher education is valuable because it assists novice teachers with acquiring the values and attitudes held in high esteem by the teaching community. Student teachers are also able to observe, consider and reflect on teaching–learning situations modelled by mentors in order to assist with developing their critical thinking skills (Crutcher & Naseem 2015) as well as their professional networking abilities (Pillay 2015).

2.4.3.3 Mentors as reflective practitioners

Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä and Turunen (2016) suggest that endorsing student teachers' reflection skills could have a positive effect on their professional development and on their acquiring teacher identities. They assert that a 'dialogical perspective' could be of benefit in establishing teacher identity and that one of the critical roles of a mentor is to assist teachers-in-training to become reflective practitioners (Körkkö *et al.* 2016:199). Stanulis, Little and Wibbens (2012) posit that teaching and learning require consistent reflection. Darling-Hammond (2012) put forward the idea that allowing student teachers to engage in reflection through experimentation, enquiry, engaging in dialogue, journalling, collaboration and questioning will result in their having greater authority and autonomy to work in the school context. Hudson and Hudson (2011:326) furthermore in the same vein recommend a number of strategies which mentors could use to encourage teachers-in-training to apply in reflection, such as: recording

viewpoints in a teaching diary; discussing opinions on teaching with a variety of stakeholders, namely principals, administrators, parents, pupils, or playing ‘devil’s advocate’ when analysing their own, or their mentor’s teaching practice (Hudson & Hudson 2011:326). Korthagen *et al.* (2006) conducted research using cases across three different continents. These researchers undertook a meta-analysis of documented research studies and determined that the teacher educators in the three programmes collectively supported the assertion that one learns not only through experience, but also through reflection on experience and through communication with others.

Communication is important since, in the sphere of professional development, research proposes that professional development targeting a specific practice may be more helpful then general professional development. This is the case because teachers appear to learn a specific practice through ongoing conversations, practice and reflection (Gersten, Dimino, Jayanthi, Kim & Santoro 2010; Turner, Warzon & Christensen 2011). Professional development is intensive, sustained over time, and integrates new ideas into existing curricula, presenting a variety of opportunities in which student teachers may incorporate new learning into their teaching (Stanulis *et al.* 2012). According to Hart (2018), both university and mentoring teachers can assist pre-service teachers to become reflective by providing support and opportunities to share their experiences.

Reflection and these shared opportunities are important in a mentoring relationship and in the development of teacher identity as they give teachers-in-training the knowledge and skills necessary to translate theory into practice. According to Darling-Hammond (2012), one of the persistent problems of teacher education is the challenge of integrating the theory-based knowledge generally taught at universities with the experience-based knowledge normally practiced in schools. Phillips (2013) asserts that it is the educator’s responsibility to narrow this gap between theory and practice.

The literature on the current topic shows that reducing the gap between theory and practice is not an easy task, partly because, as Clandinin states (in Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt 2000:741) ‘teachers are not so much in a “knowing” environment as in a

“doing” environment’. This means that many experienced teachers and lecturers may teach intuitively and there is still a limited understanding of how they interpret and personalise theory and incorporate it into their own personal frame of reference, which they could call on to regulate their actions (Maphosa & Mudzielwana 2014). Good mentors, therefore, should not be too theory-orientated and they must be able to articulate their knowledge and support their mentees in doing the same (Sheridan & Young 2016).

Knowing how to put theory into practice may give new teachers the confidence they need to succeed in their chosen profession. This is important because, as already noted, it appears to be a common phenomenon for novice teachers to struggle with ‘feelings of self-doubt and instability’ (Dotger & Smith 2009:162). Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz and Aberasturi-Apraiz (2015) as well as Delamarter (2015) describe the shock they found common among new teachers when transitioning from studying to professional teaching. They go on to note that newly qualified teachers have to grapple with the complexity and diversity of their responsibilities.

Since the duties of a student teacher are complex, and require transition from a ‘student identity’ to a ‘teacher identity’, it is critical that their studies prepare them for this. According to Korthagen *et al.* (2006), graduates of teacher education programmes, school administrators, parents and politicians frequently criticise what is taught at universities as irrelevant, and this perceived failure to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom has generated pressure to reconsider both the structure and practices of teacher education. They propose ‘intercollegially supported learning’ as a solution and state that ‘teacher educators should actively create situations that elicit the wish for self-directed theory building in their students’ (Korthagen *et al.* 2006:1025).

Korthagen *et al.* (2006:1025) found three significant benefits of mentors being reflective practitioners and encouraging student teachers also to be. The first benefit is greater emotional meaning for student teachers because their own reflections generate theory that is more substantially linked to their own situations, responsibilities and teacher identities. The second advantage of reflection, as identified by Korthagen

et al. (2006), is that the student teachers who reflect become accustomed to learning how to cultivate self-knowledge, thereby increasing their capacity for ongoing professional development throughout their teaching careers. This benefit is also cited by Bird (2012), who conducted a mixed-methods study at Minnesota State University to explore student teachers' perceptions of the impact of mentoring on their teaching. In this study quantitative and qualitative data converge and indicate that the mentoring practice of reflection enhances the professional development of student teachers and 'guides student teachers to a greater consciousness about lesson planning and how to apply their reflections to future lesson development' (Bird 2012:61). Thirdly, reflection equips student teachers to take a variety of approaches to theory, making their strategies more relevant to teaching diverse students.

Sedibe (2014) conducted research similar to the current study, in which he used an intensive individual interview to explore one student teacher's perceptions on mentoring during teaching practice. Notwithstanding the obvious limitation of using a single participant, his finding, which asserts that mentors should encourage reflection as a tool for professional teacher development rather than ineffectively imposing their own teaching methodologies (Sedibe 2014), aligns with the aforementioned findings of Korthagen *et al.* (2006).

2.4.3.4 Mentors as coaches

Stahl, Sharplin and Kehrwald (2016) found in their study that coaching was an effective way for mentors to help student teachers to develop their teacher identities. Meijer (2011:49) concurs by asserting that discussions with university or school 'coaches' frequently represent 'turning points' in student teachers' teacher identity development. Whilst some studies appear to use the terms 'mentoring' and 'coaching' synonymously (Matsko, Ronfeldt, Nolan, Klugman, Reininger & Brockman 2018), others differentiate between the two (Bird & Hudson 2015; Crutcher & Naseem 2015; Fletcher & Mullen 2012). Carr, Holmes & Flynn (2017) view mentoring as encompassing everything that supports a mentee's professional development, and coaching as a focused activity that may be implemented as a short-term solution at some stage during the mentoring process. They moreover claim that since 2005 coaching has increasingly become

recognised as important in education (Carr, Holmes & Flynn 2017).

Crutcher and Naseem (2015) define coaching as when a mentor identifies the occurrence or absence of a range of teaching strategies in a new teacher's work, and shows the new teachers how to apply novel methods relevant to their situation effectively. Hudson (2016) perceives coaching as the provision of feedback and includes the mentor's ability to equip student teachers with original approaches to assist them with accomplishing their work-related objectives. Matsko *et al.* (2018) expand on this description by adding that assisting the mentee to locate resources and to improve their subject knowledge are also important aspects of 'coaching' performed by the mentor. Coaching of student teachers entails sharing expertise about content and evidence-based practices (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner 2017). Coaching, along with the reciprocal construction of knowledge it allows, adds to continuous professional development and forming of teacher identity (Izadinia 2015). Fletcher and Mullen (2012) maintain that coaching is more meaningful if it is guided by the mentee, or 'coachee'. This is reiterated by Carr, Holmes and Flynn (2017), with Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2017) also asserting that coaching should be focused directly on the student teachers' individual requirements. Coaching may therefore be viewed as a professional discourse in which the student teacher reflects on specific challenges, after which the mentor and mentee engage in collaborative problem-solving to find creative solutions (Fletcher & Mullen 2012). The goal of these interactions is to empower and encourage the student teacher so that both personal and professional development may occur. Coaching according to a 'checklist' of what the mentor would do in a given situation may stifle the development of the student teacher's own, unique teaching identity, so it seems critical that the student teacher should be allowed to develop greater autonomy (Jones, Harvey, Lefoe & Ryland 2014).

2.4.3.5 Mentors as companions

Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) conducted an extensive review of literature on mentorship in education in an attempt to highlight the interconnectedness between the roles of mentor and mentee. They posit that being a 'friend' is an important role of the

mentor of teachers or student teachers in helping them to develop their teacher identities (Ambrosetti & Dekkers 2010: 48). Hamman, Gosselin, Romano and Bunuan (2010) describe how teacher identity often emerges within the relationship between a mentor and mentee. Bukor (2014:305) states that 'teacher identity is deeply embedded in one's personal biography', and emphasises that professional and personal experiences cannot be separated, hence both have a significant impact on developing teacher identity. This argument highlights the importance of considering student teachers' personal as well as their professional experiences in the mentoring relationship.

In addition there are other reasons why it is important for mentor lecturers to play the role of 'friend' or 'companion' to their mentee student teachers. It has already been established in this literature review that student teachers find the teaching practice experience challenging. During this initial exposure to the realities of the classroom, which frequently fall outside of what they expect or are prepared for, they commonly lack self-assurance (Lejonberg *et al.* 2018; Schatz-Oppenheimer & Dvir 2014). Knowing that they have a mentor who is by their side and on their side can help student teachers to build self-esteem (Izadinia 2015). Findings furthermore show that student teachers are more comfortable expressing new ideas, asking questions, receiving and taking in constructive criticism and working in the classroom if they have a mentor who is a companion (Väisänen *et al*. 2016). Positive connections with mentors may therefore have a buffering effect on the challenges experienced by student teachers and help them to develop their effectiveness, sense of fulfilment and identity (Keogh, Garvis, Pendergast & Diamond 2012).

Alleviating stress is another benefit of mentor lecturers being a 'friend' to student teachers. Vesely, Saklofske and Nordstokke (2014:81) assert that the current focus on championing the psychological health and well-being of teachers is 'overdue', especially since teaching has long been associated with high levels of occupational stress. This stress has an impact on not only the teachers themselves, but also the educational, emotional, social and personal results of the students they teach (Chang 2009; Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley & Weatherby-Fell 2016). Teachers' ability to monitor stress is crucial, because teacher stress and burnout have been identified as

possible reasons for teachers forsaking the profession (Kyriacou 2011) and for dismantling strong teacher identities (Yuan 2016). Meijer (2011) highlights that offering support to student teachers who are experiencing stress, challenges or crises is a crucial part of teacher identity formation. Dealing with stress therefore improves teacher identity, teacher self-efficiency and commitment to the teaching profession and to learners (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2016).

It appears that teachers are more inclined to address the needs of their pupils if their own interpersonal needs are attended to (Presseisen 2008). Gräbel (2017) furthermore found a positive correlation between a student's academic success and their emotional, social and psychological well-being. One possible explanation suggested by Gräbel (2017:7) was that the 'broaden' effect of positive feelings derived from such a supportive relationship helps to improve cognitive flexibility, open-mindedness and attentiveness and contributes to the general intrinsic motivation of students. It has been found that an inspirational environment and adequate social support promote the likelihood of student teachers' reflection, as well as their participation in co-regulative learning with peers (Saariaho *et al.* 2015).

Reinforcing supportive relationships is also critical for improving resilience in teachers (Le Cornu 2013). Mansfield *et al.* (2016:80) conceptualise resilience in the teaching profession as a 'capacity', a 'process' and an 'outcome'. These researchers expand on this by clarifying that resilience requires an individual to have the 'capacity' to exploit personal and contextual resources to overcome challenges and stress. They perceive it as a 'process' in which personal and professional experiences interact over time and moreover assert that the desired 'outcome' is a teacher who engages in ongoing personal and professional development. Dinham *et al.* (2016) describe dedication, satisfaction, wellbeing and enthusiasm as possible outcomes of promoting teacher resilience.

Building teacher resilience and developing a strong teacher identity requires emotional (Kaldi & Xafakos 2017; Toom, Pietarinen, Soini, & Pyhältö 2017) and social support (Ebersöhn, Loots, Eloff, & Ferreira 2015). Väisänen *et al.* (2016) identified emotional support as empathy, listening, esteem, creating a sense of belonging to a network of

communication and mutual responsibilities, encouragement and trust, which are important, because it enhances the student teacher's sense of empowerment. Conversely, it has been found that the lack of emotional support by some mentors is perceived by student teachers as a burden and as something which has a negative impact on their well-being and teacher identity (Mansfield *et al.* 2016; Väisänen *et al.* 2016).

Toom *et al.* (2017) identified social support for student teachers as significant. They undertook a quantitative study to investigate first-year Finnish student teachers' impression of professional agency in the teaching community, their perceptions of teacher education as a learning environment and ways in which these two constructs were possibly interrelated. Along with social support, recognition and equality, they found that collegial support from teacher educators contributed positively to the student teachers' sense of professional agency and identity (Toom *et al.* 2017). Kaldi and Xafakos (2017) concur with this when they assert that positive social relationships with mentors improve student teachers' beliefs about their self-competence. However, in contrast, the results of an investigation by Charalambous, Philippou and Kyriakides (2007) found the impact on teacher educators to be superficial and therefore inconsequential to student teachers' learning. This latter study (Charalambous *et al.* 2007) emphasised the importance of teachers rather than lecturers as mentors.

It is noteworthy that Charalambous *et al.* (2007) highlight the impact of latent messages transmitted by mentors' behaviour about the way the student teachers perceive or appraise themselves. It may therefore not only be the explicit communication within the mentoring relationship that has an impact on student teachers' well-being and efficacy, but also the tacit messages observed in mentors' behaviour. This is reiterated by the findings of Van Lankveld *et al.* (2016:1), who argue that at universities 'more attention should be paid to the implicit messages that the departments convey to their teaching faculty'.

Psychosocial support and support networks have been found to be especially important for teachers who are employed in remote areas (Sharplin, O'Neill & Chapman 2011; Ebersöhn *et al.* 2015). Existing literature suggests that the capacity

for psychosocial well-being may lead to not only personal development and growth, but ultimately promote social change at a broader level (Ebersöhn *et al.* 2015).

The role of 'companion' by a mentor lecturer requires a context in which the student teacher feels safe. The National Professional Standard for teachers, which is endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Educators in Australia provides a framework of seven fundamental elements for effective teacher education, and one of these is to 'create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments' (Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning 2011:3). The aim of ensuring such a safe learning atmosphere is to safeguard the student teachers' well-being and to help them to develop their teacher identities. This is because excellence in teaching has been found to depend on the motivation, contentment, dedication and positive attitudes of teachers (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon 2011; Day & Gu 2013). These aspects are said to lead to more effective use of cognitive, social and emotional resources and general well-being of student teachers (Väisänen *et al.*, 2016). Korthagen (2016) similarly acknowledges the importance of such a safe and supportive learning environment in order that student teachers may form a teacher identity effectively because, as has already been mentioned, learning cannot be separated from personal experiences and emotions.

In summary, the psychosocial well-being of student teachers cannot be ignored, because...

> … pre-service teachers may develop the capacity for resilience through building personal resources (e.g. motivation, social and emotional competence), understanding ways to mobilise contextual resources (e.g. relationships, support networks), and developing a range of adaptive coping strategies (e.g. problem-solving, time management, maintaining work-life balance) (Mansfield *et al.* 2016:80).

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For my guiding framework, I selected Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching, which was first developed in 2004. The theory was further elaborated on by Hudson, Hudson and Adie (2015), in detailing five factors that have

been identified as vital for providing student teachers with much needed support during their field experience and to build their teacher identities. These five factors are: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback, as depicted in Figure 2.2.

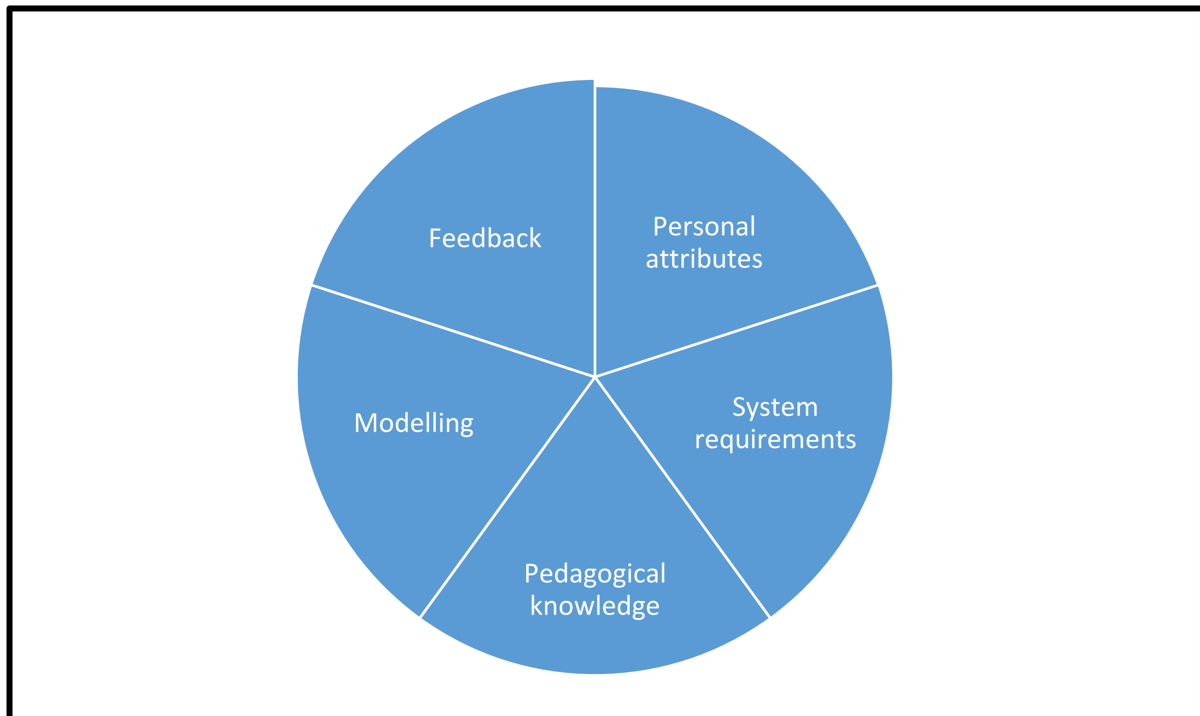


Figure 2.2: Hudson's Five-factor Model of Mentoring (Hudson 2004)

2.5.1 Rationale for using this framework

This theoretical framework has been used in a number of recent mentorship research papers (Hudson 2016; Sempowicz & Hudson 2011; Smolik 2010) and it was implemented as a guide for the current study because it provides delineated guidelines of what mentorship entails in enabling student teachers to develop a teacher identity.

This model provided insight into the commonly accepted responsibilities of mentors of student teachers, as described by the five factors initially identified by Hudson in 2004, in 2015 and yet again in 2016. By using this framework, I was able to compare the responses of the student teachers in the current study with those outlined by Hudson (2004), thus providing insight into which of these factors are specifically significant for

mentor lecturers. This was especially important, because it was this part of the triad that I was investigating. I expound on these factors in the sections that follow.

2.5.2 Personal attributes

A number of personal attributes have been identified in successful mentors of student teachers. It is crucial that mentors have the necessary interpersonal skills to build a good and trusting relationship with mentees, which would promote their optimal development (Bird & Hudson 2015). This includes being supportive of the student teacher and helping to instil confidence and positive attitudes, especially through being attentive, listening conscientiously to the mentee and creating a context where talking is comfortable (Hudson *et al.* 2013).

The communication facilitated by these personal attributes can allow mentees to be supported professionally as well as emotionally (Mansfield *et al.* 2016). Rosas-Maldonado, Vásquez Carrosa and Martin (2019) used Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model in a qualitative case study to investigate the perceptions of novice teachers of their mentorship experiences as students and found personal attributes of the mentor to be the most profound factor that contributed to their identity development. The support and encouragement received by mentors who displayed positive attributes allowed the student teachers to feel less threatened. Mentorship which ensures support and encouragement has been found to build self-esteem and to reduce stress (Hobson *et al.* 2009).

Hudson and Hudson (2017) explored some inevitable tensions that occur in mentor-mentee relationships between student teachers and the more qualified mentors. They found that tensions arising from personal, professional or pedagogical issues which emerged might be alleviated if personal attributes such as empathy, open communication, accompanied by awareness of the tone and quality of all communication, and inspiring of mentees to become empowered were present. If mentors fail to provide emotional support and have a nurturing relationship with their mentees they may cause student teachers to become less confident and display higher levels of insecurity and anxiety (Kaplan & Garner 2017).

Mentors should be reliable and dedicated to reflection and life-long learning (Moir *et al.* 2009). This includes allowing the mentee to develop their own teaching style and being open to new ideas, rather than expecting them to state the mentor's authoritative personal views. When the mentor is open and encouraging it helps student teachers to see teaching from a variety of perspectives and it consequently encourages them to make their own decisions (Hudson & Hudson 2017). Trust and respect may be cultivated in the relationship between a student teacher and a mentor through sharing information, resources and expectations as well as by displaying personal attributes such as enthusiasm, competence and support (Hudson 2016). Flexibility by the mentor is also required (Bentley-Williams, Grima-Farrell, Long & Laws 2017). Fairness is a personal attribute identified by Atjonen, Korkeakoski and Mehtäläinen (2011) and Dos Reis (2012) as having a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity development. Finally, it is essential for mentors of student teachers to exemplify professionalism and ethical behaviour in teaching (Hargreaves & Fullan 2013).

