



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
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**The role of mentor-teachers in supporting student-teachers**

**By**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

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**in the**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

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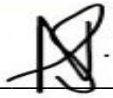
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**30 APRIL 2020**

## DECLARATION

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I, ***Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele*** declare that the dissertation which I hereby submit for the degree Masters in Education 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.



\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

30 April 2020  
**Date**

# ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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## RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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The role of mentor-teachers in supporting student-teachers

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- Data storage requirements.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this paper to:

**All teachers of South Africa  
who work tirelessly to ensure a brighter future for South African learners.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

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- My participants, for their willingness to participate in the study and providing me with your responses.
- Last but certainly not least my family, my partner, my former Teaching Practice colleagues and friends for their continuous support especially when I felt like giving up.

## ABSTRACT

Effective mentoring during teaching practice plays a crucial role on student-teacher learning in order to achieve the required results and goals of higher institutions of learning. This dissertation builds upon how mentor-teachers provide mentoring in an effort to obtain the best possible learning experiences for student-teachers and it contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of mentoring during teaching practice. However, mentor-teachers may be unsure of their role of how-to mentor student-teachers. Thus, affecting the efficacy of such a relationship of mentoring.

Although a number of studies have examined the teaching practice programme, there is a considerable lack of literature on how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice. The purpose of this study was to investigate how mentor-teachers understand their role as mentors in order to develop student-teachers during teaching practice. The data for this qualitative study were collected through semi-structured individual interviews of eight mentor-teachers and six student-teachers.

The dissertation draws strongly on the work of Peter Hudson who developed the 5-factor mentoring model. The data collected from these interviews were analysed and presented as emerging themes. The study found that many mentor-teachers showed an understanding on what mentoring is, however, they were not sure of what is expected of them as mentors and that tertiary institutions need to do more in order to ensure that mentor-teachers are trained for their role in supporting student-teachers.

**Key words:** Teaching Practice, Mentor-Teachers, Student-Teachers, Mentoring, Work Integrated Learning

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To whom it may concern

This letter is to confirm that I, Keegan Bruce Schmidt, freelance copy-editor, have edited and proofread the dissertation '***The role of mentor-teachers in supporting student-teachers***' by **Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele** for grammar and spelling. I have not changed any of the ideas presented in this paper and only the grammar and spelling has been altered for the purposes of clarity. This is to confirm that I have edited the document to a level I deem satisfactory.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

S-T	Student-Teacher
M-T	Mentor-Teacher
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification
HIL	Higher Institutions of Learning
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SBA	School Based Assessment



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# **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Student-teachers look forward to completing teaching practice as it helps them gain real-life experience of being in the classroom. The Bachelor of Education degree intends to develop and train student-teachers who, by the end of their studies, will be able to demonstrate the necessary skills, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and values of a professional teacher who are confident to hold their role in the classroom. The purpose of the degree is to provide students with the required practical and theoretical knowledge which will empower them to become qualified and professional teachers. Teachers are required to possess good teaching skills and to be familiar with changes in knowledge development as it pertains to their area of expertise. They need to be adequately prepared to meet everyday demands and complexities such as classroom management, lesson planning and learner behaviour that come with the teaching profession. Thus, to prepare for these demands and to gain experience in an unfamiliar teaching environment, they are required to perform their teaching practice exercises.

According to the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification (MRTEQ, 2011), practical learning is an essential component for the growth of knowledge, which is an essential factor of learning how to teach. Kiggundu (2009) states that teaching practice offers the prospective teacher a real classroom first experience of the role reversal from the known (recent past) of being a learner in a class – to now being the teacher of the class. This experience has the potential to be exciting and exhilarating, while at the same time it can also scare a student-teacher with the reality of learners being entrusted in one's care (Wrenn, 2009). Teaching practice grants student-teachers the opportunity to gain experience in different contextual learning environments. According to LekeAteh, Assan and Debeila (2013), teaching practice is an important component which aims to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared, developed and professional when they enter the teaching career. A previous study by Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014) addresses how assessment during teaching practice should be done, however this study in



particular will be addressing how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting the student-teachers during teaching practice.

According to Kiggundu (2009), teaching practice can be defined as the institutionalised, supervised and instructional experience in the form of practical preparation of student-teachers for the teaching profession. As a requirement by the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Qualification (2011), student-teachers are assigned with a mentor-teacher who is appointed by the school's principal to supervise and facilitate student-teachers practical learning during teaching practice. Student-teachers learn from more experienced teachers as to how to mediate unusual or difficult circumstances in a classroom by observing what entails good teaching.

O'Dwyer (2015) and Samkange (2015) affirm that teachers are required to be able to handle complex and sometimes difficult obstacles such as overcrowding in classrooms, and in addition, to this the South African Council for Educators (SACE) states that teachers need be committed to the teaching profession, which should be demonstrated by doing all they can by performing their duties in line with the standards of the teaching profession. This SACE requirement is often entrusted to the responsibility of the mentor-teacher to impart. Thus mentor-teachers should have a good knowledge of system requirements such as the CAPS document of the teaching profession in order to ensure that student-teachers understand and be able to meet the conditions such as conducting oneself in a respectful, professional and dignified manner set by the SACE code of conduct.

Research conducted by Samkange (2015) and Kiggundu (2009) revealed that mentor-teachers spend most of their time with the student-teachers and thus have the most direct and influential role to play when it comes to training student-teachers during their teaching practice. However, mentor-teachers are not always adequately trained and equipped to fulfil their fundamental goal of developing student-teachers into proficient and professional future teachers during teaching practice. What is lacking in the literature is the voice of the mentor-teachers on their knowledge of how to mentor the student-teachers and how to effectively execute their role. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by investigating mentor-teachers' understanding of their role in supporting student-teachers.

## **Teaching Practice Framework**

A university's teaching practice framework is clearly elaborated upon in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications. Teaching Qualification Policy is hereafter referred to as MRTEQ. According to the MRTEQ (2011) policy, teaching practice in the form of Work Integrated Learning is henceforth referred to as (WIL), includes being supervised and assessed, and is an essential component of the Bachelor of Education degree in all universities in South Africa. The requirements of the University of Pretoria, assessment takes in the form of formative and summative assessment, where student-teachers are assessed by the mentor-teachers as well as other student-teachers. Student-teachers at the University of Pretoria spend a minimum of twenty weeks in a school where they would be supervised and trained by a mentor-teacher.

This study argues that student-teachers need to demonstrate teaching strategies which will ensure that meaningful learning takes place. There is active engagement of learners and that effective assessment strategies are utilised to monitor and evaluate learning in their practice teaching. They should also be able to learn the skill of setting and marking tests or examinations, testing different levels of competencies and knowledge/thinking taxonomies in addition to becoming familiar with protocol of how to invigilate. More is expected of student-teachers at schools, where it is envisaged that they learn how to carry themselves as teachers in a staff meeting, how to follow protocols and codes of conduct as staff members, how to be on break duty as well as how to manage their workload to still be able to fit in time needed for extra-murals, which they also need the skill and knowledge to facilitate. During teaching practice, the student-teachers develop and hone their teaching skills through observing as well as teaching subject specific lessons. Hudson (2015) maintains that teaching practice not only ensures that student-teachers can put theory into practice but also equips them with the skills and professional knowledge needed for teachers to excel.

### **1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

From the researcher's anecdotal experience during teaching practice while studying towards a Bachelor of Education degree, the following challenges were observed:

Mentor-teachers were not keen to mentor student-teachers. They attributed this to a lack of time to mentor the student-teachers while some attributed their unwillingness to an inability on how they needed to mentor the student-teachers. In addition to this, many of them claimed that they did not understand their role during teaching practice to ensure that student-teachers enter the teaching profession as well-trained and qualified teachers. This led the researcher to the assumption that mentor-teachers lack training to mentor the student-teachers and thus do not sufficiently understand their role in supporting the student-teachers during teaching practice. This could have a negative result as this might lead to underqualified and inadequately trained teachers entering the teaching profession. Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) (2016) has shown that there is a steady decline in learner achievement, which this study contends could be attributed to the insufficiency of training that the teachers receive.

According to PIRLS (2016), a considerable amount of schools in South Africa are still subjected to under-qualified teachers. It is reported that of the 1 022 853 grade 2 learners who were enrolled in public schools in the country, only 629 155 wrote their matric examinations, which reflects a dropout rate of 38.49%. There is a total number of 534 484 grade 12 learners who wrote their final matric examinations, which signals that the percentage tally of the students that dropped out amounts to 47.75% when calculated from the commencement of their studies and assessed over 12 years, thus making the matric pass rate 39.25%. One of the major contributing factors to such incidences is the quality of teachers. Ingersoll (2007) claims that the quality of teachers and teaching are the most fundamental factors in learner performance, because it shapes and develops the growth of learners. As such, the quality of teachers is a cardinal factor in the shaping and education of learners.

Times Live reported that many learners are being taught by unqualified teachers (Savide, 2017). This has an impact on the quality of teachers who are deployed to teach in many South African schools. According to Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014), mentor-teachers who do not have training on how to mentor student-teachers affects the way in which they carry out their duty as mentor-teachers, such practices as those in the conceptual framework adapted in this study. These

practices are: the attributes and commitments that both the mentor-teachers and student-teachers have, knowledge on the pedagogical content and system requirements of objectives taught in the classroom, modelling how to prepare and execute a lesson and giving feedback to the student-teachers. Samkange (2015) argues therefore, that for mentor-teachers to understand their role, they need to be trained as mentors who will ensure the development of student-teachers. Consequently, this study investigated how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice.

### **1.3. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Interest in this study stems from my experience of having been a student-teacher having encountered mentor-teachers who were not certain of their roles as mentor-teachers. Despite many improvements in South Africa's education systems, the poor quality of teachers remains one of the challenges which leads to the poor academic performance of learners (Maarman, 2017). Thus, this study is of the view that training of teachers needs to be advanced in order to ensure that they are ready to provide quality education which would lead to increased development of the education system. This leads to the following questions: Are student-teachers adequately trained during teaching practice? Do the mentor-teachers know how they are supposed to mentor the student-teachers? This study is concerned with the kind of training that student-teachers receive during the teaching practice. The study argues that the type of mentoring that the student-teachers receive during teaching practice will highly affect their practice and expertise once they become qualified teachers. Many mentor-teachers are not sure of their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice (Maphalala, 2013). Whilst the same study conducted by (Maphalala, 2017) found that only 37% of mentor-teacher had received training on being mentors, the other 63% had not received any training whatsoever. The majority of the mentor-teachers revealed that they were not confident in executing their role as mentors. Consequently, they were resistant and unwilling to mentor student-teachers. This study has anticipated addressing this gap and endeavours to provide institutions with insight into a key element of WIL, in the form of teaching practice and mentor-teachers.

### **1.4.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice in order to develop the student-teachers into well-trained teachers.

### **1.4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study were to decipher if mentor-teachers understood their role as mentors and how their mentoring skills could be enhanced by proposing mentorship training for them as a possible strategy in order to effectively mentor student-teachers.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1. Primary research question**

How do mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice?

### **1.5.2. Sub- questions:**

1. How do mentor-teachers understand the support needs of student-teachers?
2. What challenges are experienced in mentoring student-teachers?
3. What possible strategies can be suggested to improve student-teacher mentoring?

## **1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Mpofu and Maphalala (2018) assert that although teaching practice is one of the most researched areas in the training of teachers, research places more emphasis on the student-teacher and the assessment of teaching practice. A study which conducted 46 questionnaires completed by mentor-teachers revealed that they are not sure of what is expected of them during teaching-practice (Maphalala, 2013). Thus, this study aims to extend literature on the importance of training experienced teachers in order to be mentor-teachers and execute their role according to the MRTEQ. This study aims to assist tertiary institutions to gain an understanding on

the experiences and viewpoints of the mentor-teachers during teaching practice so as to better provide guidance to them, as may be necessary if such training on how to be a mentor is not being implemented by respective schools. The importance of the role that well-trained mentor-teachers play in mentoring future teachers should be understood, which in turn has the potential to improve the results of learner performance. The importance of this study is to identify the existing literature while also acknowledging that there remains a gap within teaching practice such as the compulsory training of mentor-teachers. An attempt is made to fill in the gap in existing research by investigating the experiences of the mentor-teachers during teaching practice through having one-on-one individual interviews.

## 1.7 CONCEPTS

The concepts referred to below are viewed and regarded differently in various parts of the world. In order to better understand the context in which the study refers to or defines a concept, a brief expose is provided below for better understanding of teaching practice, mentor-teachers and student-teachers.

**Teaching Practice:** Teaching Practice is a hands-on programme which allows student-teachers to gain experience in unfamiliar teaching and learning environments (Kiggundu, 2009). It affords the student-teachers classroom teaching experience and a chance to work under an experienced teacher who acts as a mentor. The programme is based on subject matter competence to foster a deeper understanding of teaching subjects

**Mentor-teacher:** A mentor-teacher is an experienced teacher who is allocated by a school principal to mentor the student-teacher during the teaching practice programme. Their role is to ensure that they further guide and develop the student-teachers to expand their teaching knowledge in terms of planning, teaching instruction, classroom management, content knowledge and helping student-teachers familiarise themselves with the teaching environment and the daily tasks which they need to complete. Their role is to ensure that they build a healthy and trusting relationship with the student-teachers. The mentor-teacher is responsible for developing and training the student-teacher during the teaching practice programme.

**Student-teacher:** A student-teacher is a Bachelor of Education University student who must complete a minimum of 20 weeks of work-integrated learning depending on different tertiary institutions in the form of teaching practice. Student-teachers are studying to be teachers and, as part of the requirements of completion of the degree, the student-teacher is expected to observe, teach, create and prepare lessons as well as adapt or familiarise themselves with the teaching environment.

## **1.8. RESEARCH PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY**

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delpont (2015, 308) define qualitative research as a process of exploration and understanding rather than explanation, with naturalistic observation rather than utilising a controlled measurement. Qualitative research was found to be most suitable to understand mentor-teachers by allowing them to share their experiences and knowledge about teaching practice. Qualitative research methodology encompasses the acquisition of information and experiences of mentor-teachers during teaching practice from their individual opinion, understanding and interpretation.

This study makes use of purposive sampling. De Vos (2011) and Maree (2016) have found that by exploring the richness, in-depth information and phenomena, the study developed a sense of understanding of the data received from mentor-teachers and student-teachers.

Data analysis involves the transcription of data received during the face-to-face interviews. The interview and transcription process were done by the researcher. Data received from the interviews will be transcribed and presented as emerging themes.

### **Thematic content analysis**

The analysis performed was aimed at identifying a pattern of emerging themes in the data that were transcribed (Maree, 2015). This type of analysis provided a narrative descriptive of the in-depth response of the information provided by the participants. To begin the process of data analysis, the researcher will listen to the audio recordings before writing out what was said in the recordings.

## 1.9. ORGANISATION AND OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

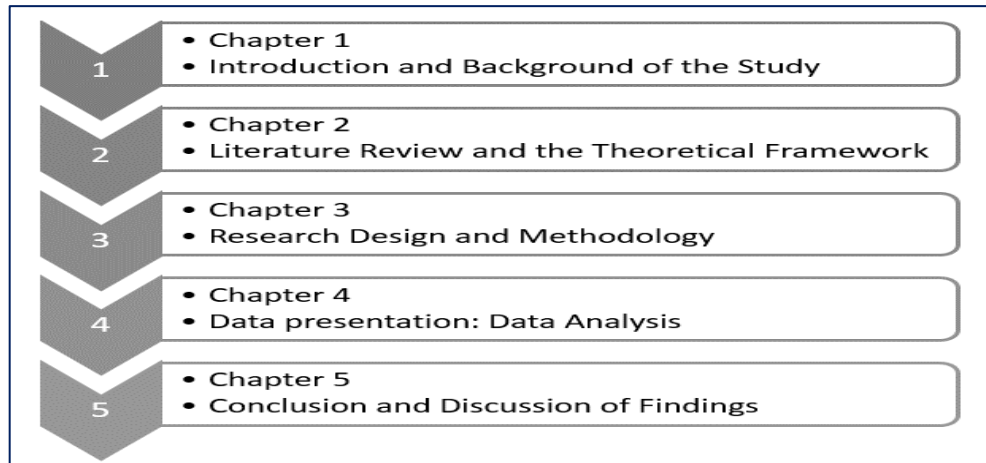


Figure 1.1 Outline of chapters

### Chapter Two Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an understanding of the role of mentor-teachers in developing student-teachers and the importance of teaching practice. In the first section, the researcher introduces the literature used for this study. This is followed by the challenges that mentor-teachers face during teaching practice. In the first part of the review, the study describes the role of mentor-teachers in developing student-teachers. Thereafter, there will be a discussion on how mentor-teachers support student-teachers, the challenges experienced during the teaching practice, strategies used to address these challenges and the perceived influence of mentor-teachers' support on student-teachers.

The researcher also explores the possible role of training mentor-teachers to be effective in their role as mentor-teachers and how the introduction of a teaching practice framework will aid in assisting mentor-teachers to be more effective when mentoring student-teachers.

### Chapter three: Research Design and Methodology

This section outlines how the researcher will approach and answer the research questions. Chapter three of this study explains the different steps aimed at answering the research questions. To accomplish this, an explanation of the research design and methodology employed in the study is provided. The research design proposed and used in the study serves as a guide or plan for the study. Once



the research design has been discussed, the researcher moves to the methodology, which then discusses how data will be collected and analysed. To conclude, this chapter discusses the ethical considerations that are followed in the study.

#### **Chapter four: Presentation of Data**

This chapter discusses the information provided by the participants. It describes the themes which emerge during the analysis of the information obtained. This will be done once the interviews are conducted. The data collected were analysed by transcribing the data of the face-to-face interviews. Data received from the interviews will then be transcribed. The data analysis method process used is thematic content analysis, which makes use of qualitative research methods in the form of interviews. The aim was to identify a pattern or themes in the information received (Maree, 2015). These themes are patterns of information that arrange the important information, which was fundamental in answering the research questions. This type of analysis provides a narrative, descriptive and in-depth response of the information given by the participants.

#### **Chapter five: Discussions and Findings**

Lastly, chapter five discusses the findings of the study. It discusses the thematic data analysis, which helped to answer the research questions, how it relates to the literature review and, finally, provides recommendations.

#### **Conclusion of the chapter**

This study placed its focus on mentor-teachers and the role they play in supporting student-teachers. South African context, student-teachers need to complete their teaching practice programme in the form of WIL thus, it is important for them to receive training from a well trained mentor-teacher who understand the role they play in developing student-teachers as prospective professional teachers in Education. Chapter one sets the background and purpose for the study. It provided an understanding of what prompted the researcher to conduct the study. Furthermore, this chapter also discussed the significance of the study, which was followed by a brief overview of the research design and methodology for the study. The chapter then provided a description of the structure which the study follows. Chapter two

deals with the literature review, which sheds light on the role of mentor-teachers and how the introduction of a teaching practice framework could contribute to the effective running of the teaching practice programme and effective mentoring of student-teachers. Finally, it was followed by the conceptual framework that the study used, which will give the reader a clear understanding of the topic under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a literature review. A literature review can be described as an evaluation, overview and description of previous research or topic. For the purpose of this study, the literature review provided an understanding of the role of mentor-teachers in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice. In the first part of the review, the study describes the role of mentor-teachers in developing student-teachers. Next, how mentor-teachers support student-teachers in relation to the challenges experienced during the teaching practice, a variety of strategies that may be used to address these challenges and, lastly, the perceived influence of mentor-teachers' support on student-teachers. The following research questions guided the study:

#### **2.3. THE ROLE OF MENTOR-TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE**

The role of the mentor is focused on providing support for the growth and development of the mentee. Mentor-teachers are expected to be role-models as experienced professionals who demonstrate best practice for the student-teachers to emulate. Mentor-teachers also provide student-teachers with work-integrated learning experience in diverse contexts of education, through offering opportunities for guided practical teaching practice. According to Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014), a mentor-teacher is an individual who is the facilitator of learning, he/she guides and assists student-teachers through observations, lesson planning and preparation, team-teaching, modelling teaching strategies and classroom management and providing feedback on student-teacher's progress. A Vietnamese researcher, Hudson (2010), is of the view that the role of the mentor-teacher is to advise, guide, support, counsel, and teach by being a role model to the student-teacher. The role of mentoring is incorporated into the conceptual framework to address the need for establishing a productive and professional rapport between the mentor and mentee. The mentor-teacher, through establishing such a rapport with the mentee, may then be able to utilise "personal attributes to model and articulate the education system requirements and pedagogical knowledge for guiding the

mentees development” as advocated by Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014, 821). The mentor-teacher is to enhance or develop the skills that the student-teacher may require. According to Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2013), the mentor-teacher has the most influence on the student-teacher and thus they must create a conducive environment for teaching and learning as well as one that supports the development of the student-teacher.