2.5.3 System requirements

Student teachers have been found to enter schools with limited knowledge about the organisational demands and the politics of school life (Bird & Bird 2015). The teaching practice period is generally the first opportunity student teachers have to acquire the skills needed to put theory into practice. This period allows them to gain an understanding of the realities of the classroom (Shanks 2017). Therefore they frequently need help navigating the complexities attached to school life. Mentors are in a position to help their mentees to prepare for the real classrooms for which student teachers are responsible. This preparation is very important because student teachers may become discouraged or disillusioned if they are confronted with the realities of teaching, yet cannot find effective ways of dealing with unanticipated challenges (Liou *et al.* 2015).

Although experienced teachers frequently come to take the curricula – both hidden and explicit – for granted, student teachers benefit from mentors' articulating the aims and policies required by the education system, and their explaining the details of the curricula (Hudson 2016). Mentors do this by not only focusing on classroom-based

learning, but also on the organisational contexts into which student teachers are inserted. Hudson (2016) recommends that mentors help student teachers to meet the required standards by elucidating system requirements and going through mandatory documents, such as the curriculum and policies that regulate teaching. A comprehensive understanding of the practices, objectives or outcomes and procedures of the DBE is a prerequisite for success as a teacher. This includes knowledge of the objectives, outcomes, policies and curriculum. Mentor lecturers are in a position to contribute information about these important system requirements (Nguyen 2016) so that the student teachers may feel more confident and so that the quality of their teaching may comply with what is legally and professionally required of them. This includes curriculum differentiation to accommodate the needs of a variety of learners in accordance with MRTEQ (RSA. DHET 2015). Mentors can also help to provide important information about school routines and teaching norms (Mena *et al*. 2017). This implies that it is the responsibility of the mentor to know what is currently happening in schools and that there should be a 'closer relationship between schools and universities' (Phillips 2013:157).

2.5.4 Pedagogical knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge refers to specific knowledge teachers have of teaching. Teaching is a social endeavour in which teachers are required to interact with a variety of learners from different backgrounds and varying skills, abilities and learning styles, in order for the learners to understand what is being taught (Tharp 2019). The aim is for certain learning outcomes to be achieved. Teaching is therefore an evolving practice which is actively influenced by these outcomes (Darling-Hammond 2012).

Student teachers, during teaching practice, are consequently required to have explicit knowledge about their subject and its contents, but also about teaching and learning in general, as well as how to connect theoretical subject knowledge with real-life circumstances (Moses, Admiraal, Berry & Saab 2019). It is the mentor's responsibility to help student teachers to identify, understand and implement commonly acknowledged aspects of high-quality teaching (Moir *et al.* 2009), including knowledge of learners, awareness of the context and situation in which learning takes place,

subject matter and teaching, and learning strategies (Berry, Depaepe & Van Driel 2016). Pedagogical knowledge is therefore complex and has been described as a challenging activity that is shaped by various types of knowledge (Ab Kadir 2017).

It is important that mentors clearly articulate expectations and offer the student teachers a variety of viewpoints on and theories of teaching. Mentors may provide student teachers with frameworks, models and theories such as Bloom's Taxonomy or Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Hudson & Hudson 2011), or with their personal viewpoints on successful teaching methods (Tillema 2009). Some important aspects of the pedagogical knowledge factor in Hudson's framework are: adequately conveying appropriate content knowledge (Hudson & Hudson 2017); developing questioning skills (Ab Kadir 2017; Hudson, Spooner-Lane & Murray 2013) and assisting with problem-solving in the classroom and with lesson planning (Mansfield *et al*. 2016).

Pedagogical knowledge is also associated with system requirements and Hudson (2016) identified classroom and timetable management, planning and implementation of lesson plans as key aspects. Providing student teachers with information and guidance for assessment is also an essential component of pedagogical knowledge (Hudson & Hudson 2011).

2.5.5 Modelling

Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) suggest that modelling by mentors is a major contributor to the success of student teachers. Modelling refers to the ability of a mentor to demonstrate teaching skills and strategies or to supply examples of their own experiences and achievements of effective teaching (Hudson 2013; Moir *et al.* 2009). When mentors model compelling and productive pedagogical strategies, it allows student teachers to perform such techniques themselves (Orland-Barak 2014). Student teachers therefore gain insight into instructional concerns and methods which they may not have found themselves (Feiman-Nemser & Ben-Peretz 2017).

Hudson (2016) discusses enthusiasm as a trait that can show a student teacher how

building rapport with learners when presenting well-designed lesson plans can facilitate learning. Other characteristics that fall under ‘modelling’, according to Hudson (2013), are: using language appropriate for the syllabus; demonstrating hands-on lessons; modelling classroom management strategies; and exhibiting effective teaching methods for a particular subject.

2.5.6 Feedback

Weimer (2017) cites feedback as one of the most beneficial actions a mentor can display towards a student teacher. Student teachers should be provided with feedback frequently, and it should be sincere and caring (Weimer, 2017). In accordance with Hudson’s model it is significant that mentor lecturers articulate their expectations of student teachers and provide detailed advice once they have reviewed lesson plans and observed the mentees during teaching lessons. The mentor lecturer should, according to Hudson’s model (2004, 2016), provide oral and written feedback explaining their evaluation of the student teacher’s lessons. Jones, Tones and Foulkes (2018) maintain that feedback should be detailed and specific. It is important that mentors observe student teachers carefully and then provide descriptive feedback on both the strengths and areas for improvement (Weimer 2015).

Constructive feedback may address a variety of tasks that are unique to student teachers. Some of the more common areas in which feedback may be helpful include: classroom management, challenges with maintaining discipline, assessment of students, lesson planning, communication with parents and other stakeholders in schools and how to make the most of available resources (Godden, Kutsyuruba & Covell 2014). Constructive feedback can be used by student teachers as a reflection tool which can guide them to improve their teaching and ensure greater learning by their students (Bird & Hudson 2015). This feedback from the mentor may also be seen as a precursor to formal evaluation and assessment of the student teachers’ practice (Izadinia 2015). Jones *et al.* (2018) specify the need for mentors of student teachers to make the time to deliberate lessons and strategies so that incorrect inferences may be avoided. These researches moreover maintain that mentors should develop the ability to challenge their own thoughts and actions openly during feedback, so that

mentee teachers may be encouraged to do the same.

2.6 SYNTHESIS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND HUDSON'S FIVE-FACTOR MODEL FOR MENTORING

Research has shown that student teachers who receive support in the form of mentorship are more capable of teaching effectively (Kaplan & Garner 2017), of believing in themselves, displaying confidence (Clark 2012) and of staying in the teaching profession for longer than their non-mentored counterparts (Ingersoll & Strong 2011). This chapter highlighted some of the commonly identified characteristics of mentorship in teacher education and emphasised the complexity of mentoring.

Mentoring is acknowledged as an effective way of helping student teachers to transition into their roles during teaching practice and to begin successfully to translate their theoretical knowledge into valuable practical strategies. A number of studies have demonstrated that a good relationship between a mentor and mentee improves the efficacy of the relationship and allows the student teacher to become more empowered and resilient (Le Cornu 2009). Mentorship is acknowledged as a widely accepted and valuable part of teacher training in the modern world (Knippelmeyer & Torraco 2009).

Figure 2.2 highlights the synthesis between the findings derived from literature and Hudson's Five-factor Model for mentoring. It depicts the ways in which mentoring by a mentor lecturer may help the student teacher to form their teacher identity.

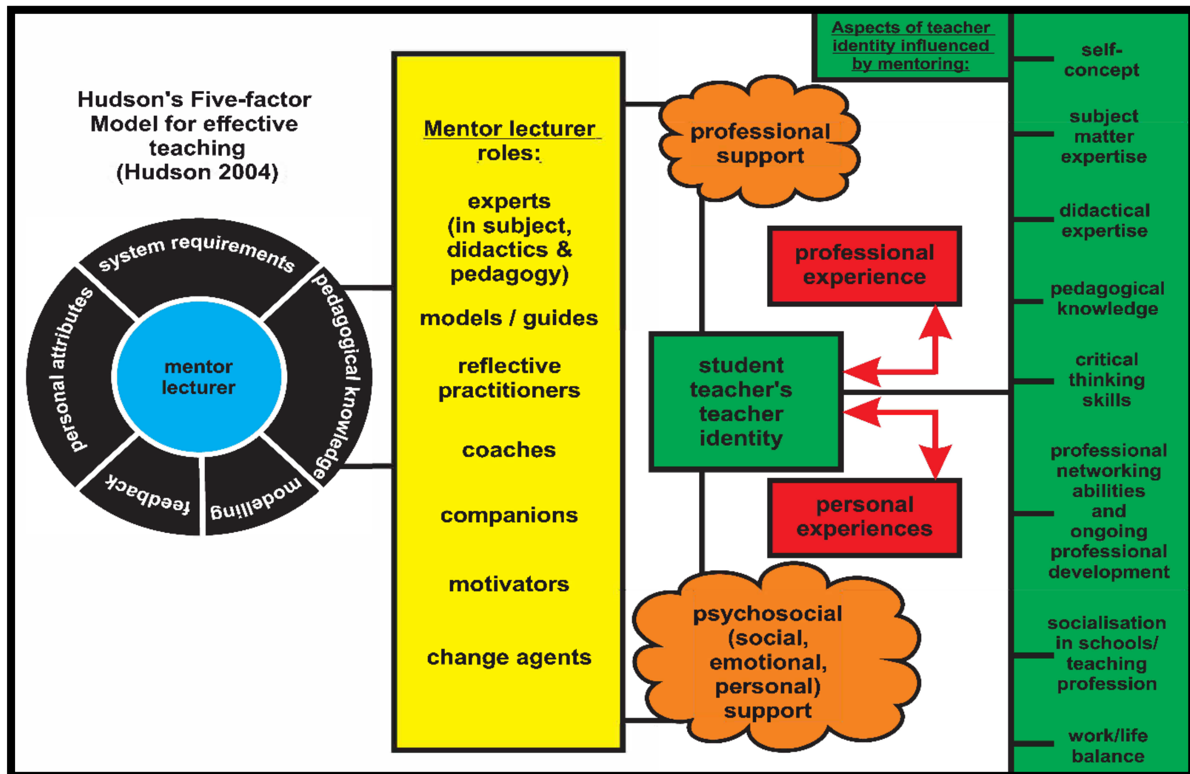


Figure 2.3: **A conceptualisation of how mentoring may assist with development of teacher identity** (Hudson 2004)

Establishing a teacher identity begins with the mentor lecturer, depicted on the left of the diagram, who integrates Hudson's five factors in their mentoring role. It is important for the mentor to incorporate: personal attributes, in so doing displaying personal characteristics such as enthusiasm, good communication skills, including attentive listening, empathy, professionalism and respect; system requirements, articulating the aims and policies required by the DHET (RSA. 2015); explicating the details of the curricula and providing information on school norms and routines; pedagogical knowledge, assistance with classroom and timetable management strategies, planning and implementation of lesson plans, along with more theoretical information on teaching and learning;, modelling, actually modelling teaching, classroom management, demonstrating lessons and hands-on techniques and displaying

enthusiasm; and providing feedback, articulating expectations and giving constructive criticism when reviewing lessons to empower student teachers (Hudson 2004).

By using this framework, mentor lecturers may fulfil a number of important roles, as indicated in the yellow box in Figure 2.2. They may become experts (in subject knowledge, pedagogy and didactics), models/guides (having the ability to model, or demonstrate, effective teaching techniques), reflective practitioners (who show mentees how to reflect meaningfully and offer the student teachers constructive guidance), coaches (who empower student teachers to overcome their specific challenges), companions (who are appropriately interested in all facets of the student teacher's life), motivators and change agents. This way they may offer the all-important professional support as well as the essential social, emotional and personal support which student teachers need during the vulnerable period of their first teaching practice (Hudson 2004).

The aforementioned is relevant, especially as both professional and personal experiences have an impact on, and are impacted by, the development of their teacher identities. Teacher identity may be described, to reiterate, as the perception student teachers have of themselves, which begins to form at this stage of their development, during teaching practice, although it may change during the course of their careers (Fraser 2018). Research highlights the importance of many facets of teacher identity development, which may be influenced by mentorship, such as self-concept, subject matter expertise, didactical expertise, pedagogical knowledge, critical thinking skills, professional networking abilities, ongoing professional development, socialisation in schools and the teaching profession, in addition to finding a balance between work and other areas of life. These features of teacher identity are depicted to the right in the diagram. The findings of the current descriptive case study are mapped onto this diagram, as demonstrated in Figure 5.1.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 2 I reflected on literature related to the topic and provided a comprehensive literature review on relevant features in the context of the current descriptive case study. This included literature on mentorship in teacher training and developing a teacher identity as part of the investigation into the expectations of the student teachers who participated in the current study. I also provided an analysis of the theoretical framework that guided the study. In conclusion, I brought the chapter to a close by providing an indication of the synthesis between the data and the theoretical framework as well as a conceptualisation of how mentoring may assist with the development of teacher identity.

In Chapter 3 I provide a detailed description of the paradigmatic perspectives and research process utilised for the current study. The advantages and disadvantages of the research design and methodology I pursued are discussed, as well as those relating to the methods of sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. I reflected on the quality criteria and ethical considerations for the descriptive case study and concluded Chapter 3 with a discussion of my role as researcher.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, I explored the existing literature on the mentorship of student teachers and the development of teacher identity. A comprehensive review of the topics relevant to the current study was provided as well as the details relating to the selected theoretical framework, namely Hudson's Five-factor Model of Mentoring for effective teaching (Hudson 2004, 2016).

Chapter 3 presents a detailed outline of the research design and methodology processes that were followed during the current study to obtain potential answers to the primary research question. I gave explanations for the paradigmatic approach that informed the research, and justified the choice of research design and methodology as well as data-collection strategies and data analysis procedures. I included a discussion on quality criteria and the ethical guidelines adhered to throughout the study. I concluded with a discussion on the role I assumed in the current research study.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

A research paradigm forms the fundamental model or frame of reference used to organise observations and to interpret data (Wilson 2017). As part of a bigger project, we collected baseline data from student teachers on their expectations of their mentor lecturers in the development of their teacher identities. The aim of this larger project was to implement a mentorship intervention programme at the UP. In the current study I therefore employed a qualitative research approach rooted in interpretivism.

3.2.1 Epistemological paradigm: Interpretivism

The paradigm I selected as the epistemology of my proposed study was interpretivism, which is philosophically based on hermeneutics (Maree 2015). Interpretive researchers maintain that there are numerous socially constructed realities (McMillan

& Schumacher 2014).The interpretivist paradigm assumes that communities seek to understand the world in which they live and work by elaborating on the personal significance of their experiences (Yazan 2015). Interpretivists differ from positivists because they believe that individuals shape society, that people have consciousness and are therefore not merely 'puppets' who respond to external social forces (Thompson 2017:1). Interpretivists proclaim that people are unique and complex. Different people experience and understand reality in different ways and they have individual, idiosyncratic reasons for their choices and actions. Unlike positivists, interpretivists don't believe in one exact truth (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). Instead, interpretivists attempt to interpret the contextualised motives and actions of their participants.

The aim of interpretive research is to depend as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation so that they can make sense of the meanings others lend to the world (Creswell & Poth 2018). Interpretive researchers therefore focus their attention on the specific contexts in which people live and work when they try to gain an understanding of the world through viewing the subjective experiences of individuals (Yin 2015). Furthermore, interpretivists are interested in how individuals explain their own behaviour and aim for complex, multiple understandings (Thompson, 2017). Interpretivists are not only interested in the actions of people, but also the reasons and processes that guide their actions. The interpretivist researchers are required to acknowledge that their own background and subjective experiences might shape their interpretation of the situation being studied (Creswell & Poth 2018).

Research done from an interpretivist paradigm tends to generate personal and elaborate information, giving a comprehensive view of what is really happening, and why it is happening. Interpretivists are interested in feelings and emotions, and they aspire to achieve an empathetic understanding of their subjects (Thompson 2017). In interpretivism less importance is attached to numbers and more emphasis is placed on values and context, hence words that explain (McMillan & Schumacher 2014).

Maree (2012:35) states clearly that when conducting qualitative research concerning social challenges or to explore the perceptions of community members an interpretivist

or constructivist paradigm is suitable; this is because it gives the researcher 'insight into the experiences and perceptions of the participants'. As the expectations and experiences of student teachers pertaining to the role of the mentor lecturer in the development of their teacher identity are what I intended to research, this required insight into their perceptions. An interpretive paradigm therefore seemed the most logical and appropriate lens through which to consider and interpret the results of this study.

The interpretivist paradigm allowed for close interaction with the participants and generated in-depth and detailed results. As I was interested in the expectations of student teachers it was of paramount importance to explore their subjective observations of how mentor lecturers could help them to shape their teacher identities. I needed to scrutinise their emotions and possible bias. The data collected in doing this contributed to achieving trustworthy and honest results. These provided in-depth insight into what was actually happening, thereby allowing me to gain a better understanding of the student teachers' needs and expectations of mentoring.

Eliminating personal bias is an almost inevitable challenge for the interpretivist researcher (Maree 2015), therefore I included a discussion of the potential effect of this on my interpretations and conclusions. This exercise required a significant amount of reflection. I had to acknowledge my own assumptions and how they might have shaped my interpretation of the data. I endeavoured to give a true and accurate explanation of the results and I was careful not to misrepresent any of the outcomes. In order to maintain authenticity, I also acknowledge the limitations of my research in order not to give the misguided impression that the results would be easy to generalise.

3.2.2 Methodological paradigm: Qualitative approach

I employed a qualitative approach to research ways in which mentor lecturers could support student teachers to gain optimally from their teaching practice and develop their own teacher identities. This methodological approach aligned with the interpretivist paradigm considering that interpretivism is the main philosophical belief

supporting qualitative research (Maree 2015).

Qualitative research is based on interpretivism in that it acknowledges multiple realities and aims to 'understand a social situation from participants' perspectives' (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:12). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) moreover assert that the design becomes evident as the data is collected, hence decisions about the data-collection strategies used for the study were rightfully adjusted during the research process, which could be done as qualitative research is flexible. As a qualitative researcher, I acknowledged the influence of the setting on human actions and endeavoured to understand human behaviour by contemplating the 'framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions' (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:13).

Qualitative research is: allegorical and open to interpretation; focuses on comprehensive, meticulous descriptions of a phenomenon, and is inductive in that it involves reasoning based on the information (Maree 2012; Sandelowski 2015).The objective of this qualitative research was to create a comprehensive description of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth 2018) and to write thorough, context-bound summaries of the student teachers' declarations (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The current study was first and foremost exploratory and was therefore used to acquire deeper comprehension of the reasons, opinions and motivations informing student teachers' experiences (Hammarberg, Kirkman & De Lacey 2016). In using a qualitative approach, I made assertions based essentially on constructivist perspectives, namely the manifold meanings of individual experiences, which are constructed socially and historically (Creswell & Poth 2018). I moreover attempted to develop a theory or pattern of themes as factors emerged from the data.

Lichtman (2014) maintains that in situations where there is limited knowledge about a specific topic it is usually better to conduct qualitative research. It appears that there is limited information on the views of South African student teachers relating to the role mentor lecturers play in assisting them to develop their own teacher identity, consequently a qualitative approach seemed most sensible to follow.
Qualitative research aims to contribute greater awareness of the details and causes

of a problem and to understand a social situation from the participants' perspective. Therefore, as it was the expectations and experiences of student teachers that I wanted to explore, the most suitable was the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach allowed me, as the co-researcher, to explore the meaning that the participants ascribed to a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth 2018) and to heed their opinions carefully. Using this approach ensured that I was able to generate information-rich data.

In qualitative research the samples tend to be fewer in number and not necessarily representative of the broader population (Yazan 2015).This made it challenging to know to what degree results could be generalised. The population of my study was indeed small as it focused on only some of the final-year student teachers (2016 cohort) at the UP alone and not the many other tertiary institutions in the country. Because qualitative research is mainly descriptive and not numerical, it can be more difficult to analyse than quantitative data. This was therefore a laborious process and, as the co-researcher, I had to be meticulous in my analysis of the data (Hancock & Algozzine 2017).

It is generally acknowledged that sound preparation and planning are essential to ensure that the qualitative methodological approach is used effectively and in a scientifically sound manner. This qualitative approach therefore required me as the co-researcher to do an enormous amount of groundwork in gathering background information, because extensive knowledge of the area or problem being explored was an essential part of the research process (Creswell & Poth 2018). I therefore did a substantial amount of reading in order to saturate my knowledge on the topic of mentorship and the current views regarding the perceptions of student teachers about how their mentor lecturers could assist them with developing their teacher identities. I was required to adhere to a pre-planned schedule and a scientific process as far as possible, therefore the reading preparation had to be done efficiently and from an empirical point of departure.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section I discuss the research design and research methodology relating to the current study. The different aspects of my methodological choices are subsequently discussed in detail.

3.3.1 Research design: Descriptive case study

I chose a descriptive case study as my research design because a case study may be perceived as a selection of what to explore identified as a single case (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). It is furthermore a well-recognised research design widely used in the social sciences (Yazan 2015). A case study has been described as the method of choice for investigations relating to professional teacher identity (Van Putten 2012). The group of student teachers themselves were the '*case*' under investigation, since the expectations of student teachers with regard to how their mentor lecturers could contribute to the development of their teacher identities was the focal point. The focus was therefore on gaining an in-depth understanding of this issue in its natural, real-life context (Crowe *et al.* 2011). A total of 170 student teachers, who were in their fourth and therefore final year of their studies in 2016, formed the case. They had completed their teaching practice of 20 weeks, which had been their first exposure to the real world of teaching. They were the second-last group of student teachers who had only participated in teaching practice during their fourth year of study before new modules, PRO452 and PRO453, were introduced. In the new modules students are exposed to teaching practice from their second year onwards. The student teachers who constituted the current case had been visited by lecturers who monitored, supervised and assessed them. Preliminary findings of the FIRE project had identified mentor lecturers as important role players in shaping the teacher identities of student teachers, yet also highlighted that these lecturers frequently seemed unable to meet the requirements of the students. This in part appears to be because the mentor lecturers focused primarily on classroom practice and criticism rather than the students' holistic development and well-being (Fraser 2018).

In order to gain a more holistic understanding of the mentorship needs of student teachers, a qualitative case study was an ideal research method, because it allowed

me to position the student teachers' expectations of their mentor lecturers as they related to the development of their professional teacher identities and their teaching practice requirements. Other research methods, such as history, experiment or surveys, would not have been appropriate and would not have allowed sufficient inquiry into the point of interest in the current study (Yazan 2015). Merriam (1988) describes four indispensable properties of qualitative case studies, namely: being particularistic, in that they are problem-centred and focused on a particular phenomenon, which in this case were the expectations and experiences of student teachers with regard to how their mentor lecturers could contribute to their teacher identity; descriptive, in that the end product is a vivid portrayal of the phenomenon; heuristic, in that comprehension of the phenomenon is elucidated, which meant that in this case an attempt was made to gain a greater understanding of the mentoring needs of student teachers; and inductive, meaning that patterns emerge rather than being dictated, indicating in this case that categories and themes surfaced from the data rather than my having searched the data for predetermined themes.

Case studies aim to provide detailed, specific accounts of particular circumstances instead of contributing broad findings that could be generalised (Maree 2015). Presenting the insights of the student teachers regarding the contributions their mentor lecturers made to the development of their teacher identities, however, enabled the illustration of broader lessons that may be learnt and implemented in the design of future mentorship programmes (Crowe *et al.* 2011). Myers and Klein (2011) maintain that despite the lack of generalisability, case studies have compensatory qualities such as providing depth in the form of rich, thick descriptions. Jita (2004:34) researched the professional identity of science teachers and found that 'the case study method allows for a context-specific inquiry into teaching and teacher change' and asserted that 'researchers working in similar contexts can draw lessons and extend their findings' from the detailed descriptions found in case studies.

Using a descriptive case study approach meant that I could use data relevant to my particular research problem. It allowed me fully to encapsulate the meanings, emphasis and themes relating to my topic. The results are therefore deeply grounded in the data. Using a descriptive case study design furthermore allowed me to obtain

significant insight into the student teachers' experiences (Yin 2015). I was able to take the context of the participants into account and it was therefore a content-sensitive and flexible technique (Hancock & Algozzine 2017).

The reality that the data were in a permanent format was useful, because it meant that I was able to validate findings through re-examination and the study could even be replicated to increase credibility. When analysing, interpreting and reporting case studies 'repeated reviewing and sorting of the voluminous and detail-rich data are integral to the process of analysis' (Crowe *et al.* 2011:7). Employing a case study design moreover allowed me to include narrative vignettes portraying the student teachers' perceptions to provide convincing and detailed representations of the ways in which their mentor lecturers contributed to the development of their professional teacher identities (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). A potential limitation of case study research is that the volume of data may have a negative impact on the depth of analysis (Stake 2005). In order to avoid this potential pitfall, I allocated adequate time for data analysis and interpretation.

I relied on the interpretation of data in the case study, therefore I had to consider the inevitable risk of human error. Bengtsson (2016) cites fatigue, personal bias and errors as possible causes. I aimed to remain mindful of these risks and to minimise them during my study. In order to reduce human error and maintain excellence in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of my case study, I included two tables (see Appendices B and C), acting as an audit trail, which illustrated the exact process I used to convert the raw data into meaningful results (Bengtsson 2016). This was crucial, because there has been some critique of case study research regarding its potential lack of scientific rigour. Transparency was suggested as a way to alleviate this concern (Hancock & Algozzine 2017). It was also important for me to consider possible alternative explanations and interpretations, as highlighted in Stake's checklist for assessing the quality of case study reports (Stake 2005).

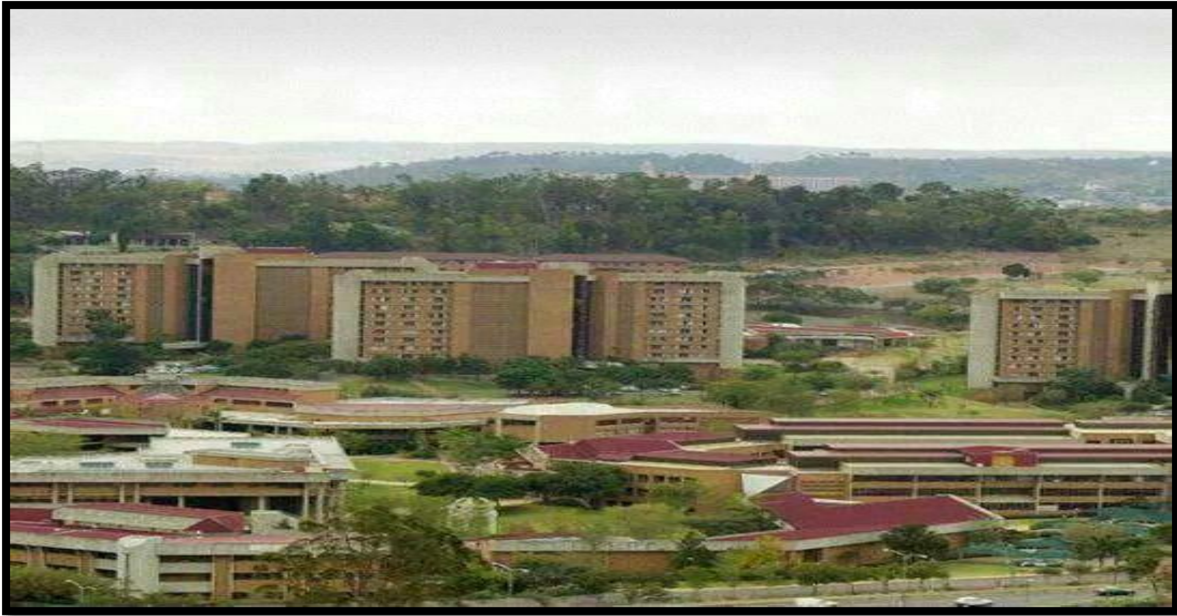
3.4 METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

In this section I explain the research process that was undertaken for the current study and I detail the possible advantages and disadvantages of the choices that were made.

3.4.1 Sampling and selection of research site

Owing to my study forming part of an ongoing interdisciplinary research project entitled 'The mentorship role of mentor lecturers in assisting student teachers in the development of their professional identities', which is focused on the development, implementation and evaluation of mentorship intervention for students in teacher training, I was not part of the original process involving sampling, data collection and data documentation. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling was utilised. The research site was convenient because the final-year students were on the campus for reflection week after teaching practice. The final-year student teachers were purposefully selected because they had participated in teaching practice in their final year and had been monitored and assessed by mentor lecturers during this time.

Purposive sampling was used for this study because, as Patton states (in Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood 2013:535), it is a 'technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources'. This method, purposive sampling, is an essential part of the case study research design (Yazan 2015). The population for my study was initially intended to be 340 final-year student teachers (2016 group) who were completing their B.Ed. degrees at the UP. However, in the end 170 student teachers were participants in the study owing to circumstances beyond the control of the researchers. In September 2016 semi-structured questionnaires containing open-ended questions were administered to the cohort of 170 final-year student teachers in the Normaal Hall on the Groenkloof Campus, UP, which is shown in Photograph 3.1.



Photograph 3.1: Groenkloof Campus, the research site (photograph courtesy of UP gallery

Purposive sampling is frequently used in qualitative research, because it yields ‘information-rich’ descriptions of the phenomenon being studied (Morrow 2005:250). The way the researcher samples can (and must) be directly linked to the objective of the research (Yin 2015). A sample is specially selected on the basis of the target population having particular characteristics and knowledge, which are required to achieve the objective of the research (Gravetter & Forzano 2009). Purposive sampling need not be representative or generalisable as the objective is to acquire in-depth information from a sample that may provide pertinent information, which is the purpose of a case study (Heale & Twycross 2017).

The inclusion criteria of the study were as follows: final-year student teachers were chosen as participants because they had been exposed to teaching practice for the first time in their final year and they had their own expectations with regard to how their mentor lecturers may help them to shape their teacher identity, which formed the unit of analysis in the current case study. The student teachers gathered after completing a 20-week teaching practicum semester at schools. The teaching practice office requested all these students to meet the week after their teaching practice in order to submit their teaching practice files, to give feedback regarding their experiences at the

schools and meet with their mentor lecturers. It was during this meeting in the Normaal Hall, where the block A and block B students met, that one of these student groups was requested to complete the questionnaires. I wanted to explore the expectations of student teachers pertaining to the role of the mentor lecturer in assisting with the development of the student teachers' teacher identity. I moreover wanted to discover how student teachers perceived the role of the mentor lecturer, and what the student teachers' needs and expectations were of the mentor lecturer during their first opportunity to participate in teaching practice.

I selected the specific sample and collection strategy I used as it was considered to be of benefit because it was economical. The location (the Normaal Hall on the Groenkloof Campus of the UP) was thought to be convenient for the participants because they were officially required to attend the university at the time. It was anticipated that completion of the questionnaires would not be a lengthy process and, most importantly, these students were in the best position to give detailed insight into the research problem. Crowe *et al.* (2011) emphasise that the case study site should permit the researcher access to the group of individuals chosen as the study's unit of analysis. These researchers (Crowe *et al.* 2011) moreover mention that 'selected cases need to be not only interesting but also hospitable to the inquiry' (Crowe *et al.* 2011:6).

The data collection did not go exactly according to plan, which was that data would be collected over two days, as the second day was interrupted by the nationwide 'Fees must fall' protest action at universities. Only 170 of the expected 340 student teachers could therefore participate. The two cohorts, when originally sampled, had been randomly selected and similar themes were repeated in the 170 questionnaires, which therefore indicates that the case study legitimately and accurately reflected the expectations of the group of student teachers.

There were nevertheless some limitations to using this sample. It was admittedly a small sample as it included only 170 of the anticipated 340 student teachers, and excluded the student teachers at the many other tertiary institutions in South Africa, and in the world. Therefore, when writing up the results I was careful not to imply that

the sample was representative of or reflected the needs and expectations of all student teachers. I actively avoided researcher bias and reported the findings as impartially as possible, especially as I was involved with this very same university. In retrospect the participants, on the first day of data collecting, may have been on edge owing to the possibility of the impending strike action. In addition, the participants may have been inclined to withhold negative viewpoints regarding their mentor lecturers owing to a sense of loyalty to the lecturers, or to the university. The responses being anonymous may nevertheless fortunately have inhibited this.

3.4.2 Data collection and documentation

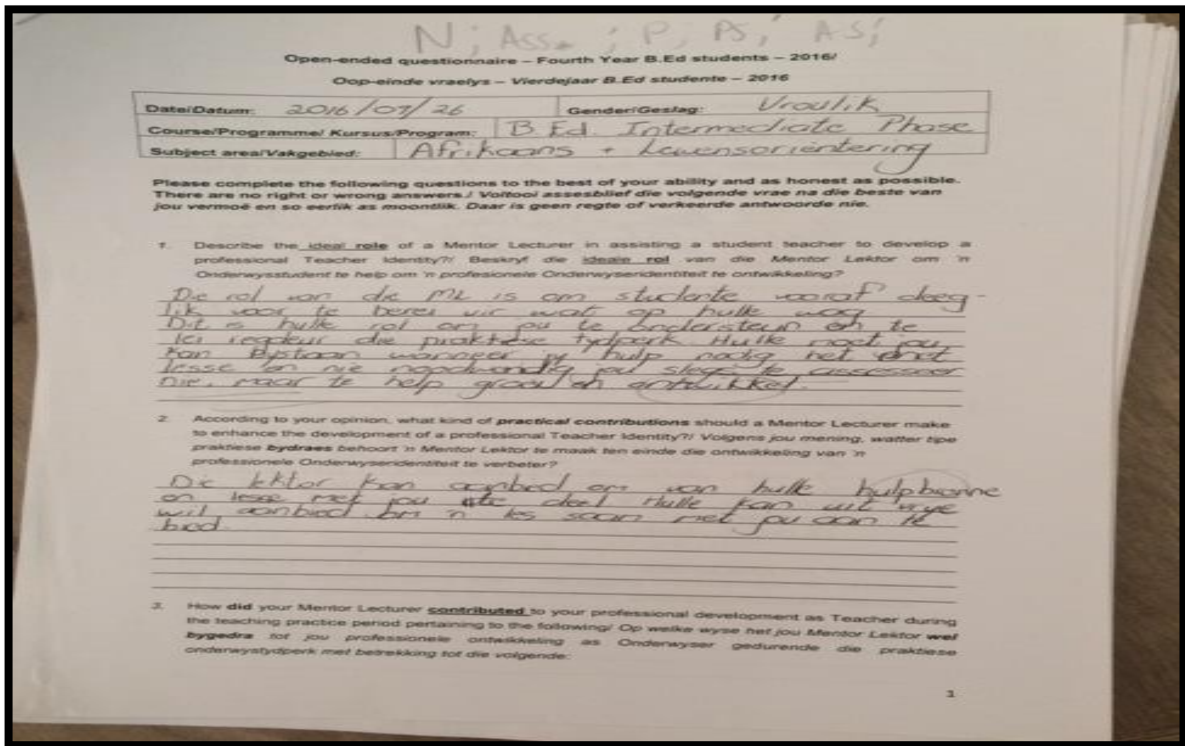
This section describes the methods and tools used for data generation and documentation.

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire

During qualitative case study research, the objective of data collection is to establish an all-inclusive record of participants' words and actions (Heale & Twycross 2017). I was not part of the process of sampling, data collection and documentation, although I remained well aware of the reasons for, advantages of and potential challenges presented by the choices. The questionnaires formed part of a baseline study. An example of the questionnaire is included in Appendix F.

The data had been gathered by my supervisor and her team, who ensured that the data-collection process maintained a level of expertise and professionalism that might not have prevailed if I, as a relatively inexperienced researcher, had done it. A disadvantage of using previously collected data is that it is not possible to control any data-collection errors that may occur.

The data-collection technique was semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires, as indicated in the photographs that follow.



N; Ass; P; PS; AS;

Open-ended questionnaire – Fourth Year B.Ed students – 2016/

Oop-einde vraelys – Vierdejaar B.Ed studente – 2016

Date/Datum: 2016/07/26	Gender/Geslag: Vroulik
Course/Programme/ Kursus/Program: B.Ed. Intermediate Phase	
Subject area/Vakgebied: Afrikaans + Lewensoriëntering	

Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability and as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers./ *Voltooi assesblief die volgende vrae na die beste van jou vermoë en so eerlik as moontlik. Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie.*

1. Describe the **ideal role** of a Mentor Lecturer in assisting a student teacher to develop a professional Teacher Identity?/ *Beskryf die **ideale rol** van die Mentor Lektor om 'n Onderwysstudent te help om 'n profesionele Onderwyseridentiteit te ontwikkeling?*

Die rol van die ML is om studente vooraf deeglik voor te berei vir wat op hulle wag. Dit is hulle rol om jou te ondersteun en te [illegible] die praktiese tydperk. Hulle moet jou kan bystaan wanneer jy hulp nodig het en [illegible] lesse en nie noodwendig jou slegs te assesseer nie, maar te help groei en ontwikkel.

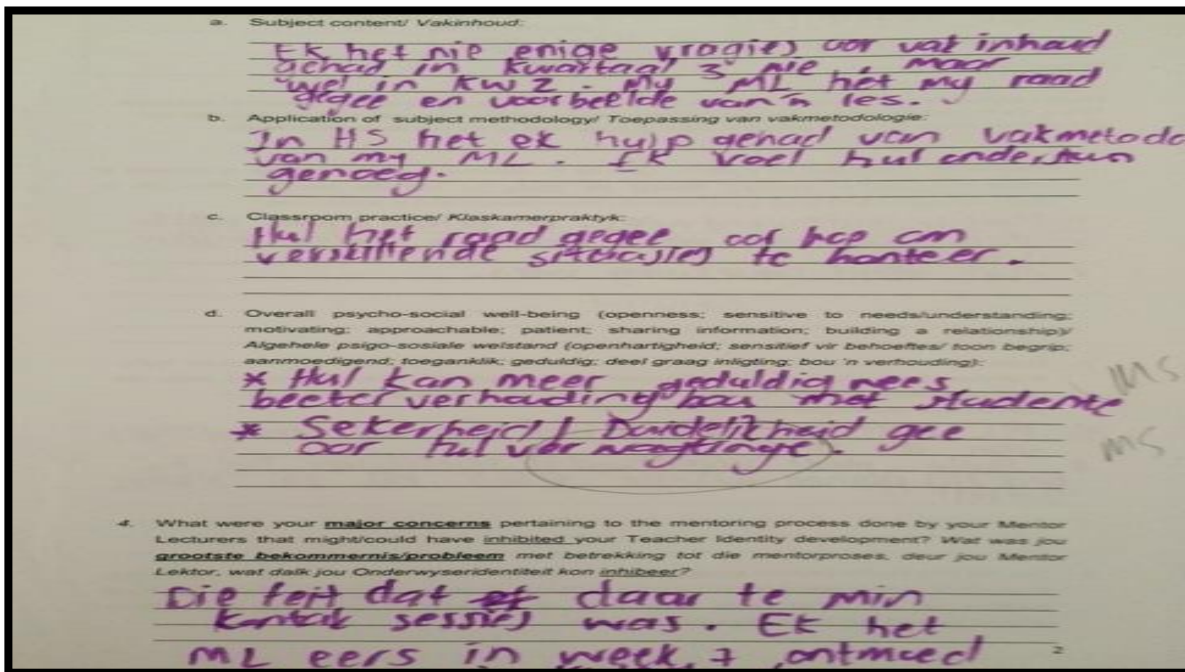
2. According to your opinion, what kind of **practical contributions** should a Mentor Lecturer make to enhance the development of a professional Teacher Identity?/ *Volgens jou mening, watter tipe praktiese **bydraes** behoort 'n Mentor Lektor te maak ten einde die ontwikkeling van 'n professionele Onderwyseridentiteit te verbeter?*

Die lektor kan aanbied om van hulle hulpbronne en lesse met jou te deel. Hulle kan uit hulle wil aanbied om 'n les saam met jou aan te bied.

3. How **did** your Mentor Lecturer **contributed** to your professional development as Teacher during the teaching practice period pertaining to the following/ *Op welke wyse het jou Mentor Lektor **wel bygedra** tot jou professionele ontwikkeling as Onderwyser gedurende die praktiese onderwystydperk met betrekking tot die volgende:*

1

Photograph 3.2: Example of completed questionnaire (photograph by Agnes Jooste on 1 November 2019)



a. Subject content/ *Vakinhoud:*

Ek het nie enige vrae oor vak inhoud gehad in kwartaal 3 nie, maar wel in KW 2. My ML het my raad gegee en voorbeelde van 'n les.

b. Application of subject methodology/ *Toepassing van vakmetodologie:*

In HS het ek hulp gehad van vakmetodo[illegible] van my ML. Ek voel hul ondersteun genoeg.

c. Classroom practice/ *Klaskamerpraktyk:*

Hul het raad gegee oor hoe om verskillende situasies te hanteer.

d. Overall psycho-social well-being (openness; sensitive to needs/understanding; motivating; approachable; patient; sharing information; building a relationship)/ *Algehele psigo-sosiale welstand (openhartigheid; sensitief vir behoeftes/ toon begrip; aanmoedigend; toeganklik; geduldig; deel graag inligting; bou 'n verhouding):*

* Hul kan meer geduldig wees, beter verhouding bou met studente

* Sekerheid / Duidelikheid gee oor hul vervagtinge.

MS

MS

4. What were your **major concerns** pertaining to the mentoring process done by your Mentor Lecturers that might/could have inhibited your Teacher Identity development? *Wat was jou **grootste bekommernis/probleem** met betrekking tot die mentorproses, deur jou Mentor Lektor, wat dalk jou Onderwyseridentiteit kon inhibeer?*

Die feit dat daar te min kontak sessies was. Ek het ML eers in week 7 ontmoet

2

Photograph 3.2: Example of questionnaire completed by respondent (photograph by Agnes Jooste on 1 November 2019)

I worked closely with my supervisor, who had designed and administered the questionnaire, therefore I am aware that the steps outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (2014) were followed, namely: reviewing existing literature in order to determine justification; identifying objectives; writing items; re-evaluating items; assembling the general format; and then revising the questionnaire before its final administration.