The WIL process is meant to foster good practice for the student-teacher to be effective and efficient in their role as future professional teachers (MRTEQ, 2011). The mentor-teacher needs to ensure that learning takes place, through joint decision making and allowing student-teachers to be active participants in their learning. As teachers who would be teaching in South African schools, they should be prepared to improvise as some schools are not well resourced, and student-teachers should be encouraged to apply what they have learnt and reflect on their learning (Maarman, 2017).

Since the 1980’s, mentoring was introduced into teaching to improve education by ensuring that teachers are effectively ready to become teachers (Hobson, 2009). According to Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2013), the aim of introducing mentoring into pre-service learning was that more experienced and knowledgeable teachers would serve the purpose of mentors, who would help student-teachers to learn new pedagogies and socialise them to new professional norms. "Teachers who prepare themselves as mentors increase their potential to enhance student growth and development, help students maximise education experiences and enrich their own teaching experience and professional development" (Zachery, 2002).

Mentoring depends entirely on the partnership that the schools and institution of higher learning has which ensures the professional development of both the mentor-teachers and student-teachers. Prospective mentor-teachers need to therefore have some form of training to be informed of the functions of their role as mentor-teachers. Zachery (2002) confirms that "teachers who make the time to prepare themselves to be mentors, tend to have more satisfying and productive mentoring relationships than those who do not". Teachers hold one of the most important roles in society and thus, for one to be fully equipped and prepared for that role, they would have to be

mentored by an experienced teacher who is passionate about learners achieving their set learning outcomes. Van Ginkel (2018) further affirms that when student-teachers reflect on the experiences that stood out the most during their mentoring experience, they would either mention a teacher that was special to them or their feelings of being connected, which informed a memorable process towards self-discovery and development.

Mentor-teachers aim to assist in improving the student-teachers' personal growth and development by educating them to become knowledgeable and well-trained teachers (Zachery, 2002). Many teachers are naturally drawn towards being mentors, as a teacher, you are drawn to seeing your learners succeed through your guidance and shared expertise, however, being a good teacher does not necessarily mean that one is a good mentor. Thus, the study argues that teachers need to be open towards being trained as mentors to ensure that they meet the everyday needs of the student-teachers by helping them constructively. Ligadu (2012) found that though mentor-teachers have an influence on the student-teachers, they need to have training in order to be effective mentors.

As stated in The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2016), poorly trained and unqualified teachers is one of the main reasons for poor learner performance and it will therefore be beneficial if teachers are effectively and sufficiently trained to teach in a South African classroom in a way which will aid in the development of the education system. Training teachers to be effective in their role will could help with learner performance. Having a more formal programme that allows the mentor-teachers to be trained and skilled in being effective mentors, will create the notion and realisation of how important the programme is and how it can play a role in developing student-teachers. Though mentoring can be very complex, it can also be perceived as a necessary process in which experienced teachers pass on their knowledge to younger and newly professional teachers. Due to mentoring being far more complex than what it appears, the practice of mentoring expands further than just giving student-teachers the support that they need to be adequately introduced through adequate guidance and support to the new school system and environment. Individuals who enter the teaching profession are those that have a sense of commitment and love for the profession. Mentoring is at times seen as

passing the baton from the older generation to the new and younger generation. Mentoring is complex and more demanding than teaching. The demands of teaching together with the complexity of mentoring at times play a huge role in even experienced and professional teachers not being able to adequately assess and mentor student-teachers to ensure their optimum performance as skilled and qualified teachers.

#### **2.4. THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF STUDENT-TEACHERS**

Bilesanmi (2011) mentions that mentoring in the context of education, is known as a practice which can be defined as an experienced and well-trained teachers mentoring the student-teacher by sharing their knowledge, skills and expertise. Student-teachers gain the necessary expertise to be a good teacher. The main task of the mentor-teacher is to ensure that student-teachers are fully skilled, trained and prepared to excel in their profession as prospective teachers. The teaching practice programme is an essential element in the Bachelor of Education programme bridges the gap to allow the student-teachers to put theory into practice.

A good and well-trained mentor-teacher is one that is steadfast in their role of mentoring student-teachers. A mentor-teacher's main function is to empower, train, mentor and guide the student-teachers for them to reach their full potential as prospective teachers. In her study on mentoring, Ligadu (2012) found that the positive professional development of mentees occurring throughout the practicum was evident, though varying in degrees. Ligadu (2012) states that mentors' guidance and advice on pedagogic matters such as planning, instructional skills, knowledge, organisation of content and classroom management were major contributors to this development despite any negative factors in mentoring relationships and communication.

Factors which contribute to the development of student-teachers are largely based on the five factors which would be explained in the conceptual framework adopted in this study. These five factors include personal attributes, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback and system requirements. In the South African context, student-teachers develop a clear understanding of what it takes to be a good teacher even if they do not have the infrastructure or resources such as teaching aids

needed to be able to teach effectively. They also learn behaviour management and how to prepare for lessons in the form of creating lesson plans. To cater to the support needs of the student-teachers, mentor-teacher should afford them their utmost attention and support which, as a result, would play a considerable role in the advancement of the student-teachers. A prominent attribute of being an excellent mentor-teacher is to show understanding and acknowledge that the student-teachers would not have the same teaching styles, and thus they need to nurture and expand upon the individual teaching style of the student-teacher.

"Mentors focus on developing the strengths of individuals, and this works best when the student-teachers being mentored by their assigned teachers in schools are aware that these mentors have a genuine concern for their development and success" (Singh, 2013, 1375). To expand upon the development of a student-teacher, mentor-teachers should ensure that they construct an environment that is conducive for mentoring. Thus, as a result, the teaching practice programme ascertains that student-teachers not only have theoretical experience but also have the practical experience to bridge the gap between putting theory into practice.

The role of the mentor-teacher is to support student-teachers through dialogue, negotiating ideas and providing advice on improving the student-teacher's capabilities. This study asserts that, mentor-teachers help student-teachers hone their teaching skills and improve their self-confidence. Knippelmeyer (2007) states that mentor-teachers are the most important resource for the development of the student-teachers during the teaching practice programme. For mentor-teachers to effectively mentor the student-teachers, they have to understand what is required or expected in their roles in this interpersonal relationship. Leshem (2012) posits that the ambiguity in the role of mentors' leads to a clash between what is expected of them and what they believe is expected of them. There is a consensus among researchers, who have been alluded to above, on the role that mentor-teachers should play.

Mentor-teachers should engage with the student-teachers in facilitating the knowledge of developing their teaching practices, thus being able to overcome the numerous challenges that teachers face. Samkange (2015) posits that experience alone is not enough to be a mentor-teacher. He further asserts that being a good

teacher does not necessarily mean that mentor-teachers are good mentors and will be effective in their roles in mentoring student-teachers. In South Africa, mentor-teachers are not required to have any kind of professional development training to become mentor-teachers. “Experienced teachers in their roles as mentors can play a significant part in educating pre-service teachers, but this will require mentors to be more critical of their mentoring practices” (Hudson, 2004, 142).

## **2.5. PROVISION OF SUPPORT BY MENTOR-TEACHERS**

Without an effective mentoring model, mentoring is unlikely to reach the true purpose and intention of teaching practice, which is to ensure the professional development of student-teachers who enter the teaching profession. However, mentors require some exposure to a variety of models of mentoring in their training as well as practice in the observation and analysis of interactions between the mentor and mentee (student-teacher) (Hudson, 2015). Different mentoring models should be implemented according to a specific context. For instance, a mentoring model which is widely used for the mentoring of student-teachers into effective teaching is the five-factor mentoring models, namely: personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback.

Harrison (2006) explains that mentoring is an essential element of the student teaching experience, using the aforesaid model would result in highly prepared and effective mentors which could contribute to the development of student-teachers. In one of Harrison's studies, the five-factor mentoring model is validated as both effective and advantageous for developing student-teachers. The study therefore argues that if mentor-teachers are aware of their roles and responsibilities when mentoring student-teachers, they are more likely to be effective in executing their role.

The introduction of a school-based policy which requires mentor-teachers to be trained in their roles as mentors would allow mentor-teachers to acquire these five skills which would enhance the development of student-teachers. In Zimbabwe, an attempt to improve the value of teachers led to the implementation of the 2-5-2 model (Samkange, 2015). This model requires that a mentor-teacher is fully trained and experienced to optimally perform their roles as mentor-teachers. The 2-5-2



model consists of a sub-model named an Apprentice Model, which includes how the student-teacher learns about the teaching profession within the specific environment to which the student-teacher is exposed (Kerry, 1995). The student-teacher learns how to teach and manage classes through exposition of learning from an experienced and well-trained mentor-teacher.

South Africa has a similar model as it also makes provision for student-teachers to be assigned to different schools where they are allocated a mentor-teacher. They begin with lesson observation taught by teachers. As time progresses, they are afforded an opportunity to teach some of the classes in the presence of the mentor-teacher who also observes, guides and advises them on how to teach and impart knowledge.

Another sub-category of the 2-5-2 is a Competence Model which is focuses on the competencies needed to become a professional teacher. Both the mentor and student-teachers have to focus on developing these competencies (Samkange, 2015). In this model, the mentor-teacher takes the responsibility of being the coach and gives the student-teacher the full responsibility of the classroom. This model is not as ideal as the student-teacher needs to be mentored and teach a few classes as they still require guidance and experience. In all of the above-mentioned models, the common factor among them is that it is imperative that the mentor-teachers be trained in their roles of mentoring the student-teachers.

## **2.6. THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING STUDENT-TEACHERS**

The term 'mentor' originated in 1750 from Greece. Mentor, who was a friend of Odysseus and an advisor to Telemachus who became the embodiment of the name as a person who occupies a position of authority, mainly being advisory (Nickols, 2003). The Gauteng Department of Education (2008) defines the term mentoring as establishing a rapport between an experienced person and a less experienced person subsisting of a specific purpose thereof. During the mentoring process, there is a joint and mutual partnership between the mentor and mentee, from which both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher will benefit (Eby, Rhodes & Allen, 2007). This active relationship contains various stages, which Oppenheimer (2016) expounds as a rapport which is based on an interpersonal connection between two

or more people, one being more knowledgeable and the other being less knowledgeable.

Effective mentoring is grounded on steps that clearly state the role of the mentor-teacher and student-teacher and how they aim to ensure the development of the student-teacher. The first step in the mentorship process is to ensure that one is aware of their roles and responsibilities as mentors. The two parties are aided in building a strong relationship with one another and having set-out expectations of what they aim to achieve, all of which are pivotal in effective mentoring. The second step is providing the mentor-teacher with clear instructions on their role and what is expected of them and is crucial in ensuring that effective mentoring takes place (Zachery, 2002). They are also responsible for ensuring that student-teachers acquire knowledge and receive advice. The third step is to model the different types of teaching strategies and classroom management styles. The fourth step is to provide training on lesson planning and preparation. Lastly, the mentor is expected to provide feedback for the student-teacher. The benefits of being a mentor include having an opportunity for improvement in communication skills, development in leadership and management qualities and an increase of confidence and motivation knowing that one has played a part in shaping society by developing effective and high-quality teachers.

"To have a clear understanding of how mentors would operate in teaching practice, it requires an investigation of how they have worked with student-teachers" is recommended by Hudson (2010, 31). Researchers such as Maphalala (2013) and Mporu (2018) seem to be of the view that uncertainty in the role of mentors' leads to confusion between what is to be expected from the mentor-teacher and what the mentor-teacher presumes is to be expected of them. An Israeli researcher, Leshem (2012), asserts that mentoring as a conceptual model lacks clarity and as a result mentor-teachers experience various challenges during the teaching practice programme. Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2013) and Samkange (2015) have identified that mentors must function in multiple roles and are often unable to meet the students' expectations. In a study conducted by Knippelmeyer (2007), it was found that mentor-teachers expressed frustration at being dragged into numerous roles, from having to prepare and teach their classes as well as mentoring the

student-teachers, which results in having an overwhelming responsibility. Unfortunately, this feeling of being overwhelmed from the mentor-teacher may create a negative space for the student-teacher, leading to them having to tread carefully to find space to gain experience in a classroom where she/he may not feel welcomed.

There can be occasions when inexperienced mentor-teachers may feel threatened by the success of a confidently well-rounded student-teacher. Mentors may fear that if they develop the student-teachers to their highest potential, they may be replaced by said student-teacher (Knippelmeyer, 2007). Many mentor-teachers are uncertain of what role they need to play as mentors, which may be due to a lack of training and effective policy implementation. Singh (2013) states that mentors-teachers are at times assigned with more than ten student-teachers to mentor, which makes it difficult for them to excel in their roles as mentors. Hudson (2011) asserts that mentor-teachers reveal that there is not enough time within the school context to mentor the student-teachers. The lack of mentor training, shortage and low quality of mentors available within the school context also plays a negative role in their perceptions and experiences of being mentor-teachers. In South Africa, a lack of formal and informal training provided for the mentor-teachers may weaken collaborations between stakeholders, thus affecting the efficacy of the mentoring process.

## **2.7. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN OTHER STUDIES DONE IN SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE AND HAWAII**

Zimbabwe has seen reforms in teacher education which have been implemented to improve the quality of teachers in the country (Samkange, 2015). There is need for a policy that implements the compulsory training of teachers before they can mentor student-teachers is imperative for the smooth running of organisations as it sets a structured framework of how tasks need to be executed (Torm, 2012). One challenge faced by mentor-teachers was that they were not sure of what is expected of them when it comes to executing their role as mentor-teachers (Maphalala, 2017). Not knowing what is expected of you as a mentor-teacher would result in an inability to execute your roles and responsibilities effectively. The need for a policy that would make it compulsory for teachers to be trained as mentors before they could be

mentor-teachers. A study in Hawaii by Cornu (2010) revealed that there should be better support structures to be devised and implemented to ensure that mentor-teachers, together with student-teachers, remain in the teaching profession. Teaching practice policies extend beyond the mere support for teachers' acquisition of new skills and also highlight the importance of student reflection and collaborating with others. The need for the involvement of all stakeholders in the creation of new policies for teacher training as well as considering the context of the school is imperative (Cornu, 2010).

In this study, findings revealed that mentor-teachers felt that they needed training from the tertiary institutions that send the student-teachers to the schools and that they needed to be trained according to the requirements of the tertiary institutions. These findings are supported by a study conducted by Maphalala (2017) which revealed that many mentor-teachers understood what mentoring was, however, they were not entirely sure what was expected from them from the University of South Africa. Jaspers, Meijer, Prins & Wubbels (2014) state that mentor-teachers in their study revealed that they are faced with is that they have to perform their role of being a teacher and a mentor. The mentor-teachers in this study revealed that their main task was being a teacher and mentoring comes after all of their duties as teachers. This may have a negative impact on the mentoring process, because this would mean that mentor-teachers could have less time to mentor the student-teachers. Many of them revealed that they did not have enough time to perform their duties as teachers and as mentor-teachers.

## **2.8. SUPPORT GIVEN BY MENTOR-TEACHERS TO STUDENT-TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE**

It is important to note that Teaching Practice is at the heart of training for becoming a teacher as it provides real-life teaching experience and is seen as the main factor which ensures that the students put theory into practice (Kiggundu, 2009). Hobson (2014, 90) adds that since the 1980's, school-based mentoring has come to play an increasingly prominent role in supporting the initial preparation, induction and early professional development of teachers in many parts of the world

In Malaysia, "there are myriad of problems and challenges which face beginning teachers in the early stage of their careers and one of them is facing inadequacies in their knowledge, skills and attributes as a teacher" (See, 2014, 54). It is imperative for mentors to be able and willing to adequately prepare student-teachers. It is furthermore vital to recognise the different factors that contribute to the preparation of the student-teachers as well as the role played by the mentor-teachers. In South Africa, a study by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) found that student-teacher experiences during teaching practice have the potential to affect their perception and preparation for the teaching profession.

In a study conducted by Nkambule (2017) at the University of the Witwatersrand, educational institutions were unable to prepare the student-teachers with essential competencies of a teacher to teach and be able to adapt to a rural and township teaching environment. The lack of a model or system of selecting mentor-teachers further compounds this problem. In South Africa, many teachers are selected to be mentors based on their teaching experience. For example, if the teacher has more than three years of teaching experience, they qualify to be mentor-teachers. Nkambule (2017) suggests that the practical preparation of student-teachers does not entirely depend on the mentor-teacher, but also on the tertiary institution. This notion infers that tertiary institutions tend to generalize the social context of many schools, forgetting the importance of preparing the student for the diverse environments which they will be faced with. "Teaching practice programmes must include exposure to authentic as well as context-based teaching experiences and situations to enable student-teachers to develop practical skills and human relationships" (Nkambule, 2017, 192).

## **2.9. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework can be described as various ideas that the researcher may have about a certain topic as well as how they put these ideas together and try to explain a certain phenomenon. A conceptual framework based on the "five-factor mentoring model" by Hudson (2004) is utilised in this study. The conceptual framework guided the design of this qualitative case study since it served as a lens through which interview questions were formulated and analysed (Agee, 2009). The five-factor mentoring model bases its belief on these five factors, namely: personal

attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback, which are fundamental for effective mentoring to take place. The figure below tries to explain the five-factor mentoring model in fine detail.

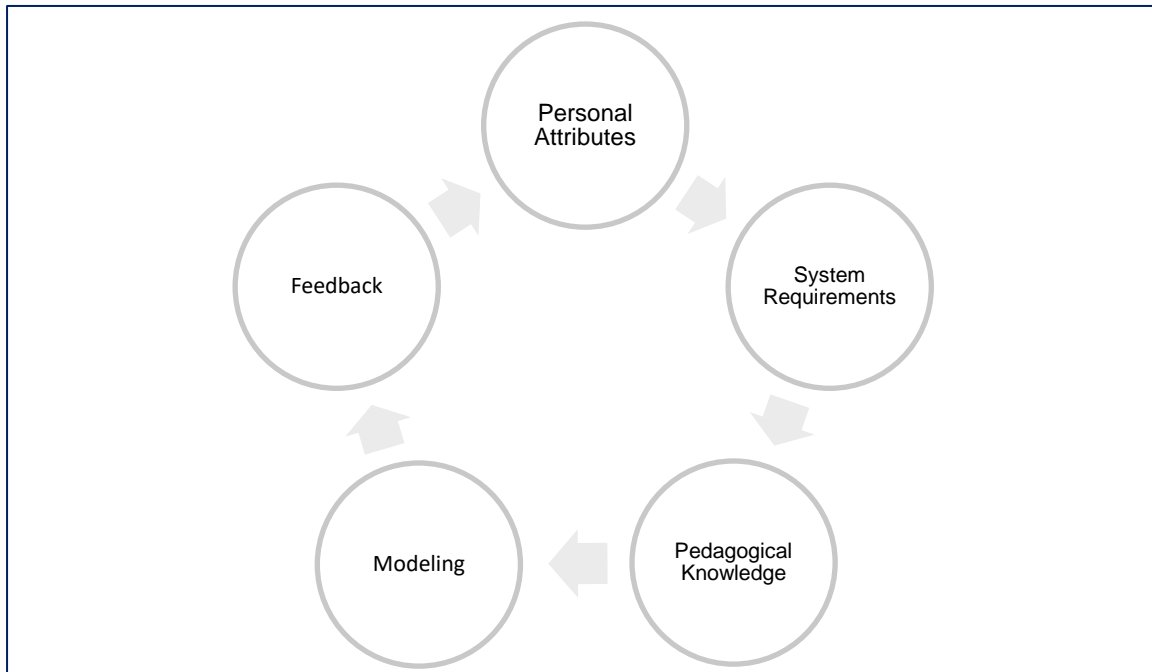


Figure 2.1: 5 Factor mentoring model by Peter Hudson (2004)

However, for purposes of this study, the Hudson model was adapted to include the personal attributes and commitment of the mentor-teachers and student-teachers at the forefront.

Effective mentoring is described as a two-way relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Mpofu, 2016). For the mentors to perform effectively and diligently in their role, they need to know what is required of them and what is essential when executing their role of mentoring. A well-trained and skilled mentor-teacher is one who communicates well with evidence of good teaching practice which brings out the best in both the learner and the student-teachers in terms of the desired teaching skills.

## **The application of the framework**

In this section, the 5-factor mentoring model is described as well as how it was applied in the study:

The 5-factor mentoring used in analysing the mentoring processes of the mentor-teachers and student-teachers is made up of: personal attributes and commitment, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback. For a working relationship to be a positive one, both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher need to be committed in ensuring that learning from the form of mentoring takes place.

Though the mentor-teacher is appointed as the facilitator of learning, student-teachers also need to be directly involved and show commitment during teaching practice. The mentor-teacher and student-teacher are to be committed and use their personal attributes to ensure that the mentoring process is successful. This can be accomplished by putting the personal attributes and commitments of the mentor-teachers at the forefront of the teaching practice. In order for the mentoring process to be effective, the remaining factors, which are pedagogical content knowledge, system requirements, modelling and feedback, cannot be used in isolation. The mentor-teacher ought to use their pedagogical content knowledge in order to demonstrate to the student-teacher the required and approved teaching methods, portray and provide the system requirements of the teaching profession, model the appropriate everyday functions for teachers and give feedback on the student-teachers teaching, lesson planning and overall performance during the teaching practice. Providing feedback will also include highlighting areas of improvement for both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher.

Although the 5-factor mentoring was used to analyse the mentoring processes of mentor-teachers and student-teachers. It was not adequate as a standalone. Therefore, a conceptual model was developed to further understand the role of support necessary for a student-teacher's professional development.

Below is a figure of the conceptual framework developed and adopted in this study.

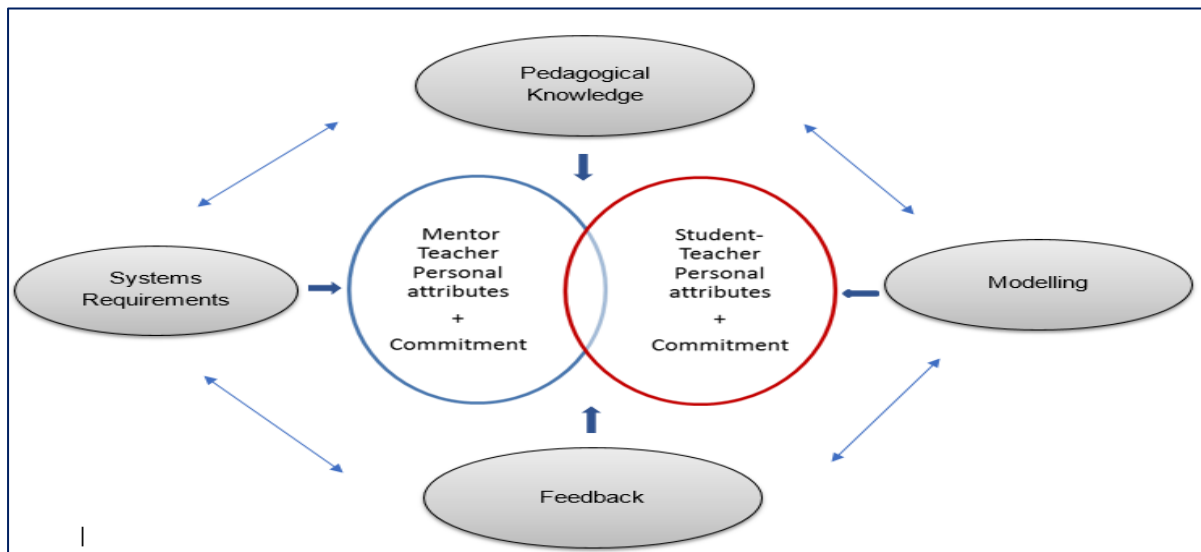


Figure 2.2: Mentoring Support Model of Mentor-Teacher and Student-Teacher (adapted, Hudson, 2004)

The key concepts that inform the Mentoring Support Model illustrated above will now be unpacked for further understanding.

### **Personal attributes and commitment of both mentor-teachers and student-teachers**

The 5-factor mentoring model defines personal attributes as, the values needed to become an ethical teacher or prospective teacher. Teaching-Practice is the student-teachers' first contact with the real environment of teaching. Many student-teachers see the mentor-teachers as their role models. Mentor-teachers therefore need to ensure that they model the best and accepted attributes. Role modelling is thought to be an integral component of education.

### **Personal attributes and commitment of mentor-teachers**

Mentors need to have an interest in the student-teachers' development. Frequent and continuous dialogue of lesson plans and overall experiences of teaching practice need to constantly take place. Student-teachers need to be supported through uplifting and constructive advice, this way the student-teacher is bound to gain confidence in their teaching. These are the abilities and features that the mentor-



teacher needs to have or acquire. For the mentoring process to work effectively, the mentor-teacher and student-teacher need to build sound relationships. Effective mentoring needs to be guided by a clear understanding of teacher learning and supported by a professional culture that favours both a sense of collaboration and inquiry Smolik (2010, 5).

The mentor-teachers' personal attributes are undeniably very important during the mentoring process. The personal attributes and commitment of both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher play a fundamental role in the success of the teaching practice programme. The personal attributes that mentors require, as mentioned by Hudson (2004) is that they ought to be supportive, they should understand that this is a new environment for the student-teachers and that they have an obligation ensure that they are always there for the student-teachers, both emotionally and physically, through providing encouragement and recognizing the needs of the student-teachers. In addition to being supportive, Kennedy & Dorman (2002) state that the mentor-teacher and student-teachers should be attentive to each other's needs. Being attentive involves ensuring that they pay attention and be careful in every situation that involves both parties.

An attentive person is one that is observant, pays attention to every detail, is an attentive listener and that attention is paid towards their needs. Zachery (2002) echoes that having open and honest conversations also forms part of being in a successful mentoring partnership. Having open and honest communication ensures that each person feels valued and it also builds a culture of trust as well as encouraging a safe space for people to feel comfortable when one has to address specific problems or issues that may arise during the programme. Mentor-teachers should be the student-teachers' first point of reference when they need any assistance when it comes to teaching practices within the school environment. Mentor-teachers show positive personal attributes by having a positive attitude when it comes to the teaching profession despite any negative experience they may have, especially within the South African context, i.e. lack of leadership and learner behaviour.

Commitment to effective mentorship persuades mentor-teachers to help student-teachers transcend in skill, development and ability. This commitment is in the form of investing their time for the professional development of the student-teacher, putting aside some time to train, observe, assess, give feedback and reflect on the student-teachers development and on where they need to improve. Mentor-teachers and student-teachers should understand that people learn differently and have different characteristics.

### **Personal attributes and commitment of student teachers**

The mentoring process will only be successful if both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher are committed to play their role. Student-teachers ought to understand that they too, have to show commitment. The commitment that the student-teachers need to show is that they are willing to learn and take advice, commit to plan and be prepared whenever they are required teach a lesson, respect the mentor-teachers' classroom, adapt the mentor-teachers teaching style to their own as well as being committed to learning new things. Passionate student-teachers are seen by their commitment to learn and develop into professional teachers. Whilst the mentor-teacher is responsible for mentoring the student-teachers, the student-teachers should be active participants in their learning during teaching practice. Showing commitment means that student-teachers are open to learning new things, being punctual for lessons, planning for lessons, being open to receiving feedback from the mentor-teachers and taking that feedback and working on the areas of improvement. The personal attributes of the student-teachers are also placed at the forefront of the mentoring process. They consist of showing active involvement when they are being mentored and showing respect towards their mentor-teachers.

### **System Requirements**

With any profession there is always a correct way of doing things. There are guiding policies, structures and systems that are put in place to ensure that employees follow current accepted guidelines and practices. In the context of education and the teaching profession, one of the system requirements put in place is the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011). The CAPS document provides a guideline of the resources needed, assessment guidelines, what to teach and how to

teach it. It serves as a guide to guarantee that the teacher plans and prepares their daily tasks. In addition, it makes certain that teaching and learning, and assessment standards are set and maintained throughout the country in public schools. The aim of having a national curriculum is so people don't do their own thing and so that standards are not compromised, or to also address the inequalities of a differentiated apartheid curriculum based on racial categories. The National Curriculum grants an opportunity to the knowledge, skills and values recognized and acknowledged in South Africa. A national curriculum intends to warrant that learners obtain knowledge and skills. "In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperative" CAPS (2011). Having this national curriculum warrants that there is coherence with what is taught in South African schools, it ensures that there is a standard being set and that teachers adhere to this set standard. It aims to introduce learners to essential information and knowledge needed to be educated individuals. The curriculum also guarantees that there is uniformity in schools in terms of what content is being taught by teachers.

Having a good understanding of the curriculum is fundamental and mentor-teachers need to have enough experience in the teaching profession to ensure that they mentor the student-teachers so that they can acquire a clear understanding and knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers need to have a clear understanding of the curriculum and adjust their teaching practices according to what is documented in the CAPS document. The role of the mentor-teacher is to ensure that they guide the mentor-teachers in becoming acquainted with the system requirements of the teaching profession. "The mentor's role must include addressing system requirements so that mentees can be more focused on planning and implementing quality educational practices" (Hudson, 2004, 142).

Mentor-teachers should be knowledgeable about the school's curriculum, effective methods of conveying the curriculum according to the learners' needs, as well as effective teaching strategies. Mentors should familiarize themselves with the current curriculum which is implemented in the school.

Before the student-teachers enter the teaching profession as teachers, they will be required to understand how the education system is structured, the laws and rules which should to be followed and they need to understand the system requirements.

“Mentors can provide valuable assistance with mentees’ understanding of key practices associated with the System Requirements factor” (Hudson, 2004, 4). There are key factors in mentoring which can be linked to system requirements, which include teaching content that is relevant to the subject in which the teacher will be teaching. The next factor is the curriculum which is specific to the specific grade or phase that the teacher teaches in and lastly, the policies that the school has put in place to make sure that there is structure and uniformity within the school. “Hence, mentoring aims, curriculum, and policies in specific primary subject areas may advance the mentees’ understanding of System Requirements, especially if this mentoring is connected with the other four factors” (Hudson, 2004, 4). System requirements pertain to the objectives and goals that are set in which both the teachers and learners should achieve, the school, district and national policies put in place to ascertain that the structure and the subject-specific content covered in the curriculum.

“This involved the mentor relaying technical advice supporting elementary science instruction. The mentee was made aware of policies and practices for implementing curriculum documents including local safety concerns and issues” (Smolik, 2010, 142). These structures and systems are put in place in order for teachers to be aware of what needs to be done, as they form part of the main core of the teachers’ job description and mentor-teachers need to ensure that they spend time explaining and training the student-teachers in how to implement these systems.

### **Pedagogical Content knowledge of the mentor-teacher**

The mentor-teacher's ability to teach will be a good example to the student-teachers of how effective teaching takes place as well as providing a clear understanding of the teaching profession. "This involves the content knowledge as well as planning, timetabling lessons, teaching strategies, problem-solving, classroom management, questioning skills, implementing effective practices and assessment (Hudson, Skamp & Brook, 2005; Schavarien & Cosgrove, 1997)" (Hudson, 2007). The mentors’ teaching strategies are fundamental to how one delivers a lesson as it is during this process where the mentor-teacher can provide a more developed and practical demonstration.

The mentor is required to constantly review the student-teacher's pedagogical knowledge to ascertain that they are teaching according to the system requirements of the particular school and curriculum. Teachers are lifelong learners and they should be in constant pursuit of improving themselves by keeping up to date with the ever-changing and ever-improving information-era world in which we live. They have to ensure that they teach content that is current and not outdated for learners to be able to adapt to the globalized and competitive society that they live in. "System requirements present quality control directions by providing a curriculum that focuses on achieving specific aims for teaching (Lenton & Turner, 1999; Peterson & Williams, 1998)" (Hudson, 2004, 4).

Knowing the requirements that are necessary within the educational profession ensures quality education is provided. Once the prospective teachers enter the education system, the teachers should have an understanding of the system requirements of education or the teaching profession. Hudson (2004) states that the system requirements consist of 3 fundamental practices, namely the policies that schools put in place, which stipulate the requirements needed to be followed for specific subjects and grade levels. The second practice is that the teacher has to know the curriculum and, in the South African context, the CAPS document. The last practice is the specific curriculum based on that grade and subject. Mentor-teachers are supposed to teach the system requirements to the student-teachers as, with any profession; it comes with its own policies and regulations which guide the profession. These policies provide guidelines on the practices which ought to be followed and policies that are aligned with the curriculum related to the specific subject and grade that will be taught. The system requirements also provide the aims that have to be met for a person for that specific subject. Providing the student-teachers with the fundamental knowledge on documents such as the CAPS and requirements of the South African Teachers Council of Education will help the student-teachers become accustomed to the South African education system.

Having systems that are put in place at a particular school will ensure that the teachers are aware of what they need to do and the specific tasks which they have to carry out as well as how those tasks need to be carried out. It is essential that the

mentor-teacher guides them through these requirements as the student-teachers who are prospective teachers should know policies and procedures put in place because they address important issues such as how to conduct themselves as professional teachers, what constitutes as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as well as ensuring that the decisions which they take are in line with what the policy and procedures document of the particular school or department of education stipulates. The purpose of a particular policy is to establish practices, boundaries and behaviours within the teaching profession as it is a highly social profession that requires one to know and understand the pre-requisites of being able to interact responsibly and professionally with the learners, colleagues, parents and the leadership at the school.

It is also important that the mentor-teachers train the student-teachers on class norms as they are the expectations set in terms of how they should conduct themselves as well as the rules that need to be set and followed in the class. The aim systems requirement within the educational context is to ascertain that teachers and all stakeholders within the school setting know the measures put in place, in order to uphold, develop, train, teach and sustain the quality of education in South African. As such it is imperative that the mentor-teachers train the student-teachers in such a way that they uphold the quality standards which are set before them. Mentoring and training the student-teachers on the important system requirements will make sure that they transition smoothly into the teaching profession as they will have a clear knowledge of what is expected of them when they enter the professional world of the teaching profession.

### **Modelling of teaching strategies and classroom management techniques**

Demonstrating suitable and acceptable conduct is fundamental, as many student-teachers are likely to adopt what their mentor-teachers do, therefore the mentor-teacher must portray themselves suitably and acceptably so that the student-teacher may know how to conduct themselves. "Mentors are defined as experts who can model effective teaching practice" (Hudson, 2004, 143). Sound interpersonal relationships between mentor-teachers and student-teachers are crucial in the mentoring process, and this positive relationship can serve as an effective guideline for the student-teachers on how this can facilitate effective learning. Mentor-teachers

must model suitable classroom practices that are appropriate for the learners. Shifting from teacher-centred learning towards involving the learners and acting as the facilitator of learning is vital. "Modelling allows mentees to conceptualize effective teaching practices towards developing their knowledge and skills" (Hudson, 2004, 143). It is during their lessons that the mentor-teacher and student-teacher can showcase their different teaching styles.

When one is modelling a particular aspect of what is being learned, it means that the teacher shows a visual representation of what needs to be learned. Mentor-teachers are required to model what lessons need to look like, which elements should be included in the lesson, how to establish classroom management as well as how to create a positive learning environment. The mentor-teacher has to model what the student-teachers have to do before the lesson begins to create a positive learning environment because, when the teacher can create a positive learning environment, learners show an increased eagerness and willingness to learn, be interactive and engage with their learning. The modelling process helps to understand how certain things are to be done; it assists people in visually and practically seeing how certain tasks should to be executed. It helps the individual to understand what to expect in the classroom environment, how to deal with certain situations and how every aspect of the lesson is taught.

The mentor-teacher has the obligation to model how lesson plans are to be scripted and the importance of scripting and internalizing these lessons as this will also play a huge role in ensuring that the student-teachers are always prepared and plan for their lessons. Lesson plan scripting is one of the system requirements that teachers need to execute to ensure that what they teach is aligned with the CAPS document and that it is relevant to what the learners are supposed to learn. "Constructive feedback is an essential adjunct of effective learning" (Omer & Abdularhim, 2017). Constructive feedback involves creating a safe learning environment, effective and open communication and accurate information on the curriculum and pedagogical strategies.

In addition, the feedback message should be immediate, specific, accurate, confidential, relevant, tailored, and understandable, voiced in non-judgemental language and provides suggestions for improvement. Such feedback could be assigned as an effective feedback that would likely enhance students' learning.

### **Feedback from the mentor-teacher to the student-teacher**

As with any relationship, communication is essential, thus, the mentor-teacher is required to be able to communicate effectively with the student-teacher with regards to their progress and areas of improvement, and the mentor-teacher also needs to articulate what their expectations are during this process.

*"Effective mentors articulate expectations and provide advice to the mentee, they review lesson plans, observe the mentee teach, provide oral and written feedback, and further feedback on the mentee's evaluation of their teaching and the learning environment" (Hudson, 2010, 33).*

The five-factor framework is relevant because it provides clear and effective requirements needed to be an effective mentor. If the mentor-teachers are trained according to these factors, they will be aware of the role which they are expected to play as well as to be effective in their role. Constructive feedback is imperative as it promotes personal and professional growth. Student-teachers would feel inspired to learn from their mistakes, the mentor-teachers have to provide constructive feedback in such a way that they do not feel attacked. It is about attacking the issue at hand, constructive feedback should enhance the acquisition of learning and promote professional development and growth of student-teachers.

However, feedback, if not communicated correctly, could result in unwanted consequences and have a negative impact on the mentor-teacher and student-teachers' relationship. (Kluwer, 2017) states that "poor feedback often results in a dismissive and defensive reaction which means, at a glance, the learners would not accept the feedback and they would not work on it". Feedback can be defined as information given to an individual about their performance on a task, this information is given by a more knowledgeable individual gives out positive criticism to another individual. Once time to reflect and analyse on what is being said has been taken,



both parties can think about the best possible solution and next steps to improve their performance or skills. Mentor-teachers also should provide feedback on what the student-teachers are doing well. This will also improve and boost the student-teachers' confidence. This constructive feedback will provide the student-teachers with positive criticism as it enables them to improve, continue or to bring about change regarding certain things in their teaching career.

The rapport between the mentor-teacher and student-teacher should consist of open and honest communication. Open and honest communication enables feedback given to be correct and accurate, which will aid the prospective teacher, in this case the student-teacher, in becoming well-trained and skilled once they enter the teaching profession. Feedback is imperative as it will ensure that the student-teacher is on track and that tasks given are carried out correctly. Providing feedback to the student-teacher will make certain that major and key errors are addressed and dealt with, especially regarding the system requirements and how one should conduct themselves as they enter the teaching profession. Though some feedback will be difficult to articulate, open and honest feedback needs to be communicated in such a way that it will not offend the other person. Feedback should be to the benefit of the other person and it should build, motivate and not discourage the individual.

If feedback is given to improve the student-teacher, it motivates them and improves their performance, especially when they take heed of the advice given to them. The feedback given will also improve their personal growth as well as their growth as professional teachers. Though feedback is imperative, the mentor-teacher give feedback in such a way that it does not affect the student-teachers' confidence and self-esteem. The mentor-teacher should be specific when giving out feedback for the student-teachers to know what to fix and what to continue doing. They are required to give the student-teachers time to reflect and understand the feedback that is given to them. Once the feedback has been given, it has to be followed by advice on improvements needed and possible solutions. If done correctly, feedback is a very powerful tool in the mentoring process, and it is one that will set up the student-teachers for success.

## **Conclusion of the chapter**

This chapter dealt with literature review. The literature reviewed, provided key insights into mentor-teachers and student-teachers. The salient findings of this literature review were that the conceptual framework adapted in this study proved to be a lens to help deepen the understanding of the problem. The review also found that provision of support to mentor-teachers was minimal as most had not received training of mentoring. It further revealed that the role of the mentor-teachers is to provide the student-teacher with guidance, motivation support and assistance on how to be a well rounded and professional teacher. Once the mentor-teacher understands their role, they will understand the support needs of the student-teachers. Furthermore, it shed some light on common challenges faced during teaching practice and these were lack of training and allocated to effectively mentor student-teachers. The chapter attempted to bring forth what researchers have said about the topic under study. It also explained the conceptual framework which underpins the study and how the researcher adapted the framework to suit the objectives of the study.

The following chapter demonstrates the understanding that informed the methodology adopted for this study.

## CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three provides a plan of how the study will be conducted as well as details the plan of action for discerning and understanding the role of mentor-teachers in developing student-teachers. This chapter discusses the research design, which includes a clear and detailed plan and the process of the study. The purpose of the investigation was to gain an in-depth understanding of mentor-teachers' experiences and knowledge about the role of mentoring student-teachers during teaching practice. Moreover, it encompassed an exploration of how mentor-teachers understand their role in shaping student-teachers by giving them the support they need to become professional and dedicated teachers. The primary basis of an effective mentorship is to ensure that mentor-teachers are fully equipped with sufficient training to successfully mentor student-teachers. At a micro level, the study hopes to provide schools and tertiary institutions with strategies which can address the challenges that mentor-teachers face during teaching practice. The chapter is made simpler to understand by following a structured approach as is illustrated in the diagram below.



Figure 3.1: Chapter three process map by Heher & Chen (2017)

## **3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design**

The primary research question of this study is:

“How do mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice?”