The justification for using a questionnaire was that semi-structured, open-ended questions allowed participants an opportunity to express, and expand on, their sincere opinions about the subject, which was the desired outcome of the case study (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). That the students were enabled to do so was amplified because the questionnaires were anonymous, preventing the participants from being reticent about voicing any apparently negative aspects. At the same time using the questionnaires was economical in terms of time and money. The questionnaires furthermore gave the participants the opportunity to re-examine questions where they were uncertain and they were in a position to take their time and consider before responding to the questions.

Of course, there are sometimes limitations to using questionnaires, namely that the researcher is unable to probe and clarify responses; there is no telling whether the participants were honest or not (sometimes people give answers that they feel are desirable, rather than being truly candid); there is no opportunity to read the body language of the participants and the questions could be ambiguous, biased or misunderstood (Opie 2004). In order to avoid these aforementioned limitations, special care was taken when developing the questionnaire to ensure that questions were clear, unbiased and relevant. Short and leading or loaded questions as well as double-barrelled or negative questions were avoided (McMillan & Schumacher 2014).

3.4.2.2 Researcher's reflective journal

Throughout the current study I kept a journal. I recorded the ideas and insights I gained as I moved through the research process, making reflective notes to document personal reflections, emotions and lessons learned from the data (Nieuwenhuis 2007).

Keeping notes on my reflections and having frequent discussions with my supervisor, of which I kept minutes to ensure the thorough exploration of ideas, enabled me to remain aware of personal values, assumptions and bias from the outset of the study (Creswell 2018). My introspective notes moreover allowed me to reflect on personal insights that arose during the current study, and I was able to compare them with the themes emerging from the literature review and the data (Nieuwenhuis 2007). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:334) recommend keeping a journal, which they call a 'reflex journal', to enhance reflexivity. By asking myself questions, I was able to ensure that I took into account everything that might have influenced my interpretations so that I could acknowledge my subjectivity and achieve greater credibility in this descriptive case study.

3.4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

When analysing the responses to the questionnaires for my study I used inductive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2014) describe inductive thematic analysis as a technique for recognising, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes that emerge from data. Creswell and Poth (2018) posit that data analysis requires the preparation of the data, conducting the analysis, understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the meaning of the data.

My aim in employing thematic content analysis was to achieve an in-depth, yet concise description of the student teachers' expectations by carefully and thoroughly examining and comparing raw data, which were the responses to the open-ended questionnaires, until I could make valid inferences and condense the information into a number of categories and themes (Yin 2015). The purpose of this was to identify and extract common, dominant and significant themes intrinsic to the student teachers' descriptions of their expectations. A theme incorporates important, specific patterns that are found in the data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Belotto (2018) suggests that exploring for themes should be directed by the research questions set during the research design phase. I therefore coded the data in order to find thematic responses to the research questions.

Inductive thematic analysis appears to be a flexible method and although researchers concur that it should be rigorous and systematic, they don't follow similar procedures or give these steps the same names or descriptions (Bengtsson 2016). I conducted the inductive thematic analysis by following the guidelines described by Braun and Clarke (2014). The following data analysis phases took place.

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with the data

I began the process of analysis and interpretation by reading and re-reading the student teachers' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires in order to become entirely familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke 2014). I made notes in the margins (see Appendix A) that reflected my initial thoughts and general impressions. These ideas were influenced by the information I had already garnered from my comprehensive literature review.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Once familiar with the data, I began the process of breaking the bulk of it down into smaller, meaningful units (Yin 2015), which were words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects that related to each other, and that had a connection with the research question. Saldaña's (2009:8) coding technique was used, as a 'heuristic exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulae to follow'. A code, in qualitative investigations, refers to a word or brief phrase that tacitly depicts a summative, significant or evocative characteristic that captures the quintessential meaning of the data. Open and axial coding in particular were utilised. Axial coding 'relates categories to subcategories and specifies the properties and dimensions of a category' (Saldaña 2009:159). After coding was applied to the data, the codes were interpreted and those codes sharing the same characteristics were grouped into sub-themes and presented together as themes (Hancock & Algozzine 2017).

Elo and Kyngäs (2008:111) refer to the aforementioned as the 'abstraction process'. I continued the process of abstraction until all the features of the content relating to the aim of my case study had been covered (Bengtsson 2016). The coding process was iterative and new categories continued to emerge as I examined the data closely

(Creswell & Creswell 2017). Table 4.1 in the next chapter represents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the inductive qualitative analysis.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

I developed the content categories, which are also known as themes, inductively, meaning that I did not start with themes and then looked for supporting evidence, but instead allowed the themes to emerge from the data being analysed, from existing theories relating to the research topic or from previous research papers relating to my study (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Once I had developed my initial codes, I collated them into potential categories and sub-themes, ensuring that I collected all the data relevant to each prospective theme (Braun & Clarke 2014). I grouped the data by means of coding and then identified categories and patterns that related to one another (Saldaña 2009) (see Appendices A, B and C).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

I examined the raw data repeatedly until I was satisfied that all the information had been sorted, coded and grouped. I continued using an inductive process until I had established an inclusive set of themes. I integrated an assortment of similar sub-themes in order to consolidate the data (Creswell & Creswell 2017) until the themes were defined in such a way that all the codes included in a category were as homogenous or similar as possible internally and as heterogeneous or varied as possible externally (Anney 2014).

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Once I had refined the specifics of each theme I generated a classification system in terms of themes, sub-themes and categories, allocating clear definitions and names to each of them (Braun & Clarke 2014). I was able to start drawing inferences at this point, and my interpretation of the data was based on the themes already identified in the literature review and the theory that guided my study (Saldaña 2009).

Phase 6: Producing the final analysis results

I selected relevant examples, which I extracted, and completed my final analysis of the selected excerpts from the questionnaires (see Table 4.1) so that I was able to relate these back to the research questions and the literature (Belotto 2018; Braun & Clarke 2014).

Using inductive thematic analysis meant that I could establish appropriate communication content to answer the research questions and use data that were pertinent to my particular research problem and case study (Crowe et al. 2011). Inductive thematic analysis allowed me to obtain the true meaning, emphasis and themes of messages relating to my topic (Hancock & Algozzine 2017). The results are deeply grounded in the data, therefore employing inductive thematic analysis allowed me to make an abundance of comprehensive observations.

I found inductive thematic content analysis to be a beneficial, flexible method that was achievable for me despite the reality that I had limited experience in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke 2014). Since inductive thematic analysis can be complicated and challenging because it is not as standardised and prescriptive as quantitative analysis (Maree 2015) and the themes could sometimes be quite abstract and therefore complicated to identify (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013), I ensured that I adhered to the important scientific principle, namely objectivity, and that I approached the research systematically.

When examining the raw data I started by reading the answers to the questionnaires carefully to get the ‘bigger picture’ (White & Marsh 2006:39), and followed this up with reading through the data several times, even starting on different pages each time to increase the stability and reliability of my findings. I considered the information as objectively as possible and continuously reflected on ways in which my own personal bias might have affected my interpretation.

Selecting suitable, meaningful units or themes was somewhat challenging, so I made a concerted effort not to make my themes too narrow or too broad, consequently I explained my 'abstraction process' in detail, substantiating it with authentic citations that corroborate and highlight the process to ensure that my themes captured the essence of the data accurately, and so that others would be able to critique the credibility of my conclusions (Yin 2015). I also used triangulation, or 'intercoder reliability' (Athanasou & Maree 2012) to improve the quality of my research by asking my supervisor do the coding of the same text as me and then comparing the results(Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas 2013:403).

Before concluding my study, I attempted to verify that my findings were rational and I made every effort to confirm whether or not they corresponded with existing literature on the topic. In order to avoid implying that my findings were more transferable than they were, I gave a comprehensible and distinctive description of the context of my research, as well as the details of how participants were selected and how the data were collected (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Transparency is critical to ensure trustworthy research.

3.5 QUALITY CRITERIA

Trustworthiness helps the researcher to ensure that their research is worthy of attention and confirms that it was conducted in a methodical, recognised and legitimate manner in order to yield results which are meaningful and credible (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules 2017). Qualitative researchers using a case study research design need to show that data analysis was conducted in an exact, consistent and exhaustive way, and that the methods applied were recorded systematically as well as disclosed (Braun & Clarke 2014). Additional strategies, such as an audit trail, accurate data recording and thorough data descriptions were integrated into the current case study to overcome the possible limitations of the methodological choices. The following criteria were adhered to in order that the qualitative research could be considered trustworthy: credibility; transferability; dependability; confirmability and authenticity (Seale 2002). The way in which these criteria were observed during the current study are discussed in the section that follows.

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to how well the data and the research processes truly address the research problem and whether or not other researchers would agree with the findings if they critically reviewed the study (Noble & Smith 2015).

In order to establish credibility I provided detailed justification for the focus of the study and my choice of context, participant selection and the approach that was followed in collecting the data. I further ensured credibility by developing and documenting a detailed audit trail, checking interpretations against raw data and through peer debriefing (Zhang & Wildemuth 2005). I ensured that I was transparent regarding all the steps undertaken during the study, including the processes I used for coding and drawing conclusions.

3.5.2 Transferability

Qualitative research cannot be generalised easily (Noble & Smith 2015) and the aim of a case study is to provide an in-depth description of a phenomenon rather than for generalising results. However, I nonetheless endeavoured to maintain rigour and to ensure transferability, which refers to the extent to which the results may be relevant to other settings or groups. Describing the insights of the student teachers regarding the contribution their mentor lecturers made to the development of their teacher identities enabled transferability in that their illustration of the broader lessons they had learnt could be implemented in the design of future mentorship programmes (Connelly 2016).

In order to ensure that the findings were transferable to the degree described above, clear explanations of the context, selection and characteristics of the research participants, data-collection and data-analysis procedures were provided (Bengtsson, 2016; Elo & Kyngäs 2014) so that the descriptions were 'rich enough so that other researchers are able to make judgements about the findings' transferability to different settings or contexts' (Zhang & Wildemuth 2005:6). As mentioned previously, I made sure to keep a conscientious and meticulous audit trail of my research.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to stability, or the extent to which the data and analysis procedures change over time. The processes utilised for the case study were noted explicitly and should thus be repeatable (Sanjari *et al.* 2014). I kept detailed notes regarding how I coded the data and what changes I made to the coding and categorisation of the information throughout the research process (Athanasou & Maree 2012; Bengtsson 2016).

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is referred to by Athanasou and Maree (2014:141) as 'neutrality'. As I utilised an interpretive paradigm to conduct this research it was almost impossible to be truly objective. It was therefore essential for me to manage my subjectivity by acknowledging this and by being as self-aware as possible so that I could declare honestly and clearly how I, as the instrument of the research, may have influenced any part of the process, including the results. I recorded all of my experiences, responses and my awareness of any assumptions or partiality that arose (Klenke 2016) in my reflective journal so that I could set them aside, or incorporate them and pronounce them part of the study. Naturally I remained cognisant of the context of the research throughout and I made a conscious effort to remain as impartial as possible.

3.5.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the way in which the conduct and appraisal of research may be considered genuine and credible, thereby representing the subject and adding to existing knowledge in a fair way (Mertens 2014). The concept of authenticity is not only related to the experiences of the participants in the study, but also to the possible broader social or political implications of the study (Given 2008). The extent to which research may contribute in a worthwhile and beneficial way to society at large was therefore considered. Exploring the expectations of student teachers with the aim of improving their ability to develop a teacher identity may have an impact on teacher retention (Henry 2016) and may also prepare them for the realities of teaching diverse students (Tran & Nguyen 2015), thus having a broad impact on society.

A number of components relating to authenticity apply to the current study. The first component was fairness, which implied that the researcher had fulfilled the responsibility of making certain that all the relevant participants' stories were included in the study, including those who might be marginalised (Lincoln & Guba 1990). It also meant ensuring that the contributions made by all the participants were portrayed respectfully and fairly. In the current study all the student teachers in cohort A were allowed the opportunity to participate and, as previously explained, the exclusion of cohort B was purely incidental. Both of the groups had been randomly selected at the start of the teaching practice period, therefore no marginalised members were excluded from the study and no individuals were intentionally excluded. Utilising semi-structured, open-ended interviews ensured that each respondent was able to express his or her opinion on the subject freely. Direct quotations were also included to support the findings in order to represent the opinions of the participants appropriately.

The second important component of authenticity which was considered for the current study was ontological authenticity, which refers to how the participants' own experiences are enhanced or developed through their involvement in the study (Connelly 2016). Since reflection was identified as a beneficial skill for teachers (Hudson 2014), it is likely that the student teachers benefitted from being given the opportunity to reflect and express what they had experienced during the teaching practice period.

The third part of authenticity, identified by Lincoln and Guba 1990), which was regarded for the current study was educative authenticity, which relates to stimulating the participants to acquire a better understanding not only of themselves but also of others with a vested interest in the study. This therefore demonstrates that individuals understand the frame of reference of others by way of cultural, social or, as in the current study, organisational engagement (Given 2008). Reference was made in the responses to stakeholders other than the participants themselves and their mentors, namely teachers, school principals and, even more imperatively, the learners from the schools where the student teachers completed their teaching practice. The insight accrued from and exploration of the experiences of the student teachers contained an expression of the complexity and profundity of their experiences. Furthermore, the

results of the current study may consequently have a positive impact on the aforementioned stakeholders as mentorship programmes are being implemented that may improve the training and general well-being of student teachers.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was critical to remain aware of ethical issues at each step in the research process (Gravetter & Forzano 2009). Every step in the course of the research process involved ethical concerns and ethical issues did not end with data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell 2017). Ethical factors during the current study included informed consent as well as confidentiality and anonymity. Owing to the qualitative nature of the current study these were important aspects to take into consideration. Other ethical strategies employed included permission to utilise existing data as well as the ethical analysis, reporting of the current study, and further points, as elucidated in the sections that follow.

3.6.1 Permission to use existing data

Before the questionnaires were even administered to the final-year teaching students, permission was requested from and granted by the Dean of the UP. I was granted permission, as a co-researcher, to use data generated as part of the larger project to conduct an inductive thematic analysis of the participants' responses for the purposes of the current research study. The ethical clearance number is UP16/11/03 and the ethical clearance certificate is attached (see Appendix D(ii).

3.6.2 Voluntary participation and informed consent

Before contributing to the study, the research participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose of the data and its intended use. Participation was voluntary and the student teachers were given an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns and were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity, after which they signed a consent form (Sanjari *et al.* 2014). It was also explained to them that there was no pressure on them to participate and that they could withdraw at any stage. A copy of the consent form is attached as Appendix E under Appendices.

3.6.3 Anonymity

Respecting anonymity implies that that data cannot be connected to individual participants by name (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The participants in the current descriptive case study gave consent that their responses to the questionnaires may be used for the study. However, the necessary steps were taken to ensure that their names remained anonymous. The questionnaires were entirely anonymous and no information or personal details that could identify participants were requested in the questionnaires.

3.6.4 Trust

In terms of data storage, the generated data will be stored in a secure location for 15 years, as stipulated by the ethical guidelines for qualitative research. The questionnaires are safely stored in the archives of the department at the UP. This aims to ensure the protection of the information of the participants and contributes to the trustworthiness of the study (McMillan & Schumacher 2014).

3.6.5 Reflexivity, integrity, beneficence and non-maleficence

The aim of my research was to explore the expectations of student teachers pertaining to the role the mentor lecturer plays in assisting with the development of the student teacher's teacher identity, therefore interpretivism was the philosophical paradigm that guided my study. Whilst an interpretive paradigm and inductive thematic analysis both require interpretation of the student teachers' responses, I had to be careful to represent the data accurately and to reflect their responses and beliefs, and not my own. This required active reflexivity on my part.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) assert that reflexivity is closely linked with the ethical practice of research. They posit that reflexivity requires 'scrutiny, reflection, and interrogation of the data, the researcher, the participants, and the context that they inhabit' so that the researcher can report the 'facts' and then industriously construct interpretations (Guillemin & Gillam 2004:275). This reflexivity ensured that I, the researcher, was able to explain exactly how those interpretations were derived. These

researchers further state that reflexivity is linked with ethical considerations. Reflexivity is thus not only a way of ensuring rigour in qualitative research, being cognisant that the goal of this constant reflection is in part to improve quality and validity, but also to be fair to the participants in the study throughout the research process.

In their discussion of qualitative research ethics, McMillan and Schumacher (2014) assert that the researcher must have a sense of caring and fairness, and that the researcher must be moral in their thinking, actions and personal principles. This is re-iterated by Athanasou and Maree (2012) when they discuss the ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence as well as integrity. They state emphatically that researchers should preserve the safety of the participants in a research study, should not cause them any harm and that the researcher must maintain precision and honesty when they carry out projects. I made every effort to apply these important ethical considerations throughout the study.

Finally, when disseminating the results of my study and writing my mini-dissertation it was critical for me to acknowledge all the sources I used to substantiate my research. Plagiarism is a serious offence, one which I took great care to avoid (Athanasou & Maree 2012).

3.7 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

As a Master's student in Educational Psychology at the UP, my role was to support the institution and the larger project throughout this study. I was afforded the opportunity to assume the role of co-researcher and utilise previously collected data for my Master's degree. I therefore confirm that I was not involved in the preparation and collection of the data and that my personal interest in conducting a study of the expectations of the role that mentor lecturers of student teachers play in developing teacher identity increased as the study progressed.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) maintain that a qualitative researcher is one who gathers the information required through a range of data-collection strategies. My interpretations could not be separated from my own background, history, contexts and

prior understandings (Creswell & Creswell 2017). I was therefore cognisant of my bias, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture and socio-economic status, which may have shaped my interpretations during the current study (Creswell & Poth 2018). These factors were all included in my researcher reflective journal, along with notes on the research process and data analysis, with a view to maintaining balance.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I focused my discussion on an in-depth description of the research process that was followed. Employing a descriptive case study by means of a qualitative research approach allowed me to analyse and interpret data from a constructivist perspective by exploring the expectations of student teachers and how their mentor lecturers contributed to their developing teacher identities. Using a descriptive case study as the research design aligned with the aim of the current study and allowed me to gain a deeper perception of, and insight into, the expectations of the participants. In addition I discussed my choice of data collection methods, the use of previously collected data as well as the inductive thematic data analysis and interpretation techniques. I elucidated some of the features of trustworthiness relating to quality criteria and ethical responsibilities, and furthermore elaborated on my role as researcher.

In Chapter 4, I present and discuss the integrated results and findings of the current study. I structured the chapter by expounding on the themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the process of inductive thematic analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 I provided detail of the research process and explained the paradigmatic approaches, as well as the data-generation and documentation strategies I employed for the study. Furthermore, I elaborated on the data-analysis and interpretation strategies. I also discussed the quality criteria and ethical considerations complied with in the study and concluded with a discussion of my role as the researcher.

In this chapter, I report on the results of the study identified during the inductive thematic analysis of the generated data with reference to the two themes and related sub-themes. I included excerpts from the data to explain my reasoning. I then discussed the findings of the study by correlating the results with the findings of the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this section I discuss the two main themes identified, along with the associated sub-themes. As introduction, Table 4.1, which is presented below, provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes of the study.

Table 4.1: Overview of themes and sub-themes	
Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1 A supportive mentoring relationship	Sub-theme 1: Personal traits required for mentoring Sub-theme 2: Communication and reflection Sub-theme 3: Holistic awareness of the mentee Sub-theme 4: Guidance
Theme 2: Professional direction	Sub-theme 1: Theoretical knowledge Sub-theme 2: Practical strategies Sub-theme 3 University and school system requirements

4.3 THEME 1: A SUPPORTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

This theme captures the view of the participants that effective mentoring requires a supportive mentoring relationship for their teacher identity development. The participants' remarks relating to a supportive mentoring relationship reflect reasons why this is important for their teacher identity development during teaching practice. Four sub-themes were identified that related to the supportive mentoring relationship, namely personal traits for mentoring, communication, holistic awareness of the mentee and guidance. Table 4.2 below provides an overview of the criteria used to identify the concomitant sub-themes.