The research method used is a qualitative research design. As stated by Cropley (2019), “qualitative research is based on the idea that reality is subjective and that individuals have their own views about the world which are based on their experiences”. Maree (2016) states that the aim is to gain a clear understanding of the study from within, through the participant's observations and their experiences of the teaching practice programme. Qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach, which means it studies phenomena in its most natural setting to clearly understand and make meaning of or interpret the phenomena in terms of how people have experienced it or understand the phenomena under study. An exploratory approach is taken to gain the views and experiences of the role of mentor-teachers during teaching practice. The data collection method used is in the form of a semi-structured interview to try and gather the participants' understanding of their role during teaching practice. The aim is to gain a clear understanding of the study from within, through the participant's observations and their experiences of the teaching practice programme.

According to Akhter (2016), the research design is the plan, structure, investigation and strategy of the research. This segment discusses the plan and structure of the study, which are deemed to be effective and adequate in answering the research questions. As a point of departure, this study chose to use a qualitative research design as a tool to answer the research questions, which are derived from the problems discussed in the first chapter. De Vos (2011, 308) describe qualitative research design as a process of “understanding rather than explanation, with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement”. A qualitative research design is used in this study through mentor-teachers' experiences, their understanding of their readiness and their role as mentor-teachers who will be

mentoring student-teachers to ensure that they are professional and effective in their role as prospective teachers.

De Vos (2011) describes case studies as often being used by researchers in education to understand certain phenomena. He goes on to further stipulate that research design enables the researcher to directly observe the case in question. Case studies allow the researcher to understand the role of the mentor-teacher. This research made use of a multiple case study and in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, the case selection was three schools, eight mentor-teachers and six student-teachers. In terms of the advantages that the case study holds for this specific study, Yazan (2015) states that a multiple case study design enables the researcher to gain data and information through multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to seam together in a triangulating mode in order to garner the ability to see what the world of teaching practice looks like from the viewpoint of mentor-teachers and student-teachers.

### **3.3. INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM**

A paradigm can be defined by Maree (2016) as a general assumption about human life which can only be understood from within. It is a lens through which a study views a certain phenomenon. Maree is also of the view that in order to understand the views of people, one needs to study the social context and natural environment in which they reside. The interpretivist approach allows for a study to investigate and understand how people interpret different experiences. This approach is rooted in understanding knowledge and that human and social sciences cannot be the same. The interpretivist approach believes that there is a relativist ontology in which phenomena has numerous interpretations rather than believing that a phenomenon can only be measured through a process of measurement. Through using this approach, researchers attempt to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon instead of generalising the views of every individual. Similarly, Hammersley (2013) states that the interpretivist approach attempts to gain a deeper understanding of how people experience the world. It is imperative to note that people have a different way of viewing and understanding phenomena or events and there are diverse factors which may cause these views, such as the social context and diverse cultures. To avoid bias, different participants were interviewed, thus gaining a

diverse understanding about the phenomena under study with different perspectives according to respective participants' experiences.

### **3.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research data collection methods are used for this study in order to gain data on how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice. The research methods used allow the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants' views, beliefs and experiences. By interviewing the participants, the interviewer is able to have direct access to the participants who can provide their own personal knowledge and experiences about the phenomena under study. These direct accounts are able to provide data and findings which allow the researcher to draw conclusions about the study. According to Maree (2016), qualitative research methods allow the researcher to understand the participants' personal experiences and beliefs, thus allowing the researcher to gain an understanding about the role of mentor-teachers.

#### **3.4.1 Sampling Method**

According to Maree (2016, 192), "There are two major classes to which sampling methods belong: probability methods and non-probability". For this study, non-probability sampling is utilised, which can be defined as methods that do not use a random selection of population elements as well as generalisations about the population under study. Often in qualitative research, non-probability sampling is used when one conducts research that only requires a small number of participants; however, these participants can provide in-depth information on their experiences of the phenomena that are being studied Curtis, Murphy & Shields (2014, 29). Purposive sampling is one of the main types of non-probability sampling methods used in this study. It can be used for qualitative and quantitative studies; this sampling method can be used if the researcher wants access to a certain group of people who have been selected under a specific criterion. This was used to identify and select mentor-teachers and student-teachers who were interviewed for this study as they were able to provide an in-depth account of their experiences during teaching practice. The chosen participants are the key role players during teaching

practice and thus they were able to provide clear, detailed and in-depth information about the phenomena under study as they have direct influence and knowledge on how they should execute their roles as mentor-teachers. The sample in this study comprised of mentor-teachers and student-teachers. De Vos (2011) and Maree (2016) state that by exploring the richness, in-depth information and phenomena, a study can develop a sense of understanding of the data received from mentor-teachers and student-teachers. To address the limitations associated with purposive sampling, a sample which had characteristics that were relevant to this study and a sample which had characteristics that were relevant to this study and that were able to have an in-depth understanding of the study was used. The participants were chosen according to specific characteristics that they had, as listed below:

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<p><b>Area/Location:</b></p> <p><b>Mentor-Teachers:</b> The mentor-teacher must teach in a school located in the Mamelodi Township</p> <p><b>Student-Teachers:</b> the student-teachers must do their 4th year teaching practicals at a school in the Mamelodi Township</p>
	<p><b>Experience:</b> The mentor-teachers must have a minimum of 3 years of mentoring experience</p> <p><b>Gender of participants:</b> either male or female</p>
	<p><b>Type of school:</b> Public/Government school to be located in the Mamelodi Township in the East of Pretoria/Tshwane</p>

Figure 3.2: Selection criteria for participants

### 3.4.2. Research Site

The study was conducted in Mamelodi Township, located 20km east of the City of Tshwane. The social-economic status of the township remains low due to high poverty levels with a high rate of unemployment and female or child-headed households. The Mamelodi Township has fifty-six schools. However, for this study, the schools were limited to schools which accommodate student-teachers during

their teaching practice. Interest in this study stems from the researchers' personal experience as a University of Pretoria fourth year final year bachelor of education student, which took place at a school in a no fee-paying school in Mamelodi located in Pretoria. The reason for choosing this area is because it represents a geographical area with many dysfunctional schools.

### **3.4.3 Target Population**

Mentor-teachers and student-teachers were sampled from the Mamelodi Township within the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The three schools were selected based on their location as they were located closely to one another, which made it easier for the researcher to travel to. The employment of purposive sampling was to ensure that the selection of the population met the criteria put in place in the study; however, to avoid generalisations, the researcher limited the findings to the schools and participants in the study.

### **3.4.4. Sample Size**

Eight high school mentor-teachers and six student-teachers were sampled from three separate schools in Mamelodi. This sample was done through the criterion set by this study; the participants had to meet the criteria put in place by the researcher. A maximum of eight mentor-teachers and six student-teachers were individually interviewed at a time most convenient to their availability, therefore a maximum of fourteen participants' altogether. The criterion used for the high school selection in Mamelodi is that they are hosting student-teachers for their teaching practice. Mentor-teacher participants are responsible for guiding the student-teachers (mentees) during this process to ensure that they are ready for the professional world of teaching, as they are also the ones who spend most of their time with the students and thus know more about their mentees.

### **3.4.5. Data Collection**

#### **Semi-structured recorded interviews**

This study conducted fourteen recorded and individual face-to-face interviews; the interviews were semi-structured in nature and conducted at a maximum of three schools in Mamelodi. The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was to



build a social relationship with the participants. In this way, the participants were free and comfortable to share their experiences and knowledge on the teaching practice programme. It also ensured that information is not misinterpreted as the researcher was able to follow up on a specific answer. Listening, social interaction and narratives are a clear way of gaining knowledge and knowing and understanding the study from the participants' point of view, especially to avoid misinterpretations of what is being said (De Vos, 2011). With the possibility of incorrect information that might be given by the participants and the participants giving information that the researcher wants to hear, the researcher ensured that different participants were interviewed to gain different perspectives. The participants' body language, facial expressions and reactions were taken into consideration especially to check if they were comfortable with answering questions asked by the researcher. Interviews were transcribed to provide clear information in a written format. The aim was to investigate and describe the role of the mentor-teacher in township schools.

### **Observations**

Observations can be described as a form of data collection method. In this instance, the researcher observed and took field notes in an unstructured way (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was a complete observer and observed without participating. The reason for doing this was to receive information as it occurred. For example, one of the student-teachers mentioned that her mentor-teacher does not come to the classroom with her and that she is always alone, so the researcher followed the student-teacher to class and indeed the mentor-teacher did not show up for the entire lesson. The observations only occurred after the interviews, once the transcription had been done, some information given needed to be validated. Hence another appointment was set to observe the participants in order to validate the participant's remarks. The main reason for using this type of data collection method was to validate and triangulate some of the responses received from some of the participants. This research made use of this method in order to study the mentor-teacher and the student-teacher's actions in their natural setting, which is the classroom, during teaching practice. This method was used in order to observe whether the mentor-teachers incorporated the 5-factor mentoring process to explain effective mentoring. This method examines the interactions between the student-teachers and the mentor-teachers. Initially, they were not forthcoming and were

nervous because of the researchers' presence, which was a disadvantage in using this method. Nonetheless, this method assisted the researcher to triangulate the data and validate some of the participants' inferences during the interviews.

### **3.4.6 Data collection process**

Before visiting the schools, an email was sent to the deputy dean of one of the universities in Pretoria. This was done to ask for permission to interview the student-teachers in that university. Once permission was granted, the researcher went to three schools in the chosen research site. The researcher visited the schools during the second teaching practice, which was during the third term of the school year. On the first day of each school visit, a meeting was set up with the school principal or the deputy principal of the school (depending on who was responsible for the student-teachers during teaching practice). During this meeting, an explanation to the principal was given about what the research was about and intentions to collect data. A commitment was made to the principal assuring him/her that no names of the respondents would be revealed.

Once permission by the principals and mentor-teachers was given, all of the student-teachers and mentor-teachers were individually interviewed. Thereafter, observation of the participants was conducted. This method was done to verify some claims that were made during the interviews. The length of each interview varied according to what each participant had to say regarding the questions posed to them.

### **3.4.7 Triangulation**

Triangulation in research can be defined as, the use and application of several research methods in a particular study. To ensure that the study is valid, two different types of data collection methods were utilised. The methods utilised in this study are observations and semi-structured recorder interviews. Mentor-teachers and student-teachers were interviewed in order to ensure that the best possible data from different experiences and from different sample groups was collected. Once the interviews were completed, an observation was scheduled, which was done to validate some of the claims that the participants made, in particular, the student-teachers.

## **The Role of the Researcher**

The researcher understands that there are many ways which bias can affect the the phenomena under study. From how data is collected, analysed and presented. Thus, to reduce this bias the researcher was very caustious as to not allow their own beliefs and practices to influence the research.

### **3.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

Transcription of information

Data analysis for this study was used as a process to present, describe, answer and evaluate information received from the participants of the study. The data required to be analysed was in the form of a transcription of data received during the face-to-face interviews. The natural context of the phenomena was studied to gain the best possible knowledge of the data presented. Once the interviews were conducted, the researcher listened to the recordings and the data was transcribed. Once the completion of the interview and transcription process was done the data was presented as emerging themes based on how the participants answered the questions Once data was transcribed and presented as emerging themes, the observation notes were used to triangulate and confirm some of the information given by the participants.

### 3.6. RESEARCH RESULTS

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Code</b>
Mentor-Teacher 1	MT 1
Mentor-Teacher 2	MT 2
Mentor-Teacher 3	MT 3
Mentor-Teacher 4	MT 4
Mentor-Teacher 5	MT 5
Mentor-Teacher 6	MT 6
Mentor-Teacher 7	MT 7
Mentor-Teacher 8	MT 8
Student-Teacher 1	ST 1
Student-Teacher 2	ST 2
Student-Teacher 3	ST 3
Student-Teacher 4	ST 4
Student-Teacher 5	ST 5
Student-Teacher 6	ST 6

Table 3.1: Coding used for the participants in the study

#### **Thematic content analysis**

The data analysis method process was in the form of thematic content analysis, which made use of qualitative research methods in the form of interviews. The aim was to identify a pattern or themes in the information received (Maree, 2015). These themes or patterns of information were arranged into themes, which was fundamental in answering the research questions. This type of analysis provides a narrative, descriptive and in-depth response of the information provided by the participants. The process of data analysis started with listening to the audio recordings before writing out what is said in the recordings. To ensure that the correct information is transcribed, the researcher thoroughly listened to the audio recordings to ensure that the correct and relevant information was transcribed. The

advantage of using this method was that during the interviews, the researcher was able to concentrate on what was being said and not be distracted by trying to capture the information in a written format.

### **3.7. RIGOUR**

In order to ensure rigour, the following steps were taken:

A criterion of the suitable participants who would give valid information of their experiences was set and the research site or context was defined. The style of data collection method was piloted during the researchers' honours year, where the same methods were used. To validate this interview protocol, the researchers' supervisor questioned if the questions used would answer the research problem. An expert in the field from one of the universities in Pretoria was consulted and he too validated the research questions. The instruments were piloted with a similar sample group. Feedback given was that some of the questions were ambiguous and at times, and further elaboration of the questions needed to be given to some of the participants. Some mentor-teachers would only give one-word answers while some of them did not want to participate in the study because of time and they had the fear that their identity would be revealed. This led the researcher to ensure that participants were notified ahead of time about the study and allow them to provide a date which was suitable for them to answer the questions. In terms of coding the participants, a pilot of the coding process was created. The coding MT and ST as a form of presenting or naming the participants instead of using their real names guarantee privacy. The reporting style was that of verisimilitude, to ensure trustworthiness. To ensure this, direct quotes of the participants were used.

#### **Trustworthiness of the study**

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher made use of literature that has been written around the topic and selected participants and research questions which assisted in ensuring that the data gathered was accurate and relevant to the study. The researcher asked the participants a series of questions and reflected on the answers given by them to ensure that the responses given were representative of the truth.

## **Credibility**

To ensure credibility, the study employed research methods which fit well and were aligned with the study. Going back to the interview questions and asking the participants to verify the answers also ensured credibility of the study. Going through the participants' answers ensured that what had been transcribed and interpreted was correct.

## **Transferability**

To ensure that there are no generalisations, participants had to fit into the criteria set in this study, this criterion was based on whether the teachers have mentored or not, they had to teach at a public school in Mamelodi with a minimum of 3 years mentoring experience. For the student-teachers, the criterion set for them was that they needed to be fourth year Bachelor of Education students who have done their teaching practice at a public school in Mamelodi. This set criterion ensured that the best possible candidates were selected to answer questions about the study in the best possible way. Thorough descriptions were given to ensure that readers get the full picture of the study.

## **Confirmability**

Bias was reduced by focusing on the participants' views.

## **3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics serve as the morals and principles that people need to follow in order to promote the objectives of a research study. Ethics ensure that a study is done in a morally acceptable manner that will not infringe the rights of those involved in the study.

*"The term ethics implies preferences that influence behaviour in human relations, conforming to a code of ethics, the rules of conduct, the responsibilities of the researcher and the standards of conduct of a given profession" Resources for Research Ethics Education (2016).*

It is imperative that every aspect and participant involved in this study was treated with the utmost respect. Thus, treating every participant with respect was the utmost imperative aspect of this research. In order for this aspect of the study to be met and that the dignity and respect of the participants was adhered to was by acquiring ethical clearance through the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, which ensured that the study was conducted in a safe manner which did not violate the participants in any manner or form. Once ethical clearance was approved this study received informed consent from the participants by providing them with consent letters assured the participants that their anonymity, confidentiality and privacy would be upheld at all times throughout the research project. They were also notified about the fact that their names would not be revealed in the study and instead of their names being used the study will use codes such as Mentor-Teacher 1 (MT 1) when the data is being presented.

### **Conclusion of the chapter**

This chapter provided key insights into the methodological and research design, it provided insight on the qualitative research design. It further explained the non-probability sampling method used to sample the participants and in this study. It further discussed the data collection methods that were followed. These methods were semi-structured recorded interviews and observations. Thereafter, it discussed the steps taken to ensure rigour of the study. Lastly the ethical considerations were discussed and the data analysis methods used in the study which will be further discussed in chapter four. Chapter four would deal with a discussion about what is discovered during the data collection process by describing the data collected, making interpretations about the data and finally, evaluating the data about the reviewed literature.

## **CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter four deals with the data collected from the participants of this study who are mentor-teachers and student-teachers. This chapter will also discuss and present the findings. The starting point of collecting the data arises from the main research question of this research project, which is:

**How do mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice?**

This is followed by sub-questions which are:

1. How do mentor-teachers understand the support needs of student-teachers?
2. What challenges are experienced in mentoring student-teachers?
3. What possible strategies can be suggested to improve student-teacher mentoring?

The conceptual framework is used to guide the identification of emerging themes. The main purpose of this chapter is to analyse, discuss and summarise the collected data. This chapter focusses on the data collection process and analysis of the data.

### **4.2. RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS**

As mentioned in chapter three the research data collection process took place in three schools in Mamelodi Township located twenty kilometres east of the City of Tshwane. The eight mentor-teachers and six student-teachers who were involved in this study participated in semi-structured individual recorded interviews. One of the mentor-teachers, who has had thirty-two years of teaching experience and has served as a mentor-teacher for fifteen years, has recently been a mentor-teacher for the University of Pretoria. The six student-teachers who participated in this study were also involved in semi-structured individual interviews all studied at the University of Pretoria and did their teaching Practice in schools situated in the Mamelodi Township.



### **4.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Codes were used when referring to the mentor-teachers and student-teachers. The Mentor-teachers were referred to as MT1, MT2, MT3, MT4, MT5, MT6, MT7 and MT8, the student-teachers were referred to as ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, ST5 and ST6. The names of the participants and schools are not mentioned. These assigned codes to the participants ensure that the anonymity and safety of the participants is respected. All of the participants willingly gave consent to participate in this research project, by signing consent letters provided to them.

The semi-structured individual interviews were conducted during an allocated time which would not affect teachers work engagements. The interviews were conducted in each of their school's meeting rooms or offices as this was a location that was empty and provided privacy during school time. The other teachers were in their classrooms and the office was the only place that was a private space without noise and other distractions.

The names of the participants and the schools were left out of the research dissertation, thus ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the study. During the interviews, the researcher asked probing questions to seek clarity on the data. They were passionate about the teaching profession and sharing their experiences during the programme. They were willing to share and became excited when talking about certain issues of the programme. One of them even mentioned that they are so glad that there was someone who realised that there should be more structure when training teachers, especially because it is such an important profession. The individual interviews were effective, and the participants felt comfortable as they were able to share their views openly and honestly.

#### **4.3.1 Profile of the participants**

##### **4.3.1.1 Mentor-Teacher 1**

The grade eleven and twelve male Tourism teacher was a twenty-eight-year-old, has been teaching for five years and has been a mentor-teacher for five years since 2014. The mentor-teacher felt that he was pushed into the deep end because he was allocated to be a mentor-teacher in the first year of his teaching career. With no

teaching experience or mentoring experience, he felt that he did not know what he was doing, which was a cause for his concern as he felt that the student-teacher he was mentoring would go into the teaching profession without being adequately trained by a skilled mentor teacher.

#### 4.3.1.2 Mentor-Teacher 2

The fifty-eight-year-old grade nine to twelve female Accounting teacher has had thirty-two years of teaching experience. With fifteen years of mentoring experience, she is yet to fully understand what is required of her as a mentor-teacher. She feels that the student-teachers are an extra burden as there is never enough time to mentor the student-teachers, so she sometimes gives them some of her admin work such as marking and entering the marks on the online system to keep them busy. She also feels that allowing the teachers to teach some of their lessons is a waste of time as some have a syllabus to follow and certain content needs to be covered within a specific period. So, giving the student-teacher who is not experienced to teach the lesson is a waste of time as she would have to teach the lesson again.

#### 4.3.1.3 Mentor-Teacher 3

The grade ten History and Tourism male teacher has six years of teaching experience. He was one of the most passionate mentor-teachers the researcher has ever had an encounter with. He spoke with such great enthusiasm and was one of the most passionate and enthusiastic about the teaching profession and being a mentor to the student-teachers of those interviewed. The mentor-teacher mentioned that he always looked forward to mentoring the student-teachers, although he highlighted that he would appreciate more involvement from tertiary institutions as well as the institutions providing in-depth expectations needed from the mentor-teachers instead of just sending the student-teachers with a letter and a booklet that explains what they need to do. He mentioned that most of the mentor-teachers do not read the booklets and would recommend a workshop or training session.

#### 4.3.1.4 Mentor-Teacher 4

The grade eight and nine Mathematics female teacher, has had eight years of teaching experience, also expressed her love for the teaching practice programme,

especially intending to allow the student-teachers to put theory into practice. However, she was not happy with the execution of the teaching practice programme as a whole. She felt that the programme was made too easy for the student-teachers, especially because some mentor-teachers would allow the student-teachers to do their "own thing" during the teaching practice and would not even be assessed. She felt that student-teachers would only be serious about the teaching practice programme when the mentor-lecturer, who was allocated by the University, comes in to observe, which only occurs twice during the programme. She felt that there should be strict conditions to ensure that all of the parties involved are doing what is expected of them to ensure the development and training of the student-teachers, who will be qualified teachers in the next year. She states that there needs to be a clear, open and honest partnership between the mentor-teachers, student-teachers and mentor-lecturers. The creation of this partnership will ensure that each of the individuals involved will know what is expected of them.

#### 4.3.1.5 Mentor-Teacher 5

Mentor-Teacher five is a grade two female Life Orientation teacher, has been teaching for eight years with five years of mentoring experience. She is happy with being a mentor-teacher and saw it as an opportunity to empower the next generation of teachers and felt honoured to be allowed to mentor the student-teachers. She also mentioned that there was no time allocated in the school's timetable to mentor the student-teachers, but to ensure that the student-teachers get the required training and fulfil the duties given to them by their tertiary institutions, and to make certain that she completes and meets her obligation of being a teacher. She would teach in tandem with the student-teacher. She felt that this helped with improving the student-teachers' self-confidence whilst also understanding the complexities that come with the teaching practice programme.

#### 4.3.1.6 Mentor-Teacher 6

Mentor-teacher six is a grade four Natural Science teacher, has nine years of teaching experience and two years of mentoring experience. She has a degree in Education as well as her Honours in a Bachelor of Education. Although she is now teaching at a Public school in Mamelodi Township, she has been teaching at a

private school for six years. She mentions that it was a huge shift and culture shock when she transitioned from a private school to a public school, which has fewer resources with major expectations, especially in terms of scholar achievement. She expressed that being a mentor-teacher is an added expectation to the endless list of expectations placed on teachers with little or no resources provided to adequately and effectively do what is expected of them. She feels that teachers have to be trained to do what is needed of them as mentor-teachers. She feels that it should be the mentor-teachers' choice if they want to mentor the student-teachers, especially as many of the teachers are already teaching under stressful conditions and mentoring is an added stress. If training is provided in their role of being mentor-teachers, it would be easier for the mentor-teachers to understand what their role is and thus execute this role effectively.

#### 4.3.1.7 Mentor-Teacher 7

Mentor-teacher seven is a grade eleven and twelve History and Geography teacher who teaches in one of the top-performing schools in the Mamelodi Township. She has five years of teaching experience and two years of mentoring experience. She feels that she understands her role of being a mentor-teacher. This is made easier because she has read through what is expected of mentor-teachers and that having a school that provides them with the needed resources to execute their everyday tasks makes it easier for them to always be willing to take part in the teaching practice programme. She mentioned that this school was the school that she did her teaching practice programme in and the mentoring that she got from her mentor-teacher is helping her to understand and execute her role as a mentor-teacher. She states that having supportive leadership in the school that is passionate about professional development helps her whenever she needs guidance when performing her role as a mentor-teacher.

#### 4.3.1.8 Mentor-Teacher 8

Mentor-teacher eight is a grade one male Creative Arts and Life Orientation teacher, has seven years of teaching experience and five years of mentoring experience. The school in which the participant teaches has poor infrastructure, the teachers skip lessons and most of them were sitting in the classroom instead of teaching. The

mentor-teacher mentioned that he is happy to accommodate the student-teachers because with the large amount of workload that the teachers have, the student-teachers are there to help them teach some of the lessons as well as help with administration work that they may have. He also mentioned that although he does not fully understand the mentor-teachers' role, he gives the student-teachers his daily tasks that he, as a teacher, must perform, as the student-teacher is training to be a prospective teacher. He mentions that having the student-teachers there during teaching practice at times adds extra work for the mentor-teachers because they have to assess the student-teachers as well as deal with the numerous forms which need to be filled in. He feels that if some form of training is provided for the mentor-teachers to understand their role, it will be beneficial for them in understanding what they need to do.

#### 4.3.1.9 Student-Teacher 1

Student-teacher one is a female student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. She is majoring in History and Life Orientation. The student-teacher did their teaching practice in the Mamelodi Township, and she feels that the teaching practice programme was helpful as her mentor teacher knew what was required of student-teachers and the mentor understood their role as a mentor-teacher. She felt that the teaching practice programme needs to be longer and they have to be allocated with more lessons to teach for her to get enough practice and training in teaching and conducting lessons. She also felt that she needs extra training in what is expected of them when planning and preparing for the lessons and how to deal with learners with special needs as well as behaviour management.

#### 4.3.1.10 Student-teacher 2

Student-teacher two is a female student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. She is majoring in Mathematics and Physical Science. The student-teacher did her second teaching practice at a school in the Mamelodi Township, where she felt that the teaching practice programme was not helpful as she mentioned that her mentor-teacher would never show up to class and they were left to teach all of the mentor-teachers' lessons while the mentor-teacher would not attend the lessons and would sit in the staffroom instead. She felt that she was doing the tasks of the mentor-

teacher as the mentor-teacher would also give her the task of compiling tests as well as marking those tests.

#### 4.3.1.11 Student-teacher 3

Student-teacher three is a female student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. She is majoring in Life Orientation and English. The student-teacher felt that the teaching practice programme was helpful as it helped her to understand what will be expected of her once she enters the teaching environment.

ST 3 added that:

*"It helped me understand the importance of the programme and how I could put what I had learned in University into practice".*

She felt that teaching practice needs to be less than twenty weeks as the student-teachers had other assignments back in University and they had also put them under pressure by giving them assignments to do while doing their teaching practice, thus not being able to perform to the best of their ability during teaching practice, especially when they had to prepare and present lessons.

#### 4.3.1.12 Student-Teacher 4

Student-teacher four is a male student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. He is majoring in Natural Science. The student-teacher did both of their teaching practice sessions at schools in the Mamelodi Township. He felt that that the programme was helpful because *"it opened my eyes to what South African schools are like and to make use of what you have. It made me realise that as a teacher, you should improvise because you won't always have the resources needed to teach a certain lesson or objective. What you learn in theory is not what you will experience. You have to practically be there to understand what being a teacher in South Africa means and what is expected of you"*.

#### 4.3.1.13 Student-Teacher 5

Student-teacher five is a female student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. She is majoring in Social Science. The student-teacher did both of their teaching practice

sessions at two schools in the Mamelodi Township. She felt that the programme put a lot of pressure on the student-teachers because she had submissions at schools and had to be full-time teachers. She also expressed her unhappiness with transport to get to the school. She mentioned that they were expected to get to the schools with her own money as transport was not provided for some schools. *“We were expected to be full-time teachers without getting any compensation for it”*.

#### 4.3.1.14 Student-Teacher 6

Student-teacher six is a male student-teacher at the University of Pretoria. He is majoring in Mathematics. The student-teacher did both of his teaching practice sessions at schools in the Mamelodi Township. He was not impressed with the programme as he felt that the mentor-teachers was overworking him and regarded him as his assistant as opposed to someone who was there to learn from the mentor-teacher. He felt that there was poor planning on the part of the schools to accommodate the student-teachers. The mentor-teachers were not prepared and were not sure of what to do with them or how to mentor the student-teachers, *“I had to explain to the mentor-teacher what they had to do and some the schools were not even aware that there [were] student-teachers coming to do their teaching practice at the schools”*.

## 4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Semi-structured individual and recorded interviews were conducted. These were done to obtain accurate data from the participants who were chosen according to the criteria set by the researcher. The reason behind these data collection methods was to make sure that the researcher gained rich and accurate data from participants who have had direct experience with regards to the topic and participants who could correctly answer the research questions. The criteria set by the researcher was that the mentor-teachers had to have 5 years or more teaching experience, to have mentoring experience and to be teaching in a public school in the Mamelodi Township. The criteria set for the student-teachers was that they had to be doing their teaching practice at a public school in the Mamelodi Township and be a student at the University of Pretoria.

Another fundamental factor is that the participants knew what the teaching practice programme is as well as its purpose. All of the mentor-teachers and student-teachers completed or were in the process of completing a Bachelor of Education degree, thus understanding the requirements of the teaching profession as well as what is required of them. MT 4 stated that "Teaching Practice allows ones to be prepared for the teaching profession, it allows the student-teachers to have a first-hand view of what to expect once they enter the teaching profession." ST 6 stated that although the programme allows one to put theory into practice, the programme would be more effective if there was sufficient and thorough planning and preparation on the part of the schools and the mentor-teachers to ensure effective mentoring and professional development of student-teachers during the programme.

The question of what teaching practice is being asked to the mentor-teachers. This is not only the definition of what the programme is but also its purpose and what it entails, which will help the mentor-teachers to understand their role and how to execute their tasks as mentor-teachers. The questions focused on finding out the participants' knowledge of the teaching practice programme, their role as mentor-teachers as well as the challenges faced during the programme. This was to see if the mentor-teachers and student-teachers are aware of all that is expected of them and if the programme was effective.

The questions were asked to establish the challenges the participants experienced during the teaching practice programme. The participants were also asked about their knowledge of the 5-factor mentoring model, which is made up of: personal attributes, feedback, modelling, system requirements and pedagogical knowledge. The mentor-teachers were asked about the support needs of the student-teachers during the teaching practice programme and how meeting these needs would result in the effective development of the student-teachers. The participants were also asked about what strategies they think are best suited to improve the mentoring of student-teachers.

From the main research question to the primary research questions, which were the main themes, some sub-themes were created from these main themes and thus made use of a thematic data analysis (Maree, 2016). These themes will be



discussed in the following section. The figure below shows the emerging themes used in this study.

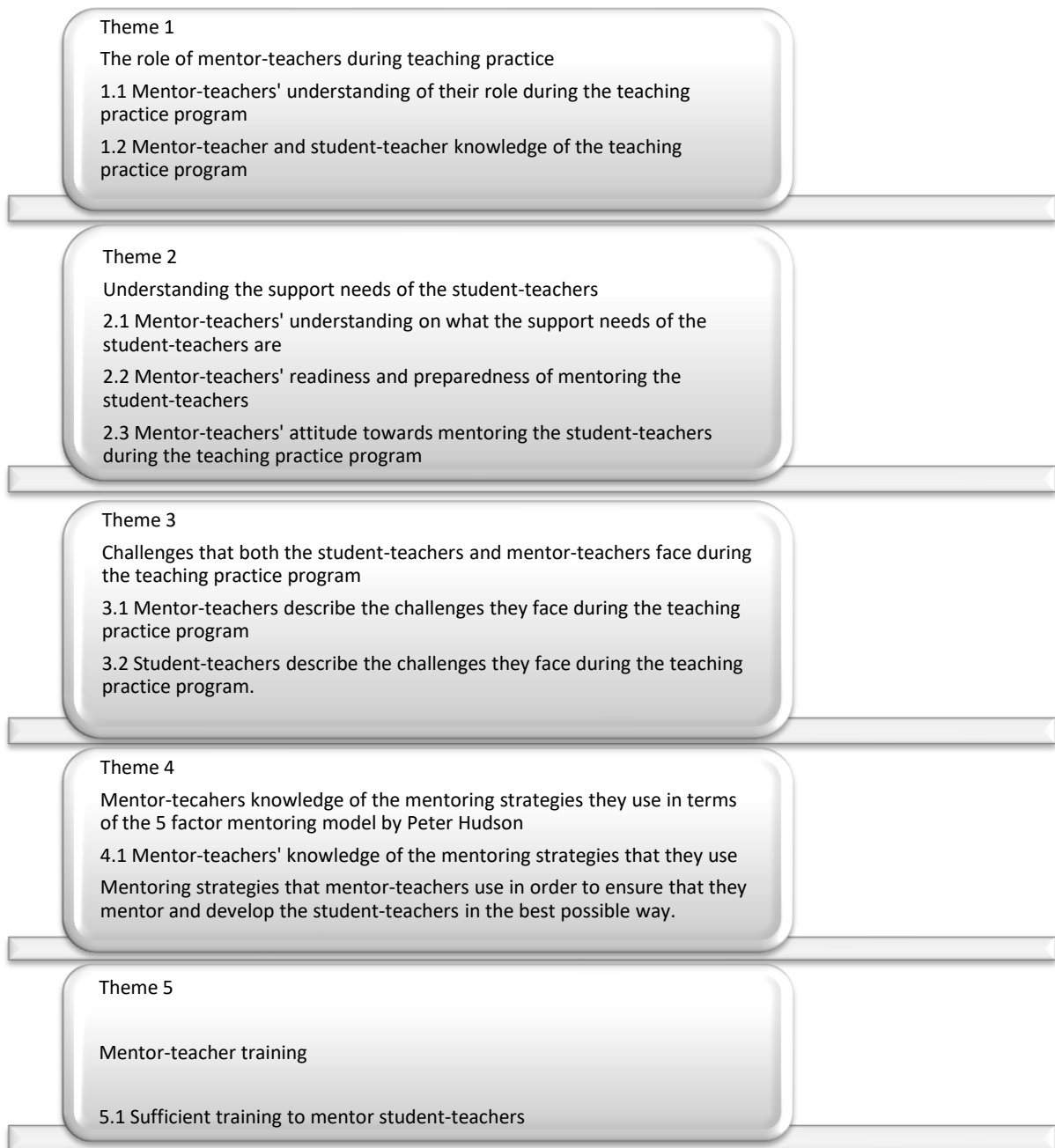


Figure 4.1: Emerging Themes identified

## 4.5. THEME 1: THE ROLE OF MENTOR-TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

### 4.5.1. Theme 1

Theme 1 of this research project deals with the mentor-teachers' and student-teachers' knowledge and understanding of what the teaching practice programme is as well as the main purpose of the programme. Student-teachers need to demonstrate sound pedagogical considerations with the active engagement of learners in their teaching. Together with teaching, student-teachers should demonstrate effective assessment strategies to monitor and evaluate learning. They should also be able to set and mark tests or examinations, testing different levels of competencies and knowledge/thinking taxonomies.

#### 4.5.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1 Mentor-teachers' role during teaching practice

The role of mentor-teachers is to support student-teachers through dialogue, negotiating ideas as well as providing guidance and advice on how to improve the student-teachers' capabilities as prospective teachers. The mentor-teachers were asked what their understanding of their role during teaching practice is. Most of them were unsure about what their roles and responsibilities were during the programme. MT 1 and MT 4 mentioned that their role is to mentor the student-teachers but were unclear as to what mentoring entailed as they mentioned that it involves giving the student-teachers the daily tasks that they as teachers have and that the student-teachers need to follow them around as they go about their daily tasks.

The table below shows which mentor-teachers had an understanding of their role as mentors.

Mentor-Teacher (MT)	MT 1	MT 2	MT 3	MT 4	MT 5	MT 6	MT 7	MT 8
Understanding of their role as mentor teachers	Not clear	Clear	Clear	Not clear	Not clear	Clear	Not clear	Not clear

Table 4.2: Mentor-teachers' knowledge on their role during the teaching practice programme.

In order for an individual to execute their role correctly, they need to have a clear understanding and knowledge of what their role is. If an individual is not aware or is unsure of what they need to do, they will not execute their role effectively.

MT 6 commented:

*"My role is to empower student-teachers to encourage them not to feel demoralised by regarding the profession as in like something they just happened to find themselves in, I want them to have passion, is to make sure, mentor teachers have different teaching styles".*

MT 8 went on to say that:

*"I just follow what the booklet we are given says, though it is not explained in-depth, I use my teaching experience to inform how I need to perform my role as a mentor-teachers".*

The mentor-teachers had different responses as to what their role was when it came to mentoring the student-teachers. However, similarities in their responses can be drawn in their responses. Many of them think that mentoring student-teachers is having them there to give them the daily tasks which they have on a regular teaching day. The mentor-teachers that participated in this study felt that their role was unclear and it needed to be elaborated upon for them so that they know exactly what they are expected to do.

These similarities can be seen in responses given by MT 6 and MT 3.

*"When the student-teacher arrives, I usually have them observe me. So that they can see how I execute my daily tasks" MT 3*

MT 6 went on to say that:

*"I believe that, in order for the student-teacher to understand what it takes to be a teacher, they need to know what teachers do on a day to day basis"*

Hudson (2004) states that the true role of the mentor is to provide pedagogical knowledge, share understanding of the system requirements of the teaching profession, model lessons and other daily tasks that a teacher has, provide feedback on what the student-teacher is doing well as well as highlight areas of improvement. The personal attributes and attitudes of the mentor-teachers towards the programme will also play a key role in how the student-teacher develops during the programme. Data has revealed that mentor-teachers are not entirely sure what the tertiary institutions expect from them and as a result they are unable to mentor the student-teachers to the expectations of the tertiary institutions.

MT 4 stated that:

*“The only form of information we are given from tertiary institutions, is the booklet that student-teachers give us. It contains how the student-teachers need to be assessed and a rubric of what we need to look for when we assess the student-teachers.”*

In addition to the abovemention, MT 1 mentioned that:

“The only time we see any representation from the university, is when the lecturer visits the student-teacher for an assessment”

MT 5 mentioned that:

“As mentor-teachers, we would really appreciate some form of training before we host student-teachers.”

#### **4.5.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2 Mentor-teacher knowledge of the teaching practice programme**

The literature review in this research project explains what the mentor-teachers' understanding and knowledge of what the teaching practice programme is. During the data collection process, both the mentor-teachers and student-teachers seemed to have a clear understanding of what the teaching practice programme is.

For one of the participants (MT 4), the recording had to be paused as MT4 wanted to first remind themselves what the teaching practice programme was. They googled

the definition and once they reminded themselves what it was the interview could continue. MT 2 expressed a full and in-depth definition of what the programme is and what it entailed as well as the purpose of having the programme. ST 1 expressed that the programme was there to ensure that the student-teachers were sent out to do their teaching practice programme at schools so that they would be able to apply what they had learned during tertiary and put it all into practice.

MT 1 said:

*“My understanding of teaching practice is nothing but having to mentor student's teachers, guide them and teach them on how to develop themselves as teachers”.*

This was further elaborated upon by MT 2:

*“My understanding of teaching practice is that we have to expose the prospective teachers so that they can learn and get enough experience before they graduate”.*

An overall assumption amongst the participants is that teaching practice is a programme in which the student-teachers go out to schools and do the practical work of what they have learned in their tertiary education. It is a programme where the student-teachers put theory into practice.

MT 4 explained that her understanding is broad because teaching practice facilitates student-teachers within the working environment. She went on to say:

*“Teaching practice is mentoring student-teachers and holding young teachers with your hand and showing them the pros and cons of the teaching world and how they should teach”.*

MT 6 said:

*“My understanding of teaching practice is basically is mentor-teachers empowering other upcoming teachers and giving them skills like classroom management and introduce them for lessons and introduce them to the teaching environment and how to deal with different learners”.*

Teaching practice can be described as a compulsory programme which Bachelor of Education students have to complete in order to qualify as teachers. The main purpose of the programme is that the mentor-teachers understand what the programme is about, and after that they can draw their understanding of what their role is from it. The purpose of the teaching practice programme is that the student-teachers who have enrolled for the Bachelor of Education degree gain some form of work-integrated learning experience before they enter the teaching profession.

#### **4.5.2 Theme 2: Understanding the support needs of the student-teachers**

Theme 2 explores the data from the mentor-teachers and student-teachers of what the support needs of the student-teachers are. This identified theme illustrated both the mentor-teachers and student points of view of what these support needs were and if these support needs were being catered for as well as how they were being catered for. The support needs of the student-teachers, as revealed by Hudson (2010), is that the mentor-teacher needs to advise, guide, support, counsel, teach and be a role model to the student-teacher.

##### **4.5.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Mentor-teachers' understanding on what the support needs of the student-teachers are**

When the researcher asked the participants what they thought the support needs of the student-teachers are. Mentor-teachers of this study mentioned that they were only there to mark and fill in any document that the student-teachers needed to fill in. They mentioned that they would ensure that the student-teachers would pass their teaching practice programme because they wanted the student-teachers to graduate and get jobs as they understood that many of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds and they knew of the difficult economic situation that South Africa is currently facing. The researcher got a sense that the mentor-teachers' main aim was to ensure that the student-teachers pass and not necessarily that they develop and mentor them to become professional teachers who enter the teaching profession in the following year.

MT 1 stated that:

*“I understand how difficult it is in university and the last thing I would want to do is fail the student-teacher”*

MT 7 further said:

*“Many student-teachers come from disadvantaged backgrounds and many of their families rely on them to graduate and find employment”*

MT 6 said:

*“The support that I give in most cases, so I don’t only offer academic support but introduce them to sports, so my focus is for them to have connection with the learners outside the school premises. So the reason I’m doing that is so they can discipline them outside class, so when they get back to class is much easier because they have connected, they communicated, so that’s the role I play, I introduce them to sports because I believe sport can unite people”.*

Through the observations, it was noted that the support that MT 6 gave their student-teachers was by providing them with their lesson plans and allow them student-teacher to adapt the lesson plan according to their own teaching style. Another support measure put in place by MT 6 and MT 3 was that they provided the student-teachers with the terms ATP, which supports one factor proposed in this study, being the system requirements. This act will ensure that the student-teachers will plan and teach lessons according to the CAPS and have time allocated for that specific objective.