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1		
Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 1.1 Personal traits required for mentoring	Any reference to a personal trait which contributes to a positive mentoring relationship	Contributions that emphasise communication/reflection, guidance or having a holistic view of the mentee
Sub-theme 1.2 Communication and reflection	Any reference to communication which assists with building a positive mentoring relationship	Contributions indicating personal traits needed for mentoring (other than communication/reflection), the need for a holistic view of the mentee or contributions that foreground guidance
Sub-theme 1.3 Holistic awareness of the mentee	Any reference that foregrounds the need for a holistic awareness of the mentee in order to build a supportive mentoring relationship	Contributions focused on communication/reflection, guidance or personal traits of the mentor which contribute to a supportive mentoring relationship
Sub-theme 1.4 Guidance	Any reference to the mentees' need for guidance in the mentoring relationship	Contributions reflecting the need for personal traits for relationship-building, communication/reflection or needing a holistic awareness of the mentee

4.3.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Personal traits required for mentoring

A large number of the student teachers' responses to the questionnaires indicated personal traits that the mentor lecturer should have in order to be able to build a supportive mentoring relationship. The participants indicated a need for these personal traits at this vulnerable time. One respondent emphasised: '*It is not easy; we were doing practice for the first time*' and this was reiterated by another respondent, who

indicated the need for '*patience, and understanding for the fact that this is our first time experiencing a school environment in the role of a possible teacher'.* Student teachers described the beginning of the teaching practice period as follows: '*Studente is baie bang aan die begin van die TP en mentor lektore kan al die "stress" en angs verlig deur (om) net ondersteuning te bied.'* ['Students are very scared at the beginning of the TP and mentor lecturers could relieve all the stress and anxiety simply by providing support.'] and called for mentor lecturers to *'understand the student teachers' lack of experience in teaching'*.

Some of the personal traits mentor lecturers should have that were mentioned by the participants included being encouraging: *'Mentor lecturers should encourage learners* [the students] *to do well, they should be enthusiastic about their duties and* [direct] *mentor*[ed] *students in(to) the right direction.' 'My mentor Lektor is baie toeganklik, aanmoedigend en deel graag haar kennis met studente.' ['My mentor lecturer is very accessible, encouraging and gladly shares her knowledge with students.';* showing enthusiasm: '*My mentor lecture*[r] *was very enthusiastic'; 'Professionele entoesiasme' ['Professional enthusiasm']*; displaying an open and caring approach: '*Very open to help*[ing] *with anything. Built a good relationship, very caring'; 'was nice + easy to relate to'*; having respect and a positive attitude: '*Show positive attitude towards learners, care, love and respect'; 'Positiewe houding'* ['positive attitude']*;* patience: '*She was always friendly, honest, approachable; she had patience and gave wonderful advice'*; '*toeganklik, openhartigheid, geduldig, vriendelik, lojaal'* ['accessible, open-hearted, patient, friendly, loyal'] and empathy, '*empatie'* ['empathy'].

Fairness was also a factor mentioned as important for relationship-building. In response to her description of the ideal role of a mentor lecturer, one respondent succinctly stated *'to be fair'* and another confirmed this by declaring '*hulle moet jou net help met jou werk en regverdig wees'* ['they should just help you with your work and be fair']. The importance of fairness and a nurturing relationship was highlighted by some participants in reference to its absence. For example, one respondent indicated: '*Some students felt that lecturers were unfairly harsh and judgemental, and broke down* (sic) *some students based on their performance',* whilst another student teacher, when asked for other valuable suggestions, remarked: '*Not have MLs cheat on "crit"*

lessons (someone, not mine, only assessed one lesson of a fellow student, and "made-up" (sic) *marks for the other "crit" lesson – which is not fair on us who actually sweated for our "crit" lessons.)'*

Professionalism was also indicated as an important personal trait. A number of participants highlighted '*professionalism*' as one of the aspects that enhanced their teacher identity. '*Her professionalism also had an impact on mine'* is how one student teacher articulated this. Professionalism was also mentioned under 'concerns', with one respondent stating: '*She was not always punctual and this was unprofessional',* and another suggesting that mentor lecturers should: '*Never correct or rectify a student teacher in front of learners'* and furthermore that they should '*be punctual so that the student teacher learns from you.'*

4.3.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Holistic awareness of the mentee

It seems evident from the responses that student teachers perceived the relationship with their mentor lecturer as more than a merely professional one. One respondent stated that they perceived their mentor lecturer as a '*professional parent'*. Since the first teaching practice period had been identified as a time of vulnerability for many student teachers their need for personal support, along with professional support, seemed inevitable and could be recognised in the data. One student teacher declared the positive effect on her teacher identity as: '*I experienced a personal problem during the TP period that made it very difficult for me to be at the school, but my mentor was supportive, understanding and flexible, which helped a lot.'* This was reiterated by another respondent, who affirmed that: *'A mentor lecturer should be a parent figure who (are)* [is] *concerned about their students' personal & professional development'* and by another, who stated: '*Dit sal ideaal wees indien die mentor-lektor 'n pad saam met studente kan stap. Op dié manier is die verhouding meer persoonlik en kan jou onderwyser-identiteit goed ontwikkel word.'* ['It would be ideal if the mentor lecturer could go the distance with students. That way the relationship is more personal and your teacher identity could be developed well.']

Some examples of quotes supporting the need for a more holistic view of the student teachers include: '*My mentor lecturer was amazing. He wanted to learn more about*

myself and what my goals are'; '*She was wonderful and consider(ed*)[ate]*. Always caring, not just about how/what I'm doing in class, but how I am doing as a person. I felt so cared for by this lecturer and will always remember her words and advice, and will recommend her to anyone'* and *'I believe the ideal role of the mentor lecturer is to assist a student in understanding what is expected of them and to be a friend as well as a guide through this time.'* One of the participants articulated a poignant example of support from the mentor lecturer which required consideration for what was happening in her personal life rather than merely in her academic or professional one: '*He would send me emails wishing me luck and was very supportive when I lost my mother during the TP.'*

Emotional well-being is something which the student teachers indicated they needed from their mentor lecturers when building a relationship, as highlighted by a student teacher's statement: '*Mentor lecturers do a lot by supporting the students emotionally.'* Social support was also cited as important: '*He was a good person. He helped me with social issues outside class, not only with the lesson itself.'* Similarly, one respondent described her experience as follows: '*Die lektor het ongelooflik baie moeite gedoen om my al die nodige bystand te gee. Sy het baie konstruktiewe denke gegee wat my gehelp het om my psigo-sosiale welstand te verbeter.'* ['The lecturer went to great lengths to give me all the necessary assistance. She gave me a lot of constructive ideas that helped me improve my psychosocial well-being], thus highlighting the need for psychosocial support.

Some participants seemed to highlight this need for more than a professional outlook by expressing their concern about the apparent lack of care by their mentor lecturers. One respondent described that he '*felt crushed'* by his mentor lecturer and he expanded on this by saying: '*I just wanted a mentor who actually CARED'* (sic). Another student teacher mentioned that his mentor lecturer had in fact not contributed at all to his teacher identity development because the mentor lecturer '*was vriendelik, maar nie betrokke nie. Het nie 'n verhouding gehad nie'* ['was friendly, but not involved. Had no relationship.']

4.3.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Communication and reflection

Communication, alongside accessibility, was mentioned as significant by the vast majority of student teachers who participated in the study, perhaps indicating that it is one of the most important ways in which mentor lecturers could assist student teachers to develop their teacher identities. This view is captured by the following contribution: '*I never had a relationship with my mentor lecturer and the only time we communicated would be during assessments only or when I would sent* [send] *an sms. Then that would be the beginning and end of the relationship. So I feel there* [their] *platforms of communication should be encouraged'* and this viewpoint is affirmed by the respondent who declared: *'I plead for better communication and building better relationships with student teachers for us to be open'* and one who vehemently pronounced: '*The most important thing that is needed is MORE COMMUNICATION'* (sic).

It appears that a number of student teachers found the lack of accessibility to their mentor lecturers a challenge, as depicted by the following statements: '*I was not contacted by the lecturer. I have had zero contact with my lecturer'* and, when asked what the most positive aspects pertaining to the mentoring process was there were the following responses: '*None. I did not really have much contact with both of my mentor lecturers, so I cannot really say.'* This was contrasted by the respondent who stated: '*'n Positiewe aspek was die Lektor se toeganglikheid. Ek het gerus gevoel om met haar in kontak te tree.'* ['A positive aspect was the Lecturer's accessibility. I felt comfortable contacting her.'], emphasising the significance of the mentor lecturer's accessibility in the mentoring relationship. In reaction to being asked about the ideal role of the mentor lecturer one student teacher responded: *'It would be to develop me as a teacher and be prepared and meet the needs of all the learners. The ideal mentor lecturer should be in constant contact and communication and should help teachers develop on all fronts.'*

The way in which mentor lecturers make themselves accessible was also highlighted in the data. Some of the suggested means of communication that were elaborated on in the data included e-mails or social media platforms: '*Checking up on a weekly basis*

(even if it is through e-mail/WhatsApp)'; regular face-to-face meetings: '*Scheduled meetings for weekly reflections. Be more available and don't be absent'*; *'I think MLs should be available for "consultations", especially at the beginning of the term, when we were feeling a bit lost.'*; and telephone conversations: '*The ML should be reachable via sms or phonecall* (sic)*.'*

One of the reasons for communication highlighted in the data is to ensure that the student teachers know and understand what is expected of them, as demonstrated by the following quotes: '*ML moet duidelikheid bied van hul verwagtinge van ons studente. Hulle moet vroegtydig spesifiseer hoe hul ons lesplanne wil hê!'* ['ML should clarify their expectations of us students. They must specify in advance how they want our lesson plans!']; and *'My mentor teacher met with us before she assessed us, which was nice, and ensured that we would not be very nervous for our assessment.'* The other reason for communication that was mentioned frequently is to provide the student teacher with much needed feedback on the lessons. The following contributions encapsulated this view: '*Constant feedback, advice and support should be given throughout the whole practical. The lecturer should help build the students' confidence and give them constructive criticism, which will help them develop their teacher identity.'* and '*Betekenisvolle terugvoer en inligting aan student verskaf aangaande die onderrigpraktyk, wat 'n student aan hulle bekend maak.'* ['Provide meaningful feedback and information to the student regarding the teaching practice which a student discloses to them.'] Open communication allowed the student teachers to feel that their unique experiences were 'heard' and this helped with the development of teacher identity, as depicted here: '*He was very helpful and understanding of my situation. He mentored me towards identifying my own identity.'*

A number of participants observed that their mentor lecturers focused the majority of their feedback on assessment. Their answers in the questionnaires seemed to reflect a need for feedback in all areas, as underscored by the following contributions: *'Practical contribution should a mentor lecturer make to enhance the development of a professional teacher identity is to mentor and guide student teacher throughout the teaching practice period, not only when they come for assessment. There must be (a) better communication and engagement.'* and *'Mentor lektore moet betrokke raak, nie*

net punte gee en reflekteer nie.' ['Mentor lecturers should get involved, not just allocate marks and reflect.']

Communication in the form of reflection after lessons was a common response in the section of the data about what the student teachers expected from their mentor lecturers in guiding their development of teacher identities. This was a mostly unanimous response, outlined in declarations such as: '*They should ensure to write lots of feedback after a lesson and engage in a substantial, focused and enriching reflection after a "crit" lesson'* and '*That reflection/reflecting on teaching and lessons is essential in order to promote development'.*

It came across noticeably that the participants in the study felt strongly that the feedback regarding their teaching should be constructive rather than disparaging '*'n Mentor Lektor moet nie net fokus op wat die student verkeerd doen nie maar ook wat hy/sy goed doen. Hulle moet opbouende (c)*[k]*ritiek lewer en as hulle areas van verbetering identifiseer moet hulle 'n voorbeeld noem van hoe die student kan verbeter*.' ['A Mentor Lecturer must focus not only on what the student is doing wrong, but also on what he/she is doing well. They must provide constructive criticism and when they identify areas for improvement they must give an example of how the student could improve.'] Despite this, a large number of responses seemed to indicate that this was not the case. Responses such as '*A mentor lecture*[r] *should assist students to reach their full potential as beginner teachers instead of breaking them down'*; *'Ek het 'n ML wat my tydens krit afgebreek het.'* ['I had a ML who broke me down during the "crit"']; *'My ml was very critical and did not really give me good, productive advice'* and *'My mentor lecturer did not assist me much; in fact he was always criticising everything that I did. There was no advice in terms of how I should teach the subject content and how to go about breaking* [it] *down because at the end of the day I was overwhelmed and did not know what to do.'* highlight how some of the participants felt about the severe criticism they received. One respondent said: '*I was openly crushed after our first meeting. There was no motivation form his side. He openly stated that I did not have the "fun vibe" to teach.'*

Some described the feedback as harsh: *'Some students felt that lecturers were unfairly harsh and judgmental, and broke down some students based on their performance.'* and *'They should give feedback and not climb into your character. They should be available more and at least pretend that they care and want to help you.'* This, however, was nevertheless contradicted in the data by comments such as: *'Gedurende my krit was my lektor baie eerlik oor my les en wou graag raad en verbeteringe deel, of wat sy as onderwyser al ondervind het, asook was sy tevrede met die lesse en het die positiewe uitgewys.'* ['During my criticism, my lecturer was very honest about my lesson and really wanted to share advice and improvements, or what she had experienced as a teacher; she was also satisfied with the lessons and pointed out the positives.'] One respondent even remarked on the lack of (and need for) negative feedback: *'Die lektor moet nie net positiewe kritiek bied nie maar wel negatiewe kritiek ook'* ['The lecturer should not give only positive criticism, but also negative criticism.'], therefore it may be acknowledged that feedback should be honest, yet fair. I believe that the following quote depicting the experience of one student teacher sums up the expectation of more balanced and constructive feedback in order to achieve optimal development of teacher identity during this phase: *'The most positive thing was that after my mentor lecturer came to assess me he would sit down with me for +- 20 minutes and go through my lesson with me. He would highlight both the good and bad things that I did. And he would advise me.'*

The final aspect relating to this sub-theme, which emerged from the data, was the need for ongoing reflection throughout the teaching practice: *'Constant feedback, advice and support should be given throughout the whole practical'*. It would seem that a number of the participants felt that their mentor lecturer was so focused on assessment that this was the only time they offered any feedback, as demonstrated by these student teachers' descriptions: *'They should be there to guide us and not just assess us.' 'To communicate with students on a more regular basis, not just when they are coming to mark.' 'To keep in regular contact with the student teacher – Avail themselves for weekly reflections and not just focus on the assessments.'* and (under the 'ideal role'): *'Meer as net punte gee.'* ['More than only allocating marks.']

4.3.4 Sub-theme 1.4: Guidance

Building a supportive mentoring relationship is necessary, because, as reflected in the data, student teachers require a significant amount of guidance during their teaching practice. This call for guidance in the relationship may be observed in the following statements by some participants: *'The role of the mentor lecturer is to guide and give assistance and motivation in building and preparing us to be(ing) a professional teacher'* and *'They should provide guidance, assistance and advice. They should make the effort to keep in contact with their students and constantly provide encouragement, advice and helpful tips when the students need it.'* One respondent explained that her mentor lecturer enhanced her development of a teacher identity by guiding her to become more successful in the classroom: *'Me. Swart het goed gekommunikeer, ons SWOT uitgewys en ons gelei om 'n sukses te wees in die klaskamer.'* ['Ms Swart communicated well, pointed out our SWOT and guided us to be a success in the classroom.']

Advice is nevertheless an essential part of the guidance needed in the supportive mentoring relationship, as portrayed in the following responses in the data: *'Good practical advice that he gave me in the 2 lessons that he assessed last term.'* In response to the 'positive aspects' of mentoring it was said: *'Gee advies vir moontlike verbetering'* ['Give advice for possible improvement'] and this reaction of the student teachers also demonstrated their desire for autonomy: '*MLs should guide students in finding their identities – but not try to push them into a mold* (sic)', and '*Encourage students to be creative, not expect them to teach like mentor lecturer would*'. As one respondent affirmed: '*He mentored me towards identifying my OWN* (sic) *identity.'*

Another respondent stressed that she didn't feel her mentor lecturer was accepting of her unique teaching style: 'Die feit dat sy my afgebreek het en gereeld gesê het ek doen nie my beste nie. Ek voel beste verskil van persoon tot persoon en elke onderwyser bied klas aan op hul eie unieke manier. Ek dink nie sy was gewoond aan 'n spontane manier van klasgee nie.' ['The fact that she broke me down and often said I didn't do my best. I feel the best differs from person to person and each teacher presents a class in their own unique way. I don't think she was used to a spontaneous

way of teaching.'] The data also indicated that guidance and advice should nevertheless be given tentatively, as confirmed by the following statement: 'The lecturer must give the students advice on how they can improve their lessons, classroom management, etc. They must also ask you challenging questions instead of just telling you everything.' Whilst appreciating guidance and accepting the mentor lecturer as a role model: 'To be a role model, to give advice, to give constructive criticism', the student teachers also needed to be allowed to discover and learn for themselves: 'Haar positiwiteit en aanmoediging om die beste student onderwyser te wees. Asook om net jouself te wees.' ['Her positivity and encouragement to be the best student teacher. As well as just being yourself.']

Providing advice and guidance is depicted in the captured data as having a positive effect on the student teacher's sense of worth as well as teacher identity: '*The mentor lecturer plays the role of supporting the student in all possible ways during teaching practicals by means of providing adequate advice to build the student's self-esteem and attitude towards the teaching profession.'* Much of this guidance and advice, as derived from the data, appeared to come from the mentor lecturer's own experience: '*To be able to give sincere advice from the lessons which they have learnt throughout their teaching experience. I had an elderly gentleman as my mentor lecturer and he had a world of knowledge & experience. This* [He] *gave me a lot of advice to follow.'*

Although much of the guidance suggested in the data relates to teaching expertise and experience, there were some responses which reflected other specific areas where the student teachers needed advice, for example, about building professional networks, as indicated by: '*To help the student beyond just practical e.g. guidance with looking for a job.'* and '*Die leiding of ondersteuning om 'n werk te begin soek.'* ['The guidance or support to start looking for a job.'] The quote: '*He gave great advice for my future as a teacher.'* provides additional evidence of the need for mentor lecturers to focus not only on the current needs of the student teacher, but their future needs as well. One respondent suggested that mentor lecturers should be '*guiding students in all aspects of their lives'*.

4.4 THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL DIRECTION

This theme captures the view of the participants that effective mentoring for teacher identity development requires professional direction. Three sub-themes were identified that relate to the professional direction which student teachers expected of mentor lecturers in order to develop their teacher identities, namely: theoretical knowledge, practical strategies and school and university system requirements. Table 4.3 inserted below provides an overview of the criteria used to identify the related sub-themes.

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 2.1: Theoretical knowledge	Any reference to theoretical knowledge expected from the participants	Contributions that emphasise practical strategies or school and university system requirements
Sub-theme 2.2: Practical classroom strategies	Any reference to practical strategies cited by the participants in the study	Contributions that emphasise theoretical knowledge, reflection on lessons or school and university system requirements
Sub-theme 2.3: School and university system requirements	Any reference the participants made indicating their expectations regarding school and university requirements during teaching practice	Contributions that emphasise theoretical knowledge or practical strategies

4.4.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Theoretical knowledge

The participants indicated in the data that they required their mentor lecturers to fulfil the role of someone giving professional direction and that they also expected them to perform a role in providing theoretical knowledge. Knowledge on a particular subject was mentioned as significant for teacher identity development of student teachers: *'Mentorship in specific subject, the best methid* (sic) *in teaching your subject'* and '*Hul moet ook goed opgelei wees in hul vakgebied.'* ['They must also be well educated in their field of study.'] This was corroborated by another respondent who expressed under 'major concerns which inhibited his development of teacher identity' that: '*My mentor Lektor het gedurende die praktiese onderwystydperk nie veel bydrae gelewer tot die verbetering en ontwikkeling van my vakinhoud nie.'* ['My mentor Lecturer did not contribute much to the improvement and development of my subject content during

the practical teaching period.'] Another respondent said in similar vein that she expected information pertaining to her particular subject: '*Just to help me to better introduce my subject. He did not know that much about Geography'*, and another corroborated this need for better understanding of the '*particular subject and its methodology'.* Although the need for subject expertise was acknowledged in the aforementioned excerpts as significant owing to its absence, the following respondent shared a positive experience: *'The fact that my lecturers were art teachers as it is my major was a great asset to the TP experience*.'

Theoretical knowledge of learning styles of the pupils the student teachers would be engaging with during their teaching practice was also included in the data, as expressed in the following statements: '*Sy het my gehelp om kennis in nuwe kennis oor te dra aan leerders en verskillende leermetodes te gebruik om dit verstaanbaar oor te dra aan leerders.'* ['She helped me to transfer knowledge into new knowledge to learners and to use different learning methods to deliver it in a more understandable way to learners.'] and under 'positive aspects which enhanced teacher identity': '*guided me to use different learning styles/methods'.*

The following statement emphasises the significance of mentor lecturers' sharing methodology with the student teachers during teaching practice: '*My mentor lecturer was my methodology lecturer and she contributed a lot, especially how to present the content and bring(ing) it to reality.'* Theoretical knowledge was also provided through the sharing of academic resources: *'She provided me with a textbook. She also gave me additional readings.'* and *'Sy het 'n groot verskeidenheid opvoedkundige materiaal met my gedeel wat lesse inhoud vergemaklik het.'* ['She shared a wide variety of educational material with me that facilitated lesson content.']

The excerpt 'The mentor lecturer can help student teachers mostly in the teaching strategies & pedagogical academic content from university, specifically in applying it.' encapsulates how important it is for student teachers' professional identity development to receive theoretical knowledge from their mentor lecturers, and ways of implementing this theory in practice. It is crucial for the mentor lecturer to provide theoretical guidance along with useful ways to apply it in context because, as one respondent articulated: 'It does not help that my real life situation differs from theory.'