MT 4 used words such as “facilitate” and “orientate” to explain how they support the student-teachers during teaching practice.

She revealed that:

*“Once a student-teacher is allocated to me, I would orientate them within my classroom, give them the rules that I give to my learners, orientate them with the learners and help them with the lesson plan so that I can show them how to conduct and prepare for a lesson”.*

Only 1 mentor-teacher mentioned that they also provide the student-teachers with emotional support. Not only do they need support in terms of their profession, but also in terms of providing them with support, especially because one may feel overwhelmed when they are faced with a new teaching environment which they are not accustomed to.

MT 8 gave a more in-depth account and said:

*“Student-teachers may be overwhelmed and nervous about how they feel, especially when faced with the new teaching environment which they are not used to. I focus on them emotional wellbeing and readiness first before I tackle the academics side of it”.*

This is a statement which the researcher agrees with, as emotional support is vital to the wellbeing and development of the student-teacher. Emotional support is vital as it boosts the morale of the student-teacher. It creates a willingness to learn and it creates a positive attitude towards the learning process. The student-teacher will feel appreciated and thus show a willingness to learn. Once the student-teachers are having a positive outlook on teaching practice and are willing to work, they become open to learning new things from the mentor-teachers and taking the constructive feedback given by the mentor-teachers.

MT 2 said:

*“I offer mentorship and classroom support; I also guide the student-teachers on how to deal with questions and solving problems. I can say I offer emotional and physical support”.*

Through observation, it can be determined that MT 2 did indeed provide emotional support to one of their student-teachers. When a student-teacher was struggling to deal with some of the learners' behaviour, the student-teacher walked out of the class and went to consult MT 6, who was in the staffroom. The student-teacher explained what had happened, she even went on to state that she would like to leave the school and ask the university to find her another school. MT 6 then proceeded to



comfort her and they went back to the classroom, once there, the MT addressed the learners' behaviour.

It is important for the mentor-teachers provide the student-teachers with support in terms of their teaching practice, as they need to ensure that they are there for them emotionally and show them some empathy because they are in a new environment and they need someone to guide them through the process.

#### **4.5.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2 Mentor-teachers readiness and preparedness of mentoring the student-teachers.**

Although the mentor-teachers have had a great deal of teaching experience, many of them have an average of only two to three years of mentoring experience. The majority of them were given the task to mentor student-teachers during their first year of teaching. Four mentor-teachers mentioned that they were not prepared to mentor the student-teachers and just gave the student-teachers work to keep them busy and "out of the way". The mentor-teachers expressed how the student-teachers only came with a booklet explaining how and what the mentor-teachers need to do during the teaching practice and how some of the schools were surprised to even see that they would be hosting student-teachers as they were not informed by the tertiary institutions that they would have student-teachers.

Another reason for this was revealed by ST 6:

*" It could be miscommunication, many of the schools do not have a working email address due to a lack of resources such as internet or computers so they do not check email communication that they receive from the tertiary institutions".*

MT 1 revealed:

*"What we do is we try and find a manageable class that is easy to handle and also give him or her manageable duties that will never interfere with his or her studies at university".*

Data were triangulated by observing whether or not MT1's claim was true. During the observation, one of their student-teachers was marking an exam that the learner had

written. The student-teacher mentioned that they were not sure if they were following the correct marking guide as it was not explained to her, and she also mentioned that she was given all of the learner's papers to mark. Thus, she went back to MT 1 and asked them about this whereupon the MT said that they indeed did not explain how marking needed to be done and they will explain it.

MT 5 said that:

*"Firstly prepare by scheduling a meeting with the student-teacher and get the feel of the type of a person they are, and they need to try and explain to me what their teaching philosophy is, what they feel teaching is in that way on my side I will plan things accordingly in that way I will be catering to their specific needs, not the way I think".*

ST 1 said:

*"Well I just think they ready in the sense that anticipate receiving students but I think their readiness ends there most of the time. In my experience in the one school I went to in term 2, my mentor teacher was ready for me to take over her classes, there's a mentor teacher guideline book and I believe they don't read it. I think mentor teachers don't know their role in facilitating our presence in the classroom".*

ST 6 commented:

*"I was lucky to find democratic mentor teachers who discussed the work schedule with me, such as sharing of classes, activities to give learners and days of assessment. In a way I would say they hosted me greatly".*

ST 3 said:

*"First one was definitely ready. She even had years of experience. She had done before so she was even though his schedule was like hectic. That is why I'm saying that it set the standard for the second mentor-teacher. She was not so ready; I had found out that it was her third teaching year. She mentioned*

*that she had never mentored before. What I went through but fortunately for me, she had also been a student-teacher before so she had an idea”.*

In order for the mentor-teachers to be prepared to mentor the student-teachers, the first step needs to be that mentor-teachers need to get the necessary training in order to be mentors. They need to be trained so that they are able to perform their duties according to the requirements of the tertiary institutions. Once they receive the training, they would be able to implement the steps needed for them to be ready to host the student-teachers.

#### **4.5.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Mentor-teachers’ approach towards mentoring the student-teachers**

This study argues that attitude and approach are some of the most important factors to determine whether a good mentoring rapport is established. The main factor or element at the forefront in the conceptual framework, which was adapted and adopted by the 5 Factor Mentoring Model by Hudson (2004), is the Personal Attributes and commitment of both the mentor-teacher and the student-teacher, as these attributes entail the willingness to learn and take advice on the part of the student-teachers as well as the willingness and dedication to mentor and accommodate the student-teachers on the part of the mentor-teachers.

ST 6 revealed that:

*“Some of the mentor-teachers did not make us feel welcome, most of them felt a bit threatened as we were from University with a lot of new and innovative ideas that we could bring to the table”.*

ST 1 further elaborated that:

*“The mentor-teachers had a negative attitude as some of them claimed that they were not informed about having to mentor the student-teachers and that they did not have time to mentor the student-teachers”.*

ST 5 reported that:

*“When I first arrived at the school, the mentor-teacher was very excited, but I realised that they were only happy because they mentioned that they are happy that I am here because they had a lot of work to do and I would help them”.*

The data reveals that as much as the student-teachers should understand and know what being a teacher entails, the mentor-teachers need to realise that they are there to teach and not use the student-teachers as individuals who are there to do their work for them, but rather as individuals who are there to gain practical skills to become well-trained teachers.

ST 6 went on to further say that:

*“The mentor-teacher made me feel unwanted and it is odd, because they too have been in the same position as I was in”.*

Participants expressed that the mentor-teachers’ attitude had an impact towards the programme and they could not wait for the programme to end as they felt like an extra burden.

The table below shows a rating given by student-teachers of their mentor-teachers’ attitude towards mentoring the student-teachers. The rating was from 1-5, with 1 being unwilling to mentor the student-teachers and 5 being positive about mentoring the student-teachers.

<b>Student-Teachers</b>	<b>ST 1</b>	<b>ST 2</b>	<b>ST 3</b>	<b>ST 4</b>	<b>ST 5</b>	<b>ST 6</b>
Student-teacher’s responses	3	2	4	1	2	4

Table 4.3: Rating (by student-teachers) the mentor-teachers’ attitude towards mentoring the student-teachers.

Mentor-teachers were not perceived to be very helpful by the student-teachers as not all their responses were positive. ST 3 and ST 6 were the only student-teachers

who gave the mentor-teachers a positive score. According to ST 3 and ST 6 scoring, their mentor-teachers were very accommodative and willing to mentor the student-teachers during teaching practice.

Both mentor-teachers and student-teachers need to understand that it is a partnership and each of them to put in 100% effort in all that they bring to the partnership. Most student-teachers expressed feelings of not being welcomed by the mentor-teachers as well as the schools that they were doing their teaching practice in. They expressed that they felt like they were in the way of the mentor-teachers and they were an extra burden to them.

#### **4.5.3. Theme 3: Challenges that both the mentor-teacher and student-teachers face**

As with any programme and profession, there are bound to be challenges that people face. Facing a particular challenge or difficulty is based on how the individuals show determination to overcome that particular challenge. A key thread of challenges that the student-teachers faced during the teaching practice programme are: a lack of supervision, resources, support and feedback from the mentor-teachers. Challenges that mentor-teachers face is that of a lack of time, a heavy workload and a lack of training to mentor the student-teachers. The most common challenge is that many mentor-teachers do not understand or have knowledge of the role that they fill during the teaching practice programme, especially when it comes to them having to mentor the student-teachers.

##### **4.5.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1 Mentor-teachers describe the challenges they face during the teaching practice programme**

Many mentor-teachers feel that they are forced to be mentor-teachers and thus they do not show a sense of willingness to mentor the student-teachers. Many of them mentioned that with the workload that they already have as teachers they do not want to take on another role of mentoring the student-teachers. Thus, once they are given a student-teacher to mentor they are not welcoming or positive about mentoring them because they have other work obligations which need to be focused on. Some of them do not want to mentor as they do not know what to do or what is expected of them as mentor-teachers. Many studies mention the need for mentor-

teachers to be in continuous mentor training programmes as a prerequisite to effectively mentor the student-teachers (Koki, 1997). However, some also mention that mentor-teachers are only selected based on their teaching experience.

MT 2 said:

*“Okay so I won’t lie to you it’s difficult because the only thing they give us is just a booklet and it does not address the challenges we have in the classroom, then they also have mentor lectures of which they also hard to get in contact with, it’s difficult to get hold of the university personnel, so supporting them is difficult”.*

MT 6 described the challenges as:

*"It depends on individual teachers. I will give you two perspectives, some teachers find it straining when they have to cater for the student-teacher and also cover other classes, we have the ATP, it tells us this week this is the amount of work you need to cover amount of SBA tasks or amount of test that need to be covered so some teachers complain about that because time is not sufficient, so in my perspective, this is what I do right, I would give a student-teacher so much work then I leave her like that, then tell her I'm busy with other class, so what I do is I become involved in what my student-teacher is doing, if she giving them classwork I need to check if it's in line with the ATP and the SBA task so that learner does not become confused, so I make sure they deliver the lesson the way I do but then I allow them to be free and be themselves".*

MT 1, MT 2, MT 5 and MT 8 expressed that though they may face many challenges when mentoring the student-teachers, the programme is very fulfilling to take part in and they would make the most of the experience if they were provided with training on what they need to do and the daily tasks they need to accomplish when they mentor the student-teachers.

M1 said:

*“The students refuse to go to class, or will reveal that the learners are disrespectful, the student-teachers do not give the learners class work and they do not teach enough”*

Data were validated by asking the student-teacher whether one of the MT's mentioned this was true and the ST said no, they only refuse to go to class if their MT is not in the classroom with them.

In addition to this, all of the participants mentioned that a lack of time was the main factor that made it challenging for them to mentor the student-teachers. Samkange (2015) expresses the need for the mentor-teachers to have some form of training for them to be able to mentor the student-teachers and to be confident in their abilities to mentor the student-teachers.

MT 4 stated that:

*“The challenges are so wide and so broad in terms of student-teachers are taught one thing in their lectures within the University they come and practically we try and incorporate what they have learned at school and we try to incorporate it with the working environment so some student-teacher[s] are not receptive to learning new things and that makes a huge challenge”.*

This statement confirmed what Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2013) revealed in their study, in that mentor-teachers sometimes tell the student-teachers to forget what they have learned in university as the true essence of the profession is taught during WIL.

Many of the participants expressed that what is done in theory is not entirely relevant to the reality in which many teachers in South Africa teach, as teaching is performed under many difficult circumstances which would be difficult for those who have to mentor student-teachers on top of their daily tasks. They should to find strategies which will lessen the stress as they should be working hand-in-hand with the student-teachers as partners, i.e. team teaching.

#### 4.5.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Student-teachers describe the challenges they face during the teaching practice programme

Many of the student-teachers expressed their frustrations concerning the programme. Though they shared these sentiments, many of them expressed their appreciation towards the mentor-teachers and schools for accommodating them, especially once they realised how stressful and challenging the teaching profession can be.

ST 1 said:

*"There are several challenges. Some of them start with the first teaching practice that we do in the second year, if you're an alert student then you can start to prepare for them like the way you need to present yourself, so financially having to change your wardrobe and getting formal clothes. Another challenge is the amount of paperwork that we need to print for our portfolios, I had two files and it's a lot of work you need to print your worksheets and so forth, another challenge that I experience[d] [was] getting to a school that I wanted and also my friend's experiences is access to getting food because they live at res and they get back late and they find the food is finished. But I started to appreciate what teachers do, especially in the Township schools; they make use of what they have especially in terms of resources".*

ST 4 said:

*"My mentor-teacher was hardly in the classroom, I felt as though I was alone. They did not give me any feedback or guidance if I am doing the correct or incorrect thing".*

A random observation of the student-teacher was done, the purpose which was to confirm ST 4's above claim. The aim was to see if the mentor-teacher was indeed hardly in the classroom. During the first observation, the MT was not in the classroom. On the second observation the MT was still not in class. When the researcher asked ST 4 where the MT was, she mentioned that they were in the staffroom.



ST 6 further said:

*“We are working as fulltime teachers with no remuneration. On top of that the mentor-teachers give us their work such as teaching all of their classes, marking, setting lesson plans and also classroom management. We as student-teachers are tired and we end up not liking the teaching profession because of what we have to go through”.*

Mentor-teachers could be giving all of this work because they do not know what to do with the student-teachers; this could also be because they think that is what they need to do as mentor-teachers. However, with the correct training they could have a better understanding of their role as mentors.

ST 5 had a different view about the challenges and said:

*“I think one of the challenges would be when you are doing something that's new from first time, obviously tasks so when it comes to those things, I think I was fully supported. So, the challenges inside the classroom. I managed to relate to our Scholars that I was teaching, there was mutual respect”.*

ST 3 had the same opinion as ST 6 in that money was a serious problem. She said:

*“The amount of work, the amount of work, I think maybe this was something that started doing from like sticking to the third year to prep for you because I think one year, final year, that's not enough get thrown into the system where you are doing student work and go to teaching practice and it's like where am I supposed to get the balance?”*

Some of these challenges may have dire effects on how the student-teachers perceive the teaching profession. Clear instructions and guidelines need to be set out on what is expected from both the mentor-teachers and student-teachers. Once this is done many challenges mentioned can be avoided because the mentors and students would be aware of what their role is and how it needs to be executed.

#### **4.5.4. Theme 4: Mentor-teachers' knowledge of the mentoring strategies they use in terms of the 5 Factor Mentoring model by Peter Hudson**

As stated in the previous sections of this research project, a conceptual framework which is based on the 5 factors of mentoring underpinned this study. The researcher sought to describe the role the mentor-teachers play during the teaching practice programme. The five factors within the model are: Personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback.

##### **4.5.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1 Mentor- teachers' knowledge on the mentoring strategies that they use**

The conceptual framework utilised is based on a five-factor mentoring model Hudson (2004), the aim of which is to describe the role of mentor-teachers during the teaching practice programme. As mentioned in chapter two, the five factors within the model are personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback.

MT 1 said:

*"I usually use the feedback strategy and modelling; I give the student-teacher feedback on how he or she planned and it was prepared and also give advice and what she must do in her next lesson for improvement".*

MT 2 commented:

*"Okay the first one is modelling. I try by all means to toughen them up. Then the feedback model that I use is I make sure that always I give them feedback even though it is not enough but give feedback. The pedagogical knowledge, I impart them with the content and also how to teach the curriculum content and how to address the challenges in the classroom".*

Based on the above-mentioned responses, it became clear that most of the mentor-teachers did not have any knowledge of the factors of the 5-factor model and which strategies of this model they use to mentor the student-teachers.

This was confirmed by MT 3, who said:

*“I think personal attributes I have the experience, I know how to support the student-teacher and also the pedagogical one it also helps... another one, feedback is very important because for growth you need to always give feedback, you cannot just assess the student-teacher without giving them feedback”.*

MT 5 posited:

*“Referring to the mentoring, so meaning therefore now I try that the student-teachers, they do what I do in class, so in my class, I know my learners’ learning strength and therefore in that way they can perform well. So mostly I use modelling, so I encourage them to do what I do in class, however they are allowed to put flexibility for our learners”.*

MT 6 stated:

*“In terms of feedback, what I do is I allow student-teachers to give a lesson then I assess them based on their presentation, so I become stricter when I assess them on their first presentation so that they know what I expect from them. I don't want them to be me but the best they can be. I look at the presentation; the content, then you as a teacher are you equipped enough to deliver the lesson, so I use feedback”.*

Mentor-teachers need to use all 5 factors of the mentoring model in order to be successful in their role as mentors (Hudson, 2004), because if some factors are not being implemented or if the mentor-teachers are not effective in their mentoring then the student-teachers will not get the required training in order to be prepared as professional teachers. The table below shows which five-factors the mentor-teachers used.

Mentor-teachers demonstration of the 5-factors of mentoring	MT 1	MT 2	MT 3	MT 4	MT 5	MT 6	MT 7	MT 8
<b>Personal Attributes</b>			✓	✓		✓	✓	
<b>System Requirements</b>		✓						✓
<b>Pedagogical Knowledge</b>		✓	✓					
<b>Modelling</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
<b>Feedback</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		

Table 4.4: Factors of the 5-factor mentoring model that mentor-teachers use

#### 4.5.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Mentor-teachers' mentoring practices and how have they influenced student-teachers?

Many student-teachers mentioned that they view their mentor-teachers as their role models.

MT 6 said:

*"I think I have touched many lives when I had student-teachers. So, what I would do is, what I have done for them is to see thing[s] in a different perspective, that teaching is a profession. The secret behind this is getting to the learners at a personal level so it makes things easy for them".*

Many protégées look up to their mentors, they see their mentors as more knowledgeable and skilled than they are, so as mentors it is imperative that they guide the student-teachers in such a way that their practices inform the type of teachers they want to be once they graduate Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014), It is imperative that mentor-teachers ensure that they mentor the student-teachers to have a positive view about the teaching profession, although this comes with its own challenges.

MT 1 revealed that:

*"The last student-teacher I had, she told me that there are certain aspects that she didn't know about and those aspects helped her a lot in teaching and the other thing is I made [her] feel like one of us. I didn't exclude her because she's a student-teacher, she was treated the same as us senior teachers".*

If the mentoring process is effective both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher will learn from each other. Creating a positive rapport will result in both the student and mentor gaining from the experience. Being open to learning new things will inform not only the student-teacher's practices as new teachers but also inform the mentor-teacher's practices in such a way that they implement new and vibrant ideas that the student-teachers may introduce.

#### **4.5.5. Theme 5.1: Mentor-teacher training**

Due to their uncertainty of the requirements of their role, most mentor-teachers find themselves unable to sufficiently and effectively develop the student-teacher. This study argues that mentor teachers need to be adequately trained for them to know what is expected of them and for them to effectively execute their tasks as mentor-teachers. Given the fact that student-teachers are not used to the new teaching environment, many student-teachers may feel anxious and overwhelmed once they realise the roles and responsibilities which teachers have. Given the huge responsibilities that teachers have, the student-teachers must be allocated to mentor-teachers who are patient, well trained, empathetic and experienced. For the teaching programme to be successful, mentor-teachers need to ensure that they support the professional growth and development of the student-teachers.

##### **4.5.5.1 Sub-theme 5.1: Sufficient training to mentor the student-teachers**

In this theme, the question asked was "Do mentor teachers need training?"

In most cases, many of the mentor-teachers are allocated in terms of the subject whom they teach (Samkange, 2015). The allocation of mentor-teachers is rarely based on the type of training that the teacher has received to qualify them to be mentor-teachers.

MT 5 said:

*"I think some mentor teachers do need a lot of training because as I said, for me, if you're going to mentor someone you've got to come with some things that you have tested and the point so if they are also going to mentor, they also need mentoring. So yeah, I think they do need training".*

MT 3 commented:

*“When they come, they have a lot paperwork from the University that we are not used to, then we are forced to work without a supervisor from the university guiding us on how to complete the documents that the student-teacher brings”.*

MT 2 said:

*“We do need training just to orientate us but, in most cases, we deal with the challenges as they arise. You cannot plan for the unknown”.*

Many mentor-teachers in the study felt that they were "thrown in the deep end" when they were asked to mentor student-teachers and sometimes they had more than one student-teacher that they had to mentor. They feel that they are uncertain of their role as to what was expected of them, and thus they felt that the student-teachers were not learning as much as they needed before they could become qualified teachers.