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Practical classroom strategies

It would seem, from the responses captured in the data, that student teachers, when beginning to form their professional teacher identities, especially during their very first exposure to the real world of teaching, expect their mentor lecturers to support them by providing some practical classroom strategies. One respondent stated: *'I expect them to be more "hands-on". They can give more practical examples and guidance with lessons and files, etc.'* Another participating student teacher affirmed this need for active participation in her learning by stating that mentor lecturers should *'provide demonstrations on how to teach concepts, and they must provide lesson ideas and helpful tips on classroom management and conflict management within the staffroom environment'.*

Drawing on personal experience and sharing practical tips as well as actual classroom experiences were indicated in the data as enhancing the student teachers' development of teacher identity, as revealed by what one respondent said: *'The lecturers' examples of personal experiences helped me to improve classroom practice because I could draw on her personal, professional experience.'* Another shared her appreciation for knowing in advance exactly what the mentor lecturer would expect in the classroom: *'He sent out an e-mail before his visit listing all the ways in which he felt a functional classroom operated and that was helpful in preparing for* [the] *"crit" lesson.'*

A number of participants expressed the need for practical classroom strategies which would help them better to manage certain aspects in the classroom, such as classroom management: *'Sy het goeie "tips" gegee van hoe ek my klaskamer beter kon bestuur.'* ['She gave some good tips on how to manage my classroom better.']; discipline: *'Klaskamerpraktyk bestuur was 'n goeie ervaring en moes goed toegepas word sodat dissipline gehandhaaf kon word.'* ['Classroom practice management was a good experience and had to be put into practice well to maintain discipline.']; lesson planning: *'Ek voel sy moes help met lesbeplanning en vakinhoud, dit sou my baie meer baat.'* ['I feel she should have helped with lesson planning and subject content, it would have benefitted me a lot more.']; and how to work with a variety of learners: *'One*

should take into account that learners are different, therefore one has to teach in a way that all the learners are catered for.'; '*hulle siening oor die onderwys en hoe kinders leer verskil'* ['their views on education and how children learn differ'].

Some of the teacher students commented that they appreciated their mentor lecturers sharing resources they could use in the classroom or even that they had expected them to do so. The following quotes indicate this expectation of the student teachers: '*Provide resources that can be used.'* and '*Die lektor kan aanbied om van hulle hulpbronne en lesse met jou te deel. Hulle kan uit vrye wil aanbied om 'n les saam met jou aan te bied.'* ['The lecturer could offer to share some of their resources and lessons with you. They could volunteer to present a lesson with you.'] The latter quote also indicated that effective mentoring required modelling by the mentor lecturer. Subsequent responses appeared to confirm this: '*Do model lessons* [present] *in order for student to observe mentor lecturer teach'*; *'Give concrete advice/example of lessons to try and make students aware of their expectations regarding, for example, resources, teaching methods etc.'*; '*Do model lessons* [present] *in order for student to observe mentor lecturer teach'* and *'Provide demonstrations on how to teach concepts'.*

Finally, the participants' contributions indicated a need for professional direction and practical assistance with how to assess learners in class. Some of the quotes in support of this expectation are: '*Assist in content knowledge and assessment procedures of subject'; 'He told me what discipline measures I could implement and what assessment methods are always useful to see if learners are listening – E.g. "Pop Quiz"'*; *'Help with marking & the development of worksheets or tests'; 'Help with lesson plans and administrative responsibilities like helping with setting up tests'* and '*Deel ervaring, foute, oorwinnings, veranderings. Wys voorbeelde van moderering sisteem, assesserings, toetse, ens.'* ['Sharing experience, mistakes, successes, changes. Show examples of moderation system, assessments, tests, etc.']

4.4.3 Sub-theme 2.3: School and university system requirements

A number of the participants expressed the need for assistance or guidance with the university's requirements in respect of their course, particularly help with their 'portfolios': '*Additionally, they should make it clear as to what they expect from the students and from their portfolios'* and '*Die lektor het baie gehelp met ons "portfolios"'* ['The lecturer helped us a lot with our portfolios.'], which was reported under 'positive aspects'. These comments show that mentor lecturers are required to know and understand what completion of the portfolios entails. One student teacher mentioned that she needed the help of her mentor lecturer with the study guide: '*Die studiegids was onsettend deurmekaar. Daar moet meer aandag spandeer word.'* ['The study guide was incredibly confused/confusing. More attention should be paid.'], which implied that this student teacher expected her mentor lecturer to be more involved with, or accountable for, the university coursework.

A different respondent commented that her mentor lecturer was not affiliated with the university and therefore not familiar with what was expected of a UP, colloquially known as Tuks, student. She declared that her mentor lecturer was '*Nie self betrokke by die universiteit, dus 'n onvolledige begrip en tekort in akkomodering van Onderwys Praktiese Tydperk van 'n TUKS student.'* ['Not involved with the university herself and thus had an incomplete understanding [of] and deficiency in accommodation of Teaching Practical Period of a TUKS student.'] Another believed that his mentor lecturer, also not associated with TUKS, apparently had a grudge against the university and that this had a negative impact on this student teacher's development of teacher identity: '*I think external lecturers should be screened before coming here, especially if they have a vendetta against the university and on how teaching practice is done.'*

The student teachers reflected a need for lecturers to be more in touch with what was happening at the schools where they were completing their teaching practice. Some of the quotes supporting this assertion include: *''n Mentor lektor is iemand wat jou raad kan gee oor wat in 'n skool gebeur en hoe om probleme op te los.'* ['A mentor lecturer is someone who can advise you on what happens in a school and how to solve

problems.’] and ‘*The fact that we have differing methods and ideas: A school setting is a lot more different than a university lecture environment.’* as well as ‘*Need to know the school system well’.* Some of the participants expressed concern over the fact that their mentor lecturers seemed to be out of touch with the current realities of schools. One respondent suggested: ‘*The lecturer should at least know the school system and not think of his/her experience of 20 years back,’* which was affirmed by another, who stated that mentor lecturers should *‘take time to experience the reality of the current school environment in which we are because it plays a role in how we deliver’*.

A system requirement expressed as important was the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which gives teachers detailed guidelines on what to teach and how to assess. The data highlighted a potential need for student teachers to receive direction on how to use this policy statement to help them with developing their teaching proficiency and teacher identity, as depicted in answers such as ‘*ensuring I refer to CAPS all the time’* under ‘expectations’ and ‘*Daar was bietjie aandag gegee oor hoe om CAPS te gebruik.’* [‘Little attention was paid to how to use CAPS.’] under ‘concerns of the student teacher’. The student teachers also articulated a need for help relating to how to teach in a particular phase in the school system: *‘Die lektor kan voor die proeftydperk wenke en raad op ’n voorlegging aanstuur vir onderwysstudente aangaande die skoolpraktyk, wat om te verwag en hoe om verskillende situasies te hanteer in jou spesifieke fase.’* [‘The lecturer could provide tips and advice on a presentation to the education students about the school practice, what to expect and how to handle different situations in your specific phase before the practice period.’] One respondent communicated a concern about the suitability of her mentor lecturer’s ideas for learners in high school: *‘Daar is* [was] *wel ’n tydjie waar ek gedink het sy het nie baie met hoërskool leerders gewerk nie dus het ek ook gevoel haar idees was nie gepas gewees nie.’* [‘There was a time when I thought she hadn’t worked much with high school students and therefore I also felt her ideas weren't appropriate’].

What also emerged from the data was that student teachers expected their mentor lecturers to become acquainted with their responsibilities at school and to accommodate them, for example, by arranging meetings at suitable times: ‘*The only concern I had was that it was very difficult to find times to meet with the lecturer that*

accommodated her lecturing times and us students' school timetable.' One respondent declared that he had expected the mentor lecturer '*to serve as communication between school and university'*, which is also a common theme in the literature (Ambrosetti *et al*. 2017). Another student teacher explained the need for support with difficult situations that might arise at school: *'helping us to deal with problems and challenges at school'.*

4.5 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section I recounted the identified themes and sub-themes and linked them with themes that emerged from existing literature. I indicated correlations and contradictions between existing literature and the current descriptive case study.

4.5.1 A nurturing and safe mentoring relationship

The teaching practice period has been indicated in literature and in the current data as a period in which student teachers, being confronted with the realities of a classroom for the first time, experienced feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt (Schatz-Oppenheimer & Dvir 2014). The student teachers, in an effort to ameliorate these feelings, looked to their mentor lecturers for guidance and support (Izadinia 2015). Existing literature calls attention to the notion that such guidance and support is likely to be more effective, and pursued more by the student teachers if they have a good and close relationship with their mentor. This expectation of a safe and nurturing relationship as an essential element of the mentoring relationship to assist student teachers with developing teacher identity (Korthagen 2016), as discussed in Chapter 2, is confirmed in the data.

It is highlighted in both existing theory and the descriptive case study that the mentor lecturer should view the student teacher holistically at this time because it is inevitable that professional and personal experiences will have a collective impact on teacher identity (Beijaard 2018). Building a relationship, as demonstrated in the data, requires accessibility and open, constructive communication by the mentor lecturer. Holmes *et al.* (2018) stress the importance of the mentor putting time and energy into the mentoring relationship and the need for this was highlighted emphatically in the

descriptive case study. The literature review indicated a dichotomy regarding what was more important for the development of teacher identity: expertise and competence on behalf of the mentor, as proposed by Tillema *et al.* (2015), or the relationship and a willingness to share, as proposed by Liou *et al.* (2015). The current case study provided evidence of both, although it should nevertheless be noted that a greater number of participants indicated a compelling expectation of a nurturing relationship to enhance establishment of a teacher identity.

4.5.1.1 Personal attributes or traits of a mentor

In order to cultivate a close relationship that nurtures the establishment of a teacher identity, it appears that mentor lecturers should embody certain attributes, which were identified in both the existing literature and the current study. These attributes enable the mentor lecturer to position themselves effectively to support and guide student teachers during this challenging phase of their development (Väisänen *et al.* 2016). Ingersoll and Strong (2011:26) emphasised ‘gentleness, enthusiasm, patience, consistency and a positive attitude’, all of which were also referred to in the descriptive case study as essential elements for teacher identity development.

This study indicated that when mentor lecturers demonstrated care, love and respect for the student teachers they were enabled to learn and to grow, whereas when the mentor lecturers were merely disparaging, some student teachers expressed that they had made no contribution whatsoever to their teacher identity development. Some student teachers even specified that disapproving or unapproachable mentor lecturers were detrimental to the development of their teacher identities. This appeared especially to be the case when this caused increased levels of stress, leaving the student teachers feeling overwhelmed and powerless. This is endorsed by the findings of Yuan (2016:188), who describes ineffectual and unsupportive mentorship as ‘the dark side of mentoring’. Support and encouragement thus seem indispensable to the mentoring relationship and teacher identity advancement (Izadinia 2015; McIntyre & Hobson 2015).

Other attributes of mentor lecturers distinguished as beneficial to the teacher identity

development of student teachers in this descriptive case study included: enthusiasm, respect, empathy, friendliness and openness. These qualities seem to build self-esteem in student teachers, thus fostering positive teacher identities, confirming the findings of Yuan (2014) and Hobson *et al.* (2009), as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Fairness, as identified in the literature review, was endorsed by student teachers as a crucial element of mentorship. This was confirmed as a critical component of ethical mentorship by Atjonen *et al.* (2011). Dos Reis (2012) furthermore described how a student teacher felt more at ease and confident when she perceived her mentor lecturer as fair. The current descriptive case study also advocated fairness as an important quality of mentor lecturers, especially since unfair or overly harsh criticism seemed to contribute to disintegration of morale and teacher identity; and unfairness or 'cheating' was perceived as unprofessional.

Finally, attention was focused on the professionalism of the mentor lecturer, which is also recognised by Pachauri and Yadav (2014) as an important personal attribute of successful mentors of student teachers. It appears to be essential for mentor lecturers to lead by example, because it has a positive impact on their mentees when they epitomise professionalism. This confirms the views of Crutcher and Naseem (2015) that student teachers value mentor lecturers as role models and may therefore emulate their behaviour. The aforementioned assists the student teachers to develop the values and attitudes espoused by their mentor lecturers. Punctuality was articulated as an example of constructive professional behaviour, whereas tardiness was purported to be held in contempt by the student teachers.

4.5.1.2 Holistic support of the mentee

Beijaard (2018:4) asserts that 'actively exercising both personal and professional agency seems to be important and necessary in developing a sound and realistic teacher identity' and therefore advocates mentorship which considers the student teacher's professional and personal experiences. In forging a teacher identity professional and personal experiences are inextricably linked and this is reflected in existing literature along with the findings of this descriptive case study.

One respondent discussed how her mentor lecturer's support during a time of grief, when her mother had passed away, was a positive aspect which enhanced her teacher identity development. Others also remarked on how much they appreciated it when their mentor lecturers showed a personal interest in them. The metaphor used by one respondent who described the development of a teacher identity as a 'path' along which the mentor lecturer may journey along with the student teacher demonstrated what Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010:44) refer to as 'the changing stereotypes of mentors and mentees'. This implies that rather than the 'traditional' role of a mentor as a leader, the role appears to have expanded to incorporate aspects such as friendship, companionship and camaraderie (Kwan & Lopez-Real 2005). The student teacher therefore needs to be considered holistically, which means that mentorship will be more beneficial for teacher identity if it takes into account professional goals as well as personal outcomes (Ambrosetti & Dekkers 2010). Beijaard (2018) posits the risk of student teachers forsaking their teaching careers if inadequate attention is devoted to the personal dimension of developing a teacher identity, although no evidence of this seemed to emerge from the data used for this descriptive case study.

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) explored how teacher identity is established within a wider social network, thus highlighting the importance of taking into consideration the context of the social environment in which student teachers find themselves. In a similar vein, emotions also play a pivotal role in teacher identity development and it seems therefore that emotional needs should not go unnoticed in the mentoring relationship (Beltman *et al.* 2015; Lamote & Engels 2010). This need for focus on a student teacher's social and emotional experiences, as demonstrated in the current descriptive case study and existing theory, supports the observation that holistic guidance is essential for teacher identity development.

4.5.1.3 Constructive feedback and communication

The literature review highlighted the importance of open communication (Ingersoll & Strong 2011) and this was reiterated as a critical expectation of student teachers from their mentor lecturers in the current study. The descriptive case study highlighted the

fact that a large number of mentor lecturers appeared to be ‘absent’ or inaccessible and the student teachers who experienced this seemed disillusioned by the lack of impact, or the negative impact, these mentors had on their teacher identities. Others indicated that their communication with their mentor lecturers was limited to assessment of their teaching practice, and articulated the need for more constant communication to enhance their teacher identity development. This need for ongoing communication and collaboration is supported by Darling-Hammond (2012).

Körkkö *et al.* (2016) highlight the importance of mentors being reflective experts in order to assist student teachers with the development of their teacher identities, a need that also became apparent in this study. One benefit of reflection identified in the literature review was that student teachers derived greater emotional meaning when linking theory to their own situations. The data echoed this benefit as one respondent articulated how it boosted her confidence when her mentor lecturer allowed her an opportunity to share her ideas during reflection.

The descriptive case study also showed how open communication and reflection allowed student teachers to understand their mentor lecturers’ expectations of them, and empowered them to develop a caring relationship with their mentor lecturers in which they felt comfortable with sharing their perceptions and experiences. This affirmed the assertion in the literature review of the importance of collaboration to enhance the student teacher’s development (Shanks 2017; Phillips 2013). When reflection resulted in feedback that was perceived as unnecessarily harsh, however, this had a negative outcome for the student teachers, substantiating the findings of Yuan (2016), who posits that negative mentoring may in fact dismantle teacher identity.

4.5.2 Professional direction

Joseph and Heading (2010:75) describe how putting theory into practice may assist with the shift from ‘student identity’ to ‘teacher identity’. The teaching practice period is the first time when student teachers are allowed an opportunity to apply what they have learnt in real classrooms and this is why professional direction is needed at this

juncture, as indicated in the literature review and corroborated in this descriptive case study (Du Plessis 2013). The need for professional direction in the form of system requirements, pedagogical knowledge and modelling is acknowledged as important in Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004) and there were some definite correlations between this model and the current descriptive case study, which are discussed in the section that follows.

4.5.2.1 Pedagogical knowledge

The need for linking theoretical subject knowledge with real-life circumstances, as highlighted by Moses *et al.* (2019) in the literature review, can also be observed in the data. For this reason, I grouped the aforementioned themes of 'theoretical knowledge' and 'practical classroom strategies', identified as sub-themes in the data analysis, under 'pedagogical knowledge', highlighting the importance that mentor lecturers should be experts in these areas.

Hudson and Hudson (2011) accentuate the importance of mentors' proposing a diverse range of theories and viewpoints on teaching, including their personal opinions and experiences about which teaching methods are the most successful. The student teachers expressed this expectation in their responses and suggested that they needed expert counsel on aspects such as lesson planning, classroom management and classroom discipline. They articulated an appreciation for mentor lecturers who related personal accounts of classroom experiences.

The study also demonstrated a need for student teachers to be given ideas about how to work with a variety of learners in a classroom in order to enhance development of their teacher identities. This is in accordance with Moses *et al.*'s (2016) proposition that mentees in education need explicit advice on teaching and learning as opposed to only requiring explicit knowledge about their subjects. Of course, subject knowledge is also important for teacher development (Berry *et al.* 2016) and this was highlighted in the data as especially important during the teaching practice phase, when student teachers felt uncertain and sometimes overwhelmed. The expectation of or need for practical examples and ideas for lessons was expressed in the descriptive case study.

The data also indicated that student teachers expected their mentor lecturers to share resources with them, as suggested by Matsko *et al.* (2018) in the literature review, along with Holmes *et al.* (2018), who assert that contributing resources promotes the success of mentees in education.

The student teachers expressed that they expected guidance from their mentor lecturers with the assessment of learners, which is consistent with Hudson's call for mentors to review different ways in which to connect learning to assessment (Hudson & Hudson 2011). It would appear that guidance with both formative and summative assessment would help student teachers' development, because mention was made of 'pop quizzes' along with marking of worksheets, tests and planning of moderation systems.

4.5.2.2 Modelling

The expectation of modelling by the mentor lecturer to enhance teacher identity forms part of Hudson's framework and also emerged from the data. By demonstrating, or modelling, lessons for the mentee or student teacher, the lecturers lead by example. The literature review revealed that some researchers cautioned against relying on modelling or demonstrations too much in case it constrains the unique teacher identity of the mentee (Hobson *et al.* 2009; Yuan 2016) , as was reiterated in the case study. The student teachers explained that they appreciated modelling so that they could view ideal lessons. However, they also said that they did not want to feel that they were being prescribed to, expected to teach according to a 'mould'. This is akin to Duszynski's (2008) recommendation not to 'clone' mentees in education, but rather to guide them to discover their own methods and means. Kaplan and Garner (2017) assert that both support and challenge are important for development, which also emerged in the descriptive case study. For example, one respondent discussed how she expected her mentor to ask her challenging questions in order to enhance forming her teacher identity.

4.5.2.3 System requirements

As stated in the literature review, Bird and Hudson (2015) highlight their finding that

student teachers enter the world of teaching with restricted awareness of organisational norms and school 'politics'. This naivety is reflected in the data, as numerous participants described feelings of insecurity and expressed the expectation that their mentor lecturers should remain mindful of the fact that it was their first time in an actual school. Notwithstanding the aforementioned relationship, the mentees expected during this time of the mentor lecturers to help them to deal with the organisational demands of schools, and also expressed the need for guidance in respect of system requirements from mentor lecturers.

Liou *et al.* (2015) discuss how disillusioning it can be for a student teacher when they are left alone to deal with unforeseen challenges. The participants in this descriptive case study communicated how they looked to their mentor lecturers for support with challenges they experienced at school. There were vehement appeals for mentor lecturers to remain informed about their current and specific needs. Some articulated that they felt their mentor lecturers' knowledge was outdated and others lamented the fact that their mentor lecturers did not know what was required of them at school and hence had, in their view, unrealistic expectations of them. There was a call for more communication between the university and the schools at which the student teachers were completing their teaching practice. This concurs with the findings in current literature, such as those of Mena *et al.* (2017), that mentors can help student teachers better to understand school routines and teaching norms, and the findings of Phillips (2013), which call for a closer connection between schools and universities. The participants also felt that their school schedules should be taken into account in making appointments to meet.

Hudson (2016) emphasises that it is advantageous for student teachers when mentors discuss aims and policies implemented by the education system, and this too was corroborated in the current case study. The participants expressed that in order for them to develop their teacher identities at this stage they expected mentor lecturers to refer to the CAPS as well as to make reference to school requirements of the specific school phase in which they were teaching.

The mentor lecturers appeared to be perceived as a link between university and school

during teaching practice, therefore a number of the student teachers conveyed an expectation of guidance from the mentor lecturer relating to the requirements of their university course. They expected their mentor lecturers to know what they should include in their teaching portfolios and how best to present that information. It appeared from the data that some mentor lecturers assigned to student teachers during the teaching practice period were not affiliated with the UP and in some of these instances the participants expressed frustration because it was their perception that these mentors could not support their needs. This had a negative impact on teacher identity, which was evident especially in one instance when the student teacher's mentor lecturer was perceived as negative about the UP.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4, I presented the results of the study in terms of two main themes that I had identified and the related sub-themes that had emerged. While presenting the results, I included extracts from the data. Thereafter I contextualised the results against the background of existing literature and Hudson's Five-factor Model of Mentoring for effective teaching (Hudson 2004), highlighting both connections and discrepancies between the theory in existing literature and the findings of the current descriptive case study.

I brought this descriptive case study to a close in Chapter 5 by addressing the research questions formulated in Chapter 1. The potential value of this study was furthermore considered and the limitations of the study were discussed. The chapter was conlcuded with recommendations for further training, practice and research, along with some closing remarks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 I discussed the results and findings of the descriptive case study by linking the results of the study with the findings noted by researchers in existing literature. I specified ways in which the current study appeared to correspond with literature and aspects that seemed to contradict the literature. I highlighted new insights where applicable and appropriate.

In Chapter 5, the final chapter, I started with an overview of the preceding chapter. Conclusions based on my initial research questions, as stipulated in Chapter 1, follow in the sections below. Furthermore, I present the potential contributions of the study and reflect on the limitations and challenges I experienced. I concluded the chapter by systematically making recommendations for future training, practice and research, followed by closing remarks.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study

Chapter 1 outlined the background of the study, explained pertinent key concepts and specified the problem statement. I explained the purpose of the research and provided the primary research question, along with three secondary research questions that guided this descriptive case study. A summary of the epistemological and methodological paradigms was incorporated, the quality criteria, ethical considerations and an explanation of my role as researcher was noted. The significance of the study was described and I concluded with an outline of all the chapters of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 was a comprehensive literature review relating to features that were relevant to the context of the current study. This included mentorship in teacher

training and developing a teacher identity, along with the various roles of a mentor lecturer. The chapter included an analysis of the theoretical framework of the study, which attempted to support the consistency that existed between the purpose of the current study and the significant theory relating to the topic of enquiry. The chapter was concluded with a conceptual framework that diagrammatically summarised the relevant literature which guided this descriptive case study.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 presented a detailed description of the research process regarding the selected research design and the methodology pursued during the current descriptive case study to investigate the research questions adequately. The methods of sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation which were selected were described and justified. I also included a comprehensive discussion on quality criteria and the ethical guidelines which I complied with mindfully throughout the study. This chapter was concluded with my role as researcher, and a reflection on my experience.

Chapter 4: Results and findings

Chapter 4 delineated the results and findings obtained during the current study. The results were described in terms of themes and subthemes which emanated from the inductive thematic analysis process. Lastly, I proposed an interpretation of the results, including comparison of and contrast between the relevant literature identified in Chapter 2.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In the following subsections, I draw conclusions from the results of the study. I began by addressing the secondary research questions that guided the descriptive case study, followed by a discussion of the primary research question formulated in Chapter 1.

5.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Why do student teachers need mentoring during teaching practice?

The results of the descriptive case study confirmed the assertion described in Chapter 2 that student teachers frequently experienced self-doubt or nervousness during the teaching practice period (Zhu & Zhu 2018). The student teachers are only exposed to the realities of the classroom during the teaching practice period (Korthagen *et al.* 2006). They are then confronted with the immense task of implementing what they had learnt in theory in a real classroom. They needed to be able to accommodate the diverse learning needs of the pupils they were now tasked with teaching (Bird 2012). Existing literature, as described in Chapter 2, acknowledges that this could therefore be a very stressful time, especially owing to the student teachers' lack of experience and limited awareness of organisational norms and school policy (Bird & Hudson 2015). The data moreover confirmed that that was the case for the student teachers in the current study, as described in Chapter 4. There might even be a feeling of 'reality shock' as they transitioned from theory to practice (Delamarter 2015). The results of the descriptive case study demonstrated the student teachers' need for role models to turn to when they felt insecure. Student teachers in the current study expressed the need for 'companionship' in order to feel supported, and for receiving guidance, as purported by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010), which was discussed in Chapter 2.

Guidance and encouragement would ensure that the student teachers felt empowered, which would have a buffering effect on the challenges experienced by the student teachers during this demanding practical teaching time. In order to develop and make a shift from 'student identity' to 'teacher identity' (Joseph & Heading 2010), described in section 2.4., student teachers needed to be guided towards independence and discovery of their own personal teaching and learning strategies (Dos Reis 2012; Heeralal 2014). This required that student teachers should be allowed to 'experiment' in teaching practice so that they could incorporate new ideas into existing curricula (Oetjen & Oetjen 2009; Stanulis *et al.* 2012). This need for autonomy and experimentation was evident in the data, and captured in section 4.3.4. Student teachers, during teaching practice, are in a phase of development in which they are developing critical thinking skills (Crutcher & Naseem 2015), professional networking

abilities (Pillay 2015), various approaches to theory, strategies relevant to teaching diverse students, and reflection skills (Sedibe 2014).

The importance of reflection is recognised in existing literature (Körkkö *et al.* 2016), and described in section 2.4.3.3. Reflection is especially crucial during the first teaching practice experience. The findings of the current case study support this need for reflection as important for teacher identity development, because it allows student teachers to link theory to their own situations and make it more meaningful. This is furthermore beneficial because it helps the student teacher to alleviate stress, improve resilience, to develop effectiveness, experience a sense of fulfilment and establish a stronger teacher identity (Le Cornu 2013). The notion of mentor lecturers easing stress through the support they offer finds resonance in one student teacher's comment that 'Student teachers are very scared at the beginning of the TP and mentor lecturers can relieve all the stress and anxiety by just providing support', as noted in section 4.3.1.

5.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2

How can effective mentoring done by mentor lecturers assist student teachers to develop their teacher identity?

The concept of teacher identity was discussed in section 2.4. Van Putten (2012) defines the term 'teacher identity' as a complex construct that incorporates personal and social aspects that integrate knowledge, beliefs, emotions, contexts and experiences. Beijaard (2018) acknowledges that teacher learning is part of teacher identity development, but emphasises strongly that this requires more than simply mastering subject matter, acquiring pedagogical knowledge, theories of learning and teaching, and the skills to implement these concepts in practice. Furthermore, Beijaard (2018) highlights that teacher identity development is influenced by personal biographies, beliefs, values and interpersonal relationships and therefore advocates the development of both personal and professional agency in student teachers.

Effective mentoring of student teachers should therefore take both personal and professional aspects of the student teacher into account, therefore a holistic view. Many features of teacher identity are described in Chapter 2 as having the potential to

be shaped by effective mentoring, namely: self-concept (Bukor 2014), subject matter expertise and didactical expertise (Berry *et al.* 2016); critical thinking skills (Sheybani & Miri 2019); professional networking abilities (Pillay 2015); ongoing professional development (Stanulis *et al.* 2012); work/life balance (Mansfield *et al.* 2016); and socialisation in schools (Bird & Hudson 2015). The results of this descriptive case study furthermore indicate that successful mentoring, which requires a nurturing relationship between the mentor and mentee, builds self-esteem in student teachers and helps them to establish a sense of belonging and empowerment (Väisänen *et al.* 2016). The comment that '[t]he mentor lecturer plays the role of supporting the student in all possible ways during teaching practicals, by means of providing adequate advice to build the student's self-esteem and attitude towards the teaching profession', as reflected in section 4.3.4, supports this.

Bird (2012), as discussed in the literature review, claims that when a student teacher feels empowered, they may establish effective teaching strategies that work for them and for the diverse learners they teach. These strategies may contribute to forging part of their teacher identities. Student teachers are, through effective mentorship, introduced to norms, values and standards that will guide them and might also be incorporated in their teacher identities (Fransson 2010). The results indicated that effective mentorship may, as suggested in section 2.4, help student teachers to undergo a shift from having naïve notions of teaching to more realistic insights, from feelings of uncertainty and doubt to feelings of self-assurance, and to transition from the role of 'mentee' to being more autonomous, a more equal partner in the mentor-mentee relationship (Zhu & Zhu 2018). Assimilating a sense of confidence and autonomy into their teacher identities would assist with alleviating stress and building resilience (Mansfield *et al.* 2016). Effective mentoring encourages reflexive thinking (Higgins, Morton & Wolkenhauer 2018), which allows the student teacher to reflect on and gain an understanding of how personal and professional experiences synchronise and become part of their ongoing development of teacher identity.

5.3.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3

How can the findings of this descriptive case study inform the future mentoring roles of mentor lecturers at the University of Pretoria?

The DHET (RSA. 2015) stipulates that an effective mentor of student teachers is required to fulfil the following roles: motivator, teacher, role model, supporter, counsellor, advisor, demonstrator, guide, change agent, companion and coach. The findings of this descriptive case study support the need for mentor lecturers to perform these roles. The case study moreover indicated that encouragement and positivity are required to help student teachers with developing their teacher identities. It similarly highlighted a need for 'companionship' or 'friendship' because, as implied in the statements by the student teachers and indicated in the literature, this kind of relationship allows the mentee to explore new ideas with confidence. The prerequisite for advice and guidance was especially demonstrated in this study during teaching practice, which appears to be a time when the student teachers are vulnerable.

Change agent

The term 'change agent', as presented in section 2.6, implies that the mentor lecturer could be a catalyst for change in the student teachers. The participants indeed indicated that effective mentors helped them to 'change' as they learnt from their knowledge and experience, and were directed to cultivate their own teaching styles and lesson ideas, thus developing greater confidence and ability (see section 4.5.1.3).

Unique and autonomous

A greater measure of confidence is important for teacher identity development, because the aim is for student teachers to become autonomous (Hudson & Hudson 2011; Jones *et al.* 2018). Developing a teacher identity implies an emergent self which is unique and the student teachers emphasised this by specifying that they did not want to be forced into a 'mould' (see section 4.3.4).

Flexibility

The findings of this descriptive case study and existing literature therefore advocate flexibility, which is crucial for the future mentoring roles of mentor lecturers at the UP (De Hei *et al.* 2016). Flexibility implies that a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring student teachers will not be effective. This conforms to the notion of Beijaard and Meijer (2017) that teacher identity is strongly linked to an individual's unique personal and professional experiences and biography.

Companionship

One of the most important roles of future mentor lecturers at the UP, as highlighted in the findings, is true 'companionship', which takes into account the distinct personal and professional needs and experiences of the student teachers they are mentoring. Being a 'friend' or 'companion' to the student teacher, as elaborated on in section 2.4.3.5, was similarly emphasised in the descriptive case study as crucial to teacher identity development.

Open and constructive communication

Open and constructive communication is accentuated in the findings as an imperative part of this nurturing and supportive relationship. Preliminary findings from the FIRE project indicated that mentor lecturers focused primarily on classroom practice and criticism (Fraser *et al.* 2016) rather than on holistic development. This could be disempowering for student teachers and might even hinder teacher identity development (Hobson *et al.* (2009).

Building a nurturing relationship

The findings of the descriptive case study inform us of the need for the mentor lecturer to build a nurturing relationship with the student teacher. The traditional role of a mentor in a hierarchical relationship with the student teacher, in which the student teacher passively takes in information, is challenged by the findings of the descriptive case study and existing literature (Helgevold, Næsheim-Bjørkvik & Østrem 2015). These findings inform us that student teachers should actively engage in their own

learning and collaborate with the mentor lecturer to develop their teacher identity. The findings (see section 4.3.4) indicate that mentor lecturers should care for, motivate, support, advise and counsel student teachers, yet also ‘challenge’ them within the safety of the relationship (Walkington 2005; Wang *et al.* 2010).

Sound relationship between university and school

Another relationship which is highlighted in the descriptive case study as being important, and might therefore inform future mentoring roles, is the relationship between the university and the schools at which the student teachers are required to complete their teaching practice. The findings reflect that there may be a need for a closer connection between schools and universities, as confirmed by Phillips (2013).

Current knowledge of schools’ norms and requirements

The descriptive case study underscores the need for mentor lecturers to have current knowledge of the organisational norms and requirements of schools, and to have more communication with the schools.

5.3.4 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What are student teachers’ expectations of the role mentor lecturers should play in the development of their teacher identities during the first teaching practice?

It is essential to refer to parts of the secondary research questions, as well as the theory which guided this descriptive case study in order to answer the primary research question effectively. Based on the findings of the descriptive case study, I conclude that Hudson’s Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004), which outlines five important factors relating to mentoring student teachers, are relevant to the UP student teachers who comprised the case. Evidence of all five factors was prevalent in the data findings of this descriptive case study, which confirmed that they were essential aspects in respect of which the student teachers expected assistance from their mentor lecturers as regards the establishment of their teacher identities. I expound on these, along with a sixth factor, namely a ‘nurturing and supportive relationship’, in the section that follows.

5.3.4.1 Personal attributes

Effective mentor lecturers should display personal characteristics that make them approachable and assist with building good, trusting relationships with their mentees, or student teachers. These qualities could be grouped together under the heading 'personal attributes', which included enthusiasm, good communication skills, *inter alia*, conscientious listening, empathy, professionalism, fairness and respect, which were all highlighted in the data and the literature. Enthusiasm, friendliness, consistency, openness, patience, care, love and gentleness were also noted as significant attributes required of mentor lecturers. These qualities highlight that student teachers thrive in a caring relationship, contrary to being in one in which they perceived the mentor lecturer to be harsh, uncaring and overcritical.

5.3.4.2 System requirements

Student teachers expect guidance from mentor lecturers regarding school and university norms and conditions, which are requirements of the education system. The teachers-in-training expected mentor lecturers to articulate the aims and policies of the DBE, to elucidate the details of the CAPS curriculum and to offer information on school norms and routines. It is therefore important for the mentor lecturer to know what is currently happening in the schools at which the student teachers are placed for their teaching practice, an aspect which was highlighted in the findings (see section 4.4.3). Student teachers also expressed a need for guidance in respect of the system requirements of the university, especially regarding the portfolios they need to submit as part of their course requirements.

5.3.4.3 Pedagogical requirements

Student teachers expect their mentor lecturers to provide them with direction regarding the methods and practices of teaching, which is referred to in Hudson's theory as 'pedagogical requirements'. The student teachers expressed an expectation of assistance with classroom management strategies, planning and implementation of lesson plans, along with more theoretical information on teaching and learning. The student teachers expect their mentor lecturers to share their ideas and experiences

about teaching the diverse learners they encounter in their classrooms. The student teachers expect their mentor lecturers to guide them in their subject content, as well as to give general knowledge and tips on teaching and learning. The findings suggest that student teachers expect their mentor lecturers to be willing and able to share resources with them and help them to link assessment with learning. Discipline in the classroom is also an aspect in which the student teachers expect particular guidance, especially as it is their first contact with real students and translating theory into practice in this situation could be very challenging.

5.3.4.4 Modelling

Student teachers expect mentor lecturers to model teaching, classroom management, to demonstrate lessons, and to provide hands-on techniques for teaching. They expect their mentor lecturers to model appropriate behaviour so that they may follow their example. Exhibiting enthusiasm was mentioned as a further expectation student teachers have of mentor lecturers.

5.3.4.5 Providing feedback

Student teachers require their mentor lecturers to articulate their expectations so that they know what is anticipated of them. Student teachers expect feedback regarding the lessons they have taught and they expressed the need for constructive criticism when their lessons are reviewed. When criticism is given in an honest, open, yet constructive way, it empowers student teachers and helps them to build teacher identity rather than to be broken down, leaving them disheartened and disillusioned. Feedback should not take the form of a one-directional conversation in which the student teacher is told where they went wrong. It is more beneficial when it is a discussion in which both parties are free to express their thoughts and ideas.

5.3.4.6 A nurturing and supportive relationship

Hudson’s five factors (Hudson 2004) featured significantly in the findings, and a sixth factor received prominence in the descriptive case study, namely the need for a nurturing and supportive relationship between the mentor lecturer and the student teacher. This requires of the mentor lecturer to view the student teacher holistically

and to take into account both personal and professional experiences that may have an impact on the development of a constantly evolving teacher identity. The findings clearly articulated that student teachers required both professional and personal support during teaching practice as they were developing various aspects of their teacher identity (self-concept, subject matter and didactic expertise, critical thinking skills, professional networking abilities, ongoing professional development, work/life balance and socialisation in schools) (Bukor 2014; Rodgers & Scott 2008). Everything else that is required of the mentor lecturer would potentially be more effective if it took place in the context of a nurturing and supportive relationship in which the student teacher felt safe. This sense of safety would allow the student to engage with the mentor lecturer confidently and to reflect on the system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback so that the student teacher could incorporate what had been discovered into their own, unique teacher identity.

Through conscious application of the aforementioned six factors, mentor lecturers could fulfil the important roles outlined in the literature (see section 2.6) and confirmed in the findings of the descriptive case study, namely: experts (in subject, didactics and pedagogy; models/guides; reflective practitioners; coaches; companions; motivators and change agents) (Izadinia 2015). By performing these roles, the mentor lecturers could more effectively provide the student teachers with the professional and personal support they needed for teacher identity development during the challenging teaching practice period.

5.4 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This section contains a discussion of the potential contributions of the descriptive case study to practice and theory.

5.4.1 Contributions to practice

Teachers play an important role in preparing their students for the twenty-first century and rapidly developing world, therefore it is beneficial to determine how student teachers may be assisted during teaching practice, especially in an emerging economy like South Africa's. Effective mentoring may contribute to the establishment

of stronger teacher identities, greater commitment to the teaching profession and the introduction of new strategies for effective teaching and learning. This implies that knowing what student teachers expect could have a positive impact on the success achieved by learners in South African schools. An enhanced understanding of the expectations of student teachers could furthermore enable tertiary institutions better to serve their needs and prepare student teachers for the realities of teaching in the modern South African classroom.

As the current study formed part of the broader interdisciplinary research project, the Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, which focused on the development, implementation and evaluation of a mentorship intervention for student teachers, the findings might inform this intervention and therefore support related role players in teacher identity development (Fraser 2018). The results generated might guide the training that the mentor lecturers would receive adequately to support student teachers and collaborate with them to develop their teacher identity. It is hoped that this contribution would shift mentor lecturers' perceived primary focus on classroom practice and criticism to a more holistic view of and a role in the development of student teachers (Fraser *et al.* 2016).

Furthermore, this study emphasised that in order for effective mentoring to take place and for mentor lecturers to play the aforementioned roles successfully, the context of a nurturing and supportive relationship between the mentor lecturer and the student teacher was essential. More specifically, my findings provide insight into the vulnerability of student teachers during teaching practice, when they are confronted with the realities of the classroom for the first time, and how a nurturing and supportive relationship with the mentor lecturer could ameliorate the challenges the student teachers are experiencing.

The need for mentor lecturers to perform the five roles identified by Hudson (2004, 2016), namely: personal attributes; system requirements; pedagogical requirements; modelling and feedback during their practice as mentors of student teachers, especially during teaching practice, was highlighted in the literature and emerged from the data. The need for a nurturing and supportive relationship was highlighted.

Another noteworthy finding is the need for greater collaboration and closer communication between the university and the schools at which student teachers are placed for their teaching practice, as was discussed in sections 2.5.3 and 4.5.2.3. Mentor lecturers could assist student teachers with the development of their teacher identities by maintaining close communication with the stakeholders at schools where the student teachers are placed. In this way the predicament of a situation in which student teachers experience conflicting expectations could be avoided.

5.4.2 Contributions to theory

The current descriptive case study provided an overview of what student teachers expected of the role mentor lecturers played in developing teacher identity. The study indicated that student teachers expected their mentor lecturers to fulfil the important roles outlined by Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004, 2016), namely: personal attributes; system requirements; pedagogical requirements; modelling and providing feedback, as stated above.

The findings of this descriptive case study corroborate a substantial number of assertions relating to the mentoring needs of student teachers found in existing literature. Moreover, these findings also contribute to current discourse on ways in which mentor lecturers may assist student teachers with developing their teacher identities.

I would modify Figure 2.2 by including in Hudson's model (Hudson 2004) the sixth factor that had been identified, namely the context of the safe and nurturing environment, as demonstrated in Figure 5.1.