The table below shows the mentor-teacher's responses with regards to the need for mentorship training:

Mentor-teacher 1	Yes
Mentor-teacher 2	Yes
Mentor-teacher 3	Yes
Mentor-teacher 4	Yes
Mentor-teacher 5	Yes
Mentor-teacher 6	Yes
Mentor-teacher 7	No, says that experience is enough
Mentor-teacher 8	Yes

Table 4.5: Mentor-teacher's responses in terms of a need for training for mentor-teachers

As with the allocation of any leader or mentor, there needs to be criteria which the teachers need to comply with or fall under to be chosen as a mentor-teacher. According to Ligadu (2012), experience plays a large role in ensuring that the mentor-teachers can mentor, however there needs to be some form of training which will ensure that the mentor-teachers understand what their roles and responsibilities are as well as what is expected of them as mentor-teachers. The process of mentoring in the context of education is a very complex process that requires the mentor-teacher to have a clear understanding of their role.

MT 4 added:

*“I think we do need training, because some mentor-teachers are actually very good teachers but we are unable to mentor student-teachers properly because they don’t know how to do it, so if we are given the skills to facilitate the programme and be equipped to deal with the challenges, so I think training will [help] us a lot”.*

The purpose of having a mentor-teacher is to provide the student-teachers with support, guidance and advice for them to develop and enhance their teaching practices and skills Mundalamo and Sedumedi (2014), For the mentoring process to be effective, the mentor-teacher needs to be experienced, a good teacher with good teaching practices, trained to mentor the student-teachers and be prepared by having a structure of the developmental programme (Samkange, 2015).

The table below shows why mentor-teachers need to receive proper training in order to become mentors in order to be able to better:

Identify the needs of the student-teachers
Identify their strengths and weaknesses (Personal Attributes)
Know how to plan and prepare for lessons and other daily tasks (system requirements and pedagogical knowledge)
Provide constructive feedback to the student-teachers
Model, mentor and coach the student-teachers in terms of classroom management and what is regarded as best teaching practice

Table 4.6: Requirements of Mentor teachers training

The table below explains what teaching practice means for the mentor-teacher and student-teacher.

For the mentor-teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity for the mentor-teachers to explore and come up with new and innovative approaches to teaching.</li> <li>• It is seen as an opportunity to improve and reflect on their teaching practices.</li> <li>• It is an opportunity for professional development.</li> <li>• Team teaching with the student-teachers can help with identifying and solving problem areas in terms of learner performance.</li> <li>• As both the mentor-teacher and student-teacher can gain confidence, it will also increase learner performance,</li> <li>• It is an opportunity to enhance and develop knowledge and skills in terms of mentoring and coaching.</li> </ul>
How a skilled mentor-teacher can benefit the student-teacher?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity for the student-teacher to learn under a trained mentor-teacher</li> <li>• It's an opportunity to learn and develop their teaching practices.</li> <li>• An opportunity for professional development.</li> <li>• Team teaching with the mentor-teacher can help with identifying and solving problem areas in terms of learner performance.</li> <li>• As both the mentor teacher and student-teacher can gain confidence, it will also increase learner performance,</li> <li>• An opportunity to enhance and develop knowledge and skills in terms of knowledge of the system requirements, emotional intelligence, classroom management and practices as well as adapting to the unfamiliar environment of teaching.</li> <li>• Opportunities for feedback in terms of their performance during the teaching practice performance.</li> <li>• Knowledge of important documents and policies in Education (CAPS and SACE)</li> </ul>

Table 4.7: What teaching practice means for the mentor-teacher and student-teacher



## **Conclusion of the chapter**

Mentor-teachers still struggle with their ability and willingness to support, guide and mentor student-teachers due to a lack of a clearly defined teaching practice policy at schools, which makes it difficult for mentor-teachers to be clear on what is expected of them. In the context of education, during the teaching practice programme, student-teachers are assigned to mentor-teachers. Mentor-teachers are identified by their experience and characteristics of their personality as well as how they interact with their learners and other teachers. Their personal and professional record, in conjunction with their behaviour, is extremely crucial when interacting with others. The criterion used to identify the mentor-teachers is decided upon by their colleagues, and mentor-teachers are selected based on the special leadership qualities that they possess. The elected mentor-teacher must be effective in communication skills, compassion and have sound interpersonal skills.

In chapter four, the researcher presented how the mentor-teachers and student-teachers experienced the teaching practice programme. It aimed to present the experiences and attitudes of the participants, the purpose of the teaching practice programme, the role of the mentor-teachers, challenges faced during the programme and the need for mentor-teachers to be trained to enhance and develop their practices and knowledge on their role as mentors. Literature and assumptions were further authenticated by the participants' responses to the interview questions. The data and responses gathered by the data collection processes were broken down into themes and further into sub-themes which validated the need for the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the research findings according to the participants' views as well as their experiences of the teaching practice programme. The data were presented in terms of five themes as well as sub-themes. The focus of the study was based on the participants' knowledge of the teaching practice programme, the role of the mentor-teacher, challenges faced during the programme and the need for mentor-teacher training. This chapter (chapter five) focuses on the findings and discussion on the participants' responses. Lastly, this chapter answers the research questions and provides recommendations of the study.

In an attempt to answer the research questions, the researcher used a thematic data analysis by separating the data into themes and sub-themes (see Chapter four), the 5-factor mentoring model by Peter Hudson as well as the teaching practice framework (see Chapters two and four), which may be used as a form of introduction of training for mentor-teachers.

In chapter two the researcher attempted to present literature on what other researchers had to say about the research topic. The perspectives presented were based on the importance of the role of the mentor-teachers and the overall perspective of the literature regarding the teaching practice programme. The researcher is certain about the importance of the teaching practice programme and the role that mentor-teachers play in developing and training the student-teachers.

This study sought to investigate how mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice. Thus, the research questions that guided this study were:

### **Primary research question**

- How do mentor-teachers understand their role in supporting student-teachers during teaching practice?

### **Sub- questions:**

1. How do mentor-teachers understand the support needs of student-teachers?
2. What challenges are experienced in mentoring student-teachers?
3. What possible strategies can be suggested to improve student-teacher mentoring?

## **5.2. INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings of this study were categorised in five emerging themes namely the role of mentor-teacher during teaching practice, understanding the support needs of the student-teachers, challenges faced by both mentor-teachers and student-teachers, mentor-teachers understanding of mentoring strategies and mentor-teacher training.

### **5.2.1. The role of mentor-teachers during teaching practice**

Teachers who ensure that they are prepared in their role as mentor-teachers are seen as those that are more likely to successfully develop and support student-teachers during the teaching practice programme. If mentor-teachers are well aware of their role of being a mentor to the student-teachers, they are more likely to help the student-teachers make the most of the work-integrated learning experience as well as discover, enrich and help them to develop their teaching practices and style of teaching (Zachery, 2002). Understanding what is expected of them will ensure that they cover all of the elements that the student-teachers need to learn to be well-trained and professional teachers. "Mentors often report that they gain exposure to new and diverse perspectives, improve coaching and listening skills, find work more meaningful and satisfying, desired leadership skills, and often become reengaged professionally. Teachers mentor students for a multitude of reasons" (Zachery, 2002: 27).

A study done by Maphalala (2013) states that mentor-teachers are the key and main role players in ensuring that student-teachers develop and grow in their role as

prospective teachers. Findings in the study conducted by Maphalala (2013) revealed that mentor-teachers understood what their roles and responsibilities during the teaching practice programme entailed. The key roles and responsibilities of the mentor-teachers were to ensure that they assist the student-teachers in executing their daily tasks as teachers, “gain competence in the various areas of the school functioning, including lesson planning and presentation; classroom management and appropriate use of teaching strategies and resources” (Maphalala, 2013).

The findings of this study revealed that of the eight mentor teachers that were interviewed, only two were certain of their role as mentor-teachers. This makes it difficult to ensure that they are covering all of the elements which make sure that the student-teachers are adequately and effectively trained to become professional teachers. Mentor-teachers who are not fulfilling their full role as mentor-teachers will have very detrimental effects or outcomes on how the student-teachers are trained. Student-teachers that are inadequately trained may have detrimental effects in their classrooms when they become teachers. The negative effects may result in low learner performance, the quality of their teaching practices as well as difficulties adapting to the teaching environment and the challenges that come with it.

In the context of education, teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning. Understanding the main aim and purpose of the programme is of great importance as it sets the tone for what the student-teachers need to learn during the programme. Having clear knowledge about the purpose of a specific programme or activity will help student-teachers set goals and objectives of what they need to know by the end of the programme. The participants seemed to know the definition and purpose of the teaching practice programme. They explained it as a programme where Bachelor of Education students had to perform WIL in the form of teaching practice to fully qualify as a professional and well-trained teacher.

### **5.2.2 Understanding the support needs of the student-teachers**

Once the student-teachers and mentor-teachers establish a positive and open rapport it will be easier for them to identify the support needs of the student-teacher. These needs may vary from one student-teacher to the other. The findings reveal that the support needs of the mentor-teachers are to guide and support the student-

teachers. Another support need that was identified was to provide the student-teachers with guidance on how to deal with classroom and behaviour management. MT's mentioned that they also provide them with mentoring outside of the classroom environment. They do this to provide them with guidance on becoming a disciplined teacher.

This study argues that the support needs of the student-teachers are linked back to the conceptual framework employed in this study. The five-factor mentoring model by Hudson (2004) will help the mentor-teachers to understand all of the components needed in mentoring to ensure the successful development of the student-teachers (refer to Chapter 2). These factors are: System Requirements, Personal Attributes, Modelling, Pedagogical Knowledge and Feedback. Using this framework as a point of reference will help the mentor-teachers to be successful in their attempt to mentoring the student-teachers.

Most of the mentor-teachers in the study revealed that they feel that they are not adequately trained or prepared to mentor student-teachers. They would like more intervention on the side of the tertiary institutions to ensure that they get sufficient training for mentoring. Similar findings were revealed in a study conducted by Maphalala (2017), where they mentioned that the "mentor-teachers also demonstrated understanding of the concept of 'mentoring', but they needed feedback from UNISA to assure them if student-teachers are being assisted accordingly to the institution's expectations. This indicates that UNISA still needs to do more to enhance the roles and responsibilities of mentor teachers in supporting student-teachers" (Maphalala, 2017).

### **5.2.3 Challenges faced by both the student-teachers and mentor-teachers**

Challenges faced during teaching practice varied amongst the participants. Some of them expressed the need to get some form of training and more involvement from the side of the University of Pretoria to ensure that the mentor-teachers are mentoring the student-teachers according to the requirements of the University. The responses of the mentor-teachers on the challenges they face during teaching practice. These challenges included, lack of raining and time, workload commitment of student-teachers. Student-teachers revealed that there is lack of supervision from

the mentor-teachers, no transport to get to the schools, freedom to teach own lessons and they struggle with learner discipline in the classroom.

#### **5.2.4. Mentor-teachers' knowledge of mentoring strategies**

This study was framed by the 5-factor mentoring model by Peter Hudson (Hudson, 2004) and sought to describe the role of mentor-teachers during the teaching practice programme.

The findings of this study make use of the factors described in the five-factor mentoring model, as it is more likely to improve the mentor-teachers' performance during the teaching practice programme when utilised correctly. Being trained within this model will also see improvements in the mentor-teachers' own teaching practices and it can be used as a reflection of the mentor-teachers' own teaching practices and knowledge of the teaching profession. The importance of understanding their role and what is expected of the mentor-teacher will also bring about improvement and development in the training of student-teachers. Once the support needs (resources, training, time) of the mentor-teachers are addressed, there will be an improvement in the understanding of their role as mentor-teachers, thus enabling them to provide for the support needs of the student-teachers.

#### **5.2.5 Mentor-teacher training**

Of the eight participants in this study, only one stated that they do not need any training to effectively carry out their duties as a mentor-teacher. The remaining seven expressed that they would like to get sufficient training to ensure that they carry out their duties and that their training and support of student-teachers are up to standard with the expectations of the University of Pretoria.

### **5.3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 5-FACTOR MENTORING MODEL**

The conceptual framework employed by the researcher is effective as it provides a model for the appropriate elements needed in the mentoring process for the mentor-teacher to be effective in their role as a mentor-teacher. With mentoring being a crucial element of teaching practice, mentor-teachers must be trained and get some form of exposure to ensure that they are effective and productive in their role as mentor-teachers. This study believes that knowledge of system requirements about

documents such as the CAPS document and requirements of SACE, the school code of conduct, providing feedback, modelling and preparing lessons, pedagogical knowledge about classroom practices, knowledge of subject content, the personal attributes of the student-teacher and mentor-teacher and providing feedback to the mentor teacher are all of great importance in ensuring the success of the mentoring process and the development of the student-teachers. From the observations, mentor-teachers require to receive training on how to ensure that they implement the factors suggested in this study to ensure effective mentoring takes place. Many of the mentor-teachers do not provide accurate and constructive feedback to the student-teachers and this is due to the fact that they do not accompany the student-teachers to the classroom, thus not having a clear idea on what they are doing wrong and what they are doing right. Another thing that also stood out was that modelling does not take place, because some of the mentor-teachers do not accompany the student-teachers to the classroom, they are unable to model how lessons are to be presented.

#### **5.4. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **5.4.1 Limitations of the study**

The first limitation is that interviews were conducted on only eight mentor-teachers and six student-teachers. The findings were solely based on their experiences and knowledge of the teaching practice programme. Every individual has their own interpretation of a certain phenomenon and they do not experience events in the same way, thus the findings of this study cannot be generalised to what other mentor-teachers and student-teachers have experienced and their knowledge and understanding of the teaching practice programme and their knowledge on the role of mentor-teachers may differ greatly.

The second limitation is that this study was conducted in the Mamelodi Township, and schools situated in this study were public no-fee paying schools. These schools are characterised by a shortage of skilled teachers, a lack of resources, poor infrastructure in the schools and overcrowding in the classroom. Thus, the findings cannot be generalised to what other schools out of this context may experience.

The only way findings in this study will be able to be transferred is if the findings are used in schools that have the same or similar settings as the schools used in this study and if the schools accommodate student-teachers during the teaching practice programme. Further research will help build on this study as well as bring forth the experiences of other participants who would be involved.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendations**

In this section, the researcher makes recommendations on mentor-teachers should have a clear understanding and knowledge of their role as mentors. These recommendations make use of the findings so that mentor-teachers are clear of their role in ensuring the development of student-teachers during teaching practice.

##### **Recommendations on mentoring programmes**

Training programmes should select and use appropriate mentoring models that have been researched and suited to the South African context. These programmes need to be relevant and suit the needs of mentor-teachers and student-teachers who will be teaching in the South African classroom. These programmes would have to take factors such as availability of resources, time available to mentor and ability of the teacher to mentor into consideration.

##### **Recommendations for mentor-teacher training and the importance of the teaching practice programme.**

The findings reveal that the majority of the mentor-teachers stipulate that they would like to receive some form of mentor-teacher training to up the standards of the development of student-teachers are in line with the requirements of the University of Pretoria. They further highlighted that the booklet they are given by the University does not provide enough information regarding what is expected of them to do, things to look out for and important documents that are required for them to fill in. This training can be held in the form of a workshop for 1-2 days depending on the content covered. This workshop would be held by university lecturers and the Head of each Teaching Practice department from tertiary institutions. Another recommendation is that principals, deputy principals' head of department of each



school could be trained and then train staff at their schools. During this training, important content such as what is teaching practice, what is the purpose and importance of the teaching practice programme, what is the role of the mentor-teacher, what is the role of the student-teacher and how to implement the 5-factor mentoring model into mentoring practices can be covered.

### **Creation of partnerships and working relationships with the schools, mentor-teachers and the University of Pretoria.**

Many of the mentor-teachers shared their frustrations with regards to not having sufficient time to effectively mentor the student-teachers, they shared how they follow an ATP, which is the annual teaching plan, and that giving the student-teachers time to teach their lessons may at times result in them losing teaching time. The responses from the student-teachers revealed that at times the schools they went to were not aware that they would be completing their teaching practice there and, as a result, the schools were not prepared to host the student-teachers. This would also lead to unwillingness on the part of the mentor-teachers to mentor the student-teachers. Creating an open relationship between the mentor-teachers, schools and the Universities would result in a positive rapport and important dates and information would be communicated efficiently and on time. In order to create these partnerships, this study suggests that the abovementioned stakeholders should be in constant communication in terms of what is required of each and every one of them and how they can.

### **Introduction of a policy on the compulsory training of mentor-teachers**

The study argues that being a good teacher does not mean one can automatically be a good mentor-teacher. Just as student-teachers are required to undergo training in the form of teaching practice, this study argues that mentor-teachers also need to receive ongoing professional development training for them to be able to mentor the student-teachers and be knowledgeable of their role as mentor-teachers. Before schools can allocate mentor-teachers, they have to ensure that the teachers are willing and able to mentor the student-teachers. This will also create a healthy working environment between the mentor-teacher and student-teacher because they

will not be forced to mentor student-teachers and they would be trained by those willing to mentor the student-teachers.

### **University perspective: Addition of methodology lecturers and co-ordinators of teaching practice**

For further research purposes, this study would include the views of the methodology lecturers and teaching practice co-ordinators. As they might provide interesting possibilities as well as elucidate the complexities of the issue at hand. For instance, some Universities allow students to choose their own school which in some cases are in different provinces and mentor-teachers in those schools may not be trained. This makes it difficult to track the student-teachers progress as internet access is not guaranteed especially when the student-teacher is in a rural area. Furthermore, some universities have a large number of students (up to 400) whom are allocated to WIL. Having this large number of student-teachers makes it difficult for the methodology lecturers and co-ordinators of the teaching practice office to make school visits for all of the student-teachers who are situated in different schools.

### **Involvement of the Department of Basic Education and District offices**

Schools are required to be compliant with policies from the district offices and Department of basic education which is hereafter referred to as DBE, thus, the involvement of the the DBE districts could be a key catalyst in order to bring about a change and introduction of a policy on the compulsory training of mentor-teachers. Drafting a policy on the compulsory training of mentor-teacher would be drafted by the district, tertiary insititions and schools.

### **Conclusion of the chapter**

In summary of the proposed recommendations for mentor-teachers during teaching practice, this study proposes the compulsory training for teachers before they can be mentors. Clear training on how mentor-teachers need to execute their roles and responsibilities will enhance how mentor-teachers develop student-teachers during teaching practice. This training will further develop the mentor-teachers' ability to incorporate the 5-factor mentoring practices proposed in this study needed to ensure

that the professional of student-teachers takes place during teaching practice. The 5 factors which are the personal attributes and commitment of both the student-teachers and mentor-teachers, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling and feedback will ensure that effective and efficient mentoring takes place. The creation of partnerships between the stakeholders mentioned in the abovementioned section, can assist to change, support and improve the quality of the teaching practice programme and better align the goals of teaching practice by communicating was is expected from each role player and more specifically the mentor-teacher.

### **Conclusion of the study**

In this chapter the researcher discussed the research findings which were presented in chapter 4. It analysed and reflected on the data collected, which was presented through themes and sub-themes. The literature and the responses of the participants formed the basis of the recommendations of the study, which will help with the improvement of the teaching practice programme and the knowledge and role of the mentor-teachers in developing student-teachers.

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of mentor-teachers and their experiences during the teaching practice programme and how they contribute to the development of the student-teachers. Furthermore, this study aimed to understand their role in shaping the professional development of the student-teachers and highlighted the importance of understanding what the role of mentor-teachers entail. Most teachers feel that they do not have the necessary skills to mentor student-teachers. Though some may be teaching in one of the best or most well-resourced schools, most of the mentor-teachers feel that they are not prepared to effectively mentor the student-teachers. Thus, in order to facilitate the mentoring process to take place and to serve its true purpose, mentor-teachers are required to be adequately prepared. In addition to being prepared, mentor-teachers should be trained according to the requirements of not only the MRTEQ, but also of the Higher institutions of Learning, as they are to know how to mentor the student-teachers and what is required to be done in order to ensure that the student-teachers are ready to become developed teachers. Once provision of training is made for the mentor-

teachers they will be confident in executing their role as well as show more interest and willingness to mentor student-teachers.

Due to their uncertainty of the requirements of their role, most mentor-teachers found themselves unable to sufficiently and effectively develop student-teachers. As a result, understanding the mentor-teachers' role is of great importance to close the gap that is created by the absence of suitable training to become mentor-teachers that will be able to develop student-teachers during teaching practice. Though mentor-teachers seem to have an understanding of what teaching practice and mentoring is, there is a need for training mentor-teachers on their role in order to ensure that they mentor the student-teachers according to the requirements set out for them by the MRTEQ.

To ensure that quality instruction takes place, mentor-teachers need to mentor student-teachers to develop their teaching and classroom management skills. This study thus argues that mentor-teachers need to be sufficiently trained in order to mentor student-teachers.