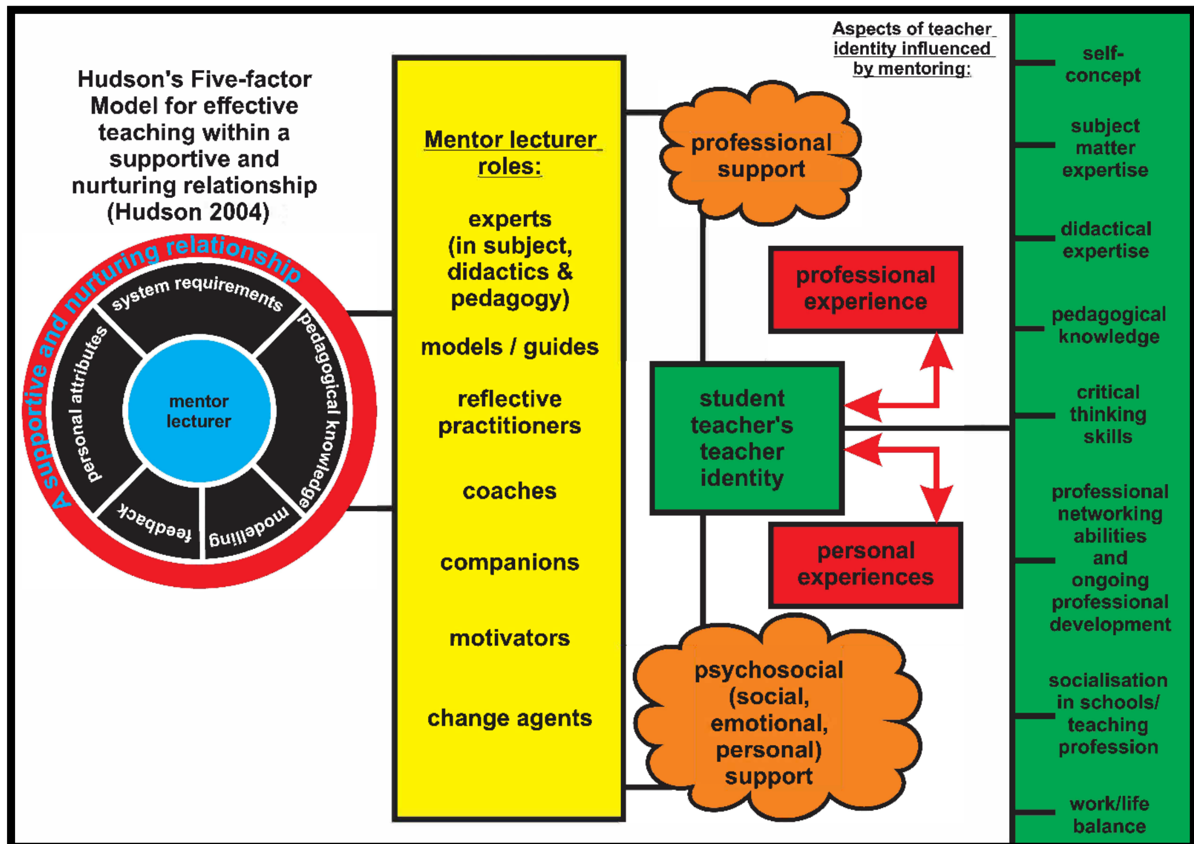


Figure 5.1 Conceptual framework incorporating results of the study (adapted from Hudson 2004)

5.5 CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS

A limitation frequently associated with qualitative studies relates to the lack of generalisability of the findings (Noble & Smith 2015). Considering that only 170 participants, all of whom were from the UP, participated in this study implies that the findings cannot be generalised. My initial aim was not to achieve generalisable findings, but instead to acquire and present an in-depth understanding of the descriptive case study and the expectations of the student teachers in this particular group. The findings derived from this descriptive case study may potentially be transferred to a similar context based on the comprehensive explanations contained

in this mini-dissertation, without generalising the results.

Owing to this study forming part of my training as a master's student in educational psychology, it was essential for me to remain mindful of my role as researcher throughout the research process. In my educational psychology course I was taught introspection and reflection skills, which enabled me to remain focused on my role as researcher and avoid assuming the role of counsellor. I was able to observe and report on ways in which my subjective opinions or bias may have had an impact on the results. I was also able to reflect on the findings with my supervisor. In addition, I included member-checking in order to confirm that the themes I identified truly reflected the participants' thoughts and opinions prior to finalising them.

A third possible limitation of this study relates to the participants and their availability. The participants, on the first day of data collecting, might have been on edge owing to the existing possibility of impending strike action, and the second day of data collection was interrupted, after which it was cancelled. The participants themselves might have been inclined to withhold negative viewpoints regarding their mentor lecturers owing to loyalty to the lecturers, or to the UP, although their responses being anonymous should have prevented this.

A fourth potential limitation of case study research is that the large volume of data might have a negative impact on the depth of analysis (Stake 2005). Adequate time for data analysis and interpretation was consequently allowed. Human error posed an inevitable risk to the interpretation of data for the case study. Fatigue, personal bias and errors might occur (Bengtsson 2016). I made a concerted effort to remain attentive of these risks and to be careful to avoid them during my research. In order to mitigate human error and to maintain excellence in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of my case study, I included tables (see Appendices B and C) that show an audit trail. The audit trail explains the exact process I used to convert the raw data into meaningful results (Bengtsson 2016). This was a crucial step, because case study research has received criticism for its potential lack of scientific rigour, and transparency was suggested as a way to relieve any apprehension in this regard (Hancock & Algozzine 2017). It was also imperative for me to consider possible alternative explanations and

interpretations, as outlined in Stake's checklist for assessing the quality of case study reports (Stake 2005).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following sub-sections I list recommendations for training, practice and future research. These are based on the findings of the study.

5.6.1 Recommendations for training

The findings of this study underscore the potential roles of mentor lecturers as influential role players who could, by means of effective mentorship, assist student teachers with the development of strong teacher identities. The findings substantiated claims in research about teaching practice being a vulnerable time for student teachers owing to experiencing their initial exposure to the realities of their chosen profession. The findings have shown that mentor lecturers, as key role players in the lives of student teachers during this time, might alleviate stress, help student teachers to build resilience and establish confidence.

The student teachers' expectations described in this study could be incorporated in teacher training programmes in order to facilitate a better understanding of how mentor lecturers could, in the context of a supportive and nurturing relationship with student teachers, and through displaying positive characteristics within this relationship, provide student teachers with guidance in the key areas of their teacher identity development. These include system requirements; pedagogical knowledge; modelling; and feedback (Hudson 2004, 2016). To this end, I recommend that mentor lecturers receive training in mentorship, which should incorporate these key elements. Teacher education programmes should ensure that each student teacher is assigned a mentor lecturer who is tasked with acting in the roles of experts (in subject didactics and pedagogy); models and guides; reflective practitioners; coaches; companions; motivators (rather than criticisers) and change agents (Bird & Hudson 2015).

5.6.2 Recommendations for practice

Based on the findings of this study, I would urge mentor lecturers who work with student teachers to focus more holistically on the student teachers, as was indicated in the study, which is furthermore supported by the literature, since teacher identity development is influenced by both professional and personal experiences. The findings also highlighted the importance of building a nurturing and supportive relationship with student teachers, especially since they are very vulnerable during teaching practice, and a safe context could help them to allay feelings of self-doubt, which seem to be inevitable at this juncture in their student careers and stage of teacher identity development.

The findings clearly indicated the need for accessibility and communication. Good communication channels and routine meetings are expected from the student teachers. Feedback is a very important part of the mentor lecturer's role, as highlighted in Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004). However, the findings indicate the importance of ensuring that feedback is given in a constructive manner. Student teachers can feel very disheartened and disillusioned when there is strong focus on assessment and little else, or when the feedback is extremely critical, and not accompanied by solutions or constructive concepts.

Mentor lecturers should therefore constantly remain mindful of the remaining four concepts in Hudson's Five-factor Mentoring Model (Hudson 2004) and incorporate them in the mentoring relationship in a supportive and nurturing manner. They should display positive attributes that contribute constructively to the relationship with the student teacher. It is crucial for mentor lecturers to practise fairness and display professional behaviour so that they may act as role models for the student teachers. They should also model different teaching methods and share their experiences so that student teachers could learn from them. However, mentor lecturers should allow the teacher identity of the individual student teacher to develop without compelling them to imitate the mentor lecturer. Student teachers need to become autonomous and the findings of this study revealed that mentor lecturers were optimally placed to empower them. System requirements, including details of the CAPS curriculum and

university requirements, such as the student teachers' portfolios, should be provided by mentor lecturers, as well as relevant and current education-related information.

Based on the findings of the study, I also recommend that the university should implement ways for mentor lecturers to communicate more frequently and openly with the schools at which the student teachers are placed for their teaching practice. A final recommendation, based upon the results of this study, is that student teachers should be given more, and earlier, exposure to teaching practice. The aforementioned has in the interim already been introduced, and student teachers are already undertaking teaching practice before their final year, which is a positive change.

5.6.3 Recommendations for future research

Based on the findings of this study, I recommend the following for further research:

- Follow-up case studies for further exploring the facilitation of teacher identity development by means of mentoring relationships between mentor lecturers and mentee student teachers, especially after introducing the intervention of a mentorship programme for mentor lecturers;

- A case study focusing on the expectations of student teachers at the University of Pretoria regarding the value of mentorship relationships with other key role players, such as school teachers, in identity development;

- Exploratory studies focused on identifying ways in which a supportive and nurturing mentoring relationship may assist with the teacher identity development of student teachers.

5.7 CLOSING REMARKS

In this descriptive case study I aimed to portray the expectations of student teachers of their mentor lecturers with regard to assisting them with developing their teacher identity. The findings confirm that Hudson's Five-factor Model for effective teaching (Hudson 2004) provides a good guide for mentor lecturers. The study specifically

highlighted that emphasis should be placed on building a nurturing and supportive relationship that takes into account not only the professional, but also personal experiences that shape the teacher identity of the student teachers during their teaching practice, which has been shown to be an especially challenging time for student teachers.

Following the data analysis, this study provided baseline data for the development of the Peer Enhanced Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. This study re-emphasised the findings of the Fourth-year Initiative in Research in Education (FIRE) project (Fraser 2018), namely that mentor lecturers frequently seem to disregard the needs of student teachers, especially by placing a great deal of attention on classroom practice and criticism rather than on the holistic development of their mentees. The study furthermore provided suggestions for how mentor lecturers could help student teachers to overcome the challenges they experience during the demanding teaching practice period. In a country such as South Africa, a developing country with an emergent economy, where there is a need for educational reform (Petersen 2017), I believe it is important, valuable and relevant to focus on the needs and expectations of student teachers because they play an important role in creating a positive future for South African learners.

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APPENDIX A: Completed Questionnaire with Initial Codes

Open-ended questionnaire – Fourth Year B.Ed students – 2016/

Oop-einde vraelys – Vierdejaar B.Ed studente – 2016

Date/*Datum*:	**Gender/*Geslag:***
Course/Programme/ *Kursus/Program:*	
Subject area/*Vakgebied:*	

Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability and as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers./ *Voltooi assesblief die volgende vrae na die beste van jou vermoë en so eerlik as moontlik. Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie.*

1. Describe the **ideal role** of a Mentor Lecturer in assisting a student teacher to develop a professional Teacher Identity?/ Beskryf *die* ideale **rol** *van die Mentor Lektor om 'n Onderwysstudent te help om 'n profesionele Onderwyseridentiteit te ontwikkeling?*

→ The mentor lecturer is someone who seeks to develop a strong healthy working relationship with their mentee.
→ Their sole purpose is to be constructive in building up their mentee. Discussing with them what went well in a lesson and what could have been even better if...

relationship building
not just negative feedback
→ reflection

2. According to your opinion, what kind of ***practical contributions*** should a Mentor Lecturer make to enhance the development of a professional Teacher Identity?/ *Volgens jou mening, watter tipe praktiese* **bydraes** *behoort 'n Mentor Lektor te maak ten einde die ontwikkeling van 'n professionele Onderwyseridentiteit te verbeter?*

→ They should ensure to write lots of feedback after a lesson and engage in a substantial focused and enriching reflection after a crit lesson. The lecturer should further make their expectations of the file and lesson clear from the beginning.
→ The mentor lecturer should make themselves available via sms/whatsapp/email or phone call to their mentees for any questions that they have.

reflection + feedback
portfolio/admin help
openness & availability
technology

3. How **did** your Mentor Lecturer **contributed** to your professional development as Teacher during the teaching practice period pertaining to the following/ *Op welke wyse het jou Mentor Lektor* ***wel bygedra*** *tot jou professionele ontwikkeling as Onderwyser gedurende die praktiese onderwystydperk met betrekking tot die volgende:*

1

APPENDIX B: "Abstraction process 1" (Elo and Kyngäs (2008)

<u>Development of the theme 1 in the current descriptive case study</u>

Initial themes	Refined themes	Sub-themes	Main Themes
Empathy	Soft skills	Personal traits required for mentoring	A supportive mentoring relationship
Professionalism			
Fairness	Fairness		
Not just negative feedback	Constructive criticism	Communication and reflection	
Time	Accessibility		
Technology and availability	Communication and feedback along with reflexive thinking/reflecting		
Openness and availability			
ML only there for assessment			
Better communication			
Assessment with explanations			
Reflection and feedback			
Holistic observation of student teacher	Holistic view of student teacher	Holistic awareness of the mentee	
Psychosocial support			
Emotional support and assistance	Support within a compassionate relationship		
Relationship building			
Role modeling and advice	Guiding student teachers and offering advice/being a role model	Guidance	
Autonomy	Independence and unique identity		
Help with career/finding jobs	Building networks		

APPENDIX C: “Abstraction process 2” (Elo and Kyngäs (2008)

Development of theme 2 in the current descriptive case study

<table>
<tr><th>Initial theme</th><th>Refined theme</th><th>Sub-theme</th><th>Main theme</th></tr>
<tr><td>Specific subjects</td><td>Subject knowledge</td><td rowspan="5">Theoretical knowledge</td><td rowspan="15">Professional direction</td></tr>
<tr><td>Teaching experience</td><td>Teaching experience and expertise</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pedagogical information</td><td>Pedagogical knowledge</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources</td><td>Resource sharing and development</td></tr>
<tr><td>Assessment of students in class</td><td>Assessment of learners</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic and teaching skills</td><td rowspan="2">Teaching strategies</td><td rowspan="4">Practical strategies</td></tr>
<tr><td>Theory to practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>Classroom discipline</td><td rowspan="2">Classroom practical skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Classroom management</td></tr>
<tr><td>Portfolio and/or admin help</td><td rowspan="4">University requirements</td><td rowspan="7">University and school requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td>1st year of TP</td></tr>
<tr><td>“Outsourcing”</td></tr>
<tr><td>Different expectations of mentor lecturers</td></tr>
<tr><td>CAPS</td><td rowspan="3">School requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td>School requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td>Communication between school and university</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX D(i): Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: **UP 16/11/03 DuPlessis 17-001**
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd Student teacher expectations of the role mentor lecturers play in developing teacher identity
INVESTIGATOR	Ms Agnes Jooste
DEPARTMENT	Educational Psychology
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	06 November 2017
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	13 November 2019

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

____

CC	Ms Bronwynne Swarts Dr Annelize du Plessis

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

APPENDIX D(ii) : Letter from Ethics Committee

Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee

30 November 2017

Ms Agnes Jooste

Dear Ms Jooste

REFERENCE: UP 16/11/03 DuPlessis 17-001

This letter serves to confirm that your application was carefully considered by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The final decision of the Ethics Committee is that your application has been **approved** and you may now start with your data collection. The decision covers the entire research process and not only the days that data will be collected. The approval is valid for two years for a Masters and three for Doctorate.

The approval by the Ethics Committee is subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The research will be conducted as stipulated on the application form submitted to the Ethics Committee with the supporting documents.
2. Proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research must be submitted where relevant.
3. In the event that the research protocol changed for whatever reason the Ethics Committee must be notified thereof by submitting an amendment to the application (Section E), together with all the supporting documentation that will be used for data collection namely; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules, for further approval before data can be collected. Noncompliance implies that the Committee's approval is null and void. The changes may include the following but are not limited to:
    - Change of investigator,
    - Research methods any other aspect therefore and,
    - Participants
    - Sites

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Upon completion of your research you will need to submit the following documentations to the Ethics Committee for your Clearance Certificate:

- Integrated Declaration Form (Form D08), • Initial Ethics Approval letter and,
- Approval of Title.

Please quote the reference number **UP 16/11/03 DuPlessis 17-001** in any communication with the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

APPENDIX E: Consent Form SOTL 1

Faculty of Education

24 July 2017

Dear Student teachers

My name is dr Annelize du Plessis. I am steering a research project which form part of a Teaching and Development Grant. In collaboration with co-researchers we are conducting research on **the mentorship role of mentor lecturers in assisting student teachers in the development of their teacher/professional identities** and would like to invite you to actively participate in the research project. Your participation is however completely voluntary, therefore you may opt out at any time during the research study without any consequences. Your anonymity is guaranteed at all times.

This project will focus on the development, implementation and evaluation of a mentorship intervention for you as student teachers. The aim is to utilise the underlying principles of effective mentorship in supporting you to develop and gradually grow into the profession of teaching. In this manner a mentorship intervention, more specifically when facilitated by mentor lecturers, may prepare you for your world of work, what you can expect when entering the career they had selected to pursue, and how they could deal with challenges that may potentially arise. Such guided support will entail far more than classroom practice, as it will focus on, *inter alia,* the acquisition of professional knowledge, the development of a teacher identity and competence as future teachers.

In conducting the research we will utilise a mixed methods design, doing intervention research and following a approach. The project will broadly entail three phases, namely a pre-intervention phase (October 2016 to February 2017), intervention phase (March to September 2017) and post-intervention phase (October to November 2017). The purpose will not be to address the methodological approaches

of mentor lecturers but to rather focus on the development of so-called soft skills amongst you, student teachers, in support of your learning and professional development during teaching practice.

We foresee that the outcomes of the mentorship intervention that will be developed and implemented will have value for you. You may also gain self-confidence and experience self-efficacy, and gain access to advice and reflections with your mentor lecturer.

Should you agree to participate in the research, you will be expected to participate in the research during the intervention phase where you will be mentored during teaching practice by your mentor lecturer who will utilise the newly developed mentoring intervention. It will be expected of you to keep a reflective journal and during the last phase of the research, you will be invited to participate in a PRA workshop to evaluate the new mentorship intervention, its possible pros and cons and how you think the intervention may be improved.

Please feel free to ask me any questions relating to this research. If you agree to participate, please sign this consent form indicating that you are aware of your rights and wish to take part in the research activities of the study. Thank you for considering participation in this research. If you have any further questions, now or as the research progresses, please feel free to contact me.

All data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use

Thank you in advance

Dr Annelize du Plessis

012 420 2498/082 828 0919

Informed Consent

The research study has been explained to me and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I am content with the answers provided. I understand that I can remove myself from the study at any point of time if I wish to do so. I am also aware that the study is being conducted by co-researchers from the University of Pretoria too and that they will have access to all data. I am satisfied to know that my anonymity is guaranteed at all times since all data will be available on the open resource repository.

Signed____________________________ by __________________________________ on this __________________ day of ________________________ 2017.

APPENDIX F: Blank questionnaire

Open-ended questionnaire – Fourth Year B.Ed students – 2016/
Oop-einde vraelys – Vierdejaar B.Ed studente – 2016

Date/*Datum*:	**Gender/*Geslag:***
Course/Programme/ *Kursus/Program:*	
Subject area/*Vakgebied:*	

Please complete the following questions to the best of your ability and as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers./ *Voltooi assesblief die volgende vrae na die beste van jou vermoë en so eerlik as moontlik. Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie.*

1. Describe the ideal **role** of a Mentor Lecturer in assisting a student teacher to develop a professional Teacher Identity?/ Beskryf *die* ideale **rol** *van die Mentor Lektor om 'n Onderwysstudent te help om 'n profesionele onderwyseridentiteit te ontwikkeling?*

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2. According to your opinion, what kind of ***practical contributions*** should a Mentor Lecturer make to enhance the development of a professional Teacher Identity?/ *Volgens jou mening, watter tipe praktiese* **bydraes** *behoort 'n Mentor Lektor te*

maak ten einde die ontwikkeling van 'n professionele onderwyseridentiteit te verbeter?

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3. How **did** your Mentor Lecturer **contributed** to your professional development as Teacher during the teaching practice period pertaining to the following/ *Op welke wyse het jou Mentor Lektor* ***wel bygedra*** *tot jou professionele ontwikkeling as onderwyser gedurende die praktiese onderwystydperk met betrekking tot die volgende:*

a. Subject content/ *Vakinhoud:*

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b. Application of subject methodology/ *Toepassing van vakmetodologie:*

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c. Classroom practice/ *Klaskamerpraktyk:*

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d. Overall psycho-social well-being (openness; sensitive to needs/understanding; motivating; approachable; patient; sharing information; building a relationship)/ *Algehele psigo-sosiale welstand (openhartigheid; sensitief vir behoeftes/ toon begrip; aanmoedigend; toeganklik; geduldig; deel graag inligting; bou 'n verhouding):*

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4. What were your **major concerns** pertaining to the mentoring process done by your Mentor Lecturers that might/could have inhibited your Teacher Identity development? *Wat was jou* ***grootste bekommernis/probleem*** *met betrekking tot die mentorproses, deur jou Mentor Lektor, wat dalk jou onderwyseridentiteit kon inhibeer?*

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5. What were the most **positive aspects** pertaining to the mentoring process done by your Mentor Lecturers that enhanced the development of your Teacher Identity? *Wat was die mees* ***positiewe aspekte*** *met betrekking tot die mentorproses, deur jou Mentor Lektor, wat die ontwikkeling van jou onderwyseridentiteit kon verbeter het?*

6. What were your **expectations** pertaining to the mentoring process done by your Mentor Lecturers to **enhance** the development of your Teaching Identity?/ *Wat was jou* ***verwagtinge*** *rakende die mentorproses, deur jou Mentor Lektore, wat die ontwikkeling van jou onderwyseridentiteit kon* ***verbeter*** *het?*

7. Any other valuable suggestions? *Enige ander waardevolle voorstelle*?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE INPUTS/DANKIE VIR JOU WAARDEVOLLE INSETTE