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**APPENDICES**  
**APPENDIX A**  
**CONSENT LETTER TO MENTOR-TEACHERS**

Date: 2019/08/21

Dear Mentor Teacher

My name is Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele and I am currently studying towards a Masters in Education (M.Ed) through the University of Pretoria. The focus of my research is **The Role of mentor-teachers during Teaching Practice** which explores the importance of mentoring in teaching practices and the role it plays in developing student-teachers. As part of the inherent requirements of this degree I am required to conduct research and write a report based on my findings, which I will disseminate.


The purpose of this study is to find out how mentor-teachers demonstrate expected teaching standards and develop teacher professionalism to student-teachers. Teaching Practice is an institutionalized, supervised, and instructional hands-on program which affords student-teachers the opportunity to gain experience in the unfamiliar teaching and learning environment. The nature and methodology of my study necessitates that I interview mentor-teachers and student-teachers. These interviews will be recorded and will take place at a venue that is convenient to you (please note: the venue should have limited distractions and low noise levels to allow recording of the interviews). Participation in this study will not interfere with any of your duties and the interviews will take 30 minutes to conduct. Once completed, the recorded interviews will be transcribed and analysed for the purpose of the dissertation. It would be an honour to hear your experiences as a mentor-teacher. I believe that you have valuable insights that need to be shared. Your participation in this study will be valuable to the production of new knowledge and development of mentor-teacher practices.

If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed. Should you not want to participate in this study, you will not be penalised. Should you agree to participate in the study then later decide that you no longer want to participate, you may do so at any time. Please also note that your identity will be protected and will only be known by myself as the researcher and my supervisor. The information provided by you will only be used for the sole purpose of this study.

Name of student: Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele

Email address: [u13323904@tuks.co.za](mailto:u13323904@tuks.co.za)

Number: 0760351676

Signature of student: 

Supervisor: Nevensha Sing

Email of Supervisor: [nevensha.sing@up.ac.za](mailto:nevensha.sing@up.ac.za)

Number of Supervisor: 0124205712/0828772564

#### Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **The Role of Mentor-Teachers during Teaching Practice**. I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one 30 minutes at my school, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that after the interview process, I am expected to participate in the face to face interview that will take place after teaching hours and that the discussion will be about the research questions and nothing else. I also understand that the discussion will be audio taped. I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e. g., research with young children.
- Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT LETTER TO STUDENT-TEACHERS



Faculty of Education


Date: 2019/08/21

Dear Student Teacher

My name is Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele and I am currently studying towards a Masters in Education (M.Ed) through the University of Pretoria. The focus of my research is **The Role of Mentor-Teachers during Teaching Practice** which explores the importance of mentoring in teaching practices and the role it plays in developing student-teachers. As part of the inherent requirements of this degree I am required to conduct research and write a report based on my findings, which I will disseminate.

The purpose of this study is to find out how mentor-teachers demonstrate expected teaching standards and develop teacher professionalism to student-teachers. Teaching Practice is an institutionalized, supervised, and instructional hands-on program which affords student-teachers the opportunity to gain experience in the unfamiliar teaching and learning environment. The nature and methodology of my study necessitates that I interview mentor-teachers and student-teachers. These interviews will be recorded and will take place at a venue that is convenient to you (please note: the venue should have limited distractions and low noise levels to allow recording of the interviews). Participation in this study will not interfere with any of your duties and the interviews will take 30 minutes to conduct. Once completed, the recorded interviews will be transcribed and analysed for the purpose of the dissertation. It would be an honour to hear your experiences as a student-teacher. I believe that you have valuable insights that need to be shared. Your participation in this study will be valuable to the production of new knowledge and development of mentor-teacher practices.

If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed. Should you not want to participate in this study, you will not be penalised. Should you agree to participate in the study then later decide that you no longer want to participate, you may do so at any time. Please also note that your identity will be protected and will only be known by myself as the researcher and my supervisor. The information provided by you will only be used for the sole purpose of this study.

Name of student: Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele  
Email address: [u13323904@tuks.co.za](mailto:u13323904@tuks.co.za)  
Number: 0780351676  
Signature of student:   
Supervisor: Nevensha Sing  
Email of Supervisor: [nevensha.sing@up.ac.za](mailto:nevensha.sing@up.ac.za)  
Number of Supervisor: 0124205712/0828772584

Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **The Role of Mentor-Teachers during Teaching Practice**. I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one 30 minutes at my school, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that after the interview process, I am expected to participate in the face to face interview that will take place after teaching hours and that the discussion will be about the research questions and nothing else. I also understand that the discussion will be audio taped. I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e. g., research with young children.
- Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Date: 2019/08/21

Dear Principal

My name is Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele and I am currently studying towards a Masters in Education (M.Ed) through the University of Pretoria. The focus of my research is **The Role of mentor-teachers during Teaching Practice** which explores the importance of mentoring in teaching practices and the role it plays in developing student-teachers. As part of the inherent requirements of this degree I am required to conduct research and write a report based on my findings, which I will disseminate.

The purpose of this study is to find out how mentor-teachers demonstrate expected teaching standards and develop teacher professionalism to student-teachers. Teaching Practice is an institutionalized, supervised, and instructional hands-on program which affords student-teachers the opportunity to gain experience in the unfamiliar teaching and learning environment. The nature and methodology of my study necessitates that I interview mentor-teachers and student-teachers. These interviews will be recorded and will take place at a venue that is convenient to you (please note: the venue should have limited distractions and low noise levels to allow recording of the interviews). Participation in this study will not interfere with any of your duties and the interviews will take 30 minutes to conduct. Once completed, the recorded interviews will be transcribed and analysed for the purpose of the dissertation. It would be an honour to hear your experiences as a mentor-teacher. I believe that you have valuable insights that need to be shared. Your participation in this study will be valuable to the production of new knowledge and development of mentor-teacher practices.

If you wish to participate in this study, the participants in your school will be interviewed. Should they not want to participate in this study, they will not be penalised. Should they agree to participate in the study then later decide that they no longer want to participate, they may do so at any time. Please also note that their identity will be protected and will only be known by myself as the researcher and my supervisor. The information provided by them will only be used for the sole purpose of this study.

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Faculty of Education  
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde

Name of student: Agnes Nokwanda Dlangwele

Email address: [ur13323904@iutks.co.za](mailto:ur13323904@iutks.co.za)

Number: 0760351676

Signature of student: 

Supervisor: Nevensha Sing

Email of Supervisor: [nevensha.sing@sup.ac.za](mailto:nevensha.sing@sup.ac.za)

Number of Supervisor: 0124205712/0828772564

### Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **The Role of mentor-teachers during Teaching Practice**. I understand that interviews will take place at my school about this topic for approximately 30 minutes, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that my teachers will be interviewed, and that the interviews will be face to face however, it will take place after teaching hours and that the discussion will be about the research questions and nothing else. I also understand that the discussion will be audio taped. I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e. g., research with young children.
- Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX D:  
CONSENT LETTER TO THE DEAN OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**



Faculty of Education

Date: 2019/08/21

Dear Dean of the University of Pretoria's faculty of Education

My name is Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele and I am currently studying towards a Masters in Education (M.Ed) through the University of Pretoria. The focus of my research is **The Role of Mentor-Teachers during Teaching Practice** which explores the importance of mentoring in teaching practice and the role it plays in developing student-teachers. As part of the inherent requirements of this degree I am required to conduct research and write a report based on my findings, which I will disseminate.

The purpose of this study is to find out how mentor-teachers demonstrate expected teaching standards and develop teacher professionalism to student-teachers. Teaching Practice is an institutionalized, supervised, and instructional hands-on program which affords student-teachers the opportunity to gain experience in the unfamiliar teaching and learning environment. The nature and methodology of my study necessitates that I interview mentor-teachers and student-teachers. These interviews will be recorded and will take place at a venue that is convenient to you (please note: the venue should have limited distractions and low noise levels to allow recording of the interviews). Participation in this study will not interfere with any of their duties and the interviews will take 30 minutes to conduct. Once completed, the recorded interviews will be transcribed and analysed for the purpose of the dissertation.

I would like to ask for permission to interview 8 student-teachers who are doing their Teaching Practice at schools in Mamelodi. Please note that their identities will not be revealed as I will be using a code when data is being presented. Should you grant permission, please note that the student-teachers will be interviewed and should they no longer wish to participate in this study, they will not be penalised for doing so. If they agree to participate in the study later decide that they no longer want to participate, they may do so at any time. I can ensure that their identity will be protected at all times and will only be known by myself as the researcher and my supervisor.




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The information provided by the student-teachers will only be used for the sole purpose of this study.

Name of student: Agnes Nokwanda Dlengezele

Email address: [u13323904@tuks.co.za](mailto:u13323904@tuks.co.za)

Number: 0760351676

Signature of student: 

Supervisor: Nevensha Sing

Email of Supervisor: [nevensha.sing@up.ac.za](mailto:nevensha.sing@up.ac.za)

Number of Supervisor: 0124205712/0828772584

#### Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to grant 8 student-teachers at the University of Pretoria take part in the research project titled: **The Role of Mentor-Teachers during Teaching Practice**. I understand that student-teachers at the University of Pretoria will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one 30 minutes, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interviews will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e. g., research with young children.
- Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E  
GDE RESEARCH APPLICATION**



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**For admin. use only:**

Ref. no.:

Enquiries: 011 3550775

Gumani Mukatuni

**GDE RESEARCH REQUEST FORM**

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN INSTITUTIONS AND/OR OFFICES OF  
THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**1. PARTICULARS OF THE RESEARCHER**

<b>1.1 Details of the Researcher</b>	
<b>Surname and Initials:</b>	Dlengezele A.N
<b>First Name/s:</b>	Agnes Nokwanda
<b>Title (Prof / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms):</b>	Ms
<b>Student Number (if relevant):</b>	13323904
<b>SA ID Number:</b>	9411170474084
<b>Work permit no. (If not SA citizen)</b>	

<b>1.2 Private Contact Details</b>	
<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Postal Address (if different)</b>
22 Hendrina street	22 Hendrina street
Ridgeway ext 3	Ridgeway ext 3
Johannesburg	Johannesburg
<b>Postal Code:2091</b>	<b>Postal Code: 2091</b>
<b>Tel: 011 648 9430</b>	<b>Cell:076 035 1676</b>
<b>Fax:</b>	<b>E-mail: u13323904@tuks.co.za</b>

## 2. PURPOSE & DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Purpose of the Research (Place cross where appropriate)</b>	
	<i>Undergraduate Study - Self</i>	
	<i>Postgraduate Study - Self</i>	x
	<i>Private Company/Agency – Commissioned by Provincial Government or Department</i>	
	<i>Private Research by Independent Researcher</i>	
	<i>Non-Governmental Organisation</i>	
	<i>National Department of Education</i>	
	<i>Commissions and Committees</i>	
	<i>Independent Research Agencies</i>	
	<i>Statutory Research Agencies</i>	
	<i>Higher Education Institutions only</i>	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Full title of Thesis / Dissertation / Research Project</b>	
	The Role of mentor-teachers in supporting student-teachers	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Value of the Research to Education (Attach Research Proposal)</b>	
	This research will help us better understand expected role of the mentor-teacher in ensuring the development of student-teachers.	
<b>2.4</b>		<b>Date</b>
	<i>Envisaged date of completion of research in GDE Institutions</i>	End of July 2019
	<i>Envisaged date of submission of Research Report and Research Summary to GDE:</i>	End of March 2020
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Student and Postgraduate Enrolment Particulars</b>	
	<i>Name of institution where enrolled:</i>	University Of Pretoria
	<i>Degree / Qualification:</i>	MEd: Management, Law and Policy
	<i>Faculty and Discipline / Area of Study:</i>	Education
	<i>Name of Supervisor / Promoter:</i>	Dr Nevensha Sing

<b>2.6</b>	<b>Employer</b>
<b>Name of Organisation:</b>	Spark Schools Midrand
<b>Position in Organisation:</b>	Mathematics Teacher
<b>Head of Organisation:</b>	Mrs Nkazimulo Zitha
<b>Street Address:</b>	Cnr Alexandra Avenue & Aitken St Halfway House, Midrand
<b>Postal Code:</b>	1685
<b>Telephone Number (Code + Ext):</b>	010 590 6208
<b>Fax Number:</b>	
<b>E-mail:</b>	

<b>2.7</b>	<b>PERSAL Number ( GDE employees only)</b>
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### 3. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD/S

(Please indicate by placing a cross in the appropriate block whether the following mode would be adopted)

#### 3.1 Questionnaire/s (If Yes, supply copies of each to be used)

<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	<b>x</b>
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#### 3.2 Interview/s (If Yes, provide copies of each schedule)

<b>YES</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>NO</b>	
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#### 3.3 Use of official documents

<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>If Yes, please specify the document/s:</b>			

3.4 *Workshop/s / Group Discussions (If Yes, Supply details)*

3.5	Standardised Tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)	YES	NO	
		YES	NO	x
<i>If Yes, please specify the test/s to be used and provide a copy/ies</i>				

**4. INSTITUTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH**

4.1 *Type and NUMBER of Institutions (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside all types of institutions to be researched)*

INSTITUTIONS	Write NUMBER here
<i>Primary Schools</i>	
<i>Secondary Schools</i>	3
<i>ABET Centres</i>	
<i>ECD Sites</i>	
<i>LSEN Schools</i>	
<i>Further Education &amp; Training Institutions</i>	1
<i>Districts and / or Head Office</i>	

- 4.2 Name/s of institutions to be researched (Please complete on a separate sheet if space is found to be insufficient)

Name/s of Institution/s
Phateng Secondary School
<i>Vlakfontein High School</i>
<i>Tsako Thabo</i>
<i>University of Pretoria</i>

- 4.3 District/s where the study is to be conducted. (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside the relevant district/s)

District/s			
<i>Ekurhuleni North</i>		<i>Ekurhuleni South</i>	
<i>Gauteng East</i>		<i>Gauteng North</i>	
<i>Gauteng West</i>		<i>Johannesburg Central</i>	
<i>Johannesburg East</i>		<i>Johannesburg North</i>	
<i>Johannesburg South</i>		<i>Johannesburg West</i>	
<i>Sedibeng East</i>		<i>Sedibeng West</i>	
<i>Tshwane North</i>		<i>Tshwane South</i>	x
<i>Tshwane West</i>			

If Head Office/s (Please indicate Directorate/s)

4.4 Number of learners to be involved per school (Please indicate the number by gender)

Grade	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Gender	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
Number												

Grade	7		8		9		10		11		12	
Gender	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
Number												

4.5 Number of educators/officials involved in the study (Please indicate the number in the relevant column)

Type of staff	Educators	HODs	Deputy Principals	Principal	Lecturers	Office Based Officials
Number	8 Mentor-teachers and 6 Student-teachers					

4.6 Are the participants to be involved in groups or individually?

Groups		Individually	x
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4.7 Average period of time each participant will be involved in the test or other research activities (Please indicate time in minutes)

Participant/s	Activity	Time
8 Mentor-Teachers	Semi-Structured recorded interviews	30 minutes each
6 Student-teachers	Semi-Structured recorded interviews	30 minutes each

4.8 Time of day that you propose to conduct your research.

During school hours (for limited observation only)		After School Hours	x
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4.9 School term/s during which the research would be undertaken

First Term	x	Second Term		Third Term	
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## **CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE**

**Permission may be granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and permission may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:**

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's concerned, the Principal's and the chairperson's of the School Governing Body (SGB) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid.
3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
5. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB's; principal's, educator's, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.
7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution's, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.
8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.
9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).
10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director's and school's concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.



DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER	
1. I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.	
2. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.	
Signature:	
Date:	21/08/2019
DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER / LECTURER	
I declare that: (Name of Researcher)..... <i>Nevensha Sing</i> .....	
1. is enrolled at the institution / employed by the organisation to which the undersigned is attached.	
2. The questionnaires / structured interviews / tests meet the criteria of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Accountability;</li> <li>• Proper Research Design;</li> <li>• Sensitivity towards Participants;</li> <li>• Correct Content and Terminology;</li> <li>• Acceptable Grammar;</li> <li>• Absence of Non-essential / Superfluous items;</li> <li>• Ethical clearance</li> </ul>	
3. I will ensure that after successful completion of the degree / project an electronic copy of the Research Report / Thesis / Dissertation and a Research Summary (on the GDE template) will be sent by the researcher to the GDE.	
Surname:	Sing
First Name(s):	Nevensha
Institution / Organisation:	University of Pretoria
Faculty / Department (where relevant):	Department of Education, Management & Policy Studies
Telephone:	0828772564
E-mail:	Nevensha.Sing@up.ac.za
Signature:	
Date:	21/08/2019


**ANNEXURE A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GROUP RESEARCH**

This information must be completed by every researcher/ student who will be visiting GDE Institutions for research purposes.

By signing this declaration, the researcher / students accepts the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research in GDE Institutions and undertakes to abide by them.

Supervisor/ Promoter / Lecturer's Surname and Name: Dr Nevensha Sing

**DECLARATION BY RESEARCHERS / STUDENTS:**

Surname & Initials	Name	Tel	Cell	Email address	Signature
Dergesele AN	Agnes Nokwanda	0116489430	0760351476	013323904@nks.co.za	

N.B. This form (and all other relevant documentation where available) may be completed and forwarded electronically to [Gumani.mukatuni@qauteng.gov.za](mailto:Gumani.mukatuni@qauteng.gov.za); [Dineo.Mashigo@qauteng.gov.za](mailto:Dineo.Mashigo@qauteng.gov.za) and please copy (cc) [ResearchInfo@qauteng.gov.za](mailto:ResearchInfo@qauteng.gov.za). The last 2 pages of this document must however have the original signatures of both the researcher and his/her supervisor or promoter. It should be scanned and emailed, posted or hand delivered (in a sealed envelope) to Gumani Mukatuni, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 6 Holland Building, Main and Simmonds Streets, Johannesburg. All enquiries pertaining to the status of research requests can be directed to Gumani Mukatuni on tel. no. 011 355 0775 or Dineo Mashigo on tel. no. 011 355 0336.

**APPENDIX F**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO MENTOR-TEACHERS**

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
3. What is your understanding of Teaching Practice?
4. How can you describe the support you offer to the student-teachers during the teaching practice programme?
5. How do you plan for hosting student-teachers?
6. What type of support do you offer the student-teacher?
7. How would you describe the challenges you face when supporting the student-teachers?
8. How do/did identify these challenges?
9. Why would you say that you face these challenges?
10. Describe the strategies put in place to address these challenges?
11. In your opinion do you have support when trying to address these challenges?
12. How would you describe your mentoring practices and how have they influenced the student- teachers?
13. What mentoring strategies (i.e. Modelling, Feedback, pedagogical knowledge, system requirements and personal attributes) have you put in place to ensure that you support the student-teacher in the best possible way?
14. Is there sufficient time allocated within the school's timetable and schedule to ensure that you demonstrate the correct mentoring strategies to ensure that the student-teachers optimal development during teaching practice?
15. In your opinion, do you think mentor-teachers need training in order for them to be adequately prepared to mentor student-teachers?

**APPENDIX G**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO STUDENT-TEACHERS**

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What made you choose the teaching profession?
3. What is your understanding of Teaching Practice?
4. How can you describe the support offered to you during the teaching practice programme?
5. How would you describe the mentor-teachers readiness to host you during the teaching practice programme?
6. What type of support does the mentor-teacher offer you during the teaching practice programme?
7. How would you describe the challenges you face during teaching practice?
8. How do/did identify these challenges?
9. Why would you say that you face these challenges?
10. Describe the strategies put in plan to address these challenges?
11. In your opinion do you have support when trying to address these challenges?
12. How would you describe your mentor-teachers practices and how have they influenced the student- teachers?
13. How would you rate your mentor-teachers' attitude towards mentoring you?
14. What mentoring strategies (i.e. Modelling, Feedback, pedagogical knowledge, system requirements and personal attributes) has your mentor-teacher put in place to ensure that they support you in the best possible way?
15. Do you receive feedback?
16. Do you feel that your mentor-teacher leads by example?
17. Do you feel that your mentor-teacher is well-trained and equipped to provide you with the correct content support?
18. How would you describe the mentor-teachers subject area content knowledge?
19. In your opinion, do you think mentor teachers need training in order for them to be adequately prepared to mentor student teachers?

**APPENDIX H  
OBSERVATION GUIDE**

Length of observation: 15 Minutes	
Description of factors to look out for during the observation	
Attendance of mentor-teachers	Feedback
Attendance of mentor-teachers in every lesson. (Accompanying student-teachers to the classroom to ensure that student-teachers receive guidance with classroom management and lesson presentation)	
Incorporation of the 5-factor mentoring model by both the mentor-teachers and student-teachers.	
How the mentor-teachers interact with each other.	